

Chris Servheen

From: Chris Servheen
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2012 1:25 PM
To: mark_haroldson@usgs.gov; Mark Bruscano; Steve_Cain@nps.gov; Kerry_Gunther@nps.gov; dtyers@fs.fed.us; Frey, Kevin; bryan.aber@idfg.idaho.gov; 'daryl.meints@idfg.idaho.gov'
Subject: FW: 3 options for consideration

Guys,

I had a conference call with the IGBC leadership (Harv Forsgren and Scott Talbot) and briefed them on our discussions over the past few days. I requested that IGBC have a conference call to discuss the 3 options we reviewed and our recommendation for option #2. They agreed and wanted a summary of these for circulation to IGBC members so they were up to speed before the call. Here is what I sent Ellen Davis who will send this to the IGBC members. I wanted you to be aware of this as I am sure each of you will be asked by your IGBC members to explain more about this.

Chris

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"If there are no dogs in heaven, then when I die I want to go where they went." - Will Rogers

From: Chris Servheen
Sent: Friday, March 09, 2012 1:16 PM
To: 'Davis, Ellen -FS'
Subject: 3 options for consideration

Ellen,

Here are the 3 options for consideration on the IGBC conference call: Please stress to IGBC members that this discussion document is NOT to be shared with others outside of IGBC. It is an IGBC-only discussion document.

We had a meeting over the past 2 days of the Yellowstone agency science team partners. After extensive discussion on what we now know, I proposed that we have 3 options on how to move forward on a possible new proposed delisting rule for the Yellowstone ecosystem given the 9th circuit decision on WBP:

- 1) Move forward now to write a new proposed rule with the information we currently have on declines in WBP and the stabilization of the grizzly population in the 2002-2011 time period.
Pros: We could maintain the Conservation Strategy commitment by the partner agencies while waiting for the process to proceed with hopes of legal success.
Cons: Low probability of legal success. Loosing again on delisting would doom the interagency partnership.

- 2) Wait 18-24 months to write a new proposed rule and in the interim time period develop a comprehensive synthesis of all the existing data on the relationship between Yellowstone grizzly bear dynamics and health, and changes in WBP and other foods. Use this synthesis to inform the decision on a new proposed rule and the quality and scientific depth of a new proposed rule. If a new proposed rule was indicated, it would be published in late 2013 or early 2014.

Pros: This approach would improve the new proposed rule and certainly improve the probability of legal success. We could maintain the Conservation Strategy commitment by the partner agencies while waiting for the process to proceed with hopes of legal success.

Cons: Increased fragility of the patience of the partner agencies and the public with a delay. There is a possibility that the results would indicate grizzly population decline which could make a new proposed rule unlikely.

- 3) Abandon any hope of delisting due to the uncertainty of the legal system. Manage the population as listed with maximum management flexibility. There would be little concern about maintaining mortality limits since there was no chance of delisting anyway.

Pros: No investment in the process of a new proposed rule and the resulting legal complications. Emphasis would shift to the NCDE delisting process.

Cons: The interagency partnership implementing the Conservation Strategy would dissolve. The Conservation Strategy would be abandoned by the USFS and NPS as it specifically says that its implementation is tied to delisted status. The result of the abandonment of the Conservation Strategy would be a serious erosion of grizzly habitat and mortality management because there would no longer be limits on new road development, new site development, and new livestock allotments. Such actions would again be allowed on public lands and only subject to Section 7. Since no individual development would jeopardize the population, all such developments would be allowed and habitat quality would decline. Mortalities would increase since the reason mortalities are limited now is to adhere to the Conservation Strategy demographic criteria. The interagency partnership built to maintain a recovered population would very likely dissolve.

We discussed these alternatives at length and the end result was that the science team partners of all Yellowstone management agencies were united in recommending alternative #2. USGS agreed to lead production of this synthesis document in #2.

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