

YES-Population Management Subgroup Report

Theme 1: Harvest focused away from park boundaries in areas where human bear conflicts are prevalent.

Originated by: NPS

Is the Theme necessary to update the CS based on changes that have occurred in the science, delisting framework or to improve the strategy? None of the above

Is this item relevant to the Conservation Strategy or should it be addressed somewhere else? Not relevant to the CS but is partially addressed in State Grizzly Management Plans and Tri-State MOA

Additional time required by sub-group to address theme: No further time needed.

Notes: Written comments from NPS to Wyoming: ‘The NPS recognizes and appreciates that the WGBMP identifies a number of management actions that would support the overall objective of focusing harvests away from park boundaries, and acknowledges the state would “*apply more conservative management policies within portions of the [Primary Conservation Area] PCA outside of national parks to assure demographic distribution criteria*” (page 10). However, we request the plan affirmatively state that Wyoming supports an approach of focusing bear harvests away from park boundaries and would work to integrate such an approach in future management actions.’

“The NPS requests that the WGBMP more affirmatively state that human-bear conflict areas would be used as a primary consideration in identifying hunting areas and establishing hunting objectives.”

NPS expressed to subgroup they would like the intent of the states to be recorded-how will hunting be directed away from the park? Forest Service stated there are areas within FS jurisdiction that may become sensitive in terms of hunting acceptance by the public and would like to have the opportunity to discuss these situations/areas with state agencies annually. States explained they have identified strategies to manage discretionary mortality in state management plans and the Tri-State MOA. The MOA commits state agencies to discuss these issues with NPS and USFS on an annual basis (see below).

- Draft 2016 CS-The CS has few references to hunting but does support management of grizzly bears as game animals (“allowing hunting when and where appropriate”- page 3) and reference hunting of nuisance bears on page 93; “Outside of national parks, individual nuisance bears deemed appropriate for removal may be taken by a legal hunter in compliance with rules and regulations promulgated by the appropriate state wildlife agency commission, as long as such taking is in compliance with existing state and federal laws, and as long as mortality limits specified for the GYE as described in this CS are not exceeded.”
- State Management Plans do not identify strategies to focus bear harvest away from NPS lands (except WYO page 10), but each state plan contains language regarding focusing hunting in areas where conflicts may be reduced. In some cases this can be in areas adjacent to the park (i.e. Gardner Area)
- The Tri-State MOA describes how discretionary mortality will be calculated and allocated within the DMA, and how states will coordinate with other agencies annually. “The Parties will confer with the

YES-Population Management Subgroup Report

NPS and USFS annually. The parties will invite representatives of both GYE National Parks, the NPS regional office and GYE USFS Forest Supervisors to attend the annual meeting “(page 6).

Theme 1 Recommendation: This discussion does not impact the CS. The annual coordination commitment to discuss issues on monitoring and discretionary mortality management (includes hunting when seasons are authorized) is important to USFS, NPS, and State agency representatives. However, NPS remains concerned about hunting that may occur adjacent to NPS lands and wants a commitment from state agencies that hunting will be focused away from parklands. This issue requires additional discussions between NPS and State F&G agency leadership.

Theme 2: Hunting will not be permitted in the John D Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway (JODR)

Originated by: NPS

Is the Theme necessary to update the CS based on changes that have occurred in the science, delisting framework or to improve the strategy? None of the above

Is this item relevant to the Conservation Strategy or should it be addressed somewhere else? Not relevant to the CS. This is addressed by a state agency during their big game season setting process. Areas open or closed are designated by the commission and identified in the hunting proclamations.

Additional time required by sub-group to address theme: No further time needed

Notes: The Wyoming Game and Fish Commission (WGFC) has ultimate authority and discretion for the establishment of take seasons in Wyoming including lands within the JODR. The Commission has both allowed and restricted hunting in this area previously (i.e. wolf hunting was not allowed in JODR). The decision to allow or restrict hunting in JODR will be made during the season setting process as the commission considers the biological and social aspects of a department proposal. NPS is opposed to grizzly bear hunting in the JODR and submitted comments to Wyoming in opposition during the public comment period for the Wyoming management plan revision and also to the Service for the proposed delisting rule. As described in the previous issue, States will confer with the NPS annually to discuss issues with monitoring and management. Additionally, Wyoming will conduct open public meetings prior to setting a future grizzly bear season.

Theme 2 Recommendation: The group recommends no change to the CS but acknowledges a hunting restriction for grizzly bears in JODR would appease public concern expressed to this point. Any restrictionis regarding harvest management of grizzly bears in the JODR would be addressed through WGF Commission Regulation.

Theme 3: If a new estimator other than Chao 2 is used in the future, the states will recalibrate the population thresholds and proportions of allocated hunter harvest based on the estimates provided by the new model in comparison to Chao 2.

YES-Population Management Subgroup Report

Originated by: NPS and States

Is the Theme necessary to update the CS based on changes that have occurred in the science, delisting framework or to improve the strategy? The theme is necessary based on changes that have occurred in the science.

Is this item relevant to the Conservation Strategy or should it be addressed somewhere else? Yes this theme appears in Appendix C-Calculation of Total Population Size and Mortality limits.

Additional time required by sub-group to address theme: 6-8 weeks

Notes: Calculation of Total Population Size and Mortality Limits (for GYE grizzly bears) is described in Appendix C of the CS and has been updated in the 2016 Draft. The Service stated that Appendix C was rewritten by the IGBST staff based on new demographic analyses reported in the Updated Demographics Rates Document (IGBST 2012).

This theme to recalibrate sustainable mortality rates based on new population estimates derived from a new estimator is addressed in language inserted on page 2 of Appendix C (paragraph 2). This language is supported by NPS as written. However, the three state fish and game agencies do not support this new language and requested that the recalibration reference be removed from Appendix C.

The states believe it is not adaptive-it holds future management to a period of time regardless of new information and conditions in the future. The second concern has been about the utility of a new estimator; it must detect trends as good as the current estimator, and it must be able to back calculate estimates during 2002-2014. There is no new estimator able to do this at this time. Lastly, recovery criteria should not automatically be reset based on a change in monitoring technique.

The states do support the YGBCC process to make changes to monitoring methods and the CS as described on page 2 (paragraph 1) of Appendix C. This process is also described in the body of the CS.

Theme 3 Recommendation: The group has requested a briefing by the IGBC Study Team, specifically from Frank Van Manen and/or Mark Haroldson who were involved in the demographic work that has led to proposed changes in Appendix C. The group will provide a recommendation following the briefing and further discussion.

Comment [DT1]: I don't feel any new methods need to be able to back calculate accurately. This is the primary problem with the premise of doing so. Even with future more accurate estimations, mortality thresholds are in place should the population be 800 or 1500 bears according to Demographic Recovery Criterion 3.

Comment [DT2]: Thompson and Bjornlie can address further during conference call. WGFD worked directly with Frank/Mark on updating language in Appendix C as well as calculation of changes in vital rates and ratios.

Theme 4: Harvest will be based on the number of grizzly bears available to be hunted outside of NPS units rather than the entire population.

- 21% of DMA are NPS managed units
- 39% of PCA are NPS managed units, and stated as "secure habitat" in the conservation strategy. What does "secure habitat" mean?

Originated by: NPS

Is the Theme necessary to update the CS based on changes that have occurred in the science, delisting framework or to improve the strategy? No

YES-Population Management Subgroup Report

Is this item relevant to the Conservation Strategy or should it be addressed somewhere else?

Allocation of total discretionary mortality is appropriate for the MOA; secure habitat is appropriate for the Habitat Standards and Monitoring Chapter in the CS

Additional time required by sub-group to address theme: None-this will be elevated to the Steering Committee.

Notes: This involves two issues; (1) Allocation of total allowable mortality, and (2) what does hunting mean to “secure habitat” in the PCA

- NPS would like 21% of the total allowable discretionary mortality for the DMA assigned to NPS lands and not available for discretionary management outside NPS lands. The Tri-State MOA does not allocate discretionary mortality to NPS but recognizes all mortalities that occurred within NPS lands the prior year when determining total allowable discretionary mortality the current year.
- Secure habitat is defined on page 62 and relates to a minimum size of area and the distance of that habitat from motorized access. One subgroup member asked if hunting should be added to bullet list on page 64 so hunting is recognized as an activity allowed in the PCA?

Theme 4 Recommendation: Defer issue to the Steering Committee at the request of YNP Superintendent Dan Wenk

Theme 5 & 6: Concern about FCOY being set at 48 – does this limit flexibility of managers; Secondly, if a new method is used to estimate population, does FCOY number change? Needs to be clear what happens to all of the metrics if we move to a new methodology

Originated by: County Commissioners

Is the Theme necessary to update the CS based on changes that have occurred in the science, delisting framework or to improve the strategy? To be determined

Is this item relevant to the Conservation Strategy or should it be addressed somewhere else? Yes this theme appears in Chapter 2 of the CS and Appendix C-Calculation of Total Population Size and Mortality limits.

Additional time required by sub-group to address theme: 6-8 weeks

Notes: There is a technical correction needed to Demographic Recovery Criterion 1 on page 35, correct to “three consecutive years.” The group would like further explanation of this demographic monitoring technique to better understand its application and whether or not clarifying language would be helpful.

Theme 5 & 6 Recommendation: After Study Team briefing consider adding clarifying language to the CS on pages 34, 38, and Appendix C

Comment [DT3]: Thompson and Bjornlie can update and clarify.