GrizzTracker: Informing Grizzly Bear Management

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GB management in Lower Peace

• Grizzly Bears
  – Designated as Threatened under Alberta’s Wildlife Act.

• Bear Management Area 1
  – Not previously inventoried
  – Priorities for BMA1
    • Estimate pop size
    • Identify core areas
    • Develop BearSmart programs
GB management in Lower Peace

• Opportunity for collaboration:
  – Population Estimate
    • Funding based on multiple stakeholder support.
  – Public Observations
    • Industry frequently in this area, as well as recreation use.
    • GrizzTracker
Importance of stakeholder inclusion

- “Attitudes to grizzly bears were more positive when stakeholders were provided with opportunities to participate in developing local management solutions and when the government’s management was perceived to be effective”
Alberta Environment and Parks and industrial stakeholders have teamed up to monitor Grizzly bears in the Lower Peace.
"We want to know—how often are they seeing, or not seeing, a bear? The information helps us gain an indication of distribution of grizzlies."

Courtney Hughes, AEP
Purpose

• This program formalized existing efforts by Industrial personal to report grizzly bear sightings to Peace Region AEP staff.

• Engage stakeholders and industrial workers in data collection relating to grizzly bears to help meet the scientific goals in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan

• App based; GPS linked; sightings/time; utilize effort of users in BMA1; link to other management activities/actions; educate public.
“If you teach people about grizzly bears, and train and motivate them to participate in research, that will generate an interest in collaborative stewardship.”

Jim Witiw, Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd.
How to participate?

- Online Mapping Tool
- Smartphone App
Data Collection

What would you like to do?

- Trip In Progress
- End Trip
- Report a Grizzly Sighting
- Learn How to Identify a Grizzly
- About

What was it?

Classifications of Bear:
Number of cubs, if any:
Confidence in Grizzly Bear identification:
Sighting type:
Upload a photo (optional):

How to identify a Grizzly Bear

Key characteristics that help distinguish a grizzly bear include:

1. A prominent shoulder hump
2. Small round ears
3. Long claws

Remember colour is not a distinguishing feature (both black bears and grizzly bears can be blond, red, black or brown)
Key Features

• **Sampling effort considerations:**
  – Route Function: volunteer sampling effort

• **Data quality considerations:**
  – Confidence in identification
  – Wildlife ID page
  – Photo submission
Preliminary Results: 2017

- 21 industrial workers reported 62 grizzly bear observations.
- Of the 62 bears reported, 42 were reported as confident in their identification.
- 419 trips recorded
Informing Decision Making

- Ability to view observer effort across landscape (can be used at variety of scales)
- Using results to inform subsequent BMA1 information needs (e.g. habitat);
- Ability to speak quantitatively to observer data
Next Steps

• Obtaining sufficient sightings reports – we are dealing with a relatively rare and elusive animal!
• Maintaining interest and momentum – building user ‘habits’.
• Continued collaboration - building joint understanding, awareness, and stewardship ethic.
• Additional opportunities – e.g. multi-species, other geographical areas.
• The observer effort component of this app is quite new, and would have utility in other programs.
Thoughts?