

Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Subcommittee Report of 2021 Accomplishments to the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

December 7, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Ben Conard, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Ecological Services Office, Subcommittee Chair
Steve Pozzanghera, Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, Vice-Chair

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 1: Augment the population

- No bears moved to Cabinet Mountains in 2021.
- 22 bears added since 1990 (14 females and 8 males).
- 4 augmentation bears (2 females and 2 males) are known to have produced offspring - resulting in: 14 first gen., 22 second gen., and 4 third gen. offspring to the Cabinet mountains.

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 2: Limit human-caused mortality

- Some I&E resumed, but still limited due to pandemic.
- Media interviews, bear rangers, bear safety courses, hunter safety courses, landowner assistance, securing attractants, Living in Bear Country events, fair booths, and more (see rept. for details)

Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 2: Limit human-caused mortality

- No human-caused mortality documented in 2021 thus far.

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 3: Document pop. growth rate and distribution

- 2020* rub trees and hair corral results: 41 individuals, 14 F: 27 M. (50 in 2019)
- Captured and collared 5 additional bears in Cabinet-Yaak.
- 1.017% growth rate for Cabinet-Yaak (1983-2020).
- 13 of 22 BMUs occupied by females with young (2015-2020).

Goal 2: Connectivity to achieve occupancy standards and linkage

- 27,289 ac. Conservation Easement approved by MFWP for Stimson Lumber Co. lands SE of Libby, MT.
- Additional land assessments underway.
- Linkage zones used in land-use planning (e.g., some motorized trail closures to increase security, Lolo NF).
- USFWS monitoring bear movement and DNA data.

Goal 3: Apply results of research to habitat management

- Review of U Montana report on Pacific Northwest Trail routes and habitats.
- USFS using habitat quality maps for management decisions (e.g., Elk Lake OHV project, Kootenai NF).

Goal 4: Increase coordination with NCDE Subcommittee

- No explicit 2021 accomplishments.

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 1: Limit human-caused mortality

- I&E still affected by pandemic.
- Virtual events increased, bear rangers, safety courses, landowner assistance, securing attractants, fair booths, and more (see rept. for details)
- IDFG, with Y-Y Conservation Initiative grant, standing up the Mount Hall waste transfer site (Boundary Co., ID)

Selkirk Ecosystem

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 1: Limit human-caused mortality

- No human-caused mortality documented in 2021 thus far.

Goal 1: Increase the grizzly bear population size and distribution

Objective 2: Document pop. growth rate and distribution

- Rub trees, hair corrals, and camera traps continued in 2021.
- 2020* results: 36 individuals, 15 F: 21 M. (44 in 2019).
- Captured 4 additional bears in the Selkirks, including first research adult female in WA.
- Selkirk pop. rate of increase for 1983-2020 was 2.9%.
- 8 of 10 US Selkirk BMUs occupied by females with young.

Goal 2: Enhance transboundary cooperation and coordination of recovery

With assistance from SCYE partners...

- British Columbia hair snag sampling and camera work continued.
- Population estimate from both sides of the border expected in 2022.
- Kootenai Tribe of Idaho working with sister tribes in Canada (conservation and trans-boundary issues).

IGBC Questions of the SCYE

Q: What do you see as the most important things the Subcommittee needs to work together on in 2022?

A: Minimize human-caused mortality; sanitation / I&E in non-traditional areas to get ahead of expanding bear populations.

Q: What do you want the Executive Committee to know about your work?

A: Above and beyond the excellent collaboration, we have 2 very engaged tribes on our subcommittee; and they have repeatedly asked how tribes might be represented at IGBC executive level.

Q: Is there any specific direction that it would be helpful to get from the Executive Committee?

A: How, and to what extent, to start facilitating bears outside of RZs, especially for linkage?