

IGBC Executive Committee Meeting
July 21, 2026

Partner Spotlight: Conflict Reduction in Montana

Grizzly Bear Conflict Reduction Collaborative (GCRC)
Sylvie Coston



Photo Credit: Bear Awareness Gardiner



Photo Credit: Blackfoot Challenge



Photo Credit: Heart of the Rockies Initiative

Background

Established in 2025 by Heart of the Rockies Initiative, the Grizzly Conflict Reduction Collaborative (GCRC) is a group of agency, Tribal, nonprofit, and community partners dedicated to enhancing the coordination of conflict reduction efforts in Montana. Our breadth of knowledge and expertise allows us to offer a forum to share information and address shared challenges.

About Us

Our Mission

To minimize human bear conflict by enhancing coordination and availability of grizzly bear conflict reduction programs across Montana.

Our Vision

Resilient Montana communities and landscapes where people, livestock, and grizzly bears all thrive, supported by accessible, well-resourced, locally-led conflict reduction programs that sustain the long-term conservation of grizzly bears.



Photo Credit: Troy Malish, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

Our Members

Alberton Bear Smart
Bear Awareness Gardiner
Blackfoot Challenge
Centennial Valley Association
Defenders of Wildlife
Greater Yellowstone Coalition
Heart of the Rockies Initiative
Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
Madison Valley Ranchlands Group
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Montana State University Extension

Montana Conflict Reduction Consortium
National Parks Conservation Association
People and Carnivores
Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group
Swan Valley Connections
Teton Bear Smart
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Vital Ground Foundation
Western Landowners Alliance
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



Photo Credit: Bear Awareness Gardiner



Photo Credit: Teton Bear Smart

Our Approach

We work collaboratively to maximize the impact of grizzly bear conflict reduction initiatives through mutual engagement, knowledge sharing, resource alignment, group problem-solving, and collective planning. We aim to reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts while encouraging the replication of successful practices where applicable.



Photo Credit: Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative



Photo Credit: Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Resource Availability

Provide clear communication and access to existing grizzly bear conflict reduction efforts, resources, and personnel to expand collective support for locally-led projects.

Objective 1

Utilize local and expert knowledge (i.e. FWP Bear Management Specialists) to increase awareness of current conflict reduction projects and gaps.

Objective 2

Improve access to resources by creating a central repository of information, including existing resources to help guide tool implementation and contacts for those who can provide technical support or financial assistance.



Photo Credit: Bear Awareness Gardiner

Diversify Funding Sources and Track Opportunities

Establish diverse and long-term funding for conflict reduction that can withstand systemic changes or challenges and maximize impact for existing funding.

Objective 1

Provide increased support for essential needs such as staff capacity, technical assistance, and equipment that are often challenging to address with public funding.

Objective 2

Secure additional funding to support conflict reduction activities.



Photo Credit: Teton Bear Smart

Support Bear Smart Communities

Provide additional support to emerging bear smart communities.

Objective 1

Increase information sharing and facilitate access to other coordinators, community leaders, and practitioners by creating a Community of Practice.

What is a Community of Practice (CoP)?

A CoP (Wenger, 1998) is a type of informal or voluntary group that comes together to discuss a common issue. It is designed to build a sense of belonging and relationships. The forum facilitates knowledge sharing and increased participation, which enhances the overall function of the group.

Bear Smart Community of Practice Participants

Alberton Bear Smart
Bear Awareness Gardiner
Blackfoot Challenge
Clearwater Valley Bear Smart
Cooke City
Livingston
Bear Smart Missoula
Paradise Valley
Beartooth Bear Smart
Silvergate
Teton Bear Smart

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks
Montana State University Extension
Defenders of Wildlife
People and Carnivores
Swan Valley Connections
Wild Solutions Consulting LLC
Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative
Yellowstone Wildlife Sanctuary

Looking Ahead

2027 In-Person GCRC Workshop

Goal: Facilitate in-person sessions for working groups and steering committees to discuss action items and 2027 goals.

Potential Topics:

- Relationship Building and Trust
- Communication and Messaging
- Workshop Opportunities
- Draft 2027 Work Plan

Location: FWP Region 2 Headquarters Office in Missoula

Tentative Date: January 12 - 14, 2027



Photo Credit: Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Thank You

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Photo Credit: Greater Yellowstone Coalition



Photo Credit: Teton Bear Smart



Photo Credit: Rocky Mountain Front Ranchlands Group