

GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT CAPTURES, RELOCATIONS, AND REMOVALS IN NORTHWEST WYOMING

2018 ANNUAL REPORT



Submitted to the Wyoming Legislature's Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife and Cultural Resources Interim Committee. This report is available to the public at the Wyoming Game and Fish Department Headquarters Office, Regional Offices and on the Department website at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov>. This report is in fulfillment of the requirements in Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001(c). Questions about this report or its content can be directed to Brian DeBolt, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, 260 Buena Vista, Lander, WY 82520, (307) 332-2688, brian.debolt@wyo.gov

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Introduction

In Wyoming, *Conflicts* are defined as “interactions between bears, people and their property, resulting in damage to pets, livestock or bees, non-natural food rewards, animal caused human injury or death, and human caused injury or death to an animal other than legal hunting or a management action.” Human-bear interactions and conflicts in Wyoming are a result of an abundance of bears seeking unnatural foods in association with people and property, close encounters with humans, or when bears kill livestock. Proactive prevention is the goal of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (Department) in minimizing conflicts. However, the number and location of human-bear conflicts is influenced by the availability of unsecured unnatural attractants (e.g. human foods and garbage), natural food distribution and abundance, bear numbers and distribution, and human and livestock use patterns on the landscape.

The management technique of capturing bears in areas where they may come into conflict with people and relocating them to remote locations is common throughout the world. Relocation achieves several social and conservation functions: (a) it reduces the chance of property damage, livestock damage, or human interactions in areas where the potential for conflict is high; (b) it reduces the potential for bears to become food conditioned and/or human habituated which often results in destructive and/or dangerous behaviors; (c) it allows bears the opportunity to forage on natural foods and remain wary of people; and (d) it could prevent removing bears from the population which may be beneficial in maintaining recovery criteria and population management objectives.

The Department relocates and removes black and grizzly bears as part of routine management operations. All grizzly bear management actions were conducted in coordination with the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, when applicable. As of September 24, 2018, grizzly bears in Wyoming were listed as threatened on the Endangered Species List. At that time, Wyoming no longer held management authority and coordination of Department management activities with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was required. The decision to relocate or remove a bear is made after considering a number of variables including the age and sex of the animal, behavioral traits, health status, physical injuries or abnormalities, type of conflict, severity of conflict, known history of the animal, human safety concerns, availability of suitable relocation sites, and population management objectives. Grizzly bears are relocated in accordance with Federal and State law, regulation, and policy.

In 2005, the Wyoming Legislature enacted House Bill 203, which created Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001 which requires the Department to:

- (a) Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the Department shall provide notification to the county sheriff of the county to which the grizzly bear is relocated within five (5) days of each grizzly bear relocation and shall issue a press release to the media and sheriff in the county where each grizzly bear is relocated;
- (b) The notice and press release shall provide the following information:
 - (i) The date of the grizzly bear relocation;
 - (ii) The number of grizzly bears relocated; and
 - (iii) The location of the grizzly bear relocation, as provided by commission rule and regulation;

(c) No later than January 15 of each year the Department shall submit an annual report to the Joint Travel, Recreation, Wildlife, and Cultural Resources Interim committee. The annual report shall include the total number and relocation area of each grizzly bear relocated during the previous calendar year. The Department shall also make available the annual report to the public.

Subsequently, the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission promulgated Chapter 58 Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation (Appendix I) to further direct the implementation of Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001.

This report satisfies the requirements set forth in Wyoming Statute §23-1-1001(c) and provides additional information on grizzly bear captures, relocations, and removals in Wyoming during 2018.

Grizzly Bear Management Captures, Relocations, and Removals

During 2018, the Department captured 53 individual grizzly bears in 59 capture events in an attempt to prevent or resolve conflicts; meaning 6 bears were captured twice (Figure 1 and Tables 1 and 2). Most captures were adult and subadult (3-5 years old) males (Table 1).

Of the 59 capture events, 35 captures were a result of bears killing livestock (primarily cattle), 13 were captured for obtaining pet, livestock food, garbage, or damaging fruit trees. Nine bears were captured for frequenting developed sites or populated areas unsuitable for grizzly bear occupancy. Two bears were captured for killing a person. Of the 59 capture events, 29 (49%) were in Park County, 20 (34%) were in Sublette County, 4 (7%) were in Teton County, 3 (5%) were in Hot Springs County, and 3 (5%) were in Big Horn County (Table 1 and Figure 1).

Of the 59 capture events, there were 23 relocation events, 4 bears were released on site because they were non-target captures or part of a family group. Thirty-two bears were removed from the population. All relocated grizzly bears were released on U.S. Forest Service lands in or adjacent to the Primary Conservation Area (Figure 2). Of the 23 relocation events, 11 (48%) bears were released in Teton County, 11 in Park County (48%), and 1 (4%) was released in Fremont County (Figure 2 and Table 2).

Bears were removed from the population due to a history of previous conflicts, a known history of close association with humans, or they were deemed unsuitable for release into the wild (e.g. orphaned cubs, poor physical condition, or human safety concern). Of the 32 bears that were removed from the population, 17 were outside of the Demographic Monitoring Area. Removals occur after much deliberation and ultimate decisions take into account multiple factors unique to each conflict situation.

Table 1. Gender and age class for all 2018 grizzly bear conflict management captures ($n = 59$) in Wyoming.

Reproductive Status	Count
UNKNOWN GENDER YEARLING	1
FEMALE ADULT	5
FEMALE ADULT WITH 1 CUB OF THE YEAR	2
FEMALE ADULT WITH 1 YEARLING	1
MALE ADULT	22
FEMALE CUB OF THE YEAR	3
MALE CUB OF THE YEAR	3
FEMALE WITH 3 YEARLINGS	1
FEMALE SUBADULT	5
MALE SUBADULT	8
FEMALE YEARLING	3
MALE YEARLING	5
Total	59

Notification to the County Sheriff and the Media

Within 5-days of releasing a grizzly bear, the county sheriff was notified by e-mail and a press release was distributed to all local media contacts in the county where the grizzly bear was released. The media release contained information on the location of the grizzly bear release, the number of grizzly bears relocated, the date of the relocation, the reason the grizzly bear was relocated, and additional bear safety and conflict avoidance information.

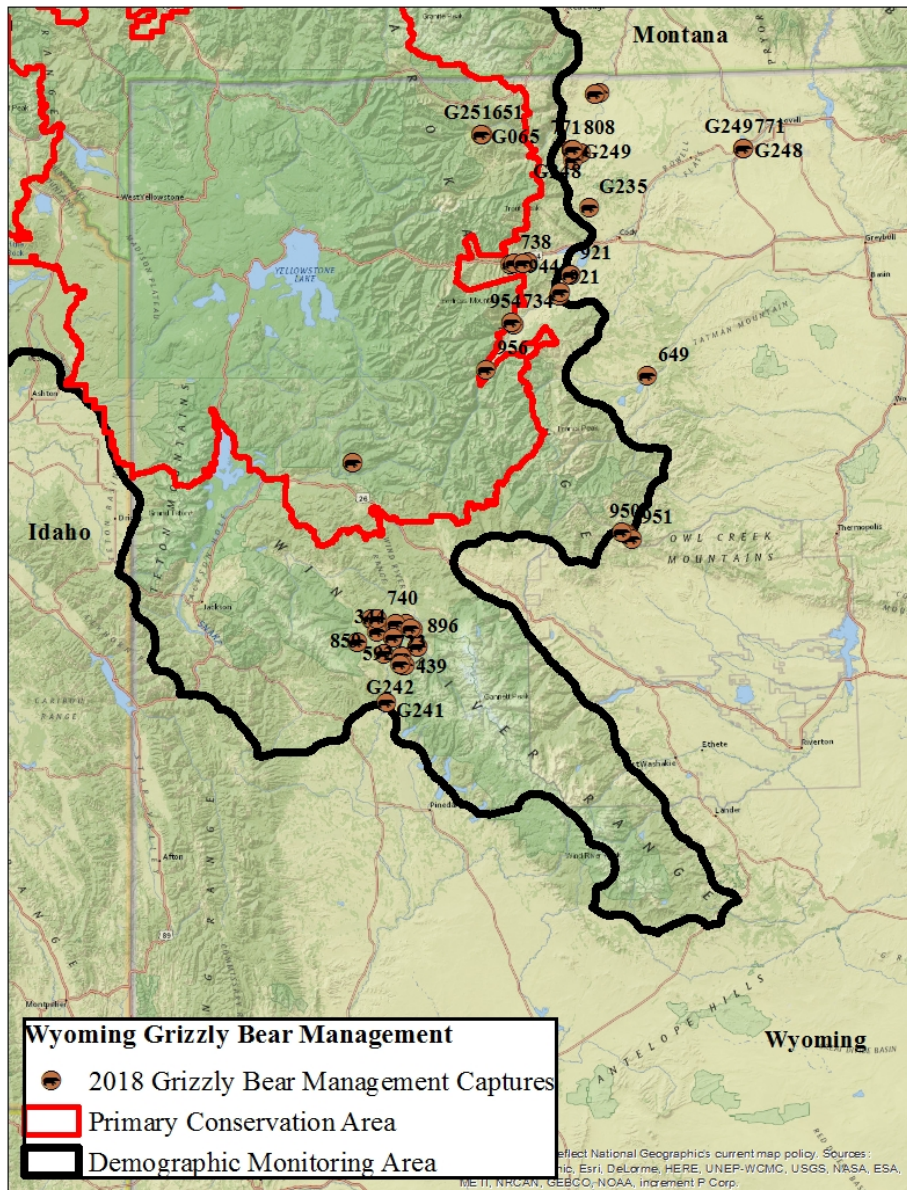


Figure 1. Management capture locations ($n = 59$) for grizzly bears in 2018. Grizzly bears with “G” in front of their number were marked but not fitted with radio collars (typically because they were too young to be collared). Grizzly bears identified with “NA” were grizzly bears removed from the population without being given an identification number. PCA is the grizzly bear Primary Conservation Area as defined in the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. DMA is the grizzly bear Demographic Monitoring Area as defined in “Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team. 2012. Updating and Evaluating Approaches to estimate population size and sustainable mortality limits for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, MT, USA. Please note that the mapping software combines some locations at this scale. Therefore, locations/bear numbers at or very near the same coordinates are not always distinct on the map, but are listed in Table 2.

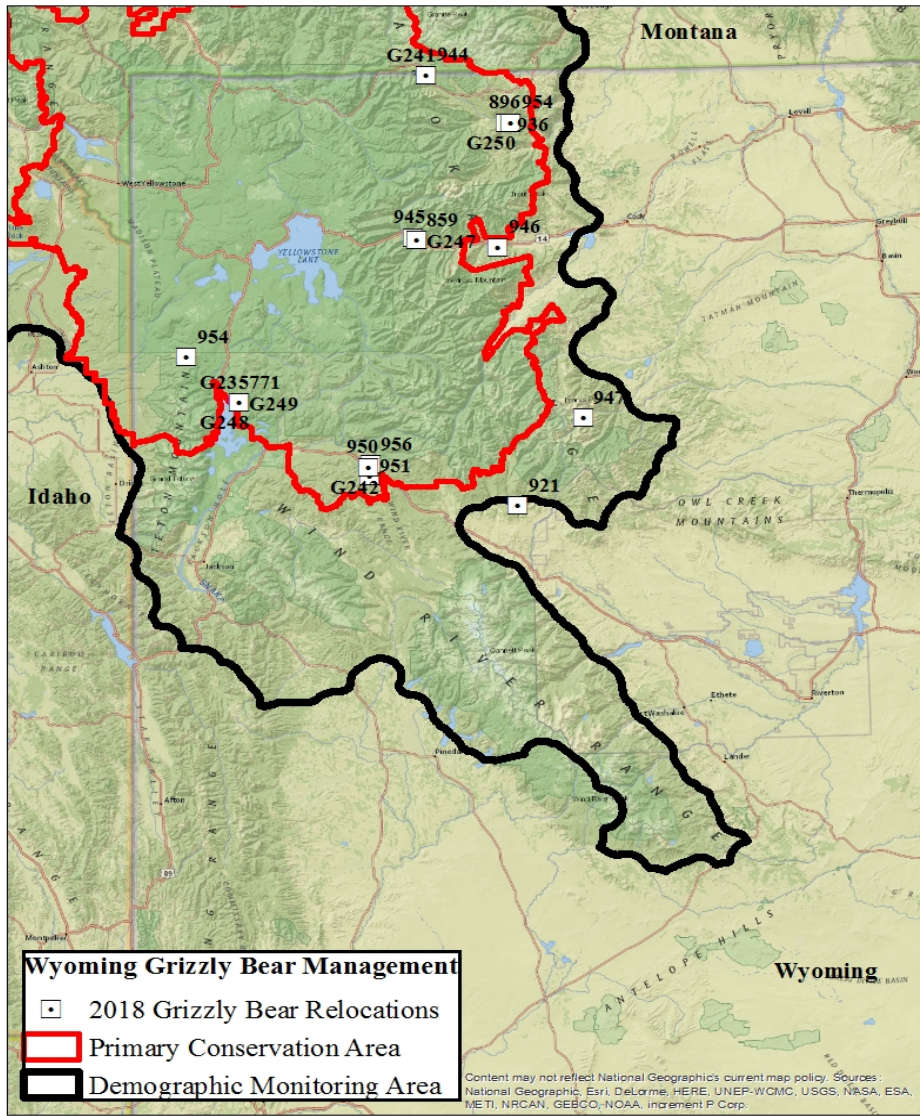


Figure 2. Release locations ($n = 23$) for grizzly bears captured and relocated in conflict management efforts 2018. Grizzly bears with “G” in front of their number were marked but not fitted with radio collars (typically because they were too young to be collared). PCA is the grizzly bear Primary Conservation Area as defined in the 2016 Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy. The DMA is the grizzly bear Demographic Monitoring Area as defined in “Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team. 2012. Updating and Evaluating Approaches to estimate population size and sustainable mortality limits for grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.” Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team, U.S. Geological Survey, Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, Bozeman, MT, USA. Please note that the mapping software combines some locations at this scale. Therefore, locations/bear numbers at or very near the same coordinates are not always distinct on the map, but are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Capture date, grizzly bear identification number (ID), capture county, relocation site, release county, and reason for capture for all 2018 grizzly bear conflict management captures ($n = 59$) in Wyoming. Grizzly bears identified with “N/A” were grizzly bears removed from the population without being given an identification number.

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
4/10/2018	649	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING CALVING PASTURE AND LIVESTOCK CONFLICT HISTORY
4/24/2018	921	PARK	BEAR CREEK	FREMONT	CAPTURED FOR FREQUENTING CALVING PASTURES
4/29/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR VERY BOLD BEHAVIOR AND FREQUENTING CALVING PASTURE/RANCH AREA
5/9/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR BREKING INTO BUILDING AND GETTING PET FOOD
5/30/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR BEING HABITUATED AND ASSOCIATED WITH MULTIPLE CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
5/30/2018	G235	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	CAPTURED FOR FREQUENTING A RESIDENCE WITH CHICKENS
6/22/2018	N/A	PARK			CAPTURED FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION. REMOVED DUE TO VERY POOR CONDITION
7/3/2018	936	SUBLETTE	SUNLIGHT BASIN	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/8/2018	841	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
7/13/2018		SUBLETTE	ON SITE		NON-TARGET CAPTURE; RELEASED WITHOUT HANDLING
7/13/2018	344	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
7/13/2018	592	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
7/16/2018	G240	SUBLETTE	ON SITE		RELEASED ON SITE
7/24/2018	G241	SUBLETTE	FOX CREEK	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/24/2018	G242	SUBLETTE	BLACKROCK	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION
7/25/2018	439	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR CHRONIC CATTLE DEPREDATION; G242, G243,G 244 RELOCATED
7/25/2018	G243	SUBLETTE	BLACKROCK	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
7/25/2018	G244	SUBLETTE	BLACKROCK	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/1/2018	N/A	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR LIVESTOCK DEPREDATIONS AND MISSING FOOT
8/4/2018	808	PARK			CAPTURED AND REMOVED FOR LIVESTOCK DEPREDATIONS.
8/5/2018	723	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR CHRONIC CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/7/2018	G247	TETON	MORMON CREEK	PARK	NON TARGET AT CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/8/2018	859	TETON	MORMON CREEK	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/13/2018	740	SUBLETTE			REMOVED DUE TO REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
8/17/2018	944	PARK	FOX CREEK	PARK	CAPTURED FOR DAMAGING APPLE TREES AT A RESIDENCE
8/18/2018	945	SUBLETTE	FIVEMILE CREEK	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
8/23/2018	947	SUBLETTE	WOOD RIVER	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/1/2018	921	PARK			REMOVED FOR APPLE TREE DAMAGE AND FREQUENTING RESIDENTIAL AREAS.
9/3/2018	738	PARK			REMOVED FOR GETTING INTO CHICKEN COOPS AND POOR CONDITION.
9/4/2018		HOT SPRINGS			REMOVED FOR MULTIPLE CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
9/6/2018		PARK			CATTLE DEPREDATION; DIED DURING CAPTURE
9/6/2018	771	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION. RELOCATED WITH TWO COY G248 AND G249
9/6/2018	859	SUBLETTE			REMOVED FOR REPEATED CATTLE DEPREDATIONS
9/6/2018	G248	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	CAPTURED AND TRANSPORTED WITH MOTHER(771) AND SIBLING (G249) FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/6/2018	G249	PARK	BAILEY CREEK	TETON	TRANSPORTED WITH MOTHER (771) AND SIBLING (G248) FOR CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/7/2018	950	HOT SPRINGS	LOST LAKE, BTNF	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/10/2018	946	SUBLETTE	CLOCKTOWER CREEK	PARK	CATTLE DEPREDATION
9/12/2018	951	HOT SPRINGS	SQUAW BASIN	TETON	CATTLE DEPREDATION

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
9/16/2018	N/A	TETON			REMOVED FOR HUMAN DEATH
9/16/2018	N/A	TETON			REMOVED FOR HUMAN DEATH
9/19/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING AGRICULTURAL AREAS, INCLUDING A PUBLIC CORN MAZE, POOR CONDITION AND PUBLIC SAFETY
9/21/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR SEVERAL TRASH CONFLICTS AND BREAKING INTO TURKEY COOP AND KILLING A TURKEY
9/25/2018	651	PARK			REMOVED FOR OBTAINING GARBAGE FROM BEAR RESISTANT TRASH CAN AND PRIOR CONFLCT HISTORY
9/29/2018	954	PARK	FALL RIVER	TETON	FREQUENTING YARDS AND AROUND RANCH BUILDINGS, EXHIBITING BOLD BEHAVIORS DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS
9/30/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING AGRICULTURAL AREAS, INCLUDING A PUBLIC CORN MAZE, AND PUBLIC SAFETY
10/2/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR FREQUENTING PUBLIC CORN MAZE AND FOR PUBLIC SAFETY
10/3/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR HABITUATED BEHAVIOR, FOOD REWARDS AND FREQUENTING DEVELOPED AREAS
10/3/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR HABITUATED BEHAVIOR AND FREQUENTING DEVELOPED AREAS
10/3/2018	N/A	PARK			REMOVED FOR HABITUATED BEHAVIOR AND FREQUENTING DEVELOPED AREAS
10/7/2018	956	PARK	LOST LAKE	TETON	PROPERTY DAMAGE TO A ROOT CELLAR TO OBTAIN ELK QUARTERS
10/15/2018	896	SUBLETTE	DEADMAN CREEK	PARK	DAMAGING PROPERTY AT OUTFITTER CAMP
10/16/2018	734	PARK	ON SITE		CATTLE DEPREDATION - RELEASED ON SITE WITH GPS COLLAR
10/16/2018	954	PARK	DEADMAN CREEK	PARK	NON-TARGET CAPTURE. MOVED FOR PREVIOUS CAPTURE ON SAME AREA ON 9/29. NOT HANDLED - RELOCATED
10/16/2018	G250	SUBLETTE	DEADMAN CREEK	PARK	DAMAGING PROPERTY AT OUTFITTER CAMP

Date	ID	Capture County	Relocation Site	Release County	Reason For Capture
10/19/2018	G065	PARK			REMOVED FOR OBTAINING FOOD REWARDS FROM BEAR RESISTANT CONTAINERS AND ASSOCIATED WITH SEVERAL DEPREDATIONS
10/20/2018	G251	PARK	ON SITE		INTO TRASH AND CLIMBING ON VEHICLES AT RANCH
10/25/2018	G249	BIG HORN			REMOVED WITH MOTHER 771 AND SIBLING G248 FOR PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS AND RECENT CAPTURE HISTORY
10/25/2018	771	BIG HORN			REMOVED WITH 2 COY G248 AND G249 FOR PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS AND RECENT CAPTURE HISTORY
10/25/2018	G248	BIG HORN			REMOVED WITH MOTHER 771 AND SIBLING G249 FOR PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS AND RECENT CAPTURE HISTORY

Appendix I. Wyoming Game and Fish Commission's Notification of Grizzly Bear Relocation Regulation

WYOMING GAME AND FISH

COMMISSION CHAPTER 58

NOTIFICATION OF GRIZZLY BEAR RELOCATION REGULATION

Section 1. Authority. This regulation is promulgated by authority of W.S. §23-1-1001.

Section 2. Definitions. Definitions shall be as set forth in Title 23, Wyoming Statutes, Commission regulations, and the Commission also adopts the following definitions:


(a) "County Sheriff " means the County Sheriffs Office in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated.

(b) "Location of the grizzly bear relocation" means the proper name of the drainage in which a grizzly bear is relocated and the estimated number of miles from the relocation site to the nearest municipality, topographical feature or geographic location.

(c) "Provide a press release" means the Department shall provide to the County Sheriff and the media in the county in which a grizzly bear is relocated, a press release including the location of the grizzly bear relocation, number of grizzly bears relocated, date of the relocation and the reason the grizzly bear was relocated.

Section 3. Notification of relocation. Upon relocating a grizzly bear or upon receiving notification that a grizzly bear is being relocated, the Department shall notify the County Sheriff of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation via direct telephone conversation, written or electronic correspondence, or personal contact within five (5) days of the date of the relocation. The Department shall provide a press release to the County Sheriff and the media in the county where a grizzly bear is relocated of the date, number of grizzly bears relocated, the location of the grizzly bear relocation and the reason of the relocation within five (5) days of the date of relocation of any grizzly bear.

WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION

By: 
Mike Healy, President

Dated: January 22, 2014