

From: [Jimenez, Benjamin S](#)
To: [Hogan, Matt](#); [Szuszwalak, Joseph A](#); [Cooley, Hilary](#); [Munoz, Anna](#); [Nelson, Marjorie \(Marj\)](#)
Cc: [Jenkins, Laura A](#); [Yost, Angelina](#)
Subject: RE: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal
Date: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:43:00 PM

I guess we won't know for sure until another one shows up, and the past 24-36 hours certainly raises that question. And based on recent events, it seems fair to say that any bear showing up in that area will be high profile, regardless of what it does or does not do. That said, I would be very surprised (and honestly, disappointed) if anyone from the conflict/carnivore portion of WGFD asked for a preemptive lethal removal based on location alone. For context, a grizzly bear (may well have been this bear) was confirmed down there last summer/fall, not far from this recent conflict site. There was conversation about that bear because of where it was and a recognition of the potential for conflict in that area, but no asks or conversation about lethal removal simply because of where it was. I could be totally wrong on this, but that's my honest assessment.

Thanks,

Ben Jimenez
Conflict Coordinator
Grizzly Bear Recovery Program
US Fish and Wildlife Service
406-214-0497 (cell)

From: Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 12:04 PM
To: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>; Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>; Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

Thanks Ben. That does help. I guess I wonder what we do if another bear shows up in the Bighorns that is not involved in a depredation event and WY asks us to remove it? Or do we not anticipate they will ask for removal vs. relocation?

From: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 9:32 AM
To: Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>; Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>; Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

Hi all,

I have not seen all of the release, so I don't know how it's being portrayed in the different outlets. Regardless, as Joe noted, the primary conversation, and the primary rationale for the removal was the confirmed attack on livestock resulting in a dead cow, multiple missing calves from the calving area, and considerable evidence of localized behavior from this bear. Additional considerations were that all of this took place on private property, the time of year/snowpack allows for few if any feasible relocation options, and this is/was ~70-80 miles outside the DMA. The Big Horns may well be a tricky place for bears... I'm not familiar with the area, but my understanding is there are minimal food storage orders, lots of private property with high volumes of unsecured attractants, very high levels of public use, widespread cattle and sheep operations, etc. That said, the fact that this took place in the Big Horns was not the determining factor, or even a main consideration for the removal. The WGFD folks I've been speaking to on this are pretty frustrated with the release, and recognize it does not help any of us do our jobs.

I don't know if any of that helps or answers whatever questions folks might have, but please feel free to reach out with any additional questions or concerns.

Thanks either way, and sorry everyone is having to deal with this... Not an ideal start to a conflict season.

Ben Jimenez
Conflict Coordinator
Grizzly Bear Recovery Program
US Fish and Wildlife Service
406-214-0497

From: Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 8:32:00 AM
To: Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>; Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>; Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

JHN&G checked-in about authorization. My understanding from Ben is that the first part of the release is accurate to the legitimate conflict situation, injured a cow with tracks and other signs showing the bear had been around for a week.

Joe Szuszwalak (*He/Him*)
Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Communications
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Southwest Region
joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov | 720-557-3848

From: Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 8:23 AM
To: Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>; Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>; Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

The bear was involved in a depredation.
Ben: would you please give the details?

From: Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 16, 2024 6:09 AM
To: Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>; Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>; Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

Thanks Joe. That is interesting. What was the media outlet?

Hilary, did we allow the bear to be removed because it was in conflict or just because it was in the Bighorns? Thanks.

From: Szuszwalak, Joseph A <joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov>
Sent: Monday, April 15, 2024 5:55 PM
To: Hogan, Matt <Matt_Hogan@fws.gov>; Munoz, Anna <anna_munoz@fws.gov>; Nelson, Marjorie (Marj) <marjorie_nelson@fws.gov>
Cc: Jimenez, Benjamin S <benjamin_jimenez@fws.gov>; Cooley, Hilary <hilary_cooley@fws.gov>; Jenkins, Laura A <laura_jenkins@fws.gov>; Yost, Angelina <angelina_yost@fws.gov>
Subject: Awareness: WYG&F Framing of Grizzly Removal

Regional leadership - wanted to flag this, a reporter also sent to me as 'interesting' but hasn't asked a question of us yet, I expect we may receive an inquiry at some point as to whether or not we agree.

WYG&F issued a news release earlier today about a grizzly bear removed due to conflict, citing our authorization. That is not unusual, what is unusual is Director Nesvick's quote and framing regarding where grizzly bears are 'allowed' by the State

- [WY G&F News Release](#)
- "Wyoming's grizzly bear population is managed and monitored where suitable habitat exists as designated by the USFWS and informed by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study

Team,” said Game and Fish Director Brian Nesvik. “The Bighorn Mountain Range is not suitable habitat and **the department is not interested in allowing grizzly bears to occupy this area**. Their expansion into unsuitable habitat leads to increased conflict potential between bears and humans, which impedes the success of grizzly bear conservation.”

We've been asked to confirm if we did in fact consult with WYG&F (interesting that media do not take the agency for their own word in the release) and if we allowed the removal. Per Hilary and Ben that is a yes due to the ongoing conflict situation.

Joe Szuszwalak *(He/Him)*

Acting Deputy Assistant Regional Director, Office of Communications

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service - Southwest Region

joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov | 720-557-3848