

Grizzly Bear Subcommittee – March 25, 2021 via Zoom

In Attendance

Rhonda Vogl, KVRI Facilitator & Kootenai Tribe of Idaho (KTOI)
Dan Dinning, Boundary County Commissioner and KVRI Co-chair
Chuck Roady, KVRI Board
Scott Soultz, KTOI
Josh Stanley, Idaho Fish & Game
Lori Roberts, IGBC, IEO, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Becky Blanchard, US Fish & Wildlife
Sarah Hendricks, Office of Species Conservation
Dave Wattenbarger, KVRI Board
Bob Blanford, KVRI Board
Karen Roetter, Office of Senator Crapo
Tim Dougherty, Idaho Forest Group
Ashley South, Yaak Valley Forest Council
Shannon Brinkman, US Fish & Wildlife
Brad Smith, Idaho Conservation League
Carol Kriebs, KTOI
Chip Corsi, Idaho Fish & Game & KVRI Board
Christy Johnson-Hughes, US Fish and Wildlife
Tim Patton, Private Landowner
Mitch Doherty, Vital Ground
Victor Martinez, Bonners Ferry Herald
Evan DeHamer, Idaho Fish & Game
Todd Higen, Idaho Water Rights
Darcy Lammers, Private Landowner
Merritt Horsman, Idaho Fish & Game
Wayne Kasworm, US Fish & Wildlife
Brandon Diller, KTOI
Jesse Grossman, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative
Norm Merz, Idaho Fish & Game
Jace Hogg, Office of Species Conservation
Jeff Gilberg, Private Landowner
Stefani Bales, Office of Senator Risch
Darren Parker, Office of Senator Risch
Karen Schumacher, KVRI Recording Secretary & KTOI

The meeting was called at 10:00 am 3.25.21 by Rhonda Vogl.

Rhonda read through the list of registered attendees admitted to the zoom meeting confirming that all had been introduced.

Rhonda introduced Wayne Kasworm. Wayne gave the subcommittee a presentation on the 2020 Field Season Results for the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Monitoring.

Of note was the accomplishments made despite the challenges had due to COVID. Wayne's presentation can be found on the KVRI website by clicking [HERE](#) and scrolling down to the 3.25.21 meeting block.

The sampling being done in British Columbia by Michael Proctor is on-going with the Eastern portion being done in 2020 and the western portion scheduled for 2021.

Questions:

Dan Dinning asked if the genetics from the Selkirk bears showed if they were the same bears that were identified before.

A: Wayne explained that he did not yet have that level of detail but that when he did, he would provide that. Wayne believes that the number of new bear/cubs would be in the low single digits however.

Dan also asked if the bear that caused the damages at the Lammers in 2019 had hair samples that got counted into this group.

A: Wayne confirmed that it would be one of the bears and added that the bear originated in the Cabinets.

Chuck Roady asked about the difference in numbers. 60 samples sent in and 250 confirmed.

A: Wayne explained that despite best efforts to eliminate black bear by hair color, some get in. In addition, sometimes the hair samples sent in do not have enough information to extract data.

Wayne went on to explain that the lab they are using is not the first lab they have used but that this one is run as a business by a man that has his PhD in grizzly genetics.

Lori Roberts added that other ecosystems use the same lab which increases the benefits to all as the information can be cross checked and added.

Darcy asked about the supposed population numbers in total.

A: Wayne said that is difficult at this time to calculate with the number one reason being that some go back and forth from B.C.

Darcy also asked about the location selection of snags/corrals.

A: Wayne explained that the corrals are moved over time. If corrals are productive they will use that spot, if no bears are coming in, they will move it.

Darcy wanted to know about the possibility of trying to collect hair on the bears that frequent the bench and valley with the knowledge that some bears are hanging out in these areas and not frequenting the areas that current hair snags are being set.

A; Wayne responded that although they are reluctant to put a corral with food attractant near populated areas, they would be interested in any opportunistic hair snags obtained.

Tim Patton asked about the impact of Forestry practices on the grizzly bear habitat.

A: Wayne answered that it really depends on the silviculture process being used and explained that the open road density and numbers of people getting in with motorized vehicles to areas that are restricted has a more significant negative impact and causes issues with mortality.

Chip Corsi was interested in learning more about the ratio differences in gender gathered from the Cabinets and wondered if there was information from the Selkirks to see if the same skew was evident there.

A: Wayne referenced the same kind of sampling work done by Kate Kendall in the NCDE Glacier finding that tree rubs early in the year are mostly males and there are more females later in the year. Most of the collection is done by Wayne's group in September/October in the Cabinets and the last collection is in September in the Selkirks. The collection times may affect the numbers and they may be missing some but are limited in what they can do.

Rhonda asked Wayne to verify that recovery is based on the number of females.

A: Wayne verified that and explained that it is the number reproductive females, the mortality rate and the distribution of the females that make up the majority of the matrix numbers.

Jessie Grossman asked Wayne to clarify the number of females he referenced in his presentation (5 in the Cabinets, 4 in the Selkirks) asking if that were all there were or if that were all that came back that year or if there are more out there and that's just how many he was able to detect.

A: Wayne explained that those numbers represent the bears they were able to detect. There could be more, but how many is tricky. He is certain he did not count them all.

Wayne concluded by explaining that the numbers of females (5 in Cabinets, 4 in Selkirks) were the ones they were able to detect. He supposes it may be around 60 – 70 % of them.

Rhonda thanked Wayne for all he has done and wished he and his team safety and the best of luck in the current year efforts.

Rhonda introduced Christy Johnson-Hughes, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, to give input on the Conflict Specialist that will be coming on board. Rhonda explained that the information was being brought to the subcommittee in order to get consensus on some ideas for the specialist as well as for the funding.

Christy shared that her offices provided funding for a conflict specialist who will be someone that specializes in human-grizzly conflict situations and will assist with education and information as well as prevention. That position will be handled through Idaho Fish & Game. In addition to the funds for that position, they have provided some funding for tools (i.e., fencing, trash receptacles) that the new specialists may need.

Christy indicated that they do not have all the information on the specifics of all the activities that may be covered with the funding but believed the decision point for today would be that Idaho Fish & Game holds the funds for the tools so the conflict specialists can access. Christy stressed that this is a starting point and they are trying to do this in a very thoughtful manner with everybody in the community and that the focus really is on conflict prevention. Her hope is to work with some of the

partners in the future to expand the pot of money for some of the bigger projects in Boundary County.

Chip Corsi of Idaho Fish & Game shared that they are interviewing and have 4 candidates now. They have a series of questions. Include emphasis on what experience and capabilities are with working with the public as well in conflict situations like were experienced in the past with bears getting into mischief. Chip also shared that they had come up with some in-house funds to provide housing at the McArthur Lake wildlife management area.

In reference to the funding made available for tools, Chip thought they would like to get input from community members, most likely through the grizzly bear subcommittee, to help determine what the priorities are for the dollars. Chip stressed that it was agreed that the money is not for big projects but to help the conflict specialist and landowner get right to work to minimize any further impacts as well as assist with outreach. It is anticipated that as the bear population continues to grow, so might our conflict situations.

Chip clarified that the job description is not a law enforcement one. The position is for 8 months (Spring into Fall).

Dan Dinning thanked IDFG and USFW for recognizing the need in the community and providing the funding and support. He stressed the need for flexibility in the consideration of the variety of needs that may arise as well as the hope that they can be autonomous and avoid long and involved decision making processes.

Darcy Lammers voiced his support for the actions being taken and felt it was very positive and in the right direction.

Rhonda thanked Darcy for his involvement recounting that So much that has been done is due to what had happened with a bear conflict at his home. She reminded the group that Darcy had shed a lot of light on the areas that needed attention.

In response to questions, Chip provided assurance that they were optimistic that the individual they choose would understand the challenges unique to our rural way of life and be open minded to what is being asked and needed of them. He also underscored the importance of collaboration between the new person hired and our officers.

Rhonda asked Dan if we could move to consensus.

Dan agreed and thought the points of decision were:

- Fish and Game will hold the funding dollars for the specialist and needed tools
- The system used will not prevent ease of a quick decision
- Expenditures will be used on temporary / small projects
- Nixle will still be used as information is relayed from sheriff to Brian Johnson or other conflict officer for dissemination.

No person voiced concerns or opposed the decision and it was passed by consensus.

Scott Soultz asked if IDFG would consider the coordination of other groups (Like Kootenai Tribe of Idaho) who may have tools and/or supplies that could readily be used.

Lori Roberts speaking on behalf of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee, as the Information Education & Outreach Subcommittee Chair shared with the group some of the approaches and ideas that may be of interest to our community. Her presentation can be seen at:

[Grizzly | KVRIID \(kvricollaborative.com\)](https://www.kvricollaborative.com) by scrolling down to the March 25 meeting block.

Brad Smith of the Idaho Conservation League shared that they are in the process of interviewing for a part-time, temporary contract position for this summer. The hired person would be reaching out to land managers in northern Idaho and western Montana as well as county solid waste departments. This is an effort to begin developing an inventory of bear resistant measures in place and needs to get an infrastructure in place to minimize the chance for conflict and habituation. Brad received feedback from some other agencies that the two areas are quite a lot to undertake at once so the decision is to focus on the 10 counties in Northern Idaho with this first contract. Brad will keep us up to date on this effort.

Scott Soultz shared the public service announcement examples that were developed. Kootenai Tribe of Idaho has provided the funds to run ads with the Bonners Ferry Herald. Two ads this spring and three this fall are planned for. Dan asked if anyone was in opposition to Scott putting these ads together. There was no opposition and by consensus Scott will put the ads together.

The meeting was called at 12:10