



GOVERNOR'S GRIZZLY BEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

fwp.mt.gov/gbac

Meeting Summary
October 3rd and 4th, 2019

Pavilion Building, Kleffner Ranch
East Helena, MT

Table of Contents

Overview	2
Meeting Accomplishments and Next Steps	2
Meeting Summary	4
Thursday, October 3.....	4
Welcome and Opening Remarks	4
Introductions of Council Members	4
Introductions of Facilitation Team and FWP Support Team	5
Council Purpose, Objectives, and Structure	5
Public Comment	7
Afternoon Presentations.....	7
Day One Wrap Up	9
Friday, October 4.....	9
Leveraging the Council's Experience and Insights.....	9
Key Issues and Challenges.....	10
State and Federal Management Agency Priorities.....	18
Public Comment	20
Developing the Council's Work Plan, Timeline, and Approach	20
Council Member Reflections and Guidance	21

Overview

The 18-member Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council, selected from a large and highly competitive pool of applicants and named to the Council by Governor Bullock in late July, met for the first time on October 3-4, 2019, near Helena, MT. The Council's main task is to develop recommendations for fundamental guidance and direction on key issues and challenges related to the conservation and management of grizzly bears in Montana, particularly those issues on which there is significant social disagreement. The Council will develop these recommendations over the next several months. To inform its discussions and deliberations, the Council will hold 6 to 8 in-person meetings, engage with a wide range of stakeholders, review existing conservation plans and relevant research, and explore existing and emerging programs and practices from Montana and beyond. The Council will submit its final report and recommendations to the Governor by August 31, 2020.

At this first meeting, the Council focused on building effective working relationships and building shared understanding about grizzly bear biology, ecology, management, and legal issues. The specific objectives for the meeting were to:

- Build shared understanding about the purpose, objectives, and structure of the Council;
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of Council members, support staff, technical and subject matter experts, and the public;
- Develop an initial work plan and timeline for the Council;
- Discuss and prioritize informational needs; and
- Build working relationships.

In addition to focusing on these objectives, the first meeting provided an opportunity to engage with a wide range of people and organizations with an interest in the Council's work, including state and federal agency representatives, elected officials, conservation organizations, land trusts, private land owners, members of the media, and other citizens.

Meeting Accomplishments and Next Steps

The Council's key accomplishments at this first meeting included:

- Sharing the perspectives, experiences, and strengths that each member brings to the Council;
- Reviewing and refining the Governor's Executive Order as well as the ground rules, principles, decision-making process, and other procedural elements that will guide the Council's work;
- Building foundational knowledge around grizzly bear biology, ecology, management, and legal issues;

- Articulating key questions and themes around each of the seven issues that the Governor's Executive Order asks the Council is asked to address;
- Prioritizing the order in which the Council would like to begin addressing those seven issues;
- Identifying possible future meeting dates and locations; and
- Identifying additional voices and perspectives the Council would like to include in future meetings.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Council, FWP support team, and facilitation team identified the following next steps:

- Finalize bios for the Council's website
- Follow up on potential meeting dates and locations for 2020
- Make travel arrangements for November 13-14 meeting in Bozeman and December 4-5 meeting in Missoula
- Follow up on draft Charter, seeking feedback and revisions by email
- Provide follow up information on related events
- Follow up on communications tools and resources
- Gather information on priority issues and ideas for future meeting agenda development

Meeting Summary

A session-by-session summary of the October 3-4, 2019, meeting is presented below:

Thursday, October 3

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Martha Williams, Director of Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and Patrick Holmes, Governor Bullock's Natural Resource Policy Advisor, opened the first meeting. Director Williams started by saying that this moment "feels momentous." She then shared her appreciation for the Council members' interests, experiences, and expertise. She reflected on both the need and the opportunity facing the state, and posed the questions: "What do we as Montana's want to choose as our path forward?" "What does long term conservation and management of grizzly bears mean in Montana?" "What does it mean for people with grizzly bears in places that haven't had bears on the landscape in a long time?" Moreover, she encouraged Council members to really dig into the full suite of issues facing the Council, including human safety, conflict management, economic livelihoods, and conservation for the long term.

Patrick Holmes thanked the Council members for stepping forward to help find solutions for grizzly bear management and conservation for the state. He sees the Council's work as a "tremendous opportunity" as well as a "tremendous responsibility." Patrick also said that the uncertainty facing us requires new ideas and new leadership, both of which this Council is well-equipped to provide. Both Martha and Patrick said that they were committed to the Council's success and would provide whatever resources and support they could to assist the Council's work.

Introductions of Council Members

Following Martha and Patrick's opening remarks, Council members were invited to introduce themselves, share where they are from, and say a word or two about the skills, insights, experiences, and perspectives they bring to the Council's work.

The 18 members of the Council are:

Bret Barney	Michelle Dieterich	Kristen Kipp
Chad Bauer	Erin Edge	Cole Mannix
Darrin Boss	Nick Gevock	Heath Martinell
Jonathan Bowler	Lorents Grosfield	Chuck Roady
Trina Jo Bradley	Kameron Kelsey	Greg Schock
Caroline Byrd	Robyn King	Anne Schuschke

Council Member bios can be found on the Grizzly Bear Advisory council website:
<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbacMembers.html>

[Introductions of Facilitation Team and FWP Support Team](#)

After the Council members introduced themselves, the facilitators offered an opportunity for everyone in the room to introduce themselves, including members of the FWP Support Team, other state and federal agency partners, people representing a variety of organizations, and members of the public.

The facilitation team includes Shawn Johnson and Heather Stokes from the Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and University of Montana.

The Governor asked Montana's Fish, Wildlife, and Parks to provide administrative and technical support to the Council. The Council's support team includes:

- Gary Bertellotti, Region 4 Supervisor, FWP
- Hilary Cooley, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator, USFWS
- Cecily Costello, Research Wildlife Biologist, FWP
- Vivaca Crowser, Communication and Education Division, FWP
- Rich Harris, Grizzly Bear Management Specialist, FWP
- Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator, FWP
- Bill Schenk, Attorney, FWP
- Charlie Sperry, Responsive Management Unit Supervisor, FWP

[Council Purpose, Objectives, and Structure](#)

The Council then reviewed the purpose, objectives, and structure of the Council as set out in the Governor's Executive Order creating the Council (the Governor's Executive Order is available at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html>).

Following a review of the substance of their work together (the five broad strategic objectives and seven topic areas the Council has been asked to address), the Council engaged in a conversation about the process that would shape their work. To facilitate the discussion around process, the Council examined and refined some draft text that will be used to develop a Charter to guide the Council's work.

The Council was divided into a number of small groups, each of which was assigned one of the following issues:

- Principles and ground rules
- Decision making process
- Work between meetings
- Working with the public
- Working with the media

The small groups reported their thoughts and recommendations back to the Council as a whole. A representative sample of that feedback is provided below:

- *Principles and ground rules*
 - Look for the deeper interests behind people's statements and positions to find common ground;
 - Be strategic and focus on areas where there is a real need for guidance (for example, focus a greater amount of effort in areas that have just recently begun experiencing grizzly bears on the landscape);
 - Strive for tangible, achievable options that benefit people, grizzlies, and producers;
 - Recognize that there is no single solution that will work for everyone, so be willing to tailor solutions that meet the needs of specific geographies
 - Strive for durability to create a product that surpasses the life of the Council;
 - Balance perspectives across Montana; listen to understand those differences and how each one informs the Council's work; and
 - Balance thinking big and being creative with working within the legal and regulatory environment.

- *Decision making process*
 - Strive to reach consensus whenever possible;
 - Use thumbs (thumb up = full support; thumb to the side = will support in the spirit of giving a little to get a lot; thumb down = will not support, but will submit in writing a realistic alternative to accompany the group's majority recommendation) to gauge the Council's support for draft ideas and recommendations;
 - If consensus is reached on a recommendation, that recommendation will be forwarded to the Governor as a formal recommendation;
 - If consensus is not reached on a recommendation, that recommendation will be forwarded to the Governor as input; and
 - Once consensus is reached, Council members will not publicly dissent.

- *Work between meetings*
 - Create subcommittees or working groups as needed to advance the Council's work;
 - Provide input and guidance to the FWP support team and facilitators as needed to inform and support the Council's work;
 - Focus on building out the Council's ideas and not reversing progress made;
 - Stay up to date on any background reading, homework, or research that is needed;
 - Hold additional meetings, conference calls, etc. as needed; and
 - Provide ideas for future meeting presentations.

- *Working with the public*

- Provide a diversity of opportunities to engage the public;
 - Be transparent in the Council’s work and provide information about the Council’s work to the public at large;
 - Seek information, resources, and insights from the public;
 - Help Council members keep their local communities updated by providing support, resources, and information as needed;
 - Reflect on how different geographies within Montana experiences grizzlies in different ways (e.g., those who live in grizzly country, those who live in places where grizzlies will like be; and those who live in places where grizzlies are not and likely won’t be);
 - Encourage interested organizations to share the Council’s work with existing their existing newsletters and other outreach efforts; and
 - Explore different meeting times and locations (e.g., some evening meetings) to engage additional members of the public.
- *Working with the media*
 - Be clear about whether you are speaking to the media as an individual Council member versus speaking on behalf of the Council as a whole; and
 - Facilitate outreach and accessibility to the Council’s work on multiple media platforms at the regional, national, and international scales.

Those suggestions were then gathered and integrated into updates for the Council’s further review and discussion the following day.

Public Comment

Members of the public were invited to share their thoughts with the Council before lunch. A representative sample of comments includes the following:

- Consider evenings or weekends for future meetings;
- Provide PowerPoint slides and other materials for the public;
- Focus on security quality habitat;
- Consider bear mortality issues;
- Facilitate the reintroduction of bears into the Bitterroot;
- Educate the public about their individual responsibilities of living in grizzly bear country;
- Consider the challenges associated with more recreation on the landscape;
- Emphasize loss reduction through prevention and preparedness; and
- Focus on human behavior, including community engagement and empowerment, capacity-building, and education.

Afternoon Presentations

During the afternoon, the Council heard a series of three presentations focused on building foundational knowledge around grizzly bear biology and ecology, management, and legal issues.

- Cecily Costello, Research Wildlife Biologist at Montana FWP provided an overview of grizzly bear biology and a historical review of where grizzly bears have been living on the landscape. Her presentation slides are available on the Grizzly Bear Advisory Council's website at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html>. Cecily's presentation included information about bear movement and ranges, diet, and behavior as well as information about the six recovery zones and the recovery goals established for each of those ecosystems.
- Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator at Montana FWP shared an overview of existing grizzly bear management plans, including draft hunting regulations. Ken emphasized that management seeks to identify solutions that are "biologically suitable and socially acceptable." He also said he was looking forward to the Council's guidance on their preferred management approaches to a number of interrelated challenges, including: future grizzly bear distribution, human safety, livestock conflicts, property damage, nuisance grizzly bears, connectivity, and hunting. Ken's presentation slides as well as links to existing conservation strategies and Montana management plans are on the Council's website at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html>.
- Bill Schenk, an Attorney at Montana FWP provided an overview of the legal and regulatory issues that shape grizzly bear management, including an overview of Montana's Fish and Wildlife Commission, the legal status of grizzly bears under Montana law, the Endangered Species Act, and an update on current litigation involving the grizzly bear. Following the meeting, Bill assembled this information and more in a document titled "Montana Grizzly Bear Regulatory Mechanisms," which is available on the Council's website at: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html>.

Throughout the presentations, Council members were invited to share questions. Several of the key questions that surfaced included:

- What decisions can be made with respect to recovery planning for the Bitterroot?
- How should we think about bears in connectivity areas (i.e., between recovery zones)?
- Should conflict management vary depending on the location of the conflict?
- How much management input does the public have in a particular ecosystem/zone?
- If there is a problem bear outside of the line (wherever the line is drawn), what happens to that bear?
- What's the difference between providing recovery numbers versus percentages in some cases? Is one metric better than another?
- Can the committee get a copy of the draft hunting regulations? (Note: these were provided to the Council on the following day.)
- How does Tribal law fit in?
- What plan can be created that works in the scenario where grizzly bears are delisted?
- If a person shoots a bear in self-defense, how is that information validated?

- How are conversations about delisting different in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem the same or different than conversations in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem?

Day One Wrap Up

Following the presentations, the facilitators provided a brief recap of the day and a look ahead to the next day's programming.

Friday, October 4

Leveraging the Council's Experience and Insights

Recognizing that the Council brings a lot of experience and insight to their deliberations, facilitators asked Council members to start the second day by adding their voices to the information presented the previous day. Council members formed six small groups with three Council members each to explore the following questions (the public was encouraged to engage in the same activity):

- What is your connection to Montana?
- What Montana values are core to leveraging this discussion – that are likely common ground for Montanans?
- What is one thing about you that you want this group to know about you?
- What experience/expertise do you contribute to this Council process?

Council members then reported back the key insights they learned from one another, including the following:

- Regardless of how long members have been in the state, they share a love of the state and the values it represents;
- Though everyone has a different background, everyone is committed to the Council's common goal and is willing to work hard, engage in meaningful dialogue, do meaningful work, seek common ground, and be solutions-oriented;
- There is a shared value in listening, learning, respecting on another, having empathy for others' perspectives and lifestyles, and working through challenges and changes;
- There is a recognition that building understanding is critical to the success of the Council and to living, working, and recreating in grizzly bear country;
- There is a lot of expertise on the Council in the area of education, engagement, and outreach and a recognition that providing information and training on grizzly bear management issues is critical; and
- The Council feels a sense of urgency to address the many issues it faces and wants to make good use of its time together.

Key Issues and Challenges

Council members were then asked to reflect on the seven issues identified in the Governor's Executive Order (listed below) and to identify the key issues/themes, critical questions, and information needs they saw for each of those themes.

Issues provided in the Executive Order:

1. Grizzly bear distribution within Montana (including outside of established recovery zones);
2. Connectivity between ecosystems;
3. Conflict prevention;
4. Response protocols to grizzly conflict in different parts of the state;
5. Transplant protocols;
6. Role of hunting; and
7. Resources for long-term sustainability of grizzly bear conservation

Council members spent time at each flip chart writing out their thoughts on key issues/themes, critical questions, information needs on each of the themes around the room. Council members were then asked to prioritize which of these issues they would like to address first. As guidance, Council members were asked to think about what information was needed to build foundational knowledge that could inform other issue areas, recognizing that this may be different from what they might consider the most pressing or urgent issues to address. The public was encouraged to engage in the same activity on separate flip charts.

A summary of the information provided on the flip charts from both the Council members and the public is provided separately below, starting with the Council. For the summary from the Council, each issue heading is followed by the priority ranking it received from Council members.

Results from Council Members

Grizzly Bear Distribution within Montana (Priority Ranking: 1st)

Key Issues/Themes:

- We need to clarify the goal/definition of "grizzly conservation," (i.e., should the focus be on population growth or stability or some other measure?)
- This will need to be an evolving and adaptive topic as bears find new areas to expand
- Need education, management, on-the-ground tools, and patience
- Human safety
- Secure habitat

Critical Questions:

- How are population objectives determined for the six recovery zones?
- How do we engage with people who don't have grizzlies yet and are making it clear that they don't want them? Especially on the prairie?

- Regarding protocols for grizzly bear distribution outside of established recovery zones: how should we address local acceptance? how might we educate unfamiliar residents? how can we avoid conflicts (including with livestock, etc.)?
- Will the NCDE continue to house relocated problem bears?
- How do we facilitate grizzly bear movement into areas where we want them?
- What parts of the state where grizzly bears are not found now do we want to encourage them in?
- What are our ideas, goals, and targets for the whole state?
- How do we address having more grizzly bears on private lands and build tolerance?

Information Needs:

- Map of conflict zones with types of conflict identified and a history of prevention efforts at each location
- Canada's bear management plans, population, and related numbers.
- Explanation/revisiting of the population targets for the recovery zones and the reasoning behind each, including the difference between using a flat number versus sow with cubs.

Conflict Prevention (Priority Ranking: 2nd)

Key Issues/Themes:

- Human safety
- Secure habitat
- Recreation in core and recovery zones – higher use than hiking; mountain biking; other
- Recognize that different communities have different needs. Not a one size fits all issue.
- Conflicts with humans, pets, livestock in non-recovery zone areas will feed public animosity. How to quickly and effectively resolve these conflicts?

Critical Questions:

- What is the role of local/city/county/tribal government in conflict prevention? Ordinances? Law?
- What are things each community should consider?
- How do we communicate the need for social contribution to the solution? It is a team effort and a work in progress.
- What methods have not been implemented?
- Education is key. How do we educate recreationalists? Hunters? General public?

Information Needs:

- What resources are out there for additional funding and education?
- What is working? Why?
- What is not working? Why?
- What is the role of real estate developers and how do we reach new Montanans?

- What are existing tools and strategies? Adaptable to local environment and social setting? What science is needed to better understand efficacy of tools and techniques to prevent conflicts?

Connectivity between Ecosystems (Priority Ranking: 3rd)

Key Issues/Themes:

- Transboundary – need to know what’s happening
- Ensure there are personnel in place to manage grizzlies so that state and federal agencies (e.g., FWP, WS, USFWS) are not constantly reacting.
- Secure habitat

Critical Questions:

- Do connectivity ‘necessities’ apply only to male bears?
- What is the plan for the Bitterroot Valley?
- How will bears be protected as they move between ecosystems and settle in connective areas?
- What different approaches do we take on private vs public lands?
- Can we relocate non-conflict bears in these areas to encourage connectivity?
- Is part of the goal for connectivity to justify expanding recovery zones? Is this socially acceptable? If not, how to address this!
- How might we make “connectivity corridors” between ecosystems safe for humans/livestock/pets and thereby socially acceptable?
- How will communities in these areas be involved in discussions/planning?
- Which recovery areas are willing to take relocated bears?
- We need private land for connectivity. How to incorporate private owners? In addition, how are we going to approach this conversation so landowners are involved from the start?

Information Needs:

- What additional science is needed?
- How does transportation play a role?
- Consider natural connectivity vs transported connectivity for genetic diversity. Do bears know where they’re going? Any training of bears possible? What are the objectives for connectivity?

Response Protocols to Grizzly Conflict in Different Parts of the State (Priority Ranking: 4th)

Key Issues:

- Policy should be regularly discussed and changed as needed
- Funding!
- Responses need to be tailored to each area (e.g., is the area a recovery area, connectivity area, dispersal area, etc.)
- This will be challenging – keeping ahead of bear distribution. Need additional capacity, tools, education, etc.

Critical Questions:

- What other resources can we use to have better response protocols?
- How can we ensure that FWP is going to respond quickly and what is going to be done to make sure FWP bear specialists are fulfilling their duties?
- Will connectivity be considered in conflict situations, response protocols, and decision making?
- How to assure funding for grizzly bear conservation as grizzly bear populations expand their range so that they have a chance to be socially acceptable in these new areas?

Information Needs:

- Do bear densities locally come to play in response protocols and what authority do local entities/agencies have in decision making?
- What are the communication or outreach guidelines on responding to conflicts in local communities?
- Do all 7 regions have/follow the same response protocols?
- What are the current response protocols and do we have the ability to change them? Do protocols differ around the state?
- What's the role of the local extension service?

Transplant Protocols (Priority Ranking: 5th)

Key Issues/Themes:

- Need to consider the unique genetic characteristics of specific populations. Is this augmentation?
- State liability

Critical Questions:

- What outreach needs to be done on the issue of transplant protocols outside of recovery zones?
- Can we relocate bears to areas that want them? And not to areas that are already "full" and have limited resources?
- Transplants that may be considered new introductions in an area without a grizzly bear population will likely not be socially acceptable. How should we identify/define such areas?
- How do transplant protocols interact with recreation use/management/planning and other public land uses?
- What conflict issues are there in between recovery areas and what work can be done proactively?
- How can we determine which bears to move and how to give the bears the best chance of survival in their new home while making sure livestock producers are made aware of and given proper tools for conflict prevention?

Information Needs:

- What are the current transplant protocols and do we have ability to change those protocols? Can these be published and added to an education component?
- Which recovery areas can house more bears?
- What can we learn from other bear management efforts (e.g., polar bears)?

Resources for Long Term Sustainability of Grizzly Bear Conservation (Priority Ranking: 6th)

Key Issues/Themes:

- Coexistence programs must be fully funded and fully developed
- Long term sustainability will depend on new funding sources, including habitat leasing
- We need to revisit the policy on bear management more often
- The success of our recommendations will depend on the money and capacity to enact them

Critical Questions:

- What are the various funding needs and goals? What does sustainable funding look like?
- Will the legislature consider an expanded resort/recreation tax to assist with grizzly bear management?
- Can we improve and broaden existing partnerships?
- Should we look at general fund dollars to help pay for grizzly management?
- What incentives might there be for private landowners living and working with grizzlies?
- Information and education for everyone is key – how are we going to do that?
- A co-existence fund should include state, federal, and private donors. How do we generate funding from people outside Montana (i.e., across the country and internationally)?

Information Needs

- Need to define sustainability
- What are the Tribes, neighboring states, and Canada's bear programs and how can we learn from and work with them?

Role of Hunting (Priority Ranking: 7th)

Key Issues:

- This will be a buzz-saw topic. We need to be aware of the national and international perspectives and push back on this topic.

Critical Questions:

- What are the goals of hunting? Reduce numbers or conflict reduction?
- Could hunting reduce the stress (emotional, physical) on FWP bear management specialists?
- Could hunting provide income for research and management or prevention?
- How would a hunting licensing fee in one state contribute to multi-state coordinated management?

- Is hunting going to be used as a management tool for problem bears that have been selected for removal from the population?
- What are other benefits of a hunting season other than population control in recovered areas? Source of revenue?
- Grizzly bears currently associate hunting season as a food source – how to transition into a hunted species?
- How can we talk about hunting when we still have recovering populations and are trying to maintain recovery?
- How does hunting intersect with other issues, including connectivity, recovery zones, dispersal zones, and connectivity zones?

Information Needs:

- What is the Tribal perspective about a hunting season for grizzlies?

Additional Thoughts and Questions

In addition to the seven issues, Council members were invited to share additional thoughts and questions. Those included:

Key Issues:

- The Tribal perspective is critical to the Council’s process
- Special use permits in core grizzly areas (e.g., races and large events)

Questions:

- How and in what way do we generate funding?
- What is the most promising alternative for population estimation – tools and methodology?
- What is FWP doing to improve relationships with producers on the East Front and all areas?
- What is the definition for human caused mortality?
- Would it speed up delisting to include bears under the Secretary of the Interior’s changes to the ESA?
- What are the tribal responsibilities for grizzly bear management and conservation?
- How do we find and encourage ongoing research post delisting?
- It would be great to know who is doing what where. There’s so much good on the ground work going on at the watershed/valley level (Blackfoot, Centennial, Ruby, Madison, etc) Where is it missing and is anyone pulling people together to learn from each other, support each other and find out what we can do to encourage and support this work?
- How do we ensure inter-state cooperation in a post delisting world?

Results from the Public

Connectivity between Ecosystems

Key Issues/Themes:

- Land protection – wild lands; linkage areas – public and private
- Ag conflict reduction
- Education
- Transportation
- County planning
- Work to increase connectivity across highways in key linkage areas
- Develop and implement public education and outreach programs in the Bitterroot Ecosystem to prepare the public for the arrival of grizzly bears and to build tolerance
- Establish relocation sites in the Bitterroot

Critical Questions:

- What about Pioneer, Pintler, Sapphires as a connector? It is fairly central between the 3 major ecosystems in the Northern Rockies. The Big Hole already seems to have been chosen by bears as a connector route.
- What about demographic connectivity areas identified in conservation strategies?
- How are we managing the expansion of animal over/under passes? Who can be our partners in this from the public and private sectors?

Resources for Long Term Sustainability of Grizzly Bear Conservation

Key Issues/Themes:

- Habitat
- Connectivity
- Sustained funding
- Conflict prevention
- Stratify need for money in relation to objective, risk, bear density, etc

Response Protocols to Grizzly Conflict in Different Parts of the State

Key Issues/Themes:

- Adapt and incorporate new ideas
- Awareness
- Peer to peer communication
- Increased staff to respond to conflicts and proactively work with communities to prevent conflicts
- Proactive action to prevent conflict in the 1st place.
- Identify and implement more conflict prevention measures specifically with the hunting constituency (especially in the GYE)
- Identify cause of conflict, if any (i.e., attractants, operations. repetitive conflict in same area)

Critical Questions:

- How can we ensure that humans recognize we are the only ones with the brain capacity to affect change?

Conflict Prevention

Key Issues:

- Test new ideas – dogs, alert technology, social media
- Need monitoring and science to assess
- Carcass management
- Need sustained and abundant funding
- Need demonstration and collaboration
- Funding non-lethal preventive measures

Critical Questions:

- What is it that we are asking of the bears? Can a bear brain understand what we are asking?
- How can we help the ag community engage in non-lethal management before discussing lethal?
What is the role of recreation in griz country? Do humans just trump animal needs?
- What do the animals need? Thinking about running/biking races in grizzly dense areas as well as the PNT up in the Yaak.
- What is the Legislative role?

Information Needs:

- What is working? Riders? Electric Fence?

Grizzly Bear Distribution within Montana

Key Issues/Themes:

- Need adaptive management for expanding front

Critical Questions:

- How are we preparing communities (like the Bitterroot) for the arrival of grizzly bears?
- Prioritization of habitat – what areas are most attractive to grizzly bears?
- What are limiting factors/conflicts that can be resolved?

Role of Hunting

Key Issues/Themes:

- Consider perspectives of Tribal Nations in regard to trophy hunting of grizzly bears and the grizzly treaty (Tribal Heritage Grizzly Bear Protection Act)

Critical Questions:

- Is hunting useful for conflict situations? Needs more science and research including for sustainability.
- What is the role of hunting in relation to other takes (i.e, road kill, “problem” bears, etc.)?

Transplant Protocols

Key Issues/Themes:

- Need to identify relocation sites in the Bitterroot Ecosystem
- Local communication
- Criteria for when necessary to intervene in natural relocation

Critical Questions:

- What options exist at various scales (e.g., with the state, across state lines, internationally)?

Additional Thoughts and Questions:

Key Issues/Themes:

- Affordability of conservation and management programs to Montana economy
 - Economic drain/boost to budget of increased state role management
 - Economic drain/boost to rural counties and farm families
- Mental effect on rural society
 - Increase danger due to risk of loss of life
 - Increase danger due to risk of loss of resources (livestock deaths; livestock stress; loss production)
 - Total stress load on farmers and ranch families

[State and Federal Management Agency Priorities](#)

While members of the Council and the public were engaged in identifying key themes, questions, information gaps, and challenges, representatives from state and federal management agencies in the room gathered to identify the issues, challenges, and opportunities that they saw.

Updates and Immediate Actions

- A final draft of the research project on social acceptance is nearly done and should be out in the next month.
- For future Council meetings, we should invite federal and state support staff to sit together.
- Council members should be invited to complete the household survey on grizzly bears.

Resources: Funding & Time Management

- What are the funding needs, and how can we gather that information?
- How do we equitably share the costs and benefits across society (considering the various market forces at play)?
- How do we prioritize our resources, and what areas need to be focused on (e.g., connectivity and conflict)?

Conflict Response

- What are we as an agency (FWP) missing in terms of engaging partners on conflict management? How can the agency maximize collaboration with partners to efficiently address conflict responses and other issue responses?
- Should we have different conflict responses in different geographic zones versus a one-size fits all approach?
- Tailoring responses unique to each geographic area. Flexibility is good but more management is needed.

Communication & Storytelling

- How does communication within FWP work and can it be improved? (Information Technology doesn't grow as quickly as the department as a whole.)
 - Website
 - Media
 - Social Media
- How can FWP communicate better within the public? And with the Council?
- Who are the partners engaged in communication, outreach, and education?
- Does the committee want to see more public data?
- The Grizzly Bear page on FWP's site is outdated. What are the short term options to make improvements?
- How do we tell the story of ranch lands providing critical habitat through management practices?
- How do we tell the story of existing partnerships between FWP, Wildlife Services, private landowners, and NGO's who are successfully implementing proactive management strategies?

Science

- How do we address bear behavior and how can we help shift that behavior to make bears have a healthy level of fear?

Partnerships

- How can FWP help Wildlife Services be more successful in its work?

Other

- How often are the recommendations (plans) going to be re-evaluated as time goes on?
- How do we build in adaptive management?
- Are plans from other states applicable or not? Can we learn from our neighbors?
- Should we revisit the existing compensation program and how we fund it?
- In planning efforts, whether or not it would be useful to have clearly defined vision, or should it be mapped? Does the Council need clearly defined terms? Or can there be a collaborative effort in defining terms/goals/planning (both outcome and process)?
- What does the Council think about flexibility in management plans vs prescriptive outcomes (which would be more helpful for them)?

- Where should we have bears? Where should we not have bears (e.g., connectivity areas, the Bitterroot, established areas, etc.)?

Public Comment

Before breaking for lunch, members of the public shared the following thoughts with the Council:

- Let's look at the economic (drain or boost) scenario as it relates to grizzly bear management
- Livestock stress and loss of production from grizzly bears need to be considered
- We are asking a small portion of the population to carry a very unreasonable cost with the impending risks
- Loss of livestock is a real issue to think about
- Consider contacting the Livestock Loss Board for information on depredation in rangelands
- The big issue is resources and sustained use of resources (long term)
- The Council should look at long term ideas and solutions
- Connectivity and habitat, grizzly bear distribution, and conflict prevention gained a lot of interest during the previous exercise
- How can hunting solve the problem of removing problem bears?
- How can the use of over/underpasses be helpful?
- What are the existing policies around management? A deeper understanding in terms of how those decisions are made.

Developing the Council's Work Plan, Timeline, and Approach

After lunch, the Council returned to the topics of principles and groundrules; decision-making process; work between meetings; working with the public; and working with the media. The Council also worked through a calendaring exercise to identify potential meeting dates for 2020.

Council members started by reflecting on their overall intentions of "listening with curiosity," "leaving identity at the door," "assuming best intentions," and "accomplishing goals instead of arguing who is right and who is wrong."

The Council then engaged in a rich conversation about the meaning of consensus. Some of the questions and considerations on this topic included:

- There should be room for dissent in the process. We don't want to ask anyone to compromise their core principles. At the same time, we want to work toward consensus when possible.
- If needed, the Council might consider including weighted scores for the final set of recommendations based on the amount of support each one receives.
- How do we weight the voice of "the Council" versus the voice of individual Council members?

- Perhaps there's a way for Council members to support the Council's final product as a whole package, even if that member disagrees with some of the parts.
- Whatever the approach, the Council wants FWP to recognize the value of all Council input regardless of whether consensus is reached.
- There's a risk of consensus leading to "dumbing it down." Be careful to avoid creating generic recommendations just to achieve consensus.

Additional input and suggestions were provided on the topics of public and media engagement and incorporated into the Council's draft Charter.

[Council Member Reflections and Guidance](#)

To close the meeting, Council members offered some parting thoughts and reflections.

Generally, council members expressed gratitude for the organization of the first meeting, respect for one another and the diverse viewpoints in the room, and optimism about their work in the year ahead.