Y.E.S. Conservation Strategy Revision Steering Committee

Meeting minutes-Conference call-April 20th, 1:00 p.m.

In attendance: Jodi Bush, Dalissa Minnick, Loren Grosskopf, Dan Wenk, Patricia O'Connor, Brian Nesvik

In advance of the meeting, the following list of topics was posed to the group:

1. Categorize the major CS themes identified by Y.E.S. members
2. Identify which sub-groups might be necessary
3. Identify members for each sub-group
4. Develop a rough timeline
5. Plan our next meeting

The group discussed these topics and potential additions. The group decided that prior to moving through the identified topics that all should agree on their understanding of the committee charge. Following discussion by the committee the oversight committee charge was identified as being comprised of four major components:

1. Categorize major themes identified by Y.E.S. members
2. Develop the Conservation Strategy approval process
3. Develop the timeline
4. Determine if issues listed by Y.E.S. were substantive, editorial and if they are appropriately addressed in the Conservation Strategy

Prior to categorizing the major themes identified by Y.E.S., the group discussed issues related to the intent of conservation strategy revision. Jodi Bush pointed out to the group on behalf of the Service their position that the conservation strategy should be edited only to the extent necessary to address changes in recovery criteria and new science.

Dan Wenk asked Jodi Bush to identify what the Service's current time-line was. Jodi indicated the Service continued to strive to finalize the delisting rule by the end of the calendar year. On behalf of the states, Brian Nesvik articulated the fact that the states expected the Service to remain true to their committed timeline of completing a rule by the end of the calendar year. Dan Wenk pointed out the timeline is clearly ambitious.

The group discussed the major actions that had to be executed prior to a final delisting rule. Jodi Bush reiterated there had been no decision to extend the comment period. Jodi Bush indicated there had to be a final signed conservation strategy in place prior to the filing of a final delisting rule and that there was no mandate for a number of days certain when this had to be completed in advance. Dan Wenk pointed out the fact that the ambitious timeline and his concerns with the NPS involvement in some of the major components of the strategy made the completion of this work in short order a challenge.

The group decided they should focus on final approval before the November Y.E.S. meeting. Jodi stated that may not be nearly the amount of change required as it may

seem on its' face now because the strategy should only include things that are already documented in a parent document.

The group decided that they should identify the subgroups now and get these issues to the subgroups so they can begin their work to help achieve this ambitious time line. The group discussed varying ways to organize the subgroups including conducting them by chapter or by major theme or issue. The committee decided to start with 3 major subgroups and to have editorial and Y.E.S. policy type issues be addressed by the steering committee (SC). The three sub-groups were identified as:

1. Discretionary Mortality (DM)
2. Habitat (H)
3. Agency coordination/conflict management (AC)

The committee went through each major theme identified by Y.E.S. at their April 13/14 meeting and placed them in one of these groups. The table depicting these assignments is below. The committee also recognized the fact that there may be other issues that come into the Y.E.S. committee by the May 15th deadline.

The committee finalized by deciding to make specific assignments for personnel on each sub-group at the next meeting to be held by conference call on April 28th at 8:30 a.m.

Discretionary Mortality

Theme	Originator	Sub-group
Harvest focused away from park boundaries in areas where human bear conflicts are prevalent.	NPS	DM
Hunting will not be permitted in the John D Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway	NPS	DM
If a new estimator other than Chao 2 is used in the future, the states will recalibrate the population thresholds and proportions of allocated hunter harvest based on the estimates provided by the new model in comparison to Chao 2	NPS	DM
Harvest will be based on the number of grizzly bears available to be hunted outside of NPS units rather than the entire population. - 21% of DMA are NPS managed units - 39% of PCA are NPS managed units, and stated as "secure habitat" in the conservation strategy. What does "secure habitat" mean?	NPS	DM

Appendix C needs significant work	States	DM
Concern about FCOY being set at 48 – need flexibility	County Commission	DM
If new method is used to estimate population, does FCOY change? Needs to be clear what happens to all of the metrics if we move to a new methodology	County Commission	DM

Habitat

Theme	Originator	Sub-group
Other methods to monitor foods (i.e. body condition)	NPS	H
Updated habitat layer (vs. 1998 layer)	USFS	H
A lot of commitments that sound like we are still managing a listed species. We cannot maintain that level of effort (e.g., monitoring number of hunters). Need to be able to trust each other and levels of commitment	USFS	H
Definitions of dispersed vs. developed sites and implications. As defined, some proactive measures would be precluded.	USFS	H
Lot of commitments to monitor outside the PCA – need to evaluate what really needs to be monitored and why	USFS	H
Conversation between USFS and States re: habitat protections outside the PCA	USFS	H
Use 2016 developments as the baseline	County Commissioners	H

Agency Coordination/Conflict Management

Theme	Originator	Sub-group
NPS unit managers be included in the discussions and decision making process that occur during annual meetings regarding the allocation of harvest mortality by the states.	NPS	AC
Chapter on conflict bears has outdated terminology that needs to be changed	States	AC
Connectivity/Linkage/Genetic Management	States/USFS	AC
USFS concerns about moving bears is related to safety, and want to know when bears are moved on/off forest service ground	USFS	AC
Food storage, consistency of orders, and linkage to the NCDE	USFS	AC
Coordination and consultation re: moving bears is vague and overly burdensome in some portions	USFS/States	AC
How do we see the USDA sheep station as it relates to connectivity	USFS	AC
Limit on bear relocations to other ecosystems	County Commissioners	AC

Steering Committee

Theme	Originator	Sub-group
Agree to conservation strategy approach, and that updates will be necessary	States	SC
Function of the Conservation Strategy needs to be clear---it is a post-delisting management plan to ensure continued grizzly recovery. Portions of the Strategy need to focus on this and need to recognize the authorities of the different agencies	States/USFS/ County Commissioners	
Description of population that is stable vs. at carrying capacity	States	SC

Remove references that the Y.E.S.committee can petition for relisting	States	SC
Sensitive Species Reference	USFS	SC
Conservation Strategy should have specified review clause detailing when it will be revisited and updated	County Commissioners	SC
Make it clear who has what responsibilities regarding who does what, who pays, time periods/deadlines.	County Commissioners	SC