



IGBC Update Dec 2020 Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem



NCDE UPDATE

- **Conflict Specialists highlights by area**
- **Workplan Accomplishments from 2020**
- **Work Planned for 2021**

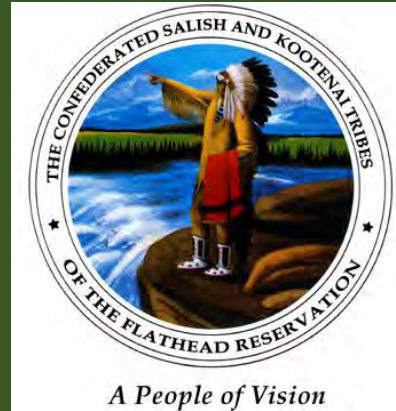
Glacier National Park

- East side of the park closed- BIR COVID 19 closure
- Managing the park with a lot of transplants or COVID refugee to recreate on public lands.
- Reducing bear conflicts will be a “Leave no Trace recreation 0.5”



Confederated Salish-Kootenai Tribe

- Fewer conflict calls overall
- 130 grizzly bear crossings along highway 93 without documentation from the crossing cameras
- 50 grizzly bears documented along highway mostly subadult males
- Tribal Wildlife Incentive Grant: highway crossing



Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife

- Closure of the Reservation- all east entrances to GNP
- Less tourist and recreation to the reservation
- Experienced less bear human garbage issues
- Help from WS with funding from FWS for electric fences
- More bear resistance garbage containers needed
- Need more coordination with MDT on vehicle-struck livestock



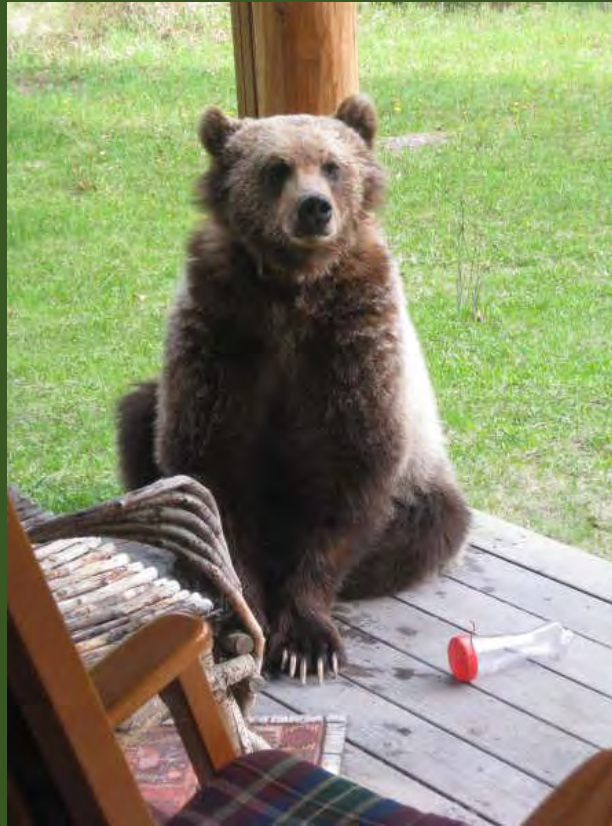
East Front

- Grain continues to be difficult attractant
 - Grain piles the size of warehouses stored out in the open
 - Removed 27,000 pounds of spilled grain, which was just a dent
 - Researching ways to resolve grain conflicts more permanently - scare devices, guard dogs.
- Bone yards continue to be a source of bear conflicts. Interest in carcass removal program continuing to grow.
- Human encounters with bears was up this year.
- Education and outreach efforts were severely curtailed this year due to COVID.



Northwest NCDE

- Over 200 reported conflicts
- Many involving the same bears
- Yards, garbage, bird feeders, livestock (pigs, llama, chickens), fruit trees.
- 19 Captures
 - 16 Relocated
 - 3 recaptured and euthanized



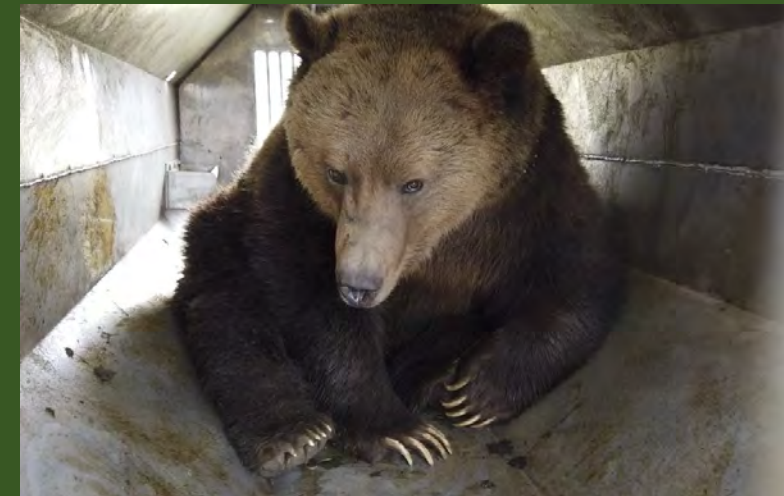
Dispersed Public Land Camping



South Side – NCDE



- 1 Research capture on NE side of the Rattlesnake Wilderness
- Euthanized male in Blackfoot in April. WS captured after it killed calves
- Relocated two males in Blackfoot possibly involved in calf depredation
- Relocated male grizzly in Seeley Lake connected to summer garbage
- Relocated a male grizzly in October from south of Interstate 90 in the Jens area after killing ducks and chickens.
- Had two additional grizzly bear mortalities that are under investigation



South Side – NCDE

Expanding Grizzly Bears

- Grizzly bears were photographed:
 - North of Missoula in Lavalle Creek
 - SE of Missoula in Miller Creek
 - South of Missoula on the fringes of Lolo
- Received other reports of grizzlies in the Deer Lodge Valley, Sapphire Range, Big Hole Valley and the Ninemile Valley.



South Side – NCDE

Expanding Grizzly Bears

- Lots of good preventative management and education related efforts on the south end of the ecosystems---- multiple electric fence projects and sanitation projects.



NCDE Workplan 2020 Accomplishments

- FWP hired a new specialist in Deer Lodge
- FWP Hired new statewide G. Bear IEO
- Wildlife Services hired two specialists on Rocky Mountain Front
- HCP for Railroad nearing completion
- Transportation and crossing coordination



ADVANCEMENTS - Electric Mats and Shipping Containers



EXPERIMENTING - Grain Bin Protection (Electrified Screen on Pallets)



NCDE Workplan 2021 Planned Actions

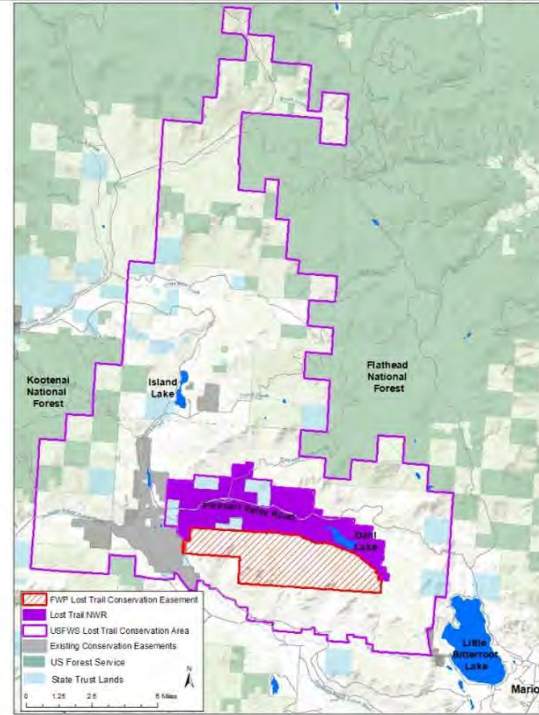
- Proposed Research:
 - FWP with U of M Post Doc Sarah Sells to map potential connectivity routes between NCDE and Bitterroot using female data
 - Grizzly Bear use of grain bins on eastern front
 - Effectiveness of deterring bears from grain bins using critter-getters and remote cameras
 - CSKT Working with ecologist to further study highway crossing on Hwy 93

NCDE Workplan 2021 Planned Actions

- Focus on Mortality Subcommittee Priorities:
 - Shooting Related (IGBC coordination role)
 - Automobile
 - Site-Related
- Support ongoing habitat protection in landscape between NCDE and CYE (Montana Great Outdoor Project). Between Flathead and Kootenai National Forests west of Kalispell.

FWP's Lost Trail Conservation Easement

- FWP is proposing to purchase a conservation easement to protect 7,256 acres of timberland near Marion west of Kalispell.
- Land shares nearly 7 miles of border with the 7,876-acre U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge and 4,093 acres of Wetland Reserve Program easements held by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.
- Part of the ~630,000 acres purchased by SPP Montana, LLC from Weyerhaeuser in December 2019.
- Decision notice signed Nov. 19. Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission to review at Dec. 10 meeting.

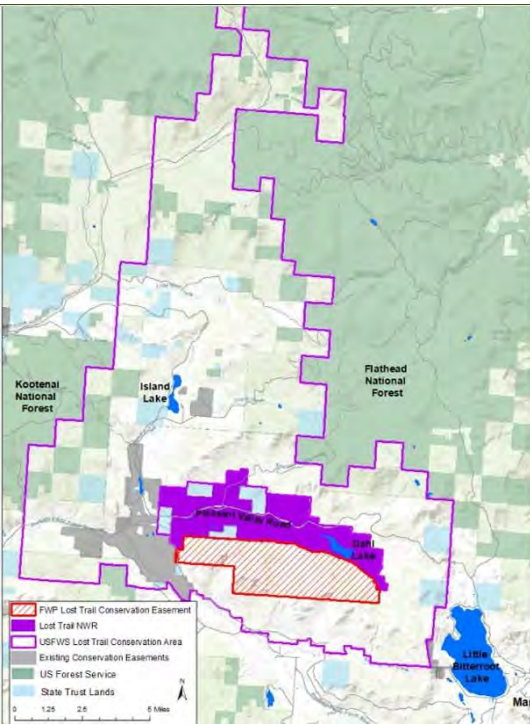


FWS Lost Trail Conservation Area

- Surrounds Lost Trail National Wildlife Refuge and FWP Conservation Easement project area.
- This potential project involves ~100,000 acres of private land, including ~70,000 acres owned by SPP Montana, that would be targeted for conservation easements with willing landowners.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would hold these easements.
- Public input collected in summer-fall 2020.

The Montana Great Outdoors Project

- This potential project would involve TPL working with SPP to acquire a conservation easement on ~130,000 acres.
- FWP would hold this easement.
- This potential project is still early in development. Any FWP easement acquisitions would be open for public comment at a later date and subject to Commission endorsement.





Questions?