



# *Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem*

## *Fall Meeting Notes*

Tuesday, December 3, 2019  
Double Tree, 100 Madison Street, Missoula, MT

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Welcome provided by NCDE Chair, Randy Arnold and Vice-Chair, Bill Avey.

- Introductions by attendees

### NCDE Bear Biologist Updates:

#### James Jonkle (R2)-

- Thank you to Eric Graham (Biologist-Blackfoot Challenge) and Eli Hampson (R2 FWP Bear and Lion Management Technician) who helped while I was on leave this spring and summer.
- Welcome to Rory Trimble who will be working with R2 and R3 bear management out of Deer Lodge/Butte areas.
- Preventative Programs:
  - Apple Exchange program
  - Nine Mile Bear Aware Group-Apple Cider Squeeze day
- Defenders of Wildlife -Residential electric fence projects (over 100 calls).
- Blackfoot Challenge- Three major electric fence projects: the Helmville dump and two residential/agricultural ranch compounds.
- Education and Outreach: Bear Safety-170 cans of bear spray distributed (funded by Defenders of Wildlife, the Sierra Club and Private donors).
- We continue to work with Republic Services to check out bear resistant containers throughout Missoula county. There were approximately 80 bear resistant cans checked out this summer through our various loan programs.
- Carcass Pickup Program-This summer, Barry Gordon picked up 131 livestock carcasses throughout the Blackfoot and over the winter, Dan Massey took over 800 carcasses to landfill. Thanks to the Montana Department of Transportation for their compost site facilities.
- This summer Eric and Eli did research trapping. They trapped and collared one adult male and one new trend female with two cubs in Lincoln area.
- Two additional male bears were trapped, hair samples were taken then they were released.

#### Stacy Courville (CSKT)

- Our season started very early this year.
- A research (female) grizzly bear was maliciously shot last October leaving two orphan cubs.
- These cubs didn't den up in the Missions and stayed in the valley all winter. They emerged on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and started frequenting calving pastures. Culvert traps were set but had trouble working due to weather conditions. We hazed the cubs back into WPA (Waterfowl Production Area) for over a month.

- I shot one of the orphaned cubs at a depredation site early in May. The sibling continued to kill sheep and a calf. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, I shot the sibling. Both cubs were microchipped, so we were certain we took out the correct bears.
- I responded to 49 different conflicts. Most of those calls related to the two yearling cubs.
- Total kills last year were: 13 lambs 10 ewes, 1 calf (and one missing calf), 1 llama, 4 ducks and unknown number of chickens.
- Conducted 171 management related trap nights.
- We received a TWIG (Tribal Wildlife Incentive Grant) from the USFWS to purchase Kodiak 65-gallon cans. This fall, we distributed 82 cans to people who haul their own garbage (limited to 1 per household). We also received money to buy thirty 95-gallon cans that we donated to Republic Services to distribute to people who request bear-resistant cans.
- This fall, we had 2 mortalities on Highway 93 on the unfinished section. The casualties included a male cub of the year and a new unmarked adult female.
- Bryce Andrews (“People and Carnivores”) and I did a corn taste aversion test this fall. We placed two piles of corn at the edge of Millie’s Woods. One pile was treated with apple bitter and the other pile with Mad Dog 357 Hot Sauce (357,000 Scoville Heat Units). Cameras were placed to observe the test area. One adult female with 2 cubs of the year came in and cleaned up both piles in a couple of days.

#### John Waller (GNP)-

- Glacier National Park had 3 million visitors again this year.
- No incidents with human injury since 2016.
- No grizzly bears have been removed from the park since 2009.
- 3 grizzly bears were relocated into the park (1 from MT FWP, 2 from the Blackfoot Nation).
- 1 mortality-presumed natural death
- 7 grizzly bears were radio collared for the population TREND monitoring program.
- Grizzly bears were hazed 69 times (pushed away from roads and developed areas).
- 4 incidents of charging grizzly bears that were deterred with bear spray.

#### Cassie Powell (Blackfeet Nation)-

- This year, 6 grizzly bear females were being monitored on the Blackfoot Reservation.
- An additional 6 grizzlies were also being monitored. These bears were caught in previous years. One male died on the west side of the Continental Divide. 2 males and 2 females had dropped their collars. One female’s radio collar stopped working.
- We captured 6 grizzly bears and 5 black bears, most in response to livestock depredations.
- There was a total of 11 grizzly mortalities this year.
  - 5 deaths were in response to the NSF (2 of them were hit on the highway)
  - Dispatched an adult female at a depredation site. Also dispatched a collared male grizzly who came over from the west side and was getting into garbage.
  - A male cub of the year was killed by an unknown predator and discovered by a hunter.

- Investigated 50 livestock carcasses for bear kills (12 confirmed cows and calves and 28 were probable) and a few killed by both wolves and mountain lions.
- We removed 85 livestock carcasses from ranches and along highways within the Reservation.
- We put up an electrical fence around a pigpen. Of the depredations this year, seven cases were 4-H pigs. We have partnered with Defenders of Wildlife and one of our goals for next year is to put up more fencing.
- Bear Spray Program:
  - In 2018, we bought over 1,000 cans of bear spray and sold out of them in June 2019.
  - I was able to purchase 648 additional cans of bear spray and we sold them for \$5.00/piece.
  - We demonstrated with inert cans of spray in addition to showing a 7-minute instructional video on the proper way to use bear spray.
  - This program is very well received by the communities.
- There were an estimated 193 calls that were recorded to the Blackfeet Wildlife personnel. The call reasons included: property damage, chasing livestock, and waste management. These call numbers exclude depredation reports.
- We have worked with numerous businesses and residential areas this year. We put up temporary electrical fences around the 4 cubic yard dumpsters due to bears tipping them over. The fencing seemed to solve the issue.
- We documented about 43 waste management calls this year.
- I did numerous "Bear Aware" presentations and events for the communities. I educated the community on what do to in a situation, encouraged the public to take pictures of sightings and contact us with any encounters with bears.

Mike Madel (R-4): Rocky Mountain Front area

- There were 40 confirmed grizzly bear conflicts (including 14 livestock depredations)
- Responded to 64 calls. We were short staffed one technician due to funding.
- High livestock depredation year including new locations. Had ~\$25,100 loss in livestock (less than 2017).
- Worked on conflict prevention program. Three new permanent electric fence projects.
- Several confirmed grizzly bear sightings in the Belts. Remote cameras were put up and no pictures captured.
- Captured 6 grizzlies this year. Two research bears (subadult female and male) were captured then released. Four management bears; 3 males were euthanized due to adult cattle predation and the 4<sup>th</sup> sub-adult male was euthanized due to raiding back country camps.
- 8 bear injury or mortality incidents
- 5 property damage encounters (resulting in 2 mortalities)
- 9 residential incidents (possibly related to weather?)
- 260 landowner contacts
- 120 permanent electric fence projects.
- Continue to distribute free bear spray to ranchers, a total of 450 cans in the last 10 years
- Fundraising-\$18,500 for preventative work
- Continue grizzly bear telemetry flights

Tim Manley (R1)- Kalispell, MT (west side of the Continental Divide)

- Busy call year. 200-300 calls (reports vs. conflicts)
- Main conflicts: chickens/livestock, property damage and garbage
- Installed electric fencing projects: horse trailers, overhead metal garage doors, metal garbage cans and electric screens around windows in chicken coups
- Livestock Depredation: Chickens, three sheep (Wildlife Services couldn't catch the responsible female adult grizzly but put down her yearlings) and five pigs (3year-old female grizzly, caught and released at Spotted bear. She was killed by a vehicle on the reservation while feeding on a cow).
- Garbage issues-We are working more with private haulers trying to get bear resistant containers. The county has a good handle on bear-proofing.
- Fruit trees continue to be an issue. We had problems on the east side of Flathead Lake with the cherry orchards.
- Mortalities: Forest Service reported two orphaned cubs killed by an Amtrak train near Trego. We are talking with railroad about reporting kills to FWP. A female and her two cubs were getting into chickens near Ferndale. One of the cubs was shot by the landowner.
- Management Bears: 19 Captures (16 individual grizzlies), 10 dead of the 16 bears, 7 were killed in management actions, 2 sent to the Grizzly and Wolf Discovery Center and 4 are still currently radio collared.
- There were a documented 56 different individual grizzly bears between Olney, MT and Swan Lake during this field season.
- We were involved and assisted with both the Cabinet Mountain Augmentation Project and the Trend Project.

Wesley Sarmiento (R4)-Bear Management Specialist, Conrad, MT

- This position was started in 2017 in response to the increase in grizzly bear population size and expansion.
- Conducted over 22 presentations/events, educational community days, gave bear spray trainings to 363 people and gave away over 50 bear spray canisters.
- Created the FWP's first agriculture "Bear Aware" brochure and magnets for landowners. We installed 4 more bear aware signs at key recreational sites.
- Initiated call trees over 91 times for towns and neighborhoods. Can do alerts when bears are in the area.
- We have our "Montana Prairie Bear" Facebook page. There were over 150 posts. Every time someone reports a bear to us, we update information of sightings on this page so people can track bear activity for safety reasons. We also post other educational information for the public as well.
- Received communication with public for service and/or information: 374 calls, 109 text message conversations and over 71 Facebook conversations.
- There were 37 grizzly bear conflicts and a bad year for livestock depredation. Conflicts mainly consist of young bears (typically) dispersing out in May/June and don't know they are supposed to stay away from people.
- 10 independent livestock depredation events (does not equal the number of livestock deaths)
- Depredation: 1 hog killed (Cut Bank Creek), 2 calves/1 cow killed (Dupuyer Creek) and 2 other depredation attempts that were stopped by ranchers pushing the bears away from area.

- 2 subadult grizzly bear mortalities: One male was humanely euthanized on the Sun River for killing 3 registered Black Angus calves, attacking another 3 calves (that required veterinary assistance) and another 5 calves that were missing. It was this bear's first strike, but we couldn't relocate it and reasonably eliminate that threat. The other mortality was another male that killed at least 41 domestic sheep on the Marias River near Tibor Dam.
- Donated two temporary electric fences with charger for nomadic sheep bedding ground areas. Installed permanent electric fence for 50-acre sheep pasture east of Valier.
- No apiary conflicts-Ten temporary electric fences were installed.
- 122 proactive patrols after observations, quick response, 95% under 30 minutes
- Hazed 23 bears away from people. Kept bears out of town (except 1 black bear), fired 89 cracker shells, 4 rubber slugs, got 2 Airedale dogs to assist with bear management efforts.
- Obtained six bear proof garbage cans
- Removed 42 livestock and 17 deer carcasses. (Have a designated person to do this)
- Grain conflicts: Deployed 15 scare devices and removed 2,000 pounds of grain. Good success with "Critter Getters" to scare away from sites.
- Nine grizzly bear captures: An average of 13.64 trap nights per conflict. 191 trap nights total
- Future efforts: Doing a research proposal using guard dogs to protect corn fields

#### Wayne Kasworm-Augmentation Program

- DNA monitoring showing success (non-conflict bears)
  - In 2019, 2 bears moved and released in July into the West Cabinet Mountains on the Idaho/Montana border. One female moved 10 miles north of release site & came back to south to den near release site. One male moved north to Troy, then moved south to Lake Pend Oreille, then to Lake Creek drainage (south of Troy) and has not denned yet.
  - The 2018 (2yo male) bear went south across the Clark Fork river, got into a bait site, trapped then taken back to Montana. Reappeared in Cabinet Mountains, then went back into Idaho. Dennd in Idaho and came out in April 2019 (Hwy 200) going south across the Clark Fork River. In May/June 2019, crossed I-90 near De Borgia and Highway 12. Stayed inside the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness until September. Lost radio collar contact for a 12-hour gap near Fish Creek. Once back to the Cabinet Mountains, collar started transmitting again. Storm Creek was a popular spot and he spent a lot of time there.
- Program 1990-2019: Collared 22 bears (14-Females, 8-Males). Seven bears left outside the recovery zone but 3 have returned. Six bears known dead (one known to have produced second generation off-spring).
- Two Females and one male have reproduced. DNA determined success.
- Rub tree collection efforts collected on a monthly basis. We collected 255 grizzly bear samples identifying 51 different bears.
- Not seeing much of natural influx of other bears (DNA) from outside the monitoring zone. In the short-term, we are not worried about genetic in-breeding in our populations.

## Grizzly Bear Conflict and Mortality Subcommittee Update - Hilary Cooley

- Trends in human conflict vs. mortality
- Agency removal due to livestock down and defense of life conflicts (recreationists & hunters)
- Recommendations:
  - Make sure representation from pertinent agencies consider representatives from other industries (where appropriate).
  - Coordinate strategies amongst agencies.
- Shooting related mortalities: Mistaken identity and defense of life.
  - Target information and education programs to bird hunters and rifle hunters
  - Videos-play bear safety segments at regional offices
  - Hunter's Ed-expand on bear spray education and initiate campaign hunters carrying spray
- Auto related mortalities: general increasing trend.
  - Increase subcommittee engagement and support with MDT projects.
  - Support NGO coalition to advocate effective wildlife connectivity measures (e.g., I-90 bridge coalition)
  - Increase connectivity with MDT and other research mitigation measures
  - Develop highway signs to increase driver awareness of grizzly bear crossing areas
  - Continue roadkill pickup sites
- Railroad related mortalities: 2019 particularly high grizzly bear mortality year.
  - Conduct reviews of early warning systems
  - Develop system of livestock fencing
  - Notify railroad that we have a working group
- Site related conflicts: Attractants
  - Waste management:
    - Provide bear proof containers to all residents in grizzly bear habitat
    - Explore funding for preventive measures, maintenance and replacement needs
    - Explore regulations and enforcement
  - Chickens:
    - Utilize signage and billboards to increase awareness.
    - Investigate working with stores to educate public on the tools that are available.
    - Explore regulations and enforcement.
- We need to improve the importance of reporting conflicts. Some people don't want to report due to the misunderstanding that the outcome will be bad for the bear. We need to educate that non-reporting could escalate the bad behavior in bears and lead to a worse situation for them.

## Conservation Strategy-Edits Summary-Dillon Tabish

- IGBC has been coordinating grizzly bear population recovery policy, planning, management and research for over thirty years.
- The IGBC website shows the addendum editorial changes document, subcommittees, meeting summaries and the Conservation Strategy document. We have built a flow chart regarding the changes.

## I & E Subcommittee Update-Dillon Tabish

- Reviewed grants for teacher outreach and bear rangers
- Received over 30 grant requests to share \$160,000
- Ksanka District (Eureka area) NCDE/CYE was able to secure a grant to hire a seasonal ranger.
- General public doesn't know we need funding so need to find a way to get that message out to them.
- On December 14<sup>th</sup>, the Swan Valley Connections group is holding a fundraiser to try to hire a grizzly bear ranger.
- Website: We request that anyone on the committee who has reports or ideas to add to the website, please let me know. It would be very valuable to share with the public and other agencies.

## NCDE Habitat Monitoring -Kathy Ake

- Explained the differences in AUM (Animal Unit Months) versus Head Months. A decision needs to be made on which measurement needs to be utilized to monitor items for this report.
  - Animal Unit Months-Forage required for one mature cow
  - Head Months-One month use and occupancy of the range of one animal
- Monitoring items to be reported:
  - Allotments are either open or closed
  - Active allotment will be active, inactive or vacant depending on the permittee (USFS)
- Proposed Monitoring items:
  - Number of active allotments regardless of permittee
  - Type of allotments-Cattle, horses or sheep status
  - Acres of allotments
  - Number of head months current active permits
- 2017 Motorized Access Monitoring:
  - OMRD-open roads, route density
  - TMRD-total motorized route density
  - CORE-security core
  - Percentage of subunit open to motorized traffic
  - 56,000 acres
  - 1% increase
- 2018 Developed Recreation Monitoring:
  - 23 BMU met conservation strategy rules
  - 16 BMW had updates or corrections

## Science Team Update/Mortality Monitoring- Cecily Costello

- Summary of 12/02/2019 Science meeting:
  - Habitat use study-use GPS data relating to forest management, fires and roads
  - GPS Data-Where they are crossing (putting into a report)
  - Wesley study on guard dogs on agricultural fields
  - Human attitude survey is under way and has been sent out. Hopefully, responses will be back by January/February 2020
  - Denning chronology and parturition report soon

- Known and probable mortalities (2019)-preliminary data
  - Inside DMA-45
  - Outside DMA-3
  - Canada-2
- Causes of death-Mistaken identity, natural, train (*higher this year*), undetermined, automobile, illegal, agency removal (*higher this year*)
- High mortality year: Management removals
  - Major causes: 9 related to anthropogenic sites, 12 related to livestock issues 1 humane removal and 2 augmentation bears moved to the Cabinet-Yaak (but counted as mortalities)
  - Under sustainable limits
  - Bears increase in numbers and distribution
  - Human presence in the NCDE has been increasing
- Population is increasing over time thus higher mortality rates.
- The loss of open space will result in more conflicts over time.

#### Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council- Heather Stokes

- GBAC was developed in August 2018 by Gov. Steve Bullock to promote inclusivity and transparency.
- It is comprised of 18 appointed members representing diverse industries and areas from around the state. (e.g., livestock, recreation, NGO's, agriculture, education).
- The purpose of the council is to make recommendations on the five strategic objectives (inclusive of public input and comment):
  - Maintaining and enhancing human safety
  - Ensuring a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population
  - Improving timely and effective response to conflicts involving grizzly bears
  - Engaging all partners in grizzly-related outreach and conflict prevention
  - Improving intergovernmental, interagency, and tribal coordination
- Future meetings: (All events open to the public)
  - December 4-5, 2019: Missoula
  - January 14-15, 2020: Polson
  - February 26-27, 2020: Libby
- Meeting summaries will be posted on the website.

#### NCDE Work Plan (Coordinate with SCY)- Randy Arnold and Dillon Tabish

We have immediate deadline for work plan for 2018-2022 IGBC 5 Year plan. We need to use this time to brain-storm on ideas.

- Goal #1- Complete the delisting process and transition to management of a delisted population.
  - Objective: Finalize the Conservation Strategy by 4/30/2018.
- Goal #2- Reduce human-bear conflicts and public safety concerns in areas newly occupied by bears.
  - Objective: Increase human-bear safety outreach annually in areas newly occupied by grizzly bears.



- Goal #3 - Improve conditions that allow interchange and dispersal between NCDE and Bitterroot, Cabinet-Yaak, and Yellowstone Ecosystems and Canada.
  - Objective: Protect and improve habitat security in Salish and Nine-mile connectivity areas.

Some accomplishment examples:

Jim Williams- MT FWP(R1) Regional Supervisor

- Habitat acquisitions
- Conservation easements efforts-60,000 acres (more being discussed)
- Food storage
- Consistency (on IGBC website)
- Wildlife Management Areas

\*\* Send other additions specific to these objective action plan ideas or accomplishments to Dillon Tabish by end of next week.

There was interest in coordinating a joint meeting in the spring with the Selkirk Cabinet-Yaak and NCDE ecosystem subcommittees. We will try to plan a day-long meeting agenda to collaborate resources and discuss common interests/overlapping objectives.

(e.g.: Wayne Kassworm\_ How management would occur in the intervening area between the Cabinet-Yaak and NCDE ecosystems).

Agency/Tribal General Updates-

- USFWS-Hilary Cooley
  - Doing a 5-year review on grizzly bears in the lower 48 states. We need to put a notice out in the Federal Register for publication.
  - Last week we had an agency meeting with Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, USFWS, CSKT and Blackfeet discussing conflict response.
  - In October, U.S. Secretary David Bernhardt came to Choteau, MT to meet with a group of producers on the Eastern Front for discussion concerns with grizzly bears.
- USFWS-Jodi Bush
  - USFWS has been working with BNSF for several years to develop the HCP (Habitat Conservation Plan) to minimize impact with grizzly bears.
  - We are compiling a draft then it will be out for public comment in early 2020. We hope to finalize the Biology Opinion then issue permit to BNSF (Olney to Cut Bank stretch).
- FWP-Ken McDonald
  - Grizzly bear management need broader approach.
  - We hired Rich Harris to spearhead staff support for advisory committee to craft statewide management plan over the next 2-3 years.
  - Proposal to legislature for funding for bear specialists-granted 4.3 FTE to permanent staff
- USGS-Claudia Regan
  - Our role is to do research and provide scientific information.
  - Mark recently represented USFWS and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team in several presentations to the November 2019 GBAC meeting in Bozeman. Topics included: how grizzly bear occupied ranges are estimated, updates on range expansion, connectivity and distribution of verified grizzly bear other vations between the GYE and the NCDE. Videos of the presentations are online.

- Tabatha is continuing research on huckleberry patterns and factors influencing productivity. Multiple years of data collection have been already completed in the Swan Valley, Glacier National Park and the Flathead Reservation. Currently working on analyzing the data.
- John: Connectivity work continues across Highway 2. We have gathered quite a bit of additional information and local knowledge documenting about 350 wildlife crossings. We have a graduate student working this year and next, studying grizzly bear mothing behavior in high elevation mothing sites.
- Tabatha and John: Mapathon on connectivity with Glacier National Park. We gathered information on multiple species and park- based assessment over time, habitat use and connectivity.
- We need to be proactive on conflicts.
  
- Blackfeet-Gerald Cobell/Cassie Powell
  - Glenn Hall (former tribal Wildlife tech, now with Wildlife Services) is helping with depredation investigations.
  - Blackfeet Nation Animal-Vehicle Collision Reduction Master Plan has been completed.
  - There have been more human/bear conflicts on the Reservation over time. The development on the west side of the Reservation is occurring at an alarming rate with more summer residents, the grizzly bear population is growing and visitation in Glacier National Park has doubled.
  - Blackfeet people are very tolerable of bears, but it is starting to be more of a problem. Children cannot be outside as in the past due to more bear activity.
  - We need to be more proactive on communicating with the public on the importance of reporting bear sightings in order to help reduce human conflict.
  
- MDT-Joe Weigand
  - MDT and MT FWP have continued moving forward since the Wildlife and Transportation Summit that was held last December. We put together a steering committee to come up with a strategy on how we'll work together on prioritizing habitat connectivity.
  - We recently completed a wildlife mitigation project (at the southern end of the Cabinet-Yaak system) near Thompson Falls. It consists of a 2.3 mile stretch from the Thompson River bridge going eastward. The project plan includes an 8-foot wildlife fence, underpass, escape jump-outs and experimental electrified asphalt mats (9,000 volts) on each end to halt animals getting within the right of way.
  - This project's primary purpose is to reduce big horn sheep collisions, but it will hopefully benefit grizzly bears who expand their range.
  
- CSKT-Stacey Courville
  - We have a graduate student doing research on small livestock and grizzly bears. She is working on resource selections, functions and is currently analyzing her data.
  - 7 female bears were collared last year. Only 2 left "on-air" this year.
    - 1 was maliciously poached (left the 2 problem orphan cubs)
    - 2 shed their collars in the den
    - 1 disappeared completely off the air

- Mapping known locations of collared bears for crossings on Highway 93 (primarily at night). The cause of the crossings is not known. Possible reasons could be a function of habitat or simply females with cubs trying to stay away from males. We will collar more bears next year.
  - Seven female bears=128 documented crossings.
  - One female- crossed 39 times (near crossing structures).
  - One female- crossed 31 times, was killed by a car.
  - One female w/3 yearlings-crossed 25 times.
- Still trying to get improvements to the sections of highway where we already have crossing structures. We are monitoring 13 structures with trail cameras. There is no evidence of any grizzly bears utilizing any crossing structures this year.
- BLM-Katie Stevens
  - We are waiting on publication of our resource management plan. In this plan we made commitments to the conservation strategy actions, as well as the open road densities from 2011. We will also have implementation of a food storage order under all those alternatives.
- Livestock Loss Board-George Edwards
  - At this time, we've already paid for the same number of animals as we did in all of 2018. We still have 2 months of grizzly bear claims to process yet for 2019. The number of claims has been increasing every year.
  - We received additional funding this year. Rep Ray Shaw (Alder, MT) was able to up our appropriation from \$200,000/yr. to \$300,000/yr. to pay claims.
  - Glacier County was one of the hardest hit counties. We had issues with 4H pigs. The board decided we would have a set price for pigs (whether 4H or not).
  - We are operating a trailer and supplies along with Wildlife Services to provide prevention tools for ranchers to utilize.
  - By Montana state law, the USDA Wildlife Services has the final say on investigation outcomes and verifications regarding livestock losses.
  - There is \$300,000 appropriated for verified death loss only claims due to wolves, grizzly bears or mountain lions. If there is any leftover funding, it will go to grizzly bear loss prevention projects. Nothing left over this year. We should have some excess next fall for loss prevention grants.
  - Claims will be covered unless the rancher hasn't paid their per capita fee.
- Wildlife Services-Kraig Glazier
  - There were 157 grizzly bear investigations this year. This is an increase from previous years.
  - 60% confirmed investigations of grizzly bear incidents
  - Captured 16 grizzly bears out of 80 incidences. It is very difficult to capture the individual bear responsible for the incident.
  - New wildlife technician hire: Glenn Hall for Glacier County, based in Browning, MT. Thanks to the Blackfoot Tribe and the Blackfoot Nation Stock Growers Association who petitioned the USDA to fund this position.
  - Stuart Breck is with our National Wildlife Research Center. He helps collaborate with researching guard dog usage in corn fields.

- USFS Updates-
  - Flathead National Forest - Chip Weber
    - We have started issuing decisions on regulatory mechanisms we put in place around the conservation strategies and they are now being implemented.
    - This is the last NCDE meeting for me and thanks to everyone!
  - Lolo National Forest – Greg Gustina
    - Completed the first phase on “Placid Gold” (Placid Lake and Gold Creek) acquisitions in bear areas.
    - Completed a couple acquisitions on the peripheries that will help in getting bears across to the Bitterroot or the Cabinet-Yaak.
    - Thanks to Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Trust Republic Land and The Nature Conservancy for making this happen.
  - Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest - Bill Avery
    - We have implemented food storage orders across the entire forest because of our connectivity between both the GYA and NCDE, consistent with our land masses.
    - Thanks to MT FWP and our NGO partnership for our information and education efforts. These included Bear Aware programs in Central Montana.
    - Special thanks to the FWP-Region 4 for their outstanding response to a situation between several camps and a habituated bear.

### Public Comment

- Senator Bruce Gillespie (Montana Senate District 9)
  - Bears come with a high price tag and agriculture is negatively impacted.
  - Grizzly bears were put on the endangered species list in 1975.
  - In 2020, we need to get them delisted and onto a management program. By 2021, the economic budget needs to focus on healthcare, education, incarceration and infrastructure.
- Joshua Osher (Montana Coordinator for the Western Watersheds Project)
  - We are here because we care about bears and want to reduce conflicts/mortalities.
  - In response to the time that grizzlies have been “listed”, forty-four years is not that long in the big picture to recover a species.
  - We need positive focus instead of only concentrating on the negative. The public needs to hear more stories of the positive impacts of the grizzly bear expansion and recovery.
  - Encourage your information and education staff to share positive stories of the benefits of bears and their recovery in the Northern Rocky Mountain ecosystem.

- Claudia Narcisco (Interested public citizen, FLB Citizen Task Force)
  - In 1975 (when listed), there were 700 grizzly bears. In 2019, there are now 1750 grizzly bears.
  - We shouldn't be in a rush to delist when we already have so much invested.
  - Many projects are developing everywhere before public even gets to comment. These projects are directly affecting grizzly bear habitat. The loss of open spaces causes conflicts.
  - The tribes are proposing bringing in more bison onto the reservations. When one looks at an ecosystem, bison as a food source (rather than livestock) for the grizzly might be more socially acceptable.
  
- Trina Bradley (Grizzly Bear Council-GBAC)
  - Owns a ranch in the heart of grizzly bear country near Dupuyer, MT.
  - Recovering the grizzly bear is cool, but we must emphasize the safety of people. She wants people who live in non-bear habitat to realize that it isn't safe for children to go outside alone due to the bears.
  
- Patty Ames (President-Flathead Lolo Bitterroot Citizen Task Force)
  - Planned or proposed mega-projects in the national forests:
    - Swan Project (Flathead National Forest):
      - 60 miles of new permanent roads and millions of board feet of logging.
    - Gold Butterfly Project (Bitterroot National Forest):
      - 20 miles of new roads and 10,000 truckloads of logs from old growth forests and lynx/bull trout/grizzly bear habitat
    - Soldier-Butler Project (Lolo National Forest):
      - 9 miles of new roads and 3,000 truckloads of commercial logs. This project would cancel a previous commitment to decommission 37 miles of roads within the Nine Mile demographic connectivity area designated by the USFWS for grizzly bears.
    - Black Ram Project (Kootenai National Forest):
      - Would log 60 million board feet, including the 1,000-year-old rain forest and some of the last remaining secure habitat for endangered Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear populations.
    - "End of the World": (Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest):
      - 250 million board feet of commercial logging
  - Forest Service promoting running events and mountain biking in prime grizzly bear habitat, against the advice of experts.
  
- Chuck Bartlebaugh (Be Bear Aware)
  - 2% atomized capsaicin
  - Products are being sold at a lesser strength and being perceived as bear spray.

Adjourned at 5:00pm

Attending Subcommittee members:

Chair, Randy Arnold, MT FWP (R2)

Vice Chair, Bill Avey, Helena/Lewis and Clark Forest

Chair Assistant: Lori Brooks, FWP (R2)

Committee Advisors:

- Cecily Costello-FWP Grizzly Bear Monitoring and Science
- Hilary Cooley-USFWS Recovery Coordinator

Blackfeet Nation Fish and Wildlife- Gerald "Buzz" Cobell, Cassie Powell

BLM- Katie Stevens

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes- Stacy Courville

DNRC-Dan Rogers

Flathead National Forest-Chip Weber

Glacier National Park-Jeff Mow

Kootenai National Forest-Bryan Donner

Lolo National Forest-Greg Gustina

MDT- Joe Weigand

MT Livestock Loss Board- George Edwards

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (R1)- Jim Williams

MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks (R4)- Gary Bertellotti

MT FWP Information & Education (R1)- Dillon Tabish

USDA-APHIS-Wildlife Services- Kraig Glazier

USGS-Northern Rocky Mtn Science Center- Claudia Regan

\*\*An estimated 60 guests attended this meeting.