



Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Five-Year Plan for 2005-2010

January 2005



IGBC Mission: To recover and secure the future of the grizzly bear and its habitat through cooperation, communication, and agency action.

Background

In 1983, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) was established to help ensure recovery of viable grizzly bear populations and their habitats in the lower 48 states through interagency coordination of policy, planning, management, and research. Consisting of top-level federal, state, and Canadian representatives from agencies with grizzly bear population and habitat management and research responsibilities, the objectives¹ of the IGBC are to:

- Coordinate management and research actions of state, federal, and Canadian agencies related to the grizzly bear to ensure the best utilization of available resources and prevent duplication of effort.
- Implement the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan to facilitate recovery of grizzly bears.
- Implement and oversee the management and research activities for recovered grizzly bear populations.

In September 1999, the IGBC met in executive session to reaffirm the Committee's objectives and set goals for the next five years. After these five years passed, the IGBC met again in June 2004 to review progress and set new goals for the next five years. Below is a summary of the goals set in 1999, progress made toward those goals, and the new goals for 2005-2010.

Overarching Issues

- Enhance leadership role as a coordinating body. Share collective opinion more often to agencies to push action. Be more assertive in encouraging progress.
- Acknowledge 25 years of efforts by IGBC toward grizzly bear recovery – capture history, development, maturation and accomplishments.
- Emphasize coordinated efforts across ecosystems. IGBC members will not be designated formally as a point of contact for subcommittees. The lines of communication will remain wide open. Subcommittee members are encouraged to visit with executive committee members as needed.
- Executive committee will write the appropriate officials regarding funding needs.
- Provide input to the Fish and Wildlife Service on future DPS designations.

Research/Monitoring

Issue Statement: Adequate levels of population and habitat research and monitoring are needed in each ecosystem in order to understand population and habitat dynamics sufficiently to ensure progress towards recovery.

Status/Accomplishments:

¹ IGBC objectives are defined in the 1999 Memorandum of Understanding among member agencies.

- Research and monitoring in YES have been a major factor in documenting population recovery.
- DNA population census and trend monitoring are underway in the NCDE.
- Research and monitoring efforts are ongoing in the Selkirks and Cabinet-Yaak; however, funding has been chronically low and is in danger of decreasing.

Vision: Robust research and monitoring programs with adequate funding and personnel are in place to ensure that sound science is available for decision making in each ecosystem.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Secure \$1 million in USGS annual base budget.
- Develop a consistent and coordinated approach for research and monitoring to ensure that funding and personnel are effectively deployed to support IGBC priorities.
- Develop political/financial support for research/monitoring – cross-ecosystem research priorities.

Subcommittee Goals:

- See ecosystem duties.
- Implement research and monitoring actions as funding is available.

Linkage

Issue Statement: Linkage across fracture zones is needed to maintain healthy wildlife populations and provide for human safety on highways.

Status/Accomplishments:

- Linkage work is progressing on the ground in some areas.
- MOU among state and federal wildlife, land management, and transportation agencies for cooperation in wildlife linkage is in preparation.

Vision: Achieve biologically effective linkage between all grizzly bear ecosystems and with Canadian populations.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Promote development and implementation of MOU among wildlife, land management, and transportation agencies.
- Provide subcommittees and other agency managers with copies of linkage reports and other available tools
- Promote use of linkage assessment tools in the planning processes of land management agencies
- Support establishment of a linkage technical assistance team to provide help to agencies implementing linkage
- Support the creation of a linkage coordinator position as funds are available

Subcommittee Goals:

- Promote assessment of linkage opportunities on public lands in land management planning
- Promote outreach with private land owners to enhance awareness and opportunities for providing linkage
- Promote cooperative efforts with transportation agencies to enhance linkage across highways

Attractant Storage/Food-Conditioning

Issue Statement: Grizzly bears are easily conditioned to unnatural food sources. Food conditioning generally leads to the death of the bear and often presents human safety risks.

Status/Accomplishments:

- All National Parks and many areas of the National Forests within grizzly bear habitat require proper storage of attractants.
- Some National Forests and all other land ownerships have no attractant storage requirements
- Existing storage requirements are inconsistent, leading to public confusion, potential safety risks, and possible liabilities
- Many sources of food-conditioning exist on private land, and these are being dealt with through outreach by bear conflict specialists

Vision: The need to properly store bear attractants is understood by the public, and consistent, effective storage practices are in place on all land ownerships.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Promote consistent attractant storage requirements and education across all public land ownerships occupied by grizzly bears
- Support ongoing efforts to manage attractants on private lands.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Work to enhance public understanding and compliance with attractant storage requirements

Access Management

Issue Statement: Motorized vehicle access in grizzly bear habitat can displace bears from important seasonal habitats and provide an avenue for human-caused bear mortality

Status/Accomplishments:

- Standards for limiting access management are in place on many areas of the National Forests
- Access limitations are highly controversial with a large segment of local publics.

Vision: Motorized access in grizzly bear habitat is managed appropriately to limit bear displacement and mortality within acceptable levels while impacting the public to the minimum degree possible.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Provide consistent science-based guidance to land management agencies on the issue of access management
- Work to enhance public understanding and political support for appropriate levels of access management on public lands

Subcommittee Goals:

- Implement consistent science-based access management as needed in grizzly bear habitat
- Work with local publics on understanding and acceptance of access management.
- Access; study bear reaction to human activity.

Ecosystem-level Plans

North Cascades

2000-2004 Goal: Restore North Cascades Ecosystem to “threatened” status

Status/Accomplishments:

- Information, education, and sanitation efforts are ongoing.
- Habitat management standards (access management, management situation mapping) are being addressed in Forest Plan revisions.
- No progress has been made on a recovery implementation planning document in the U.S.
- Endangered status is warranted for U.S. population.
- British Columbia has completed a recovery implementation plan including strategies related to augmentation.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service is now being litigated for lack of recovery action.

Vision for 2010: Develop a defined course of action toward recovery

Executive Committee Goals:

- Develop financial and political support for implementation of U.S. recovery.
- Coordinate with British Columbia’s recovery efforts.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Identify/protect opportunities for habitat connectivity.
- Continue outreach and public involvement to increase understanding and support for bears.
- Initiate a recovery implementation planning process, including public involvement.
- Conduct a bear hazard assessment (at least in the north ½ of the ecosystem).
- Coordinate with BC on recovery efforts, and continue with contingency planning for bears that may enter the U.S. from Canada.

Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak

2000-2004 Goal: Restore Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem to “threatened” status

Status/Accomplishments:

- Endangered status is warranted for the population.
- Some linkage zones have been identified and linkage implementation is ongoing on some of these zones between the Cabinets and Bitterroots, between the Selkirks and the Cabinets, and across Highway 3 in Canada.
- Cooperation with BC is ongoing and multiple projects are underway including examining linkage locations and amount of movement across Highway 3, enhanced outreach efforts with the local public, and discussions about augmentation.
- Linkage between the Cabinets and the Yaak is being examined in detail using GPS collars on black bears to understand the amount of movement, locations of movement, and relations between bear movement and Highway 2, the Kootenai River, and the BNSF rail line.
- Record of Decision and Forest Plan Amendments completed for motorized access management on National Forest lands in the Selkirks and Cabinet-Yaaks.
- Genetic analysis identified the Selkirk bears as isolated and shown limited connectivity in the Yaak portion of the Cabinet-Yaak population.

Vision for 2010: Make significant progress toward recovery and restore population to “threatened.”

Progress toward recovery will require simultaneous application of augmentation, maintaining, and enhancing linkage opportunities with adjacent populations (due to the

small population size here), enhanced mortality control, enhanced outreach and public involvement, building support in the local public for bear conservation and for reduced mortality, and making the public aware of where they can expect grizzly bears to be present.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Develop political and financial support for augmentation and other necessary recovery efforts.
- Emphasize linkage support regarding high level of habitat fragmentation on all lands (public and private), highways, and railroads.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Increase number of breeding females by $\geq 50\%$ in each population to address extinction risk and genetic isolation issues.
- Identify/protect opportunities to connect Cabinets, Yaak, and Selkirks with each other, the NCDE, BE and Canada.
- Reduce human-caused bear mortality to within recovery plan goals.
- Outreach/public involvement to increase public and political support.
- Improve sanitation on public and private lands.

Yellowstone

2000-2004 Goal: Recovery and de-listing of the Yellowstone Ecosystem population

Status/Accomplishments:

- Recovery and delisting are on track.
- Plan to propose status change in 2005.
- Agency cooperation toward this end is excellent.
- Process is underway to amend the forest plans with the habitat criteria necessary to maintain recovered status.
- FWS Distinct Population Segment Analysis is underway.
- Subcommittee completed a task force effort in spring 2004 to address human-caused mortality using a strategic planning approach.

Vision for 2010: Transition from a listed grizzly bear population to a recovered, de-listed population of grizzly bears.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Secure funding for Conservation Strategy implementation by making state and federal officials aware of implementation costs.
- Establish effective working relationship with the Yellowstone Grizzly Coordination Committee.
- Continue to support research and monitoring through the IGBST.
- Communicate success of progress toward recovery.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Continue sanitation efforts.
- Continue outreach/education efforts and highlight the history of recovery of the Yellowstone population and cooperation of agencies involved.
- Implement the Conservation Strategy.
- Promote continued population expansion in biologically suitable/socially acceptable (BS/SA) areas.
- Identify/protect opportunities to connect YE with BE and NCDE.

Bitterroot

2000-2004 Goal: Initiate recovery of grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Ecosystem

Status/Accomplishments:

- Reintroduction ROD was signed but implementation was suspended
- Agencies and cooperating NGOs continue working to improve sanitation and public education

Vision for 2010: Develop a defined course of action toward recovery.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Develop a full understanding of the potential for and consequences of natural re-colonization.
- Keep open the option of reintroduction should political support develop.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Continue sanitation and outreach efforts
- Synthesize past public input (local vs. other) and social/economic information.
- Conduct a quick review on the viability of the reintroduction NEPA documents.

Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem

2000-2004 Goal: Achieve recovered status for the NCDE population

Status/Accomplishments:

- Population is expanding in all directions outside the recovery zone.
- Fieldwork to make a population estimate using DNA sampling was completed in 2004. The total population estimate resulting from this work is expected in December 2006.
- An effort to begin to collect the data necessary to estimate the trend of this population began in 2003. Results of this effort are probably 4-5 years out, depending on the sample size. To date, 16 bears have been collared.
- There is ongoing evaluation of the possible connection between the NCDE and the Yaak area, although there has been no documented movement of research bears between these areas.

Vision for 2010: Achieve recovery and de-listing.

Executive Committee Goals:

- Direct the development of a conservation strategy for appropriate parts of NW Montana. The Conservation Strategy will include appropriate recovery criteria based on the best available science, and will be used to amend the recovery plan.
- Evaluation of a study team approach toward research and monitoring to support recovery and delisting.

Subcommittee Goals:

- Develop statistically bounded estimates of population size and trend.
- Develop an annual Monitoring Report.
- Develop a State Grizzly Bear Management Plan.
- Cumulative Effects Model has been completed and baseline run for 1999 habitat analysis.
- Develop 2004 activities layer and re-run in 2005.
- Promote continued population expansion in biologically suitable and socially acceptable areas.
- Identify/protect opportunities to connect NCDE with CYE, BE, YE and Canada.
- Address access management needs through established public planning processes.

Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Action Items

(As of 12/10/04)

Overarching

Engage top-level decision makers in a coordinated approach to recover grizzly bears through policy and procedures adopted by each member agency. The implementation of these procedures is assigned to each respective subcommittee.

Through completion of an IGBC mission statement, 5-year plan, and Business plan, establish IGBC's leadership role in grizzly bear recovery. Chairman and Executive Assistant will monitor to ensure that IGBC's role is being appropriately implemented in accordance with its Charter and agency MOU's.

Through a coordinating committee, set in place the necessary actions to appropriately recognize IGBC's 25th anniversary in 2008.

Through the Executive Assistant position, ensure that coordination in grizzly bear research, management, and outreach/education is occurring across all ecosystems.

Direct the strategic funding taskforce to identify and draft correspondence for the Chairman's signature to appropriate officials regarding the need for consistent, adequate funding for grizzly bear recovery and management.

North Cascades

IGBC will send a letter of support for a recovery planning process in the North Cascades to USFWS officials.

Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak

IGBC members will assist in assuring that Section 6 funding to IDFG for the Selkirk monitoring effort is not reduced.