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Connectivity issue for discussion:

It is our hope to maximize the opportunity for occasional male movement between the NCDE and Yellowstone to address concerns about negative long-term isolation impacts to Yellowstone. One way to achieve this objective, is to minimize discretionary mortality in the genetic connector area in Montana between the NCDE and Yellowstone through the Madison Range, Tobacco Roots, Highland Mountains, Boulder Mountains and Nevada Mountains. This could be accomplished by not permitting sport hunting in these connector areas.

Management of any human-bear conflict in these connector areas will still proceed as necessary and appropriate; curtailing sport hunting in these connector areas is the issue for discussion. Since there are few if any grizzly bears currently in these areas, the question is how important is loss of hunter opportunity in these areas by implementing this conservation objective. A commitment to connectivity management in state regulations or in Commission policy statement would make this clear and legally defensible.