

April 2, 1991  
revised April 15, 1991

TO: HUNTER/GRIZZLY BEAR INTERACTIONS TASK FORCE.

HERE IS THE DRAFT REPORT WE PRESENTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON APRIL 3. I HAVE HIGHLIGHTED THE CHANGES AND COMMENTS THAT OCCURRED DURING THE MEETING. OUR NEXT STEP IS TO REVISE THE REPORT BASED ON THE COMMENTS AND THEN SEND IT TO ALL THE SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR REVIEW AND COMMENT. ALSO WE NEED TO PROCEED WITH OTHER ACTIONS AS DESCRIBED IN THE REPORT. TOM AND MARSHALL -- I WILL CALL YOU TO ARRANGE A MEETING DATE. CHRIS-- IF OK WITH YOU WE WILL MEET AND THEN SEND YOU THE RESULTS FOR REVIEW??? JIM

DRAFT REPORT TO  
YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM GRIZZLY BEAR SUBCOMMITTEE  
regarding  
RECOMMENDED ACTIONS TO REDUCE GRIZZLY/HUNTER CONFLICTS

prepared by: Hunter/Grizzly Bear Interactions Task Team

Introduction

During 1990 one hunter was seriously injured by a grizzly bear and four bears were shot by hunters. These were field encounters away from camp and appear to be the result of both the hunters and bears being surprised and one or both reacting defensively. These incidents have resulted in pain and suffering by the hunter who was mauled and the loss of these bears is an adverse impact to recovery efforts. As the grizzly bear moves towards a recovered population increased confrontations are likely to occur.

Current advice on human/grizzly bear interactions stresses camp standards and letting the bear be aware of your presence when afield by making noise. While hunters can maintain proper camp standards the idea of making noise to warn the bear of your presence is opposite of good hunting techniques. There are no methods that currently prescribe a safe way to hunt in grizzly bear habitat.

The Grizzly Bear/Hunter Interaction Task Team was created by the Yellowstone Interagency Grizzly Bear Subcommittee to explore avenues to prevent grizzly bear and hunter interactions from resulting in the death or injury of a hunter or bear.

Task Team Objective

"Explore avenues to prevent grizzly bear and hunter interactions resulting in the death or injury of a hunter or bear."

DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Develop a supplement to the hunter safety training course that provides advice for hunting safely in Grizzly Bear habitat.

Rodd Richardson, National Grizzly Bear Habitat Coordinator, working with the National Rifle Association developed a proposal to create a supplement to the hunter safety manuals regarding hunting safely in Grizzly Bear Habitat. A core team of representatives from the Wyoming Game and Fish, US Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Forest Service has been formed to provide the technical advice for this project.

At their first meeting on March 20 the following assignments were agreed upon:

a. The message will be defined by a team headed up by Dennie Hammer, Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Some initial thoughts or topic areas to be considered.

- Theme is to develop an ownership/partnership between the bear and hunter.
- Watch for bear signs (identify) and then take action (explain).
- Stay away from day beds (identify where these are)
- How to approach animal carcasses (leave overnight?)
- Maybe not leave carcass alone at all
- Hunt & pack in pairs
- Avoid whitebark pine stands.
- Leave "an out" for bear - as approach cliffs, etc.
- Hunter escape route - don't run.
- Calling game
- Special items, whistle... required to check, with agencies about specific problems.
- Problem carcass handling - separate gut pile from carcass
- Enlist hunter's help in spotting bears, informing authorities
- Watch for old camps, etc. that were not sanitary as they draw bears.
- Hunt in pairs
- Light in camp

b. Various organizations will be contacted regarding funding.

THIS RECOMMENDATION WAS ACCEPTED BY THE SUBCOMMITTEE. I EXPLAINED THAT LARRY ADAMS, WYOMING GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT WAS LEADING THE EFFORT TO DEVELOP THE MESSAGE AND FIND FUNDING SOURCES. IN ADDITION I DISCUSSED THE NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 22.

2. Change elk and deer hunting dates.

Changes in the timing of elk and deer seasons may affect the amount of interaction between hunters and grizzly bears. It appears that states with a later season such as Montana experience less conflicts with grizzly bears.

RECOMMENDATION - The State of Wyoming will be reviewing their overall hunting season changes in June and July of this year for the 1992 season. They will be

reviewing changes regarding bull ratio's and building more elk in the Teton Wilderness. This may mean shorter seasons or the use of more limited quotas. We recommend they factor the effect of hunter/grizzly conflicts into this decision.

SUBCOMMITTEE WAS OK WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION AS WRITTEN

### 3. Area Closures

Agencies currently utilize two types of area closures. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department occasionally closes areas to hunting when a sufficient number of game animals have been harvested; and the Forest Service occasionally will close an area to all entry (i.e. some elk and deer winter range).

Current Wyoming Statutes do not allow a hunting season to be closed prematurely for other reasons such as to prevent hunter/ bear conflicts.

While Forest Service regulations will allow an area to be closed to prevent conflicts, experience has shown these to be effective for only small areas which does not allow for easy application over broader areas.

RECOMMENDATION- Use area closures to reduce conflict for small easily defined areas.

### 4. Use of Chemical Repellants and Deterrants

The use of chemicals to repel bears has been studied in some detail in the past. There are two possible uses for the chemical.

- a. Personal self defense to repel a bear at close range. Of the many different products tested, those containing an active ingredient of cayenne peppers have been recommended by some bear experts.

THERE WAS CONCERN ABOUT THE EFFECTIVENESS OF REPELLANTS. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE 2ND SENTENCE IN (a), ABOVE BE CHANGED TO THE FOLLOWING: "Chemical sprays may have some value to deter bears that enter camps. In such situations sprays may influence a bear to leave a camp. Chemical sprays have minimal usefulness in trail encounters with bears at close range due to the difficulty of effective use and continuing questions about the real deterrant value of chemical sprays to a charging bear in a close encounter. Chemical sprays do not make a person safe in bear country and should not be used in place of common sense about backcountry use in bear country. "

IT WAS ALSO AGREED THAT WE WOULD SUMMARIZE THE EXISTING INFO ON CHEMICAL SPRAYS AND SEND OUT TO THE UNITS. CARRIE HUNT FROM THE SHOSHONE MAY BE WILLING TO DO THIS. SHE HAS EXTENSIVE EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA.

- b. As a deterrant to the bear using a carcass by placing the chemical either on or next to any game animal that a hunter has taken. Currently more research is needed to determine the best substance to use for keeping a grizzly bear from using a carcass.

Two alternatives were considered regarding the use of bear repellants. These were:

1. Require all hunters to carry the repellent in a readily available place
2. Inform hunters of the availability but do not require.

BASED ON THE SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ITEMS 1&2 ABOVE WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE REPORT

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Inform hunters of the availability of the repellent and recommend it be carried. This recommendation, however, needs more study. There is some concern that people may become too confident and therefore actually increase incidents.

#### ITEM A WILL BE DROPPED

B. Initiate more research to determine what type of substance is best used to deter a grizzly bear from either being attracted to or using an animal carcass without affecting the quality of the game meat.

#### 5. Required Training

The information developed for hunting safely in grizzly bear habitat will only be effective if hunters somehow have been exposed to and assimilate the information. In order to ensure this occurs the following is recommended:

#### RECOMMENDATION-

1. Outfitters and guides must have the training developed for the hunter safety course and must be certified for hunting in the recovery zone.
2. All hunters must have received instruction for hunting safely and be certified to hunt in the recovery zone. Implementation of this recommendation may require agencies to make this available on certain days throughout the hunting season to facilitate training opportunities for non-local hunters.

ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS WERE OK

#### 6. Whistle - or other noise making device

Various studies have shown that conflicts between humans and grizzly bears are reduced when humans make enough noise to allow the bear time to move out of the way. Hunters do the opposite by trying to move as quietly as possible to not startle elk or deer.

An attempt has been made to find a sound device that would allow a hunter to alert a grizzly bear of their presence without being heard by elk or deer. While various studies have been made regarding bear reaction to sounds, to date, no research has been found that determines if the hearing frequency range of a grizzly bear is different from an elk or deer.

RECOMMENDATION--

1. Initiate a study to determine if the frequency range of a grizzly bear is sufficiently different from an elk or deer to allow for development of a discriminating whistle.
2. If sufficient differences occur in hearing ranges, initiate research to develop an appropriate whistle or other sound making device.

OK WITH THIS RECOMMENDATION. AS A COMMITTEE WE ARE TO PROCEED WITH FINDING RESEARCH OUTLET TO GET THIS DONE. NEED TO CHECK WITH WSU. THEY MAY BE ABLE TO DO THIS.

7 Registration of hunters in the Recovery Zone.

Hunter responsibility to follow regulations that have been developed to reduce hunter/bear conflicts would improve if they were required to provide information prior to entry regarding their name, address, camp location and expected time of stay. While the Forest Service in the past has used voluntary registration in some wilderness areas this has met with limited success. Mandatory self registration at trailheads would be required to make this work.

RECOMMENDATION--

Initiate a mandatory self registration program for hunters who desire to hunt within the Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone.

THIS RECOMMENDATION WAS NOT ACCEPTED. DECISION WAS TO FOLD THE IDEA OF VOLUNTARILY REGISTERING INTO THE HUNTER SAFETY COURSE

8. Hunter Education

Education of hunters who decide to hunt within grizzly bear habitat is essential for reducing the conflicts between bear and hunters. If the recommendations of this report are implemented information will need to be provided as follows:

PREHUNT

-Requirements for hunting in grizzly bear habitat included with information packets that are sent out.

-The requirements for hunting in grizzly bear habitat, including training requirements, must be included in the Big Game Regulations under General Information.

LICENSING PROCESS

-Flyer about hunting in grizzly bear habitat to be included with limited quota licenses.

-Brochure available at all licensing sites.

#### DURING HUNT

-Field checks, agency patrols

#### AFTER HUNT

-Questions regarding hunting in grizzly bear habitat will be added to the hunter survey form.

#### HUNTER/GRIZZLY BEAR INTERACTIONS TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Tom Toman, Wyoming Game and Fish Department  
Marshall Gingery, Grand Teton National Park  
Chris Servheen, US Fish and Wildlife Service  
Jim Gladen, Bridger-Teton National Forest