

Meeting minutes-Conference call-July 12th, 4:00 p.m.

In attendance: Loren Grosskopf (joined at 2:15 p.m.), Patricia O'Connor, Brian Nesvik, Dan Wenk, Jodi Bush, Dalissa Minnick

The group started by re-visiting one issue from the previous meeting to ensure the conclusion was properly captured.

Theme #10---Brian outlined his recollection of the final group discussion and the fact that all present came to agreement on the issue. Brian re-stated the final group position as being discretionary mortality near the boundaries of the National Parks was not an issue appropriate for the Conservation Strategy. Additionally, Dan will draft language for the introduction and vision of the strategy that will more clearly state the value of grizzly bears to the ecosystem and the public.

***NOTE: Brian will update the June 24, 2016 meeting notes to reflect CONSENSUS ACHIEVED on theme #10.

Theme #13---Dan outlined the issue stating that this theme was related to other themes regarding connectivity and the harvest of bears near the National Park boundaries. He stated this is a big issue to some constituents. He stated this is an issue related to the value for grizzly bears his visitors have. Dan stated that he doesn't feel that Yellowstone should be a source population to provide bears for the states to hunt.

Brian outlined the position of the states and the background on the previous discussions on this issue. He stated that this was a major part of early discussions between the states and the USFWS regarding developing a new delisting rule. Brian stated that the Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear population is managed at the ecosystem level and that bears routinely move throughout the area. He stated that the recovery criteria are based on this premise and that this theme is not a biological issue. Brian also stated that at no time will there be discretionary mortality in the Parks.

Dan stated that he agreed this theme was not a biological issue and acknowledged that bears in the South Wind Rivers and the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park are a part of the same population. He brought up challenges with the Northern Range elk population that has declined over the past several years and that they are hunted when they leave the Park. He indicated the fact that they have no influence over what happens to this population of elk once they leave the Park creates problems for him and his ability to meet the Park mission. He also indicated that Yellowstone is blamed for the large decline in hunter success because Yellowstone won't kill predators. Dan also acknowledged the fact that this is one of the hardest issues for the National Parks and the states to come to agreement on.

Dan asked if there were any populations in the state where a species is hunted and that objectives are based on the number of animals in a particular geographic area. Brian cited mountain lion and black bear populations as examples where this is the fact. There was a lengthy discussion on predator management and the concept of "source, stable and sink" populations.

Loren brought up the fact that the recovery criteria related to reproductive female distribution (16 of 18 BMUs) and the fact that this ensure wide distribution of grizzly bears.

Dalissa asked if the Conservation Strategy is the right place for something related to optics. Dan stated that it would be in the rule if it was up to him.

Brian brought up his perspective that the allocation of discretionary mortality at the ecosystem level would not preclude the National Parks from meeting their mission to provide grizzly bear viewing opportunities and a quality experience for their visitors. Brian stated that the states have a conservation based mission and the Parks have a preservation based mission. He asserted both entities could achieve their respective missions under the draft construct related to the allocation of discretionary mortality to Idaho, Montana and Wyoming.

Dan stated that he didn't think it is appropriate for the Parks to serve as a source of grizzly bears for the states to hunt. Dan talked about the increased use of Yellowstone National Park and the tremendous commitment the park has made towards maintaining secure, undeveloped habitat for grizzly bears and protections against harvest. He again stated he didn't argue the science and that this isn't a scientific issue, but made clear this is a big issue for to his constituents.

Brian stated that his recommendation was that no changes be made to the Conservation Strategy related to the allocation of proportion of discretionary mortality to exclude the geographic area represented by Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.

Jodi stated that she supports the states' position and Brian's recommendation

Loren stated that he supports the states' position and offered that this kind of a change would change the management model for all species around the National Parks.

Dalissa stated that she supports the states' position.

CONSENSUS WAS NOT ACHIEVED

MAJORITY SUPPORT NO CHANGE RECOMMENDATION TO YES

The committee discussed the process that will be used to move through all of the themes at the August 2nd YES meeting.

Brian reminded the group that the sub-groups will be providing their edits to the steering committee by July 15th.

NOTE: Population Management requested 1 additional week to provide their edits. This request was granted.

The group agreed to provide any edits they are responsible for to the committee for review no later than July 27th. The group will discuss these edits at a meeting on July 28th at 10:00 a.m.

Additionally, the group will decide on the process to be used to present these recommendations to the YES committee.

The group set the next meeting for July 28th at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m