

Meeting Date: May 16, 2024

Agenda Item No. 16

Agenda Item: Panhandle Region Grizzly Bear Program Overview

Bureau Chief Approval: SR

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Background:

The Panhandle Region is occupied by a population of about 70-100 grizzly bears that are listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Portions of GMU 1 lie within the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Areas, which collectively span three states (WA, ID, MT) and are contiguous with occupied bear habitat in Canada. The Grizzly bear population has expanded in abundance and distribution over the past several decades and related conservation work by IDFG has evolved in relation to community and management needs. At present, the program is primarily community-based and focuses on 1) human-bear conflict prevention and resolution, 2) depredation management, 3) conservation enforcement, 4) education and outreach, 5) supplemental demographic monitoring, and 6) policy development.

In 2021, the Department invested additional resources toward bolstering staff presence in communities most affected by grizzly bear conflicts in the Panhandle Region. That investment is delivering much needed tools and technical assistance to people in the region's rural communities that experience routine conflict with grizzly bears. Through the enhanced program, outreach efforts are creating synergy among many diverse partners and building important tolerance among the public.

This presentation will provide an overview of the Panhandle Region's grizzly bear program, highlighting key points related to future policy and the basic program operations necessary to support bear conservation in northern Idaho. Content will focus on trends in grizzly bear conflict management in the region, outreach tools being used to inform and equip communities, and conflict response framework.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues:

The Idaho Fish and Game Commission administers state wildlife policy through the Department (Idaho Code 36-104). Grizzly bears in the Selkirk/Cabinet-Yaak are listed under the federal ESA, and accordingly the Department's management actions of grizzly bears in this area are coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Public Involvement Process:

N/A. This agenda item is for Commission information only.

Justification:

Information will aid Commissioners as they respond to requests, recommendations, or other input from the public.

Staff Recommendation:

None. This agenda item is for Commission information only.