

2023 Grizzly Bear Management Summary



Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Chad White, Ali Marschner



Ali Marschner

-Bear Management Technician

- FWP partnered with a diverse group of 15 community leaders in Choteau to create *Bear Smart Choteau*- modeled after the guidelines put out by the IGBC
- Held 4 initial meetings. Community interest is high, particularly by Mayor Chris Hindoién, one of the most active members of the group.
- The subcommittee completed a grant application through the IGBC in October in hopes of holding two bear spray educational events in 2024.
- Applied for, and received, a \$3,500 grant from People and Carnivores to fund about 10 new bin doors which will be custom welded by the Choteau FFA Chapter and sold at cost to have continuous funding for future doors. Implementation of this project should begin in the next few weeks.



Figure 1. MFWP Region 4 and the portion of the region Choteau Bear Management Team is generally responsible for. responsible for.

Management Tools

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Prevention
- ◆ Conflict response



Education

- ◆ Total of 14 events. ~563 people reached
- ◆ Focus on kids, communities, and expansion zones, black bear areas.
- ◆ Range of events: small neighborhood outreach events, community wide education events, group talks, schools, booth events, and area gatherings.

Prevention

- ◆ Bear Signs: Placed ~50 hunter/bear
- ◆ Grain hauled: ~24,000 lbs of spilled grain
- ◆ Electric fencing or mat projects: 22
- ◆ Bear sprays given: ~50 cans. Gave out 20+ bear sprays through the Augusta game check station.
- ◆ Air horns given: ~6.
- ◆ Scare devices deployed: ~10
- ◆ Gave out (1) bear resistant trash can
- ◆ Assisted with carcass hauling program



Attention Hunters

Grizzly Bear Area

- Carry necessary equipment to:
 - Immediately field dress and remove meat from kill site.
 - If game must be left in field, hang it at least 10 feet above ground & at least 200 yards from gut pile.
- Process game 200 yards from any trail system.
- Leave meat where you can see it from at least 200 yards away.
- Upon return, observe hanging meat with binoculars. Approach from upwind and make noise! If it has been disturbed or if there a bear in the area, leave and report to the proper authorities.
- Carry and know how to use bear pepper spray.
- Elk bugles and cow calls attract bears. STAY ALERT!

Complaint type	Number
Near people	20
Beehives	~20
Harvested grain	13
Property damage	12- plus all beehives
Poultry	12 turkeys killed in 2 events. 1 poultry feed/no birds. 1 BB/chicken coop
Cattle	7 confirmed with FWP
Goat	3 confirmed with FWP
Hunter carcass loss	4
Livestock feed	3
Encounter	2
Garbage	1
Fruit trees	1
Garden	1
Birdseed	1

Complaint response

(A single complaint often populates several fields)











Call Response

- ◆ Physical response: 65
- ◆ New bear call: 155
- ◆ Old bear call: 80
- ◆ Contacts for information (other): 40
- ◆ Black bear conflict calls: 7
- ◆ Black bear conflict responses: 3





Mortalities

- ◇ May 9- A yearling female was killed in a vehicle collision on Teton Canyon road near Eureka Reservoir.
- ◇ May 11- An unknown, presumed adult, was struck by a motorist on Teton Canyon road. The bear ran off indicating an unknown mortality.
- ◇ July 26- a yearling male was found dead on private land near Augusta. No cause of death specifically identified.
- ◇ September 12- A bird hunter wounded a bear, likely a mature male indicated by tracks, in a self-defense encounter. Mortality uncertain.



Capture

- ◇ On July 11th, a mature male was captured near Augusta for damaging a structure to access horse pellets. The male was collared and released on-site with a hard release. The structure was electrified, and the bear has not returned.



BEAR AWARE



Bears Frequenting Area



Montana Wildlife & Fisheries



Alerts

- ◇ 5/11, Teton County Code Red Alert, vehicle injured bear at large.
- ◇ 6/14, Choteau Call Multiplier Alert, bears seen on the edge of town by bicyclists.
- ◇ 9/11, Teton County Code Red Alert, bear inside Fairfield city limits.
- ◇ 9/12, Teton County Code Red Alert, hunter injured bear at large.

Additional Projects

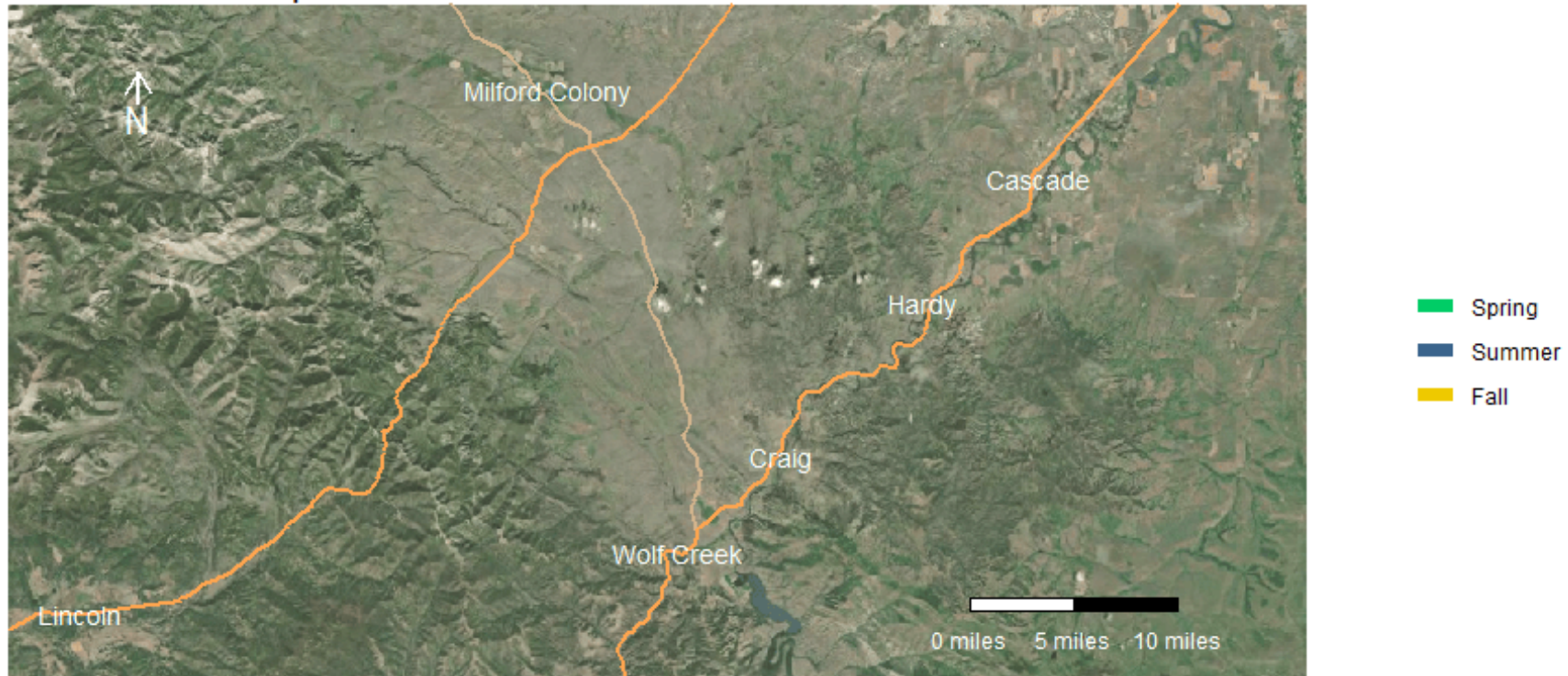
- ◆ Collaborated with US FWS and USDA WS- Electric fencing for large bee producers in active conflict with grizzly bears. As a result, numerous temporary and semi- permanent electric fences were constructed, a permanent fence was constructed, and more fencing material was provided to producers to cost share additional fencing.
- ◆ FWP partnered with USFWS, USDA WS, Defenders of Wildlife, and other groups to construct a cost shared 200-acre electric cattle enclosure fence. FWP video producer filmed the event for distribution in 2024.
- ◆ FWP, with the help of our video producer, created a big game carcass management video series for distribution in 2024 after receiving several reports of hunters losing game carcasses to bears in the Augusta area during the 2023 general hunting season.



Butters:

Movements through the seasons

Locations from April - October 2023



Thank you to
all of the
wonderful
landowners,
coworkers,
and
colleagues



Happy denning!