Y.E.S. Conservation Strategy Revision Steering Committee

Meeting minutes-Conference call-April 28th, 0830

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

The committee began by reviewing the last meeting minutes. No changes were offered.

The group established the following objectives for this meeting:

- Assign members to each sub-group
- Develop initial direction to each sub-group

Brian asked the group to consider changing the name of the "Discretionary Mortality" Sub-group to "Population Management" to more accurately portray the major themes indentified for this group. All agreed with the change. An updated version of the list of major themes and which sub-group they will be assigned to are at the end of these minutes.

The following assignments were made to each sub-group based on direction from each oversight committee member.

Population Management Sub-group---Loren Grosskopf (Steering Committee), Joe Alexander (USFS-YES), Jennifer Fortin-Noreus (USFWS), Jodi Bush (Steering Committee), Jeff Gould (IDFG), Dan Thompson (Study Team), Kerry Gunther (YNP), PJ White (YNP)

Habitat Sub-group---Destin Harrell (BLM), Dennis Saville (BLM), Jennifer Fortin-Noreus (USFWS), Kerry Gunther (YNP), Tom Rice (MT Association of Counties-YES), Dan Tyers (USFS), Ken McDonald (MT FWP)

Agency Coordination/Conflict Management Sub-group---Dalissa Minnick (Steering Committee), PJ White (YNP), Loren Grosskopf (Steering Committee), Joe Alexander (USFS-YES), Steve Schmidt (IDFG-YES), Jeff Gould (IDFG), Jennifer Fortin-Noreus (USFWS)

The group discussed a request by Jennifer Fortin-Noreus (USFWS) to serve as an advisor to the Steering Committee. The group recalled it was not discussed at the YES meeting. The group decided to enlist Jennifer's help through Jodi Bush on a case-by-case as-needed basis and that a permanent assignment to the group wasn't necessary.

The committee discussed the initial charge and direction that will be provided to the sub-groups. The committee had a lengthy discussion about whether the intent would be to overhaul or update the Conservation Strategy. Jodi pointed out that the USFWS's intent is to update the document as necessary and that the timeline identified by the USFWS didn't lend itself to a complete overhaul. Trish stated a similar position and reminded the group that the Conservation Strategy had already been reviewed and withstood legal scrutiny. Loren felt that as long as the major issues were addressed, he wasn't tied to labeling it as an update or an overhaul. Dan also felt that as long as the appropriate issues were addressed, he was indifferent to the label. Brian felt the direction to the sub-groups should be a well defined set of parameters aimed at updating the

Conservation Strategy with those items necessary to address changes in conditions on the ground, changes in the delisting rule, recovery criteria and new science.

Loren asked the group how editorial or administrative changes will be made. After a short discussion, the group decided that they would ask folks to hold non-substantive, administrative, editorial and style changes to the end of the process at which time the Study Team will be asked to provide a final review.

The group discussed all components of the initial guidance to include:

- The list of major themes and their sub-group assignment
- Select a sub-group chairperson
- Stay focused on the CS, not other documents involved in delisting
- Try to resolve but push to steering committee if needed
- Feedback required for first meeting (see discussion below)
- Develop recommendations for steering committee-be prepared to provide thorough background and/or justification to full YES committee
- Timeline
- Remember, there may be more issues to come after May 15th

Trish articulated very clearly her thoughts on a model for working with the sub-groups whereby each group would start by answering the question of whether the particular themes within their bins were relevant to the Conservation Strategy or if they should be addressed somewhere else or not at all. Under her idea, these items would be briefed to the Steering Committee for approval or further direction. Secondly, she thought each sub-group should take their list items and provide an approximate workload projection. Following approval by the steering committee, the sub-groups would then go to work on their items with the goal of providing the steering committee with a final recommendation. The steering committee would then develop final recommendations for consideration by the entire YES committee.

The committee supported Trish's idea

In conclusion, Brian committed to providing draft sub-group guidance for the steering committee's approval within a couple of days. The group agreed that within about 3 weeks of providing the guidance to the sub-groups, they would be required to report back to the Steering Committee with their answers to the initial two questions.

The group established May 12th at 0830 as their next meeting time.

Population Management

Theme	Originator	Sub-group
Harvest focused away from park boundaries in areas where human bear conflicts are prevalent.	NPS	PM
Hunting will not be permitted in the John D Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway	NPS	PM
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	PM
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	PM
Appendix C needs significant work	States	PM
Concern about FCOY being set at 48 – need flexibility	County Commission	PM
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	PM

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	USFS	H

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		
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	USFS/States	AC

overly burdensome in some portions		
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