



2004 BLACK BEAR RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

Annual Progress Report

January 24, 2005

Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP)

Author: Greg Holm, Wildlife Biologist

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes black bear research and management activities that occurred within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) during 2004. The black bear research section was excluded from this report, as no black bear research was proposed or initiated within RNSP during 2004. The management section summarizes all important bear sightings and incidents, bear related meetings and education efforts, funding, known mortalities, and fiscal year 2005 priorities for black bear management within RNSP.

BEAR SIGHTINGS AND INCIDENTS

Wildlife Observation Database

There were 69 sightings (88 bears) of black bears reported on RNSP wildlife observation reporting forms during 2004 (Appendix A). Although there are many factors which can influence the number of bear sightings reported, the 2004 total was only 45% of the average reported annually during the previous five years (1999-2003; avg. = 155). Twenty-eight percent of the observations were made during June (n=20; Figure 1) and no sightings were reported for November. Eighty-one percent of the sightings were of a single bear, 10% involved 2 bears, 9% reported 3 bears, and there were no reports of 4 bears.

Only 17% of the sightings occurred within RNSP north of the Klamath River (12 sightings, 12 bears; see Figure 2). Twenty-five percent of the sightings occurred (17 sightings, 28 bears) in the middle portion of RNSP, south of the Klamath River and excluding the Redwood Creek drainage. Fifty-four percent of the bear sightings occurred within the Redwood Creek drainage (37 sightings, 44 bears). Only 4% of the reported bear sightings occurred outside of the park boundaries (3 sightings, 4 bears).

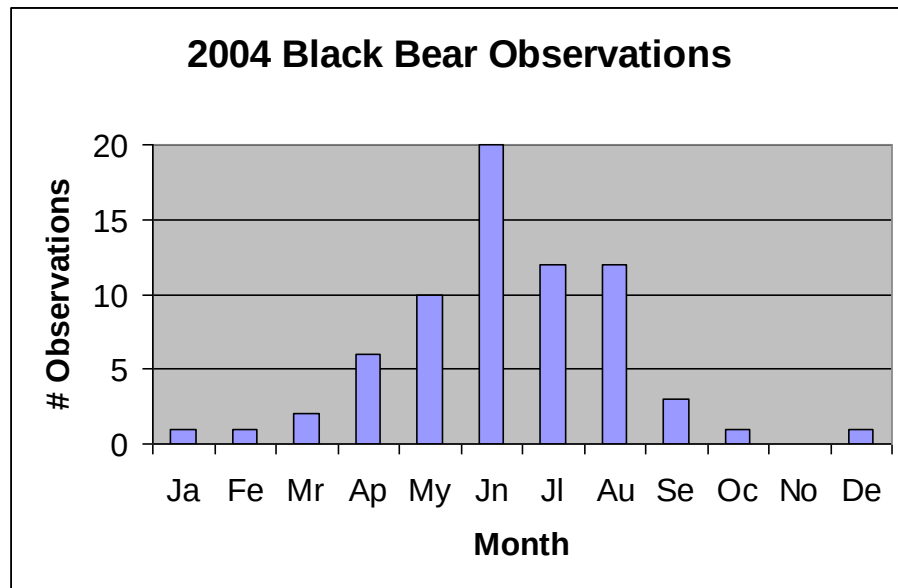


Figure 1. Number of bear sightings reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards, and month that the sighting occurred, during 2004 (total =69).

Campgrounds

Mill Creek: There was 1 report in May of a single bear at the north end of the campground near an old abandoned road. There was also a report in June of 1 bear on the Hobbs Wall trail within 100 yards of the trailhead. Both bears left/ran away when spotted.

Jedediah Smith, Little Bald Hills, Nickel Creek, DeMartin, Flint Ridge, Butler Creek, Gold Bluffs Beach campground and the Environmental Camp, Elk Prairie, and the Redwood Creek camping areas (Elam, 44, and gravel bars) had no reports of bear incidents in 2004.

Facilities and Housing Areas

Hiouchi Housing: There was one sighting of a single bear behind the house and past the dorm at Hiouchi, towards the river near where roads connect. The bear was likely after the apples nearby (sighting was in October) and was not threatening towards people.

CCC/ Requa: An NPS ranger reported a juvenile bear being sighted near the CCC facility at Requa for 4 days in late May. On 29 May, it entered one of the

stairwells of a CCC building and found food in somebody's backpack that had been left out. Some CCC members yelled at the bear and it ran away. This incident occurred while the CCC facility was being moved and shut down. Shortly after this incident, the CCC no longer inhabited the facility, and there were no subsequent reports of a juvenile bear getting into any food or garbage at the NPS facilities at Requa.

Davison Ranch buildings: There were 3 reported bear sightings around the Davison Ranch horse stables/barn between 23 July and 16 August. One of the sightings was of 2 bears. The reports indicated that they were foraging on the blackberries in the area.

Kuchel Visitor Center (KVC): On 11 July, there was a report by a park employee of a bear running off the front decking at KVC and into the bushes during the early morning when the facility was just being opened. The bear was headed south and not seen again.

Trails, and Trailheads

There were 16 bear sightings that occurred while people were on a trail in RNSP. With the exception of Fern Canyon (see below) only single sightings were reported at various trails and trailheads.

Fern Canyon area: There were 6 reports of bear sightings near the Fern Canyon trail or the Friendship and James Irvine trail sections right near Fern Canyon. The sightings occurred between 8 July and 4 September. On 3 occasions a female with 2 cubs was reported and on 2 occasions 2 bears were reported.

Roads

There were 45 bear sightings that occurred while people were on a road in RNSP. With the exception of the Tall Trees Access road, Ranch Road, and West Side Access Road (see below) only single sightings were reported along the various roads within RNSP.

Tall Trees Access Road: There were 12 reports of single bear sightings along the Tall Trees Access Road. Six of the sightings were within 1 mile of the gate. Three were along the road within ¼ mile of the Tall Trees trailhead, and 3 gave no specific location, other than along Tall Trees Access road. In 11 of the 12 instances the bear was running away from the vehicle. No sightings occurred after July, with most occurring during May-July.

Ranch Road and West Side Access Road: There were several sightings of black bears along both Ranch Road in Coyote Creek drainage, and the West Side Access Road. The bears in Coyote Creek were typically foraging, and all sightings along both roads were made by park staff, as both of the roads are closed to public travel.

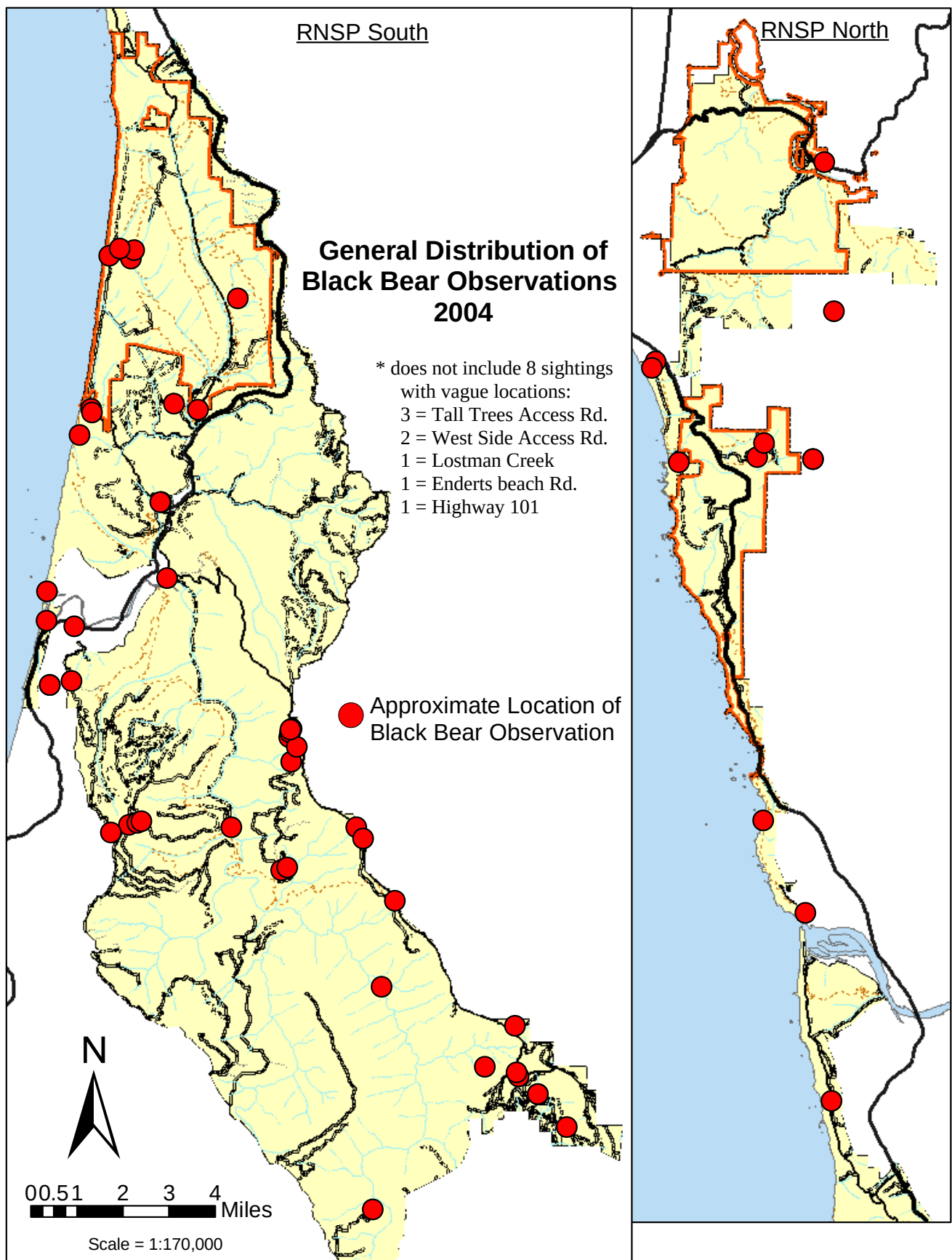


Figure 2. Approximate black bear sighting locations during 2004.

MEETINGS

The RNSP Bear Panel members met during both May and November 2004 (Appendix B).

EDUCATION

Presentations

Bear safety and reporting orientations were given to seasonal RNSP interpretation staff, Youth Conservation Corps crews, Student Conservation Association members, and volunteer trail crews. Fish and Wildlife staff made regular follow-ups on problem bear reports and to educate staff and visitors about proper reporting and response procedures. Numerous other informal contacts were made with RNSP personnel regarding bear-garbage and bear-human issues. The RNSP Interpretation Division also informed visitors about basic bear safety during bear campfire programs at Elk Prairie, and at the beginning of various interpretive programs and walks at RNSP.

FUNDING

During FY 2004, the National Park received \$37,000 from several funding sources, including \$4,000 from Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation and \$33,000 from NPS natural cyclic maintenance funds. Most of the funding (\$33,234.80) was used to purchase 40 bear proof food lockers and associated installation hardware for the Mill Creek campground. A small portion of the Earth friends funding was also used to purchase 7 bear proof backpacking canisters for use along Redwood Creek.

The North Coast Redwoods Interpretive Association agreed to sell bear related merchandise (stuffed “beanie” bears) in the Prairie Creek visitor center again during 2004, with a portion of the proceeds going towards a fund to pay for bear related information and educational signs within the parks. Approximately \$250 was raised for this fund through the NCRIA program. The current balance of beanie bear account money (\$495.60) will likely be used for purchasing more picnic and campground table sign materials. The CDPR requests for funding bear proof equipment have been submitted in all possible places and various formats, but funding will probably not be available in the immediate future.

MORTALITIES

There was only one reported bear mortality during 2004. A yearling female bear was hit and killed by a vehicle just south of the RNSP boundary, near the entrance to Stone Lagoon. Fish and Wildlife Branch staff collected samples for the UC Davis Veterinary Genetics Lab, Wildlife & Ecology Unit, for an ongoing bear genetics study.

FY 2004 PRIORITIES

- ❖ Initiate hazing of nuisance bears immediately and frequently.
- ❖ The RNSP Intranet will be used for more effective communication regarding bear management issues.
- ❖ All employees, contractors, etc., will be encouraged to turn in bear observations immediately.
- ❖ Fish and Wildlife staff will continue to work on consistent bear information for bulletin boards and information brochures around the park.
- ❖ Metal picnic table signs will continue to be inventoried and replaced as needed.
- ❖ NCRIA partnership for funding will be continued, and RNHA will be approached to implement similar program.
- ❖ Obtaining funding to purchase the remaining bear proof equipment will be pursued by NPS Fish & Wildlife and CDPR staff.
- ❖ Bear Research related to the management needs of RNSP will be investigated.

Appendix A. Date, number, activity, and general location of bear sightings reported to RNSP during 2004.

Bear 2004			
Date	#	Activity	Location
1/29/2004	1	Running down road	200 Yards up Road from Tall Trees Trailhead
2/23/2004	3	Feeding at the bases of oaks	Coyote Creek above Ridge Ranch Road -200foot Elevation - Oaks
3/19/2004	1		Wolf Crk Skid Trl
3/20/2004	1	Fled from road and approaching vehicle	Tall Trees Access Road
4/2/2004	1	Fleeing from road	About 1/4 Mile from Tall Trees Trailhead
4/9/2004	1	Climbing up tree	Coastal Trail, Close to Yurok Loop
4/21/2004	1	Ran off road	
4/21/2004	2	Ran off the road	
4/23/2004	1	Visitor on mtn. Bike, bear ran and climbed a tree.	Coastal Trail, South of Enderts Beach
4/28/2004	1	Ran off the road	2nd Growth off Dirt Road
5/4/2004	1	Crossed rd into brush	Burn Pile Rd B/T #S 108/109
5/5/2004	3	Walking along rd and ran off when view	WSA Rd, 0.3 Mi Past South Gate
5/19/2004	1	Foraging by side of road	1 Mile Down from Access Gate to Tall Trees Grove
5/19/2004	1	Feeding in prairie	Long Ridge road, South of Bald Hills Rd. and School House Peak
5/21/2004	2	Crossing road	Old Highway 101 above Freshwater Lagoon
5/22/2004	1	Walking in Jen Jackson's driveway	
5/24/2004	1	Ran off road and back to forest	off Coast Drive, Heading North toward High Bluff Overlook.
5/25/2004	1	Ran off road	M-Line
5/25/2004	1	Ran off road	West Side Access Rd
5/29/2004	1	Crossing rd	Redw Crk Rd
6/2/2004	1	In road way, ran away	Mill Creek Acquisition
6/5/2004	1	Coming out of woods heading for stream at n. end	Freshwater Lagoon, East of 101
6/6/2004	1	Resting	Hobbs Trail, 100 Yards from Trailhead on A Hillside
6/11/2004	1	Ran across road and looked back	on Tall Trees Access Road

Appendix A. (cont.)

Bear 2004			
Date	#	Activity	Location
6/13/2004	1	Crossed street toward redwood creek	Bald Hills Road, Past Nps Sign by 100 Yards Or So
6/15/2004	1	Ran across rd. In front of truck	West Side Access Just Prior to Parking Area for Devils 3
6/16/2004	1	Walking along k+k	Between Dolason and Airstrip Prairies
6/16/2004	1	Sniffing air and drooling as smacking mouth	top of Bluff @ 1st Rocky Cliff Face- Beach Just North of Mouth of Redwood Crk.
6/16/2004	1	Near rd	200 Yds Back on Davison Rd from Kiosk
6/17/2004	1	Foraging on overgrown road. I scared him	Bridge Road, Upper Redwood Creek Access.
6/21/2004	1	Walking up the cbec driveway	Near Enderts Beach
6/22/2004	1	Foraging	Old Growth Redwood above Redwood Creek Near Bobcat Creek
6/23/2004	1		A9, Beginning
6/23/2004	1		A9 Beginning
6/25/2004	1	On side of road, scattered off when saw me	1/4 Mile In Past Tall Trees Grove Gate
6/26/2004	1	Came to a gravel bar for a drink, wandered, went back up	1 Mile Downstream from Seasonal Bridge Near Tall Trees Grove on Redwood Creek
6/28/2004	1	Walked across rd into veg	0.5mi from Start of Tall Trees Access Rd
6/30/2004	3	Feeding	Prarie Below Lyons Ranch Road, 1/4 Mile Past Gate
6/30/2004	1		Ranch Rd
6/30/2004	1		Ranch Rd
7/4/2004	1	Running across 101 hwy	Old State Hwy and 101
7/8/2004	3	Cubs ran up hill and mom waited and watched	James Irvine Trail Near Fern Canyon
7/10/2004	1	Ran across road, look back, ran away	First Curve Up from Tall Trees on Access Road
7/11/2004	1	Running, hid in bushes south of deck	Front Deck of Kvc/Ric
7/12/2004	2	Running across rd	Elk Prairie Camp Road Near Cdf
7/14/2004	1	Running across road	top of Road to Tall Trees by Gate
7/21/2004	1	On side of road and then hurried away from car	A Couple Hundred Yards Down from the Tall Trees Gate
7/21/2004	1	Running across the road	Requa Road, Halfway to the top
7/21/2004	1	Running into woods	100 Yds Inside Tall Trees Gate
7/23/2004	1	Eating berries	Davison Trail by Stables

Appendix A. (cont.)

Bear 2004			
Date	#	Activity	Location
7/24/2004	1	Running along rd	Lostman Rd
7/28/2004	1	Browsing in meadow, scratching dirt	Williams Ridge
8/1/2004	1	Eating berries and then ran off	Elk Meadow Trail, Near Barn
8/5/2004	1		Near Major Crk
8/14/2004	1	Climbing tree	100 Yds Friendship Ridge Junction
8/15/2004	1	Running away	Southfork Trail
8/16/2004	2	Foraging in gully	Davison Trail Near Barn
8/18/2004	1	Ran across rd	Mile Marker104
8/26/2004	3	Walking	Behind Boat Crk Pond At Fern Canyon
8/26/2004	1	Walking	Near Crescent Beach Picnic Area
8/26/2004	3	Walking	Fern Canyon Loop
8/27/2004	1	Crossing rd	Enderts Beach Rd
8/30/2004	2	Lounging in veg	1/4mi from Beach on Davison
8/30/2004	1	Walking past parkway s end of prairie	
9/2/2004	2		on Fern Canyon Loop
9/4/2004	2		Upper Part of Fern Canyon Loop
9/23/2004	1	Feeding on acorns	Ranch Rd In Bald Hills
10/27/2004	1	Walking	Behind the House and Past the Dorm At Hiouchi towards the River, Near T Where Roads Connect
12/21/2004	1	Walking along rd	Westside Access Rd Mi 3

Appendix B. Minutes of the Spring 2004 and Fall 2004 Bear Panel meetings.

Spring Meeting

May 17, 2004

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs
From: Wildlife Biologist (Greg Holm)
Subject: Spring Bear Panel Minutes, May 5th, 2004

Attending: Laura Denny, Greg Holm, Lynne Mager, David Pitz, Mary Read, Phil Rovai.

Bear incidents, sightings, and reporting: There have been <20 bear sightings reported since 2004 began, with 1 sighting in both January and February, and most occurring in April. There have been no reports of any serious bear-human interactions or property damage. **Reminder:** bear “incidents” are currently defined as aggressive behavior towards humans, personal injury, property damage, bears in garbage, and bears obtaining human food. **All employees** (contractors, etc. too) need to report bear incidents (as defined above) in a timely manner, which helps immensely when it comes time to determine management actions and signing needs. Remember that wildlife incident reporting protocols are now located on each network drive at - \team\shdata\wildlife protocols, and the RNSP Bear Management Guidelines are on the “intranet” at General Announcements\Other\Wildlife Observation Reports.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: Apparently, the 1 remaining dumpster at Freshwater Spit has been over flowing a lot recently, or people have been leaving garbage bags on the outside of the dumpster. Probably not a likely spot for bears to hang out, but the potential is there, and there are many corvids taking advantage of the situation to feed. The dumpster should be removed if NPS is not obligated to keep it there for some reason.

Funding: The NCRIA will continue to sell the “beanie bears” again this summer if they can continue to get the bears from a supplier. Last year’s beanie bear money will likely be used for more table sign making materials. The National Park receive \$33,000 from natural cyclic maintenance funds (12K=FY04/21K=FY05), and \$4,000 from Earth Friends of the Parks, all of which will be used to purchase bear proof equipment. The CDPR request for funding bear proof equipment has been submitted in all possible places and various formats, but funding will probably not be available for several more fiscal years.

Signs and Bulletins: Table signs were recently given to Chuck McKinney and he will be installing them on new picnic tables and replacing any missing ones the crew comes across. **Reminder:** RNSP has 100,000 “rack” cards that inform visitors about mountain lion, black bear, and marbled murrelet management issues and responsibilities. The rack cards are distributed at all park visitor centers, kiosks, and also by interpretive staff during ranger “roves”.

Education: Greg will continue to give educational bear training sessions to RNSP employees, YCC, SCA and the volunteers during 2004. The Interpretation division will continue to inform visitors of bear issues.

Next meeting: Tentative date for the next bear panel meeting is Wednesday, November 3rd 2004, 9:00-12:00, at South Operations Center.

Appendix B. (cont.)

Fall Meeting

November 15, 2004

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs
From: Wildlife Biologist (Greg Holm)
Subject: Fall Bear Panel Minutes - November 10, 2004

Attending: Jeff Bomke, Eric Carter, Doug Corrigan, Mike Goss, Greg Holm, Roxanne Jacobus, Lynda Mealue, Mary Read, Phil Rovai, Jim Wheeler.

Bear incidents, sightings, and reporting: To date, there have been fewer reported bear sightings than during recent years. However, there are probably some sightings that occurred during 2004 that haven't been turned in yet (e.g. records at Prairie Creek kiosk). Fortunately, there were no reports of any serious bear-human interactions or property damage during the 2004 visitor season. However, there was a report of a bear getting a food reward during the closure and moving of the CCC at Requa. Reported sightings, known mortalities, and any other incidents will be summarized in the 2004 black bear management report. The panel also discussed the usefulness of continued production of wildlife observation cards and associated collection boxes for bear management.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: The panel briefly discussed equipment needs, and agreed that current bear proofing equipment and maintenance needs have been addressed with the current PMIS and CDPR requests.

Funding: During FY 2004, the National Park received \$37,000 from several funding sources, including \$4,000 from Earth Friends Wildlife Foundation. Most of the funding was used to purchase 40 bear proof food lockers and associated installation hardware for the Mill Creek campground. A small portion of the Earth friends funding was also used to purchase 7 bear proof backpacking canisters. The NCRIA will continue to sell the "beanie bears", and provide \$250 to the bear panel annually for producing bear management educational materials. The current balance of beanie bear account money (\$495.60) will likely be used for more picnic and campground table sign materials (see below). The CDPR requests for funding bear proof equipment have been submitted in all possible places and various formats, but funding will probably not be available in the immediate future.

Signs, Bulletins, and Education: The picnic table signs are still very popular, as evidenced by the constant removal by park visitors. Mary will be producing more this winter, after the Interpretation staff examines the compatibility of current signs with ADA requirements. RNSP staff will continue to give educational bear training sessions to RNSP employees, YCC, SCA and volunteers, and the Interpretation division will continue to inform visitors of bear issues. **Reminder:** RNSP has 100,000 "rack" cards that inform visitors about mountain lion, black bear, and marbled murrelet management issues and responsibilities. The rack cards are distributed at all park visitor centers, kiosks, and also by interpretive staff during ranger "roves".

Next meeting: Tentative date for the next bear panel meeting is Wednesday, April 13, 2005, 9:00-12:00, at South Operations Center

