

Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystems (SCYE) Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC)

Notes from the Nov 16, 2021 Microsoft Teams meeting (virtual meeting)

Subcommittee Members calling in:

SCYE CHAIR: Ben Conard (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service)

SCYE VICE CHAIR: Steve Pozzanghera (Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife)

SCIENCE ADVISOR: Wayne Kasworm (USDI Fish and Wildlife Service)

I&E TASKFORCE CO-CHAIRS: Kim Annis, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks; and Kirsten Kaiser, USDA Kootenai National Forest

GUEST PRESENTERS: Hilary Cooley (Fish and Wildlife Service GB recovery office), David Diamond (IGBC executive coordinator), Lori Roberts (Montana Department of Fish and Wildlife), Brittani Rosas (P&C)

Members: Chip Corsi (Idaho Department of Fish and Game), Michele Anderson and Dan Brown (Idaho Department of Lands), Ray Entz (Kalispel Tribe), Gary Aitken, Jr. and Scott Soultz (Kootenai Tribe of Idaho), Neil Anderson (Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks), Carl Petrick (Idaho Panhandle National Forests), Chad Benson (Kootenai National Forest), Kurt Pindel (Bureau of Land Management), Christy Johnson-Hughes (Fish and Wildlife Service N Idaho field office), Jeff Krupka (Fish and Wildlife Service Washington field office), Dan Dinning (Boundary County, ID commissioner), Holger Bohm (BC Ministry of Forests), Dave Wroblewski (Lolo National Forest)

IGBC Executive Coordinator Update

- David Diamond introduced himself as the new igbc executive coordinator. The position coordinates and manages executive igbc meetings and facilitates discussions and overall mission. Position also assists subcommittees and serves as a liaison with the executive committee. David also manages the igbc website.
- David asks two questions of the subcommittee:
 - “What are most important things to accomplish in the coming year?”
 - “What’s working and what’s not on the executive committee level?”

Kim Annis SCY I&E and Management Updates

Montana Conflict Management update

- 2 bears caught management
- One caught near Heron, MT. Photo’d on game camera near dead, buried sheep. 5 year old female grizzly bear relocated south of Heron. Monitoring her collar and currently in West cabinets
- 4 year old male bear incidentally caught when trying to capture a grizzly female south of Libby. Trap was set for a family group of bears eating fruit under fruit trees. Bear was preemptively relocated to southern part of main cabinets and is now in high elevations of Cabinets probably looking to den

IEO update

- IGBC I&E grant and funding proposals: 8 proposals received for projects in the Cabinet-Yaak / Selkirks (4 for CY, 1 combined CY and NCDE, 3 combined Selkirk and CY). Total of SCY requests over 42K, good projects and good asks. Kim will ask who is left of the SCY IEO committee and some others to review. December 2 meeting with the Executive IEO subcommittee to select recipients.
- Kim will step away from IEO chair position for a period. Asking if anyone on subcommittee or someone else to step in as IEO chair and work to reconvene membership
- Kirsten Kaiser – Michael Feiger agreed to take her position on the IEO subcommittee.

Lori Roberts: Chair of the IGBC executive IEO committee

Presentation on the IGBC bear smart community program

- Assembled a group of IEO subcommittee chairs and bear specialists.
- Selected a writer/editor Andrea Morehouse to produce a document that will guide program with communities
- Goal is a community driven program. Communities take the lead. Steps:
 - Community develops a bear smart committee
 - Assess community: looking at conflict history, different attractants, and existing/potential conflict
 - Education efforts: Bear fairs, educating out of town tourists
 - Develop a plan: attractants, solid waste mgmt., education, and codify in bylaws, and timeline. Timeline is executable.
- IGBC can help with assessing whether plan is executable and then can also assess whether the community is Bear Smart certified.
- End of winter (march or april 2022) IGBC will finalize a draft of the document for agencies to review.

Project year 2021 IEO IGBC grant funding

- Gave a total of 20K to Selkirk cabinet-yaak a lot of great projects. Materials, purchasing of signs, installation of food lockers. Cabinet-Yaak bear ranger.
- IGBC I&E will produce an annual report and post on IGBC webpage.

Brittani Rosas Conflict prevention coordinator with People and Carnivores

Bear attractants and infrastructure assessment in North Idaho

- Assessment of all bear resistant infrastructure through data collected. Narrowed scope to focus on northern portion of Idaho Panhandle national forest and working south.
- Starting planning now and hired a contractor to conduct field work June 2022.
- Assessment completed by fall 2022.
- Contractor produces a report handed to forest service personnel.
- Work partners with Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Panhandle National Forest personnel, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and has also reached out to Idaho Fish and Game.
- Goals: provide useful info to managers on the ground to use as they see fit and those who work to get funding to address equipment needs.

Idaho Fish and Game Management update

Jeremy Gaffield IDFG Conservation Officer / Bear Specialist

- Subadult male grizzly bear incidentally caught when trying to capture a black bear that had caused damage to an organic farm.
- Released in north fork of Callahan Creek. Bear monitored with collar and headed west into the Selkirk Mountains.
- Some indication that before capture, bear got into unsecured chicken feed in the Rapid Lightning creek area a couple times. Bear also found an illegal bait. Citation written to the individual with the bait site.
- Bear currently monitored with collar and may be searching for a den. More to come from Wayne K later.

Barb Moore IDFG

- Longtime bear specialist and CO Brian Johnson retired before bear season 2021.
- Jeremy Gaffield hired in July 2021, he is a previous fish and game conservation officer near Nampa, ID.
- IDFG worked with US Fish and Wildlife Service for 8 month grizzly bear management position.
 - Amber Kornak was hired; she has a strong background in bear management.
 - Amber worked with Jeremy on bear education, outreach and responding to bear conflicts.
 - Over 15 bear aware presentations with a variety different constituents and conducting a living in bear country workshop with Idaho Conservation League.
 - Position added an additional level of responsiveness.
 - Big thanks to financial USFWS Idaho Office, Forest Service, and Idaho Department of Lands. And lots of local collaboration.
- Purchased many of bear resistant and conflict avoidance materials to help respond to conflicts in Boundary and Bonner counties.
- Amber and Jeremy used these materials to put up numerous temporary fences, worked with numerous landowners, distributed critter getters, and established a permanent electric fence for an organic farm.
- Used a Yellowstone to Yukon grant to purchase bear resistant dumpsters and placed throughout Bonners Ferry area. Grant money also used to replace vandalized informational signs.

Grizzly bear recovery program update - Jennifer Fortin-Noreus

- Released 5 year status review in March 2021. Waiting for current administration to make a decision.
- Hilary Cooley has spent a considerable amount of time in Jackson, WY dealing with female grizzly bear 399. She had been obtaining lots of unsecured foods. Underlines need for a conflict coordinator to manage such situations. Looking to advertise that position soon. Position would be a new, permanent position with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, working within the grizzly bear recovery program.
- Maintaining an outlier database for grizzly bears in lower 48. This database helps create May Be Present maps for consultation and has also derived interest from other groups in how they prioritize work projects and information, outreach, and education efforts.

SW Montana DNA project

- Project goal: to document grizzly bears within SW Montana outside known distribution and identify ecosystem origin from DNA

- USFWS provided one full time crew and one part time crew. Defenders of Wildlife and Lolo National Forest also participated with crews.
- 130 corral sites (strung barbed wire around lure in the center), all located on USFS lands. 3,400+ corral days of effort.
- Based locations on expert opinion and verified sightings since 2014.
- Difficulties: lots of livestock allotments in the Big Hole. Moving corrals every 3-4 weeks proved to be a moving target for the very few bears in the study area; in 2022, will use similar sites but leave them up in same place and relure monthly
- Grizzly bears detected at 1 site (2 individual grizzly bears, one was collared male, other is uncollared and unknown). Collared bear was a conflict bear caught in 2020, relocated north of I-90. Visited corral site during foray southwest toward Sula
- 100 sites with black bears, 52 sites with camera issues (bears attracted to cameras). Lots of tan/blonde black bears.
- Samples sent to laboratory for genetic analysis from grizzly site and other sites with camera issues. Hope to continue effort in 2022 field season

Subcommittee member entity accomplishments

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife – presented by Ben Turnock NE district 1 wildlife biologist

- Gave many bear aware virtual presentations but provided some small group in person toward end of the year.
- Post card sent to residents to secure attractants.
- Loaned out temporary electric fences.
- Have a cost share program but unfortunately not used.
- Purchased 20 bear proof trash cans that can be loaned out to residents.
- Setup 8 corrals and checked 12 rub posts. Able to get out more corrals than in the past with help of technicians.

Kalispel Tribe – Ray Entz

- Hair sampling at 10 locations.
- Provided truck and tracked ATV for trapping effort in Washington.
- 2 virtual bear awareness trainings and bear spray pickup at local libraries.
- Bear awareness booth and Pend’Oreille county fair.
- School presentations on bear biology and awareness
- Training the trainer workshop on bear awareness in the North Cascades
- Megan Wright, biologist with Kalispel Tribe, project on genetics of Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak bears. Masters project in conjunction with University of Idaho, Kalispel Tribe, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Using the existing dataset.
 - Objectives include updated science on new gene flow, updated genetic diversity measures, look at how gene flow has impacted and connected pops over time. Estimate effective population size. Estimate effective migrants per generation and how connectivity maintains genetic diversity in these small populations.
 - Wayne added that Recovery Plan calls for smaller population goals as long as pops are connected to other ones and genetic diversity is preserved. This study will better describe

current levels of genetic connectivity between populations now that there is documented migration and gene flow

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho - Scott Soultz

- Assisted public distribution of igbc brochures at fairs and public events in county.
- County commissioners community kvri grizzly bear subcommittee.
- Providing information to local news outlets
- NIXLE service coordination
- bear dumpsters at boat ramps.
- Local citizen loaner program.
- Staff time for collection of monthly dna sampling 4 rub hair snare days
- Monetary contributions for I and E and research programs.
- Sister tribes in BC on grizzly bear mgmt.
- Hope to assist on future bear smart community program

Colville National Forest

- Purchased 21 food lockers with partner funds. Install half this year and half next year.
- Set out 10 hair corrals and checked 15 rub posts.
- 20 I&E weekend patrols. Focus on food storage bear id and bear safety education.

Idaho Panhandle National Forest - Diane Probasco

- Partnered with Idaho Fish and Game to grow bear education events in local communities. Current restrictions limited in-person events.
- Using recreational technicians to spread word about food storage and bear aware.
- Completed consultation projects under 2020 Forest Plan. Finished a first annual report under the BO and BA and incidental take monitoring requirements
- Deployed 5 hair corrals and monitored many bear rubs and tons and tons of Cameras. Added many cameras to the Blue-Grass bmu to monitor use relative to Bog Creek project.
- Contribute funds for genetic analysis and bear capture and monitoring efforts
- Provided housing and vehicle or one of the DNA monitoring teams in the Priest lake area.
- Acquired 7 bear boxes to be installed Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak
- Working with infrastructure project (B Rosas previous presentation)
- Worked with Amber Kornak and Waste Management to address non-bear resistant dumpster issues at resorts around Priest Lake

Kootenai National Forest - Chad Benson

- Facilitate Bear Ranger outreach education to schools, campgrounds, campground hosts,
- bear booths at boat launches went over pretty well given covid restrictions.
- Working with county with bear sanitation issues.
- Hanging structures at dispersed sites and visitor contacts and clean camps. Rec use going up so this work more important going forward.
- Monitored 3 hair rub stations and corrals on the Kootenai.

- Bmu 8 finished reroute of a motorized trail (elk lake) combining other motorized routes to improve user experience and access standards
- Electric fencing with NGOs, FWS, and MFWP as well as private land owners
- Increased focus on WUI (Wildland Urban Interface). Managing bears in WUI will be a challenge going forward.

Lolo National Forest - Dave Wrobleski

- BMU 22 compliance project finished, which completes the NEPA to get the bmu up to access management standards. Implemented some motorized trail closures that brings them in compliance to date. Goal to get above standard by a percentage point or two.
- 25 corral sites in the SW MT monitoring project (previous presentation J Fortin-Noreus)

USFWS Idaho Office - Christy Johnson-Hughes and Hilary Whitcomb

- Acknowledge support of IDFG, KVRI (Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative), and KTol for pilot project for bear specialist A Kornak
- Proactively support community education and community involvement and tools used for managers and minimize human bear conflicts
- 125K spent on grizzly bear in 2021
- Additional 26K for landscape genetics and genotyping study in 2022
- Support proposal for bear resistant infrastructure on IPNF (B Rosas, previous presentation).

Grizzly Bear Monitoring Update: Wayne Kasworm

2021 Bear Captures

- 4 bears collared in the Selkirk Mountains (2 year old male, adult female, 2 yearling males)
- Female was first research female captured in the state of Washington
- 5 captures in the Cabinet-Yaak (subadult female, subadult female, adult male, and 2 male yearlings).
- Male yearlings associated with adult females, provide information about those adult females
- 3 individuals caught in management traps (adult female and 2 subadult males)

Telemetry Monitoring

- 4 bears in the Selkirks currently
- 9 bears currently collared in the Cabinet-Yaak
- Adult female in WA Selkirks with 3 yearlings spent time Molybdenite mountain and NNE
- Adult female caught near Heron spent time south of 200. She did spend time in the north fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Now in high up in the West Cabinets possibly looking to den. Reports and photos of her at bait sites in the fall.
- Bear in Rapid Lightning Creek NE of Sandpoint. Released in NF Callahan, went west into Selkirks and then spent time in Rapid Lightning Creek. Has moved back east to the head of Lightning Creek.

Augmentation program

- Decision to not capture an augmentation bear due to excessive heat and other concerns
- Augmentation bear 923 dropped collar after 2 years of staying in the west cabinets. Will try to document her with the DNA collections and camera efforts. She will be 5 next year (adult female).

Genetics results

- 2020 was a limited year. Only 1 hair collection team in 2020. Thanks for all the assistance from collaborators. Trap teams were able to assist a little.
- 824 samples sent to lab, 420 came back as grizzly bear hair of which 36 individuals in the Selkirks. 44 bears identified in 2019. Great deal more effort in 2019.
- Cabinet-Yaak: 41 individuals identified from 72 samples. Sent in nearly 200 samples.
- These are minimum numbers and photo evidence, collared bears not sampled will add to this number.

Mortality

- No known human-caused mortality in the Cabinet-Yaak or Selkirks to date.

Huckleberry monitoring

- Huckleberry counts on average were similar to previous annual averages.
- High variability in berry counts between sites and patchy in their production.

Question and Comments

Dan Dinning asked about what's going on in BC Selkirks

- Wayne responded that Michael Proctor completed sampling. He has submitted all samples and at the Laboratory and will be analyzed over the winter period. Sample results will be analyzed together with US Selkirks and analysis and possible population estimation by fall of 2022

Hilary Whitcomb asked about LogTag data collected at huckleberry sites

- Wayne responded that they are temperature and humidity logging instruments placed at monitoring sites. Would try to correlate certain temperature and humidity values with berry production at sites. 9 years of production data and logtag data across 15+ sites a year. Selkirks have 5 or 6 sites sampled over past 5 years. Hope to produce some results within next 2 years.

Ray Entz and trap effort planning, when to start discussions on Kalispel Tribe assistance

- Wayne responded that Border Patrol may provide funding for increased capture and monitoring. A fourth trap team would require a qualified trap team leader. Kalispel Tribe is ready and prepared to help.

Paul Sieracki - Has IDL completed any grizzly bear metrics for the state bear unit yet, so we can monitor grizzly bear disturbance there? Regarding OMRD, TMRD, and Core.

- No answer from IDL. **Follow up from IDL.**

Dan Dinning asked Wayne K to be part of discussions on Bog Creek

- Wayne acknowledged he would.

Next Meeting

- **Poll of subcommittee members April 19, 2022. Plans to have it in person in Coeur d'Alene at the joint FS/BLM/FWS office.**