

## BOARD OF REVIEW REPORT

# Fatality of Mr. Adam Thomas Stewart from a bear attack in Cub Creek on the Bridger-Teton National Forest on September 4, 2014

November 20, 2014

### Board of Review members<sup>1</sup>:

Steve Cain, Grand Teton National Park, Senior Wildlife Biologist, Moose, WY  
Kate Wilmot, Grand Teton National Park, Bear Management Specialist, Moose, WY

Kevin Frey, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department, Bear Management, Bozeman, MT

Dan Tyers, USFS, Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Management Coordinator, Bozeman, MT

Mark Haroldson, USGS, Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, Bozeman, MT

Frank van Manen, USGS, Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, Bozeman, MT

Chris Servheen, USFWS, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, Missoula, MT<sup>2</sup>

Brian DeBolt, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Bear Management, Lander, WY

Dan Thompson, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Large Carnivore Section Supervisor, Lander, WY

Dan Bjornlie, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Large Carnivore Section, Lander, WY

Kerry Gunther, Yellowstone National Park, Bear Management Supervisor, Yellowstone National Park, WY

### Summary:

Mr. Adam Thomas Stewart, a 31-year-old man working for a contractor doing vegetation plots, was killed by a bear in Cub Creek on the Bridger Teton National Forest on September 4, 2014. The remains of Mr. Stewart were found by searchers on September 12, 2014. Mr. Stewart was employed by a company that conducts vegetation surveys on contract for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). He had left the Brooks Lake trailhead on September 4, 2014 on his way to complete a vegetation plot for his employer. He was alone and was apparently planning on spending at least 1 night in the area. His camp was found approximately 5 miles from the trailhead along Cub Creek. It did not appear that he spent any nights in the camp nor was it apparent that he cooked any food there. His employer said he was due out the next day on September 5, 2014. His employer reported him missing to the Fremont County Sheriff's Office in Dubois, WY on September 7, 2014. A formal search began on September 8, and his remains were found on September 12, eight days after he had entered the area and 8 days after he encountered the bear(s) that caused his death.

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<sup>1</sup> Arranged in alphabetical order by agency affiliation.

<sup>2</sup> Chair of the Board of Review.

Mr. Stewart's remains were almost totally consumed and scattered in a food cache typical of a bear. Such food caches are composed of a pile of dirt and vegetation that covers the food remains. The remains of two adult mule deer completely consumed by a bear(s) were found in association with Mr. Stewart's remains, one of which was mixed with his remains and the other was in another cache close by. No bears were seen at the fatality site but it was evident that both grizzly (*Ursus arctos*) and black bears (*Ursus americanus*) had been in the area because of the caching of the remains, several evident bear beds, bear hair, bear tracks, and multiple bear scats.

### **Format of this report:**

An interagency Board of Review composed of state and federal personnel prepared this report. A Board of Review is required after any human fatality caused by a grizzly bear as per the Interagency Grizzly Bear Guidelines (p. 59). This report is based on the efforts and investigation reports by Wyoming's Fremont County Sheriff's Department, Fremont County Coroner's Office, and personnel of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) (Appendix A). This report summarizes the incident, the response to the incident, the investigation of the incident, resolution or response to the incident, and presents appropriate recommendations to minimize the possibility of future incidents. After examining the detailed investigation materials, the Board of Review members discussed the incident and followed up on some details to clarify particular issues. Informational materials that were used to develop the finding of the Board of Review are appended to this report. The Board of Review attempted to reconstruct the incident as much as possible given the information available while avoiding speculation about details not supported by the evidence. All times in this report are Mountain Daylight Time.

### **Situation:**

The Cub Creek trail goes through timber and eventually enters high elevation grizzly bear habitat (Figures 1 and 2). The route that Mr. Stewart apparently chose to travel to



Figure 1. Aerial view of upper Cub Creek, the location of the fatality site, and the general location of the vegetation plot that was Mr. Stewart's objective.



Figure 2. Overview map of Cub Creek, the camp and fatality sites, and the location of the vegetation plot Mr. Stewart was to visit. Red arrows note assumed direction of travel from the camp to the fatality site. See Figure 6 for an aerial view of this area.



Figure 3. Cache in the foreground where Mr. Stewart's remains were found mixed in with the remains of a mule deer. Flags indicate remains. The assumed direction of travel into the site by Mr. Stewart is noted by the red arrow. Red arrow stops at the apparent site of the attack as noted by the presence of Mr. Stewart's hat and sunglasses and noted by red flags at that location.





Figure 4. The view along the game trail in the assumed direction of travel by Mr. Stewart. The presumed attack site is in the foreground as noted by the flag where Mr. Stewart's hat and sunglasses were found. Red arrow points to human blood on a log. It is believed Mr. Stewart's body was dragged over this log toward the cache site. Cache site shown in Figure 3 is immediately behind trees on the left. Note limited sight distance in this area.

the vegetation plot he was assigned to survey took him through timbered habitat on a game trail and it was along this trail that Mr. Stewart's remains were found (Figures 3 and 4). The fatality site where Mr. Stewart's remains were found had limited visual sight distance because of relatively thick vegetation and undulating topography. From the direction we assume Mr. Stewart was travelling, the trail approaches the fatality site over a slight rise so that a person approaching the site could not see ahead until they came over this rise.

When Mr. Stewart's remains were found, they were scattered in a cache and mixed in with the remains of one of the mule deer carcasses at the site (Figure 3). The other mule deer carcass was approximately 10 yards away (Figure 5). There was no available evidence as to why the remains of 2 mule deer were present at the fatality site. Based on the condition of the mule deer carcasses, we assumed that the remains of both deer were present before Mr. Stewart entered the site. There was extensive evidence of bear presence in the area. From the condition of Mr. Stewart's remains, he had been deceased for some time. His backpack was found at the fatality site as were the marker flags that he would have used at the vegetation plot, indicating he was on his way to the vegetation plot when he was killed.

## Detailed Information:

### Actions of Mr. Stewart:

Mr. Stewart had been doing similar vegetation plots all summer and these involved extensive hiking in backcountry areas. On at least one previous occasion, he completed his assignments several days early. When his remains were found, Mr. Stewart was wearing light-weight trail shoes, which might be described as trail running shoes. When he left the trailhead at approximately 10:00 AM on September 4, 2014, he apparently hiked into Cub Creek 5 miles, set up his camp, and then left for the plot site sometime in mid to late-afternoon. The plot location was approximately 3 miles from his camp. It appeared that he was on his way to the plot location when he encountered a

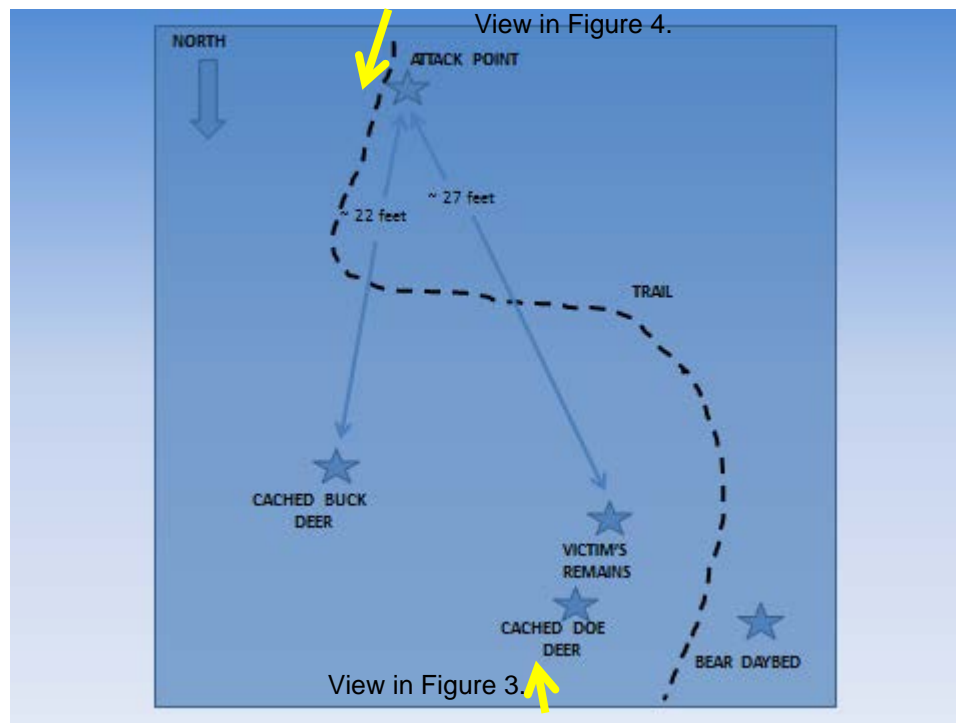


Figure 5. General map of the fatality site. Arrows indicate photo direction for Figures 3 and 4.

bear (or bears) on the game trail. One photo of the landscape was recovered from his camera from the Cub Creek area. The photo shows the cliff faces of the Continental Divide on the south side of Cub Creek. The time stamp on the photo was September 4 at 2:33 PM. The photo was probably taken looking south from the north side of the Cub Creek drainage prior to Mr. Stewart's crossing into the unnamed tributary to Cub Creek where his remains were found (Figure 6). This area is between his camp site and the fatality site, which indicates the photo likely was taken after Mr. Stewart set up camp and before he was attacked at the fatality site.

The weather on September 4 was sunny and cool with light winds and no precipitation. When Mr. Stewart's remains were found more than a week later, they were covered with 1-2 inches of snow. Between September 4 when he set up his camp and September 12 when his remains were found, a storm went through the area and wind



blew over his tent. Nothing at his campsite was disturbed by bears. He had stored his food properly by hanging it at his camp and it was undisturbed.

After the discovery of Mr. Stewart's remains on September 12, Fremont County Sherriff Officers and Wyoming Game and Fish Department officers flew into the site by helicopter arriving at 5:32 PM. There were two bear day beds at the fatality site. Mr. Stewart's blue backpack was evident on the surface of the cache but most of the remains were covered with vegetation and dirt (Figure 3). The crew flagged the scene and took photographs, but because it was late in the day, they flew out in the helicopter

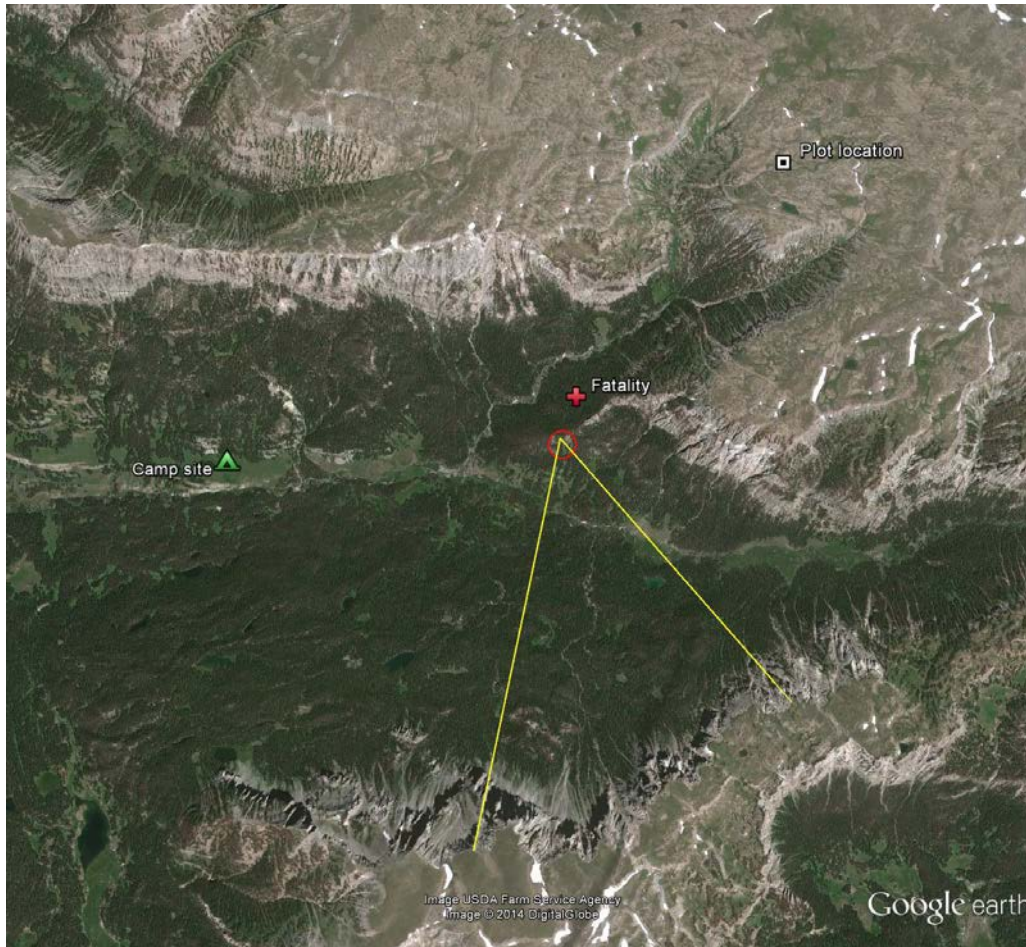


Figure 6. Presumed location of where the last photo was taken by Mr. Stewart at 2:33 PM - from inside red circle. Yellow lines bound the edges of the photo. Location where the photo was taken is approximately 0.3 mile from the fatality site.

at approximately 7:26 PM. The next morning, on September 13, ten people were flown into the fatality site, including personnel from the Fremont County Sherriff's Department, WGFD, Fremont County Coroner's Office, and Fremont County Search and Rescue. They conducted a grid search of the area starting at the immediate scene and worked out from there.

### The Fatality Site:

The fatality site was along a game trail between Mr. Stewart's camp and the location of the vegetation plot he was to survey. The distance from the fatality site to his camp was approximately 1.8 miles. The fatality site is in relatively thick timber with limited visual sight distance. As previously stated, there was a rise in the trail so that someone approaching the fatality site would not be visible from the location of the mule deer carcasses until less than 15-20 feet away.

The fact that there were two mule deer carcasses at the fatality site seems unusual. Whether these mule deer were killed by a bear (or bears) or other animals, such as a mountain lion, are unknown. Both mule deer carcasses were thoroughly consumed, apparently by bears because they were cached. The consumption of the carcasses precluded determination of the cause of death of the mule deer. The male mule deer remains were more recent than the female mule deer remains. Mr. Stewart's remains were cached by a bear with the remains of the female deer. The bones were intermingled so that when the victim's remains were transported from the scene, some mule deer bones were inadvertently included. There was no evidence of any other large carnivores at the fatality site like wolves or mountain lions. Black and grizzly bears were the only large carnivores identified at the fatality site.

### Hair Collection:

Hairs were collected at the fatality site from trees and branches, the cache materials, and from Mr. Stewart's remains (Appendix B). In addition samples were obtained approximately 0.5 mile below the site of the fatality where WGFD personnel conducted additional monitoring efforts. Sixteen extracted DNA samples were sent by WGFD on September 19 to Wildlife Genetics International (WGI) for DNA analysis. In addition, five hair or blood samples from additional monitoring efforts were sent to WGI on September 26, 2014. The results produced by WGI identified 3 grizzly bears, one female and two males, and one male black bear from all samples collected in the area. One male grizzly bear and one male black bear were identified at the fatality site. One male grizzly bear (captured) and one female grizzly bear (hair sample) were identified at a trap site location approximately 0.5 mile below the site of the fatality. None of these bears were known bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem, indicating that none of the bears identified genetically had previously been captured. The long time period between the apparent death of Mr. Stewart on September 4 and the collection of the samples on September 13, made it impossible to determine which, if any, of the bears documented at the site were directly responsible for Mr. Stewart's death.

### Cause of Death of Mr. Stewart:

The Fremont County Coroner's Office conducted an autopsy on September 14, 2014. Forensic pathologist James Wilkerson stated, in his opinion, Adam Stewart "died of blunt force injuries consistent with a bear bite." The pathologist determined that there were canine punctures in Mr. Stewart's skull that occurred while he was still alive, as indicated by subdural hemorrhaging, and these contributed to the cause of death. Precise information about the cause of death is complicated by the fact there were 8

days between the time of death and when remains were recovered.

### Results of the Investigation:

Mr. Adam Stewart hiked alone into Cub Creek on the Bridger-Teton National Forest on September 4, 2014. He was employed by Nature's Capital, Inc. to complete vegetation plots as part of a contract with the USFS. Mr. Stewart set up his camp approximately 5 miles from the trailhead.

### Timeline:

<b>Table 1. Time line of what we know about Mr. Stewart between 9/4/2014 to 9/13/2014. All times are Mountain Daylight Time.</b>	
<b>9/4 Time</b>	<b>Description of event</b>
9:51 AM	Mr. Stewart is at the Brooks Lake trailhead where his vehicle was left. Time is from a single GPS coordinate on Mr. Stewart's Garmin GPS device.
1:21 PM	Mr. Stewart's employer (Mr. Stephen Rust) "pings" Mr. Stewart's Delorme InReach Explorer GPS device and receives a location between the Brooks lake parking area and Mr. Stewart's camp in Cub Creek. This location is sent presumably while Mr. Stewart was hiking in to his campsite.
Early afternoon	Mr. Stewart sets up his camp approximately 5 miles from the trailhead. He leaves his camp with a day pack in the afternoon on his way to the plot site.
2:33 PM	Mr. Stewart takes a photo that shows cliff faces on the south side of Cub Creek. Location of the photo is shown in Figure 6. This is assumed to have been taken along the route between his camp and the fatality site. The time was recorded on the photo.
Mid- to late afternoon	Mr. Stewart encounters a bear(s) along a game trail as he proceeded toward the plot site. He is killed at the encounter site.
<b>9/5</b>	Mr. Stewart is due out of Cub Creek.
<b>9/7 12:56 PM</b>	Mr. Stephen Rust, Mr. Stewart's supervisor calls the Fremont County Sheriff's Department and reports that Mr. Stewart is overdue from a trip into an area above Brooks Lake.
3:48 PM	The Fremont County Sheriff's office finds Mr. Stewart's vehicle at the Brooks Lake parking area and leaves 2 notes on the vehicle asking that he report to the Sheriff's office.
<b>9/8</b>	No report from Mr. Stewart and his vehicle is still at the trailhead. A search and rescue operation is initiated.
<b>9/12 afternoon</b>	Mr. Stewart's remains were located along a game trail approximately 1.8 miles from his campsite in Cub Creek.
<b>9/13</b>	Mr. Stewart's remains are flown out of the area via helicopter.

Because his vegetation sampling materials were intact and there were no data recorded for the plot in the materials found in his daypack at the time of his death, the evidence indicates that Mr. Stewart had not visited the plot site and was on his way to the plot site when he was killed. Mr. Stewart was due out of this area on September 5, according to



his Supervisor, Stephen Rust of Nature's Capital. On September 7, Mr. Rust notified Fremont County Sherriff's Office that Mr. Stewart was overdue. Mr. Stewart's vehicle was located at the Brooks Lake parking area on the afternoon of September 7, 2014. A note was left for Mr. Stewart on the vehicle asking him to report to the Sherriff's Office. On September 8, the vehicle was checked and there was no sign of Mr. Stewart. At that time, a search was initiated by the Fremont County Sherriff's Office and Fremont County Search and Rescue. Mr. Stewart's remains were found on September 12, 2014. His body had been almost completely consumed by a bear (or bears) and possibly other scavenging animals. The coroner determined he had died from blunt force trauma received from a bite to the skull. Mr. Stewart's day pack and field supplies were located close to where his remains were found.

Mr. Stewart was alone and there was no evidence of bear spray or firearms at the fatality site or at Mr. Stewart's camp. He was wearing light-weight trail shoes and was known for rapid trail hiking in remote areas. The fatality site had poor visual sight distance and was unusual because there were two mule deer carcasses where Mr. Stewart's remains were found. This indicates a strong possibility that the fatal attack was the result of a combination of: 1) an encounter with a bear on a food source; and/or 2) a surprise encounter with a bear due to the poor visual sight distance. Given the evidence, it is likely that a combination of these factors was the cause of Mr. Stewart's encounter with a bear that resulted in his death.

DNA from hair samples collected at the fatality site and at the trap site 0.5 miles away documented 3 different grizzly bears (2 males and 1 female) and 1 male black bear that had been present at some time in the general vicinity of the attack. Of these 4 bears, 2 (1 male grizzly and 1 male black bear) were documented at the fatality site. None of these bears were in the Yellowstone ecosystem DNA database therefore none of them had ever been previously captured<sup>3</sup>. There were no radio-collared grizzly bears in the vicinity of the fatality area at any time during Mr. Stewart's disappearance and during the subsequent search and rescue operation. There is no definitive evidence to directly link any of the bears documented at the fatality site or surrounding area with Mr. Stewart's death.

A 5-day monitoring and trapping effort was initiated by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in the area of the fatality. The WGFD trap site was approximately 0.5 mile SW of the fatality site. One subadult male grizzly bear (#792) was captured on September 18 during this 5-day effort. Additional hair samples obtained at the trap site were attributed to a female grizzly bear. Neither bear #792 nor the female grizzly bear had been captured previously and neither bear was identified from hair obtained at the fatality site as determined by DNA analysis.

The conclusion of the Board of Review is that Mr. Stewart likely surprised a bear at close range that was at the site of two mule deer carcasses. There was limited visual sight distance at the fatality site. The evidence suggests the likely impetus for the attack by a bear was a combination of defense of a food source (the deer carcasses)

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<sup>3</sup> Every bear captured is sampled for DNA and these DNA records are maintained in a file of all known bears.

and a surprise encounter in an area of limited visual sight distance, and not predation. The majority of Mr. Stewart's body was consumed by (perhaps several) scavenging animals, sometime during the 8 days between his death and when his remains were recovered.

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A – Fremont County Sheriff's Department report

Appendix B – Wyoming Game and Fish Department laboratory examination report

Fremont County Sheriff's Department  
460 Railroad  
Lander, Wyoming 82520

307-332-5611  
307-856-7200

1-800-967-2302

Admin. 307-332-1025 (Fax)

Jail 307-332-1856 (Fax)

Sheriff  
Jack R. "Skip" Hornecker

Undersheriff Ryan D. Lee



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# FREMONT COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

## C14-06615



Fremont County Sheriff Department  
Details of Investigation

**Case Number: C14-06615**

**Date of Incident: 9-8-14**

**(PRELIMINARY INFORMATION)**

On Wednesday, September 10, 2014, I, Detective Jason Cox with the Fremont County Sheriff's Department became involved in the search for Adam Thomas Stewart (DOB/062983). The original report of Adam Stewart missing had been reported to the Fremont County Sheriff's Department on September 7, 2014. Stephen Rust who is Adam Stewart's supervisor advised Adam was employed with Natures Capital LLC and Stephen is his supervisor. Stephen advised Adam was overdue from a trip into an area above Brooks Lake and was supposed to have returned on September 5, 2014. Stephen advised he had last received a location from Adam on September 4, 2014 through a Delorme In-Reach GPS in which Adam had sent his location to Stephen. It was advised that Adam was enroute to a "Plot" near Cub Creek. The specific plot coordinates were later given to Search and Rescue personnel.

Deputy Jones with the Fremont County Sheriff's Department located Adam's vehicle at the Brooks Lake parking area. Deputy Jones left two (2) notes on the vehicle at this time to contact the Sheriff's Department if he returned.

A Search mission and plan was put into action on September 8, 2014.

**(INVESTIGATION)**

On Wednesday, September 10, 2014, I responded to the Dubois Airport where Incident Command had been set up. After meeting with Captain Lee with the Fremont County Sheriff's Department I made contact with Stephen Rust who was Adam Stewart's boss at Natures Scape. I contacted Stephen and spoke to him on the phone about Adam carrying a Delorme In-Reach GPS. Stephen advised me that he had been on the website designed for the Delorme. Stephen explained he was requesting a location from the device Adam was carrying which would in turn send him GPS coordinates if the GPS unit was on and responded accordingly. Steve told me he observed coordinates on the unit that he had given to IC earlier in the day. Steve explained that Adam could have entered the coordinates or the unit could have sent the coordinates because of the locate he requested from the unit. Steve gave me the log on information to access the website for the Delorme so I could get onto the website and better understand and look at the device Adam was carrying. Steve explained to me the last coordinates from the unit were above the last plot that Adam was supposed to do. Steve stated he was unsure why Adam

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would go to the area where the last coordinates were sent from the unit other than sightseeing.

I went to the Fremont County Sheriff's Department in Dubois and accessed the website. I also requested the Fremont County Dispatch center to attempt another ping on Adam's cell phone. I was notified they were unable to get a location from the phone as it was roaming internationally. I called the Delorme technical support and asked if there were any other options with the device that we were unaware of that could help locate Adam. I was advised unless the unit was on there was nothing else that could be done. I studied the Delorme website and the route that Adam was supposed to take to the plot he was going to.

On Thursday, September 11, 2014, contact was made with Verizon Wireless Emergency Department. I was attempting to gain access to the last calls logged or text messages and make sure that Adam had not contacted somebody and deviated from his original plan. I was advised because of the time lapse since Adam had went missing a Search Warrant or Subpoena needed to be obtained to gain the last calls logged or text messages. I attempted to contact Thomas Stewart to see if he had access to Adams phone records but didn't make contact. I completed a Search Warrant and Affidavit for the records to Adams phone that was signed by Judge Denhardt. I faxed a copy of the Search Warrant to Verizon's Emergency Department to the subject I had been in contact with. A short time later I spoke with Thomas Stewart on the phone and he advised me Adam was under his Verizon plan and he gave me the access to the Verizon.com to access the information I was looking for. Soon after I began accessing the records I was advised Adam's cell phone had been located in his car. Nothing of interest was located in the records at this time.

**(RECOVERY)**

On Friday, September 12, 2014, I was contacted by Undersheriff Lee and advised that Search and Rescue had located a body believed to be that of Adam Stewart. I responded to Incident Command and was briefed further on the situation when I arrived at approximately 1440 hours. I was then given the information that it appeared that Adam Stewart's body had been located by Search and Rescue crews. I was told that it was apparent that Adam's body had been eaten by what they presumed was a bear. I was informed there was a bear den located near the Adam's body, and there was a lot of bear scat in the area. I was also informed that there was a deer carcass right by Adam's body. I

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**Report of:** Jason COX  
Investigator

**Reviewed by:**

**Enclosure #:**

**Date:**

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was given GPS coordinates from Steve Waldrep with Search and Rescue who had called in the coordinates of N 43°49.316, W 109°57.846 and the elevation was approximately 9,600 feet where Adam's body was located. .

I was advised by Shane Fehring who was IC on this date of the Search that Seth Rohn, Terry Freese, Steve Waldrep, Don Paul, and Mike Moyer with Search and Rescue were on scene. Don Paul and Mike Moyer stayed at the location and the other members were flown back to Incident Command where they briefed us on the scene. I was advised Search and Rescue crews had placed orange flagging from the landing zone (LZ) for the helicopter up the trail and to the scene. I was advised that Game and Fish had been advised and Brian Debolt would be responding to the location as well as personnel from the Fremont County Coroner's Office.

I requested Darby Frank who was at Incident Command in charge of financing for the search to compile a list of searchers and take a photographs of their face and boot prints prior to them being released from Incident Command Staging Area. A copy of these photos will be attached to this case.

Fremont County Deputy Coroner Dan Nowland and Deputy Coroner Vernon Lajeunesse arrived at Incident Command. I spoke with the two and was advised Vernon was going to go in and with us for the investigation. After further discussion it was determined that we would wait for another Deputy Corner who was better suited for the hike and helicopter ride. Brian Debolt arrived at the location and was briefed on the findings and information that had been gathered at this point. Brian advised Mike Boyce another Bear Specialist with Game and Fish was enroute to the location to assist from Teton County. When Mike Boyce arrived he was briefed and a plan of action was determined.

**(SCENE OBSERVATION)**

Brian Debolt, Mike Boyce and I left Incident Command at 4:58 p.m., and were flown in to the designated LZ near the scene. We arrived at the LZ at approximately 5:32 p.m. I began to photograph the trail walking into the scene as we approached. We walked from the LZ toward the scene and arrived a bear den that had been described to us by search and rescue personnel at approximately 5:43 p.m. We continued to the scene by following the flagged path and arrived on scene at 5:48 p.m. We met with Don Hall and Mike Moyer who walked us to the areas of significance and briefed us on their rolls.

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Moyer described walking on a trail that almost runs North to South. Moyer stated when he arrived close to the scene he observed what he believed to be pine martin tracks on the trail. Moyer advised he began looking closer at the ground and the tracks and followed the tracks up with his eyes to the area where he observed the blue bag. After advising their involvement Don Hall and Mike Moyer were relieved from the scene and they went to the LZ where they were flown back to Incident Command staging area.

Upon arriving on the scene I observed there to be about an inch of snow on the ground where the body believed to be that of Adam Stewart's was located. The main scene where it appeared most of Adam's body was located was just east of the trail that ran through the area. Right on the trail, north of the scene Brian Debolt pointed out two (2) day beds which were presumed to have been made by a bear. It was apparent and appeared that a bear had been consuming the body of the presumed Adam Stewart as it had been dismembered. Looking at the main scene I observed a large blue back pack and could see the bottom of a shoe that was neon green west of the back pack. I could then see a skull and what appeared to be a pelvis and femur near the skull. I could see clothing next the back pack. In the main scene area I could see a deer hide near the pelvis and femur that was visible.

I began to further photograph the scene and Brian Debolt began to photo mark evidence as we observed it by walking along the trail. Mike Boyce kept a photo log of the scene. Approximately ten (10) yards east of the scene there was another deer carcass. The area where Adam Stewart's body was discovered was described to me to be a bear cache. The ground appeared to have been torn up to cover items the bear was scavenging on. Further up the trail metal stakes were located sticking out of another area that appeared to be a bear cache. Up the trail to the south there was a Cliff Bar right on the trail with, a plastic sack, sunglasses case, and a water bladder. Continuing up the trail to the south located west of the trail was the location of a baseball hat, sunglasses, and a portion of a shirt. This appeared to be the last item located in the area by the Search and Rescue crews.

After photographing the scene we then flagged the main scene with numbered flags and it was photographed. After flagging the scene we placed neon tape around the main scene. A time had been in place for us to meet at the LZ with the helicopter pilot. We left the scene at approximately 7:09 p.m. and arrived at the LZ at approximately 7:26 p.m. We were then flown to the Dubois Airport and arrived on the ground at Incident Command at approximately 7:40 p.m.

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At Incident Command a briefing was held. It was determined all parties would meet at 8:00 a.m. and process the scene in the morning. I was advised Amy Zeigler a Deputy Fremont County Coroner would be going in to help process the scene. We also determined that we would take a few Search and Rescue folks to help with the extraction as well as scene security folks.

On September 13, 2014 at approximately 8:00 a.m., we held a briefing at the Dubois Airport designated Incident Command. The following is a list of individuals who were on scene this day and helped process the scene and extraction of Adam Stewart:

Detective Jason Cox - Fremont County Sheriff's Department  
Sergeant Shane Brazil- Fremont County Sheriff's Department  
Deputy Nate Hindman - Fremont County Sheriff's Department  
Warden Brian Debolt - Wyoming Game and Fish  
Warden Mike Boyce - Wyoming Game and Fish  
Deputy Coroner Amy Zeigler - Fremont County Coroner's Office  
A.J. Albright - Search and Rescue  
Harold Albright - Search and Rescue  
Dustin Ralston - Search and Rescue  
Don Hall - Search and Rescue

At approximately 9:27 a.m., Amy Zeigler, Sgt. Brazil, Brian Debolt and I were dropped off at the LZ. We then hiked to the scene and arrived on scene at approximately 10:10 a.m. A scene log was kept for the incident and will be attached as **Enclosure #2**.

**(EVIDENCE COLLECTION)**

After arriving on scene it was Sgt. Brazil and Deputy Hindman were scene security. Search and Rescue personnel conducted a grid search of the immediate area for further evidence. The grid search started from the immediate scene area and was worked out from there. A.J. Albright and Don Hall were used to scribe and assist with the handling of evidence after it had been collected and bagged.

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A Base Line Point #1 was then determined and the GPS Coordinates were recorded as N 43°49.296', W 109°57.848'. We then began to collect and photograph evidence from this base point working north toward the scene.

Base Line Point #2 was at one hundred feet (100') from Base Line Point #1 and the GPS coordinates were N 43°49.311', W 109°57.848'.

The following Items were documented collected and photographed unless otherwise noted:

Item #:	Measurement At Base Line:	Item Description:	Measurement Off Base Line:	Time Collected:
Item 7	17'2"	Green Hat	20'10" W	10:47 a.m.
Item 6	19'3"	Sunglasses	17'6" W	10:49 a.m.
Item 5	22'2"	Piece of Shirt	14'1" W	10:50 a.m.
Item 4a	35'1"	Toothbrush	6'4" W	10:55 a.m.
4b	36'7"	Water Bladder	5'4"W	10:57 a.m.
4c	38'2"	Sunscreen	3'1"W	10:59 a.m.
4d	38'8"	Branch	On	11:09 a.m.
Item 2	42'7"	Bear Scat	On	Not Collected
Item 3a	44'	Cliff Bar	2'2"E	11:15 a.m.
3b	44'9"	Ziploc Bag	2'2"E	11:16 a.m.
3c	45'6"	Glasses Case	1'W	11:18 a.m.
Item 8a	78'6"	Metal Stakes	4'11"W	11:24 a.m.
8b	75'10"	Duct Tape	5'8"W	11:26 a.m.
8c	77'9"	Compass	2'6"W	11:28 a.m.
8d	78'9"	Survey Bag	3'5"W	11:33 a.m.
Item 9	85'3"	Deer Carcass	10'E	Not Collected
Item 11.10	4'9"	Right Arm	10'1"W	11:57 a.m.
11.6	5'4"	Back Pack	4'1"W	12:00 p.m.
11.7	4'7"	Lower Jaw	5'10"W	12:09 p.m.
11.8	5'1"	Femur/Tibia	6'8"W	12:12 p.m.
11.12	5'10"	Upper Jaw	2'3"w	12:09 p.m.

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Fremont County Sheriff Department  
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**Case Number: C14-06615**

**Date of Incident: 9-8-14**

Item #:	Measurement At Base Line:	Item Description:	Measurement Off Base Line:	Time Collected:
11.15	6'2"	Vertebrae	5'8"W	12:16 p.m.
11.14	6'6"	Shirts	5'9"W	12:16 p.m.
11.9	6'1"	Right Leg/ shoe/pants	10'3"W	12:20 p.m.
11.11	7'4"	Right Foot	9'11"W	12:22 p.m.
11.5	7'5"	Unknown Vertebrae	4'W	12:24 p.m.
11.13	8'2"	Left Arm and Hand	5'4"W	12:27 p.m.
11.4	8'3"	Skull	1'2"W	12:36 p.m.
11.3	9'9"	Unknown Pelvis	1'8"W	12:38 p.m.
11.2	8'8"	Deer Carcass	3'5"W	Not Collected
11.1	15'6"	Deer Pelvis	6'6"W	Not Collected

**(EVIDENCE EXTRACATION)**

After processing the scene and collecting all evidence that was found all items were sealed. At approximately 1:17 p.m., the evidence and body of Adam Stewart were packed out to the LZ by Amy Zeigler and Search and Rescue personnel. Adam Stewart's body and the evidence were flown out first by the helicopter with Amy Zeigler, Don Hall and Dustin Ralston. All other subjects who were involved with the incident on this day were flown out after this.

The Fremont County Coroner's Office maintained care and custody of all evidence collected at the Dubois Airport. Prior to my arrival back at the Dubois Airport the Fremont County Coroner's Office Departed the location with all evidence.

**(AUTOPSY)**

The Autopsy for Adam Stewart was scheduled for Sunday, September 14, 2014 at 1:00 p.m. in Loveland, Colorado at McKee Medical Center.

On Monday, September 15, 2014, I spoke with Fremont County Coroner Ed Mcauslin by phone. Ed advised the preliminary results of the Autopsy were indicating the

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cause of death was most likely blunt force trauma which resulted in a skull fracture. I was advised an Anthropology Examination was scheduled for Monday, September 15, 2014, in Laramie Wyoming.

**(EVIDENCE)**

On September 17, 2014, Undersheriff Lee contacted County Coroner Ed Mcauslin who advised he had turned over all items in his possession including a wrist band, watch, camera, disc with previous x-rays provided by the family, and the Garmin GPS. Undersheriff Lee responded to the Davis Funeral Home and spoke with Mr. Robert Davis concerning Stewart's backpack which he had in his possession. The pack had been dropped off with Stewart's remains the night prior by the Coroner. Undersheriff Lee took possession of said pack. **(Enclosure #3)**

I met with Undersheriff Lee, and Detective Granlund, on September 17, 2014 at approximately 9:15 a.m., at which time we went through the pack and photographed the contents. We did locate the Delorme In-Reach (Item #1AS) device, and another Garmin GPS (Item #2AS) which were seized at that time. The remainder of the contents consisted of a large measuring tape and personal items. These items were left in the pack as his personal belongings. **(Enclosure #4)**

The pack, wrist band, watch, DVD, and camera were then transported to the Davis Funeral Home and were turned over to Mr. Davis to be given to the family as personal effects.

Undersheriff Lee then spoke with Deputy Coroner Nowlin, who advised that Dede Hawk with the Wyoming Game and Fish had the remainder of the property at her laboratory in Laramie undergoing testing.

On September 25, 2014, I met with Chip Williams who works at the Fremont County Assessor's Office. Chip downloaded information for evidence item #2AS the Garmin GPS. Chip downloaded this information to a disc that will be attached to this case. While gathering information from Garmin device it was discovered that the last known location on the Garmin was very close to the location that Adam Stewart was found. These points were logged on September 4, 2014 at approximately 2:16 p.m.

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On September 26, 2014, I contacted Dede at the Game and Fish Forensic Laboratory in Laramie to make arraignments to retrieve the remainder of Adam Stewart's property on October 9, 2014.

**(INFORMATION)**

On October 7, 2014, I received the Autopsy results from the Fremont County Coroner's Office. **(Enclosure #5)** This report also included the Department of Anthropology's results as well. According to the documents of the Forensic Pathologist James Wilkerson the matter of death was classified as accident. In Dr. Wilkerson's opinion Adam Stewart died of blunt force injuries, and injuries consistent with a bear bite and subsequent extensive defleshing.

Rick Weathermon who is a Senior Research Scientist/Bioarchaeologist Curator, Human Remains Repository, completed a report. It was his opinion although no single trauma event was evident on the remains, the cumulative evidence strongly suggest that this is a case of large carnivore predation and subsequent consumption.

A scene diagram was created and will be attached to this case as **Enclosure #6**. Also a map image of the area where Adam Stewart was located and other significant points of interest are included on the map.

**(CASE STATUS)**

This case will be closed no further action taken at this time.

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## WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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Department 3312

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Laramie, WY 82071

Phone: (307) 766-6313

Fax (307) 766-5630

## LABORATORY EXAMINATION REPORT

LAB NO.

14-38-W-CAF

DATE:

October 6, 2014

**SUBMITTER:** Brian DeBolt**EXAMINERS:**

Kim Frazier

Tasha Bauman

**AGENCY:**

Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.

260 Buena Vista

Lander, WY 82520

**TECHNICAL REVIEW:**

Dee Dee Hawk

**CASE NO.:** N/A**PURPOSE:** Species identification of the  
submitted items.**EVIDENCE RECEIVED:**

Dee Dee Hawk, Laboratory Director, collected items #1-3 and 5-7 and received the remaining items on September 14, 2014 from Dan Newland, Fremont County Coroner's Office. Evidence received is listed in Table No. 1.

**EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED:**

Species identification was performed on items #3-7 and 23-31 using an amplified portion of the mitochondrial DNA cytochrome *b* gene and subsequent sequencing of the amplification. The sequences obtained were matched against sequences in the National Center for Biotechnology Information DNA database ([www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)). Tests for species and family level identification were performed using serological and enzymatic electrophoretic techniques on items #8 and 16. Hair identification of hairs from items #1 and 4 was performed using light microscopy.

**RESULTS:**

Results are listed in Table No. 1

**Table No. 1**  
**Items Submitted and Results**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Evidence Item #</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Species ID</b>
1	N/A	Hair from vertebral bodies- most likely deer	Deer
2	N/A	Victim's scalp hair for comparison	NT
3	N/A	Suspect bear hair from body	NR
4	N/A	Victim's clothing-(Suspect bear hair)	Most probably grizzly bear
5	N/A	Body Bag (Suspect bear hair)	NR
6	N/A	Back pack (Suspect bear hair)	NR
7	N/A	Suspect bear hair-crime scene	NR
8	N/A	Branch w/ blood-crime scene- 9-13 @1109	Human
9	4-A	Tooth brush- crime scene- 9-13@1055	No sample
10	8-B	Tape-crime scene- 9-13 @ 1126	No sample
11	6	Green sunglasses- 9-13 @1049	No sample
12	5	Brown flannel shirt – crime scene 9-13 @1050	No sample
13	3-A	Cliff Bar - crime scene- 9-13 @1115	No sample
14	7	Green hat - crime scene- 9-13 @1047	No sample
15	3-C	Sunglass case - crime scene- 9-13 @1118	No sample
16	D	Branch w/blood - crime scene- 9-13 @1109	Human
17	4-B	Bladderbag - crime scene- 9-13 @1057	No sample
18	3-B	Ziplock bag – crime scene-9-13 @1116	No sample
19	8-D	Survey bag in cache – crime scene- 9-13@1133	No sample
20	8-A	Stakes in cache - crime scene- 9-13 @1124	No sample
21	8-C	Compass in cache – crime scene- 9-13 @1128	No sample
22	4C	Sunscreen – crime scene- 9-13 @1059	No sample
23	S1	Bear scat – crime scene	23-Scat-NR 23A-Tissue in scat-Human 23B-Bone in scat-Human
24	S2	Bear scat – on log south of victim 9-13-Crime scene	24-Scat-NR 24A-Tissue in scat-NR 24B-Bone in scat-NR 24C-Bone in scat-Beef 24D-Bone in scat-Beef 24E-Bone in scat-Beef 24F-NR

Table No. 1 (Continued)

Item No.	Evidence Item #	Description	Species ID
25	S3	Bear scat-crime scene – Above deer carcass 9-12 @ 1859	25 -Scat-Grizzly bear 25A-Tissue in scat-NR 25B-Bone in Scat- Deer (MD or WTD) 25C-Bone in scat-Deer(MD or WTD) 25D-Bone in scat-NR
26	H1	Possible bear hair- Den	NR
27	H2	Possible bear hair- Cub Creek	NR
28	H3	Possible bear hair on shirt	NR
29	H4	Possible bear hair on fallen log near cache w/ compass and bag	NR
30	H5	Possible bear hair on tree adjacent to victim site	NR
31	H6	Possible bear hair on tree near upper deer carcass	NR

NR- Non-reactive      NT- Not tested

#### CONCLUSIONS:

- 1) The sequences obtained for items #3-7, 23, 24, 24A, 24B, 24F, 25A, 25D and 26-31 were either non-reactive for PCR or no significant similarities were found when comparing to the national database. This is most probably due to sample degradation or small sample size.
- 2) Microscopy of hairs from item #4 indicated the hairs most probably originated from grizzly bear and hairs from item #1 most probably originated from white-tailed deer or mule deer.
- 3) Species identification of items #8 and 16 resulted in human.
- 4) The sequence of item #23A is 92% similar (max identity) to *Homo sapien* (human) sequence in the GenBank database over 434/474 base pairs indicating the sample originated from human.
- 5) The sequence of item #23B is 95% similar (max identity) to *Homo sapien* (human) sequence in the GenBank database over 365/383 base pairs indicating the sample originated from human.
- 6) The sequence of item #24C is 93% similar (max identity) to *Bos taurus* (beef) sequence in the GenBank database over 220/236 base pairs indicating the sample originated from cattle.
- 7) The sequence of item #24D is 98% similar (max identity) to *Bos taurus* (beef) sequence in the GenBank database over 365/374 base pairs indicating the sample originated from cattle.



- 8) The sequence of item #24E is 82% similar (max identity) to *Bos taurus* (beef) sequence in the GenBank database over 207/252 base pairs indicating the sample originated from cattle.
- 9) The sequence of item #25 is 85% similar (max identity) to *Ursus arctos* (grizzly bear) sequence in the GenBank database over 75/88 base pairs indicating the sample originated from grizzly bear.
- 10) The sequence of item #25B is 97% similar (max identity) to *Odocoileus heminus* (mule deer) sequence in the GenBank database over 404/416 base pairs indicating the sample originated from deer (either mule deer or white-tailed deer).
- 11) The sequence of item #25C is 99% similar (max identity) to an *Odocoileus heminus* (mule deer) sequence in the GenBank database over 368/372 base pairs indicating the sample originated from deer (either mule deer or white-tailed deer).

**DISPOSITION OF SAMPLES:**

Extracted DNA from items #3, 4-7, and 23-31 was sent to Wildlife Genetics International Inc. for comparison to their grizzly bear database. Their report will come directly from that laboratory.

Item #6 was returned to the Fremont County Coroner's Office and the remaining items were retained in the custody of the examiners.

**SEROLOGY AND DNA EXAMINER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Kim Frazier, M.S.  
Forensic Specialist

**HAIR, SEROLOGY AND DNA EXAMINER:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Tasha Bauman, M.S.  
Forensic Analyst

**TECHNICAL REVIEW:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Dee Dee Hawk, M.S.  
Laboratory Director

cc S. Kofron  
S. Edberg  
file