

GYA CS Revisions:

Background

We are planning to make revisions to the Conservation Strategy for grizzly bears in the GYA as part of any proposed rulemaking to delist. We feel this is necessary for several reasons.

- #1) to make the language in the CS consistent with Forest Plan direction (remember, the CS wording was finalized 3 years before the ROD was issued)
- #2) to improve the clarity of direction and
- #3) to update monitoring methods and such based on 7 years of implementation
- #4) to update the demographic chapter and the entire document with the best available science since its original writing in 2003

I know our partners have a lot of ownership in this document so I wanted to bring everyone together to talk about these changes, the need for them, to get your blessing, and to open the lines of communication. You're welcome to help as little or as much as you want. Our intent is to update, clarify, and improve.

Proposed Revisions to Chapter 3 (the habitat chapter)

- 1) drop the CEM (and all references to HE & HQ also). Please review draft language since there is now no measure for HQ and beef it up?
 - a. any project that reduces the amount of secure habitat permanently will have to provide replacement secure habitat
- 2) grazing allotments – unit of measurement changed to track the number and total acres of allotments, and sheep Animal Months
- 3) change reporting/monitoring protocol for motorized route density to remove seasonal designation
- 4) mining (tracked as part of the developed site standard) – unit of measurement changed from active claims to Plans of Operation
- 5) Removing language directing agencies to “categorize private lands and report changes.” Monitoring human-caused mortality related to private land conflicts (which IGBST does) is adequate because this is the real impact on bears and this is where the agencies can have a direct impact on preventing this type of mortality.
- 6) Remove requirement to report elk hunter numbers. Hunter numbers has not turned out to be a meaningful metric related to grizzly bears. For example, while the total number of elk hunters has decreased through time, conflicts between elk hunters and grizzly bears have increased. This metric will continue to be monitored by state wildlife agencies, it just won't be reported in the Study Team's annual reports.
- 7) Food Storage Orders on National Forest & Park lands everywhere within the Demographic Monitoring Area?

Other revisions to the CS:

- 8) Add this language to intro: ~~This CS will remain in effect beyond recovery, delisting, and the five year monitoring period required by the Act as grizzly bears will always be a “conservation-reliant” species (Scott *et al.* 2005, p. 384) because of their low resiliency to~~

~~excessive human-caused mortality. Therefore, the need to coordinate management of the population across multiple land ownerships and jurisdictions will always remain.~~

- 9) update ch. 2 w/ most recent recovery criteria
- 10) update ch. 2 w/ information about possible hunting allocation & coordination
- 11) Demographic review will be done 5 years post delisting and at least every 10 years thereafter to ensure **population objectives** [rs1] are being achieved. More frequently than that doesn't make biological sense.
- 12) To facilitate connectivity, would it be possible for FWP to commit to no hunting in the Tobacco Root and Highland Mountains?
- 13) ~~drop the CS Mgmt. Area polygon entirely since it's being replaced by the Demographic Monitoring Area~~
- 14) update figures...just copy from **annual reports?** [rs2]
- 15) insert updated genetics monitoring protocol (that already went through public review in 2008 while bears were delisted)
- 16) Update translocation language: "In light of new information documenting increased levels of heterozygosity and an effective population size of 185 animals, we have removed the deadline of 2020 for translocation from the Conservation Strategy. Instead, translocation will be a last resort and will only be implemented if there are demonstrated effects of lowered heterozygosity on GYA grizzly bears or significant decreases in genetic diversity."
- 17) ~~state laws chapter – include more description (like in NCDE). On second thought, I decided not to do this because it would create a HUGE amount of red line strikeout and, even the Judge Molloy thought it was cursory, the actual analysis in the Rule and the regulatory documents that will exist before delisting speak for themselves. Going along w/ the "change it as little as possible since it was upheld by the 9th circuit"~~
- 18) ~~update language to reflect new Montana mgmt. plan in 2013~~
- 19) Review and update all appendices...Appendix A – summary of governor's roundtable?
Include 2013 draft of MT plan; add Wind River plan as an appendix;
- 20) ~~UPDATE TRIGGERS FOR A Bio.&Monitoring Review~~
 - a. ~~inadequate funding as a trigger?~~
- 21) ~~INSERT TRIGGERS FOR A USFWS STATUS REVIEW:~~
 - a. ~~any criteria being routinely not achieved = status review~~
~~...routinely not defined, but an example given...2 years violated, 1 year ok, 2 years violated = 4 of 5 years~~
 - b. ~~changes to Commission rules or state laws that depart significantly from the CS...significantly needs to be defined...if it will make the population trend negative or create range retraction w/in the DMA~~