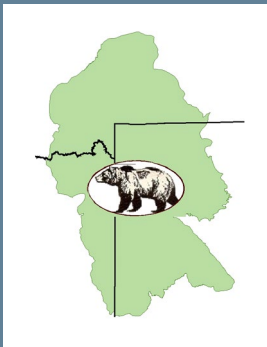


Proposed Habitat Standard Revisions for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear



UPDATE TO THE YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM SUBCOMMITTEE
NOVEMBER 9, 2021

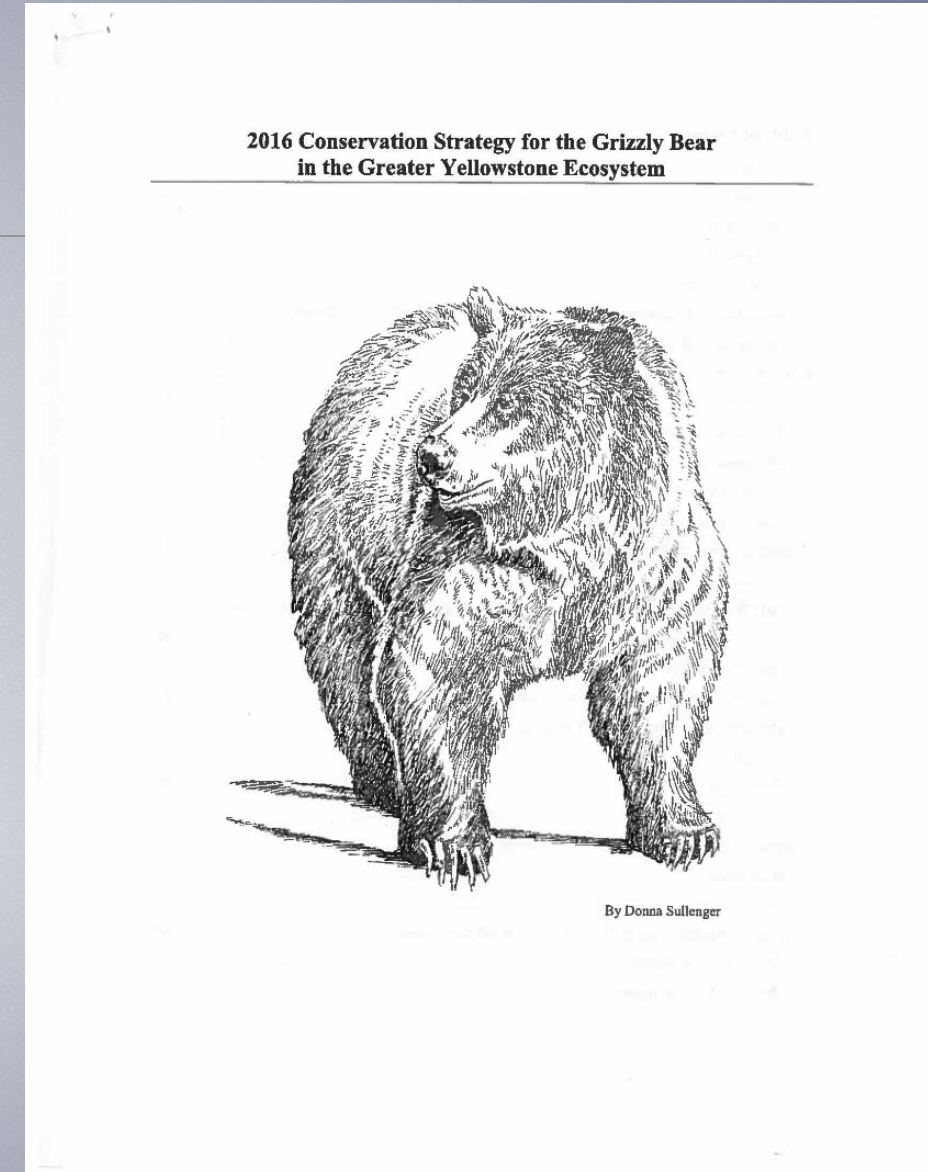
Objectives of this Presentation

- Overview of proposed changes
- Initiation of public comment period
- Timeline for finalizing revisions

2016 Conservation Strategy Habitat Standards

Objectives:

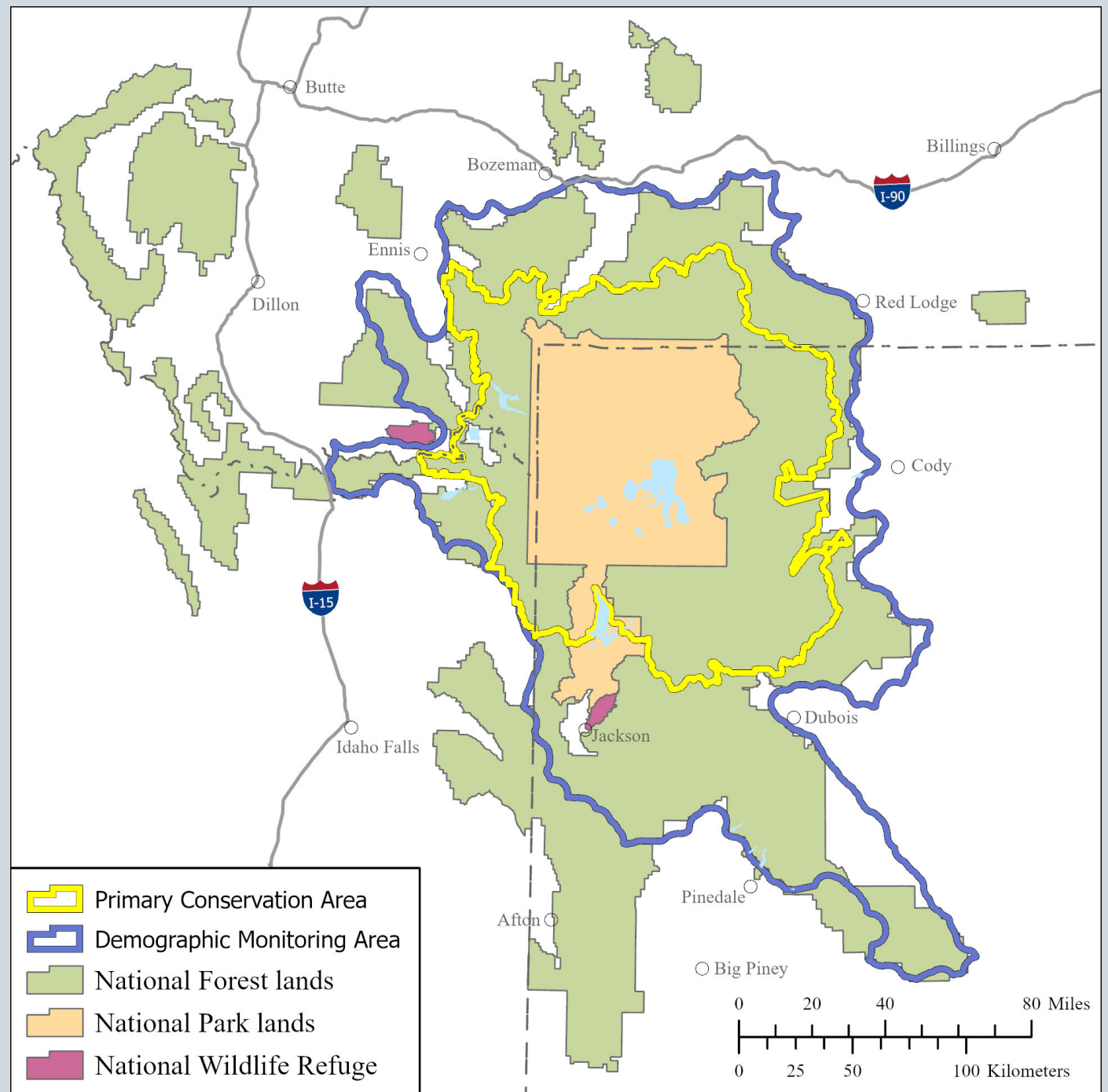
- Measurable habitat criteria
- 'No net loss' from 1998 conditions
- Maintain or improve habitat to reduce access related disturbances and mortalities



Where Do Standards Apply?

Federal lands within the Primary Conservation Area (aka Recovery Zone)

98% of PCA is managed by the NPS and USFS



How did we get here?

- 2007 Conservation Strategy
- 2016 Rewrite of the Conservation Strategy
 - > Developed Site Placeholder in 2016 version

“The habitat standards associated with the 1998 baseline and the administrative mandates to manage for increased visitation have not kept pace with the recent changes in a manner that allows land managers to responsibly accommodate the current, and likely future, increase in visitor use.”

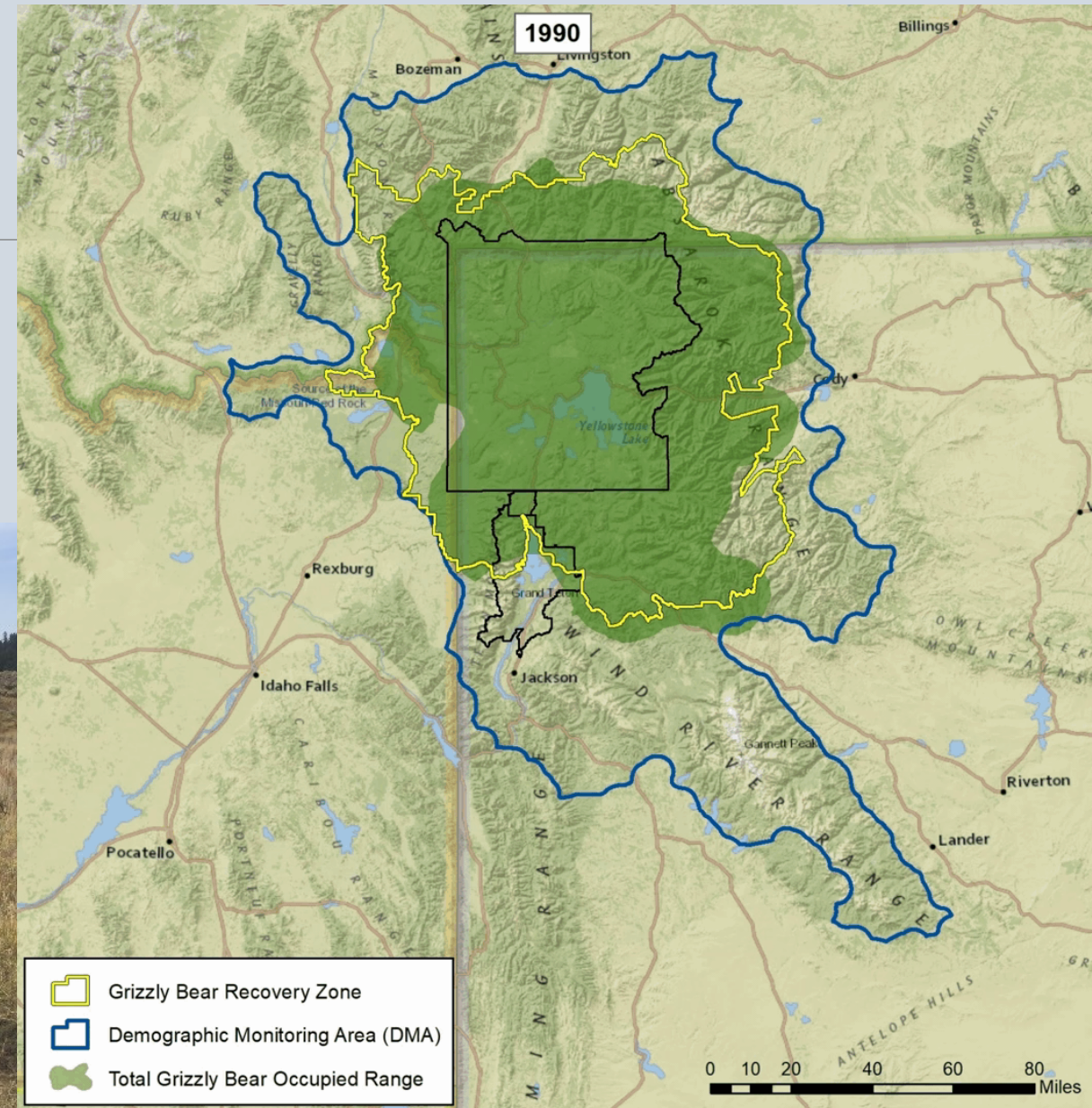
Success and Challenges

- Increase in visitor use
- Need for infrastructure to manage use



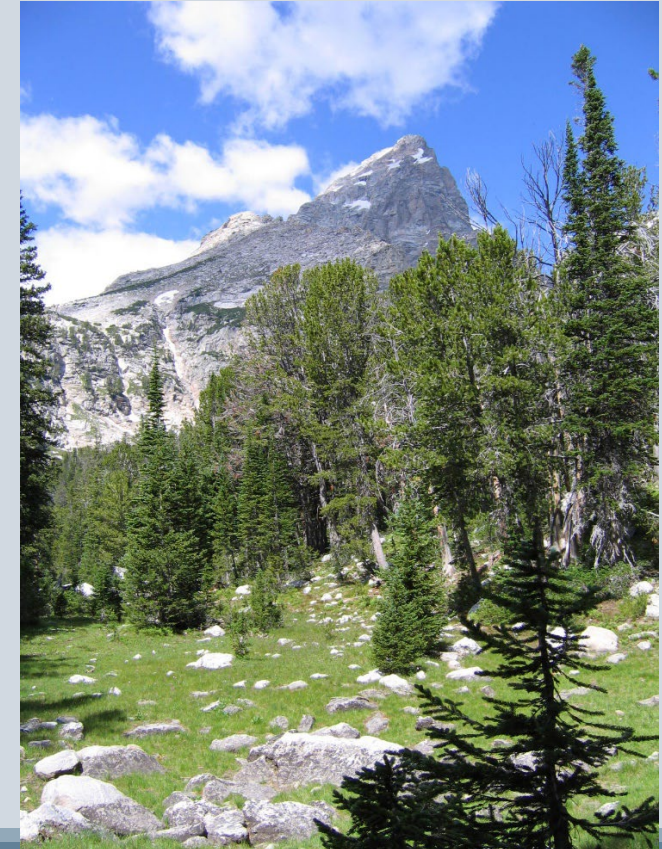
Changing Conditions

- More bears more widely distributed
- More informed management
- Multi-agency effort



Current Habitat Standards

- Secure Habitat
- Developed Sites
- Livestock Allotments



Secure Habitat

No net loss

Contiguous areas > 10 acres and more than 500 m from an open or gated motorized route (road or trail) or recurring low-level helicopter line



Developed Sites – Visitor Use



Campgrounds, picnic areas, trailheads, boat launches, rental cabins, summer homes, lodges, service stations, and restaurants



Developed Sites – Administrative

Unit headquarters, ranger stations, patrol cabins, park entrances, employee housing and other facilities supporting administration



Current Developed Site Standards

Allows changes to or construction of new sites if:

- Mitigated by closing or restoring another site in the same subunit
- Increased administrative infrastructure is necessary for enhancement of public land management and viable alternatives are not available
- Modifications reduce resource damage, detrimental environmental impacts or increase human safety

Does not allow:

- Increased overnight visitor use
- Creation of new sites without mitigation

Current Standard – Dispersed Sites



- Not included in “developed site” inventory
- Elimination of dispersed sites can be used to mitigate an increase in capacity at developed campgrounds

Revision Process – Tasks for a Technical Team

- Review the habitat standards for developed sites
- Recommend revisions appropriate to visitor use levels



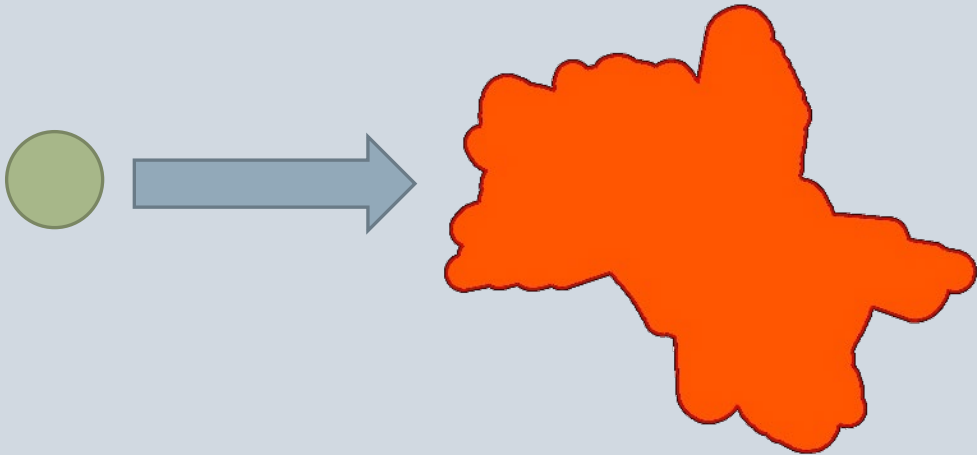
Revision Process – Potential Changes to the Standards

- Evaluated in cooperative manner
- Minimize deviations to 1998 baseline
- Preserve previous habitat gains
- Establish measurable spatial constraints to infrastructure additions
- Address management needs associated with visitor use of NPS and surrounding USFS lands
- Available for public comment; approved by YES
- Track and report future changes



Revision Process – Improved Mapping

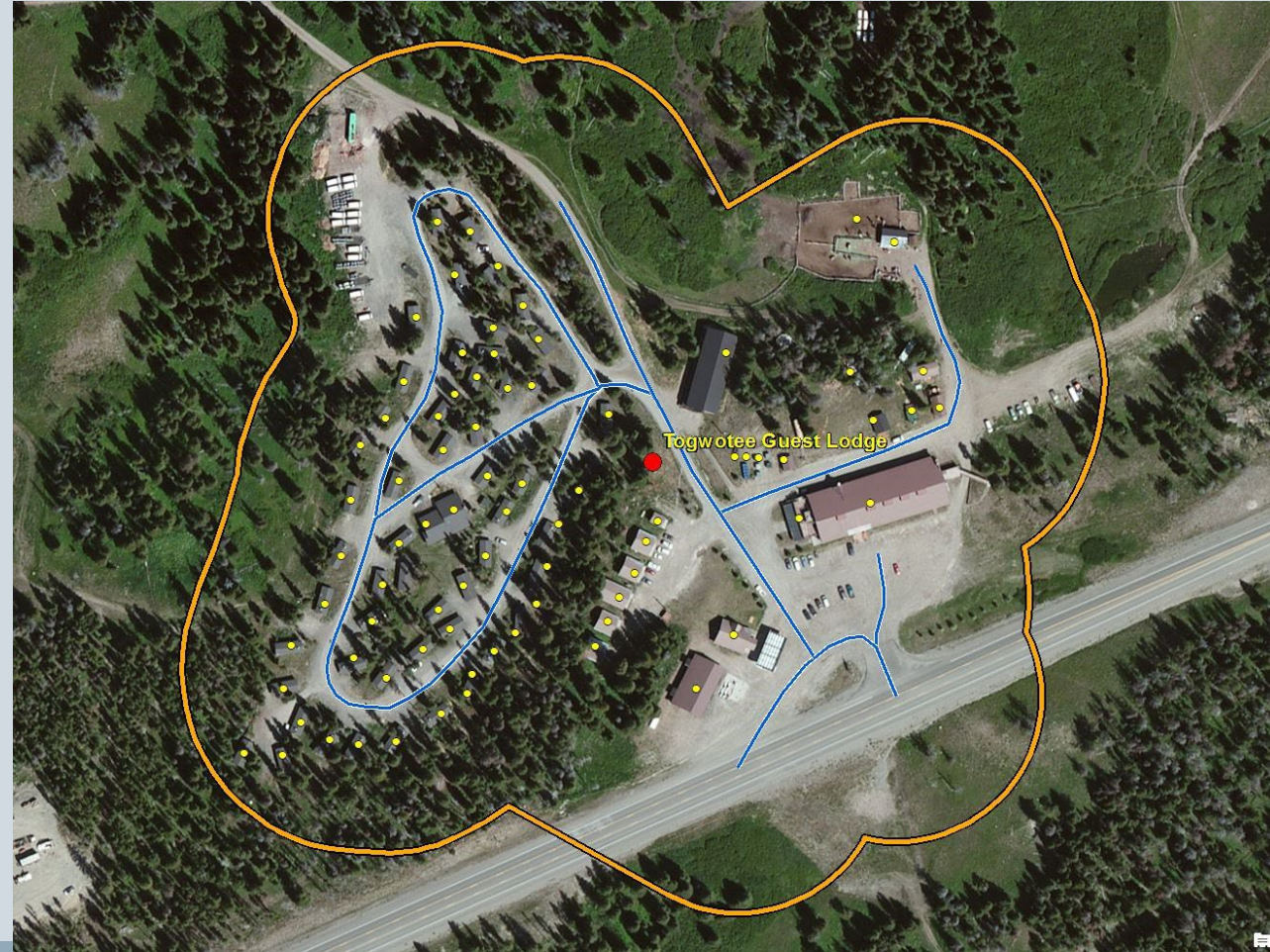
- Correct errors
- Replace developed areas points (where appropriate) with 'footprints'



Revision Process – Advantages to the Footprint Approach

Advantages:

- Accurate representation of human presence
- Defines a space for expansion
- Imposes measurable sideboards
- Provides management opportunity



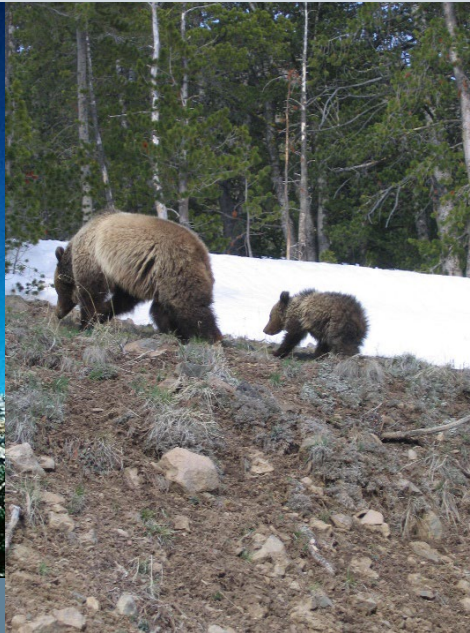
Revision Process – Footprint Approach

Applies:

- Major developments
- Front-country administrative sites
- Developed campgrounds
- Visitor overnight lodges

Doesn't apply (point sites):

- Trailheads
- Picnic areas
- Boat launches
- Fishing access
- Backcountry patrol or rental cabins
- Summer homes

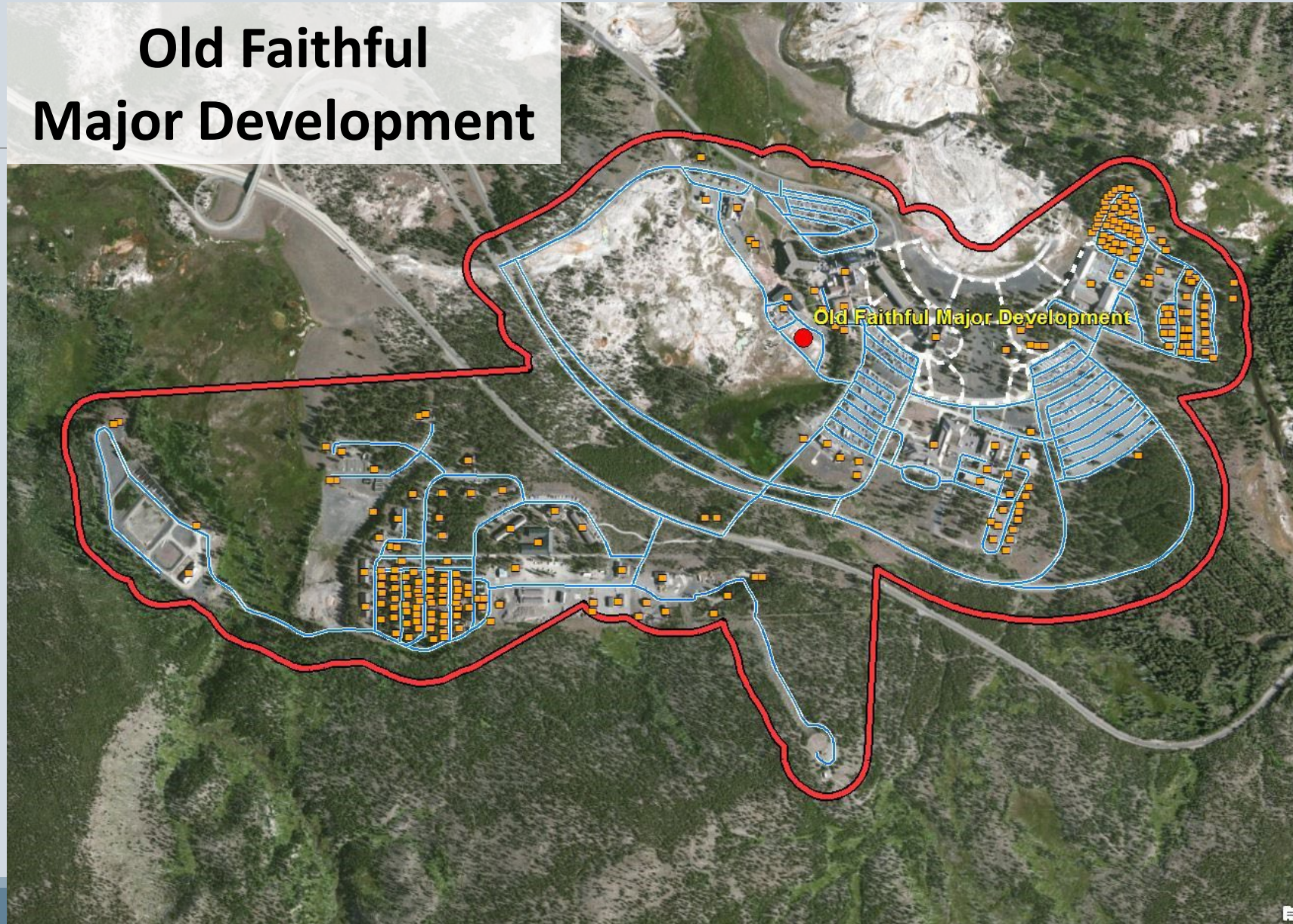


Proposed Revisions: Overnight Capacity

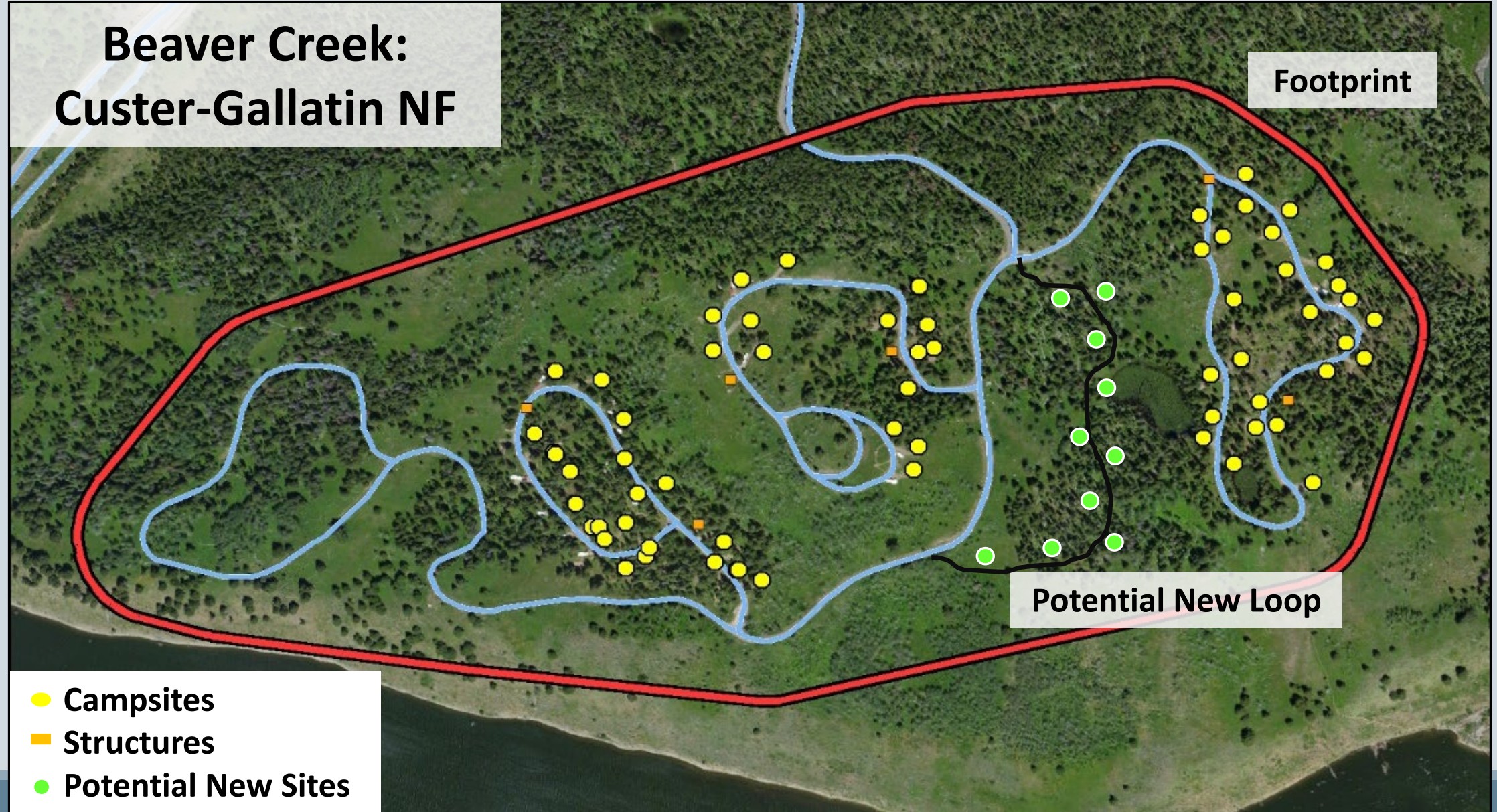
- FS and NPS Lodges: overnight capacity is limited to 10% increase in the capacity of visitor overnight use (*NPS – if below previously approved master plan capacity*)
- FS Campgrounds: increase overnight capacity permitted within existing footprints



Yellowstone National Park Example



US Forest Service Example

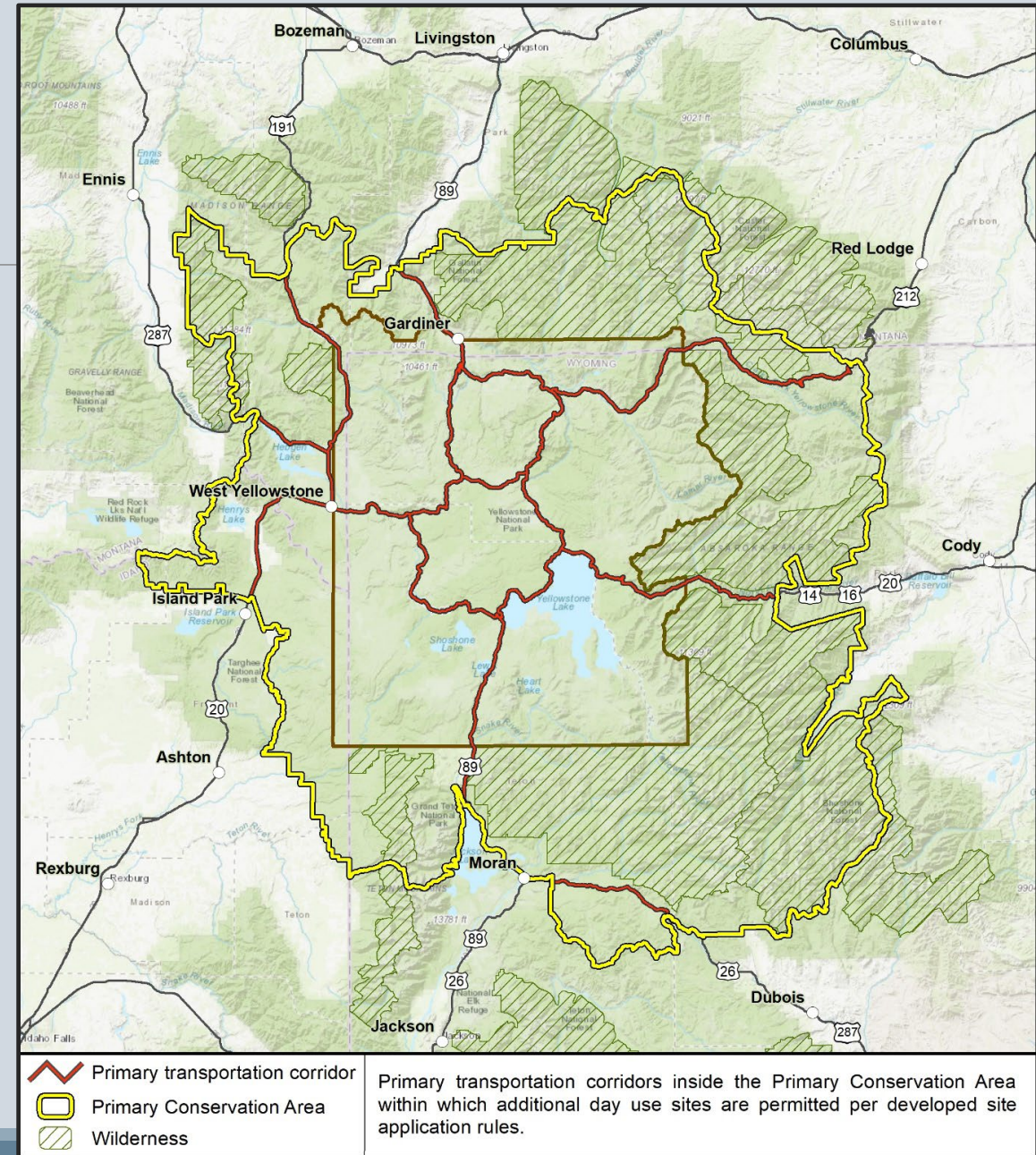


Proposed Revisions: Day-Use Sites

Day-use sites (i.e., parking areas, restrooms/pit toilets, picnic areas) can increase within footprints

New sites allowed within primary road corridors:

- Within 300 m of existing primary road
- Avoid high quality grizzly habitat
- Will affect no more than 10% of existing mapped primary road corridor
- Public transportation and associated utility infrastructure is the only commercial facilities allowed
- Best management practices will be used to prevent human-bear conflicts



Revision Process – Proposal for Road Corridors

Limited to primary road corridors

Would allow new:

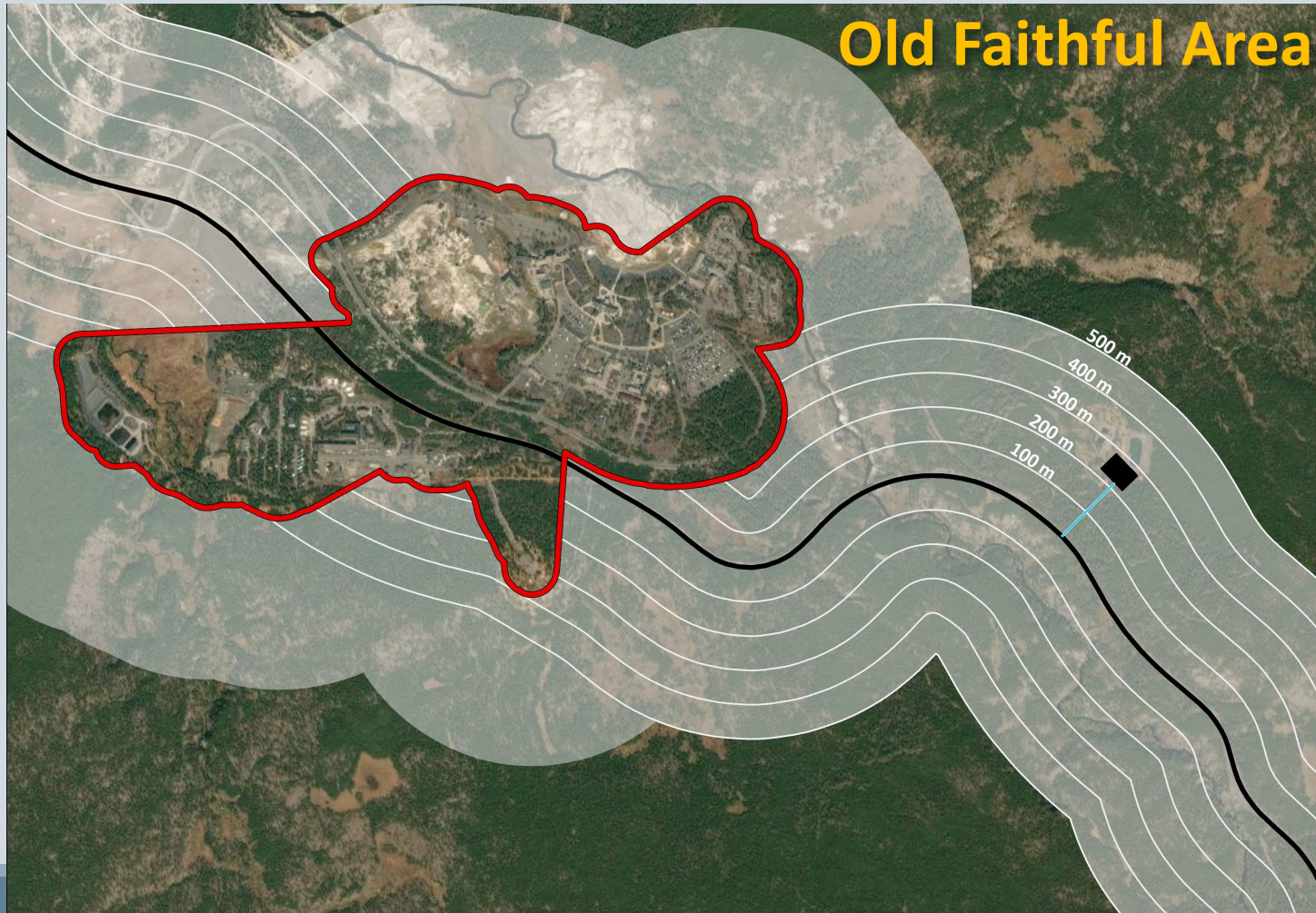
- Pull-offs
- Rest stops
- Picnic areas





Needed for:

- Traffic management
- Visitor safety and accommodation
- Natural resource protection



Primary Road Corridor Example



-  New parking access
-  Main road corridor
-  Non-Secure (500m buffer)
-  New parking lot

Proposed Revisions: Administrative

- Expand/modify is allowable within existing footprints
- New emergency/maintenance infrastructure allowed outside of prescribed footprints to reduce resource damage or potential for human-bear conflicts or increase visitor safety
- Emergency repairs, replacements, or realignments of existing roads, power lines, utilities, and/or associated infrastructure adjacent to existing
- Construction of temporary work camps for emergencies or critically needed maintenance projects



Proposed Revisions – Secure habitat definition

Secure habitat would be redefined as areas ≥ 10 acres in size and more than 500m from a motorized route, **prescribed footprint of a developed site**, or recurring low-level helicopter line

This new method of calculating secure habitat results in lower percentages of secure habitat but do not translate to a loss of habitat on the ground, but rather a more accurate measure of human presence on the landscape



Changes in Reported Secure Habitat

BMU subunit name	1998 % Secure Habitat			BMU subunit name	1998 % Secure Habitat			BMU subunit name	1998 % Secure Habitat		
	Pre-Revision	Post-Revision	% change		Pre-Revision	Post-Revision	% change		Pre-Revision	Post-Revision	% change
Bechler/Teton	78.1	78.0	-0.1	Hellroaring/Bear #2	99.5	99.5	0.0	Shoshone #3	97.0	96.9	0.0
Boulder/Slough #1	96.6	96.5	0.0	Henry's Lake #1	45.4	45.3	-0.1	Shoshone #4	94.9	94.8	-0.1
Boulder/Slough #2	97.7	97.6	-0.1	Hilgard #1	69.8	69.5	-0.3	South Absaroka #1	99.2	99.2	0.0
Buffalo/Spread Creek #1	88.3	89.3	1.0	Hilgard #2	71.4	71.5	0.1	South Absaroka #2	99.9	99.9	0.0
Buffalo/Spread Creek #2	74.3	73.3	-1.0	Lamar #1	89.4	89.0	-0.4	South Absaroka #3	96.8	96.8	0.0
Crandall/Sunlight #1	81.1	81.0	-0.1	Lamar #2	100.0	100.0	0.0	Thorofare #1	100.0	100.0	0.0
Crandall/Sunlight #2	82.3	82.3	0.0	Madison #1	71.5	71.5	0.0	Thorofare #2	100.0	100.0	0.0
Crandall/Sunlight #3	80.4	80.4	0.0	Pelican/Clear #1	97.8	97.7	-0.1	Two Ocean/Lake #1	96.3	96.0	-0.4
Firehole/Hayden #1	88.3	87.5	-0.8	Pelican/Clear #2	94.1	93.8	-0.2	Two Ocean/Lake #2	100.0	100.0	0.0
Firehole/Hayden #2	88.4	87.9	-0.6	Plateau #1	68.8	68.6	-0.2	Washburn #1	83.0	81.9	-1.0
Gallatin #1	96.3	96.3	0.0	Plateau #2	88.7	88.7	0.0	Washburn #2	92.0	91.8	-0.2
Gallatin #2	90.2	89.1	-1.1	Shoshone #1	98.5	98.5	0.0	Primary Conservation Area	85.6	85.4	-0.2
Hellroaring/Bear #1	77.0	76.6	-0.3	Shoshone #2	98.8	98.8	0.0				

Exceptions to 1998 Baseline	Gallatin NF Travel Plan Baselines (supersede 1998 thresholds)	
As of 2016, three subunits (Gallatin #3, Henrys Lake #2, and Madison #2) have new threshold for secure habitat baselines established at values to be achieved with full implementation of the 2006 Gallatin National Forest Travel Management Plan. These 3 subunits were identified in the 2007 Conservation Strategy as needing improved secure habitat levels above 1998 conditions. New baseline thresholds raise the bar for these 3 subunits and supersede 1998 thresholds for secure habitat.	Subunit	% Secure Habitat
	Gallatin #3	71.1
	Henrys Lake #2	52.0
	Madison #2	67.4

Summary

- Technical team reviewed habitat standards
- Corrected mapping errors and replaced 'points' with 'footprints' of developed areas when appropriate
- More accurately represents human presence and management intent
- Imposes measurable sideboards
- Defines space for expansion within existing developed areas and primary road corridors

Acknowledgements

Technical Team

Dan Tyers – USFS

Lisa Landenburger – USFS/USGS

Alison Reck – MSU

Andy Pils – Shoshone NF

Kerry Murphy – Shoshone NF

Randy Griebel – Bridger-Teton NF

Todd Stiles – Bridger-Teton NF

Josh Hemenway – Custer-Gallatin NF

Kerry Gunther – Yellowstone NP

Kate Wilmot – Grand Teton NP/John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway

Jennifer Fortin-Noreus – USFWS



Next Steps

- See Draft Revisions for Chapter 3 and Appendix E at IGBOnline.org
- Public comments (as per the Strategy, p. 55):
 - email: comments-intermtn-bridger-teton@usda.gov
 - include “YES grizzly bear” in subject line of email
 - comments accepted until December 31, 2021
- Process and evaluate public comments over winter
- Goal: Finalize revisions at spring YES meeting