June 14, 2016 Version DRAFT

Chapter 4 Management and Monitoring of Grizzly Bear-Human Conflicts

Introduction

Grizzly bears will occasionally come into conflict with humans and livestock in areas where they encounter one another. One objective of the signatory agencies to the Conservation Strategy is to minimize grizzly bear conflicts with humans and livestock. In the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, conflict bear management is essential to successful grizzly bear conservation and is often necessary to prevent property damage, livestock losses, and human injury or death.

Management of conflict bears requires rapid responses by state and federal agencies to address conflict situations. Agency responses will address the sources of the conflict through public education, removal of attractants, aversive conditioning, hazing, or preventive sanitation of human use areas. Agencies will also capture, relocate, or remove conflict grizzly bears when necessary.

Conflict bears often result from bears seeking and finding human related foods and garbage, pets, pet foods, bird feeders, and livestock. Occasionally, bears damage buildings, vehicles, tents, and campers to access food and garbage. Although aggression toward people and human injury or death is rare, bears will occasionally harm people. Incidents of injury are usually the result of a surprise encounter, protection of cubs, or defense of a food cache; or when bears have become accustomed to obtaining food from humans.

Management of grizzly bear-human conflicts is based upon the existing laws and authorities of state, tribal and federal agencies as detailed in Chapter 7. Strategies to respond to conflict bears usually fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Removing or securing the attractant and providing education to modify human behavior/practices that contributed to the conflict

- Deterring the conflict bear from the site through the use of aversive conditioning or hazing techniques
- Relocation of the conflict bear
- Removal of the conflict bear, including lethal removal

Definitions:

- **Grizzly bear-human conflicts** are incidents where bears kill or injure humans or livestock, damage property, obtain anthropogenic foods, damage or obtain garden and orchard fruits, vegetables or beehives.
- A bear is classified as **food conditioned** when it has received a significant food reward of human foods such as garbage, camp food, pet food, or processed livestock food, and seeks these foods.
- A bear is classified as **habituated** when it does not display avoidance behavior around humans or in human use areas such as camps or town sites.
- **Relocation** is the capture and movement by management authorities of a bear involved in a grizzly bear-human conflict to a pre-approved release site.
- **Repeat offense** is the involvement of a bear that has been previously relocated in a conflict situation or, if not relocated, is a bear that continues to repeat a behavior that constitutes a grizzly bear-human conflict.
- **Removal** is the capture and lethal removal or placement of a bear in an authorized public zoological or research facility.
- **Management authorities** are the designated representatives of the agencies in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) including: Yellowstone National Park (YNP); Grand Teton National Park (GTNP); Wyoming Game and Fish Department; Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Custer-Gallatin, Shoshone, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, and Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forests; the BLM; and USDA Wildlife Services. These authorities will employ one or more of the four strategies listed above to manage the conflict. Outside Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks and the John D. Rockefeller Parkway (JDRP), management actions will be coordinated and completed by state wildlife agencies that have responsibility for the management action. When conflict bears are in YNP,

GTNP, or JDRP, decisions will be made by park representatives and coordinated with state and Forest Service representatives when necessary, e.g., for bear relocations. Management of conflict bears outside the PCA and outside National Parklands will be conducted as described in state and tribal grizzly bear management plans.

Management of conflict grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem will vary depending on whether they are inside or outside the PCA, or inside National Parklands. This system will provide increased security for grizzly bears inside the PCA and inside National Parklands, as bears will be given greater consideration in most conflicts inside the PCA and inside National Parklands.

In circumstances that result in a conflict bear situation outside the PCA and the National Parklands, more consideration will be given to existing human uses. Outside YNP, GTNP, JDRP, and the PCA, tribal plans on tribal lands or state management plans will govern how conflict grizzly bears are handled. Site-specific conflict areas within and outside the PCA and National Parks will be documented routinely and prioritized to focus proactive management actions to minimize grizzly bear-human conflicts and address existing and potential human activities that may cause future conflicts.

All grizzly bear conflicts that occur outside the PCA and National Parklands will be managed according to guidelines in each of the tribal and state management plans (Appendices I, J, K,O). The following conflict grizzly bear standards apply only to the PCA and National Parklands.

Conflict Bear Standards

Conflict grizzly bear management is focused on appropriate responses and strategies to address and prevent grizzly bear-human conflicts inside and outside the PCA.
It is recognized that active management aimed at individual conflict bears will be required in both areas.

Management actions will be implemented according to state, federal, and tribal management

plans in coordination with landowners and other land management agencies. These actions will be compatible with grizzly bear population management objectives for each state and agency.

General Criteria

Location, cause of incident, severity of incident, history of bear, health/age/sex of bear, and demographic characteristics of animals involved will all be considered in any relocation or removal. Removal of conflict bears will be carefully considered and counted against the mortality limits for the GYE as described in the Conservation Strategy. Recognizing that conservation of female bears is essential to the maintenance of a grizzly bear population, removal of conflict female bears will be minimized.

Within the Primary Conservation Area

Within the PCA, but outside of YNP, GTNP, and JDRP, management of conflict bears will be addressed according to the following standards:

- Bears displaying food conditioning and/or habituation may be relocated or removed based on specific details of the bear and the incident. State wildlife agencies will make this judgment after considering the cause, location, and severity of the incident or incidents.
- Bears may be relocated when and as many times as judged prudent by the state wildlife agency. All relocations outside the PCA and National Parklands will be governed by state management plans.

Within the PCA, management of conflict bears will be addressed according to the following standards:

- National Park Service authorities will implement trapping, removals, and relocations within YNP, GTNP, and JDRP.
- Outside National Parklands, state wildlife agencies shall coordinate with and notify the

appropriate land management agency when trapping and/or relocating conflict bears..

- State and tribal wildlife agencies in coordination with the appropriate federal agency will predetermine adequate and available sites for relocations outside of YNP, GTNP, and the JDRP. Relocation sites should be agreed upon before the need for relocation occurs.

Specific Criteria for Removals

Captured grizzly bears identified for removal may be given to public research institutions or public zoological parks for appropriate non-release educational or scientific purposes as per regulations of states and national parks. Grizzly bears not suitable for release, research, or educational purposes will be removed as described in appropriate state management plans or in compliance with national park rules and regulations.

Outside of National Park, conflict bears deemed appropriate for removal may be taken by a legal hunter in compliance with rules and regulations promulgated by the appropriate state wildlife agency commission, as long as such taking is in compliance with existing state and federal laws. The removal will be counted against the mortality limits specified for the GYE as described in this Conservation Strategy. This could include licensed hunters or property owners or their agents who have obtained appropriate permits from the state. Licensed hunters will be allowed to possess bear parts for bears that are legally harvested under a state permit.

Monitoring Protocol

All conflict bear management actions will be summarized annually in the Annual Report of the IGBST. This report will detail the cause and location of each conflict and management action and display an annual spatial distribution of conflicts that can be used by managers to identify where problems occur and to compare trends in locations, sources, land ownership, and types of conflicts.