

**Panhandle Forest Collaborative**  
3/20/13 draft meeting minutes  
Sandpoint District Office, Sandpoint  
1:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Members present: Bob Boeh, Jeff Connolly, John Finney, Phil Hough, Liz Johnson-Gebhardt, Mike Petersen, Brad Smith, Laura Wolf

Guests: John Cosolito (FS), John Bair (Idaho Master Naturalists), Jim Mellen (Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness/ POP), Lori Getts (Idaho Master Naturalists), Clem Yonker (Idaho Master Naturalists), Carol Jenkins (Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness and Kinnickinnick Native Plant Society), Dave Pietz (Idaho Master Naturalists)

Facilitator: Karen DiBari

Presenters: Kristina Boyd, Project Manager for Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at University of Montana and Michael Lucid, Idaho Fish & Game, Multispecies Baseline Initiative

Everyone introduced themselves. A number of guests attended the meeting to hear the educational presentations.

Forest Projects Committee:

- Committee plans to meet April 17 or 18 in Priest River
- Moving ahead with discussions with the Coeur d'Alene District (Chad Hudson, Ranger) about Bottom Canyon

Recreation Committee:

John Finney reported that since the last meeting, the Forest Leadership Team met about the winter travel plan and instead of focusing just on the Selkirks, are now going to include the whole north zone. All analysis has been focused on the Selkirks thus far, so this means it will have to be broadened. A plan probably won't be in place next winter. Brad Smith and John Finney have talked about trying to have some interim management until the final management plan is in place. Erick Walker and John met to talk about public engagement; the process would include Cabinets and Purcells. The travel plan won't be underway until the forest plan is final. Budget constraints are still a concern.

Agenda items for the next meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, May 21, 2013:

- Committee reports (Structure & Relationships; Recreation; and Forest Projects)
- Announcements (Treasured Landscapes)

The Kootenai Tribe sent a letter to the PFC to let the group know that they'll not be able to attend meetings as frequently but would like to keep in touch with the group.

## **Grizzly Bear Presentation**

Presentation from Kristina Boyd, Project Manager for Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at University of Montana (Katherine Kendall, USGS is Project Lead)

- People are very interested in how many bears are out on the landscape
- In Continental Divide, Kate Kendall did a non-invasive study in 2003-2004 using hair snagging; County Commissioners and RC&D commissioned a study in the Cabinet-Yaak – very controversial
- Once the project began, there were many supporters who came forward (USFS, Border Patrol, MFW&P, IDF&G, Revett Minerals, Friends of Scotchman Peaks, Y2Y; Idaho Forest Group, Stimson, and more)
- Kate Kendall's estimate in Northern Continental Divide had 3%+/- confidence interval (very high)
- Objectives of study: population estimate of grizzlies +/- statistical confidence limit
  - Distribution, density, relatedness
  - Hair snagging
- Data Analysis
  - Repeated sessions of hair collection with genetic analysis to identify individual grizzlies
  - Can build a capture history of each bear across collection sessions
  - The capture histories show the probability of a bear being captured at least once
  - Then can determine the probability of being captured vs. not being captured
  - Captured and probably uncaptured bears = population estimate +/- confidence limits
- Probability of capture is affected by gender, trapping history, distance to edge of study area, sampling effort
- Two methods of hair sampling: rubs and corrals (natural behavior of bears is to rub against trees, posts, etc; corrals – wrap barbed wire around some trees and leave lure in the middle so bears have to cross wire)
- 1/3 of bears only caught at rubs; 1/3 of bears only caught at corrals – showing that individual bears have different behaviors and using both methods very important
- Probability of being captured at a rub higher for males, adults and history of capture
- Corrals visited in higher ; by young, females and no history of capture
- Timeline
  - Project started 2011 w/establishing study area; 5 crew members set up and monitored rubs (they were natural rubs that were already used by bears; added

- barbed wire for better hair samples); surveyed 3,542 miles in the 2011 field season and found over 1,000 rub objects
  - 2012 – 70 field members to set up corrals – bears lured by liquid from aged fish and blood (no food reward); corrals moved in mid-summer to higher locations to respond to the bears’ movement to follow food sources w/the seasons; 395 corrals monitored and 1,412 rubs monitored; 5 collection sessions at corrals and also used a secondary lure later in season; 8 collection sessions at rubs; collected hair at all sites every 2 weeks; 18,500 hair samples total for season; not many grizzly bear sitings (7); 64 black bear sitings
  - 2013 – 10,472 samples sent to lab for microsatellite DNA analysis (took best samples which is why not all 18,500 samples analyzed); determined 1) if grizzly bear; 2) individual identification
  - Report expected 2014 – don’t have an estimate yet
- Application of study
  - Population estimate
    - Combined w/trend = updated population number
    - Frame of reference for mortality rates
    - Solid data for litigation
  - Distribution and density
    - Prioritize mitigation dollars
    - Supplement corridor planning
    - Solid data for litigation
  - Individual ID and relatedness
    - Compared w/cooperators = immigration/emigration/forays
    - Population fragmentation
    - Unknown bears/breeding
    - Augmentation bear survival
  - Google USGS grizzly bear for website w/other information

## **Idaho Multispecies Baseline Initiative Presentation**

Michael Lucid - Multispecies Baseline Initiative, or MBI (Idaho Fish & Game)

- 1948 – Robert Orr was taking a road trip across Montana – collected a Magnum Mantleslug near Lolo Pass; 62 years later in 2010, MBI crews detect 17 specimens (shows the value of observing a variety of species over time)
- The MBI project monitors:
  - Snails and slugs,
  - Forest carnivores (lynx and wolverine for example)
    - Learning about resident lynx populations, passing through, etc.

- Frogs – Northern Leopard Frog, Wood Frog (last found in 1970 – no one has looked since then for them) – before taking action to conserve, need to have a sense of whether it occurs and where located
- State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP)
  - Every state has a SWAP
  - A comprehensive strategy to maintain the health and diversity of wildlife w/in a state. The plans outline the steps that are needed to conserve wildlife and habitat before they become threatened
  - Develop a list of species of greatest conservation need (SGCN)
    - 229 species in ID; 200 in WA
    - Most species on this list are birds; conservation actions are more understood
    - Also a lot of gastropods on list, but basic surveys are needed as conservation action
  - SWAPs are funded through offshore oil lease receipts; intent of state wildlife grants is to support implementation of SWAPs
  - FY11 - \$62 million in pot split amongst all states and territories; got grant for \$950,000 to implement MBI in northern ID and WA
  - Grant spans 3 years w/following elements
    - Summer amphibians and gastropod surveys
    - Micro-climate
    - Forest carnivore surveys and monitoring
    - GOALS: improve SGCN status before 2015 revision OR
    - Develop more specific conservation actions
  - Plan for 2012-2015 w/grant funds – 20 species total
    - 5 amphibians
    - 12 invertebrates
    - 3 forest carnivores
  - Doing terrestrial habitat surveys on top of Forest Inventory & Analysis for 150 sites; also buffering roads and wetland sites
  - Methods of collection
    - Measuring microclimate at sites (relating to climate change)
    - Plastic cups and beetle funnel traps
    - Paper soaked in beer to attract gastropods (snails)
    - Bait station (hang meat in tree) w/brushes on tree to collect hair, and a camera to get pictures
    - Amphibians – challenging to collect and identify rare amphibians; working with University of Idaho to identify “environmental DNA” – shows what species were present in pond water (being used to look for

Asian carp in the Great Lakes); animals shed DNA into the water through feces, skin slough, etc.

- Coeur d'Alene salamander survey
- 2010 – surveys begun; now 2012 – 2015 have increased number of cells and scope of survey (cooperating with Canada as well)
- Partner groups have been instrumental in setting up bait stations, monitoring, etc. – helps to provide non-federal match that enables the state to get federal funds
- Lacking long-term data on a diversity of species in Idaho – have lots of information on ungulates (elk and deer) that support management decisions, but that's not the case for the species being studied under MBI; hope is that this project can turn into a long-term monitoring program to provide a true baseline to support wildlife conservation strategies in the face of development, climate change and other pressures
- Website: <https://fishandgame.idaho.gov/baseline>
- Public can report animal sightings through “observations” on the web page

### **Fisher**

- Fisher reintroduced in 1990s from Midwest population
- Ray Vinkey did a project/paper in 2003 (Master's thesis) on history of fisher in area (lots of trapping); follow up studies done w/hair traps to find number of fishers in the Cabinets, Selkirks, and Purcells
- Now—IF&G bait stations set up 2010-2012 in northern part of state – 111 bait stations -
- Does sample exposure time affect DNA quality? Found that number of days not that important in determining success of samples
- Purcells- no fisher detection
- Selkirks – found 1 fisher 2010 (12? Fisher detections 2004-2008 – could be the same individuals)
- West Cabinets – 54 bait stations; 2004-2008 11 detections (not individuals); 2011 – detected 15 individuals; 2012 – re-detected 7 individuals and 14 new individuals
- Looking at all bait stations, found that fisher and marten tend to separate themselves by elevation (marten high elevation; fisher lower elevation) – but this is not conclusive and there's been another study that found the opposite
- No native fishers found; doesn't mean there wasn't a native population but it's not known

Meeting adjourned.