



GOVERNOR'S GRIZZLY BEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

fwp.mt.gov/gbac

Montana's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council Meeting Summary

December 4 and 5, 2019

University of Montana | University Center Rooms 330-332 | Missoula, MT

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Overview

This was the third meeting of the 18-member Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council. The focus of this meeting was on conflict prevention and response in addition to building upon previous work and conversations the Council has had.

The first meeting provided an opportunity to review and discuss the Council's purpose as described in the Governor's Executive Order: 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 first meeting also gave the Council an opportunity to discuss and prioritize the seven topic areas listed in the Executive Order. Based on the results of this discussion, the second Council meeting focused on the issues of grizzly bear distribution and connectivity between ecosystems.

The overall objectives for the December meeting were to:

- Continue to refine processes and protocols to support the Council's work
- Build understanding and awareness around conflict prevention and response
 - Provide current information
 - Explore informational needs and perspectives
 - Consider management needs and challenges
 - Begin to identify priority areas that can lead toward Council recommendations
- Gather Council input and guidance on priorities and next steps
- Reflect on the Council's overall work to date and make any necessary adjustments

Presentations and Handouts from this meeting can be accessed here:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html>

Meeting Accomplishments and Next Steps

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

- Gaining insights into tribal culture and grizzly bear management practices from wildlife managers from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and from the Blackfoot Nation.
- Building awareness and knowledge about grizzly bear conflicts and the protocols and processes for responding to and preventing conflicts.
 - Learning from and engaging in discussion with eight bear managers representing various regions of Montana regarding their experience in responding to conflicts and activities/methods used for prevention.
 - Hearing from land trusts, community-based efforts, and non-profit organizations about their efforts to prevent and manage conflicts.
- Sharing additional resources and experiences among Council members.

- Engaging in a discussion with Governor Bullock about the Council's charge and where they are in the process.
- Building in some additional work between meetings to clarify key terms and to draft and share some emerging ideas and recommendations.

At the end of this meeting, the Council developed a number of next steps, including:

- A survey, to be completed by Friday, December 13. It includes questions on:
 - locations for 2020 meetings;
 - interest/availability for a June meeting;
 - interest/availability for an optional field trip to augment the Polson meeting;
 - reflections on the Missoula meeting and guidance for the Polson meeting;
 - definitions for key terminology;
 - any clarifying questions that need to be addressed;
 - any newsletter items they want to share with each other.
- Self-assigned homework for Council members to review notes/information and to offer up any emerging ideas and recommendations, whether that's articulating an overarching goal/vision or suggesting a more focused area for consideration. The purpose of this task is to begin to develop a possible menu of ideas to consider and build upon.
- The facilitation/support teams will put together a directory of Council Members, Support Team, and Speakers so that the Council can follow up as needed with questions.

Meeting Summary

A session-by-session summary of the December 4-5, 2019, meeting is presented below:

Wednesday, December 4th

Introductions, Welcome, and Overview of Agenda

The third Council meeting was opened with introductions of the facilitators, Council members, support team, and the public.

A summary of the Council's work since their first meeting in October was provided. The Council meetings thus far have fostered learning and relationship development among Council members, in particular around the seven topic areas in the Governor's Executive Order. To date, the Council has focused on the two areas of grizzly bear distribution and connectivity between ecosystems.

An overview of the agenda was shared to set the stage for the two-day meeting. This third meeting focus is on grizzly bear conflict prevention and response (covering an additional two of the seven topic areas). The design of the agenda focuses on building knowledge and understanding through presentations and discussion, which will lead to the generation of ideas to inform the development of the Council's recommendations.

Council Member Input and Guidance

Objective: Provide Council members with the opportunity to frame and discuss their individual and shared interests and objectives for the December meeting and beyond.

- Reflect on Council principles, guidelines, and November discussion on finding common ground.
- Share insights and key take-aways from the Western Landowners Alliance (WLA) meeting in Alder and the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) – Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Subcommittee meeting.
- Provide Council members with the opportunity to share their reflections, interests, and objectives for this meeting and moving forward.

The Council and the public were reminded of the ground rules that were established at the first meeting in October and further refined during the 2nd meeting in November. A few of the ground rules reiterated were:

- respect other Council members, seek to understand their interests, and be empathetic to their perspectives;
- speak openly and honestly about concerns and opportunities;
- strive to resolve differences in a constructive manner;

- engage in joint learning;
- actively generate proposals thought to be workable for all;
- assume good intentions from others;
- listen to hear, not to respond;
- not bring any preconceived perceptions about Council members;
- set defined goals, deadlines, benchmarks, and objectives;
- seek tangible, achievable outcomes;
- recognize that every area has unique challenges; and
- explore solution statements that can integrate diverse needs and geographic areas.

The Council shared thoughts regarding past meetings, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem subcommittee meeting and the Western Landowners Association meeting in Alder. Several reflections from the Council included:

Alder Meeting

- Those who were able to attend the meeting found it to be very valuable and stimulating. The meeting created additional interest in prospective prevention tools, understanding available resources and research opportunities.
- Desire to see the inter-agency and landowner relationships identified by the Upper Green Group in Wyoming to serve as a model for lessons learned and applied throughout Montana.
- Reiterated and emphasized the need for more field staff to respond to conflicts.
- A lot of interest and discussion over the difference in Wyoming's compensation program for depredations compared to Montana's.
- The Council would like better understanding of Montana's compensation program in order to inform further discussion around potential recommendations.

IGBC NCDE Subcommittee Meeting

- Appreciation shared for the number of agencies involved in the IGBC and grizzly bear management efforts.
- Finding the balance between expanding human populations, urban sprawl and bear expansion is a difficult but extremely important endeavor.
- There is no one size fits all approach for Montana.
- Learning of the widespread misunderstanding over the differences between bear spray manufacturers and clarification of approved and effective products – versus pepper spray or using wasp spray.
- Meeting notes and presentations from the IGBC NCDE meeting will be posted on the IGBC website.

General Reflections since November Council Meeting

- Themes included:
 - Urban sprawl and development significantly increasing throughout the state
 - Private/public partnerships essential

- Funding increases essential from diversified groups
 - Incorporating communities in local solutions
 - Relationships key for prevention and response on all levels
 - Many lessons to be shared – important to identify those that are transferrable
 - Human safety remains priority throughout discussions
 - Smart recreation and tourism needs more attention as population densities increase including tourists
 - Need central location for general public to find information about prevention/education/response from all agencies and NGOs
- Some Council members have seen an increase in contact from the general public, which they appreciate. They are wanting to hear from and engage with their communities and wanting to bring those voices into the discussion. If needed, the support team can provide support to members in responding. For now, the Council members indicated ability to continue to respond themselves.

Tribal Grizzly Bear Management

Objective: Build understanding about Tribal efforts and perspectives on grizzly bear management.

Presenters: Dale Becker, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
 Gerald Cobell, Blackfeet Nation
 Stacy Courville, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
 Cassie Powell, Blackfeet Nation

Gerald Cobell

Gerald addressed general concerns about grizzly bears on the Blackfeet Reservation, a summary of his discussion is provided below:

The Blackfeet Tribe has lived on the larger landscape with grizzly bears since the beginning. They are very important to the tribe's history and culture. Development and increased human population including tourism is an issue. With more grizzly bears and more people, conflicts are increasing. The seasonal influx of people occurs simultaneously with grizzly bear activity.

The Blackfeet people don't call every time they see a grizzly bear. Seeing one doesn't always imply conflict for our people. For bear managers, this is a problem. We are not able to implement prevention methods if we do not know about these sightings. We get the call once there is a conflict such as grizzly bears getting too close to dwellings or cattle depredations.

The tribe needs infrastructure help to handle the increase of people in the summer that visit Glacier National Park. It is not just the tribe's problem, grizzly bears affect everyone. They need help from all to address it.

Dale Becker

A summary of Dale's discussion is provided below:

Dale would like everyone to understand the historical perspective about how the CSKT tribes have arrived at the issues we face today. The tribes have always held grizzly bears in extremely high regard. They are central to the tribe's history and culture. Things are more and more complicated with human development and new comers to the area. New development and new people who are not accustomed to co-existing with wildlife create ongoing challenges that need to be addressed. The tribes do a lot of outreach to develop relationships and prevent conflicts from happening. This remains a challenge to keep up with.

Dale highlighted several historical milestones related to grizzly bear management for the CSKT. In the mid-1970s, the tribal government discontinued hunting of grizzly bears. The CSKT were the first to designate a tribal wilderness area and wilderness buffer zones as well as primitive use zones. Within the wilderness area, there are 20,000 acres of a grizzly bear habitat that is closed seasonally each year to prevent conflicts with feeding bears and recreationists. This report provides a glimpse into that process - <https://www.wild.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/Mission-Mountains-Tribal-Wilderness.pdf>

The CSKT created a grizzly bear management plan in the 1980s. It has been updated over the years. They are currently developing an updated plan that will incorporate the IGBC NCDE Conservation Strategy (which the CSKT council approved this past fall).

Interagency collaborations have been and continue to be a priority. All projects on tribal lands go through NEPA to evaluate the effects on ESA listed species.

CSKT are working with Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) to create wildlife crossings on Hwy 93. Working on additional MDOT projects in the Ninepipe area to improve wildlife crossings.

It is important to keep in mind that the dollar value for depredation reimbursement is not just for its market value. Ranchers/livestock producers put a lot more effort in than the dollar value reflects. It is more complex than lost profit.

Stacy Courville

A summary of Stacy's presentation is provided below:

The long-term residents east of HWY 93 are generally tolerant of grizzly bears. There are many people living in close proximity to grizzly bears every day without conflict. Despite the high density of bears and the proximity with residents and hunters, in the last twenty years there have been only 3 grizzly bear attacks involving people. This is a testament to the dynamic and behavior of grizzly bears.

People in the Mission Valley have a very high tolerance for bears. Unless it's serious, they don't call the carnivore managers.

Recently the expansion west past of 93 has created new issues. Relationships with other areas and groups have presented new challenges on the west side of the highway.

Cassie Powell

Cassie has lived in Babb for most of her life. Coexisting with grizzly bears is a of life for her. Managing an apex predator is complex, but the grizzly bear is significant to the culture and heritage of the tribe. Every situation is unique, both with the people and with the grizzly bear. She works with all bear managers to help deal with different situations. She is grateful for the bear manager network, and collaboration and support are key in her day-to-day work.

The Blackfeet Reservation is 1.5 million acres with a human population of 10,000+. There are 66,432 cows that live year round on the reservation, not including leased land for summer pastured cows. Two full time staff work on grizzly bear management and prevention. That is a lot of area to cover, especially for depredations. We work very hard, often with no days off. "Being a bear manager is hard and I love it."

Electric fence is a very valuable tool for her management. Collaboration with Defenders of Wildlife and Wildlife Services has been essential.

Council Questions for the Tribal Panel

- What are grizzly bear population numbers in the Blackfeet Reservation area?

The grizzly bear population is not measured by local areas but rather by ecosystem. There has not been a specific count for the Blackfeet Reservation. The population in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem is increasing at a rate of 2.3%. The estimate is 1000+ bears in the NCDE ecosystem.

- Can you elaborate on the cultural significance of the grizzly bear for the tribe?

Their stories and their history is directly related to wildlife. Grizzly bears play a profound historical role in their tribal heritage. The bear is their brother and that is what they know.

- How can we increase tolerance and coexistence?

Every bear manager has safety as goal – both human and bear safety. Tolerance can be learned, especially in the native community. If tribal people lose their game animals or hide because they didn't store them properly, they don't generally see it as a conflict. There is acknowledgement that the bears were here first. We only started growing corn in the last 25 years. Now the amount of corn in the valley is substantial. It is very difficult to keep bears

out of the corn. People are losing money and they appear to understand that as part of the business given where we live.

Tolerance is often gained through education. We provide many trainings within the schools and at community meetings.

- Some people can afford losses and be ok with grizzly bears or some people lose enough that they give up on their businesses. What's the difference between the westside and the eastside of the Continental Divide? In certain areas they don't believe they can afford to be that tolerant. What are the other options besides tolerance?

It is important to remember that grizzly bear conflicts are relatively new, and we are still learning what works where and why. There is not a simple answer to this complex intersection of human and wildlife co-existence. Many of the prevention tools such as electric fencing, carcass removal, and guard dogs have proven effective. Much of this will be discussed throughout these two days.

Overview of Conflict Protocols and Conflict Response

Objective: Develop shared understanding of existing conflict protocols and response.

Presenters: Hilary Cooley, US Fish & Wildlife Service
Ken McDonald, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Kraig Glazier, USDA Wildlife Services
Jamie Jonkel, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Hillary Cooley, USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator

Hillary addressed the ESA's regulations regarding management actions. She discussed the 4(d) rule which addresses issues of "take", removal of nuisance bears, and take of bears for research purposes. The 4 (d) rule provides a guideline for how to respond to grizzly bear conflicts, removals, and management actions throughout all states with USFWS managed grizzly bears. These guidelines help the USFWS and field employees make a decision in each individual situation. Hilary stressed the importance of succession planning for bear managers as many of them are close to retirement in the next 5 or so years.

Ken McDonald, Wildlife Division Administrator for Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Ken addressed the state's obligation to follow the federal 4 (d) rule and how that affects state management. There are some Montana rules that may allow for protection of livestock through take, however because grizzly bears are a federally listed species, federal rules supersede state laws. Tribal authorities also follow the 4 (d) rule and USFWS's guidelines.

Ken also discussed many of the IGBC guidelines in place for handling bears that must be considered in conflict response. Ken referenced the regulations and policies regarding transplantation or moving of bears to other geographical locations.

Kraig Glazier, Western District Supervisor for USDA Wildlife Services

Kraig began his presentation with discussion of funding for Wildlife Services (WS). WS gets about half of its funding from federal appropriations, state funding, and other agencies. The other half of the funding comes from per capita taxes, livestock taxes, and the livestock industry.

Kraig emphasized that Wildlife Services has no regulatory capacity. They are entirely a service agency. WS has Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with each of the regulating and governing agencies to allow them to conduct their work, including USFWS and MT FWP.

The Livestock Loss Board is a State of Montana managed agency, under the Department of Livestock. Decisions regarding which species and how much is reimbursed due to depredation is decided by the Livestock Loss Board and Montana State. The decision for how much to reimburse a depredation and the funding available is not determined by WS. Some investigations (to determine if depredation is confirmed grizzly or other cause) are co-investigated FWP staff depending on livestock owner requests and available personnel. WS gives their investigative report of a depredation to the landowner. The landowner decides whether or not to pursue reimbursement.

Jamie Jonkel, Bear Management Specialist for FWP based in Region 2, Missoula, MT

Jamie discussed his process for handling conflict calls.

Jamie described 3 types of conflict calls:

1. Depredations,
2. Human injuries, and
3. Residential or Agricultural complaints.

Depredations have a protocol for confirmation to determine if compensation is possible. As mentioned above, this is handled by Wildlife Services.

Human injuries are specifically handled by the Wildlife-Human Attack Response Team (WHART).

Jamie primarily discussed his protocol for handling calls in the category of residential or agricultural complaints. He receives calls, complaints, or comments primarily via agency referrals, Facebook, wardens, and neighbors. Jamie emphasized the many relationships and programs that work to respond to and prevent conflicts. Much of his work is dynamic and requires a fluid response to the many different types of calls he receives. Relationships, trust, and collaboration are key.

Types of Conflicts and Methods to Address Them

Objective: Understand the types of conflicts (e.g., livestock depredation, residential site conflicts, hunter-recreation conflicts) and how grizzly bear managers work to respond to and prevent these conflicts.

Panel of Bear Managers: Kim Annis, Montana FWP, Libby
Stacy Courville, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
Jamie Jonkel, Montana FWP
Mike Madel, Montana FWP
Tim Manley, Montana FWP
Cassie Powell, Blackfeet Nation, Browning
Wesley Sarmento, Montana FWP
John Waller, Glacier National Park, West Glacier

Guiding questions:

- *What kinds of conflicts are there? Where are they? How prevalent are they?*
- *How are bear managers addressing these conflicts from both a response and a prevention perspective?*
- *What is working?*
- *What challenges and opportunities do bear managers face? Which are unique to their region and which ones are consistent throughout the state?*
- *Where do bear managers see the greatest opportunity for this Council to make a difference?*

Tim Manley, Grizzly Bear Management Specialist for Region 1 out of Kalispell, MT

Tim has worked as a grizzly bear manager since 1993. In his area, Tim has a lot of work associated with seasonal (2nd home) land owners, tourism areas, and garbage. Tim asked the Council to identify what they see as a conflict. He also asked the Council to think about what feedback/realistic alternatives they might recommend for conflict response?

Bird feeders, garbage, chickens, hobby farms, and seasonal homes are Tim's primary conflict issues. Tim also has to address property damage related to the above conflict issues. Electric fence, one on one prevention, scare devices, hazing, and attraction removal are all very effective tools at minimizing conflicts in his area. Tim works very closely with landowners, the public, local NGO's, recreation groups and many others to encourage prevention and awareness.

Tim's primary challenges are the large number of people living in the area, the large turnover of residents and tourism in the area, as well as a lack of funding to keep a bear technician on staff.

Mike Madel, Grizzly Bear Management Specialist for Region 4, Rocky Mountain Front

Mike primarily deals with conflicts involving beehives, sheds, livestock depredation, railway-bear mortalities, and hunter-grizzly bear encounters. Conflicts over time have shaped people's attitudes. His job initially was to prevent human-bear conflicts, and he spent a lot of time going to door to door to work with land owners. It takes a lot of time to develop the relationships with other people. It also takes time to develop tolerance, understand, and feel comfortable living with grizzly bears.

Electric fencing is a very valuable tool that has almost eliminated beehive conflicts in the Primary Conservation Area of the NCDE. Many of the tools available work, but not all tools work for every situation. With all the prevention tools available, some bears will still need to be removed and managed, as they can't be deterred from conflict.

Mike's primary challenges are a lack of funding for technician staffing, the expanding population, and management of livestock carcasses.

Wesley Sarmiento, Bear Management Specialist for Region 4, Golden Triangle Area

Wesley is the only bear manager who works outside a recovery zone. In his management area, most of the land is agricultural and privately owned. His primary issues are funding availability and application of prevention tools throughout his extensive coverage area.

With bears continuing to expand eastward, conflict will always be an issue. Grain spills are a large issue unique to his area. Other issues include human safety due to bears sleeping in shelterbelts around homes and livestock depredations.

Human safety is the biggest concern out on the prairie. There is little to no tolerance for any bear-human encounters, regardless of the situation.

John Waller, Carnivore Program Manager Glacier National Park

John has worked in Glacier National Park for the last 17 years. Glacier has the least number of conflicts in the NCDE, and that is attributed to very strict attractant food storage practices. The park has their own law enforcement and they can keep up on violations in food attractant storage. Additionally, the park has strict rules on tolerance for bear behaviors. Bears are not allowed in front country camps, they are quickly hazed, relocated, or removed to avoid human conflict. There are very few human/grizzly bear issues in the park.

Cassie Powell, Blackfeet Reservation Bear Manager

Cassie's experience aligns with much of what has been shared thus far by the bear managers. Cassie deals with waste management/sanitation, livestock depredations, human safety issues, and increasing bear populations. Cassie emphasized the importance of understanding the complexity of the job as a bear manager - it is a lot of time and dedication. It involves a lot of personal time and involves a lot of stress with few resources.

Jamie Jonkel, Bear Management Specialist Region 2, Missoula, MT

Jamie deals with a wide variety of calls from livestock depredations near Helmville to grizzly bears in backyards eating fruit and black bears entering homes. Jamie also faces issues with human population growth expansion into new areas, resident turnover, small hobby farms, and a large area to cover. Jamie uses many of the same tools as other bear managers such as electric fencing, bear resistant garbage cans, and partnerships with many NGO programs to help with outreach/education and area coverage.

Stacy Courville, CSKT Carnivore Manager

Stacy primarily deals with small livestock depredation. In addition, he has a lot of agricultural bears that have learned to live in and around crops. There are many old homesteads that planted fruit trees that now have no people nearby to manage them, allowing bears to become accustomed to fruit eating. The bears have become extremely adapted to fruit trees. People do not consider this a conflict. However, the bears may eventually cause conflict in other regions. Stacy emphasizes that the decision to do or not do something affects other managers. Bears are incredibly good at living with people in his area, and he has very few issues of human conflict.

Radio collars with Geo-fences is one of his most valuable tools for tracking bears and understanding their movement.

Kim Annis, Bear Specialist for the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem in Region 1 of FWP

The ecosystem has not met its recovery goals. The CYE has less than 60 bears. Mortality impacts their population extensively. Her area is 70% public land and heavily forested, where most residential areas are along creek bottoms. Current conflicts (mostly black bear at this time) include some agriculture, small hobby farms, and pig and chicken depredations. Conflicts are very low in the CYE, but the lack of the statewide and national attention to this area needs to change.

Kim's conflict calls are primarily black bear related, but her management of black bears is very similar to her management of grizzly bears. By managing for black bears in this manner, she is preparing the community for future grizzly bear management prevention methods.

Tolerance is typically based on a personal and individual outlook. It is very important to be able to work with and understand people.

Questions from the Council for Bear Managers:

- What are the biggest holes or needs in the programs? In the next ten years, what are the biggest challenges?
 - Staffing resources
 - Outreach and education on bear behavior and prevention tools
 - Cost and availability of prevention tools such as electric fencing
 - Operational budgets, funding for aerial surveys, and radio-collars
 - How to reach to people who don't know they live in grizzly bear country
 - Large expanse of geographical area to cover
 - Funding for staff, resources, land owner coalitions, prevention tools, etc.
 - Sanitation management
 - Capacity and complacency
- How do you see recreation effecting grizzly bear recovery, timber management, and access?
 - Assessing recreation impacts on grizzly bears is difficult to understand scientifically, in addition to its socio-economic impacts.

- Increasing recreation interests by mountain biking groups creates involvement by bear managers to discuss trail placement, human safety, outreach and education.
- On the East Front, the primary issues are with backcountry camps in heavy bear use areas.
- E-bikes are growing in popularity and have been approved for use on federal lands. Due to their speed and quiet nature, they are a risk for potential human/bear conflict.
- Could FWP provide a training program to train volunteers to help with certain issues to assist bear managers? What are the challenges associated with such a program?
 - The complexities of differing personalities can add extra stress to bear managers
 - A class at the university has the potential to be useful especially in training on prevention and education
 - Knowing how to work with people in stressful situations is a difficult skill to obtain or identify in volunteers
 - A program such as this has not been successful so far
- What are the food sources available to grizzly bears on the prairie other than anthropogenic food sources without Bison?
 - Berries, insects, native plants
 - Livestock carrion is a primary resource today
- What prevention and response methods are available and useful for habituated and/or conflict bears?
 - Prevention is key to preventing habituation.
 - Reporting bears before they get to this point can allow managers to start to address the issue before conflict occurs.
 - Bear spray is a very effective tool. Bear spray can be used to aversively condition grizzly bears to avoid people.
 - Teach bears respect of space and teach them to leave human areas even if they aren't causing trouble by utilizing safe practices such as noise, loud noises, bear spray, and barking dogs to deter them.
- How do we get the message out to people that hunting won't eliminate conflicts completely, and that proactive prevention remains important?

Roundtable Discussion on Conflict Response Protocols

Objective: Provide an opportunity for the Council to engage with one another, panelists, bear managers, and the support team to discuss challenges and opportunities, clarify questions, and identify the key issues the Council wants to focus on moving forward.

- What has resonated with you from the information today? How are you seeing the issue of grizzly bear conflict and response?

Comments from the council are listed below:

- There is an overwhelming need for people on the ground for response, prevention, education, and management.
 - Communication between agencies and people is better in some areas than others. How do we improve this?
 - What is the role of land/community developers and realtors?
 - Great appreciation of the bear managers and their work.
 - We need to identify very specific paths for requesting funding.
 - Public/Private partnerships are essential.
 - The grizzly bear is a very expensive animal to manage.
 - Dedication and efforts of the people who presented today is very valuable.
 - What other ways can we reach the public without the biologists doing it door to door?
 - A low number of conflicts doesn't necessary equal high tolerance.
 - The grizzly bear is of national interest, and we need to tap into this for funding.
 - Conflict is different throughout the state.
 - There needs to be enough flexibility in management to handle the different areas.
 - Land owners need to be provided with more options for prevention and response. Land owners need to be empowered.
 - There is a lot of frustration in areas where all the tools are being utilized and grizzly bears are not deterred.
 - There are more people and more bears. It is very clear that every situation is different. How do we build community, and how do we build solutions on the local, regional, state, and national level?
 - Some landscapes are new for people and for grizzly bears.
 - How do we take into consideration the difference between recovery areas and other areas, especially where private land owners make up the majority?
 - The Bear Smart program in British Columbia – a voluntary, preventative conservation measure that encourages communities, businesses and individuals to work together to reduce the root causes of human-bear conflicts.
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/environment/plants-animals-ecosystems/wildlife/human-wildlife-conflict/staying-safe-around-wildlife/bears/bear-smart>
- How Does the Council Want to Progress this Conversation?
 - We need to look at management as a state as a whole, instead of ecosystem to ecosystem
 - Emphasis on education and engaging local communities
 - Can livestock producers be trained to identify a depredation to reduce the work for agency staff?
 - Anything that can be considered a take can only be allowed by federal, state, tribal representatives. Can this somehow be extended to private citizens? This would require significant legal investigation and careful forethought
 - How can we help with the lack of confirmed carcasses for depredations? Especially if they can't find the carcasses

- If we began to look at statewide management, it strengthens the argument for delisting and connectivity
- Need for a central location for information & education needs to be made available
- What mechanisms could the IGBC I&E funding program utilize to help with education and information dispersal?

Public Input

- FWP I&E folks may be another avenue for information/education
- Considerations for why bears may not be valuable or important to certain communities, and therefore may not utilize some of these education resources being proposed
- How do we create space in our hearts and minds for bears, and we can't overstate Montana's large role in GB recovery with 4 ecosystems located in some way in the state
- Hunting related conflicts haven't been addressed yet, and hopefully the council will address this at some point
- Are there places we do and do not want bears? Is it possible to say that we can keep bears out of certain places or move them to where we want them?
- Remember that without connectivity, the CYE or Selkirk won't recover
- How many members of the council hunt big game? 8-10
- The question came up about hunting grizzly bears personally and the council doesn't feel they have the information yet to answer those questions
- Social acceptance in connectivity is going to be key that needs to be discussed
- Surprise that recreation didn't come up more in conflict management and resolution
- Huckleberries bring in about 1 million dollars in revenue every year
- The council should consider that bears do not care about state borders and lines

End of Day Check in with Council

- From a state wide perspective, how do we move forward with statewide translocation? What are the agreements that need to be made to allow bears to be translocated from one area to another?
- Curiosity about who is working with developers and developmental growth in the state. How do we incorporate wildlife into developmental growth?
- Request for understanding how the livestock loss compensation program works – the role of the Livestock Loss Board, Wildlife Services, FWP, land owners.

Thursday, December 5th

Welcome and Overview of Day 2

Key Take-Aways from Day 1

- Bear managers are over-worked and underpaid
- We seem to have different definitions of conflict. Need to ensure that we are using terms such as conflict in the same manner.
- Everyone is not going to agree on everything, but conversations should be constructive

- It is helpful to hear what is working.
- We also need to hear what is not working.
- What do people in Montana need to live with bears? They aren't going away, so what do bears need and what do people need to carry forward life with bears?

Programs to Help Prevent or Address Conflicts

Objective: Develop shared understanding of existing conflict prevention efforts.

Presenters: Bryce Andrews, People and Carnivores
 Gary Burnett, Heart of the Rockies Initiative
 Eric Graham, Blackfoot Challenge
 Russ Talmo, Defenders of Wildlife

Gary Burnett, Heart of the Rockies

Gary's work focuses on sustaining agriculture, land protection and connectivity. Assists with partnerships of landowner-led groups. Emphasizes that tools need to be flexible to address the unique and individual situations. Gary helps with building individual plans of work, finding funding through grant applications and tool expansion/application. He also assists with coordinating relationships and finding funding sources.

Council Discussion with Gary:

- Is there a full report Gary can send to the council? Yes.
- EQIP funding doesn't initially apply to conservation practices that would be applicable to these programs. NRCS would be open to looking to modify conservation practices to receive additional funding opportunities through EQIP
- What potential federal funding sources may out there? Such as the farm bill?
 - Land protection is an extremely expensive issue, but many of the other issues such as education and prevention tools are relatively cheap comparatively to land purchase programs
- What do you think is critical to giving capacity to these other areas in places that don't have existing organizations and start to create additional landowner-led organizations?
 - Connectivity is different on the east front. There is no other population for the bears to connect to in that area, and so the issue is different. Would need to start with people who are leaders in their communities and understanding the issues in their areas and the needs they want you to address.

Bryce Andrews, Field Director for People & Carnivores

P&C is a small NGO based in Bozeman. Bryce primarily works in the Flathead Valley area. P&C works to reconnect and restore large carnivore populations by working with rural land owners. P&C, between 2 field employees, covers the High Divide, the western divide up to the Flathead area, and southwest Montana. Tools that P&C use are: education guides and publications for conflict prevention tools, education classes and trainings, backcountry food storage tools,

livestock guard dog work, and distribution of bear-resistant cans. Additionally, they utilize trail camera monitoring to identify high-risk conflict areas and range riding. P&C is also working on new methods for prevention, such as treating for crop aversion.

Russ Talmo, Field Technician for Defenders of Wildlife

Defenders of Wildlife works to reduce conflicts, increase tolerance, and reduce grizzly bear mortality. They provide both financial and technical support to landowners. One of their largest projects is the electric fence incentive program. Since 2010, they have been able to install over 200 electric fences. Many of the referrals come from the bear management specialists.

Eric Graham, Biologist for the Blackfoot Challenge

Eric summarized some of his work that he has done working for the Blackfoot Challenge and in coordination with Jamie Jonkel. He then addressed the development of the Blackfoot Challenge and how much effort and time it took for the relationships to build. Originally the BC started with weed management, but today they work with everything from weeds, to wolf/bear management, and ranchland sustainability. Relationships and collaboration have been key to preventing and reducing human/bear conflicts. Eric invites the committee to come out with him to show off some of the successes and challenges the Blackfoot Challenge faces.

Governor Bullock's Visit with the Council

Heather briefly updated the governor on the council's progress to date. Each of the council members then introduced themselves to Governor Bullock. The governor asked for each member to share what they see as the primary issues and challenges along with anything they might need from him to assist with their recommendations.

- Great support for the creation of this committee
- There is a need to find common ground and to understand the variety of perspectives
- Gaining greater awareness between the differences and disconnect between rural and urban Montanans
- More resources and compensation for livestock producers are needed
- Discussing the importance of keeping the landscape intact and how vital the ranching community is for the conservation of grizzly bears
- Agriculture is compatible with wild things and wild places – critical to keeping open spaces
- Wanting to develop recommendations that incorporate an awareness of developing trust with Montanans
- The differences and variety across the state are challenging
- Concerns over the amount of work to be done in the short amount of time available, especially to provide the recommendations
- Appreciate that the members from the tribal reservations were invited to the Council
- Discussions on how to keep Montanans safe in the backcountry
- Losing agriculture land to development is a real challenge to both people and wildlife

- Social tolerance and perspective of some committee members has changed since the development of the committee
- Pride of the Montana landscape, even if it creates difficulties in grizzly bear management
- Would like to understand where all the current funding is coming from
- Grappling with discussions about connectivity in between ecosystems where development (increased human density), which inevitably creates more opportunity for human/grizzly bear conflict
- Wanting deeper discussion on how to effectively engage national support for funding

Governor Bullock responded with great appreciation and acknowledgement of the ‘herculean’ task within a relatively short time frame. Bullock encouraged the Council to create recommendations that can be immediately actionable. He stressed the importance of recommendations for the legislature. The very nature of having such a diverse representation of Montanans on the Council was purposeful. Bullock stated, “You are the leaders in the state in shaping this understanding and in struggling with the differences. This is what makes this process valuable.”

Education and Outreach Efforts

Objective: Develop shared understanding of existing education and outreach efforts.

Presenters: Dillon Tabish, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Laurie Wolf, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Luke Lamar, Swan Valley Connections
 Danielle Oyler, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Jamie Jonkel, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Kari Eneas, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Dillon Tabish, MFWP Region 1-I &E Program Manager

Dillon works to handle social media, press releases, radio shows, public requests for information, IGBC NCDE I&E subcommittee chair, and is the regional hunter education coordinator. Dillon discussed the many requests and needs for I&E, especially with the funding program from the IGBC. He noted that it lacks sufficient funding to support many of the requests they receive.

Kari Eneas, CSKT Biologist and UM Graduate Student

Kari’s research looks at grizzly bear conflict with small livestock. Her programmatic goals are to increase bear awareness and increase human safety. Through her work and those of others, they do a week long community Birds & Bears festival throughout the Mission Valley. This celebration begins with welcoming back migratory birds to the valley and bears waking from hibernation. They do presentations to 3rd graders, who then participate in a poster competition integrating the content learned. They follow this up with a festival to engage communities with

bear safety. Over the last few years, 400-600 community members have participated in the festival.

This past year, they partnered with People & Carnivores to host carnivore community meetings to focus on how to live with bears in the Mission Valley. They address that bears are in the area and explain what attractants are, how to store attractants, and how to use bear spray.

Luke Lamar, Conservation Director at Swan Valley Connections

Luke shared that Swan Valley Connections has partnered with the USFS and FWP to create Swan Valley Bear Resources (established 2007) to distribute electric fence, loan out bear-resistant garbage cans, help with community I&E, and conduct property consultations. Swan Valley Bear Resources hosts the annual Bear Fair to have biologists present various information related to bears, in addition to other NGOs, vendors, and bear managers. This allows informal and formal opportunities to ask questions and learn from others. One of the greatest challenges is reaching more people. Hosting meetings at local bars has been effective – meeting the people where they are. They also host the spring Bear Wake-Up Festival to remind people to store their attractants.

They also produce Swan Valley Bear News that puts out various information and newsletters for the public. They assist with USFS bear ranger work, such as campground talks and campground patrols.

Laurie Wolf, Education Program Manager at MT Wild Helena, MT

Started in bear education by default by working at MT WILD and having the rehabilitation center nearby. Laurie personally began to research and understand bears, and then wanted to develop programs to educate kids about bears. They started a program called Living with Wildlife that taught about bears, lions, and wolves. She then began to be involved in IGBC subcommittee work.

She stressed the importance and need for consistent messaging. The greatest need and demand for I&E occurs during the bear manager's busiest season. A working group was formed to create a consistent set of information to provide to everyone to keep messaging consistent. There is a lot of work being done on I&E, but there is not an education coordinator at the state level. One of the biggest challenges is coordination oversight, given there is not funding for a statewide coordinator.

Laurie shared the following documents:

FWP Grizzly Bear Information, Education, and Outreach – Current and Proposed Techniques
FWP Grizzly Bear/Human Safety Information, Education, and Outreach Plan
An easy guide and handbook for living with Carnivores in the Mission Valley

Danielle Oyler, Education Coordinator for the Montana Bear Education Working Group

Originally started as a working group in southwest MT, the Montana Bear Education Working Group is now a multi-agency collaborative effort. Danielle's position has expanded from a

seasonal position to a year-long position over 5 years. MTBEWG coordinates with national forests to help their bear technicians provide consistent messaging, bear spray training and food storage knowledge throughout the Custer-Gallatin and Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF. MBEWG employees consist of 2 people who work throughout the state, but primarily focus on the east front, high divide, and southwest MT. Danielle emphasized that the current program is not an agency held position and is not guaranteed to be funded each year.

Council Questions for Panels on Prevention and I&E

- Question about the distance learning program that FWP did last spring?
 - FWP, in conjunction with many others, provided a distance learning program last spring that incorporated schools and a variety of bear-related professionals. This allowed students to learn about grizzly bear issues and challenges.
- Question about why the MTBEWG has not worked up in the Cabinet Yaak area much?
 - We work with Kim Annis and others in that area, but due to logistics and contract objectives contacts are very low in that area. Work focuses on prioritized areas by contract agreements.
- Do out of state hunters get the same bear spray information and bear information as in state?
 - Out of state hunters do not get the same information as in state hunters. There is a gap of information being provided to out of state hunters. There is now an established curriculum for hunter's education that includes a bear spray component for Montanans. Montana allows hunters to obtain licenses with out-of-state proof of hunter education, regardless of what state you received it from. The required hunter education is once in a lifetime.
- Discuss Eric Graham's position with the Blackfoot Challenge, how it's funded and how it allows him to build relationships between FWP and landowners.
 - There is no other position known in the state that looks like his. Part of how the position came to be is Eric's work as a seasonal employee for both Jamie Jonkel and the Blackfoot Challenge. Due to Eric's diligence and time in the work, the position was made full-time within the last few years. Funding comes from FWP, USFWS, DOW, LLB, and many other avenues. It was not solely created by FWP.
 - Do you feel like the way you (Eric) are funded allows you to play a unique role? Yes, it allows him to be on the ground with the landowners, to share information between people and agencies, and continue to develop trust amongst land owners.
- Recently there has been a spike of conflicts in the Blackfoot, why is that?
 - Probably due to many factors, wildfires in the area, at least 3 bears became habituated, and new family groups of bears are in the area. The conflicts showed where there were gaps in prevention, education, and relationships. Eric feels trust was increased because so much work was done on the ground and the Blackfoot Challenge was there and willing to help in every situation.

- Are you all engaging the more local sanitation companies?
 - There are a variety of haulers and information that need to be engaged. Sanitation is a difficult program to start, and takes time to learn haulers, complications, and compatibility. The work is starting but more definitely needs to be done in some areas. Bear resistant canisters are extremely expensive, and the cost shouldn't fall on only landowners or hauling companies.
 - It may require a community regulation or mandate.
- There is difficulty in finding the NGOs and organizations. Finding people and funding is difficult.
 - Those in the education community are also struggling with this issue. The hope is the upcoming FWP summit will organize all this information and then provide it to everyone. While this summit is focusing on Montana, efforts will be made to indicate when organizations/efforts have a wider reach.
- There are definitely opportunities for better coordination that don't necessarily require money. But are there other things the I&E and prevention efforts need?
 - We have spent a lot of effort and time building things up. How do we keep this moving forward for years to come?
- Thinking about the social tolerance issue, is/are there messaging and outreach to people who are large land owners, but maybe not agriculturally based. And what are their needs?
 - There does need to be more work to share the story of land owners, agricultural producers, etc. Getting the story out is needed. Messaging is often more effective coming from neighbors, locals, and the general everyday public. Living with Carnivores: Boneyards, Bears, and Wolves is a film that helps to paint the picture about carcass pickup and the story in the Blackfoot.
 - <https://vimeo.com/131528982>
 - Education and outreach is often easier if you are the initial person called for conflict. Do we do a film/video/podcast about all the work and challenges in the state regarding grizzly bears, land use, compensation, agriculture, wildlife management etc. to share with the world the story?
 - Seems like a majority of the time, the major issues are due to a few problem bears. Tolerance could increase knowing that something could be done with these problem animals. Understanding that electric fence doesn't work in all areas. Ag producers face challenges from many arenas outside of just grizzly bears. There is a lack of support for ranchers socially and economically. There are things that can't be prevented such as calves being trampled due to a bear scare or buildings being torn apart.

Public Input

- There may be some misunderstanding between food-conditioned and habituated bears. Habituation is very common for grizzly bears that live near private land, most grizzly bears have some level of habitation.

- Kraig Glazier from Wildlife Services responded to some questions regarding the issue of compensation multipliers. Wyoming's general fund pays for the compensation program that comes out of sportsmen's dollars. The multiplier is specific to species, age class, and habitat type to compensate for missing livestock after Wildlife Services has confirmed a predator kill. For grizzly bears on calves, it could be up to 3.5 for 1 calf confirmed predated upon.
 - In Montana there is no multiplier, and you can only be compensated for confirmed depredations.
 - Wildlife Services is not responsible for the compensation program in MT. It is handled by the Livestock Loss Board, which is managed by the Montana Department of Livestock.
 - The original Livestock Loss Board was designed out of a recommendation from the Governor's Wolf Advisory Committee.
 - George Edwards, the Director of the Livestock Loss Board, is scheduled to speak with the Council during the January 2020 Council meeting.

- A council member asked for more understanding of using dogs in the livestock protection. Dogs can be a very effective tool for livestock protection, and there are many breeds out there that can be utilized for hazing or protection. But there are differences in individuals and personalities, and many breeds can be used for these tasks.
- Would like to see more examples and representation from the CYE such as understanding the augmentation program, what it is like in the CYE community area, and what living with grizzly bears means in that area of the state
- One of the largest differences between the CYE and the NCDE & the GYE is difference of having a national park within the recovery zone. Timber and roads are a large component of the CY and Bitterroot ecosystems.
- The Living with Wildlife FWP grant program was very valuable, and should be considered for re-funding by the legislation.

USFWS Update

Hillary Cooley discussed the fact sheet on Grizzly Bear Caught-in-the Act Deterrence Guidelines found here: http://liv.mt.gov/Portals/146/Grizzly%20Bear%20Deterrence%20Techniques_7-21-17.pdf

In a recent meeting, Jody Bush and others in her working group discussed 3 main issues to address:

- Is there a way in our current regulations for us to broaden what we do now for nuisance or habituated bears?
- Is there a way to delegate authority to people such as law enforcement for responding to conflict of bears?
- What would the best way to delegate potential additional funding?

Questions at the Forefront from FWP

- As per the request of the Council, FWP support team has identified some questions that FWP would like input from the Council under several of the topic areas in the Executive

Order. Charlie Sperry clearly indicated that FWP is not directing the Council by providing questions. These questions are merely a reflection of where FWP is grappling with these topics areas in order to provide transparency.

- The Council shared appreciation for FWP taking the time to create these questions and would like to see something similar from the other agencies.
- The questions from FWP were shared with the Council. They are as follows:
 - **Grizzly Bear Distribution within Montana (including outside of established recovery zones)**
 - FWP has stated grizzly bears will be allowed to occur in areas that are biologically suitable and socially tolerable. Does the Council see value in this approach? How should one define 'socially tolerable' and 'biologically suitable'?
 - Where does Montana want grizzly bears? Where should we be managing for bears?
 - Where should bears be managed for, or not managed for (where do we want grizzly bears)?
 - Should they be managed differently in different areas of the state?
 - **Connectivity Between Ecosystems**
 - Should we strive for connectivity between all recovery areas?
 - Should connectivity be just for the purpose of genetic exchange or should we strive for occupied habitat and established populations in what are currently considered the connectivity areas? Should the answer be different for different areas of the state?
 - **Conflict Prevention**
 - Are there recommendations that should be considered to help prevent conflicts? (e.g., food storage orders, mandatory bear-awareness training, stricter laws related to attractants in bear country, etc.)?
 - Should there be more outreach efforts and staff dedicated to bear conflict outreach?
 - **Response Protocols to grizzly conflicts in different parts of the state**
 - Should response to conflict be the same across the state, or should there be different levels or types of response (i.e. more or less aggressive) in different areas of the state or zones?
 - Are there certain conflicts that should or should not result in immediate removals of bears?
 - Should current protocols be modified to address the change in bear numbers and distribution since the protocols were initially developed?
 - **Transplant Protocols**
 - Should FWP/Agencies continue to move bears into occupied bear habitat?
 - Under what circumstances should bears be moved to 'new' or unoccupied habitat?
 - Are there specific criteria that should be applied before a bear is moved into either occupied or unoccupied habitat (e.g., only young females, or bears that have not killed livestock)?
 - **Role of Hunting**
 - Should hunting be allowed, and if so, under what circumstances?

- **Resources of Long Term Sustainability of Grizzly Bear Conservation**
 - Are current resources adequate?
 - Who should pay to cover grizzly bear costs?
 - Are there recommended mechanisms or approaches to help cover costs?

Facilitated Discussion with Council

- The Council would really like to see US Forest Service representatives at these meetings. The Council will think more about what they would like to hear and what role they would like for the USFS to have at the meetings.
- Some council members feel that the Governor's Executive Order is very clear and their goal is clear. There seemed to be consensus on this.
- Human safety continues to prevail as a overarching theme. Prevention is huge in human safety.
- A council member requested the bear managers discuss hunting seasons or hunting programs for bears:
 - In 1981-1986, hunting did occur while the bears were listed as threatened. The state implemented a special damage hunt for identified trouble bears who were marked for removal. Socially this was upsetting, but was effective in removing 3 trouble bears. In 1991, they changed the structure by allowing an early spring season male hunt from April 1st to the middle of May that was a random draw permitted hunt. 50 permits were issued, some to out of state and in state. Once 3 bears, were harvested the season closed. Then litigation closed the hunting season.
 - In 1993, there was no hunting of grizzly bears. In Region 1, they harvested a significant number of black bears, and there is still a significant number of conflicts from black bears. Hunting will not solve all conflicts.
 - Assumptions are that there are certain areas in Region 2 that a bear tag or 2 would help with tolerance. Hunting has the potential to bring in funding.
 - Hunting is going to be very unlikely in the CYE, Selkirk, and possibly the Bitterroot ecosystems, due to population numbers and listing status.
 - There is a lot of research that hunting of black bears does not equal reduced conflicts.
 - CSKT will oppose any sport hunting of grizzly bears in the state of Montana, no matter what.
 - The Blackfeet would not support sport hunting of grizzly bears.
- The Council identified several terms for further discussion
 - Bear managers provide lists of their definitions and descriptions in their annual reports
 - There is a conflict database for FWP also that contains definitions
 - Council members request that each member share their definition for further understanding of how members are using the terms
 - Terms for further discussion/defining are:
 - Conflict
 - Social Tolerance
 - Management
 - Connectivity

- Total Recovery
- Social Acceptance
- Long Term Sustainability

Wrap Up and Final Discussions

Communication Needs Check In

- Concerns over the delay in putting the agenda up on the website as per public feedback
- Would like to have the panelists and presentations videoed for reference
- Could/should we have the ability of live public comment like they do with commission meetings?
- Asked for a directory of all the council members, support staff, panelists and presenters

Key thoughts and take-aways from last 2 days for the Council. Next steps.

- Any clarifications you might have so far, please email them to Shawn and Heather so they can be clarified before the next meeting.
- Making great strides; Moving in the right direction
- Key theme continues to be lack of capacity/resources and social acceptability
- Perceptions incredibly diverse across the state; need to continue to understand the social landscape throughout Montana as well as neighboring states (ID, WY, WA)
- This is a complex topic, but we should also understand that we are not going to backwards. Progress may feel slow. We are right on track.
- Many of the Council members indicated they will review their materials from the previous meetings and begin to synthesize their ideas thus far as well as action items for moving forward.
- Excitement for the upcoming FWP education summit and the value it will bring.
- Some Council members have enjoyed obtaining a new insight to the perspectives and tolerance of other members.
- Social tolerance does not necessarily equate with reduced conflict.
- Identifying and connecting with NGOs and available resources is difficult.
- Small action items can occur without having a full handle on the final plan.
- Having at least 1 recommendation by the next meeting is a really desirable goal.
- There is a lot of infrastructure to build on, and the Council should take advantage of it.
- Is there a way to hear from other states (ID, WY) about their vision and process for their management development?
- Would like to have more engagement from the USFS at meetings.
- Would like to explore discussion of zero tolerance and how the National Park Service zero tolerance guidelines may be transferable in other public and private landscapes.
- Would like more understanding/information on the Montana livestock loss compensation program.
- Council will begin to think about potential working groups for in between meetings.

Next Meeting Dates and Locations

January 14th & 15th - Polson

February 26th & 27th – Libby

March 19th & 20th – TBD

May 11th, 12th & 13th – TBD

July 21st & 22nd - TBD