

Special Report
DRAFT GRIZZLY BEAR
MANAGEMENT PLAN



A Summary of the Public Involvement Process, Written Comments and
Analysis,
Telephone Survey Results, Costs, Conclusions and Recommendations

September, 2001

Wyoming Game and Fish Department

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the 135 people who attended the public open houses held around the state in early May, 2001, to inform interested individuals about the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, plus the 8,195 who took the time to provide written input. Recognition is also in order to the 195 participants of the initial grizzly bear plan scoping workshops held around the state in October, 2000. Their insight and comments helped launch this planning process in a very positive way.

A special thanks is extended to the 21 members of the Citizens Grizzly Bear Working Group who spent hundreds of hours, collectively, in meetings - both deliberating and listening - and without whose dedication, the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* would have taken much longer to produce and not reflected the amount of consensus it did at the time it was released for public review.

Thanks, too, to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission members and legislators for their interest and willingness to give of their time to listen to the proposal and to what people had to say in response.

Finally, compliments to all Department personnel who assisted with this information dissemination and gathering exercise.

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PREFACE

This *Special Report* is a compilation of the public involvement process surrounding the release of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* in late March, 2001. The process was undertaken for the purpose of ultimately determining management direction for the State of Wyoming, once this species is removed from the federal list of threatened species. Predictably, the interest in the proposed plan was not only intense, it eclipsed all previous records by a substantial margin. Simply put, the process resulted in the largest volume of written public input ever received on any subject in the Department's history.

The following pages briefly summarize the efforts used by the Department to explain the original draft proposal to the public and solicit input, as well as examine the feedback received. This process included scoping workshops, a citizens working group, open houses, written comments and a public opinion telephone survey of residents. Conclusions and recommendations emanating from this process are also included in the *Special Report*. These came after a careful review of, and are based upon, all the input gathered. Hopefully, this *Special Report* transmits sufficient information upon which decision-makers can chart a future course of action related to the management of grizzly bears in Wyoming.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This *Special Report* summarizes the public involvement process surrounding the development of a grizzly bear management plan for the State of Wyoming. That process took place during August 1, 2000 - July 20, 2001. It consisted of five parts: 1) scoping workshops; 2) citizens working group; 3) public open houses; 4) the acceptance of written comments; and 5) a random telephone survey of Wyoming residents.

1. **Scoping Workshops** (beginning on Page 3) - A series of seven scoping workshops were held in the cities of Cody, Sheridan, Jackson, Rock Springs, Riverton, Cheyenne and Casper during October, 2000. One hundred ninety-five (195) people from across the state attended the workshops.
2. **Citizens Working Group** (beginning on Page 3) - Twenty-one (21) citizens representing diverse interests were selected by the Department to help develop the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. These individuals met four times in late-2000 and early-2001 in facilitated fashion to complete their work, which was presented to the Game and Fish Commission at its February, 2001, meeting.
3. **Public Open Houses** (beginning on Page 6) - A series of four open houses were held in the cities of Casper, Riverton, Jackson and Cody, during late-April and early - May, 2001. A total of 135 people participated in these open houses. Attendees were given the opportunity to have all their questions answered from an assembled team of Department experts familiar with grizzly bears and the proposed management plan.
4. **Written Comments** (beginning on Page 6) - A total of 8,195 comments were received from people around Wyoming and outside the state - including internationally. Copies of all written comments are included in Appendix II of the *Special Report*, which is a separate document.
5. **Telephone Survey** (beginning on Page 12) - Responsive Management Inc., of Harrisonburg, Virginia, was contracted to do this work. A total of 1,015 residents were surveyed during July and August, 2001, to determine their views on grizzlies and future grizzly bear management in Wyoming. A copy of the firm's final report, along with the accompanying findings, analysis and comments, constitutes Appendix I of the *Special Report*, which is part of this document.

Nineteen (19) conclusions were drawn from the public involvement process and the content analysis performed on the public input received. These are found on pages 15 - 19 of the *Special Report*.

Based upon this process and the input received from the public, the Department advanced nine (9) recommendations to the Game and Fish Commission, concerning how the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* should be modified prior to finalization and adoption. These recommendations are found on pages 19 - 21 of the *Special Report*.

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BACKGROUND

It has been over 25 years since the State of Wyoming had complete management responsibilities for grizzly bears occupying habitats within its borders. Since 1975, the grizzly bear population here has been listed as "threatened" under the federal Endangered Species Act. As such, most of the management goals within the state over the past two-and-a-half decades have been defined by the U.S. Department of the Interior/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. But that will be changing with the very real prospect that the grizzly bear population within the Yellowstone Ecosystem has sufficiently recovered to warrant delisting. When that happens, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) needs to be ready to assume that responsibility. A necessary component for managing grizzly bears following delisting is the preparation of state management plans.

The Department currently does not have a grizzly bear management plan, since such a plan would have been superceded by the federal recovery plan for this species. Even the skeletal management objectives and goals referenced in the Department's 1990 *Strategic Plan* are now woefully inadequate because they do not address management of the grizzly bear following delisting. This prompted the agency to initiate a new planning effort in late-1999, which culminated in the release of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* for public review earlier this year.

While the draft plan is specific to Wyoming, it had its grounding in federal requirements such as the *Recovery Plan* and the soon-to-be-completed *Conservation Strategy*. Once Wyoming's plan is approved and in effect, as long as all the population criteria defined in the *Conservation Strategy* are met, the Department will have full management authority inside and outside the Primary Conservation Area, with the exception of Yellowstone and Grand Teton national parks. As proposed, the state's management plan will provide the framework for grizzly bear management outside Yellowstone and Grand Teton.

But Wyoming is not the only player in the management of grizzlies, after delisting. There was considerable coordination with the states of Montana and Idaho during the development of the Wyoming draft plan. Those states are also in the process of developing similar plans, and lag slightly behind Wyoming in the scheduled completion date. Once all these plans are completed and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurs, the three states understand there will need to be continued coordination after delisting to ensure consistency in managing this shared grizzly bear population.

What follows in the *Special Report* is a summary of the public involvement process used by the Department in the development and release of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, the input received through written comments and a telephone survey, the costs associated with this undertaking, conclusions that can be drawn from the process used and input received, as well as recommended changes to the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*.

INTRODUCTION

In order to fully appreciate where the planning process currently stands - much less try to imagine where it goes from here - it is important to recognize a great deal of effort was expended before the first sentence was ever put on paper. While the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* describes management objectives and strategies for the Wyoming portion of the Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear population, once this population is removed from the federal threatened species list, a host of administrative actions will need to be completed first, including:

- Revision and completion of the *Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy*;
- Concurrence and signatures by all agencies on the final *Conservation Strategy*;
- Completion of habitat criteria for the Yellowstone Ecosystem and appending same to the *Recovery Plan*;
- Amendment of national forest management plans in the Yellowstone Ecosystem to incorporate the habitat criteria; and
- Completion of state management plans in Wyoming, Montana and Idaho.

Over the years, the Department has involved a number of stakeholders in discussions regarding grizzly bear recovery. In preparation of eventually developing a state grizzly bear management plan, the Department, in 1999, embarked on a planning process known as the "Legal-Institutional Analysis Model" (LIAM). Stakeholders were invited to participate in two LIAM workshops held in Powell and Riverton in August of that year. The purposes of the workshops were to explore the process for designing the state's management plan and to recommend the essential elements of that process. Participants in both workshops supported the idea of developing a state management plan and favored a planning process that involved as many parties as possible. They also supported the concept of a steering committee of representative stakeholders to help guide the planning process. The workshops did not result in a recommended planning process.

Shortly thereafter, in December, 1999, a Memorandum of Understanding between the states of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming was signed by their respective governors, establishing an agreement to conduct a tri-state Governors' Roundtable to review and comment on the draft *Conservation Strategy* for grizzly bears in the Yellowstone Ecosystem, while the *Conservation Strategy* was undergoing broader public review.

The roundtable discussions were completed in May, 2000. One of several recommendations to flow from that forum, and agreed to by the three governors, was the development of state management plans for grizzly bears outside the Primary Conservation Area. These state plans were to go into effect once grizzly bears were delisted.

At their July, 2000, meeting in Rock Springs, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission (Commission) directed the Department to develop a grizzly bear management plan and provide a draft to that body for approval in February, 2001. To assist with the planning process, the Department hired a professional facilitator, Virginia Tribe. Ms. Tribe facilitated the Governors' Roundtable on the *Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy*. While under contract with the Department, she was responsible for the design and management of the process by which the Wyoming plan would be developed. For its part, the Department created a citizens working group to help draft the grizzly bear management plan. In addition to her other responsibilities, Ms. Tribe also facilitated the meetings of this working group.

Selection of the working group began in August, 2000, with a statewide news release to over 1500 news outlets, businesses and individuals, and over 360 direct mailings to likely candidates, seeking applications for membership on the working group. Approximately 60 applications were returned to the Department. Ultimately, an internal team selected 21 working group members. These members were chosen based upon the interest they represented and their ability to think critically, work collectively, and network effectively with their colleagues. The group included a federal land manager, motel owner, a member of the media, an attorney, an outfitter, a retired forest supervisor, a land surveyor, a sheep rancher, an environmental organization staffer, two educators, a legislator, a gas field worker, a county commissioner, two cattle ranchers, a housewife, a statistician, a veterinarian, a lobbyist, and a tribal game warden. These individuals acted as volunteers, receiving no compensation, but were reimbursed for mileage and per diem. A technical group made up of representatives from various state and federal agencies involved in grizzly bear management within the Yellowstone Ecosystem was also established to provide technical support to the working group.

The citizens working group met four times (September, November and December, 2000 and January, 2001) in Lander. Meeting length averaged 12-14 hours over the course of two days. The technical support group was instructed to provide information only when asked, and its members were not full participating members of the working group discussion. The working group was charged with exploring public input, developing guiding principles, identifying issues and concerns, discussing options, recommending strategies and identifying other items to be addressed in any planning exercise.

Issues and concerns regarding grizzly bear management were identified through seven public workshops held in October, 2000, as well as follow-up written responses to the Department. The workshops were held in Cody, Sheridan, Riverton, Jackson, Rock Springs, Cheyenne and Casper, with some members of the working group, legislators and Commission members attending each. One hundred ninety-five (195) people attended the workshops. In addition, the Department received 82 written comments. Nineteen (19) subject areas were advanced for consideration to the citizens working group.

Thereafter, during the course of the working group meetings, management issues and concerns were discussed and addressed. As each issue of concern was covered, the working group made recommendations that were to be included in the draft plan. Based upon those recommendations, and under the direction of the working group, personnel from the Department wrote sections of the draft plan as a "work in progress". These draft sections

were then reviewed by the working group and revised based on their comments. In the end, with working group review and technical group support, a draft plan was developed and sent to the Commission on February 1, 2001. At its February 12th meeting in Cheyenne, the Commission heard from representatives of the working group and were presented with a thorough briefing of the draft document. After careful consideration of the working group's recommendations, the Commission directed the Department to perform a final internal review and revision of the document prior to its being released for public comment. That work was accomplished during a February 19-20, 2001, meeting in Lander.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS ADDRESSED IN THE DRAFT PLAN

In crafting the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, the citizens working group refined the earlier input obtained during the scoping process and identified six issues or concerns that needed to be addressed in the plan. Included were the following: 1) occupancy; 2) population management; 3) habitat and land management; 4) nuisance grizzly bear management; 5) information and education; and 6) costs and funding. In the draft planning document, each topic was carefully communicated in an "issue statement". Those issue statements are reiterated here, verbatim, so the reader does not lose sight of the core purposes for which any management plan involving grizzly bears in Wyoming is being developed:

- 1. Occupancy** - Wyoming must decide where grizzly bears will occur outside the Primary Conservation Area and, where allowable under the *Conservation Strategy*, within the Primary Conservation Area. State managers should set management objectives for populations of grizzly bears and the strategies necessary to meet those objectives, such as active management versus self-regulation. Scientific data to help make those determinations is limited, and social and cultural concerns may conflict with population objectives in some areas. State management strategies, which maintain a healthy, sustainable population of grizzly bears, will lessen chances of the species being re-listed.
- 2. Population Management** - Necessary grizzly bear habitats, dynamics within those habitats, and grizzly bear population dynamics are not fully understood. Data collection and analysis on grizzly bears is expensive. Money generated from hunting and fishing license fees for other species has traditionally paid for this data collection. Emphasis needs to shift to additional funding sources. Without accurate data, including a statistically sound and affordable population estimate, it will be difficult to apply traditional wildlife population management concepts to grizzly bears.
- 3. Habitat and Land Management** - Management of grizzly bear habitat in Wyoming outside the Primary Conservation Area is complicated. Important habitats need to be identified and managed where grizzly bears exist. Most currently occupied grizzly bear habitat in the state is on U.S. Forest Service land, although grizzly bears do use other federal, state and private lands. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department's authority over land use decisions is limited to Department-owned lands, yet the Game and Fish Department is responsible for management of grizzly bears. Coordination among state and federal agencies and private landowners will be crucial.

4. **Nuisance Grizzly Bear Management** - Nuisance or “problem” grizzly bears that are not managed successfully, threaten the entire grizzly bear program. When grizzly bear problems are not adequately addressed, there are negative affects for the individual grizzly bear, the public, and the reputation of grizzlies. The primary goal is to maximize human safety and minimize losses to property, while maintaining a viable population of grizzly bears. Compensation programs for depredation may help build tolerance for grizzly bears by property owners.

Acceptance of grizzly bears is largely dependant on prevention and mitigation of human-grizzly bear conflicts. The cause, severity and appropriate response to human-grizzly bear conflicts often varies considerably from one incident to another, making a broad range of management applications desirable to the wildlife managers. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department encourages the public to report any conflicts with grizzly bears.

5. **Information and Education** - Management strategies are unlikely to succeed without comprehensive public information and education programs. A partnership information and education approach involving the Game and Fish Department, as well as other agencies, local communities and private interests, can result in minimizing human/grizzly bear conflicts, as well as develop a stronger sense of agreement among Wyoming’s residents about the state’s goals and management schemes related to the grizzly bear.
6. **Costs and Funding** - The cost of long-term management of the grizzly bear will exceed the financial ability of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to fund the program through traditional sources. The Department needs to secure new sources of long-term funding to assist with the cost of managing this species.

The above-referenced issues and concerns formed the basis of the subsequent proposed management actions and, hence, the core of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. The plan addressed the full array of management options considered by the drafters of the plan to address identified issues and concerns, as well as a full accounting of the recommended courses of action. The latter was also the focus of most of the public comment on the draft plan. Due to the voluminous nature of the specific management recommendations in the plan, they are not included in the *Special Report*. Rather, interested individuals seeking more detail should refer to pages 15-30 of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, dated March 28, 2001, and published by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE DRAFT PROPOSAL AND PUBLIC NOTICE

The original 42-page draft proposal outlining the management options was printed in late-March, 2001, and the initial distribution of the plan was completed immediately thereafter to Department offices and public libraries across the state. For the first time, in part because of anticipated demand to review the document, the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* was accessible to the public via the Internet, on the Department website at <http://gf.state.wy.us>. Widespread public notification of the plan's availability resulted from statewide media

coverage immediately following the February 12th Commission meeting, and frequent media coverage, generally, throughout the next four months.

In addition, Department-produced news releases issued on March 29, April 26, June 14, and July 5, 2001, also helped remind the public about the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, its availability and the deadline for comments. Two hundred (200) copies of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* were printed.

OPEN HOUSES

In an effort to respond to inquiries concerning the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, the Department hosted a series of four open houses during May, 2001, in the cities of Casper, Riverton, Jackson and Cody. A total of 135 people participated in these open houses. Unlike prior public meeting forums the Department has utilized, these open houses were very informal. They were designed for information exchange between Department personnel involved in grizzly bear management activities and inquiring citizens.

Upon arriving at the open houses, participants were greeted and offered a copy of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* if they desired or previously hadn't secured a copy. Most attendees had not previously read the draft plan. Once inside the room where the open house was being held, participants had occasion to meet with 3-5 Department managers familiar with the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, examine maps of current grizzly bear occupied habitat in the state - complete with overlays of other commodity and recreational uses in these areas - and view a continuous running PowerPoint presentation that highlighted the draft management plan and its recommendations. A U.S. Forest Service representative was also present at each of the open houses, except Jackson. Each meeting ran from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM. While this format did not draw the attendance seen at previous public meetings involving subjects of great interest, the information imparted was appreciated by attendees. Only a few objections to the meeting format were registered.

Open house attendees were also given a form on which they could present written comments and submit them prior to departing. Seven (7) people who had previously read the plan brought written comments to the open houses. Another seventeen (17) people took advantage of the "individual comment form" and provided written comments after having their questions answered at the open houses.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

Written comments constituted the only means by which the public could provide direct input on the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. The rationale for restricting input to this medium was to provide interested individuals the opportunity to present detailed views on the draft plan, grizzlies in general, and grizzly bear management in Wyoming in particular, without the need to record and subsequently interpret oral comments. These written comments came in the form of letters from individuals, organizations and agencies, e-mails and mass-produced postcards. The length of time people had to provide written comments

on the draft plan approximated 120 days, making this the longest public comment period ever offered by the Department on any proposed action.

Copies of all comments received during the period March 28 - July 20, 2001, are included under separate cover as Appendix II. When the deadline arrived, a total of 8,195 pieces of written input had been received, including 8,169 individual comments and 26 representing organizations and agencies. Of that amount 1,048 (13%) came with Wyoming addresses. Written comments were received from 65 communities in Wyoming, the other 49 states and the District of Columbia, as well as 42 foreign countries. All totaled, this written input comprised the largest amount of feedback the Department has ever received through this means on any single issue in its history.

This quantity of input undoubtedly is evidence of the intense interest in this subject, as well as very well organized grassroots effort by an interest group to encourage its members to submit comments. It is worthy of mention that of the 8,195 written responses received, 6,318 (77%) were preprinted postcards, and of those, 862 (14%) were from Wyoming residents. These all originated from the Sierra Club. This is unlike the public participation process surrounding the *Draft Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Proposal*, where several competing interest groups had organized efforts to increase membership responses.

The *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* public involvement process also revealed a significant increase in the use of e-mail to provide written comments. Slightly over 20% (1,665) of the 8,195 written comments came via the Internet. A substantial amount of the total e-mails received (17%) were duplicate messages - that is one or more from the same individual. These were detected and are not reflected in the figures above. This duplication rate compares to less than one-tenth of one percent when traditional written communications were utilized.

Although the deadline for written comments was July 20, 2001, cards, letters and e-mails continued to arrive at Department headquarters in Cheyenne up until the *Special Report* went to press in late-August. Late comments numbered over a hundred. These were not included in the previously referenced tallies, nor in the analysis of the public input that follows. All written input received in a timely manner are on permanent file at the Department's Cheyenne headquarters office, as are any supporting attachments that accompanied the written comments, but that were not copied for inclusion in Appendix II.

DEPARTMENT ANALYSIS

During the week of August 13th, 2001, Department personnel with experience in content analysis reviewed all the written input received during the public comment period. This analysis was made easier because only written comments were considered. While the following information is a qualitative representation of the written input received, this was not a scientific process, and therefore the analysis should not be, and cannot be, extrapolated to reflect the opinion(s) of the general public as a whole. It is, however an accurate reflection of the views expressed by those individuals who took the time to provide written comments on the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*.

The method used was careful review of each individual written comment, recording of the salient points related to actual grizzly bear management, grouping similar responses, then arraying them in order of frequency in which they occurred. Approximately 70 separate issues or concerns were identified from individual respondents. These are listed below in categories ranging from “very high” (i.e. most frequently referenced) to “very low” (i.e. least frequently referenced).

VERY HIGH

- Opposed to reinstating a grizzly bear hunt in Wyoming.
- Protect grizzly bears where they currently live in suitable habitat outside archaic boundary lines.
- Maintain existing forest wildlands and ensure science-based standards on roads and access to ensure grizzly bear habitat.
- Support information and education programs for those recreating in grizzly country, including requiring the carrying of pepper spray.
- Allow second chances for grizzly bears found outside the recovery zone.

HIGH

- Protect habitat outside the current recovery zone.
- Better address habitat protection in the plan.
- Identify the areas grizzly bears will be allowed to occupy in Wyoming.
- Oppose/rework the overly aggressive nuisance bear policy reflected in the draft plan.

MODERATE

- Inadequate funding or contingency planning for funding for the state’s grizzly bear program.
- Concerns over energy development, logging and ORV use in grizzly country.
- Political meddling by the Game and Fish Commission in the development of the draft plan.
- Concerns that grizzly bears are dangerous and pose safety threats to humans, especially children.
- Plan lacks accountability.
- Plan provides for inadequate monitoring of grizzly bears.
- Support limited hunting season on grizzly bears.
- Allow the grizzly population to expand beyond the Primary Conservation Area.
- Restrict the grizzly population to the Primary Conservation Area and the contiguous portions of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
- Better explain how Game and Fish actually intends to implement the management plan.

LOW

- Establish migration corridors or habitat linkages between grizzly populations.
- Minimize land use restrictions.
- Don’t be swayed by the special interest groups.
- Plan needs to better address ways to minimize human/bear conflicts.

- Restrict grizzlies to Yellowstone National Park.
- Support delisting of the grizzly bear.
- Oppose delisting of the grizzly bear.
- State the current grizzly bear population and future population objective.
- Ensure the grizzly remains a unique part of Wyoming.
- Plan provides inadequate protection for grizzly bears.
- Wyoming and its license buyers have spent too much money on grizzly bears.
- Reduce or control grizzly bear numbers.
- Oppose the current method of reimbursing landowners for damage caused by grizzly bears.
- Don't provide grizzly bears more protection than people.
- Make management decisions based on science, not politics.
- Grizzly bears are damaging to Wyoming's tourism and economy.
- Game and Fish ought to be managing grizzly bears, not the federal government.
- Ensure adequate protection of private property rights.
- Support limited grizzly bear hunt, but only after certain conditions are met.
- Support information and education program that stresses coexistence.
- Support the plan as written.

VERY LOW

- Establish grizzly bear eco-centers or otherwise provide food.
- Oppose mandatory carrying of pepper spray.
- Support occupancy in Wind River Range, Wyoming Range and/or Owl Creek Mountains.
- Oppose baiting in areas frequented by grizzlies.
- State shouldn't assume management responsibilities until the grizzly is delisted.
- Applaud illegal shooting of grizzly bears.
- Support nuisance bear policy as written.
- Oppose grizzly bear expansion into the Bighorn Mountains.
- Applaud Idaho governor's position on Bitterroot Mountains reintroduction.
- Grizzly bears belong to all the people of the United States, not just Wyoming.
- Restrict commercial activities/uses in occupied grizzly bear habitat.
- State needs to improve its relationship with the federal agencies.
- Altered recreational uses, by area, due to the presence of grizzlies.
- Grizzly bears are an asset to Wyoming tourism.
- Oppose Idaho governor's position on Bitterroot Mountains reintroduction.
- Concern over genetic diversity and viability.
- Plan is too punitive to first-time offender bears.
- Those who strongly support grizzly bears should be forced to live with them.
- Support Game and Fish Commission's modification to the draft plan.
- Game and Fish employees should be in uniform at all public meetings.
- Support the State of Wyoming suing the federal government to recover grizzly bear management costs.
- Oppose establishment of the national endowment to fund state grizzly bear management programs.

- Oppose any loss of hunting privileges because of grizzly bears.
- Restrict ORV use in grizzly bear country.
- Develop quality counting methods for grizzly bears.
- Oppose establishing migration corridors or linkages between grizzly populations.
- Get rid of the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service.
- State should buy land for grizzlies within the Primary Conservation Area, when it becomes available.
- Need tougher laws against salting as a hunting technique and also leaving carcasses in the field.
- Use sale of all grizzly bear bladders as a way to fund state management efforts.
- Eliminate the 10-mile buffer zone.

A number of individuals also proposed very specific wording changes to the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* or posed very specific questions they wanted to see addressed. In all instances, the authors responsible for making revisions have these requests in hand and will take these matters into consideration when drafting the *Final Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. These comments are included in Appendix II.

As previously stated, in addition to comments received from individuals, 26 organizations and agencies also submitted written comments on the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. The organizations included the Marion County Humane Society, Inc., Southern Appalachian Biodiversity Project, The Nature Network, Mouton Cadet Sunset Society, Wyoming Stock Growers Association, National Wildlife Federation, Wyoming Wildlife Federation, Animal Protection Institute, The Fund for Animals, Predator Conservation Alliance, Wyoming Advocates for Animals, Audubon Wyoming, Friends of Loomis Forest, Wyoming Outdoor Council, Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation, Northwest Wyoming Resource Council, Wyoming Wool Growers Association, American Wildlands, and Northwest Ecosystem Alliance. Agencies represented in the array of comments included the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, USDA/APHIS Wildlife Services and USDI/Bureau of Land Management.

A separate content analysis was conducted on these written comments. It was performed in the same manner as the individual comments - that is, issues, concerns and position statements were segregated according to the frequency in which they were advanced. Those are listed below, ranging from the most often referenced items (i.e. “very high”), to the least often referenced (i.e. “very low”). Approximately 50 items were identified by the organizations and agencies. They included:

VERY HIGH

- Protect habitat outside the current recovery zone.
- Oppose/rework the overly aggressive nuisance bear policy reflected in the draft plan.
- Identify the areas grizzly bears will be allowed to occupy in Wyoming.

HIGH

- Oppose reinstating a grizzly hunt in Wyoming.
- Better address habitat protection in the plan.
- Plan lacks accountability.
- Establish migration corridors or linkages between grizzly populations.
- Political meddling by the Game and Fish Commission in the development of the draft plan.
- Inadequate funding or contingency planning for funding for the state's grizzly bear program.

MODERATE

- Protect grizzly bears where they currently live in suitable habitat outside archaic boundary lines.
- Protect grizzly bears outside the current recovery zone.
- Make management decisions based on science, not politics.
- Plan provides for inadequate monitoring of grizzly bears.
- Support information and education programs for those recreating in grizzly country, including requiring the carrying of pepper spray.
- Don't allow expansion of the grizzly beyond the Primary Conservation Area.
- Opposed to any grizzly-related conditions being placed on grazing permits and other additional land use restrictions.
- Support information and education program that stresses coexistence.
- Support limited hunting season on grizzly bears.
- Plan needs to address ways to minimize human/bear conflicts.
- State the current grizzly bear population and future population objective.

LOW

- Concern about genetic diversity and viability.
- Support the nuisance bear policy as written.
- Address precise criteria for dealing with problem bears.
- Grizzly bear is not a desired resource in Wyoming.
- Support establishment of the national endowment to help fund state grizzly bear management program.
- Oppose delisting of the grizzly bear.
- Oppose baiting in areas frequented by grizzlies.
- Plan lacks a mission statement or statement of real commitment that the state wants to manage grizzly bears.
- Support the plan as written.

VERY LOW

- Maintain existing forest wildlands and ensure science-based standards on roads and access to insure grizzly bear habitat.
- General concern over the amount of roading.
- Support multiple use concepts in managing public lands.
- Plan provides inadequate protection for grizzly bears.

- Oppose the current method of reimbursing landowners for damage caused by grizzly bears.
- Game and Fish needs to be more aggressive in putting forth recommendations to federal agencies on management actions that protect/benefit grizzly bears.
- Plan lacks details; too vague and too many generalities.
- Oppose the state assuming management responsibilities that rightfully belong to the federal government.
- Wyoming must coordinate its bear management program closely with Montana and Idaho.
- Support limited grizzly bear hunt, but only after certain conditions are met.
- Define what is meant by pre- and post-hibernation.
- Specifically clarify management strategies that will occur inside and outside the Primary Conservation Area.
- Clarify the use and extent of prescribed burns.
- Don't rely on handshake deals to protect the grizzly bear and its habitat; develop binding agreements between agencies.
- Concern about ORV use in grizzly country.
- Concern about energy development and logging in grizzly bear habitat.
- Support delisting the grizzly bear.

Also, as was the case with the individual responses, several organizations and agencies proposed very specific wording changes they wanted to see in the final plan and/or posed very specific questions that needed resolution. In all instances, these requests are known by the authors and these will be carefully considered in the *Final Grizzly Bear Management Plan*. Again, these comments are included in Appendix II.

TELEPHONE SURVEY

The Department contracted with Responsive Management Inc., one of the premier natural resource survey firms in the country, to conduct a random telephone survey of adult Wyoming residents to examine opinions on grizzlies and grizzly bear management in the state. Specifically targeted were public opinions on delisting, increasing the grizzly bear population, value of grizzlies in the ecosystem, personal observations of grizzlies, avoidance of areas because of grizzly bears, education opportunities utilized about living in bear country, sources of information about grizzly bears, potential management actions involving problem bears, support for regulated sport hunting, distribution, potential food storage or other restrictive regulations, and federal land management restrictions. In addition to providing insight on public opinion related to some issues within the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, this survey was designed to address broad management topics and will provide useful information to Department managers as they prepare to take on additional responsibilities with this species. It is worth noting, however, that the results from the survey are the most statistically valid (i.e. quantitative) information received during the recently-concluded public involvement process on this issue.

The telephone survey was conducted between July 9 and August 11, 2001. Interviews took place between Monday and Friday, from 9:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. and on Saturdays from 10:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M., local time. Participants were asked a series of 59 questions with a total of 1,015 respondents providing answers to all the questions. The interviews lasted an average of 14.6 minutes. The response rate for the grizzly bear survey was 59.11%. Researchers reported no major problems or resistance from participants were encountered during the interviews.

The sampling error associated with the telephone survey is +/- 3.07%. Findings are reported at a 95% confidence interval. In other words, 95% of the time the real population values that have been estimated by this survey and this sample will be the same as these survey results, plus or minus 3.07%. The entire survey report from Responsive Management is reproduced in Appendix I, which follows the *Special Report* narrative in this document. Because of the thoroughness of Appendix I, it is not the Department's intent to summarize all of the survey results here, rather to highlight some of the most important findings. These include:

Opinions towards grizzly bears in Wyoming - A large majority of residents (74%) agree that grizzly bears are a benefit to Wyoming. An even larger percentage (87%) agree grizzly bears are an important component of the ecosystems they occupy.

There is an equal split between residents who think the grizzly should be removed from the federal Endangered Species List (36%) and those who think it should not be removed (36%). A substantial number (25%) indicate they do not know.

Opinions/attitudes toward increasing the grizzly bear population - No majority consensus exists either for support or opposition to increasing the grizzly bear population in Wyoming. Slightly more residents (42%) support increasing the population than oppose increasing it (39%). Support for increasing the population increases significantly with the addition of local managers who would manage bears and resolve conflicts.

Residents' contact with grizzly bears and recreational activity - Most Wyoming residents (70%) have not seen a grizzly bear in the last five years. Of the 30% who have, most (86%) have seen a grizzly one to five times.

Opinions on legal hunting grizzly bears - A majority of Wyoming residents (79%) support legal and regulated sport hunting to maintain population objectives, if the grizzly bear population reaches a large enough size.

Precautionary steps in grizzly bear habitat - There is an almost equal division between residents who indicate that they would continue to use (48%) and those who say they would not continue to use (44%) outdoor areas where they currently recreate if those areas were occupied by grizzly bears. However, most residents (80%) do not avoid working in areas because of the presence of grizzly bears, and most (71%) do not avoid recreating in areas because of the presence of grizzly bears. Only 17% of residents carry pepper spray when entering areas containing grizzly bears.

Sources of information on grizzly bears - Very few residents (6%) have attended a “Living in Bear Country” workshop. An identical percentage had visited the Game and Fish website looking for information on grizzly bears. The most frequently used source for information about grizzly bears is newspapers and magazines (35%), followed by television (23%).

Conflict resolution techniques - Wyoming residents support relocating grizzly bears from areas with livestock and buildings, more than they support game wardens or biologists killing grizzly bears. The most opposed technique is killing an individual bear that is occupying an area with livestock or buildings, but is not causing damage. It is opposed by 81% of residents. A large majority of residents (88%) support moving bears that have killed livestock or damaged buildings. A similar majority (77%) support proactively moving a bear before it becomes a problem, if it begins occupying areas containing livestock or buildings.

Bear management techniques - The most supported technique for dealing with bears that threaten human safety through aggression is relocation. A large majority of residents (83%) support relocating a grizzly bear that threatens human safety through “unnatural” aggression. Unnatural aggression involves a bear that associates humans with food. Slightly fewer (72%) support relocating a grizzly bear that threatens human safety through “natural” aggression. Natural aggression involves a surprise encounter, a sow defending cubs, etc. A majority of Wyoming residents (63%) support a game warden or biologist killing an individual problem grizzly bear that threatens human safety through “unnatural” aggression.

Grizzly bear distribution - Nearly equal majorities of residents support a management plan that would allow grizzlies to remain in areas they currently occupy, but would require removal of bears that move into unoccupied areas (62%) or a plan that would allow grizzly bears to expand into all suitable habitat in Wyoming (66%). A majority of respondents support a management plan allowing grizzly bears to expand into the Wyoming Range (73%), the Wind River Mountains (67%) and the Bighorn Mountains (66%).

Potential grizzly bear regulations - A majority of residents support an array of potential regulations that would minimize bear/human conflicts, including bear-proof containers or hanging food at night (90%); imposing fines for people who act irresponsibly in bear areas (82%); regulations on where people can camp in grizzly bear habitat, even if these regulations have the possible outcome of prohibiting camping in certain areas (73%); and requiring people working or recreating in grizzly bear habitat to carry pepper spray (72%).

On the question of federal land management, there is no majority consensus for either support or opposition to federal land management restrictions for grizzly bear. Forty-five percent (45%) of Wyoming residents support and 42% oppose land management restrictions to maintain or enhance grizzly bear habitat on federal lands.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT COSTS

All efforts that allow public involvement in decision-making cost money. The more interest in the subject matter or the greater the policy shift is from established norms, the larger and more complex the process, the more the price tag increases. But clearly, public involvement

is a source of pride for the Department and Commission, and if ever there was justification for hearing from the public on a proposed action, this was it.

Tracking of costs associated with the development of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* was facilitated with an existing internal cost-accounting system. By designating an activity code at the onset of this project, then following through with monthly reporting by Department personnel, all costs directly attributable to this project were accrued beginning in August, 2000. As of the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2001), and prior to the start of preparation of the *Special Report*, total project costs amounted to \$72,644. Of this amount expended, \$44,555 (61%) was directly attributable to personnel (i.e. salary) costs involving 2231 hours devoted to plan development. This category does not include hours logged by the volunteers serving on the citizens working group.

The second highest category for expenditures was for consulting services for the scoping workshops and working group meetings. These costs totaled \$16,464, or 23% of the total project costs, through June 30, 2001.

The third highest category for expenditures were travel and vehicle charges associated with Departmental employees and citizens working group members directly involved with the planning and public participation process. These totaled \$10,063 for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2001, or 14% of the total project costs.

The remainder of the costs, \$1,562 (2%), were for miscellaneous items - mostly office and educational supplies - purchased to support the working group and conduct the public workshops and open houses.

A substantial amount of the costs associated with this grizzly bear planning and public participation process have been accruing since July 1, 2001. This cost includes staff time to write and type the *Special Report*, data entry, the telephone survey, printing of the *Special Report*, and salary/travel costs related to convening administrators and managers at a central location in the state to review the public input and formulate recommendations to the Commission for consideration at its September, 2001, meeting. Since most of these costs were accrued during the months of July and August, 2001, the exact expenditures were unknown at press time, but believed to be in the realm of an additional \$35,000 - \$40,000.

Additionally, and dependent upon the action taken by the Commission in response to this public participation process, revisions will need to be made to the draft plan before a final is released. This will require staff time for writing and meeting, as well as printing costs, estimated to be approximately \$10,000-\$12,000. Using the known and estimated costs of this undertaking, it is reasonable to assume approximately \$118,000-\$125,000 will be spent in plan development and the related public participation process, before the plan is finalized.

CONCLUSIONS

On August 23 and 24, 2001, a two-day meeting was held at the Department's regional office in Casper, at which time agency managers and administrators reviewed the management options outlined in the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, reviewed the outcome from the

scoping workshops and open houses, examined the written comments, were presented with the results of the content analysis of that written input and the findings of the telephone survey, and drew conclusions about what all these findings meant.

When completed, the August 23rd- 24th internal assessment of the process and public input resulted in 19 conclusions being drawn. These conclusions also form the basis of the recommendations to the Commission, which follow later in the *Special Report*. The conclusions include the following:

PROCESS

1. The release of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* in March, 2001, was the culmination of nearly two years worth of effort by a host of people. This undertaking marked the first time ever a Department - established citizens working group, representing diverse interests, helped develop a proposed management plan on any species and advance it for consideration to the Commission. Other citizens working groups are in place on similar Department planning efforts involving sage grouse and black-tailed prairie dogs.
2. The public participation process used in the development of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* ranks as one of the most exhaustive efforts undertaken by the Department, to date. In addition to the previously-referenced citizens working group, this process also marked the first time the Department had contracted with an outside consultant to launch such an undertaking or utilize facilitated public scoping workshops prior to the actual writing of a management plan.
3. Attendance at the May, 2001, grizzly bear plan “open houses” was surprisingly low. It represented less participation than that seen at previous Game and Fish public forums involving subjects of intense interest. For example, 1,216 people attended the “*Funding Dilemma*” meetings in late 1995 and 973 people took part in the April, 1997, meetings held around the state to air the *Draft Wyoming Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Proposal*. That said, the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* drew intense media coverage from news outlets across the state. In the end, written comment records were shattered, with the 8,195 received surpassing the previous mark (i.e. 3,453 on the wolf plan) by a factor of nearly two-and-a-half times. This, therefore, represented the most public input ever received on a proposed action in the Department’s history.
4. With the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* came dramatic evidence of the public’s evolving preference for written communication in electronic form. Where only four years ago during the public review process for the *Draft Wyoming Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Proposal*, a similar effort involving gray wolves, where less than a dozen people used e-mail to convey their written comments, 1,665 - fully 20% - used this medium in the recently-concluded draft grizzly bear planning process. Evidence also suggests that people are now using the Internet to avail themselves to documents like the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to a much greater extent than ever before. This also had the benefit of substantially reducing agency printing costs.

5. The cost of the public participation process accompanying the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* is consistent with prior efforts involving major or controversial subjects - the best and most recent example being the *Draft Wyoming Gray Wolf Recovery and Management Proposal*. That undertaking, in 1997, cost approximately \$85,000, compared to an estimated \$118,000-\$125,000 needed to complete the grizzly bear plan. The slightly higher costs can be attributed to consultant fees, travel/per diem costs associated with the citizens working group, a more extensive telephone survey and inflation.

CONTENT

6. The overall tenor of communications - both at the open houses and written comments - was very civil, thoughtful and lacked the acrimony that so dominated the draft wolf plan four years ago. By comparison, the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* was far less controversial. This may have been because the proposed action represented an expansion of an ongoing program, rather than initiation of a new program; species work with an existing population, rather than one that was once extirpated; the use of the scoping process and citizens working group in development of the draft plan; and the open house meeting format and Internet availability of the plan, combined with an extended comment period.
7. There is a striking similarity between the items of concern about the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* as expressed through individual written comments and those of organizations and agencies. There were at least two notable exceptions: 1) the “moderate” expression of human safety concerns by individuals - an issue absent from organizational and agency comments; and 2) the “moderate” expression of opposition to any grizzly-related conditions being placed on grazing permits on public land by several organizations and an agency - something not referenced, specifically, by individuals.
8. The Wyoming public is very tolerant of grizzly bears and values grizzly bears both as a benefit to Wyoming and an important component of the ecosystems they occupy. They do not want to see them diminished in numbers, in fact, they favor expansion of grizzly bears into all suitable habitat in Wyoming, including the Wyoming Range, Wind River and Bighorn Mountains, especially if such expansion is accompanied by Department support personnel to deal with the conflicts.
9. The results of the telephone survey indicate the majority of the Wyoming public favor expansion of grizzly bears into all suitable habitat, while at the same time - by a similar margin - they also support removal of grizzly bears that move into currently unoccupied areas of the state. This suggests residents do not associate the expansion of range with the prospect this likely will result in more bears in the population.
10. Department funding is currently almost entirely derived from license fees and federal excise taxes associated with hunting and fishing. The Department anticipates an expanded role with grizzly bears will be expensive, regardless of the final construct of the management plan. Undoubtedly, the return of grizzlies to Department management will require an expanded budget. It is hoped that can be accomplished

with new revenue sources to minimize its impact on other services or programs. If that does not occur, the Department and Commission will be faced with some difficult choices. While not addressed in the telephone survey, written input received suggests real concern about the adequacy of the Department's preparedness for funding the grizzly bear management program and its contingency planning for funding in the event the preferred alternative (i.e. national endowment) does not materialize.

11. The question of hunting grizzly bears in Wyoming will be a controversial issue. By a substantial margin, Wyoming residents favor that prospect, but similarly, based upon the written comments received, non-residents do not.
12. The general public wants more information about grizzly bears. Most people have never seen one and those who have, have seen relatively few. People support more information and education efforts.
13. The public expects the Department to be advocates for grizzly bears and the protection of grizzly bear habitat. They also support additional regulations to minimize human/bear conflicts.
14. The grizzly bear delisting process cannot be completed unless and until there are adequate regulatory mechanisms in place to ensure conservation of the species. This includes finalization of the *Conservation Strategy*, habitat criteria made part of the *Recovery Plan*, and completion of state management plans. Wyoming has done yeomans work to make certain it is not the source of any delays in this landmark decision.
15. Residents of Wyoming are divided on the question of whether or not the grizzly bear should be delisted from "threatened" status under the federal Endangered Species Act. Written comments also suggest similar opposing views. This will pose both problems and opportunities for the Department.
16. The Wyoming public is willing to give grizzly bears a great deal of consideration in nuisance situations. Non-lethal methods for prevention and control are the preferred management options for dealing with nuisance or problem bears.
17. There is strong public support - as expressed in both the telephone survey and written comments - for requiring the carrying of pepper spray when recreating in occupied grizzly bear habitat. But the telephone survey revealed very few residents are now voluntarily carrying such protection measures when in the backcountry.
18. The public - as evidenced by both the telephone survey and written comments - strongly supports habitat protection for grizzly bears, but residents at least, are nearly evenly split on the question of whether they want to see this result in increased land use restrictions on federal land.
19. Not surprising, almost no one supports the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* as written. In fact, fewer than 10 out of 8,195 written comments received from

individuals, organizations and agencies expressed such sentiment. The draft document needs to be revised to reflect the public input received.

DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

In the preceding 18 pages of this *Special Report* and the accompanying two appendices, the reader has had the opportunity to follow the process used by the Department to develop a management plan for grizzly bears in Wyoming. Also covered have been the core issues that need to be addressed in that plan, the public input that was received through both written comments and a telephone survey, and conclusions that can be drawn from all this input. From the beginning of the process to this point in time, nearly two years worth of effort and several thousands of hours have been expended by Department personnel and citizen volunteers. The objective of all this work is to present the Commission with all this information, including what modifications need to be made to the draft plan before it is finalized and approved.

Four things seem eminently clear: 1) the public was asked to comment on the draft plan and they did so in record numbers; 2) the Department and Commission have an obligation to seriously consider this input; 3) completion of these state grizzly bear management plans are an integral part of the delisting process and need to be completed before the states can assume management authority following delisting; and 4) even after finalization of the plan by the Commission, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will need to determine whether the plan is adequate. Based on these factors, the Department advances nine (9) recommendations to the Commission for consideration at its September 10, 2001, meeting in Casper:

Recommendation #1 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Introduction” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to reflect the statutory authority of the Commission to manage “all wildlife” in Wyoming; the fact that the Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear population is at a point where the delisting process can commence; the fact that the Department is the appropriate agency to assume management responsibility in Wyoming once delisting occurs; and furthermore, it is a role the agency wants to assume.

Recommendation #2 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Occupancy” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to reflect where in Wyoming grizzly bears will be allowed to occupy, including the use of maps and a narrative description.

Recommendation #3 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Population Management” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to include all the grizzly bear population indices that the Department will be monitoring; prioritization of research and the fact that research should be tied to monitoring needs; and further, that hunting will remain a valid management option in the future, but specify when that will occur and under what criteria.

Recommendation #4 - The Commission direct the Department to better address habitat protection in the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan*, by revising and expanding the “Habitat and Land Management” section to clearly identify agency responsibilities; identify how interagency coordination and land management decisions are made; explain how the Department intends to address and establish habitat and access standards with federal land management agencies - just as currently occurs with other species; clarify coordination and habitat monitoring protocols involving key food sources; the Department’s intention to focus its efforts on where bears are likely to occur during the life of this initial plan, following delisting; the Department’s desire to expand cumulative effect modeling efforts to include all occupied habitats in Wyoming; and further, address habitat fragmentation and linkage issues.

Recommendation #5 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Nuisance Grizzly Bear Management” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to better address the rationale behind the proposed nuisance grizzly bear management options outlined in the plan; the fact that public safety concerns will remain paramount in agency management actions dealing with problem bears; and the fact the Department will advocate for and work with local, state and federal agencies to make attractants unavailable to grizzly bears.

Recommendation #6 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Information and Education” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to reflect an expanded public outreach effort to address grizzly bear population status, distribution, and the rationale for removing the species from “threatened” status on the federal endangered species list; to indicate mandatory hunter education will include grizzly bear information as addressed in the introductory course of the Commission-approved Hunter Stewardship Program; indicate the Department will expand its public education efforts on the value of carrying and proper use of pepper spray; articulate the full extent of ongoing grizzly bear information and education efforts being conducted by the Department; and the fact there will be a comprehensive information and education effort undertaken that will be directed at people living, working and recreating in grizzly country, including greater access to grizzly bear information on the Internet.

Recommendation #7 - The Commission direct the Department to revise and expand the “Costs and Funding” section of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to reflect the full range of options that have been identified by the Department to fund Wyoming’s grizzly bear management program - including traditional funding - as well as contingency funding measures that will be made available.

Recommendation #8 - The Commission direct the Department to proceed with revision of the *Draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan* in accordance with the recommendations set forth in Recommendations #1 - #7 above, and any other specific guidance the Commission chooses to specify when briefed in September, 2001. Such revisions will result in a *Final Grizzly Bear Management Plan* to be presented to the Commission for adoption at its meeting in late - February, 2002.

Recommendation #9 - Future planning efforts involving major actions by the Department need to consider adequate timelines for completion of all facets of work related to such undertakings including scoping and citizens working groups (if utilized), plan development and writing, analysis and reporting of public input, plan revisions, and decision-making. Adequate staffing and budgetary contingencies should also be contemplated.

SUMMARY

This *Special Report* will be presented in its entirety - including the recommendations - at the September 10, 2001, Wyoming Game and Fish Commission meeting in Casper. This report and appendices are available in hard copy and electronic form. Two hundred (200) copies have been printed and will be available for review after September 10th at Game and Fish offices and public libraries around the state. The *Special Report* and Appendix I, only, will also be posted on the Department's website at <http://gf.state.wy.us> by mid-September, 2001.

As currently envisioned, a *Final Grizzly Bear Management Plan* will be prepared by the Department, consistent with the timeline and other guidelines established by the Commission in September. Once the Commission has approved and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has concurred, the resulting *Final Grizzly Bear Management Plan* will constitute the conclusion to the Department's planning effort for the initial phase of grizzly bear management in Wyoming, following delisting. It, too, will receive broad printed and electronic distribution to interested parties.

Finally, and once again, the Department wishes to thank all public participants, citizen working group members, employees and decision-makers for their role in the development of a grizzly bear management plan for the state. In so doing, a significant step has been taken to return management authority for this resident species to the State of Wyoming.

– WGFD –