elk marking

Chronological Review of Grizzly Bear and Elk Research Programs Within Yellowstone National Park

1959

The study of the grizzly bear, Ursus Arctos horribilis, in Yellowstone National Park was initiated in 1959. Arrangements for conducting the study within the Park were made with Superintendent Lemuel Garrison and the plans were cleared with the Research Division of the Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service is authorized by Congress to conduct wildlife research on public lands. Other federal land management agencies do not have this responsibility and funds cannot be budgeted for this.

The project has been conducted jointly through the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit headed by Dr. John J. Craighead and the Environmental Research Institute headed by Dr. Frank C. Craighead.

Verbal agreements were made with Superintendent Garrison regarding conduct of the study. It was generally agreed that the Park Service would maintain a closure on the Trout Creek area so that observations would not be disrupted, that housing and laboratory facilities would be furnished, that rangers would be requested to actively cooperate in the study, and that findings and publications resulting from the study would be made available to the National Park Service. We agreed to abide by Park rules and regulations.

The first year of work was financed entirely by the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit*. Housing facilities for the project were made available by the Park Service at the old ranger station at Canyon.

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*Fish and Wildlife Service, Montana Department of Fish and Game, University of Montana, and Wildlife Management Institute cooperating.

1960

Similar housing arrangements were made for 1960 and study plans for a long-range study financed by numerous organizations was discussed with the Superintendent and his staff. A research proposal submitted to the National Science Foundation at the end of the 1959 season was approved. Financial support for the project was thus increased by $19,400. Financial support was also secured from the National Geographic Society. Philco Corporation agreed to provide electronic equipment for developing a radiotracking system for use with the grizzly bear. This was provided gratis.

1961

National Park Service long-range development plans called for destruction of the Canyon Ranger Station. Operations began early in the spring of 1961 and we were informed we would have to provide our own quarters. The National Park Service was unable to provide housing or laboratory facilities for the research team. Fortunately the Yellowstone Park Company, a private concessionaire, agreed to allow us to use their housing facilities in the Canyon area. These facilities were far superior to those that had been available in previous years. The Company volunteered to assume the costs of heating, lighting, and maintaining the facility. Without the use of the Yellowstone Park Company facilities, the research program could not have survived. The Park administration could not openly oppose this arrangement, but we were informed from several sources that the Park authorities were not happy with the arrangement because it lessened their control of our operation.

1962

Project personnel were again housed in the Yellowstone Park Company facilities at Canyon and improvements were made in these facilities. Additional support for the grizzly bear research was obtained from the Boone and Crockett Club and the Wildlife Management Institute. The National Geographic Society continued to support the research effort and so did Philco Corporation.

In spite of this additional support, there was need for more funds in order to expand the scope of the study. Dr. Frank C. Craighead made a request to Senator Metcalf for some federal support since the research findings were of special value to the National Park Service and other federal agencies. In making this request, Dr. Craighead requested that no strings be attached to any funds provided. It was believed that if certain demands were made, these demands might retard the research effort. This request was forwarded by the Senator to the Secretary of the Interior and the request for funds was approved by him. Notice was received from Under-Secretary Carver that funds would be made available through the National Park Service. Such funds could have been requested by the Under-Secretary directly from the Fish and Wildlife Service but his decision was to make the request from the National Park Service. The researchers had no part in this administrative decision but were on occasion accused of using influence to obtain funds earmarked for other Park Service activities. A grant of $6,000 was made available from National Park Service funds with no strings attached and apparently with full concurrence at top administrative levels.

During the winter of 1962-1963 the Northern Yellowstone elk herd was reduced by approximately 5,000 animals. This reduction and the action taken by the Service was given full support by the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. This support was much needed in order to swing public opinion in support of the Park Service Objectives.

Because this support proved extremely helpful in accomplishing the reduction goals and clearly showed the value of research, Superintendent Garrison suggested it would be desirable to have an elk research project under way similar to the grizzly bear project and requested that Dr. John Craighead prepare a research plan and a budget. This was done and as a

result an elk migration and movement study was initiated in 1964 with annual support of $4,500 from the National Park Service.

A loose contract was negotiated which set no deadlines with regard to research objectives, procedures, or completion reports. Because of the additional research load and the necessity of housing graduate students, we requested that the Yellowstone Park administration consider the possibility of providing additional facilities at Canyon. National Park Service funds were made available for renovating the Lamar Ranger Station and making it into a research center; however no provisions were made to improve our research station at Canyon which is located in the geographic center of the Park. Intensive long-range research directly related to the Park's management problems was being conducted by us at Canyon; little research was in progress at the Lamar Station and this facility has had relatively little use up to the present time.

We obtained discarded rental cabins from the Yellowstone Park Company and these were moved to our Canyon headquarters with permission of the Park Superintendent. These units were moved by the Yellowstone Park Company and renovated by the National Park Service. These provided housing facilities for students doing research work on elk and grizzly bear. No family living quarters were or have been available for senior research personnel. Some members have spent a total of five months a year in the Park and away from their families.

1963

Plans were made for beginning the elk migration and movement study. The Park Service agreed to trap and mark elk. Additional support for the grizzly bear research was received from the National Science Foundation and other supporting agencies.

Partly as a result of the Leopold Report, the National Park Service initiated its own research program. Relatively small funds were involved and most projects were short term and emphasis was placed on applied research. The annual contract with the National Park Service for the grizzly bear research was altered at the regional level, requiring specific research objectives, periodic reports during the year, and a final report. Freedom for individual investigation was curtailed and administrative paper work greatly increased. The loose flexible arrangement originally made was altered to conform to a very inflexible contract that emphasized routine outlines, reports, and stated research objectives. Freedom to seek knowledge and to do this with a minimum of red tape was discouraged.

1964

Approximately $99,900 of direct and indirect funds were expended in Yellowstone Park on grizzly bear research by the Craigheads during 1964. This support is detailed in the enclosure and is fairly representative of other years as well. The National Park Service grizzly bear contract became still more restrictive and considerable discussion took place before a contract was written that could be signed by both parties. Even so it was unsatisfactory to the researchers, whose major financial support came from organizations sponsoring research free from bureaucratic control.

A contract for conducting the elk migration and movement study was signed June 30th and the sum involved was $4,500. This was a rather loose contract making few demands on the researchers except to produce a final report in due time. A sum equal to the National Park Service contribution was provided by the Wildlife Research Unit. This was a cooperative research venture with equal contributions from both parties. It was to be student rather than staff conducted. The formidable physical problems were recognized by both parties to the contract.

A contract was negotiated with the Atomic Energy Commission for approximately $20,000 to perfect a radiotracking system to be used to study elk in Yellowstone National Park.

A Memorandum of Understanding was prepared between the Wildlife Research Unit and Yellowstone National Park in an attempt to overcome some of the red tape involved in National Park Service contracts. This Memorandum was finally approved in 1966, a year after research work began. It was satisfactory to both parties. The Park Service provided no funds.

Problems developed in meeting deadlines for reports on the elk movement study due to loss of students to the draft. Attempts were made to negotiate less demanding contracts and ones recognizing the special problems involved in student research. Some progress was made, but due to the lack of trained scientists or research-oriented personnel within the National Park Service, advances in this direction have been slow and painful. An educational program is needed.

1966

Submitted a proposed Memorandum of Understanding to the Superintendent of Yellowstone for the extension of grizzly bear research. This was done so that a renewal research proposal could be submitted to the National Science Foundation. The Superintendent informed the researchers that a Memorandum of Understanding extending the grizzly bear research would not be considered until a final report on the earlier phases of the project had been submitted. A deadline on this could not be met due to the press of other work and the magnitude of the data involved. It was necessary to submit a proposal to the National Science Foundation without confirmation of cooperation from the National Park Service.

The Fish and Wildlife Service provided funds to hire a student for summer employment on the grizzly bear study. The elk movement and migration study was renewed by contract; however because of the problems encountered in keeping graduate students on the project and because of unrealistic report deadlines, these funds were purposely not utilized so that the Wildlife Research Unit personnel would not be under further pressure and obligation to the National Park Service. The Atomic Energy Commission project was renewed for another year.

1967

Received notice that our laboratory in Yellowstone Park would be destroyed in long-range plans to "beautify" the park. The laboratory at Canyon, according to the Assistant Superintendent of Yellowstone, detracted from visitor enjoyment of the area. The building is in better shape structurally than it was before we occupied it, and could be made attractive with a fraction of the funds that will be required to replace it. There has been no direct indication from the National Park Service that comparable facilities will be furnished. When and if they are, we will be charged for them. We are obligated under two major contracts - one with the Atomic Energy Commission and one with the National Science Foundation - but with no assurance that we will have a place from which to operate.

The Fish and Wildlife Service again has agreed to furnish funds for us to employ a student on the grizzly bear project during the summer. A final report on the management of the grizzly bear and a progress report on radiotracking elk have been prepared and are being submitted to the National Park Service and other cooperators.

The effort to keep a $100,000 a year research program operative within Yellowstone becomes greater each year. We can only conclude that there is little interest in non-service sponsored research by the present Yellowstone

staff. There is evidence that the Park Service wishes to exert strong control over research efforts in the Park and where this is not possible they are willing to sacrifice the research effort. This attitude toward both research and management can only serve to perpetuate mistakes similar to those that in the past have created the host of complex management problems that now exist in the Park.

Annual Financial Statement for the Grizzly Bear Ecology and Radiotracking Projects (1964)

Agency	1964 Contribution	Remarks
National Geographic	$10,000	Grant funds and photographic equipment
National Science Foundation	11,000	
Philco Corporation	40,000	To Environmental Research Institute for research and development of electronic equipment
University of Montana	2,000	
Montana Fish and Game	3,000	
Environmental Research Institute	9,000	
Boone and Crockett Club	2,300	
New York Zoological Society	1,000	
American Museum of Natural History	500	
Wildlife Management Institute	500	Over and above annual contribution to the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit
Yellowstone Park Company	2,000	Housing (Lab and utilities) in Yellowstone
National Park Service	6,800	Salary and transportation of research assistant and utilities in Yellowstone
Fish and Wildlife Service	4,000	Salary and transportation of Unit Leader
Fish and Wildlife Service	3,500	Radio development and maintenance
Penrose Hospital	2,000	Chemical analysis of blood. Micropathology.
University of Minnesota	300	Chemical analysis of milk
Hoke Franciscus	2,000	Electronic consulting
Total -	$99,900	

CHRONOLOGY OF GRIZZLY BEAR RESEARCH

1959 - J.J. Craighead, F.C. Craighead and associates started on a long-range ecological study of the grizzly bear in the Yellowstone ecosystem.

1960 - Tested a prototype transmitter for tracking grizzlies.

1960 - First publication on grizzly bear research; Trapping, immobilizing, and color marking grizzly bears.

1960 - Publication of National Geographic article, "Knocking Out Grizzlies For Their Own Good".

1961 - First instrumenting & tracking of grizzlies.

1963 - First publication on radiotracking of grizzlies: "Radio-tracking of Grizzly Bears".

1966 - Publication of National Geographic article: "Trailing Yellowstone's Grizzlies By Radio".

1966 - Showing of National Geographic television special, "Grizzly".

1967 - Completion of 113 page management report on grizzly bears submitted to Park Service.

1967 - [illegible]

1968 - Supt. Jack Anderson & biologist Glen Cole transferred to Yellowstone.

1968 - Volume of garbage taken to Trout Creek dump was drastically reduced & dispersed grizzlies throughout Park & into campgrounds (documented). Grizzly movement & travel changed & greatly accelerated.

1968 - Number of grizzlies captured was about 4 times the average for the previous 9 years.

1968 - (July 9) A discussion with Glen Cole where he threatened that if we didn't give out the information put out by the Park on the Glacier killings which he indicated was a cover-up, that we would be more-or-less pushed out of the Park.

1969 - Dispersal of grizzlies continues--more food but not enough & not buried.

1969 - Interior Secretary Walter Hickel dropped the grizzly from the list of species considered in danger of extinction.

1969 - Anderson starts the personal attack, insisting that we [illegible] not providing the Park Service with publications or information on the grizzlies.

1969 - Glen Cole threatens us with expulsion from Yellowstone.

1969 - Anderson states that no more animals will be marked & markers are removed from some, a policy he claims was set by the Natural Sciences Advisory Board.

1969 - (January 17) John's memorandum to Frank Dunkle suggesting a meeting to explore the cooperative management of grizzly bears. John prepared an outline of the material given at this meeting.

1969 - (Jan. 27) Letter to Walter J. Hickel from John, me and Dr. V. Schaefer relative to research situation in Y.N.P.

1969 - (Jan. 31) Letter from Rex Corsi, Wyo. G&F Dept. asking about censusing grizzlies.

1969 - (February 6) My letter to Rex M. Corsi, Wyoming Fish & Game concerning censusing grizzlies in the National Forest area surrounding YNP. Also mention of bill to create special grizzly bear license.

1969 - (March 17) Press release--Hickel states "The grizzly bear is not now threatened with extinction in the United States".

1969 - (April 14) Letter to Jack Anderson from J.J. Craighead: "During the last four years we inconspicuously color marked and instrumented seven of an Interior elk herd of 600 or 700 elk. At no time were more than two animals wearing radio collars and usually only one. From the northern elk herd, 1,507 elk were conspicuously color marked over a five year period by Park rangers & by staff of the Montana Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit at the request of Supt. Garrison".

1969 - Yellowstone bear mauls child, Daphne Jacks, at trailer village in Fishing Bridge campground.

1969 - (June 12) A press release stating that Craighead said he was not surprised "5 yr. old Daphne Jack was mauled by a bear in Y.N.P."

1969 - (July 8) Conversation with Jack Anderson at Mammoth concerning material being released to the press. We agreed to try to not publicize our differences of opinion in the press.

1969 - (August) Census of grizzlies surrounding Y.N.P. by the Forest Service & the Wyoming Fish & Game. Three grizzlies were counted.

1969 - (August 15) Conversation with Dr. Linn concerning the Natural Sciences Advisory Board meeting to be held in Mammot This includes Linn's agreements to record the meeting.

1969 - (August 16) Met at Moose with Senator Gale McGee. I asked the Senator what he thought of holding public meetings on grizzly bear management & research problems in Yellowstone. I made notes on this meeting.

1969 - (August 28) Article in Jackson Hole Guide, "Grizzlies will Control Themselves".

1969 - (September 6) Natural Sciences Advisory Committee meeting on grizzly bears at Mammoth. Did not go as a paid consultant. ~~Resulted in~~ J. Craighead outling of material treated at meeting. Noted on prior discussions with Bob Linn on meeting arrangements.

1969 - (September 6) Bear management meeting. Prior to this Jack Anderson had insisted that no more animals in the Park could be tagged & that tags would gradually be removed from those that had been marked. Anderson indicated this decision had been made by the Natural Sciences Advisory Board. I posed the question to Dr. Stanley Cain and he questioned Anderson. Anderson admitted before the group that it was his decision.

1969 - (Sept.) I commented on the foregoing article in the JH Guide--"Craighead disputes biologist's statements on grizzly bears".

1969 - (October 13) Grizzly #40 shot by ranger.

1969 - (November 6) Tom Hough of the JH Guide printed a statement that I had given him for background material.

1969 - (Nov. 7) Letter from Rex Corsi, Wyo. G&F Com. commenting on grizzly survey & Commission recommendation of a hunt with 30 permits issued. Asked for my comments.

1969 - (Nov. 12) My letter to Rex Corsi interpreting results of the summer census. This also included information on grizzly bear hunting--suggested closing of season or reduction of permits from 30 to 10.

1969 - (November 14) Received a copy of a bear management policy and program for Y.N.P. (The Leopold Report) I made comments concerning this report and phoned Starker in regard to it.

1969 - (December 4) John's letter to Starker Leopold on the Leopold report. Suggested changes in report.

1969 - (December 10) Leopold's letter to John--suggested modificati

1969 - (Dec. 15) John's letter to Stephen Herrero concerning his article "Human Injury Inflicted by Grizzly Bears" (File Leopold Report)

1969 - (Dec. 22) Received a revised page 6 of the bear management report from Robert Linn.

1970 - (January 15 & 16) Meeting in West Yellowstone called by Frank Dunkle to discuss grizzly bear problem.

1970 - Tri-state Grizzly bear Management Meeting. Park Service, BLM, & U.S. Forest Service included. Notes taken by J. Sumner.

1970 - (February 4) Letter to Jim White commenting on the bear management policy and program for Y.N.P. (Leopold report)

1970 - (March 12) A letter from Tom Hough stating that he had printed a memo I had given him on the grizzly bear situation even though I requested that it be treated confidentially because in his editorial judgment he felt the public needed to know.

1970 - Closure of Rabbit Creek dump.

1970 - Starker Leopold article "Weaning Grizzly Bears".

1970 - (Sept. 3) Park visitor mauled at Grant Village. (Probably by #8, never captured or observed in campground in 11 prior years).

1970 - (Nov. 6-9) Calgary Bear Management Meeting.

1970 - (Dec. 16) Announcement of special permit hunting season for grizzlies in Wyo.--30 permits, 20 in Park County, 10 in Teton. Bill SF160.

1971 - (July 13) A letter to Anderson concerning his instructions to rangers to remove all the tags & color markers that were placed on grizzly bears from 1959 through 1968 and not to give us this information. (Folder of John's letters).

1971 - (July 20) Anderson's letter to John stating their policy of attempting to reduce the adverse comments on marking and to reduce conspicuous marking of park wildlife for the 1972 Centennial.

1971 - Trout Creek dump completely closed.

1971 - (August) The renewal of the memorandum of understanding providing for continued research on the grizzly bear.

1971 - West Yellowstone dump closed (moved and fenced).

1971 - (September 13) Received a letter from Dr. David E. Worley concerning trichinella in bears. I had previously written him my thoughts on why this appeared to be increasing in the Yellowstone black & grizzly bears. Worley's abstract on trichinella survey.

1972 - (February 5) My letter to Teno Roncalio recommending that a committee from the National Academy of Sciences be set up to investigate the grizzly bear situation in Yellowstone as well as the subject of independent research within the Park.

1972 - (February 25) John's letter to Montana F&G Commission concerning management of grizzly bears in Montana. [~~prepared a statement on grizzly bear & black bear management in Y.N.P. but was unable to present it.~~]

1972 - (March 29) Grizzly Bear Meeting, Bozeman, Montana.

1972 - (August 4) Issue of Science states: "Advisory meetings; confidentiality dropped, public is invited".
(_____) Phone conversation between Nat Reed & Jim Stingley.

1972 - (September) Statement in Missoulian by Glen Cole in regard to putting garbage data into a computer--you'll get garbage data out". Apparently condoned by Reed.

1972 - (Sept. 11) I requested the opportunity from Jack Anderson to look over the Yellowstone bear logs. My letter was received 9/11.

1972 - (Sept. 12) Letter from Anderson suggesting that I obtain the bear log information from weekly summaries.

1972 - (Sept. 19) Bear management meeting. I compiled a number of grizzly bear mortalities to present at the meeting. At this time the total of the 1970-71 mortalities was 91.

1972 - (Sept. 19) Meeting: I prepared notes on Grizzly Bear Dispersion: At this meeting I had also outlined a "suggested solution to grizzly bear problem: and "Grizzly Bear and Black Bear management YNP". I had no opportunity to present material.

1972 - (Sept. 19) Meeting at Mammoth on grizzly bears where John first presented results of the computer analysis, and left copies of abstract.

1972 - (Sept. 19) Grizzly bear meeting at Mammoth. This was called by Assistant Secretary of Interior Reed & was a closed meeting right up to the morning of the 19th. Science Aug. 4, 1972 carried an editorial & notice of Pres. Nixon's to federal agencies to open meetings of their advisory bodies.

1972 - (October 10) My first discussion with Gerald B. Schroeder, a seasonal ranger, concerning grizzlies in Y.N.P.

1972 - (November 29) In a letter I suggested to Hon. Lee Metcalf that congressional hearings were necessary concerning bear management in the Park & the freedom to conduct research.

1972 - article in "Science Year 1973" Turning Bear On The Grizzly

1972 - (Dec. 1) Dorn lecture before the Environmental Protection Agency
Included information on grizzly controversy
Recommended an eight point management plan

1973 - (January 9) A call from Stingley to tell me about problems in Yellowstone. ~~The material that Tom Hough published in the JH Guide without my permission was the November 6 issue.~~

1973 - (Jan. 10) Letter to Jim Stingley lists some of the material that I sent to him. Newspaper clippings and copy of joint letter to Hickel.

1973 - (Jan. 11) Letter by Jim White to Teno Roncalio requesting that the Nat. Academy of Sciences review & supervise the grizzly bear research.

1973 - (Jan. 24) A letter to Roncalio from Paul L. Sitton (Ass't. to the President) concerning the grizzly bear study by the National Academy of Sciences. States how committee is chosen & how financed.

1973 - (February 5) Stingley's Los Angelos Times article on "Grizzly Men Fight to Death - Maybe His?"

1973 - (Sept. 5) Met and talked with Nat Reed on grizzly bear situation for first time on Denver-Jackson flight. Later dictated notes.

1973 - (Sept. 27) Talked with Jerry Schroeder. He told me he was losing his job and would not be back next summer.

1973 - (Sept. 26) Cowan's letter stating his task of ~~choosing~~ chairing the NAS Bear Committee & asking for data.

1973 - (Sept. 28) Grizzly Bear Meeting at Mammoth, John and I were excluded.

1973 - (Oct. 4) Meeting at Moose with Steve Johnson regarding grizzly bear article.

1973 - (Oct. 16) Met Lewis Regenstein and Steve Seater for first time in Wash. DC.

1973 - (Oct-Nov) National Wildlife article "They're Killing Yellowstone's Grizzlies".

1973 - (Oct. 15) Memo from John to Loveless requesting permission to publish computer analysis report.

1973 - (October 27) Meeting in Missoula with the National Academy of Sciences Grizzly Bear Committee.

1973 - (November 9) Meeting with Mike Maloney & Larry Rupp to discuss the grizzly bear problems for National Observer article of 11/24/73.

1974 - (Jan.-Febr.) Reed's rebuttal to article in Nat'l Wildlife (Oct.-Nov. 1973)