GOVERNOR'S GRIZZLY BEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

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Montana's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council
Meeting Summary

January 14 & 15, 2020
KwaTaqNuk Resort | Polson, MT

Table of Contents

Overview
Meeting Accomplishments and Next Steps....2
Meeting Summary
Tuesday, January 14th....3
Introductions and Tribal Welcome....3
Council Member Input and Guidance....4
Council Led Discussion on Key Terminology....5
Council Led Discussion on Emerging Ideas....6
Public Engagement....7
A Closer Look at the Bitterroot Ecosystem....7
Council Reflections....8
Wednesday, January 15th....9
Panel Presentation: Transplant Protocols (General)....9
Panel Presentations: Transplant Protocols (The Case of the Stevensville Bear)....12
Facilitated Scenarios Discussion (Council and Public)....15
Wrap Up and Final Discussions....18

Overview

This was the fourth meeting of the 18-member Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council. The focus of this meeting was on relocation and to explore and discuss emerging ideas thus far. The council worked extensively in small working groups and continued to develop and strengthen their working relationships and emerging ideas.

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 third meeting focused on conflict prevention and response, including discussions with eight bear managers representing various regions of the state.

The overall objectives for the January meeting were to:

- Continue to refine processes and protocols to support the Council's work
- Continue to build understanding and awareness around conflict prevention and response
- Discuss key terms and build a common vocabulary among Council members
- Build understanding and awareness around transplant protocols
    - Explore informational needs and perspectives
    - Consider management needs and challenges
- Discuss emerging recommendations from Council members
- Gather Council input and guidance on priorities and next steps
- Reflect on the Council's overall work to date and make any necessary adjustments

Meeting Accomplishments and Next Steps

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

- Confirm dates and times to confer with their small working groups to continue to modify their "Emerging Ideas" document;
- Ask the support staff to reach out to forest service staff to provide the council with additional information unique to each geographic region they will be visiting;
- Ask the support staff to explore additional public engagement opportunities in addition to the website and existing opportunities at meetings;
- Explore additional ways to share information, especially around conflict prevention tools, resources, and techniques; and
- Continue to work on how to address the questions the agencies provided the council to guide their work.

Presentations and Handouts from this meeting can be accessed here:
http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbac.html

Artistic renderings of the meeting are inserted throughout the summary. Credit to Chelsea Levin, University of Montana, MS Candidate, Department of Society and Conservation.

Meeting Summary

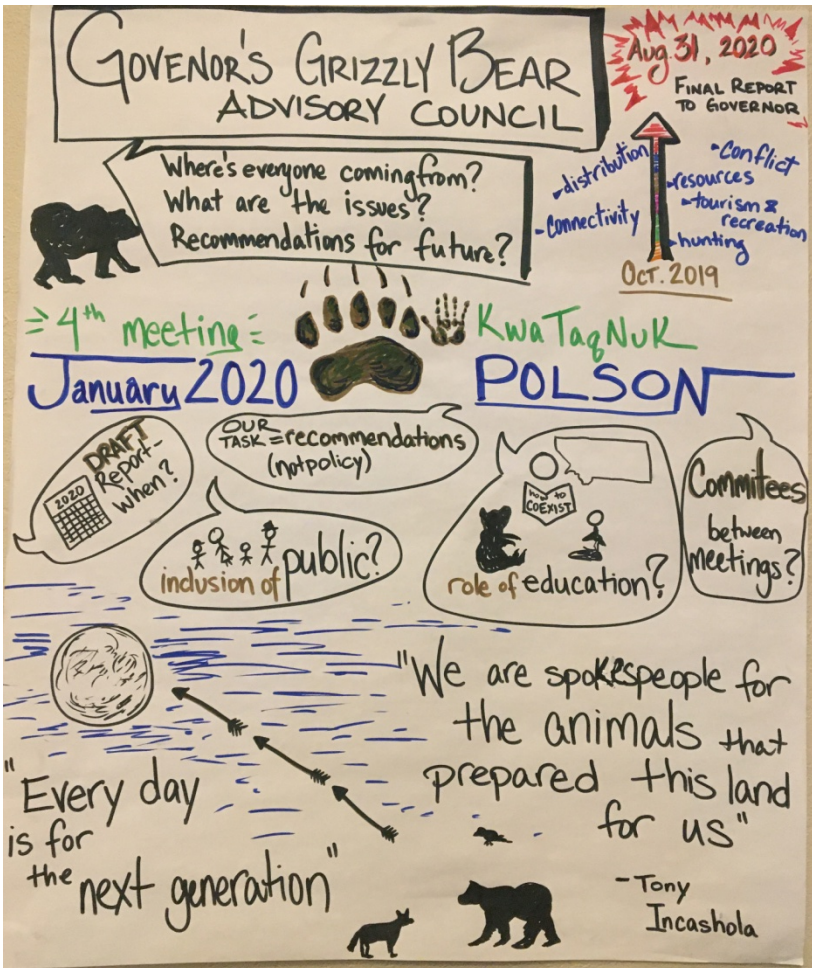
A session-by-session summary of the January 14-15, 2020, meeting is presented below:

Tuesday January 14th, 2020

Introductions and Tribal Welcome

The 4th council meeting was opened with welcoming remarks from Dale Becker, Shelly Fyant and Tony Incashola. Dale Becker is the Tribal Wildlife Program Manager for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) of the Flathead Indian Reservation; Shelly Fyant is the Chairwoman for the CSKT Tribal Council; and Tony Incashola is the Chair of the Salish Cultural Committee.

Shelly welcomed the Council and the public to the Flathead Indian Reservation and acknowledged the awesome responsibility the Council has to come up with ideas to conserve and manage grizzly bears. She indicated there are many lessons to be learned in terms of how one action can significantly impact an entire ecosystem, such as with the mitigation actions with wolves and fire suppression.



Dale Becker also shared some thoughts on this topic. He discussed how people are spokesmen for the grizzly bear and all animals. And grizzly bears play an important role in the tribal way of life and tribal culture.

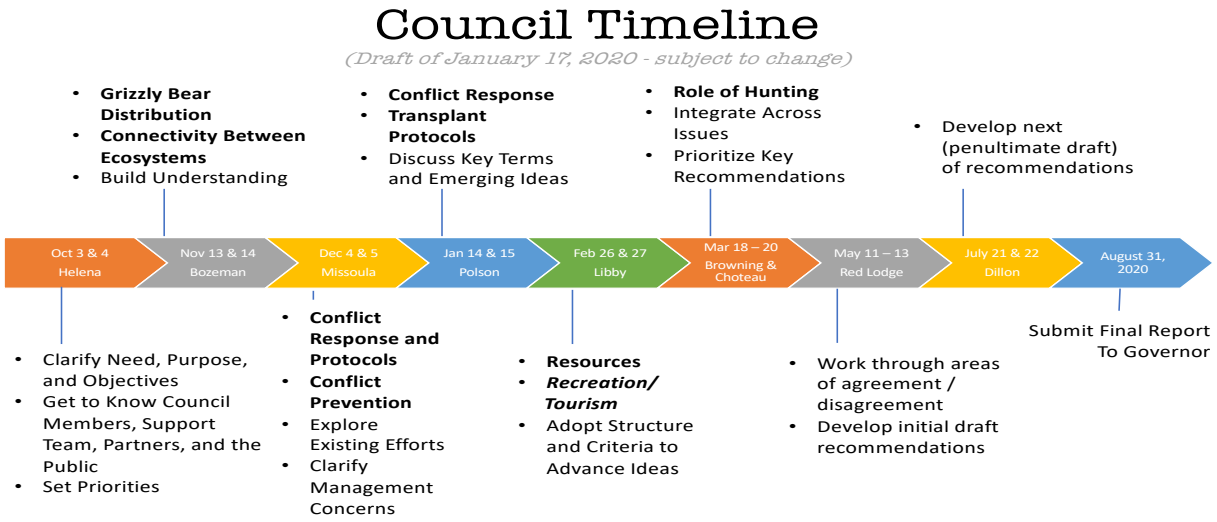
Tony shared stories of the historical importance and understanding of grizzly bears and wildlife in their culture. He has been working with the CSKT Cultural Committee for the last 45

years. “We have something new to learn every day. Every day is for the next generation.”

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 January meeting and beyond. Review of the timeline and geographic locations of future meetings

Timeline Review



Feedback from the council members:

- The council reflected on the benefits of building shared knowledge and understanding around grizzly bear biology, ecology, and management at the first three meetings.
- Charlie Sperry, FWP, expressed his support and the support of FWP Director Martha Williams, noting the great progress the council is making.
- The council discussed the timeline of the remaining dates and venues moving forward and how they plan to address all of the remaining key issues.
- Small group break outs are desired and important. The public and specialists may be integrated into these groups as needed to inform and support the council’s work.
- The council raised a concern that waiting until the Red Lodge meeting in May might be too late to start with a draft of recommendations and suggested instead that recommendations should start to be developed over the next few meetings. There was some insistence not to rush the process, but also to be aware of the time constraint in place.
- Want to make sure we don’t spend time re-inventing the wheel, utilize a lot of the work that has been done so far.
- The council is here to make recommendations, not the full management plan. More public input will occur with the develop of policy and any future management plan.

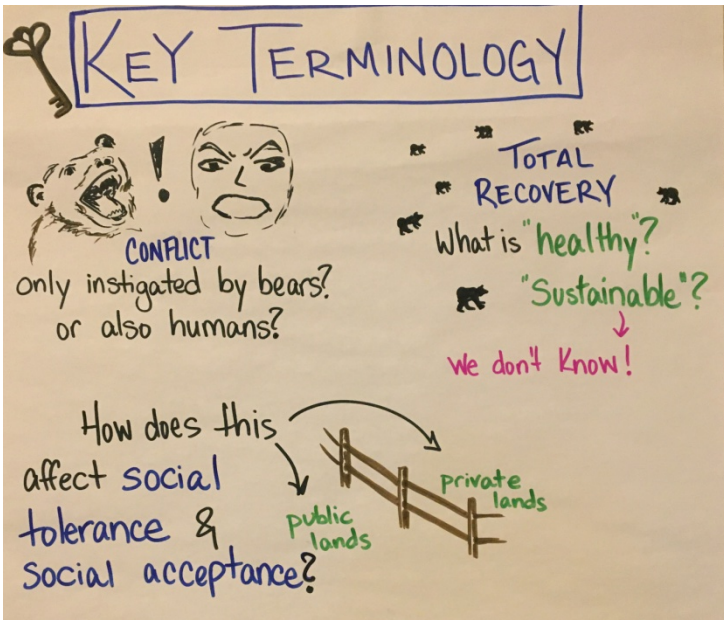
- Have a working document as the council goes through future meetings to help capture recommendations to help with the development of the final recommendations might be useful.
- Would like to see working groups in between meetings. And to make sure everyone has a voice. Want to make sure working groups are diverse and allow members to push their comfort zones and learn more about others' issues and opinions.
- Having meetings in different communities is valuable. It is important for people in the local communities to have a voice and provide valuable input.
- People need to share their stories to help everyone understand the dynamics of living with grizzly bears. There is a disconnect between people working in the field and understanding how it can be applied in reality. Sharing stories and real life situations is incredibly valuable.
- There is not a one size fits all tool or solution for all the communities.

Council Led Discussion on Key Terminology

Objective: Discuss key terminology, review how those terms are used and defined, and work toward common usage by Council members.

The council broke into small groups to review and prioritize key terminology that was discussed at the December meeting. For many definitions, they were able to utilize documents such as existing conservation strategies and scientific papers. The council found this exercise helpful in creating some consistency in their terminology use, but also in recognizing that some terms are inherently difficult to explicitly define. The council discussed the terms:

- Long-Term Sustainability
- Prevention
- Socially Acceptable
- Social Tolerance
- Total Recovery
- Management



Some definitions and terms were encouraged to be defined by the scientific community.

Council Led Discussion on Emerging Ideas

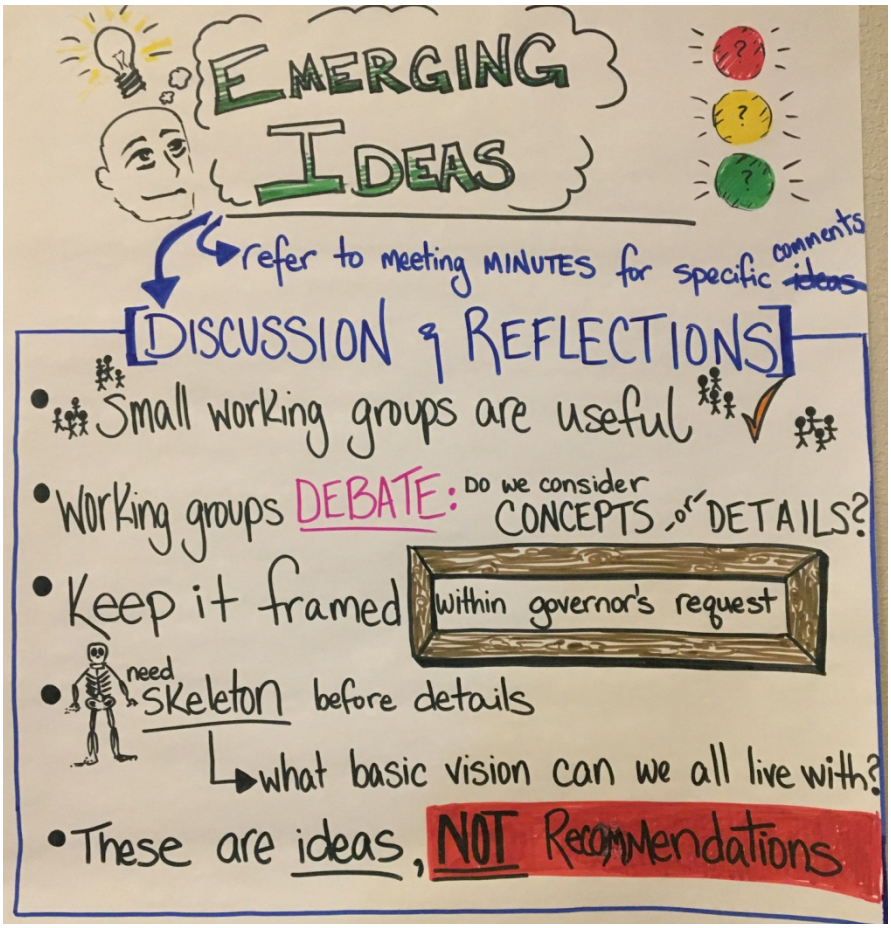
Objective: Provide an opportunity to Council members to review and discuss their emerging ideas/recommendations. The focus is on building a better understanding of the key issues before the Council and how members are thinking about solutions.

- The Council broke into small working groups to review various sections of their emerging ideas (related to the 7 topics in the Executive Order) document that was worked on in between the December and January meeting.

- During this exercise the working groups were asked to review each emerging idea to determine where conceptually there is initial agreement; need for more information though generally thinking the idea could move forward; and/or disagreement/concerns/need for additional understanding and discussion.
- Each working group approached the exercise from a unique perspective, serving to highlight the complexity of these ideas.
- The public was also given pages of the document to discuss in their working groups.

Report out

- Important reminder that these are emerging ideas and not in the form of recommendations.
- Helpful to have an initial sense of the emerging ideas that have come up throughout the last few meetings.
- Tried to address the fundamental questions without getting too much into the details.
- Some groups decided to analyze and prioritize key concepts, and focus less on the details.
- The Council members would like to continue meeting in their working groups in between this meeting and February to consolidate some of the repetition, further refine the ideas, and generate additional ideas.
- Council members will also begin to build a working framework for which these ideas will address the overall Executive Order.
- This exercise was helpful to begin to identify where there is movement toward consensus and where discussion time is needed for the more complex items.



Public Engagement

Objective: Provide members of the public an opportunity to reflect on the emerging ideas shared by the Council and to offer their own insights and ideas for solutions that will work for all Montanans.

- Concerns over jumping to such specific and detailed recommendations without having a larger vision, however the facilitators reminded everyone the exercise was about developing ideas, not creating recommendations.
- A few members of the public requested that the public remain involved and have opportunity to engage in the progression of emerging ideas.

Closer Look at the Bitterroot Ecosystem

Objective: Provide Council members with information about the Bitterroot Subcommittee's recent work and upcoming activities. Provide an opportunity to learn more about the role of the US Forest Service in grizzly management in forest planning and to learn more about the context in Idaho.

Presenter: Chuck Mark, Forest Supervisor of the Salmon-Challis National Forest and Chair of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee's Bitterroot Subcommittee

Chuck referenced the following thesis throughout his presentation:

Velado, Carlos L., "Grizzly Bear reintroduction to the Bitterroot ecosystem: perceptions of individuals with land-based occupations" (2005). Graduate Student Theses, Dissertations, & Professional Papers. 8387.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/etd/8387

Primary presentation discussion points included:

- The Bitterroot Ecosystem will need help working through real and perceived threats from grizzly bear reintroduction
- Human safety concerns
- Financial concerns due to property damage and livestock loss
- Fear over reduced access to public lands

Identified Needs:

- Additional education and outreach, including better coordination from agencies and partners.
- Communities need to be involved, but it will not happen overnight, relationships take time.
- Assurance for livestock producers that they will be compensated for depredation losses.
- Outfitters and guides are concerned; camp spots can't be shut down on the Salmon river or on any of the major guided rivers.
- Outdoor recreation access is key to the Idaho way of life. Concerns that the grizzly bear will create restrictions on hunting, fishing and recreation.
- Everyone needs to be prepared to be part of the relationship. Be authentic and listen to the communities and the locals.
- Need to bridge the gap between locals and non-locals; need to work with outfitters and guides and livestock producers in particular.

Upcoming Activities on the Salmon and Challis Forests:

- Meeting with USFWS to discuss grizzly bear expansion and reintroduction to discuss:
    - what can be expected in the near future, what about bears that are in the in between, what about when bears show up on the forest;
    - how grizzly bears will affect forest plan revision;
    - food storage orders and sanitation;
    - information and education efforts in the Bitterroot ecosystem; and
    - work with the tribes in the area.

Current Information & Education Activities in the Bitterroot:

- Bear ranger
- Jamie Jonkel has been doing a lot of work on sanitation and in the Lolo watershed
- Working with the Wind River Institute
- Working with Lolo hot springs
- Working with the Bitterroot-Sapphire coalition

General thoughts & Questions:

- Where do we want bears?
- Connectivity has poor association in Idaho, because it implies restrictions. Can this association be changed/improved?
- The time is now to build relationships with Idaho Department Fish and Game, landowners, and Wildlife Services
- Forest planning provides direction but doesn't solve it. It doesn't provide concrete answers.

Council Reflections and Guidance

Communication

How do we continue to communicate this process to the public?

- In addition to the website, the public comment portal and inviting the public to the meetings, what other opportunities exist?
- Dillion will take the lead on drafting an op-ed based on the Council's talking points and share it with the Council for further input.
- Remember that the council members are the public. They were chosen as Montana citizens.

End of Day Reflections

- Meetings are great and progress is being made.
- Glad to see the collaboration happening and the relationships developing between council members.
- A lot of appreciation for today to go through ideas and have some smaller groups and robust conversations.
- Would like to retain working groups going forward.
- There was real value in hearing from Chuck Mark and there is a desire to hear more from other states and agencies.
- Repetition has been helpful. It helps everyone to hear things they may have missed. Everyone should keep listening and not try to jump to assumptions.

- More and more people feel comfortable to speak up and say what they think while being respectful and trusting of their fellow council members.

Wednesday January 15th, 2020

Panel Presentation: Transplant Protocols (General)
Objective: Develop shared understanding of existing transplant protocols.

Hilary Cooley, USFWS Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator
Grizzly Bear Relocation Presentation

Hilary covered the statues and regulations that guide the relocation of grizzly bears. Translocation is not a term that is utilized by the USFWS. The relocation guidance mostly stems from the 4d rule, but there are also interagency guidelines (from the IGBC) to assist with decision processes.

Summary of all of the bears relocated by ecosystem:

- For the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem there is data for the last 15 years.
- In the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem they have data for relocations from 1974 until 2019.
- The Cabinet-Yaak and Selkirk ecosystems include relocation data from 1983 to current.

She discussed the steps and agency roles involved in grizzly bear relocation cases. Hilary presented the question to the council regarding bears outside of the recovery zones.
If they are not candidates for removal, where do we put them?

- What is the difference between transplantation and relocation?
  This varies somewhat depending on federal or state statutes. USFWS primarily uses the term relocation.
- Augmentation in Montana currently only occurs in the Cabinet-Yaak (CYE). Non-conflict bears from the NCDE (Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem) are moved to the CYE to augment the already existing bear population. There are very specific requirements for what bears can be moved from the NCDE into the CYE

Ken McDonald: MFWP Chief of Wildlife Division

Ken summarized state terminology in relation to transplantation and relocation.

- On-site release = release of a captured bear from a trap at the site where it was trapped.
  - Is not considered a relocation or translocation. MEPA/Commission approval not required.
- Relocation = Movement of a bear to an occupied portion of a recovery zone.
  - Most commonly used by bear specialists to address conflicts in specific recovery zones (e.g., from one part of NCDE to another part of the NCDE)
  - Doesn't require MEPA or Commission approval
  - Does require coordination and approval of land management agency or landowner where bear will be released

    - Could be movement of a bear from an unoccupied area to an occupied area such as from Basin to the Blackfoot (NCDE) or Two Dot to Marias Pass
- Augmentation = Movement of a bear from one recovery zone to another recovery zone for purposes of enhancing that population
    - Currently ongoing in the Cabinet-Yaak using bears from NCDE
    - Sideboards based on Environmental Impact Statement that was completed by USFWS
        - No "management" bears
        - Must come from a similar food base (berries) (i.e., not from east front or GYE where the diet is more meat-based)
        - Limited to certain times of year when foods are most plentiful
- Transplantation = Movement of a bear from one location to an otherwise "unoccupied" or new area for purposes of establishing bears in that location
    - Could be movement of a bear from an occupied area to an unoccupied area such as from NCDE to Bitterroot
    - Could be movement of a bear from an unoccupied area to a nearby unoccupied area such as Stevensville bear further into the Bitterroot or Two Dot bear into the Little Belt Mountains
    - Requires MEPA and Commission approval per state statute

State Statutes

- 87-5-702 (6) "Introduction" means the release from captivity or attempt to release from captivity, intentional or otherwise, wildlife from outside the state into the wild within the state.
- 87-5-702 (11) "Transplantation" means the release of or attempt to release, intentional or otherwise, wildlife from one place within the state into another part of the state.
- 87-5-711 – Transplantation - The transplantation or introduction of any wildlife is prohibited unless the commission determines, based upon scientific investigation and after public hearing, that a species of wildlife poses no threat of harm to native wildlife and plants or to agricultural production and that the transplantation or introduction of a species has significant public benefits.
- 87-5-713 - Any wildlife species listed in 87-5-714 or approved by the commission for transplantation may be introduced or transplanted only subject to a plan developed by the department to assure that the population can be controlled if any unforeseen harm should occur.

<u>Chris Savage, Renewable Resource Manager for US Forest Service Region 1</u>

Chris discussed some of the issues facing the Forest Service and the Bitterroot Ecosystem in regards to grizzly bears. Some of the primary issues are:

- The ESA, NEPA, and IGBC guidelines are all taken into account when identifying relocation sites outside of recovery zones.
- The development and implementation of Food Storage Orders – sets the stage to ensure relocation programs are successful.

- Discussions on designating relocation sites take into consideration outfitter sites, permittee allotments, and recreation sites. Chris emphasized that to make the relocation process more successful, these sites should be designated ahead of time.
- USFS role is to cooperate and collaborate with USFWS and FWP in relocation – they are not the management entity.

Stacy Courville, Carnivore Management Specialists for the CKST

Stacy summarized relocation of bears on the CSKT. He emphasized that he only has one place he can release bears. The majority of his bears end up moving into Jaimie Jonkel or Tim Manley's areas (FWP Region 1 and Region 2). In his experience, no matter how far they move bears, the bears come back. The number of bears captured each year varies. General themes Stacy discussed included:

- There are differences between management and research bears.
- Explanation of "geo-fence" to council members. Geo-fence capability has only started within the last 4-5 years with the development of iridium collars. Other collars require wildlife professionals to retrieve the collar before they can download the data, often years after they are placed on the bears. Iridium collars can allow for real-time location data with some time delay for the data to be updated. Iridium collars cost about $2400 each.
- The majority of sub-adult males that are moved eventually end up getting removed.

Kraig Glazier, USDA Wildlife Services Western Field Supervisor

Kraig briefly summarized Wildlife Service's policy on grizzly bear relocations. Primarily Wildlife Services does not do the relocation themselves. Rather, Wildlife Services works closely with the other agencies (USFWS and FWP) to make decisions on bear movement or removal.

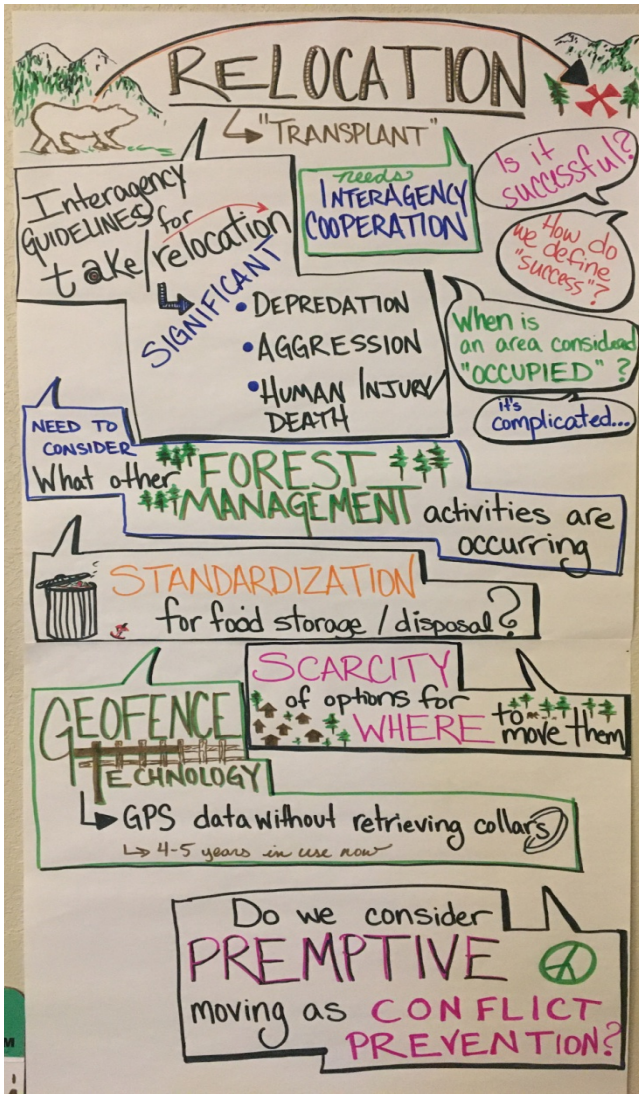
Questions from the Council to the panel members:

- Could the new collars be used as "shock-collars", limiting them from entering certain geographic areas?
  No. However, is one bear truly valuable to the recovery of entire population? These management discussions should begin to look at populations as whole, especially as some of the bear populations have made it to recovery levels. While the technologically may be beginning to allow

this, it would be impossible to collar all bears and , even then, it is unclear how this would ultimately benefit human-grizzly bear co-existence.

- Has there been any movement on consistency across the forest on food storage orders?
  While this topic has been brought up with the IGBC executive committee and with agencies, very little movement towards this goal has occurred. The council did ask if there was anything they could do to help make this occur? There are reasons that the food storage orders are not consistent. This has to do with what is needed and appropriate for that area and community.

- What is the success of transplanting a bear?
  There are many different variables and there needs to be a definition of success.
  What defines an occupied area? There isn't necessarily a specific definition across the state. A "population" must include 2 or more breeding females.



Panel Presentation: Transplant Protocols (The Case of the Stevensville Bear)

Objective: Build shared understanding of the issues and challenges involved in bear management as seen through the recent case of the Stevensville bear.

Jamie Jonkel, Region 2 Bear Management Specialist, MT FWP

Jamie summarized the events that transpired in the capture the Stevensville bear. A trap was set out to catch an assumed black bear digging up the golf course, and finding a grizzly bear instead was unexpected. The "Stevi" bear was considered a non-target bear. Quite often they move them a short distance or release them on site if approval exists. A pre-emptive capture and relocation moves bears that may start causing problems or is too close to certain human areas. He emphasized that relocation is a very important tool in their management toolkit. For the Stevi bear, there was no nearby release sites on public lands that had already been established.

Randy Arnold, Regional Supervisor for Region 2, MT FWP

The decision as to how and where to move this bear was complex and well-considered. The bear was not creating significant conflict, and was very close to being on public lands. If you go west of

the Stevensville Golf Course you end up in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. At the time, they couldn't guarantee this was a bear from the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) as genetics take about a year to return from the lab. While it was considered for release on site, it was too close to the residential community to be a comfortable decision. Discussions occurred with the local Forest Service supervisor, but no sites had been considered or evaluated, and the partners did not feel that doing so without proper consideration was a smart choice.

The decision was made to release the bear to a known release spot as far south in the NCDE as possible. Much of the decision making process occurred with social factors in consideration. Following this decision, more conversations have been occurring as to what should occur the next time a bear shows up so far away from established relocation sites.

Mike Thompson, Region 2 Wildlife Manager, MT FWP

Mike supervises Jamie directly, but works under Randy Arnold. Mike emphasized the first responsibility to the bear was to understand that the bear would not succeed on the golf course or in the nearby landscape without further consideration. Currently that area is not prepared for grizzly bears; there is minimal sanitation management and policy in place for living with grizzly bears. It is important to have dialogues with people living and working in that area to consider having a bear knowingly and purposely in their area.

In order for grizzly bears to recover and to have a population that doesn't go extinct, there needs to be extensive social considerations and planning.

Questions for Panel from Council

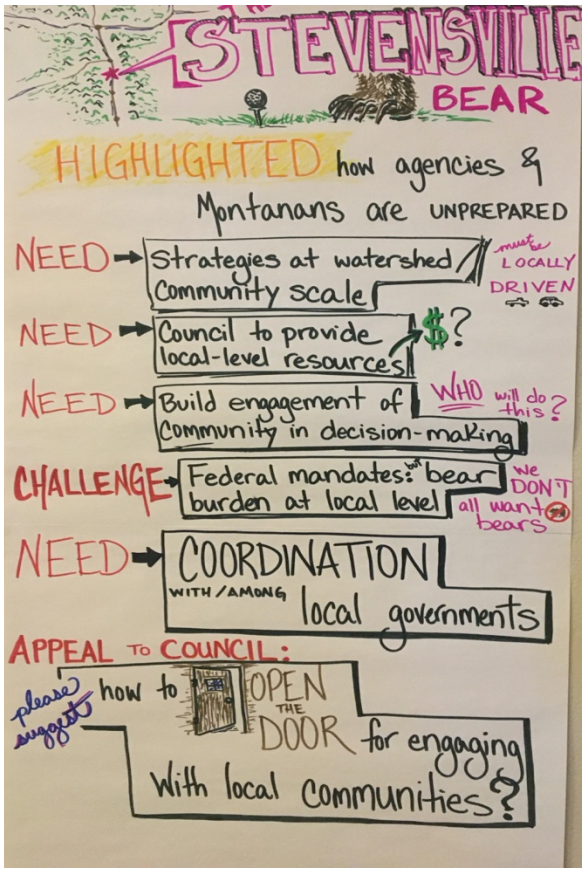
- Talking more about how bears are here and bears are moving, how do we frame these questions differently than just "we put a bear there"?
  Randy asked how the council to deliberate on where bears could be without building a giant fence. How can we manage these bears in these places once there, knowing they move freely throughout the landscape.

- There are a lot of interesting challenges in the Stevensville area and Ravalli County. Many of the social pieces such as signage and sanitation are not in place. So how do you address the concerns from people that the agencies are just going to put bears wherever they want? How do we engage the public in these discussions?
  Mike responded that this is a process that the Council is in a great position to address.
  Jamie also discussed how well the Ovando/Helmville area has addressed these issues. Land-owner led or community entities are much more successful in beginning and continuing these conversations with invited support from the agencies.

- The council is looking for advice and support on how to address these challenges such as social acceptance, tolerance, and starting these conversations in the new areas. How does the Council balance this with communities and areas that do not want bears?

The agencies struggle with whether this should be the same process across the state or community to community. The agencies would like the help of the diverse citizens represented on the Council.

- The Blackfoot Challenge is often pointed to as representing a high standard for grizzly bear-land owner relationships. But it must be understood that their success did not occur over night and all of the work the land-owners and Blackfoot Challenge does requires significant resources, costs, and commitments.



- Can we create an over-arching understanding of if and where grizzly bears can be embraced, or if they can even be tolerated?
  Solutions will need to be developed watershed to watershed and community to community. Conversations need to be open and honest.

- The Stevensville bear is not going to be the last case of a non-target bear occurring in a new area. We need something to help address this before it occurs this next season. Bear managers would like help and guidance on this issue from the Council. Can discussions with the forest service and other agencies and communities start now? Have additional relocation sites been identified for the next instance?
  Conversations have begun and some sites have been identified. But there hasn't been a public dialogue or MEPA analysis.

- What is the process for starting to apply some of the other processes throughout the state to these "new" areas? Can we gather together a lot of the protocols already in place? Can we continue the existing relationships and expand our conversations?

- What are some of the challenges agencies are facing that the council can help with? Coordination with local governments.
  - Can the local bear managers be a good source for this type of communication?
    Yes, for the right people. But there is a shortage of the people to do this. The nuisance guidelines are an excellent tool to help with these conversations.

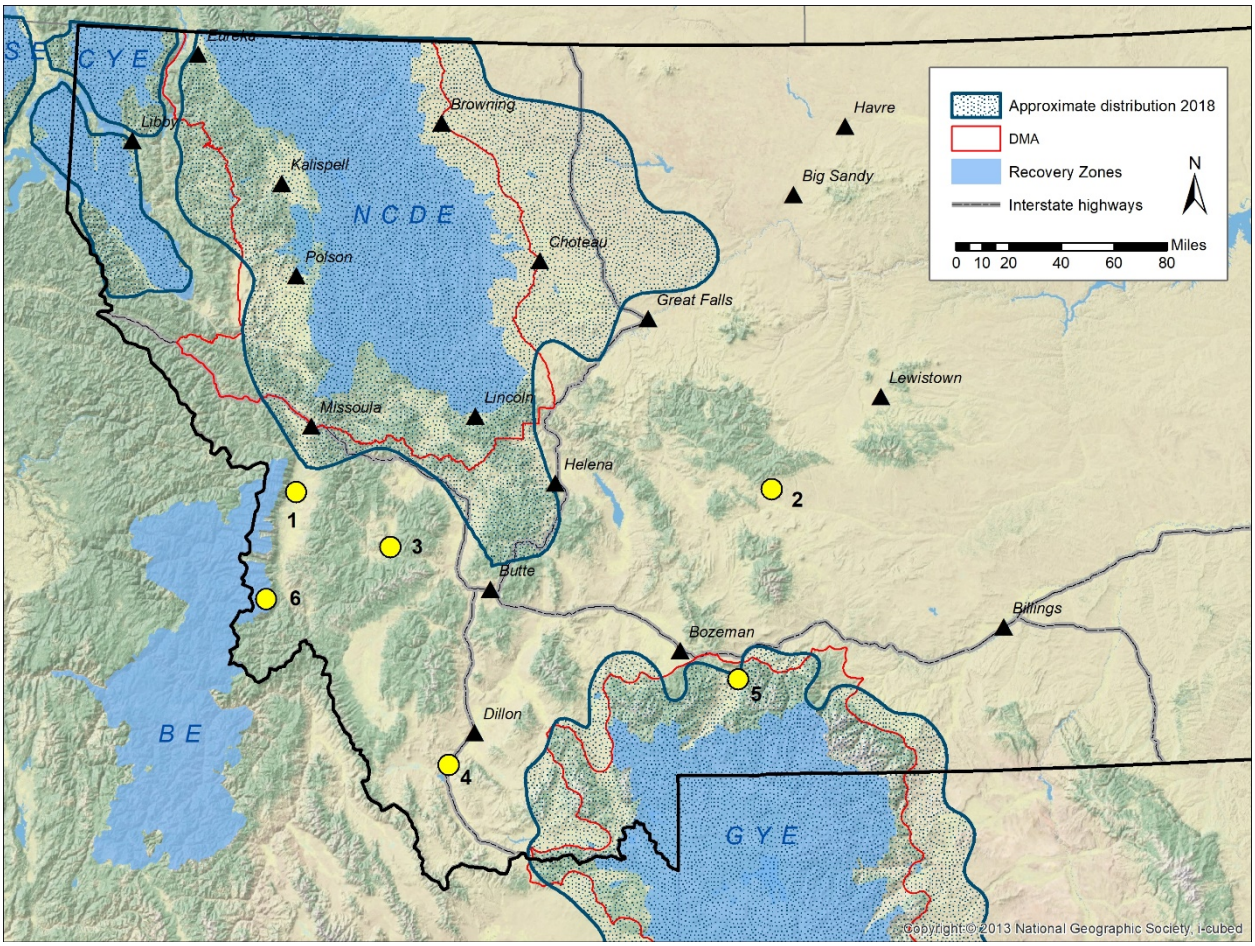
Small Group Break-out Looking at Scenarios

The Council was provided a set of scenarios based on real-life events.

It was reminded that these discussions did not suggest formal recommendations from the Council or its members. Rather, this was an exercise to help see the challenges facing grizzly bear managers today and going into the future.

Directions provided to the Council were as follows with the map below:

For each, Council members are asked to discuss the considerations involved in the unique situation and see if they can reach consensus regarding how they would handle each case. The task would be to develop a brief statement outlining what should happen to the bear and why. The why part should consider the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solution from the perspective of long-term grizzly bear conservation and the social environment. Council members should consider, discuss, and articulate the larger vision that helps inform the selected actions, i.e., why the recommendation is made from both biological and social perspectives. If no consensus is reached, the Council's task is to provide a majority recommendation, as well as alternative minority recommendation(s).



Scenarios and Key Items Developed from the Working Group Report Outs

Much discussion occurred in these working groups exploring various concerns, questions, and options which were not recorded and not reflected in the summary below.

Scenario 6

A citizen reports seeing a female grizzly bear with one cub in Trapper Creek in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness, southwest of Darby, and provides photographs. After examining the photograph and finding tracks at the site, FWP determines that the bear was, in fact, a brown-phase black bear. This sighting occurred outside of estimated grizzly bear range inside the BE Recovery Zone boundary. If this sighting had been of a reproductive female it would have represented the first evidence of grizzly bear occupancy of this ecosystem, but instead, it emphasizes the absence of bears or a population from this ecosystem. Does this prompt you to think about any actions regarding the BE?

Council working group response:

Use it for an opportunity for education and outreach. Correct the misinformation, but also emphasize bear ID and what could and would be done when grizzly bears show up. Outreach to Idaho Department of Fish and Game. Start doing camera and hair snare monitoring, to try and get ahead of the bears coming. Making it clear that the bears are not being augmented, but they would be moving in on their own. Is data gathering and grizzly movements a priority? Should it be a quiet, non-human involvement endeavor? How much resources do we put into these things?

Scenario 4

North of Clark Canyon Reservoir, between Dillon and Dell, an adult female grizzly bear is struck and killed by a vehicle on Interstate 15. It turns out that she was accompanied by 2 yearlings, who continue to hang around on the west side of the highway, in view of the public and in potential danger of being hit themselves. This incident occurred outside of estimated occupied grizzly bear range and about 70 miles from the GYE Recovery Zone boundary and 90 miles from the BE Recovery Zone boundary. Should any action be taken?

Council working group response:

Consider cautionary signage. Consider human safety, bear safety, and conflict prevention. Signage in the area, relocation onto public land or potentially just hazed northwest. Likely the bears originated from the GYE, but not certain of that. Notify nearby landowners, conservation districts, CVA, Big Hole, etc. Should the gender be identified?

Scenario 3

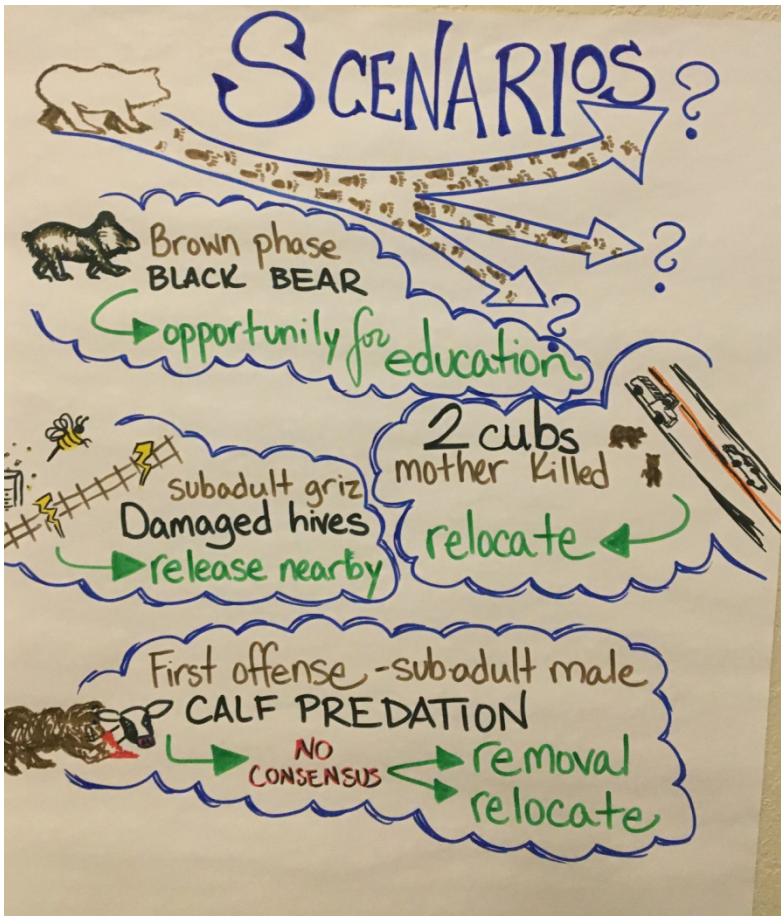
Near Georgetown Lake, in the Anaconda Mountain Range a beekeeper discovers damage to his operation apparently caused by a black bear and contacts FWP. FWP helps the beekeeper secure his hives with electric fence and sets a trap. Surprisingly, they capture an unmarked subadult male grizzly instead (which may or may not have caused the damage). The incident occurred outside of estimated grizzly bear range and about 60 km from the NCDE Recovery Zone boundary and 45 miles from the BE Recovery Zone boundary. What do you do with the bear?

Council working group response:

If there were pre-established relocation sites, it should be released in the area. Creates an education opportunity, and notify the land-owners. Without pre-established sites, move it back to the NCDE. There bear got there on its own, but ideally it would be released back into the area. No confirmation for the bear being the cause of the damage.

Scenario 2

At the southern end of the Little Belt Mountains near Martinsdale, FWP and Wildlife Services respond to a calf depredation on private land. Upon confirming that the calf was killed by a bear, and observing grizzly bear tracks at the kill site, a subadult male grizzly bear is captured. The bear is not marked, and as far as can be determined, has no history of prior conflict. This is the first verified incident of grizzly bear depredation in this area. This incident occurred outside of estimated ranges of grizzly bears, about 100 km from the NCDE Recovery Zone boundary and 80 miles from GYE Recovery Zone boundary. What do you do with the bear?



Council working group response:

A consensus was not reached. 3 votes to remove the bear, 1 vote to relocate. Sub-adult males are more expendable. Males have a tendency to continue killing once they have started, and this is in Martinsdale, far outside the recovery zone.

The take-aways are what tools are missing here for the bear managers? Could you relocate? There is a lack of funding to start prevention methods in low risk area, where higher conflict areas could use this funding. There needs to be communication and conversations with the land-owners. Need for designated relocation sites. Would like to gather data to understand which ecosystem the bear comes from. What does relocation do to the relationships with the landowners?

Questions for the Council to consider:

- What if this happened somewhere else? Same circumstance, different area, or different bear gender, etc?
- Where these scenarios helpful?
- How do you share this information?
- How from an information and education perspective do we put this information out there with value and how do we create the correct narrative?
- What can be done better in releasing information?
- Are there better ways to communicate that helps these issues?

Public Report Out from Scenario Exercise

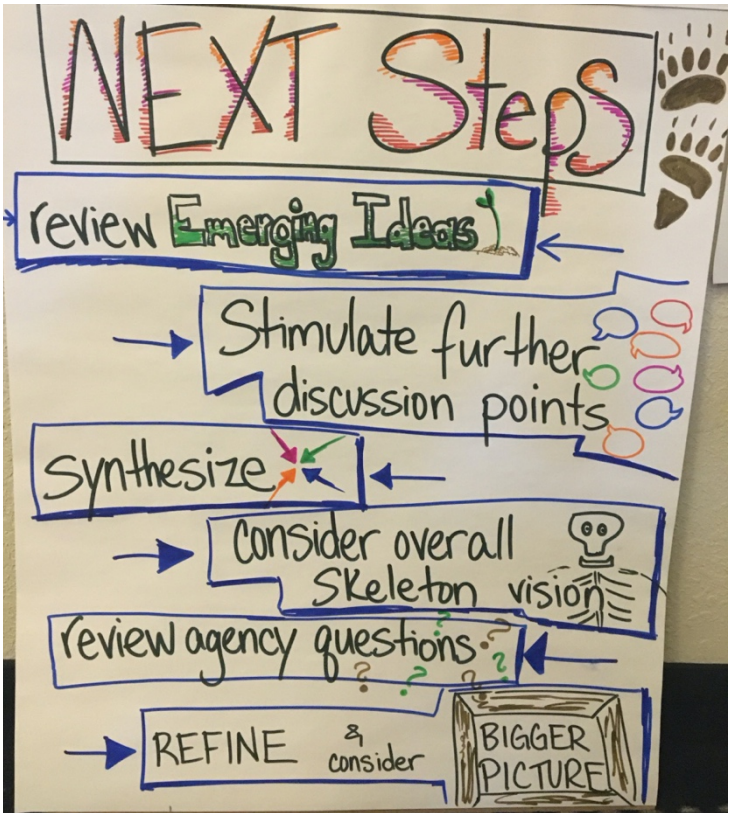
Key questions, themes and take-aways after the scenario exercise from the public

- Could bears be relocated into Little Belt mountain range when it's the closest large chunk of public land? Or other places such the Tobacco Roots or back into the NCDE on first offense depredations?
- Is there a way to balance and prioritize the areas for prevention and efforts?
- In some areas, bears caught outside of recovery zones can be released in the area, and in some areas this is not the case. They do not have to be put back into their believed origin ecosystem.
- Should it be a standard to let people know when they know a bear is in the area? With the knowledge that iridium collars can report data much faster than the older VHF collars.

Public Input

General public input on the day's activities and the recent activities

- News releases and media can distort the perception of an entire population, when looking for new ways to get information and news to be shared, be conscientious of this fact.
- Remember that when we attempt to reach to new communities to consider the historical perspective of when bears lived on that landscape previously.
- What is the law or is there a law in storing attractants on private land?
  The state of MT passed a law that it is illegal to knowingly put out attractants that feeds deer, elk, bears, and lions. However, bear managers try to work with the landowners first before taking legal action. There is a monetary fine associated with it, but it is not often effective at changing poor attractant storage behaviors, and enforcement of these situations are difficult to pursue.



Key Take-Aways and Next Steps

- Continue working groups. Each group set dates and times to review the emerging ideas document and work on modifications amongst their working group.
- Add a column to the emerging ideas spreadsheet for modification ideas, then send the modifications to Heather and Shawn by Monday, February 17th, so that they can be consolidated, reviewed, and shared back out with the Council and Support Team before the February Council meeting.

- Review the FWP questions (in December meeting minutes) and integrate them as appropriate into the emerging ideas and overall framework.
- Working groups will draft initial skeleton for the larger vision on which the emerging ideas will be attached.