



## *Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center*

### **Weekly Highlights for April 2007**

#### I. Departmental/Bureau News

##### *A. Upcoming Events*

USGS research biologist, Kate Kendall, from the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, will be attending the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) subcommittee meeting April 24-25 in Choteau, MT. Kendall will give a short presentation to the subcommittee on the 24th. The NCDE subcommittee is part of the larger Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (<http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/wildlife/igbc/>).

**Contact: Katherine Kendall, 406-888-7994, [kkendall@usgs.gov](mailto:kkendall@usgs.gov)**

##### *B. Current*

##### **Wind Energy for Wildlife**

Two presentations given by USGS scientist Rick Sojda from the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center for the Western Region's Interagency Spotlight on Science speaker series are now available on the web. "Wind Energy Basics (17 minutes)" and "Some Thoughts On Wildlife Friendly Wind Energy (29 minutes)" can be viewed at: <http://www.fsl.orst.edu/cfer/Spotlight/Spotlight.html> under the "March 2007 Wind Energy Impacts/Solutions" heading.

**Contact: Richard Sojda, 406-994-1820, [sojda@usgs.gov](mailto:sojda@usgs.gov)**

##### **USGS Contributes to Research on American Bison Population Dynamics**

The April 4 American Bison Society (ABS) newsletter published by the Wildlife Conservation Society mentions a paper about the conservation of plains bison (*Bison bison bison*) in which USGS scientist Peter Gogan at the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center is a co-author. The paper was published in the January edition of *Biological Conservation* (Volume 136: 175-184) and discusses the urgent need to conserve the wild bison genome and restore the ecological role of bison in grassland ecosystems. The ABS newsletter also cites a paper in the Jan/Feb issue of the *Journal of Heredity* by Derr and Halbert titled, "A Comprehensive Evaluation of Cattle Introgression into US Federal Herds," that results from a study funded with money from the Natural Resource Preservation Program (NRPP) that came through the USGS Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center.

**Contact: Peter Gogan, 406-994-6989, [peter\\_gogan@usgs.gov](mailto:peter_gogan@usgs.gov)**

### **GLORIA Project Tracks Changes in Alpine Ecosystems World-Wide**

USGS Research Ecologist Dan Fagre from the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center was featured in an article for the April 2007 edition of Backpacker Magazine about work he is conducting for the GLORIA alpine-plant monitoring project. GLORIA is an abbreviation for “Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments.” This effort was started so that scientists could establish and maintain a world-wide network of long-term observation sites in alpine environments. The data will be used to assess and predict losses in biodiversity and other threats to these fragile alpine ecosystems, which are under accelerating climate change pressures. Fagre is monitoring a GLORIA site that he established in Glacier National Park. For more information about GLORIA visit: <http://www.gloria.ac.at/>.

**Contact: Dan Fagre, 406-888-7922, dan\_fagre@usgs.gov**

### **Scientists Discuss Modeling Northern Continental Divide Grizzly Bears Population Trends**

The USGS Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center hosted a three-day workshop April 16-18 at the Glacier Field Station in West Glacier, Montana to discuss the best approaches for modeling the density of the threatened Northern Continental Divide grizzly bear population. The primary goal of the Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project is to develop the first-ever estimate of size for this population and establish baseline data for monitoring population trends. Workshop participants included modelers as well as staff from the USGS Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project. Names of participants and affiliations are listed below:

#### Modelers

John Boulanger, Integrated Ecological Research, Nelson, BC

Bill Kendall, USGS Merriam Lab, Laurel, MD

Trent McDonald, Western Ecosystems Technology, Cheyenne, WY

Gary White, Colorado State University, Ft. Collins, CO

#### USGS Northern Divide Grizzly Bear Project

Kate Kendall, Project Leader

Staff: Jeff Stetz, Amy Macleod, and Tabitha Graves

**Contact: Katherine Kendall, 406-888-7994, kkendall@usgs.gov**

### **State of Montana Officials Concerned about Funding for Long-Term Grizzly Bear Population Study**

USGS scientist, Kate Kendall, from the Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center, has been working on a population estimate using DNA from grizzly bear hair collected along survey routes and from systematically positioned hair snag stations. The work is mentioned in articles published on April 25 in the Great Falls Tribune and The Daily Interlake since it is linked to the state of Montana's long-term population monitoring program of grizzlies in northwest Montana which is in need of federal funding support in order to continue. These articles are available on the web at:

<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20070425/NEWS01/704250316/1002> and <http://www.dailyinterlake.com/articles/2007/04/25/news/news04.txt>.

**Contact: Kate Kendall, 406-888-7994, kkendall@usgs.gov**

II. Notable Congressional Activity

None

### III. Press Inquiries/Media

USGS scientist Chuck Schwartz discussed bear 398, who was killed after mauling a person in Idaho last week, with reporter Rocky Barker of the Idaho Statesman. Schwartz provided information on when the bear was captured and his known movements and they discussed the need for humans to learn to live in grizzly bear country.

USGS scientist Geneva Chong was mentioned in a story about the use of transmitters to trace sage grouse to precious habitat that was published by reporter Cory Hatch of the Jackson Hole News & Guide on April 18. The story is available at:

[http://www.jacksonholenews.com/article.php?art\\_id=1668](http://www.jacksonholenews.com/article.php?art_id=1668)

USGS scientist Chuck Schwartz was contacted by Rocky Barker, a reporter from the Idaho Statesman, about a story he is writing on famous bears in the Yellowstone area. Barker needed information on bear #1, which died at age 28 in Yellowstone National Park, so Schwartz provided him with these data and discussed the context of his story.

### IV. FOIA

None