



Friends of the Clearwater

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April 22, 2020

Ed Schriever
Director
Idaho Department Fish and Game
Box 25
Boise, ID 83707

Jim Teare
Clearwater Region Supervisor
Idaho Department Fish and Game
3316 16th Street
Lewiston, ID 83501

Sent via email to administrative assistant Kim Rau at kim.rau@idfg.idaho.gov and to Jim Teare at jim.teare@idfg.idaho.gov

Dear Director Schriever and Supervisor Teare:

We just learned about the confirmed tracks of a grizzly bear near Fish Creek, south of Grangeville spotted by an Idaho Fish and Game Officer. This was reported on the Idaho Department of Fish and Game's (IDFG) website today, April 22, 2020.¹ Last year, it appears at least three grizzlies were reported on the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests. In 2019, two bears were photographed near the north end of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, one with a collar—the bear that returned to the Cabinet Mountains to den—and one apparently without a collar or ear tags. There were also photographs of a bear taken near White Bird earlier in 2019 and photographs taken of a bear near Newsome Creek later that year. While we don't know if these photographs were of one or two grizzlies, the bear (or one of two bears) in the photos could have been the same bear as the one referenced below.

According to the IDFG website:

Fish and Game's first evidence of a grizzly in the area came from game camera pictures in the same general vicinity in spring 2019, and biologists collected a hair sample. The hair sample was sent for genetic testing. Recent results matched a male grizzly bear radio collared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a yearling in 2017 near the Idaho-British Columbia border. The radio collar fell off the bear in 2018.

A Fish and Game officer collected a hair sample near the tracks found on April, 2020 in the Fish Creek Meadows area, which was sent for genetic testing. However, it could take months for test results.

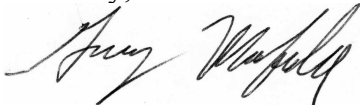
Was the bear referred to in the just-announced news release, where the genetic results came back, the same bear that was photographed near White Bird Creek in 2019? A photo is attached of that bear. Given today's date, it seems almost certain this bear denned on the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests.

¹ <https://idfg.idaho.gov/press/fg-officer-spots-grizzly-bear-tracks-about-7-miles-south-grangeville-april>

This raises a serious concern about bear baiting in the Clearwater Region and other places where grizzlies are reoccupying former habitat in what the Fish and Wildlife Service terms the Bitterroot Ecosystem. According to the website of the Interagency Grizzly bear Committee, “In 2001, the Secretary of the Interior halted the plan as the agency’s strategy shifted to allowing bears to naturally migrate into the ecosystem.” (See <http://igbconline.org/bitterroot-ecosystem/>). Attached is a letter we sent when the collared bear from the Cabinet Mountains appeared. It seems that grizzlies are ranging more widely in the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests than anyone would have previously thought. Thus, we request that bear baiting be prohibited in these two administratively combined national forests. Other concerns in the 2019 letter, including reasons for prohibiting bear baiting in areas with grizzlies, remain the same.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Gary Macfarlane
Friends of the Clearwater
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Moscow, ID 83843

cc: Hilary Cooley, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Leanne Marten, Regional Forester, Region I
Cheryl Probert, Supervisor, Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests