

2 May 2017

North Cascades Ecosystem Subcommittee Meeting Conference Call

Subcommittee:

Karen Taylor-Goodrich (NPSⁱ, chair)
Jim Brown (WDFW)
Jason Kuiken (USFS)
Mark Miller (USFWS)
Hilary Cooley (USFWS)
Jack Oelfke (NPS)
Dianne Freeman (USFS)

Technical Team:

John Rohrer (USFS, chair)
Anne Braaten (NPS)
Scott Fitkin (WDFW)
Jesse Plumage (USFS)
Gregg Kurz (USFWS)
Wayne Kasworm (USFWS)

Other participants:

Ellen Davis (USFS)
Andrea Lyons (Wa. Conservation Science Institute)

Chris Smith (Wildlife Manage. Institute)
Lorna Smith (Western Wildlife Outreach)

Audience:

Joe Scott (Conservation Northwest)
Charles Laver

Robb Krehbiel (Defenders of Wildlife)
Graham Taylor (Nat'l Parks Cons. Assoc.)

Bob Everitt is retiring at the end of June. We send him our best wishes. A presentation will be made at the IGBC summer meeting. We will also now need a new vice chair.

EIS Update: Jack Oelfke

- Eight public meetings were held during the weeks of February 13th and 20th. Meetings were held in Winthrop, Cle Elum, Omak and Cashmere on the east side of the mountains, and Sultan, Renton, Darrington and Bellingham on the west side. Two webinars were also held. Over 1,200 people attended the meetings and webinars.
- The Draft Environmental Impact Statement closed for public comment on April 28th. Nearly 127,000 comments were received.
- The contractor, park staff and Environmental Quality Division (NPS, Denver) staff are working through comments and analysis.
- In the near term once comment analysis is completed, agency staff will be addressing substantive comments.
- We anticipate the Final EIS to be released in December, but the comment period extension has thrown the schedule a little bit off, so it may be later than that.

Outreach update: Jack Oelfke

- IGBC funds for deploying the bear trailer to school children in the east side of the NCE had to be returned due to the loss of staffing for this project.
- The bear trailer *was* used for presentations to the Lummi Nation.
- Many media requests were fielded with regard to the EIS.
- Videos were created for the public meetings, and run on loops throughout the meetings.
- The NPS and FWS reached out to and provided several dozen in-person presentations to local elected officials, tribes, staff of federal Congressional representatives, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations. There are diverse opinions across and within many of these groups, ranging from support to opposition.

- The NPS provided a phone presentation to a group in California which is interested in restoring grizzly bears to the Sierra Nevada.

Grizzly Bear Recovery Office update: Wayne Kasworm

- Hilary Cooley is the new Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator.
- The final review for delisting the Yellowstone population is expected to be in the Federal Register sometime early this summer.
- The Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem is working on a conservation strategy for release this fall. They anticipate the rule to be completed roughly one year from now.

Western Wildlife Outreach Program update: Lorna Smith

- They were on the road through the winter and spring with their bear trailer, giving the public standard messaging about living with large carnivores (grizzly and black bears, cougars and wolves).
- They provided presentations on the EIS to groups in Portland, Vancouver (WA) and Longview. About 60-80 people attended each night, with largely positive feedback.
- They gave carnivore presentations to approximately 20 middle school classes.
- They actively work with the WDFW in Issaquah (Bear Smart King County) and in presentations at the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle.
- Most of the bears observed in the greater Seattle/ East King County are related to garbage management, and they are working with garbage disposal companies, communities and homeowners' associations to address this. It is a long, uphill battle. Non-compliance with proper garbage storage is the norm.
- They have developed a video for middle schoolers, which will be on their website soon.
- They are reprinting their IGBC-sanctioned Bear Safety brochure in the next couple of weeks and are always interested in partnering, as more can be printed at lower cost.

Wildlife Management Institute (for the IGBC): Chris Smith

- The IGBC is developing a charter and revising their approach to five year work plans. Goals and objectives will be coordinated among the ecosystems at the executive committee and subcommittee levels.
- We will be asked comment on the goals, objectives and line items. Any comments should be sent to Chris, copied to Karen.
- The goal is to have a Five Year Plan fleshed out by the winter meeting.

Public comments/discussion:

- Will the public comments for the DEIS be published in the final? (Answer: Yes, this is standard protocol.) The National Parks and Conservation Association was hoping to have them made public prior the release of the FEIS.

ⁱ Agency acronyms: National Park Service (NPS); US Forest Service (USFS); US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS); Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)