

**Yellowstone Grizzly Coordinating Committee
Snow King Resort in Jackson, Wyoming
October 24-25, 2007**

Member Attendees:

Becky Aus
Tim Bozorth
Maureen Davey
Max Ethridge
Tom Puchlerz for Mary Erickson
Pat Flowers
Kniffy Hamilton
Pat Hickerson
Ann Belleman for Brian Kelly
Wendy Reynolds for Joe Kraayenbrink
Tom Olliff for Suzanne Lewis

Paul Romrell
Bill Rudd
Dennis Saville
Steve Schmidt
Chuck Schwartz
Mary Gibson-Scott
Chris Servheen
Mike Stewart
Larry Timchak
Leander Watson
Mark Petroni
Gregg Losinski

Public Attendees:

Monica Fella
Mark Bruscano
Dennis Oden
Janet Barwick
Louisa Willcox
Bryan Aber
Mark Orme
Terry Hershey
Kim Barber
Zach Turnbull
Glen Guenther
Theresa Mathis
Pat Hnilicka
Arnold Dood
Mark Haroldson
Dan Bjornlie

Pam Buline
Steve Cain
Lynette Otto
Marion Cherry
Virginia Kelly
Tim Bennett
Steve Cherry
Kerry Gunther
Kevin Frey
Tara Hodges
Jeff Kershner
Melissa Harrison
Matt Evans
Rhonda Crumley
Susan Rupert
Lynn Ballard

Larry Timchak welcomed the group. The members and public attendees introduced themselves. Pat Flowers was presented with a leather vest as thanks for his service as Chair of YES.

Larry kicked off the meeting by stating that the coordinated management that contributed to the delisting is just as important in a delisted environment to be successful with management of the grizzly bear. He thanked members for contributing their time to this important effort.

The group elected a chair and vice chair to represent the group. Beck Aus nominated Larry Timchak to be the chair, Kniffy Hamilton seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved. The vice chair assumes the chair after 2 years. Paul Romrell nominated Steve Schmidt. Pat Flowers seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Charter – Larry requested comments on the draft Charter for the YGCC. Max Ethridge recommend removing the words “Biological Resources Division of the” which was the beginning of the forth bullet statement on page 3. That bullet statement will now read, “U.S. Geological Survey (Members appointed by Regional Director, USGS).”

Bill Rudd motioned to approve the charter. Becky Aus seconded the motion. The Charter was approved unanimously.

Pat Flowers asked if the Charter is a signed document. A vote was taken and everyone agreed that the Charter did not need to be a signed document. Bill Rudd asked if Larry would sign and date the Charter as approved by the committee. Larry agreed to sign and date the Charter.

Meeting Location – Larry asked if the meetings should be moved around the GYA. Pat Flowers explained that the idea had been tried in the past and there was the same or less participation at the different locations. In 2005, the meetings were switched back to alternating between Jackson and Bozeman. People were open to the idea of other areas but it was simpler to keep with the rotation. Tim Bozorth commented that some of the areas didn't receive public participation. Steve Schmidt asked if it was different people who participated. Greg Losinski commented that it was the same public who showed up regardless of the location. Becky Aus mentioned that one of the reasons for moving the meetings was that the grizzly bears are expanding and it was an opportunity to provide more access to the committee. The committee agreed to keep the meetings in Jackson and Bozeman retaining the option to move the meetings around as needed.

Committee Members - Larry reviewed how members of the committee were selected. It was recommended that Jim Claar, Forest Service Carnivore Leader, be added as an ex-officio member. Chris Servheen requested that a tribal member from the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Wind Rivers be added to the committee. Both recommendations were accepted.

Agenda/YGCC letterhead - Larry requested feedback on the new letterhead reflected on the agenda. Wendy Reynolds mentioned that the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho tribes be added to the letterhead. If there are any other comments or suggestions, please send them to Rhonda Crumley at rcrumley@fs.fed.us .

FY07 Accomplishments - Larry opened the discussion of key accomplishments to be included in the report for '07. Suggestions included:

- Delisting of the Grizzly Bear
- Forest Plan amendment approval

Becky Aus requested that each Forest send their reporting accomplishments to Larry. This information has been collected separate from the meeting in the past. Pat Flowers suggested that the committee review the action items for FY07.

Five Year Work Plan:

Trust Fund – Establishment of a Trust Fund to help finance grizzly bear management was discussed. Chris Servheen went to Washington DC to meet with the delegation members and officials to discuss a trust fund to help implement the Conservation Strategy. Though no financial commitments were made, work needs to continue to develop this concept. The trust fund could be expanded to include other species such as wolves. Larry stated that this item needs to carry forward into FY08.

Education and Awareness - There was a lot of work completed with education, awareness and sanitation efforts. Larry requested that each unit submit a report on their education and sanitation efforts to him.

Cumulative Effects modeling - Kim Barber confirmed that “Organize a workshop/training session in the Ecosystem to train new practitioners in the operation of the grizzly CEM model and methods to conduct the access and secure habitat analyses required by the Conservation Strategy” was completed. Kim mentioned that the software for the GIS has been updated. He suggested that some of the items be removed from the action plan as the items are what the ID team does as their program of work. Kim will provide to Larry what items should be included in the action plan. He will also provide an update on the projects the team is currently working on.

Adopt Food Storage Order – Pat Flowers commented that the Montana State Lands food storage order will not be complete and should be carried over into FY08. The Caribou-Targhee NF will implement a food storage order early spring of 2008. With the addition of this food storage order most of the currently occupied habitat will be covered.

If there are any other items to be included in the Action Plans to send a message to Larry at ltimchak@fs.fed.us .

A question surfaced about the Western Watershed lawsuit concerning sheep grazing in the Centennial Mountains by the USDA Sheep Experimental Station near Dubois, Idaho. Larry briefed group on lawsuit that challenges NEPA sufficiency and ESA compliance of Sheep Station grazing program. Contact Larry or Mark Orme of the Caribou-Targhee for additional information.

Larry will present a report at IGBC meeting in Missoula on December 11. Please provide information for the accomplishment report to Larry by November 30.

Annual Report from IGBST – Presented by Chuck Schwartz
[IGBST Summary for YGCC 10-24-07.pdf](#)

Public Comments -

Lousia Willcox asked what efforts are underway to track the impact of development on grizzly bear habitat. Chuck Schwartz explained that protocols are in the process of being developed. Monitoring will track loss of habitat due to development within occupied grizzly bear habitat.

Paul Romrell questioned implications of continued 5% grizzly bear population growth rate and potential future range for the bear. Are they going to be denser in the areas where they are already established or are they going to travel further to the outreaches? Chuck Schwartz commented that bears will disperse into areas regardless of the density. The boundaries of where bears live and where people live will depend on the people. If humans are going to live in bear habitat then commissioners need to be thinking of programs that minimize potential conflict with bears. There will always be problem bears but we can work together to reduce conflicts and risk.

Janet Barwick announced the Jackson Hole Daily and other newspapers around the region are printing ads sponsored by the Sierra Club and NRDC notifying hunters to carry bear spray. - - Copies of the ad were provided on the handout table.

Bill Rudd thanked Chuck for his presentation- a job well done in summarizing the information in a way that is understandable. Thanks for the work that everyone has done to get us to this point!

Open Space Strategy for GYA – Presented by Dennis Glick, Paul Hansen, and Larry Timchak

Dennis Glick from the Sonoran Institute

Dennis shared information about the historic and planned growth in the Greater Yellowstone area, and shared key conclusions and recommendations. Further information is available on the Sonoran Institute web site at www.sonoran.org.

Paul Hansen with The Nature Conservancy

Paul has spent the last 12 years in Washington DC working on national policy. He noticed that we tend to emphasize what divides us and not what brings us together. The focus to work together must change. TNC is the 15th largest charity in the nation.

Summary – The critical habitat around Yellowstone must be protected. The challenge is to find effective mechanisms. If we do not protect it there will only be a remnant of what exists today. It will take all of us working together to accomplish it. This is a bipartisan issue. He has observed that there is very little distinction between republicans and democrats on this topic. Paul cited example of national Roadless Area Advisory Committee as an example of how diverse groups can come together to help resolve contentious issues. They have been able to reach virtual consensus on divisive issues that were unresolved for the past 35 years. TNC has identified 2.8 million acres around the Yellowstone area which need to be protected. The goal is to find ways to protect 1

million acres in the next 10 years. Active participation in land use planning decisions crucial.

The Forest Service Open Space Strategy – Presented by Larry Timchak

Larry shared recently released Forest Service Open Space Conservation Strategy.

GOAL: CONSERVE OPEN SPACE by cooperating across boundaries to sustain working and natural landscapes:

- **Protecting** the most ecologically important lands;
- **Conserving** working lands as sustainable forests and grasslands;
- **Expanding** open spaces in cities, suburbs, and towns; and
- **Reducing** the ecological impacts of new and planned development.

Four objectives will guide Forest Service action into the future:

- Galvanize and coordinate action by conservation partners and local citizens- be a more effective partner;
- Make open space conservation a top priority for the agency;
- Identify and protect priority open space in collaboration with others;
- Work with landowners and communities to conserve open space.

[Open Space - Timchak.ppt](#)

Comments

Chris Servheen commented that the open space strategy was a good example of how the YGCC should work. The greatest threat to grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone is private land development.

Dennis Glick mentioned that he will spend the next 3-4 months working on county planning issues. He will be exploring innovative approaches and tools.

Paul Hansen commented that a lot of people who live and enjoy this area are clueless about the land management issues. Mary Scott stated that most of the local public and many visitors to the area just assume that it is being taken care of. Chris Servheen stated that the public has little knowledge of the impacts that developments have on wildlife. They don't think their house or their choice will make a difference. Dennis Glick explained that it's an education process. Mary asked Dennis if he expected to expand the community partnerships outside of Montana. Dennis explained that most of the work is in Montana but the Sonoran Institute will be working on an assessment of Teton County Idaho.

Paul Romrell mentioned that it is interesting to watch the difference in Teton and Fremont Counties in Idaho. The explosion in the Teton Valley is different than seasonal

houses being built in Fremont County. Fremont County has million dollar cabins being built but are only being utilized for a month or two out of the year.

Mark Petroni mentioned that in addition to loss of habitat, impacts of development on water quality are a serious concern. Development of land adjacent to the forest often limits management options on nearby federal land. Dennis mentioned that in Gallatin County the effects are visible. A poll showed that 70% felt that the county needed to apply zoning and take the growth seriously. They want to make sure that the farms and ranches are not being left in a lurch.

Wendy Reynolds mentioned the power transmission corridors in sage grouse and potentially grizzly bear habitat. Planned corridors may be quite wide, impacting and potentially fragmenting habitat.

Kniffy asked Paul Hansen how the TNC plans to protect a millions acres in the GYA. Paul responded by saying that it will be hard to meet the goal in the timeframe without multiple partnerships including federal help. There is a communication challenge as visitors and the people who live here do not understand the problem. It is also a local planning challenge. Private philanthropists are needed and others who will support large scale conservation. Multiple tools will be needed. To have others understand the situation will help facilitate TNC to meet the goal.

Lousia Willcox asked to what extent the Forest Service could take a more active step to mitigate impacts from development of adjacent private lands. Larry stated that the Forest Service must consider the impacts of private land development when designing projects, consider cumulative effects and fully involve the public. Mitigation must be considered on a case by case basis.

Becky Aus asked Dennis Glick how accessible his resources are to the commissioners and if he would be willing to go to county meetings and present an overview of the situation. Dennis said he would love to present the information to others but that it has to be scheduled far in advance. That is what the Institute does. They try to keep the costs down and as affordable as possible.

Pat Flowers asked where the federal agencies could connect to this issue. YGCC may need to refine cumulative effects modeling to better track impacts of private land development. Biologists do not have time to do cumulative effects models for all of the subdivisions.

Dennis Saville stated that Montana Fish and Wildlife has hired a planner to focus on land development issues. The goal is to take a more proactive role in working with counties to protect critical habitat.

Mark Petroni mentioned that the review process is hard for everyone and typically creates a conflict oriented environment. We need to take it outside of that environment and solve the issues before it gets to the level.

Larry thanked Paul and Dennis for their presentation.

Bear Wise Project – Presented by Melissa Harrison, Jackson Wildlife Foundation

Melissa is pleased to be working with Wyoming Game and Fish on this project. The mission is to educate the public about wildlife and the simple things they can do to minimize the impact on wildlife. Partnerships provide the public the opportunity to purchase bear resistant containers at a reduced cost. Getting the information out is critically important. Many of the problems are related to the handling of garbage.

[Bear Wise Project.ppt](#)

Day 2

Larry asked if there was any needed follow up from the previous day. There were no comments.

April meeting in Bozeman – The dates for the spring meeting in Bozeman are April 9 and 10.

Chris Servheen provided an update concerning a lawsuit on the delisting of the grizzly bears. No major action anticipated until later in 2008. Fish and Wildlife Service may have funding in FY 08 for implementation of the Conservation Strategy, depending on the FY 08 Appropriations Bill. The states should apply for Section 6 money. This money will be available for grizzly bears for the next 5 years.

Incident Reports, Sanitation Efforts

Mark Brusino - Wyoming
[Wyoming Incident Report.ppt](#)

Kerry Gunther - Yellowstone

- 700 road jams this year.
- 8 property damages in the park. Tennis shoes, tents, shed. A sow and her cub “pooh bear” had 5 incidents chewing up the sewer lines.
- 1 bear injury in Hayden Valley – a photographer
- 2 management captures of the same bear
- 2 natural mortalities
- 1 human caused mortality
- no road kills this year

Steve Cain – Grand Teton Park

- Busy black bear year
- This year the Park revamped its grizzly bear prevention materials and started a new program called Bear Brigade. The Bear Brigade consisted of one staff plus volunteers. This crew helped with road jams and food storage issues. The plan is to continue the Bear Brigade in the future.
- A lot of road side sightings – tagged bear #399 and cubs were seen a lot throughout the summer. They have no food conditioning and have been well behaved.
- 1 inflicted injury with #399. The injured person had 3 bites in the back but was ok. The injured party came upon the bears right after a fresh kill.
- Open camping areas currently don't have hard food storage containers set up. Next year it will be required to use hard food storage canisters in the back country.

Bryan Aber – Idaho

- 42 food related incidents – bird seed in a lot of cases
- 2 human injury conflicts – The first conflict was in April outside of Tetonia. It involved a male bear. The bear was removed. The second conflict was this fall with a bow hunter in Island Park. The hunter used pepper spray on the sow.
- 1 livestock depredation in the Squirrel Meadows area. The sow had been in trouble many times in the past. The sow and cubs have been relocated to research stations and Washington State University.
- We had a technician who helped with sanitation efforts. There are two Boy Scout camps working on getting bear proof dumpsters for the camps.
- Working with Sobeys to help convert the dumpsters in Island Park, ID
- Fish and Game and The Defenders of Wildlife provided dumpsters for the fish hatchery in Island Park.
- There is an Elk Shooter operation in Island Park where the gut piles were available to the bears. The bow hunter conflict happened a half mile from the operation. There were up to 7 bears feeding off of the operation at one time. The operation is now burying their piles daily.

Greg Losinski - Idaho Education Efforts

PowerPoint presentation provided by Lynn Dickerson

[2007 bear education.ppt](#)

Kevin Frey – Montana

- 2007 has been an average year
- Conflict total 43
- 2 mortalities – hunting related
- The conflicts started in March and have been going ever since. It has been steady through out the year.
- 2 management captures
- Have not had to remove any bears

- 3 human injuries in the Gardiner area – Two incidents involved the same sow with cubs. One of the incidents occurred in a snow storm. The bear spray was not as effective in the heavy snow.
- 10 year average is 51 conflicts a year
- 1 bear was caught in a wolf trap this spring

Larry Timchak asked if we keep track of the incidents when bear spray is effective. Yes it is tracked and the findings show that it is effective more than it is not.

I&E Committee Update – Presented by Greg Losinski

Greg reviewed how the committee is set up. All of the I&E folks from the different agencies work together and coordinate through the IGBC.

The committee has found that it is hard to move money around through the different agencies. Public service announcements and other information were developed and distributed this year. The committee will find opportunities to increase sharing and development of GYA wide products and information. Greg hopes to facilitate the communication and share the products and information. He asked that there be someone designated as the I&E contact from each agency. Greg will contact all the agencies to get a designated representative.

Chris Servheen has done a great job at getting money for the group. Please keep the committee in mind when figuring out your budgets.

The group put together a display on grizzly bears 3 years ago. This display can be seen at the Idaho Falls Airport. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks have a display available for use.

Sue Rupert mentioned that the Gallatin National Forest also has a grizzly bear display available for use.

The question was asked if an informational brochure on responsible landscaping had been developed. Greg said that is a product that the committee could work on to get out. The committee can coordinate with the biologists to start the development of that product. Great suggestion!

Habitat Monitoring Update and Role of Habitat Monitoring Team – Kim Barber

Kim reviewed the monitoring requirements. A white paper, a desk guide including manual requirements, and some forms has been developed so everyone is consistent in their reporting and monitoring.

There was a workshop in Cody, WY this summer where habitat modeling team members were identified. This team is included in the charter. The team will develop a Five Year Action Plan and will report their activities to the YGCC.

This summer they have been testing portable electric fences with outfitters on the forest. The group wants to see if it is an effective way to keep bears from carcasses. The success of the testing will determine if this is something they will promote to outfitters with carcasses on the forests. If you have an interest in testing a fence, contact Kim.

The team is trying to implement a star rating system on container products. This will allow people to make more informed decisions on the bear products available.

A database coordinator has been hired to coordinate with the forests. The coordinator will marry up the information in INFRA and the other databases. This will make it so multiple databases won't have to be maintained. This is a huge workload.

Kim will visit with the leadership teams of all the forest and parks so everyone is aware of what the goals are.

Public comments/questions

Lousia Willcox asked how many more bears have to die this year before we hit the sustainable level reflected on one of the graphs. Chuck explained that when the agency removes a bear it is recorded as one bear. If it is a hunter or similar situation it is reported as two or three bears. This year we are probably within a couple of bears before we hit the sustainable level.

Federal/State Local communication plans – Presented by Steve Schmidt [Communication Plans - Schmidt.ppt](#)

The dynamics have changed with delisting creating new communication challenges. How can we move forward? We need to develop a communication MOU between the agencies. This will document how employees and agencies will work together in different situations. A lot has been learned this year but there is still a lot of learning to go. Please be patient as we are committed to strong and frequent communications with the public and agencies.

Wendy Reynolds asked when the communication MOU would be out for review. Steve said that it is going to take awhile but once a draft is developed it will be sent out for review. The MOU will be most valuable for coordination between the counties and federal agencies. Everyone needs to understand the roles and responsibilities. Becky asked that when the MOU for Idaho is in place to please share it with the other states so they can look at it as a model.

Bin Items/Questions

Louisa Willcox asked about conservation strategy funding. Where is it reported what was spent as opposed to what was needed? Becky Aus explained that we don't track the money to that degree, rather what are tracked are the accomplishments, what we did as

opposed to what we said we were going to do. It probably tracks money to some degree but the reporting is really accomplishment based as we have not made the commitment to track the money. Pat Flowers commented that it was not part of the strategy to report the funding it has always been accomplishment based. Louisa explained that the point wanted to make is that it would show the short falls if we tracked how the money was spent.

Greg mentioned the online bear testing in Montana and asked who has to take that test. Pat explained that any hunter who is going to hunt black bears has to take the test. Greg suggested that all states look at adopting Montana's test or implement a similar test. Pat noted that the test is working well. The test is not easy and is an effective tool. Kevin mentioned that there have been minimal mistaken identifications because of this test. Also a lot of people want to take the test and they come in and take it for fun.

Larry ended the meeting by thanking everyone for their hard work and for everything that had been accomplished. He stated that Chuck's report was excellent. The open space topic brought up a lot of thoughtful discussion and interest. An outstanding job was done on the Bear Wise project. Steve's presentation made us think about complex management issues now that the bears are delisted. Thanks again for everyone's hard work and service. This committee is just as important now then ever.