

Teton County Wildlife Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - December 6, 2023

Committee Members in Attendance: Jeff Klausmann, Kathy O'Neil, Wray Landon, Renee Seidler, Tamara Sperber, Linda Unland

Meeting Called to Order at 3:10

1. **Minutes** from October 11, approved.
2. **WHA(Wildlife Habitat Assessment) Revisions** – Chairman Klausmann reported on his discussions with Fish and Game re: IDFG involvement in the WHA. IDFG will provide information on process as needed only. They are not able to take part in the consultation portion of the WHA. Rather, they will be a resource to the county and are willing to field questions and address clarifications.

It was suggested that the county enter into an arrangement with IFWIS, in which data is updated 2x/year. There is a fee for access, which it was suggested, could be split between the consultant list and the county so the data could be accessed thru a shared data agreement. This way, obtaining IDFG data would be through the county and not directly through individuals at IDFG. Consultants would understand that this is a primary source of data but not the only source. Should there be questions pertaining to this data, they should be submitted to IDFG in writing to be answered in a timely fashion. The Committee understands that there will most likely be gaps in information needed, and there will be a need to add to IDFG data from outside sources(such as FTR, TRLT, biologists).

ACTION. Obtain access to IFWIS data. Determine fee structure.

IDFG Report. As the Committee discussed IDFG's lack of participation in the actual WHA process, attention was brought to page 4 of the IDFG Report: "IDFG is available to provide technical assistance to county planners/leaders to identify a proposed project's potential effects on fish, wildlife, and botanical resources, and recommend avoidance and minimization measure to offset adverse project effects."

The need for a checklist was discussed as providing a necessary tool for the planning staff and consultants at the beginning of the Conservation Plan, suggesting that it would be a one-step process for each WHA at the outset and would provide a way for the planning department to monitor the status of a project.

ACTION. Refine a checklist to be used by planning office and consultants.

Exceptions to a WHA. It was agreed that language specific to what would be considered exceptions to requiring a WHA be included in the WHA so as to provide greater

efficiency in staff time, citing that there are many instances in which building within a Wildlife Habitat Overlay has no impact on wildlife.

ACTION. Copy specific to WHA exceptions to be written.

The question was raised about what wildlife maps from IDFG will be available to consultants. The Committee will check with Rob Marin to make sure IDFG shared their maps for our NRO. Then, we need to discuss what additional layers might be needed. It was noted that Big Game maps in the IDFG report provide more detail.

ACTION. Jeff, Tamara and Renee will work on obtaining IDFG maps.

3. **Bear Overlay Map.** We have black bear conflict information, but not for grizzlies. It was pointed out that the problem is we don't know what IDFG has, and they are reticent to share collar data. Rob Marin asked the Committee to help with obtaining GIS collar information. Rob would find any information on this helpful. Renee will check with Sarah Sells on this. It was pointed out that Sarah's pathway data lines up with drainages and wetlands; the Roadkill data points out hotspots and lines up with bear movement following riparian - and this falls well within our NRO. Sarah's model is based on habitat and collared bears. What's not in the bear conflict area are wetlands in most of the valley, Darby and the area east of Teton (Spring and Leigh Creeks), as bears are never seen outside of stringers(riparian- cottonwood, ash).

The question arose: Do we make a bear habitat zone vs a bear conflict zone? Our hope is to put such a zone in the WHA and WHO so that people would have to address bear habitat in their planning. This would also be important in educating new buyers. If their building is in a Bear Conflict Zone, then they would be subject to the Ordinance. An ultimate objective would be to get this policy into the Code.

It was agreed that obtaining grizzly bear collar data is critical so that we know if it is in a conflict area, which appears to be more than likely. Rob indicated that from this data, a polygon could be made for mapping purposes, at a bare minimum.

ACTION: Obtain Grizzly bear collar data(Renee and Tamara); Obtain digital copies of maps/data from IDFG Report(Tamara and Renee). POINT OUT PAGE 4; Outline bear conflict area; Outline different areas to be put in NRO; Rob to additionally explore NRCS data set that may be more detailed.

Meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.