



2005 BLACK BEAR RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT

Annual Progress Report

January 23, 2006

Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP)

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INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes black bear research and management activities that occurred within Redwood National and State Parks (RNSP) during 2005. The black bear research section was excluded from this report, as no black bear research was proposed or initiated within RNSP during 2005. The management section summarizes all important bear sightings and incidents, bear related meetings and education efforts, funding, known mortalities, and fiscal year 2006 priorities for black bear management within RNSP.

BEAR SIGHTINGS AND INCIDENTS

Wildlife Observation Database

There were 70 sightings (78 bears) of black bears reported on RNSP wildlife observation reporting forms during 2005 (Appendix A). Although there are many factors which can influence the number of bear sightings reported, the 2005 total was only 54% of the average reported annually during the previous five years (2000-2004; avg. = 128). Twenty-four percent of the observations were made during June (n=17; Figure 1) and no sightings were reported for January, February, November, or December. Eighty-nine percent of the sightings were of a single bear, 11% involved 2 bears, and there were no reports of 3 or more bears.

Only 19% of the sightings occurred within RNSP north of the Klamath River (13 sightings, 13 bears; see Figure 2). Twenty-one percent of the sightings occurred (15 sightings, 16 bears) in the middle portion of RNSP, south of the Klamath River and excluding the Redwood Creek drainage. Fifty-nine percent of the bear sightings occurred within the Redwood Creek drainage (41 sightings, 47 bears). Only 1% of the reported bear sightings occurred outside of the park boundaries (1 sightings, 1 bear).

2005 Black Bear Observations

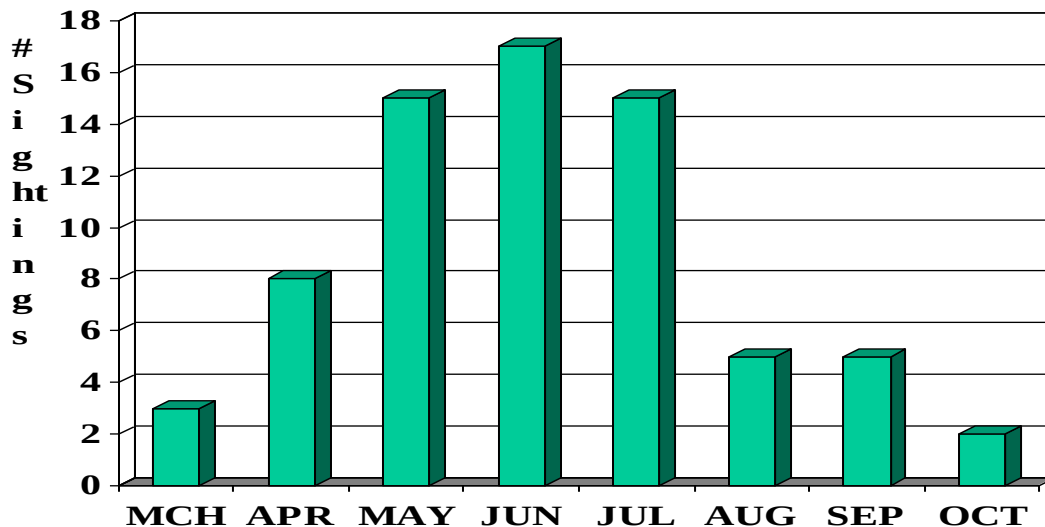


Figure 1. Number of bear sightings reported on RNSP wildlife observation cards, and month that the sighting occurred, during 2005 (total =70).

Campgrounds - There was one small bear within the Elk Prairie campground on 4th of July weekend, but it was hazed away from the area and did not get any food.

Facilities and Housing Areas - There was one sighting of a sow with cubs at the Howland Hill outdoor school, and a bear was residing near the Wolf Creek Outdoor School as well. However, no incidents were reported.

Trails, and Trailheads - There were 12 bear sightings that occurred while people were on a trail in RNSP. With the exception of Redwood Creek (4 sightings) only single sightings were reported at the various trails and trailheads.

Roads - There were 56 bear sightings that occurred while people were on a road in RNSP. A majority of the sightings were along the Tall Trees Access road. There were 21 bear sightings along the Tall Trees trail access road. All but one of the sightings were during May, June, and July. The one sighting that was in March was a small bear found sleeping in the middle of the road (see photo on first page of this report). It appeared to have possibly just emerged from hibernation. There were also 6 sightings within the Mill Creek Acquisition.

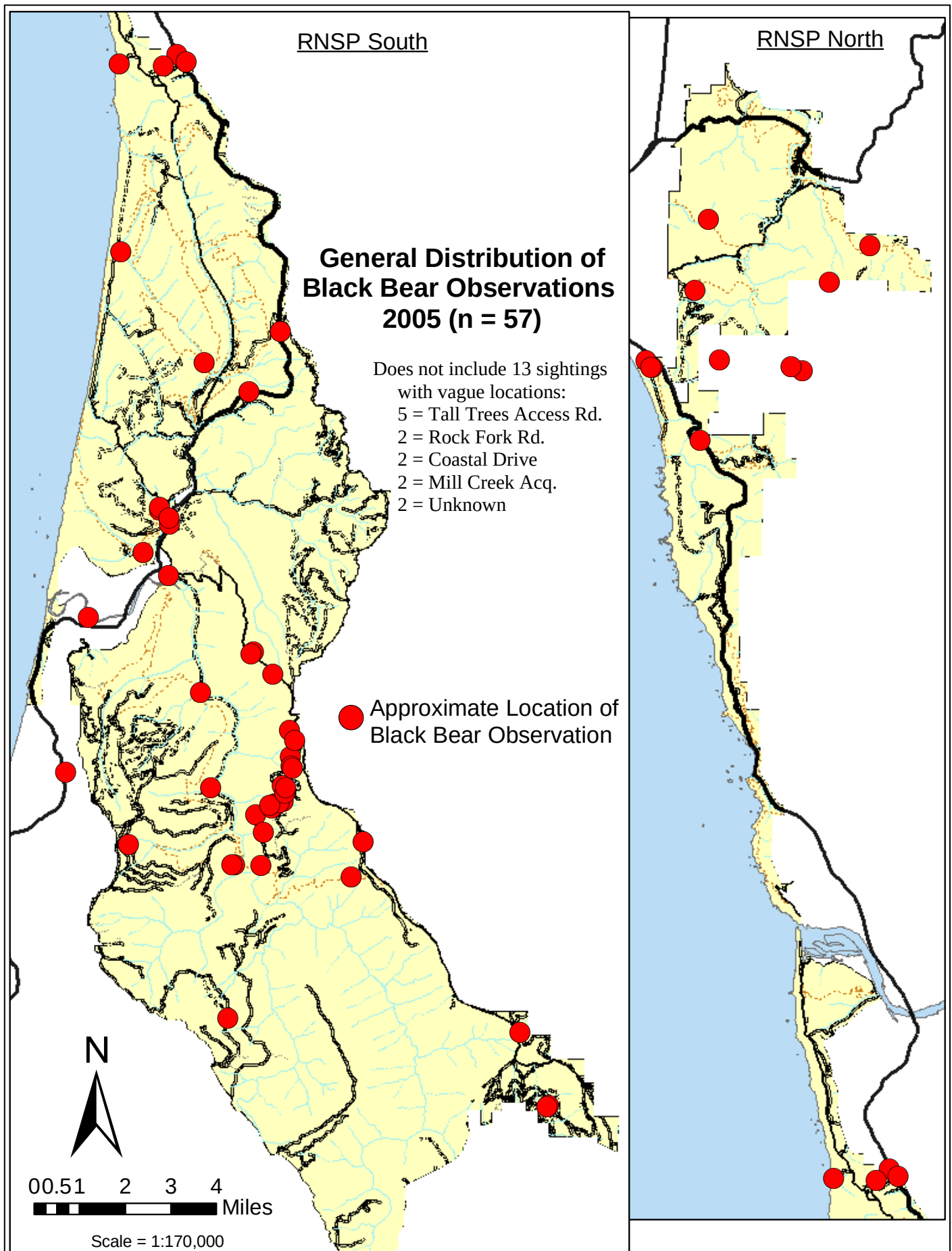


Figure 2. Approximate black bear sighting locations during 2004.

Other sightings – In the beginning of July there were several sightings and a “bear jam” at a private residence on the east side of highway 101 near Elk Meadow. In March staff working in the Mill Creek acquisition reported a possible bear den. Fish and Wildlife staff investigated the site and found the den with 1 cub.

MEETINGS

The RNSP Bear Panel members met during both April and October 2005 (Appendix B).

EDUCATION

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 up visits 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

The North Coast Redwoods Interpretive Association agreed to sell bear related merchandise (stuffed “beanie” bears) in the Prairie Creek visitor center again during 2005, 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 will 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. The NPS has several bear proof equipment proposals submitted for funding.

MORTALITIES

There were three reported bear mortalities during 2005, all on highway 101, with two of them outside the Park boundary. In July a bear was hit and killed by a vehicle just south of the RNSP boundary, near the entrance to the Orick dump. In August a bear was hit and killed by a vehicle near the intersection of Endert’s beach road and highway 101. There was also a bear hit and killed by a car near the run away truck ramp on the highway 101 bypass.

FY 2005 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 staff and CDPR staff.
- ❖ Bear Research related to the management needs of RNSP will be investigated.

Appendix A. (cont.)

Appendix A. Date, number, activity, and general location of bear sightings reported to RNSP during 2005.

Bear 2005			
Date	#	Activity	Location
3/4/2005	1	Very confuse, no response to our vehicle. Circled continuously around jeep wandered aimlessly	4 Miles Down Tall Tree Road
3/28/2005	1	Running across road quickly	On Road
3/31/2005	1		Right Half Way Between The Trail
4/18/2005	1	Ran across road	Near Turn Off To Redwood Creek Trail
4/19/2005	1	Feeding on vegetation, lying down, walking, staring	Cbec - Looking Toward Ocean On Right In Trees 1/2 Way To Gate
4/19/2005	1	Walking across enderts beach road	Halfway Between The Park Entrance Sign And Hwy 101
4/20/2005	1	Running across road	Mill Creek Acq. Hamilton Rd Between Office And Gate
4/25/2005	1	Runnnng from car. Small black bear- crossed road and ran up mountain.	
4/26/2005	1	Running away	Mill Creek Acquisition
4/27/2005	1		Cougar Ridge Rd, Mill Creek Acquisition
4/28/2005	1	Running down road away from car	0.5 Miles Down A-9-9 Rd From A-9 Deck
5/10/2005	2	Small brown bear - running from road @ 2.8 miles in (rusty colored); 2nd black bear - small	Tall Trees Access Rd @ 2.8 Miles In; And 2nd @ 1.6 Driving Out (4:00 Pm)
5/14/2005	1		0.5m E On Hamilton Rd/Childs Hill Of Mill Site @ Mill Creek
5/20/2005	1	Crossed road in front of our car	4.2 Miles Down Tall Trees Access Road
5/20/2005	1	Chillin in the sun	Bear On Road Out (Tall Trees Access Road)
5/23/2005	1	Was on road, ran down into small drainage	Coyote Creek Road Near Coyote Barn
5/24/2005	1	Eating at side of rd	Coastal Drive South Of High Bluff Overlook
5/24/2005	1	Ran across road, stopped, & stared @ visitors	Approx. Half Way Down Tall Trees Trail
5/24/2005	1	Crossed road and looked back @ visitors "leisurely"	Flint Ridge Rd.
5/25/2005	1	Bolting off road into brush	Crossover Road Mill Creek Acquisition
5/25/2005	1	Running down rd. Away from car towards paragon	Mill Creek Acqu. Sec. 1 Rd.
5/26/2005	2	Ran away from visitors	Tall Trees Grove
5/29/2005	2	Standing across creek, turned and ran from visitors	Redwood Creek @ Elam Camp

Appendix A. (cont.)

Bear 2005			
Date	#	Activity	Location
5/29/2005	1		4 Miles Down Tall Trees Road
5/30/2005	2	Adult stopped eating and ran from visitors, juvenile was eating in bushes	Near Barn On Dolason Prarie Trail
5/30/2005	1	Trying to cross the road	Elk Meadow At Overlook
6/1/2005	1	Dead, lying on bald hills road	~ 0.4 Mi East Of Cdf Fire Station On Bald Hills Road.
6/1/2005	1	Running down prairie in front of car	Rock Fork Rd (Bald Hills)
6/4/2005	2	Mother took step towards people while cub ran off. People backed away and and mother left the scene	Howland Hill Outdoor School Rd, Just Below Bathrooms
6/6/2005	1	Running	Tall Trees Road 3.2 Miles Above Trailhead
6/6/2005	1	Running down road	Rd To Skunk Cabbage Trail
6/6/2005	1	Running up and away from hill access road	B-Mill Pond
6/11/2005	1	Running away	Crescent Beach Entrance Driveway
6/12/2005	1	Fled from visitors	1 Mile Up Boyscout Trail On Howland Hill Rd.
6/13/2005	1	Ran off into forest	Tall Trees Access Rd.
6/14/2005	1	Foraging alongside roadway	Mile Post 129.38 Northbound 101, Humboldt County
6/14/2005	2	Standing on side of rd., slowly moved off into brush	Tall Trees Access Rd.
6/15/2005	1	Feeding in johnson pond	Johnson Pond
6/19/2005	1	Eating grass	West Side Of Highway 101 At North End Of Parkway Btwn Offramp South & Freeway
6/20/2005	1	It ran about 20 meters on the road	Tall Trees Access Rd (In The Middle)
6/22/2005	1	Loping across the road, disappeared into the forest, crossed from south to north	Tall Trees Access Rd, About 2 Miles Down From The Gate
6/23/2005	1		About 1 Mile In On Tall Trees Grove
6/26/2005	1	Eating grass	East Side Slope Of Hwy 101 N Near End Of Newton B Drury
7/5/2005	1	Curious, ran away, then stopped, came towards them a little then ran off into weeds	3.4 Miles Inside Gate At Tall Trees Trail
7/6/2005	1	Standing at base of tree in someone's yard	East Side Of Hwy 101, Just South Of Elk Meadow
7/6/2005	1	Driving	Tall Trees Access Rd Near Upper Miller

Appendix A. (cont.)

Bear 2005			
Date	#	Activity	Location
7/7/2005	1	Didin't seem afraid	Half Way Down Tall Trees Access Rd
7/8/2005	1	Crossing road and kept going	1/2 Mile Past Access Gate For Tall Trees
7/13/2005	1	Driving	Tall Trees Access Rd Near Upper Miller
7/14/2005	1	Hiking	On Tall Trees Trail Near Bond Creek
7/19/2005	1	Running away	Runaway Truck Ramp Above So. Entrance To Parkway
7/20/2005	1	Feeding on side of road	Tall Trees Access Rd, 1.3 Mi From Gate
7/21/2005	1	Standing upright, looking at car and then running away	West Side Access Rd.
7/21/2005	2	Ran across road at tall trees access rd. Just south of gate, headed south	Tall Trees Access Rd
7/24/2005	1	Ran across rd	Bald Hills Road Before Redwood Creek Overlook- See Map
7/24/2005	1		Left Side Of Bald Hills Road 4.8 Miles Up
7/25/2005	1	Climbed tree after running across road	Along Tall Trees Road. See Map.
7/26/2005	1	Crossing stream	Fern Canyon
8/3/2005	1	Escaping our presence through brush & x-ing river	Redwood Crk Along Ne Bank, 1 Mile W Of Hwy 101
8/16/2005	1	Running across hwy	Hwy 101 @ 1/2 Mile North Of Mill Creek Cg Road
8/16/2005	1	Eating huckleberries	Bald Hills Rd. 300 M Se Of Williams Ridge Rd. Intersection
8/18/2005	1	Watching people drive by	Stone Lagoon Vc
8/26/2005	1	Roaming and stopped and looked at us then ran away	Tall Trees Loop
9/4/2005	2	Heard mom, saw cub climb tree	Mineres Ridge 1/4 Mipast Bridge Out
9/6/2005	1	Ran across hwy101 and ran into davison prairie	
9/9/2005	1	Raised up on back legs, then ran away after yelled at	South End Of Construction On Little Bald Hills Trail
9/18/2005	1	Walking along road shoulder	Bald Hills Road Between Ganns Prairie And Holter Ridge
9/18/2005	1	Moving off side of road into bushes	Between Coastal Drive South Entering The South End Of Newton B Drury North Interchange
10/13/2005	1	Running along hillside watching us drive by	Lower Coyote
10/14/2005	1	Foraging	Rock Fork Rd. And Lower Rock Fork Rd. Intersection
8/27/2004	1	Crossing rd	Enderts Beach Rd

Appendix A. (cont.)

Bear 2005			
Date	#	Activity	Location
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 2005 and Fall 2005 Bear Panel meetings.

Spring Meeting

April 13, 2005

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs

From: Wildlife Biologist (Greg Holm)

Subject: Spring Bear Panel Minutes - April 13, 2005

Attending: Carl Cutshall, Corky Farley, Valerie Gizinski, Mike Goss, Greg Holm, Mary Read, Phil Rovai, Jim Wheeler.

Bear incidents, sightings, and reporting: To date, there have been few (5) reported bear sightings. However, there were several reports of a small, dirty brown/gray colored yearling bear observed in the middle of the Tall Trees access road starting on March 3rd. The bear was not moving off the road when cars stopped, and was even observed sleeping in the middle of the road by Fish and Wildlife branch staff. Fortunately, he/she appeared only to be very tired from just having emerged from hibernation (best guess), and was probably quite hungry as well. It was seen over a period of about 4 days, then not heard from again. There have been subsequent sightings of a small black bear on Tall Trees road, but it has been closer to the trailhead and is also black in color. There was also 1 bear mortality reported in March (Rovai) near the run-away truck off ramp on the bypass. The Fish and Wildlife staff hopes to respond quickly to any bear/human safety conflicts if they arise this coming year, but as always will be depending on ALL park staff to report aggressive or habituated bears immediately (see S:\team\shdata\Wildlife Protocols). The panel also discussed the usefulness of continued production of the wildlife observation cards.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: Carl gave an update on the installation of bear-proof foodlockers at the Mill Creek campground. All 40 of the new BearSaver foodlockers that were purchased last year have been installed in the southern loop of the campground, which is the loop that stays open the longest each year. In addition, 17 other foodlockers, which became available due to the closure of 17 campsites at Jed Smith campground, were also being installed in the southern loop. In addition, all of the bear proof trash cans removed from the 17 sites at Jed Smith were relocated to other parts of the campground where recycling containers are needed. Carl noted that there is still a need for another 80 bear-proof foodlockers at Mill Creek.

Funding: The current PMIS and CDPR requests for funding to complete bear-proof food locker and recycle bin replacement will not be going forward during the upcoming budget cycles. 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 will likely be used for more picnic and campground table sign materials.

Signs, Bulletins, and Education: **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 to be distributed at all park visitor centers, kiosks, and also by interpretive staff during ranger “roves”. The picnic table signs are still very popular, as evidenced by the constant removal by park visitors, and Mary will soon be producing more. Greg (or other F&W staff) is available to give talks about bear management and reporting issues if needed. RNSP staff will continue to give educational bear training sessions to other RNSP employees, YCC, SCA and volunteers, and the Interpretation division will continue to inform visitors of bear issues.

Next meeting: Tentative date for the next bear panel meeting is Wednesday, October 26th, 2005, 9:00-12:00, at South Operations Center.

Appendix B. (cont.)

Fall Meeting

October 26, 2005

Memorandum

To: Superintendents, Division Chiefs

From: Wildlife Biologist (Greg Holm)

Subject: Fall Bear Panel Minutes - October 26, 2005

Attending: Jeff Bomke, Mike Goss, Greg Holm, Mary Read, Phil Rovai, Howard Sakai, Jim Wheeler.

Bear sightings, incidents, and reporting: To date, there have been about 75 recorded bear sightings. However, there are likely more notes of black bear observations within the park that haven't been collected yet. Fortunately, to date, there have been no black bear "incidents" as defined in the RNSP Bear Management Plan. However, there were several areas that had repeated sightings of black bears near popular park roads, highway 101, or park facilities. The 2005 Black Bear Research and Management annual report will include summaries of these observations, and all other observations reported during 2005. There has been only 1 bear mortality (hit by car) reported within RNSP during 2005, but 2 other bears were also hit and killed by cars near Crescent City and Orick. The panel also decided to continue production of the green wildlife observation cards, but have the public pay for postage should they choose to mail the observation in.

Bear-proofing equipment and maintenance: RNSP still needs 78 bear-proof foodlockers at the Mill Creek campground, and 40 bear-proof recycling/trash cans are needed between Jed Smith and Mill Creek campgrounds. The bear panel will look into the possibility of using equipment stock piled at Requa to meet a portion of the recycle/trash can needs. The foodlockers at Nickel Creek were replaced over the summer. New bear-proof dumpsters will be located at various park facilities in the north area in the coming months, and a new 40-yard dumpster at the Orick dump will become the central replacement for several south area dumpsters.

Funding: Jeff Bomke still has several CDPR funding requests submitted, and has also recently gotten favorable feedback from a private grantor for a small portion of the bear-proof recycle/trash can needs. Three PMIS (NPS) requests will be going forward during the upcoming budget cycle. Two of them cover all park bear-proof needs (from 2 different fund sources), and the other is for replacement of a small portion of the foodlockers. The NCRIA will continue to sell the "beanie bears", and provide \$250 annually to the bear panel for producing bear management educational materials. The previous balance of that account was used for more picnic and campground table sign materials. The panel decided to spend the remaining Bear Panel funds on more bear-proof equipment if/when a larger purchase is made, which will reduce overall shipping costs. Howard also mentioned the possibility that Stuyvesant oil spill money may provide some bear-proof equipment in the future. Greg is pursuing funding from Save the Redwoods League for some basic black bear density work in the Mill Creek acquisition.

Signs, Bulletins, and Education: The picnic table signs are still very popular, as evidenced by the constant removal by park visitors, and Mary will soon be producing more. Many of the table signs were replaced by a wildlife technician this summer, and Mike will continue replacing others, mostly in the north. The Interp. Division and Greg will be updating/replacing the "Bear Facts" poster which has hung at the Orick Post office for probably 15 years. The hope is that this prototype poster will be usable at other park "gateway" businesses or government offices, and will be similar in style to other existing park educational materials.

Next meeting: Tentative date for the next bear panel meeting is Wednesday, March 8th, 2006, 9:00-12:00, at South Operations Center.

