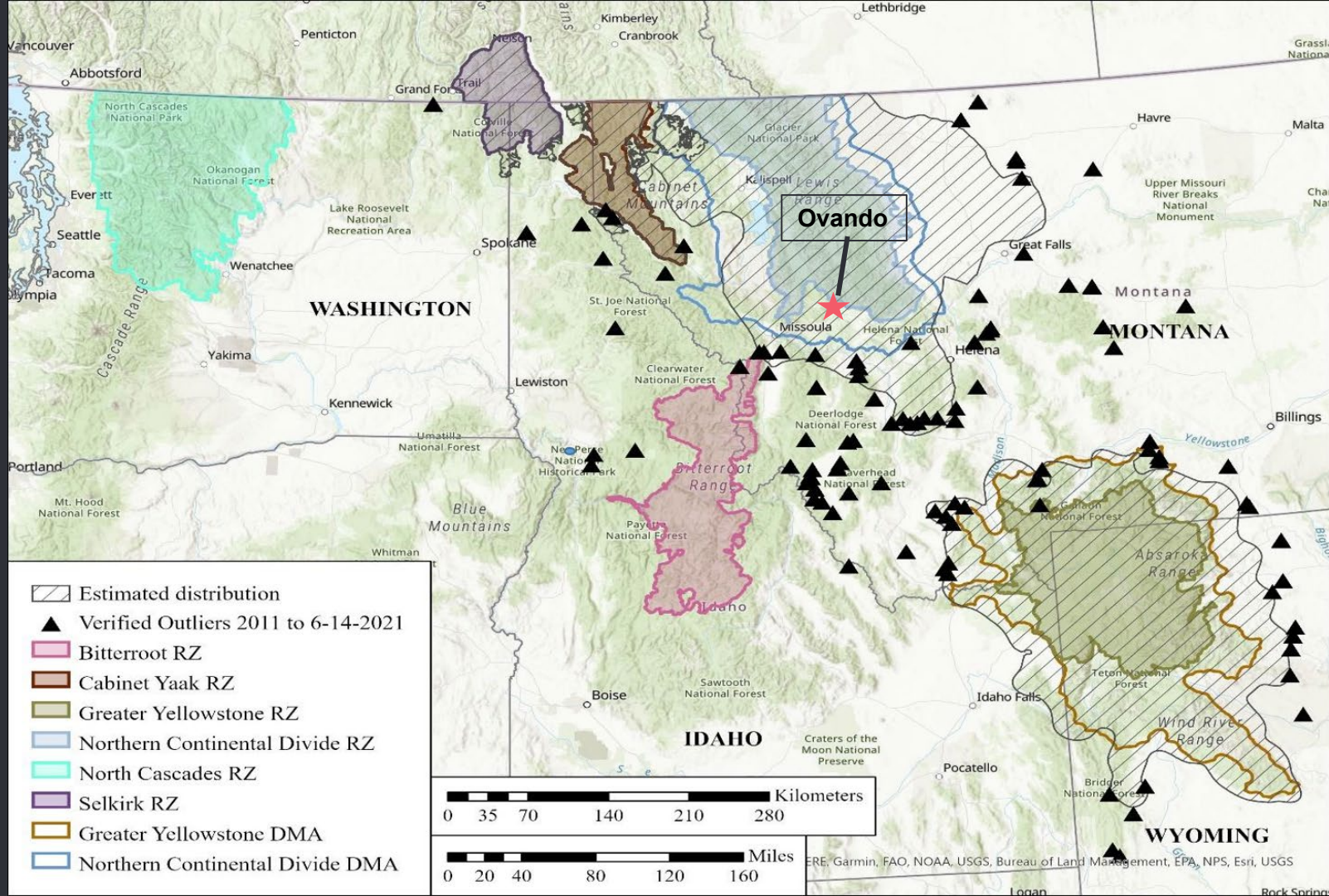


- Board of Review:
Recommendations following the July 6, 2021 fatality of Leah Davis Lokan from a grizzly bear attack in Ovando, MT

● **Board of Review: Leah Davis Lokan, Ovando, MT**

- **Response & Investigation:** Community of Ovando, Powell County Sheriff's office, MTFWP, USFWS, Blackfoot Challenge
- **Interagency Team:**
 - USFWS: Jennifer Fortin-Noreus, Hilary Cooley, Wayne Kasworm
 - MTFWP: Jamie Jonkel, Eli Hampson, Rory Trimbo, Erik Wenum, Lori Roberts
 - Glacier NP: John Waller
 - USFS: Dan Tylers
 - CSKT: Kari Eneas
- **Location :** Ovando, MT
- 19th Human Fatality in GYE since 1892.



Fatality Site

Blackfoot Commercial
Company & Ovando Inn

BLACKFOOT CENEX

Ovando Teepees
Temporarily closed

United States
Postal Service

Stray Bullet Cafe
American • 6

Ovando School

Blackfoot Community
Bible Church

Summary of Incident

Leah Lokan was a 65-year-old female from Chico, California. Ms. Lokan had been on a multi-day bicycle trip through Montana and rode into Ovando on July 5th to stay the night. Ms. Lokan decided to camp behind the museum next to one other tent. At approximately 3:08 am on July 6th, Ms. Lokan and the neighboring campers were awoken by a bear near their tents. They all got up and made noise and the bear left the area. At that time, Ms. Lokan moved food (packaged snack foods and dried lentils) from her tent into a nearby building and took bear spray into her tent. After returning to sleep, the neighboring campers were again awoken by noise at approximately 4:05 am and they realized that Ms. Lokan was being attacked by a bear. The neighbor campers yelled, deployed bear spray, blew a whistle, and the bear ran out of the area. Ms. Lokan and tent had been dragged part way out of tent and showed no signs of life. They immediately ran to seek help and emergency responders were dispatched.

● Timeline

July 5

19:00 Campers Ms. Lokan and Kim and Joe Cole set up tents in Ovando.

Evening Grizzly bear attempted to break into trailer 3.9 miles west of Ovando

July 6

03:08 Campers awakened by bear approaching tents. Ms. Lokan removes food from her tent, campers return to their tents.

03:26-03:30 Lone grizzly bear captured on security camera in Ovando.

04:05 Bear attacked Ms. Lokan.

04:14 Call to Powell County Dispatch.

04:27 EMS on scene.

04:30-06:30 Grizzly bear breaks into chicken coop on 213 Main St, ~ 215 yards from fatality site (traps later set).

Timeline

July 6 ctnd

- 11:30 1st Helicopter search. No bears found.
- 20:00 2nd helicopter flight. A bear (likely grizzly) was observed from ground east of Ovando but ran into cover and not seen again.
- 21:19 Grizzly bear returned to chicken coop at 213 Main St. in Ovando; did not enter trap.

July 7

- 05:00 3rd helicopter flight for thermal image search of Ovando area. No bears detected.

July 8

- 09:30 Report of chicken coop raided by grizzly bear 5 miles east of town. Traps set at site.

July 9

- 00:00 Grizzly bear returned to the chicken coop from July 8. Bear was shot by WS agents.



Camper Incident

Fatality Site, Ovando

Bear observed evening flight, July 6

Chicken Coop Incident, July 8

Conclusion

- This was a predatory attack by a habituated or food conditioned bear.
- Food and toiletries inside and near tent, as well as food scent from July 4th celebrations were likely contributing factors.



Recommendations

1) Camping:

- Keep food and anything with a scent out of tents and well away from tents.
- Properly store unattended food and anything else with a scent.
- Do not tent in the same area where food was cooked. Cooking area should be 100+ feet from sleeping area.
- If a bear comes into the vicinity of an occupied tent, do not return to tent. Move to a hard-sided vehicle or building if possible.



Recommendations



2) Towns, communities, municipalities:

- Grizzly bears could be anywhere in western Montana, even in residential areas.
- Consider food storage regulations or ordinances on public and private lands throughout grizzly bear occupied range.
- Consider placing bear aware signs.
- Consider participating in the IGBC Bear Smart Program.
- Private campgrounds should provide bear resistant containers, food storage, and place bear aware signs.
- Bears should not be allowed to feel comfortable near houses, buildings, or human activity centers. Residents should use approved deterrence methods to safely keep bears away from residences. If deterrence does not work, residents should call the local bear manager.

● Recommendations

○ 3) Recreation Events

- Consider bear education and food storage requirements as part of federal land special use permits.

Race organizers should:

- Disseminate bear education materials (camping, recreating) and require bear spray.
- Emphasize being observant, keep bear spray close at hand.
- Encourage communities along the route to endorse bear spray, provide bear-resistant food storage bins, provide electric fence checkout kits at camping sites in town, and place bear aware signs.

● Recommendations

○ 4) Agency incident responders/Investigators

- Implement a Wildlife Human Attack Response Team (WHART) to ensure a systematic approach to investigation.
- Conduct full necropsy. Consider standard disease testing such as rabies or other issues that might be related to the attack.
- If responsible bear is caught and euthanized, protect head and paws to preserve any potential DNA evidence.
- Document full chain of custody for all samples.
- Treat decisions on final disposition of hide and skull with sensitivity for the victim's family.

● Recommendations



○ 5) Public Land Management Agencies:

- Food storage orders and guidelines should be enacted on all public lands throughout grizzly bear occupied range.

6) Bear Spray Manufacturers

- Consider adding a whistle to the bear spray trigger so that deployment would notify people and may be an extra deterrent to the bear.