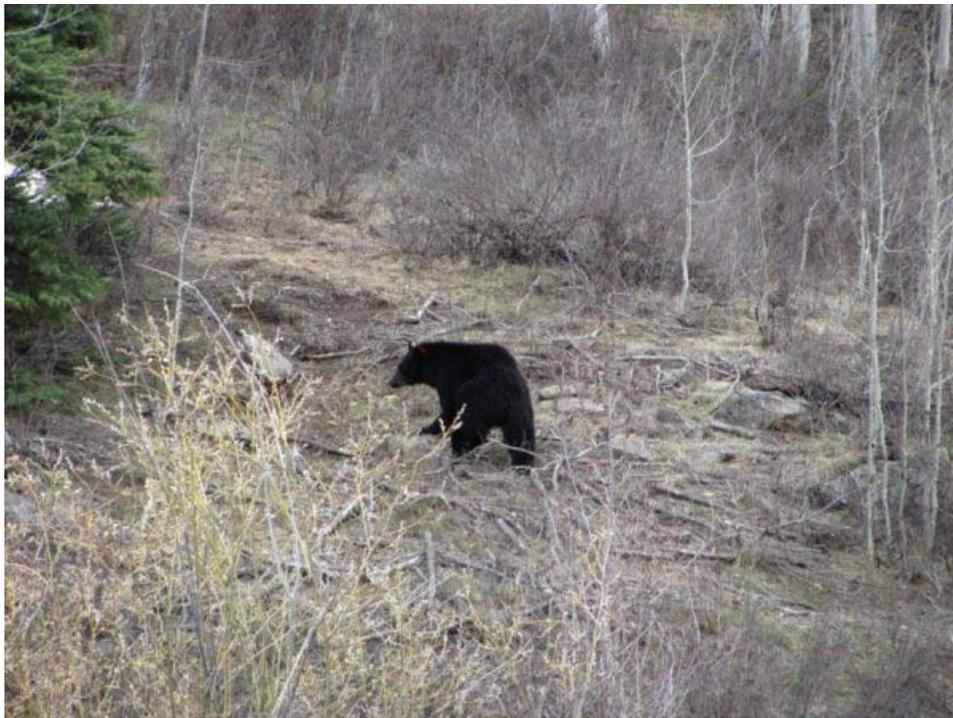


**BLACK BEAR DATA ANALYSIS UNIT  
MANAGEMENT PLAN  
GRAND MESA  
DAU B-17**

GAME MANAGEMENT UNITS  
41, 42, 52, 53, 63, 411, 421, 521  
Northwest and Southwest Regions



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Colorado Parks and Wildlife

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Game Management Units:** 41, 42, 52, 53, 63, 411, 421, and 521  
(Mesa, Delta, Garfield, Montrose, and Gunnison counties)

**Land Ownership:** 44% Private, 36% USFS, 18% BLM, ~1% NPS, ~1% State

**Current Objective:** Stable, no population objective for B-17

**Current Mortality Objectives:** Harvest objective: 100 Total mortality objective: 105

**Preferred Alternative:**

*Increase total annual mortality to 240 – 320 bears until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest are comprised of greater than 50% adult sow in the total sow harvest. Once adult sow composition objective is met, the population size and trajectory will be re-evaluated.*

*This interim evaluation will incorporate a formal public input process regarding damage and nuisance situations and hunter satisfaction in B-17. This public input, combined with recent forage conditions, other harvest composition indices, and three-year average success rates will determine the future population trajectory and resulting mortality objectives.*

*If the interim evaluation indicators support further reduction in population size, increased harvest will be maintained until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest exceeds 60% adult sow in total sow harvest.*

*If the interim evaluation indicators support a stable population, harvest objectives will be reduced to stabilize the population, including a three-year running average or two consecutive years of total sow harvest comprised of 50% adult sows. If the interim evaluation warrants increasing the population size, harvest objectives will be reduced to increase the population, including a three-year running average or two consecutive years of total sow harvest comprised of less than 45% adult sows.*

### **BACKGROUND**

Black bear Data Analysis Unit (DAU) B-17 is located in west-central Colorado. The DAU includes portions of Mesa, Delta, Garfield, Montrose, and Gunnison counties. The Game Management Units (GMUs) in B-17 are 41, 42, 52, 53, 63, 411, 421, and 521. Over half of the 3,243 square miles (8,399 square kilometers) DAU is public land. Black bears utilize the entire DAU, and bear densities are quite high across much of the DAU.

In general, overall annual bear mortality has increased over the last 10 years in B-17. Since 2002, total bear mortality in B-17 has ranged from a low of 95 in 2006 to a high of 196 in 2007, with an annual average of 149 bears. The 10-year annual average of hunting mortality is 115 bears. The 30 day September high-powered rifle season has an average three-year success rate of ~14%, and is

responsible for approximately 51% of the annual bear harvest in B-17. Archery and muzzleloader hunters contribute an average of 27 bears and 9 bears, respectively, per year to the harvest and have success rates around 14% and 11%, respectively. Harvest success rates for hunters in the four concurrent rifle seasons are very low; total harvest across all four seasons in B-17 averages 24 bears per year. Harvest and total mortality have exceeded current objectives every year since their establishment in 2001, with the exception of 2002 and 2006. Game damage claims have averaged 12 per year in B-17 for the last 10 years with an average cost of ~\$2600.00. Conflicts between bears and humans are not uncommon in B-17 and are usually the result of bears using developed habitats and food sources that are associated with people.

A suite of habitat and population models have been developed as part of the revision of the B-17 DAU plan to help provide estimates of the projected bear population in the unit. These include a general vegetation/bear density extrapolation, a use/occupancy surface extrapolation based on habitat classifications, and two model simulations with varying constraints (liberal and conservative).

### ***SIGNIFICANT ISSUES***

The most significant issue regarding bear management on the Grand Mesa relates to balancing the demands of hunters, livestock producers, local residents, and non-consumptive users of wildlife. There is strong demand for a sustainable bear population in B-17, while at the same time an equal interest in decreasing human-bear interaction and livestock damage. This management issue and what tools should be used to address it are complex and multifaceted. There is strong demand for the reinstatement of the spring bear hunting season, and the use of dogs and of bait. Although these management tools are not within the purview of the DAU planning process, the topic was central to many discussions during the planning process and therefore warrants mention.

The structure of a DAU plan focuses on one specific tool, primarily hunting, out of a suite of tools including education, enforcement, and habitat modification, which can also be used to manage conflicts. Unfortunately, the types of conflicts that occur with bears and the landscapes they occur in, often preclude simple changes in licensing or hunting structure from completely resolving the problem. This DAU plan provides harvest related monitoring structures along with strategic goal alternatives that will directly impact bear population sizes in B-17.

### ***MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES***

The B-17 DAU is currently being managed for a stable bear population, with a total mortality objective of 9-12% of the total population size. This objective was set without a population estimate, resulting in a total mortality and hunter harvest mortality objective that were too low to effectively stabilize the population. The following three strategic objectives alternative were presented to the public in May 2012.

#### **Stable population trend**

To achieve a strategic goal of maintaining a stable bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates will fall in an intermediate range. Total mortality, should fall within 10-15%; of the total population. Proportion of adult males in the harvest should be within 25-35%, with all females making up 30-40% of

harvest. Additionally, adult females should comprise approximately 45-55% of the female harvest. Within the framework of an overall stable population, flexibility in off-take rates will be maintained to manage for minimized game damage and human/bear conflicts in localized areas of concern. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should point toward a stable population.

#### **Decreasing population trend for three years, then stable population trend**

To achieve a strategic goal of decreasing, then maintaining the bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates would be in the liberal range, and then reevaluated after three years. Total mortality would increase to 15-20% of the total population size. Proportion of adult males in the harvest can be low, even below 25%, with total female harvest rates going over 40%. Additionally, adult females could comprise over 55% of the total female harvest. Populations in areas with conflict and damage could be suppressed to low levels. After three years of decreasing the population, the sex and age composition of mortality and harvest would be reexamined to determine if the increased harvest had impacted the population. This information, combined with analysis of damage and nuisance complaints, would inform decisions on whether to continue with higher harvests, or whether the population was within an acceptable range. If so, overall harvest and mortality could be decreased to stabilize the population. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should initially point toward a decreasing trend, followed by a stable trend.

#### **Decreasing population trend**

To achieve a strategic goal of decreasing the bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates would be in the liberal range. Total mortality would increase above 15-20% of the population. Proportion of adult males in the harvest can be low, even below 25%, with total female harvest rates going over 40%. Additionally, adult females could comprise over 55% of the total female harvest. Areas with conflict and damage could be suppressed to very low levels. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should point toward a population being held below biotic and human social tolerance thresholds. It is unrealistic to manage for a continually decreasing population; after 5 years of applying this strategy, the sex and age composition of mortality and harvest would be reexamined to determine if the increased harvest had impacted the population. This information, combined with analysis of damage and nuisance complaints, would inform decisions on whether to continue with higher harvests, or whether the population was within an acceptable range. If so, overall harvest and mortality could be decreased to stabilize the population. When the three-year average harvest criteria for a DAU indicate heavy harvest of over 50% females in the total harvest and over 60% adult females in the female harvest on either a three year running average or in two consecutive years, subsequent harvest objectives and license allocations may be reduced to stabilize if other indicators, including nuisance and conflict, are in agreement.

### **PREFERRED STRATEGIC GOAL**

During the DAU planning process, over 200 individuals provided input regarding black bear management on the Grand Mesa. Roughly equal numbers of respondents desire the black bear population to remain stable, increase, or decrease over the next 10 years. Although not all management indices agree, it is most likely that the B-17 population is increasing and has done so for much of the last two decades. There is significant demand both internally and externally to minimize damage and nuisance situations, while continuing to provide hunter opportunity and acceptable harvest success rates.

The preferred alternative is to increase total mortality in the population in an effort to reduce damage and nuisance situations in most years with good forage conditions, while maintaining hunter opportunity and success rates. These goals correspond to an off-take rate at the upper end of the 10-15% off-take rate needed to stabilize the population, into the lower end of the 15 – 20% off-take rate to suppress the population.

With a population estimate of approximately 1600 independent bears in B-17, this will translate to an overall mortality objective of approximately 240 – 320 bears annually, until three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest is comprised of greater than 50% sow in the total sow harvest.

At that time, a formal public input process will be implemented to obtain information from a cross-section of hunters, landowners, and other interested stakeholders regarding hunter satisfaction and tolerance of current game damage and nuisance situations. This public input, combined with other harvest composition indices and hunter success rates will be used to determine if the population is at an acceptable level. Recent annual forage conditions will be used as a check for the other indicators to balance the increased success rates and higher levels of damage and nuisance situations that arise from forage failures.

Future management decisions, including harvest objectives, will be based on this evaluation. If the above-mentioned indicators support a smaller population size, increased harvest objectives will be maintained until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest exceeds 60% adult sow in total sow harvest. If stabilization or an increase of the bear population in B-17 is warranted, harvest objectives will be decreased until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years' harvest composition indices demonstrate that the desired population trajectory is being met.

*This plan was approved by Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission January 2013.*

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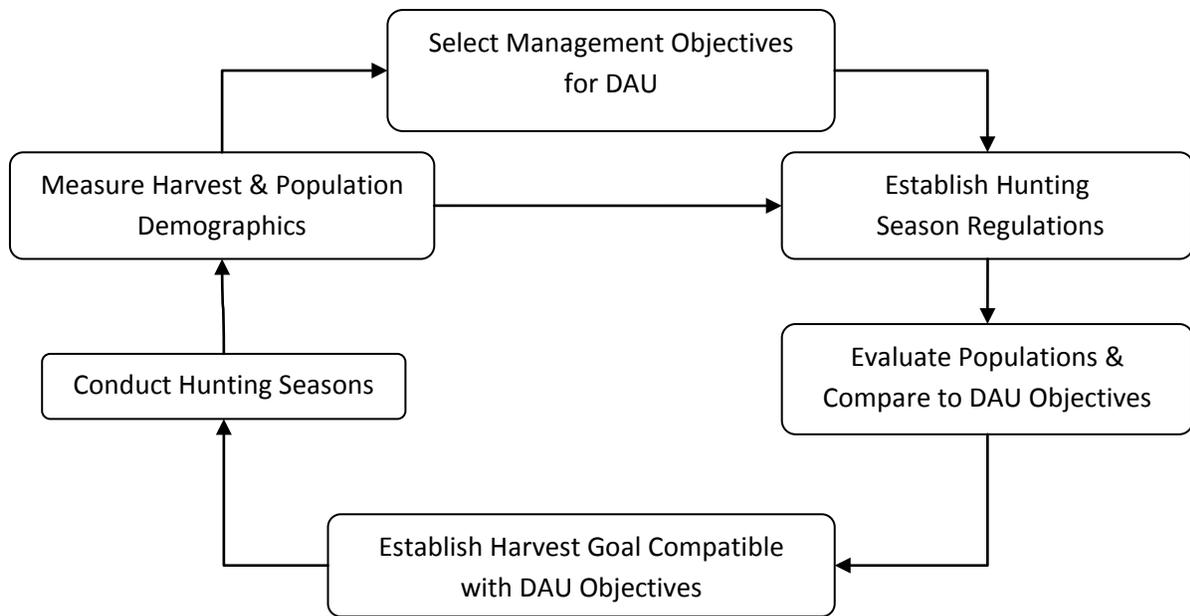
## **INTRODUCTION**

Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) manages wildlife for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of the state in accordance with the CPW's Strategic Plan and mandates from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission and the Colorado Legislature. Colorado's wildlife resources require careful and increasingly intensive management to accommodate the many and varied public demands and growing impacts from people. CPW is responsible for the maintenance of Colorado's big game at population levels that are established through a public review process and approved by the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission.

## **DAU PLANS AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BY OBJECTIVES**

To manage the state's big game populations, the CPW uses a "management by objective" approach (Figure 1). Big game populations are managed to achieve objectives established for Data Analysis Units (DAUs). DAUs are geographic areas that typically contain an individual big game population. For large mobile carnivores like black bears DAUs are primarily administrative constructs with generally similar habitats and/or human social considerations. DAUs are composed of smaller areas designated as game management units (GMUs), which provide a more practical framework where the management goals can be refined and applied on a finer scale, typically through hunting regulations.

The DAU plan process is designed to balance public demands, habitat and big game populations into a management scheme for the individual DAU. The public, hunters, federal and local land use agencies, landowners and agricultural interests are involved in the determination of the plan objectives through input given during public meetings, the opportunity to comment on draft plans and when final review is undertaken by the Colorado Parks & Wildlife Commission. The strategic goals and specific mortality objectives defined in the plan guide a long term cycle of annual information collection, information analysis and decision making. The end product of this process is a recommendation for numbers of hunting licenses for the DAU (Figure 1). The plan also specifically outlines the management techniques that will be used to reach desired objectives. CPW intends to update these plans as new information and data become available, at least once every ten years.



**Figure 1. Management by objective process used by CPW to manage big game populations at the DAU-level.**

# DATA ANALYSIS UNIT DESCRIPTION

## Location

Data Analysis Unit (DAU) B-17 is located in west-central Colorado and includes portions of Mesa, Delta, Garfield, Montrose, and Gunnison counties. It is bounded on the north by the Colorado River; on the east by South Canyon Creek, the divide between Roaring Fork-Crystal River and Baldy Creek-Divide Creek drainages to the common point of Mesa-Pitkin-Gunnison Co. lines, the Gunnison-Pitkin county line, the White River-Gunnison NF boundary and the Ruby Range Summit; on the east and south by the Gunnison River-N. Fork of the Gunnison River divide, Curecanti Pass, Curecanti Creek to the Gunnison River; and on the west by the Gunnison River and Hwy 50. The Game Management Units (GMUs) in B-17 are 41, 42, 52, 53, 63, 411, 421, and 521.

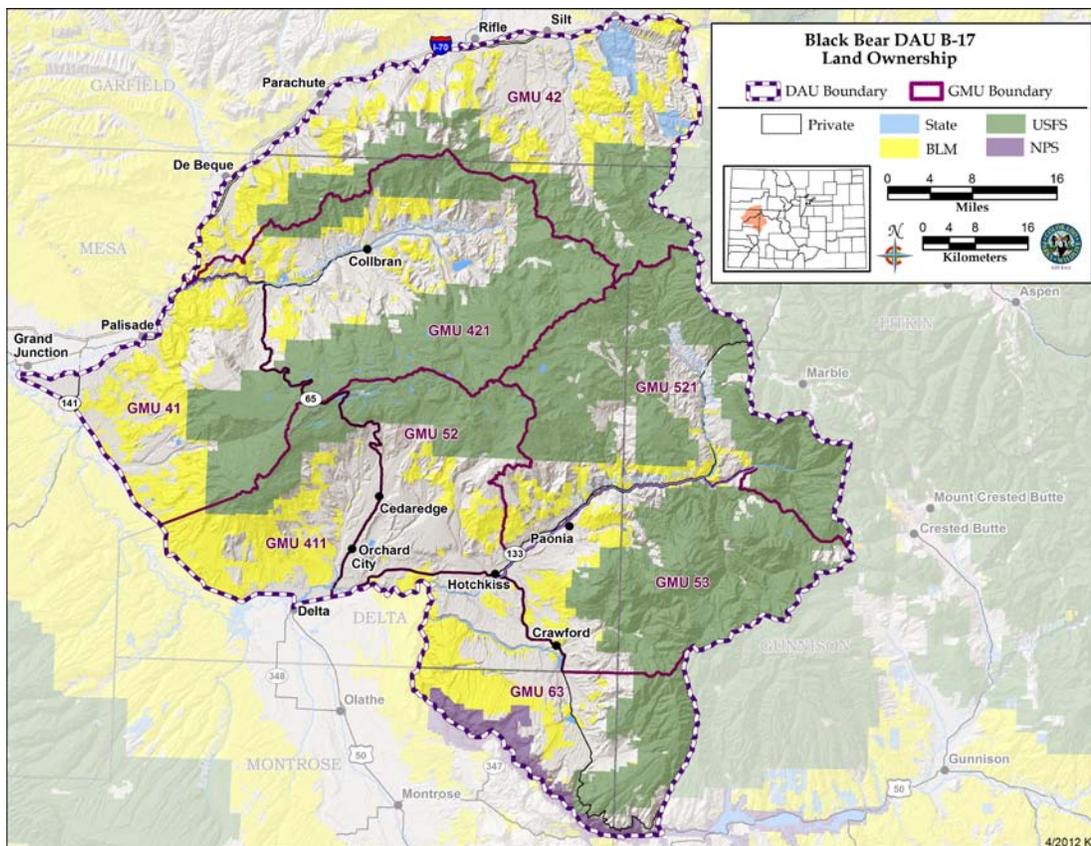


Figure 2. B-17 Location and landownership

While managed by a number of agencies, approximately 64% of the 8,399 sq. km (2.07 million acres) DAU is public land (Figure 2). The US Forest Service (USFS) manages 44% of the land in the DAU, or 905,442 acres. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 370,879 acres or approximately 18% of the DAU. The State of Colorado and the National Park Service (NPS) each manage roughly 1%

of the total land each. The remaining lands, approximately 758,000 acres, or about 37%, are in private ownership.

The entire DAU is considered overall black bear range; although densities vary dramatically by habitat type, bears do use the all available lands. Approximately 30% of the DAU is considered fall concentration habitat for black bears (Figure 3). Human conflicts are concentrated around population centers, areas of high recreational use and orchards. Bears tend to concentrate in the fall during hyperphagia in areas with high mast crop production in anticipation of hibernation.

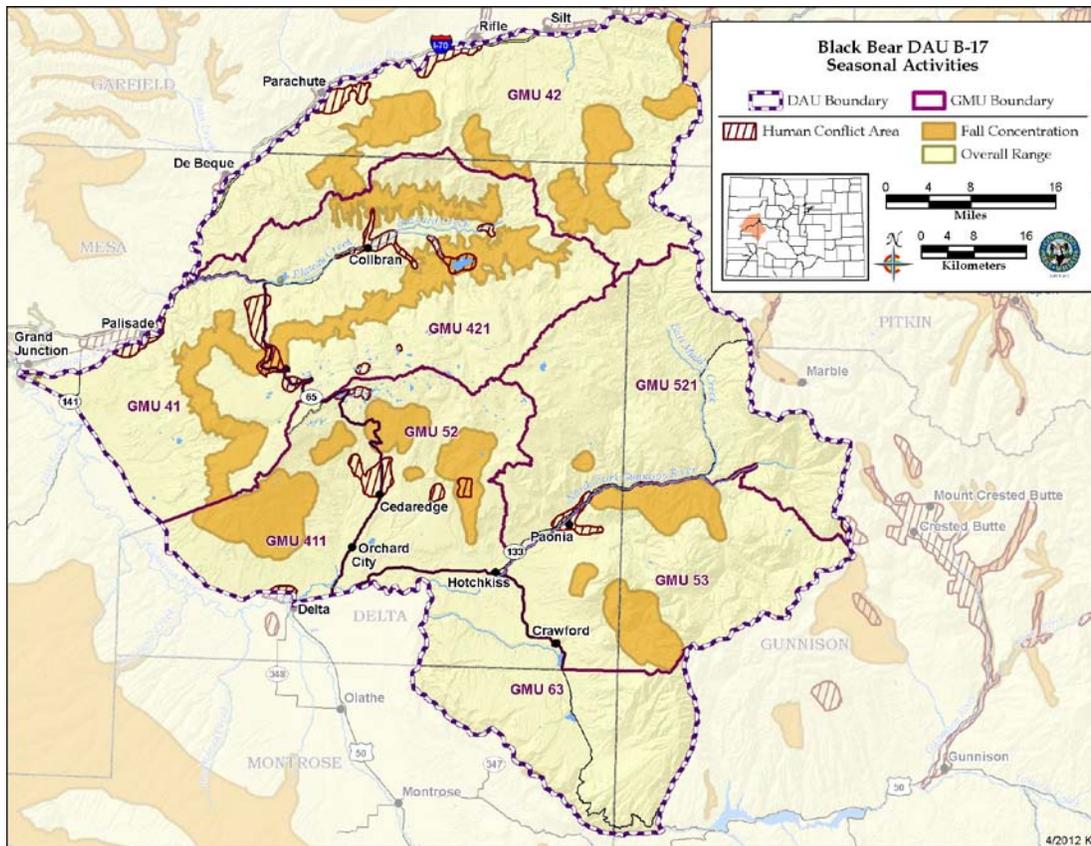


Figure 3. Black bear seasonal activities in B-17.

### Land Use and Land Status

Human development in the Grand Valley, along the I-70 corridor, and in the North Fork Valley is perhaps the dominant issue when evaluating bear management in B-17. All of the counties in B-17 have experienced significant human population growth, as well as commensurate increases in roads, property subdivision, and development in bear habitat.

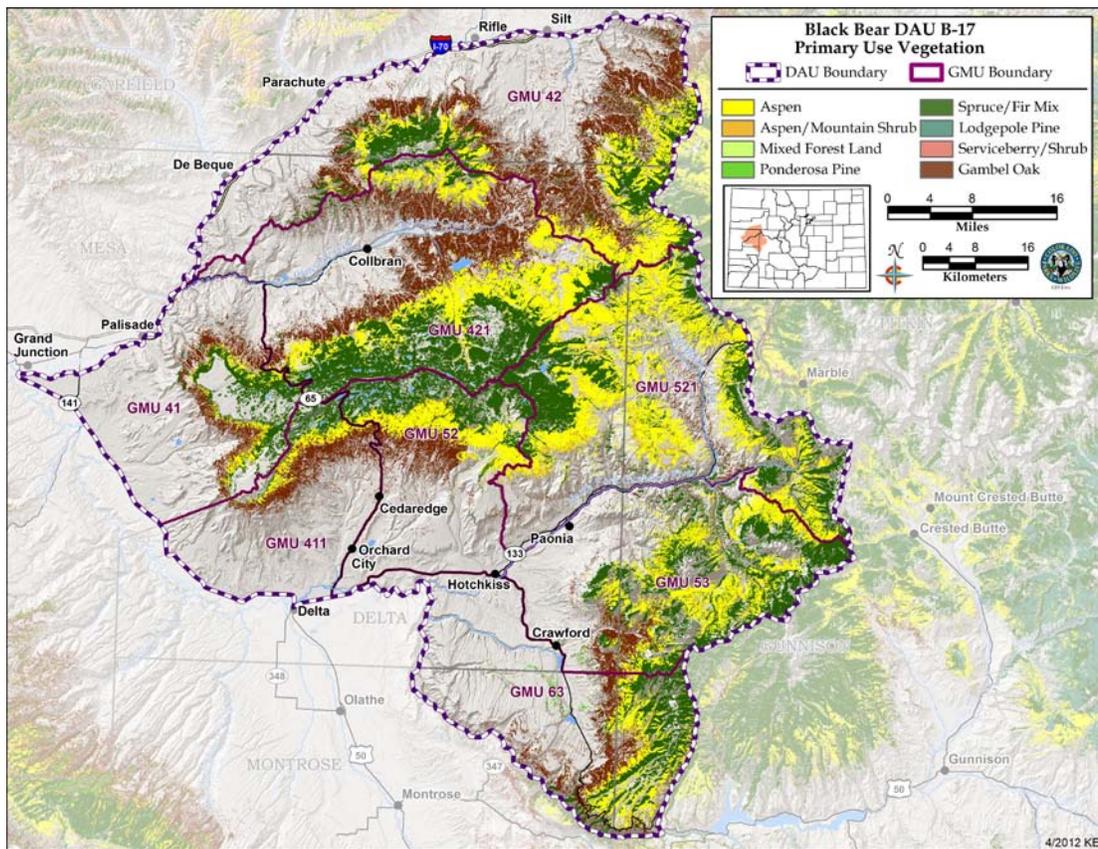
### Topography & Climate

Elevations in the DAU range from approximately 12,700 feet on Mt. Gunnison in the eastern side of the unit to 4,600 feet near Grand Junction on the western border. The climate in B-17 is quite varied, as

expected with the wide range of elevations. Lower elevations are generally characterized by hot, dry summers and mild winters. Higher elevations see short, cool summers, and long, cold, snowy winters. Most annual precipitation comes in the form of snow; however summer moisture in the form of rain can have a significant impact on the growth of plant forage sources used by bears. Annual precipitation totals in the Grand Valley are usually around 8 inches, while higher elevations receive significantly more precipitation and can average 40 inches or more annually.

## Vegetation

Principal vegetation classes across the DAU include a spruce-fir mix at high elevations, aspen, and aspen/mountain shrub complexes, large areas of Gambel oak, with lesser amounts of serviceberry and other mountain shrub species, agricultural lands, ponderosa pine, and lodgepole pine (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Primary use vegetation in B-17.**

Elevations below approximately 6,500 ft near the Colorado and Gunnison Rivers are characterized by a high desert plant community. Important plant species of this community include four-wing saltbush, shadscale saltbush, black sagebrush, winterfat, broom snakeweed, rabbit brush and greasewood. These areas provide little black bear habitat. Vegetation at elevations between approximately 6,000-7,500 ft. is characterized by pinyon pine and Utah juniper woodlands and grassland/shrub (e.g., basin big sagebrush, black sagebrush, Wyoming/mountain big sagebrush, mountain mahogany, Indian ricegrass).

From approximately 7,500 to 8,500 ft, Gambel oak/mountain shrub (e.g., Gambel oak, serviceberry, mountain mahogany, mountain big sagebrush, silver sagebrush, snowberry, and manzanita) is the dominant vegetation type. Elevations above 8,500 ft are generally characterized by aspen forests and a mixed spruce-fir complex (aspen, Douglas fir, sub-alpine fir and Engelmann spruce). Common plant species found in lowland riparian areas in the DAU include narrowleaf cottonwood, coyote willow, chokecherry, tamarisk, and boxelder. In higher elevation-riparian areas, characteristic species include thinleaf alder, birches, willows, and blue spruce.

Agricultural areas and cultivated croplands within the DAU occur primarily in the Colorado and North Fork of the Gunnison valleys. Private farmlands are characterized by irrigated hay meadows (grass & alfalfa), artificially seeded rangelands, cornfields, and many types of fruit orchards.

There are abundant vegetation communities that support high densities of bears and natural bear habitat is excellent in much of B-17 and this DAU likely supports some of the highest bear densities in the state. In addition to the extensive, high quality natural food sources, bears living near human communities have another significant source of high-quality nutrition in the form of anthropogenic food. This would include all sources associated with human activities including livestock, crops, trash, pet food, barbeque grills and bird feeders.

## **MANAGEMENT HISTORY**

### **Administrative**

The boundaries of B-17 include GMUs 41, 42, 52, 53, 63, 411, 421, and 521, and have been consistent since DAU boundaries were established. There have been no changes to the administrative management of B-17.

### **Hunting Seasons**

Prior to 1935, black bears were not considered a game animal, which afforded them no protection from being shot on sight if they were encountered, or preyed on livestock. In 1935, they were awarded some protection by being classified by the state legislature as a game animal. This established limits on the annual harvest and on the number of licenses that an individual could possess. From 1935 to 1963, bears were hunted in the fall usually concurrently with the annual deer and elk seasons. In 1964, a spring hunting season was established with unlimited licenses available. This continued until 1986, when licenses for the spring season were limited (Beck 1991). The fall hunting seasons occurred concurrently with the established deer and elk seasons and licenses were unlimited until the limited September rifle seasons were established in 1989. Hunters wishing to hunt bears during the established deer and elk season still had access to unlimited licenses until 2005 when license caps were established for these licenses.

In 1992, a constitutional amendment was passed and changed bear hunting within the state by preventing bear hunting prior to September 1st and outlawed the use of bait and dogs as aids for hunting black bears. Since 1992, the annual hunting seasons have begun on September 2nd annually.

Since 2000, hunting seasons have started with an early, limited, rifle season that runs from September 2nd through September 30th each year, along with concurrent Archery, Muzzleloader, 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th rifle season licenses. Under the current season structure, the four concurrent seasons are 5 days, 9 days, 9 days and 5 days in length. Harvest is concentrated in the limited September rifle season as it is concurrent with the initial phases of the bear hyperphagia period. Harvest and success rates decline as hunting seasons progress through the fall months (October-November) due to bears entering the initial stages of hibernation.

### **License Allocation history**

Although there have been changes to season structure since 1999, licenses have gone from being unlimited in number in most seasons to being either available only in the limited draw or available over the counter with caps (OTC). Overall hunting opportunity, however, has changed little.

The September rifle licenses available in B-17 have been limited and specified since 1999. From 1999-2004 archery, muzzleloading, and concurrent rifle (first, second, third and fourth big game rifle seasons) licenses were specified in B-17, but unlimited in number. Beginning in the fall of 2005, those licenses became over-the-counter (OTC) with caps. That meant that a limited number of licenses (capped number) were issued for each huntcode but licenses could be purchased without going through the

limited draw (bought first-come, first-served). However, this had no functional impact on concurrent rifle season bear hunter opportunity, as the license cap was rarely reached. Archery and muzzleloader hunters did see an impact in opportunity in going from unlimited to OTC with caps, as those licenses often sell out within a few days of going on sale. Hunter pressure has traditionally been higher in GMUs 53 and 63. In an effort to distribute harvest and reduce crowding, limited licenses were designated as valid in either GMUs 53 and 63 or in GMUs 41, 42, 52, 411, 421, and 521. There was no change in license numbers, harvest objective or overall opportunity, but hunters and harvest were dispersed more equitably across the DAU.

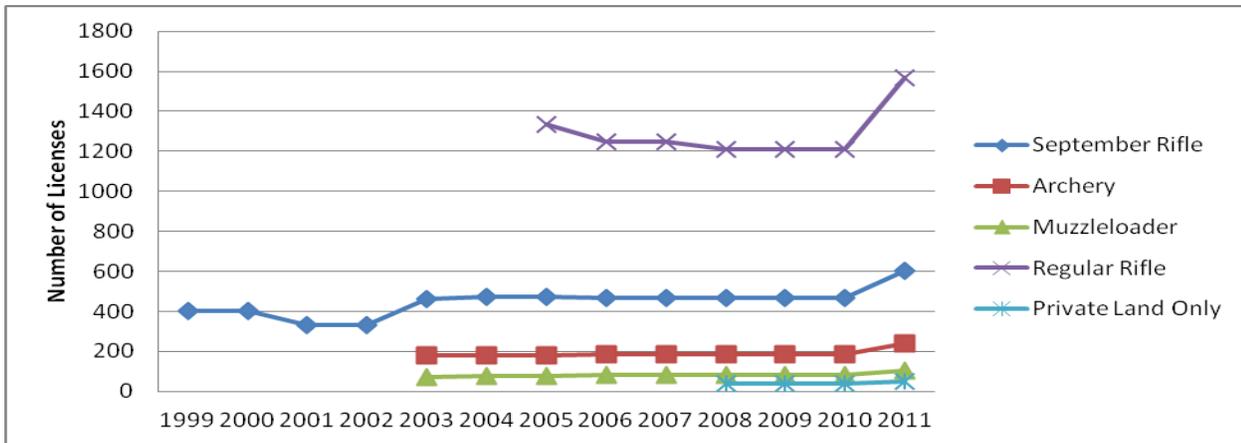
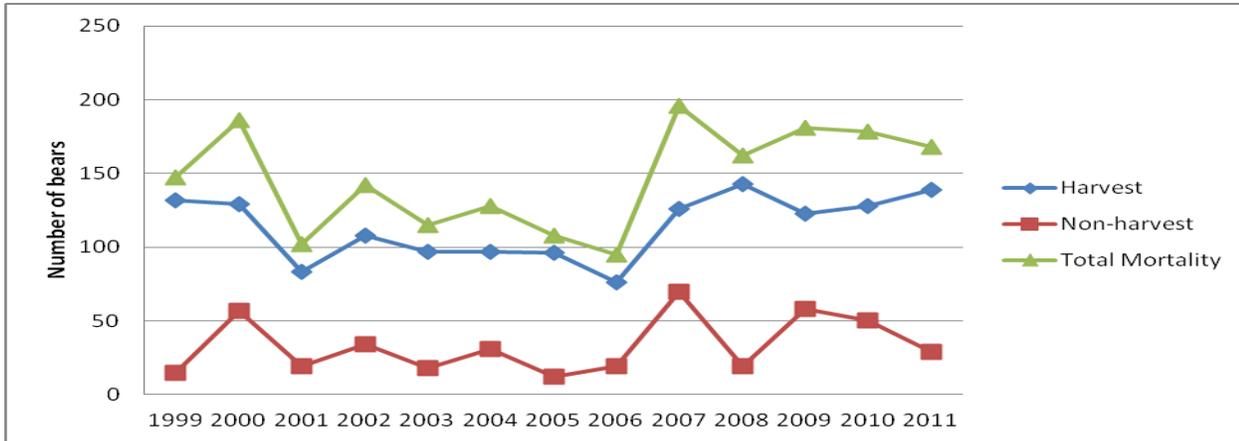


Figure 5. License allocation history in B-17.

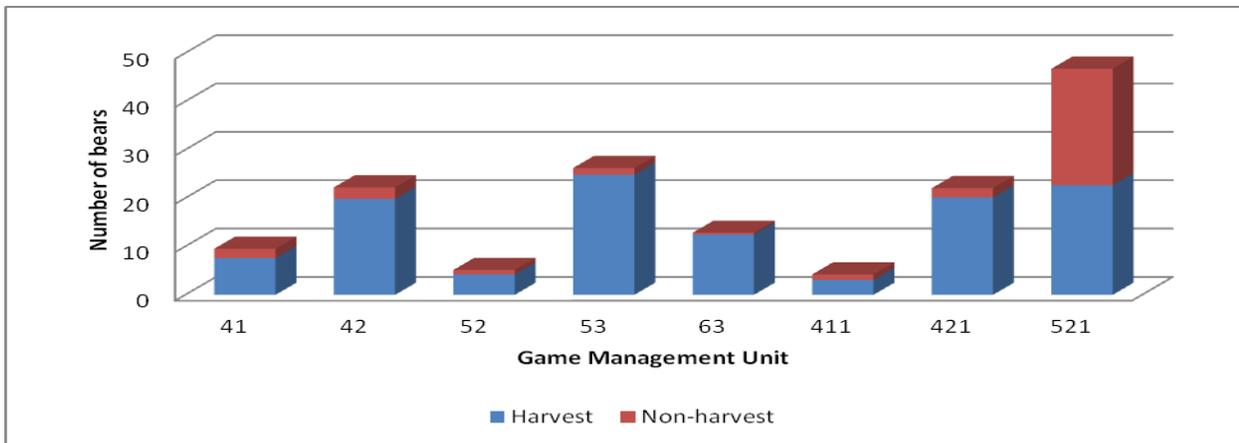
**Mortality: Harvest and Non-harvest**

In general, overall annual bear mortality has increased somewhat over the last 10 years in B-17. Since 2000, total bear mortality in B-17 has ranged from a low of 95 in 2006 to a high of 196 in 2007. While the average annual bear mortality since 1999 is 147 bears, the 3-year average is quite a bit higher at 176 bears. All mortality has increased, although there has been disproportionately larger increase in other mortality sources, specifically control/damage kills.



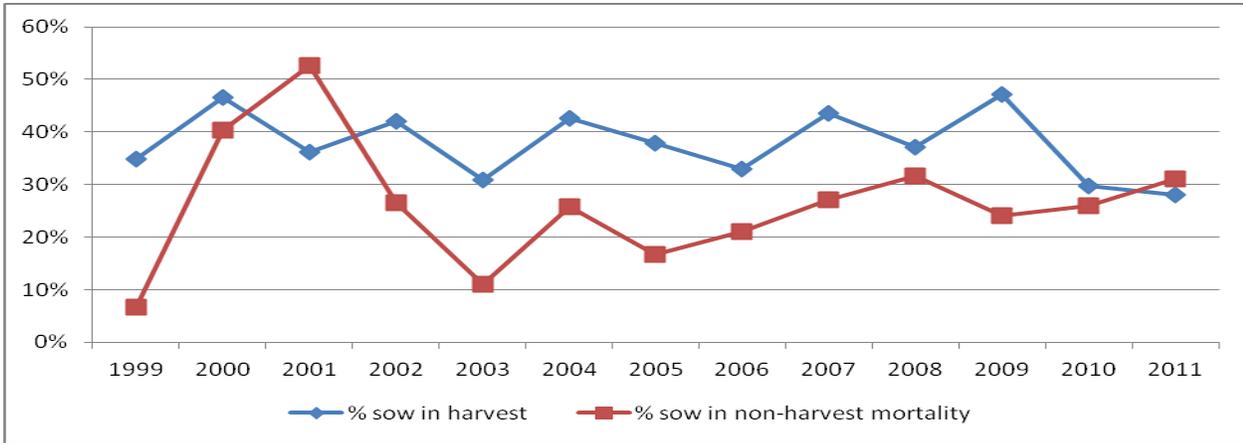
**Figure 6. Total black bear mortality in B-17.**

Harvest mortality and total mortality vary significantly by GMU, but the distribution has remained generally consistent since 1999. GMU 521 has the highest levels of harvest and total mortality in the DAU, followed by GMUs 53, 42, and 421 (Figure 7). Harvest levels appear to be roughly proportional to the amount of fall bear habitat, GMU size and hunting access levels. Total mortality contributions per GMU follow the same ranking order as harvest mortality. Non-harvest mortality is strongly associated with livestock production, and slightly less so with orchards and vineyards.



**Figure 7. Average annual hunting and total mortality by GMU (1999-2011).**

The proportion of females in B-17 harvest and non-harvest mortality has fluctuated little over the last 13 years, but has averaged below 40% of the total mortality (Figure 8).



**Figure 8. Proportion of females in B-17 harvest and non-harvest mortality.**

### Mortality: Method of take

Among methods of take, the September archery, muzzleloader, and rifle seasons have similar 3-year average success rates (14%, 11%, and 14%, respectively). These seasons are responsible for ~79% of the annual bear harvest in B-17. The September rifle season alone accounts for ~51% of the total harvest in B-17, or roughly 66 bears annually. Archery hunters contribute an average of 27 bears per year to the harvest while muzzleloaders harvest an average of 9 bears per year in B-17. The total harvest of all the combined rifle seasons is relatively small, with an average of 24 bears harvested per year. While always very low, harvest success rates during the regular rifle seasons varies from 1-8% in the first and second rifle seasons to nearly 0% in the third and fourth when many bears are unavailable for harvest due to the onset of hibernation. Success rates in GMUs 53 and 63 tend to be slightly higher than those for the rest of the DAU.

	September Rifle	Archery	Muzzleloader	Combined Rifle	Private Land Only
1999	45	23	5	59	n/a
2000	64	33	15	17	n/a
2001	28	19	12	24	n/a
2002	40	37	9	22	n/a
2003	47	10	4	36	n/a
2004	63	15	3	16	n/a
2005	31	17	3	45	n/a
2006	38	19	7	12	n/a
2007	85	23	14	4	n/a
2008	54	23	9	53	4
2009	79	16	8	18	2
2010	57	28	11	28	4
2011	65	36	7	26	5

Table 1. Black bear harvest by method of take 1999-2011.

### Mortality: Age and gender

Beginning in 2007, a premolar was extracted from harvested bears and other deceased bears handled by CPW. These teeth were collected and submitted annually for aging via cementum annuli sectioning.

Since bear age data have only been collected for a relatively short time, the sample sizes are small (total sample across 3 years in B-17 is 384 bears).

The technique of counting annual rings in cementum of bear teeth is a reliable method for determining ages of black bears (Harshyne et al. 1998, Costello et al. 2004). This is especially true for bears less than five years of age. For bears five years of age or older, errors increased with the age of the bear (McLaughlin et al. 1990, Harshyne et al. 1998, Costello et al. 2004). Since most female black bears in Colorado do not reproduce until their fifth year, classification of females into sub-adult (non-reproducing)

and adult (reproducing) age classes using cementum annuli is quite reliable. Therefore, all female black bears age five and over are considered adults for the purposes of harvest data analyses.

Below are figures showing the frequency of each bear year-class, by gender from the 2008-2010 dataset (Figure 9 and Figure 10). Both harvest and non-harvest mortality sample sizes are greatly skewed towards the sub-adult age classes; 46% of the total mortality was juvenile or subadult males and another 24% was juvenile or subadult females.

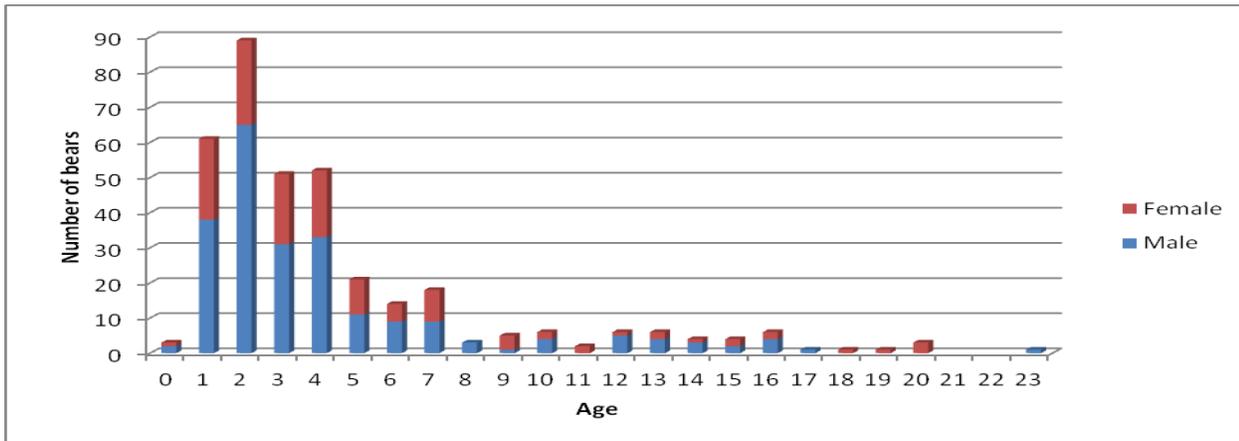


Figure 9. Age distribution of harvested bears in B-17 2008-2010.

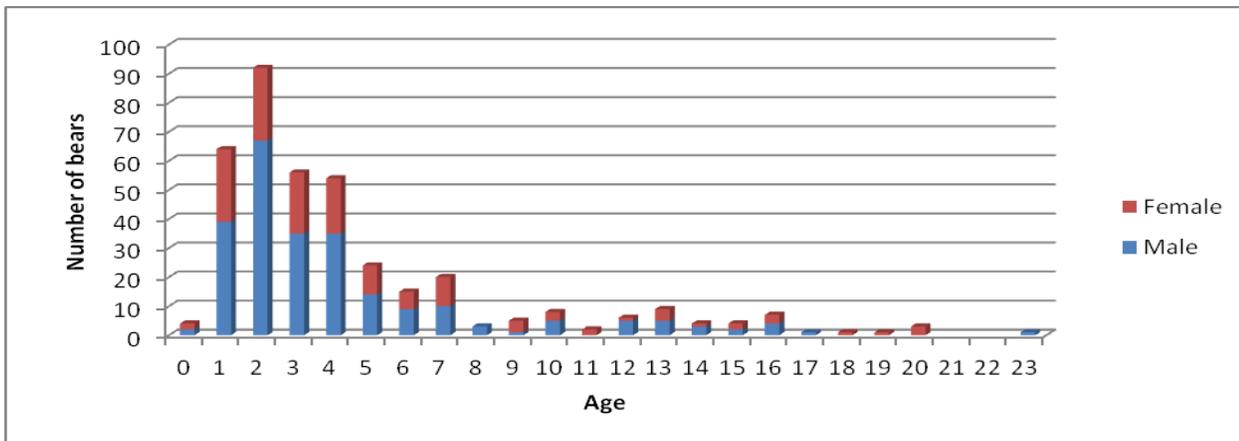


Figure 10. Age distribution of bears from all mortality sources in B-17 2008-2010.

### Game damage and human conflict management

There have been 124 black bear claims paid out in B-17 in the 10 years since personal property claims were removed from CPW liability (August 2001). Roughly 44% of these claims were for domestic sheep, approximately 29% were for beehives, with the rest being for other livestock or growing crops. The mean claim payment since 2002 is \$2600.00, with a range from \$10 - \$20,000. The most claims

have been in GMU 521 (46%), followed by GMU 421 (17%). The remainder has been roughly evenly split among the other GMUs.

Human conflicts with black bears in B-17 are not unusual occurrences. In many cases, human interactions with bears are reported to the CPW call centers or field staff. This subset of conflicts is documented in written form by CPW staff and range from a second hand report of a bear being seen in a town or suburb to a physical incident between a bear and a person. While these conflict reports provide a snapshot of individual incidents, lumping reports into categories or evaluating summary statistics can be misleading. There are a number of issues related to capturing the location of the incident versus the location the report was filed from, the reliability of some reports and the bias in reporting associated with increased media coverage on an event or location that can all significantly increase or decrease the number of conflict reports. CPW continues to document reported human conflicts with bears, and will continue to improve and refine the system and methods used for collecting and synthesizing those reports. Bears involved in conflicts will be handled per agency policy at the discretion of the field officer or supervisor.

### Current harvest and total mortality objectives

In 2001, a basic DAU plan was developed for B-17 that recommended an annual harvest objective of 105 bears and a total annual mortality of 110 bears. The plan also identified a sport harvest off-take rate of 9-12% annually (Graham, 2001). These guidelines have been the foundation for license setting decisions, but have been exceeded nearly every year since their establishment.

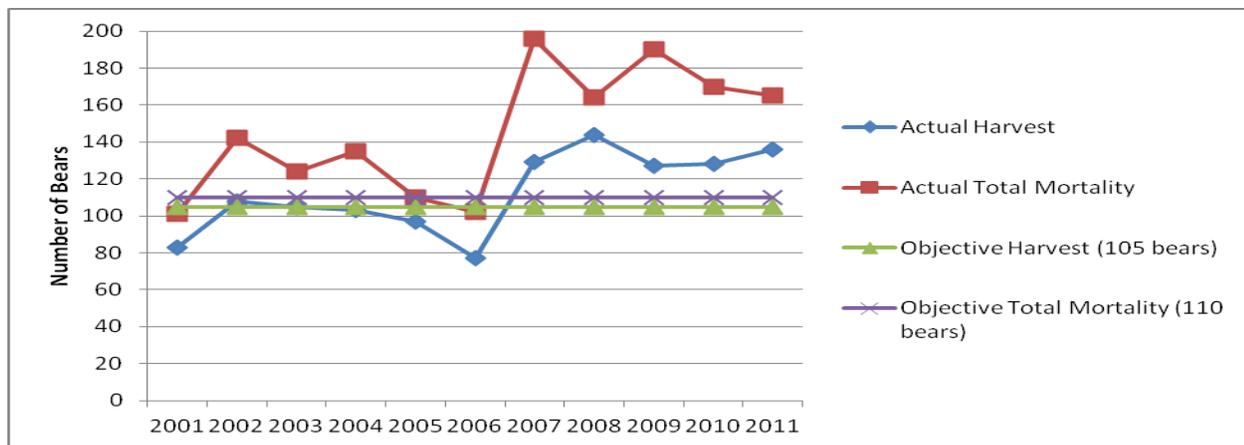


Figure 11. Annual harvest and mortality in B-17 in relation to objectives set in 2001.

## MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

### Habitat Models

Two different habitat models have been developed to relate bear use, occupancy and forage value to project possible populations by extrapolating bear densities. The population projections use densities derived from relevant Colorado data and from literature. Managers applied densities representative of similar habitats and vegetation types in Colorado to develop population projections and then select population ranges which best represent current conditions in the DAU.

### General Vegetation/Bear Density Extrapolation

The first model was developed by Gill and Beck (1991) in an unpublished report to the Colorado Wildlife Commission and was modified by Apker (2003) in an internal DOW report. This model applies subjective probable black bear densities for different vegetation types to the amount of land area of those vegetation types in the various GMUs. The vegetation type amounts for this model were derived from landsat GAP project coarse vegetation types. This vegetation/density model provides a snapshot extrapolation of possible bear population size in Colorado based on current vegetation classes and both measured and projected bear densities in those vegetation classes from the 1990s. This model and its subsequent extrapolation yield a projected bear population in B-17 of 1420 black bears.

### Use/Occupancy Density Extrapolation

General classes of habitat that occur in B-17 are presented in Table 2 using CPW Basinwide GIS Vegetation Classification data. Each of these vegetation classes has been further refined relative to bear use/occupancy and relative forage value; this analysis results in a two tiered habitat ranking system presented below. Use/occupancy was defined at 4 levels; primary, secondary, edge, and out (or not bear habitat). See also Figure 10 for a graphic depiction of the use/occupancy habitat types in the DAU. Relative forage value was rated for primary, secondary, and edge habitat at 3 levels; high, moderate or low based upon the perceived potential of those habitats to provide forage for black bears.

Use/occupancy terms are defined as follows:

*Primary – cover types that bears typically and normally are found at various times of year.*

*Secondary – cover types that bears occasionally use but is not preferred.*

*Edge – cover types infrequently used, but bears may be found in when adjacent to primary cover types.*

*Out – cover types that are not black bear habitat or those in which bears would only travel through.*

The results of this analysis provide tables of bear habitat in terms of its relative use and state of occupancy and then for those habitats with varying levels of use, what their potential relative forage value may be. This resulted in a matrix for assigning habitat quality and subsequently for assigning bear densities to different habitat quality to extrapolate a potential population. The population results for

B-17 can be incorporated into modeling or used as a comparison to independent population model runs. The 2011 population estimate is 1476 bears. Table 2 provides the results of this surface area analysis for B-17.

GMU	Available Bear Habitat (km <sup>2</sup> )			Bear Density (bear/km <sup>2</sup> )			Projected Bear Population			Projected Total Bear Population
	Primary	Secondary	Edge	Primary	Secondary	Edge	Primary	Secondary	Edge	
<b>41</b>	163	52	300	0.36	0.23	0.036	59	12	11	81
<b>42</b>	611	179	419	0.36	0.23	0.036	220	41	15	276
<b>52</b>	257	69	154	0.36	0.23	0.036	93	16	6	114
<b>53</b>	458	179	119	0.36	0.23	0.036	165	41	4	210
<b>63</b>	264	33	139	0.36	0.23	0.036	95	8	5	107
<b>411</b>	120	31	143	0.36	0.23	0.036	43	7	5	55
<b>421</b>	739	135	312	0.36	0.23	0.036	266	31	11	308
<b>521</b>	669	333	163	0.36	0.23	0.036	241	77	6	323
<b>TOTAL</b>	3,280	1,011	1,749				1181	233	63	<b>1476</b>

**Table 2. B-17 bear population projection based on vegetation and density extrapolation.**

Published black bear densities across Rocky Mountain States range from 1.35 bears/100 km<sup>2</sup> in Rocky Mountain National Park (Baldwin and Bender 2007) to 31-77 bears/100 km<sup>2</sup> in Idaho (Beecham and Rohlman 1994). However, two 2009 Colorado mark-recapture surveys indicate higher densities than those found by most studies, analyses, or management reports in the western US (44-85 bears/100 sq. k.)(Apker et al. 2010). The Divide Creek drainage, in B-17, GMU 42, was a small portion of one of these mark-recapture survey areas.

Although density estimates are influenced by the size of the study area and the methods by which density estimates were derived (see Apker et al. 2010); overall habitat quality in the two 2009 study areas in Colorado is probably better than that found in most other study areas. It should also be noted that both the Colorado 2009 survey areas were selected in large part because they were considered among the highest overall quality habitat in Colorado and the exact survey grid areas were structured to include mostly the highest quality cover and forage value habitat for the survey season. The habitat in the northwest survey area was very similar in condition and quality to the majority of the habitat in B-17 and it is likely that these high density estimates are representative of densities found in much of B-17.

Several other correlates of bear habitat use/occupancy are also available to managers in B-17 including harvest density/locations, roadkill/highway crossings, and conflict hotspots. An evaluation of B-17 harvest locations superimposed on the basic categories of bear habitat use and occupancy indicates that most harvest, and presumably most of the bears, are being found (in the fall) in primary habitat or within edge habitat that very closely adjoins primary habitat (Figure 12). The significant exception to this would be the presence of bears, as documented through roadkill, harvest and conflicts, in high densities in some localized areas of edge habitat (those associated with human food sources).

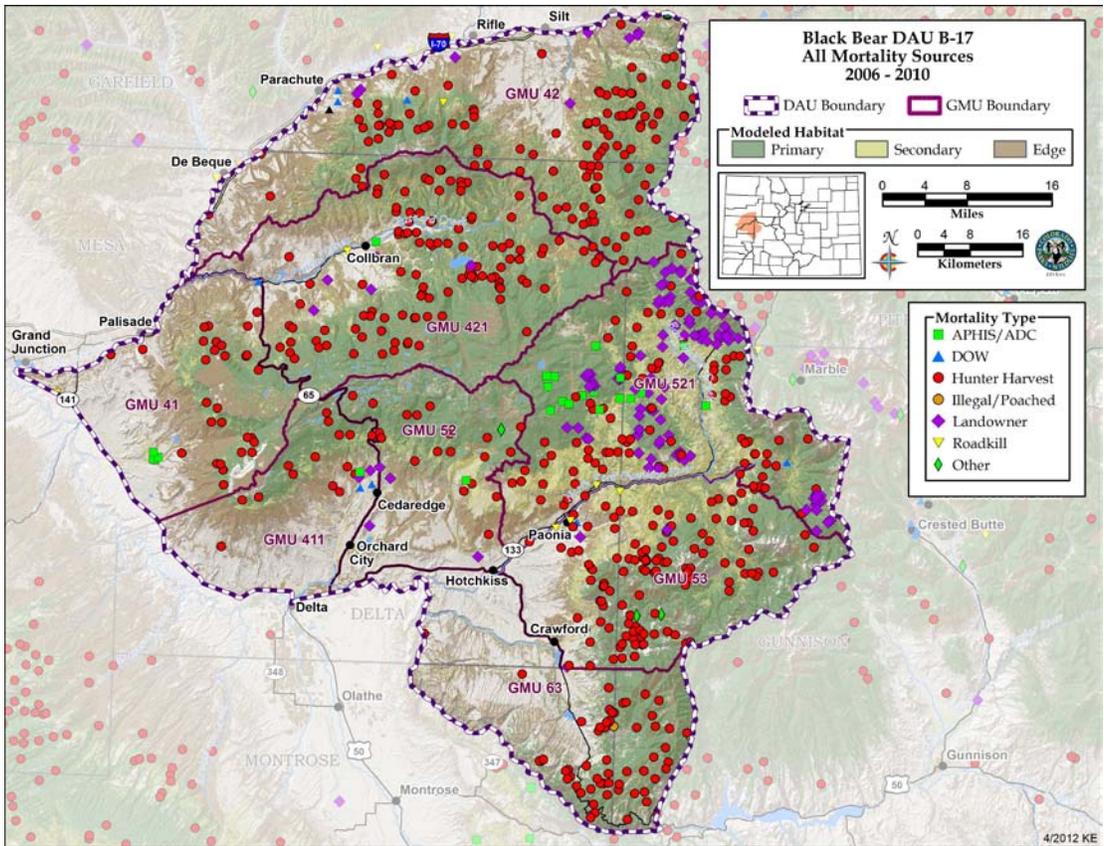


Figure 12. Location of bear mortalities in relation to bear habitat classes.

## Mortality Density and Rates

The amount of human-caused mortality in relation to the amount of suitable habitat available is another method to gauge the impacts of human-caused mortality on black bear populations. This can be useful in illustrating impacts on a more local scale and standardizing mortality between DAUs with varying habitat suitability. The number of human-caused mortalities can be divided by the area of primary and secondary habitat.

Thus B-17 with 4,291 km<sup>2</sup> of primary and secondary habitat and an average of about 147 bears killed per year over the past 10 years = a mortality density of 3.42 bears/100km<sup>2</sup>. Then assuming that the bear population is about 2000 bears, which is roughly the mid-point between the various habitat and population model projections, the median bear population density in the DAU is approximately 37.3 bears/100km<sup>2</sup>. Using these figures to calculate a mortality rate yields 3.42/37.3 = 9.2%. It is likely that some human-caused non-harvest bear mortality occurs in B-17 that is undetected, but it is unlikely that the average ten-year total mortality exceeds the mortality rate that would result in a stable population trajectory.

Miller (1990) demonstrated that under optimal conditions of reproduction and survival, maximum sustainable total mortality for black bears could be as high as 14.2%. Beck and White (1996

unpublished) conducted black bear population simulation analyses which, given their assumptions, produced stable bear populations with annual mortality at up to 15%.

It is unlikely that bears annually experience optimum reproduction and survival conditions due to environmental variation affecting forage conditions and black bear vulnerability to mortality factors. Therefore, we have formulated mortality rate thresholds associated with different management strategies which are somewhat lower than the foregoing:

<b>Strategic Goal</b>	<b>Mortality Rate Threshold</b>
<b>Increasing</b>	5 – 10%
<b>Stable</b>	10 – 50%
<b>Decreasing</b>	15 – 20%

**Table 3. Mortality rate thresholds based on strategic goals.**

### **Forage Condition and Mast Production Surveys**

Forage conditions influence bear reproductive success and certain gender and age specific survival rates due to changes in vulnerability to mortality (Beck 1991, Costello et al. 2001). Therefore, managers consider forage conditions when formulating annual management recommendations. Mast production surveys have been conducted since 2008 B-17(Table 4). Following survey protocols developed by Costello et al. (2001), we made only slight modifications to provide a basic five-point matrix of fall mast fruit production for Gambel oak, juniper spp., chokecherry, and serviceberry. Forage condition results within DAUs can then be represented numerically to reflect annual forage conditions. These results can provide managers objective information about relative forage conditions over time and use that with their professional judgment to influence management recommendations. Taking it a step further, the results can be used as one of the many population model inputs as a factor influencing birth rates and cub survival in the population models.

B-17 has the highest mast production potential in the state, and the bear population is therefore exceptionally dependent on annual forage condition and mast production.

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>SCORE (1 poor, 10 very good)</b>	8.72	2.00	7.75	8.63

**Table 4. Forage condition scores in B-17 2008 - 2011**

## **Population Models**

Deterministic population models were developed on a framework of annual biological, harvest and density assumptions to project assumed populations using available data. We used a starting population at the higher end of the range taken from the early 1990s vegetation/density extrapolation and projected it to 2017. We used plausible values for age specific survival, number of cubs per litter, and the model includes input values to account for changes to reproduction and mortality rates due to poor forage years. For years 2008-2011 we had actual forage condition monitoring data. For prior years we used the relative amount of non-hunt mortality to provide an index of forage conditions. The models use mortality data with harvest as a direct model input and non-hunt mortality adjusted upward since we know our records do not document all non-hunt mortality.

While the models do yield population estimates, these estimates are predicated on many plausible, yet assumed input values. The results do appear to conform to population extrapolations derived by the habitat models. Nonetheless, the value of the models is most worthwhile in the population trajectories and responses to mortality and forage condition variability than the absolute population numbers they produce.

Two models in B-17 are compared; one projects a liberal population with attendant liberal, but plausible model parameters, the other is a conservative population projection with more conservative parameters.

### **Assumptions common to both Liberal and Conservative Models**

The initial population size of 1476 bears and the starting age distributions for both models was derived from extrapolations of habitat quantity and known bear densities from the literature. Sex ratio at birth was assumed to be 50/50, with an average litter size of two. The age of fix was used for female primiparity with a birth interval of two years between litters. Both models employ a non-harvest multiplier of 1.5 that increases the value of the reported non-harvest mortality.

Subadult and adult survival rates were largely midpoints of published ranges in New Mexico and Colorado (Costello et al. 2001, Beck 1991, Beck 1997), while cub survival fell within published ranges but was modulated by a mast index that is intended to reflect documented forage conditions on a yearly basis. Given the weak influence of mast in B-17 cub survival rates were assumed to be slightly lower but less variable than in models of mast-driven systems. Predicted population and age structure levels beyond the current year (2011) relied upon the continuation of assumptions used in the preceding years, as well as projected future mortality levels at levels necessary to stabilize the population.

### ***Liberal Model***

The assumptions used specifically in the liberal model include cub survival rates of 40% (poor food years), 60% (average food years) and 68% in good food years. Annual age and gender specific survival rates are unaffected by natural or human forage conditions, although the forage condition or mast index that modulates cub survival rates does minimally impact age class totals (see rates below).

Modeling efforts using the liberal inputs yields a 2011 post-hunt population projection of 2321 bears, with 606 cubs, 1128 females and 587 males. Excluding cubs, the 2011 B-17 projection of independent bears is 1715.

### ***Conservative Model***

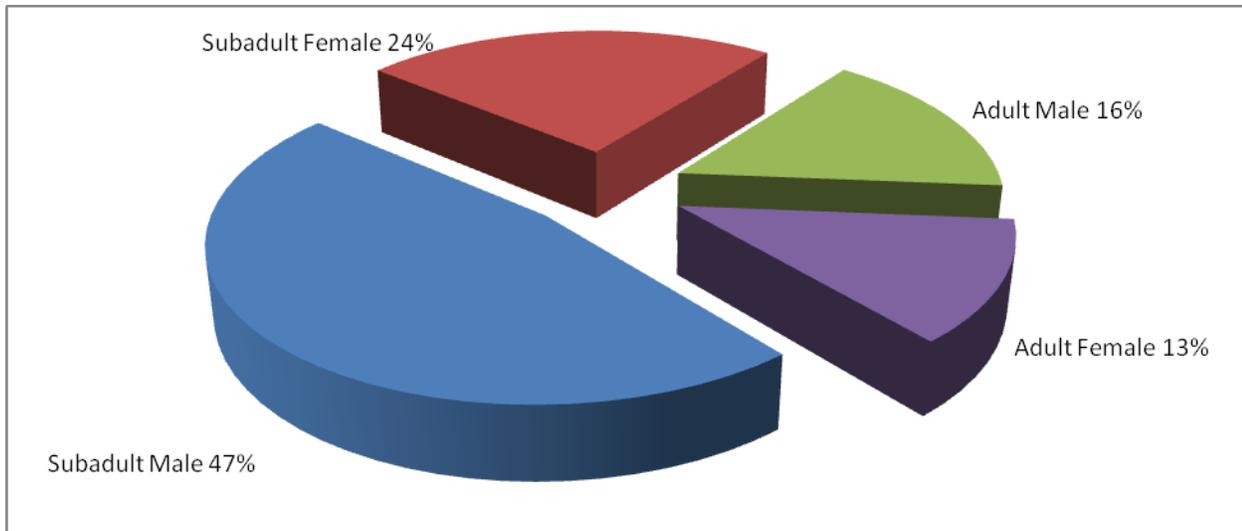
The assumptions used specifically in the conservative model includes cub survival rates of 40% (poor food years), 57% (average food years) and 65% in good food years. Annual age and gender specific survival rates are generally 1-2% lower than those used in the liberal model, and are unaffected by natural or human forage conditions.

Modeling efforts using the conservative inputs outlined above yields a 2011 post-hunt population projection of 1703 bears, with 472 cubs, 865 females and 366 males. Excluding cubs, the 2011 B-17 projection of independent bears is 1231.

### **Mortality Composition and Management Criteria**

Black bear vulnerability to harvest and other mortality factors varies depending upon differences in habitat, hunter effort or pressure, access, and forage conditions. Bears are less vulnerable where cover is dense over large geographic areas. They are more vulnerable where vehicle access is good. The greatest influence in annual variation in bear vulnerability is forage conditions. When natural forage quality or availability is poor, bears must become much more mobile in search of food, especially during fall hyperphagic periods. Increased mobility tends to result in bears being more visible to hunters, more likely to encounter human food sources, more frequently found along or crossing roads, and more concentrated in areas where there may be relatively more forage available. All of these tendencies can result in increased hunter harvest, increased human conflict mortality, more roadkills and other forms of mortality.

Not all segments of bear populations are equally vulnerable however, regardless of other influences. Hunting pressure affects harvest rate, which affects age structure, sex ratios, and densities of black bear populations. Adult males are typically most vulnerable because they are bold (often use open areas) and have larger home ranges. Sub-adult males are slightly less vulnerable. Consequently, the adult male segment of a population is the first to be reduced under hunter pressure. As harvest rates increase, the proportion of sub-adult black bears (those less than 5 years old) in the harvest typically increases, whereas the proportion of adult males declines. A low percentage of adult males ( $\geq 5$  years old) in the harvest may be an indication of over-harvest. This criterion is a more sensitive indicator of black bear population levels than median age (Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game 1998). The mean percent of adult males in the harvest in relatively stable populations in Idaho (Beecham and Rohlman 1994) and New Mexico (Costello et al. 2001) under moderate to high harvest levels was 30% and 28%, respectively. Studies of black bear populations in Alaska, Virginia, and Arizona showed similar relationships between lightly and heavily hunted populations. Therefore, 25% to 35% adult males in the harvest could indicate a stable black bear population. Levels lower than 25% may indicate a higher level of harvest, which has reduced the adult male segment of the population; whereas levels higher than 35% may indicate a much lighter harvest level. Based on the 3 years of available data in B-17, it appears that current harvest levels could be somewhat high, as adult males comprised 16% of the total harvest during those years (**Error! Reference source not found.**).



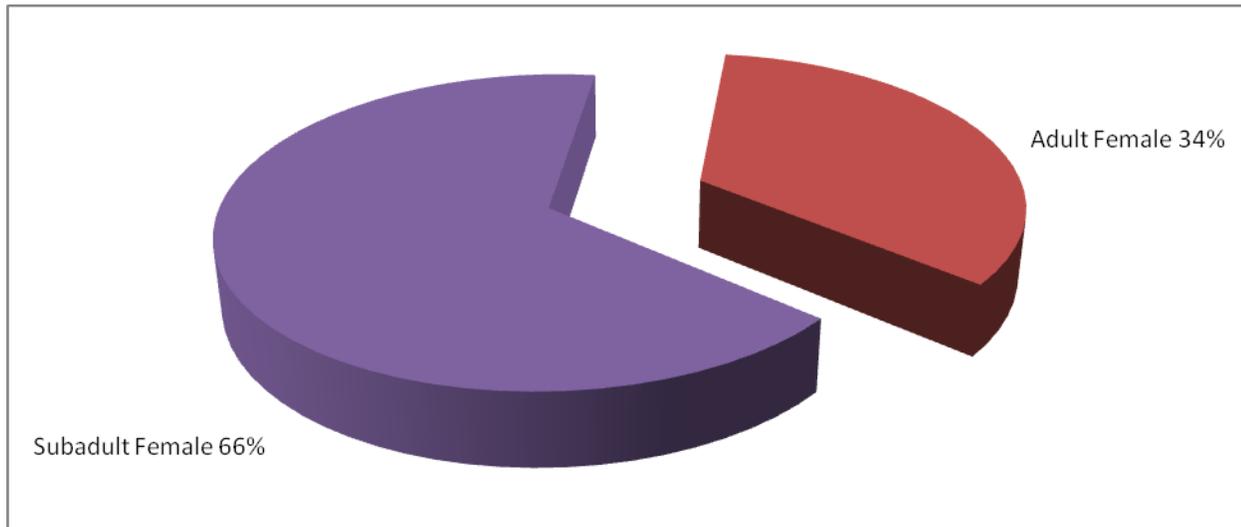
**Figure 13. Bear harvest in B-17 by proportion of age class and gender (2008 - 2010).**

As harvest levels increase and additional adult and sub-adult males are removed from an area, the proportion of females in the harvest begins to increase (Fraser et al. 1982, Kolenosky 1986, Beecham and Rohlman 1994), because females are least vulnerable, especially if accompanied by cubs. The average percent females in the harvest of black bear populations under moderate and high hunting pressure in Idaho (Beecham and Rohlman 1994) and New Mexico (Costello et al. 2001) was 35% and 40%, respectively. Beecham and Rohlman (1994) suggest a desired proportion of female harvest of 35% to maintain a stable population, whereas Beck (1991) suggested maintaining <40% females in harvest. Therefore, a range of 30% to 40% females in the total harvest could indicate a stable black bear population. Data Analysis Unit B-17 appears to be in the middle of the stable range using this indicator, with a 37% female harvest rate over the last 3 years (**Error! Reference source not found.**). Proportions higher than 40% may suggest reduction of the number of females in the population. Monitoring this criterion helps ensure a stable reproductive portion of the population and the ability of the population to rebound in the event of a decline.

With increasing harvest of a black bear population, younger females are removed and older females become more common in the harvest. Thus, the proportion of adults in the female harvest should rise with harvest rates, increasing mean age of females in the harvest (Kolenosky 1986, Beecham and Rohlman 1994). This phenomenon is especially important with late-reproducing species like bears, since removing adult females has the enhanced effect of not only reducing the number of bears in the population, but also decreasing reproductive potential of the population and, thus, its ability to respond to declines. The delayed response of slow reproducing populations to reductions was noted by Harris (1984) and was demonstrated in modeling efforts by Miller (1990), who predicted black bear populations reduced by 50% would take an average of 17 years to recover if hunting pressure was reduced by 25%.

The percent of adults in the female harvest, rather than mean or median age of the females in the harvest, can also be used to gauge the presumed population trajectory. Averaged over a three-year period, this criterion provides a more meaningful measurement of female harvest age structure, especially in areas with small sample sizes. The mean percent of adult females in the harvest of two

New Mexico black bear populations under moderate and high harvest pressure was 55% and 70%, respectively (Costello et al. 2001). The mean percent adult females in the Wyoming statewide female black bear harvest from 1994-2005 was 47%, with a range of 32% – 57%, suggesting that 45 – 55% adult female harvest provides a stable proportion of adult females (Wyoming Game and Fish Dept. 2007). In B-17, adult females comprised 34% of the female harvest from 2007-2009, indicative of a increasing population under this criteria (Figure 14)



**Figure 14. Proportion of adult and subadult harvest in female segment of total harvest in B-17 (2008-2010).**

Looking at criterion independently could give very different results than when considering them together. For instance, looking only at a reduced percentage of adult males in the harvest may indicate a population is moving from light to moderate harvest. However, evaluating the other criteria may show a low proportion of females and lower proportion of adult females in the harvest, indicating a much lower level of harvest than looking at males alone. Alternatively, a high percentage of adults in the female harvest, assessed independently, would indicate population reduction. However, when the percent adult males and percent females in the harvest are both in the population increase or stable range, the population might actually be thriving. This situation might occur when the DAU is adjacent to or has an area providing a source of immigrating black bears. Source areas can be defined as areas of suitable habitat with little to no human-caused mortality that may provide dispersing bears to surrounding areas (Beecham and Rohlman 1994, Powell et al. 1996). Areas adjacent to sources may have a lower proportion of adults in the harvest due to sub-adults dispersing to occupy vacant home ranges of harvested bears. These areas may also be able to rebound more quickly from overharvest (Beecham and Rohlman 1994). Dispersing subadult males may also supplement surrounding populations and absorb much of the harvest to the point where female harvest remains low and adult females comprise a higher proportion of the population.

To better evaluate harvest data, black bear seasons are set for a five year period as with most other big game species in Colorado. We recommend that harvest objectives and attendant license allocations be set for three-year periods. This would allow for a more complete analysis of the effects of harvest by

holding dates and quotas the same for each three-year season cycle. In order to increase the sample size of the harvest data and to reduce the influence of high or low annual harvest rates due to environmental or other factors, three-year running averages will be used in harvest data analyses rather than analyzing annual data independently. While the evaluation of harvest criteria will be analyzed using a three-year average, data from the previous 10 years (two black bear generations) or longer should be analyzed to illustrate longer-term trends in harvest and related population trends.

## **Social Factors**

The social factors that influence management scenarios in B-17 include game damage and human conflicts. Since 2002, the annual average number of game damage claims in the DAU is slightly over 12, with the largest number being for domestic sheep damage. Most of these claims are for large-scale woolgrowers whose primary source of income is from domestic sheep production. Direct, significant human conflicts with black bears in B-17 typically involve a bear seeking out easy food sources including trashcans and/or pet food. Occasionally, there are conflicts associated with a bear entering or attempting to enter a home, cabin, trailer or car. These conflicts are dealt with by CPW field staff differently depending on the severity of the incident, other site-specific qualities and whether the bear in question had been previously handled by the CPW. There is a CPW policy on handling bears that have already received a first “strike”, as well as procedures to follow if a bear makes physical contact with a person.

## **STRATEGIC GOALS AND MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES**

### **Process for Developing Strategic Goals and Management Objectives**

#### **Public Process**

Local CPW staff met in March 2012 to develop feasible alternatives for strategic objectives for B-17. Three alternatives were developed based upon modeled population estimates, damage and nuisance issues, and hunting opportunity. These alternatives are outlined in APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ALTERNATIVES. These alternatives were used merely as a basis for discussion; the introduction of other alternatives was strongly encouraged throughout the initial public input process.

In May of 2012, initial public input was solicited using several different methods. A survey was available in both printed and online formats in an effort to obtain public input on bear population goals and other comments directly related to management. The full document is available in APPENDIX B: PUBLIC SURVEY.

Individual letters were sent to local Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and United States Forest Service (USFS) personnel, as well as interested stakeholders, including entities such as Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Colorado Woolgrowers Association, and Colorado Cattlemen's Association. Their written input was requested, with a deadline of May 31, 2012. Letters of input were received from the White River National Forest Rifle and Aspen-Sopris Ranger Districts (APPENDIX D: UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE INPUT). No other written input was received.

Approximately 4,300 postcards were mailed out to a cross-section of interested stakeholders, including B-17 license holders, local residents, and game damage recipients requesting their input via the online or written survey. Information was provided to obtain a hard copy of the survey.

Four public meetings were held in Grand Junction, Rifle, Hotchkiss, and Collbran to solicit input on future management scenarios in B-17. The meetings were advertised in the local media, CPW website and through a press release. Attendance was low, with a total of only about thirty individuals at all four meetings. A printed copy of the online survey was provided for all attendees.

A total of 205 individuals responded to the online survey, and 13 surveys were returned in printed format. The answers to the survey are briefly summarized below. The full results and analysis are available in full detail in APPENDIX C: PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS.

Following the public meetings, a draft plan was reviewed by CPW staff. All public input received in written form was incorporated into this document. The first draft was available for public comment in July 2012. The draft plan was also be available to impacted federal, county and local municipality land management and natural resource agencies for comment.

Following public review of the draft plan, all input was reviewed and incorporated. A preferred strategic objective was selected (Management Objectives and Preferred Strategic Objective) and the plan will be presented to the Parks and Wildlife Commission in November 2012.

### Brief Summary of Public Survey Responses

There were a total of 27 questions in the survey, two of which were open-ended and there was no limit on length of response. A complete analysis of the public survey, including the full text of written responses can be found in APPENDIX C: PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS.

6. How important are black bears to you? (Please check one.)	<b><u>Very Important</u></b>	<b><u>57%</u></b>
	Somewhat Important	<b>37%</b>
	Neither Important, nor Unimportant	<b>4%</b>
	Somewhat Unimportant	<b>1%</b>
	Very Unimportant	<b>0%</b>
	I am not sure.	<b>0%</b>
7. Which of the following best describes your general attitude about black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)	I do not enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and regard them as a nuisance.	<b>3%</b>
	<b><u>I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa, but worry about problems they may cause.</u></b>	<b><u>48%</u></b>
	I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and do not worry about the problems they may cause.	<b>43%</b>
	I do not have particular feelings about black bears in the Grand Mesa.	<b>6%</b>
8. How important is it to you to know that black bears live in this area and that their populations will continue to exist in the future? (Please check one.)	<b><u>Very Important</u></b>	<b><u>76%</u></b>
	Somewhat Important	<b>15%</b>
	Neither Important, nor Unimportant	<b>6%</b>
	Somewhat Unimportant	<b>1%</b>
	Very Unimportant	<b>1%</b>
	I am not sure.	<b>0%</b>
9. In your opinion, how important of an issue are negative interactions between humans and black bears in the Grand Mesa? (Please check one.)	<b><u>Very Important</u></b>	<b><u>43%</u></b>
	Somewhat Important	<b>34%</b>
	Neither Important, nor Unimportant	<b>12%</b>
	Somewhat Unimportant	<b>7%</b>
	Very Unimportant	<b>3%</b>
	I am not sure.	<b>1%</b>
11. Based on your experience, how has the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area changed over the last 10 years? (Please check one.)	<b><u>Increased greatly</u></b>	<b><u>35%</u></b>
	Increased somewhat	<b>29%</b>
	Stayed the same	<b>20%</b>
	Decreased somewhat	<b>1%</b>
	Decreased greatly	<b>1%</b>
	I am not sure.	<b>14%</b>

12. How would you like to see the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area change over the next 10 years? (Please check one.)	Increase greatly	6%
	Increase somewhat	23%
	Stay the same	28%
	<u>Decrease somewhat</u>	<u>29%</u>
	Decrease greatly	11%
	I am not sure.	3%
14. To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.) I believe that CPW is currently doing an adequate job of managing black bears in B-17.	Strongly agree	17%
	<u>Somewhat agree</u>	<u>28%</u>
	Neither agree, nor disagree	17%
	Somewhat disagree	17%
	Strongly disagree	18%
	I am not sure.	4%
15. To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.) I believe that hunting, watching and other bear-related forms of recreation contribute substantially to local economies of Mesa, Delta, Montrose, Gunnison, and Garfield counties.	<u>Strongly agree</u>	<u>50%</u>
	Somewhat agree	21%
	Neither agree, nor disagree	13%
	Somewhat disagree	7%
	Strongly disagree	9%
	I am not sure.	1%
25. Which of the following alternatives would you prefer to guide CPW's decisions about the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area in the next 10 years? (Please check one.)	<u>Maintain a stable population of black bears at current levels.</u>	<u>57%</u>
	Short term population decrease from current levels, then maintain a stable population at decreased population size.	21%
	Long-term decrease in population size from current levels.	17%
	I am not sure.	5%

**Figure 15. Brief summary of public survey responses.**

Of the two open-ended questions, there were 157 respondents for the first question and 99 respondents for the second. Of these, roughly thirty responses for each question mentioned the spring bear season as a valuable tool to manage bear populations and increase harvest and opportunity. Most of these comments recommended that CPW reinstate the spring bear season and almost all implied that the respondent believed that it was a feasible option. Additional comments were received encouraging CPW to reinstate the use of hounds and bait for bear hunting. Although the information was provided at the public meetings, there is a lack of understanding by the general public regarding the spring bear season and use of bait and hounds.

## Strategic Goals

Total mortality and harvest objectives are presented as ranges necessary to achieve the strategic goal of the DAU. Annual monitoring of mortality, gender and age structure, Colorado black bear density study, and annual forage condition survey results are all incorporated into determining annual mortality objectives. However, the models and their results have not been validated with demographic data from Colorado bear populations. Moreover, the data that has been collected and used for model inputs

result from relatively new efforts. We anticipate that the models will change and be improved over time and thus should be viewed as presumptive estimates.

Therefore, although the plan identifies mortality and age and gender objectives, these are initial values. Modeling will be conducted every other to every third year, while other mortality data and demographics are collected and analyzed annually. Population extrapolations based on predicted densities, range-wide or within vegetation associations, will be re-evaluated as new data is gathered via research and mark-recapture surveys.

While unlikely, objectives may be periodically adjusted in order to achieve the DAU strategic goals based on changes in the information sources above. Specific objectives will be documented in annual objective sheets approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission. These objective sheets will also govern annual license levels to achieve the DAU strategic goals.

## **B-17 Strategic Goal Alternatives**

### ***Stable population trend***

To achieve a strategic goal of maintaining a stable bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates will fall in an intermediate range. Total mortality, should fall within 10-15% of the total population. Proportion of adult males in the harvest should be within 25-35%, with all females making up 30-40% of harvest. Additionally, adult females should comprise approximately 45-55% of the female harvest. Within the framework of an overall stable population, flexibility in off-take rates will be maintained to manage for minimized game damage and human/bear conflicts in localized areas of concern. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should point toward a stable population.

### ***Decreasing population trend for 3 years, then stable population trend***

To achieve a strategic goal of decreasing, then maintaining the bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates would be in the liberal range, and then reevaluated after three years. Total mortality would increase to 15-20% of the total population size. Proportion of adult males in the harvest can be low, even below 25%, with total female harvest rates going over 40%. Additionally, adult females could comprise over 55% of the total female harvest. Populations in areas with conflict and damage could be suppressed to low levels. After three years of decreasing the population, the sex and age composition of mortality and harvest would be reexamined to determine if the increased harvest had impacted the population. This information, combined with analysis of damage and nuisance complaints, would inform decisions on whether to continue with higher harvests, or whether the population was within an acceptable range. If so, overall harvest and mortality could be decreased to stabilize the population. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should initially point toward a decreasing trend, followed by a stable trend.

### ***Decreasing population trend***

To achieve a strategic goal of decreasing the bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates would be in the liberal range. Total mortality would increase above 15-20% of the population. Proportion of adult males in the harvest can be low, even below 25%, with total female harvest rates going over 40%. Additionally, adult females could comprise over 55% of the total female harvest.

Areas with conflict and damage could be suppressed to very low levels. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should point toward a population being held below biotic and human social tolerance thresholds. It is unrealistic to manage for a continually decreasing population; after five years of applying this strategy, the sex and age composition of mortality and harvest would be reexamined to determine if the increased harvest had impacted the population. This information, combined with analysis of damage and nuisance complaints, would inform decisions on whether to continue with higher harvests, or whether the population was within an acceptable range. If so, overall harvest and mortality could be decreased to stabilize the population. When the three-year average harvest criteria for a DAU indicate heavy harvest of over 50% females in the total harvest and over 60% adult females in the female harvest on either a three year running average or in two consecutive years, subsequent harvest objectives and license allocations may be reduced to stabilize if other indicators, including nuisance and conflict, are in agreement.

### **Monitored Data to Inform Management**

All known dead black bear, from both harvest and non-harvest sources, are checked by CPW staff to obtain biological information. The proportion in total mortality of each gender will continue to be closely monitored on an annual basis to assure that female mortality rates are not contrary to the DAU strategic goals. Age structure in total mortality and reproductive history are derived from extraction of a premolar tooth from bears when bear harvest and non-hunt mortality is reported through the mandatory check.

In 2009 and 2010, hair snag surveys were conducted in two locations in Colorado. Additional hair snag survey areas may be established in the future during the term of this DAU plan. Results about bear density, gender, and possibly age structure from these surveys may be incorporated into the habitat model/density extrapolations.

Because of low reproductive rates, black bear populations cannot sustain high harvest levels over prolonged periods. Research has shown that high harvest levels can quickly reduce black bear populations to levels where severe reductions in harvest quotas and season lengths may be necessary for greater than 10 years for full recovery of a population (Miller 1990, Beecham and Rohlman 1994). Therefore, the following harvest criteria will be assessed at the DAU level, with each DAU strategic goal set to achieve the criteria for reduced, stable, or increasing black bear numbers.

The preferred management strategy for B-17 incorporates a formal public input process once a harvest composition trigger is met. The input process and the trigger for the process are outlined in the PREFERRED STRATEGIC GOAL and in Management Objectives and Preferred Strategic Objective.

### **Total mortality and proportion of mortality by age and gender**

Monitoring harvest and overall mortality totals in relation to projected population size will be important in interpreting mean age and relative proportions of age/gender classes as indices. The desired proportions and total mortality off-take range will be based on the preferred strategic objective, which has yet to be established. Table 5 outlines the guidelines that will inform management decisions based upon the selected strategic goal.

	Criteria	Adult Males in Total Harvest	Females In Total Harvest	Adult Females in Female Harvest	Total Off-take Rate
<b>Strategic Goal</b>	Suppression	< 25%	> 40%	> 55%	15 – 20%
	Stable	25 – 35%	30 – 40%	45 – 55%	10 – 15%
	Increasing	> 35%	< 30%	< 45%	5 – 10%

**Table 5. Harvest composition indicators.**

**Other conditions**

Other conditions that will be monitored in B-17 to ensure that the strategic goals are met include hunter success rates and satisfaction (anecdotally), annual fall forage condition monitoring and amount and number of game damage claims and human conflicts.

***Forage condition monitoring***

Collected annually, this data can be used when projecting reproductive rates, cub survival, vulnerability to harvest and other factors related to modeling and predicting population trends for the upcoming year. Annual forage condition/mast production surveys are conducted in representative GMUs in DAU B-17. Results of these surveys are incorporated into population modeling efforts, as are mortality, age and gender structure data.

***Game damage & human conflict***

Levels of submitted game damage claims and documented conflicts between humans and bears will be evaluated anecdotally on an ongoing basis. In most cases, management efforts will be targeted at individual bears/locations that are involved in these situations. Management actions include a wide array of techniques and strategies that are employed on a case by case basis.

## Management Objectives and Preferred Strategic Objective

The specific total mortality and harvest objectives are based on present information and assumptions about population status and trajectory. These represent starting points in an ongoing process. Annual changes to mortality and harvest objectives are anticipated based on new information and evaluation of monitored data. Annual quantitative objectives will be documented in DAU objective sheets approved by the Parks and Wildlife Commission during annual regulation cycles.

Using the four different models/techniques to project plausible bear population sizes in B-17 yields the following 2011 posthunt population estimates:

SOURCE	INDEPENDENT BEARS	TOTAL POPULATION
Vegetation/ Bear Density extrapolation	1420	n/a
Use/occupancy density population extrapolation	1476	n/a
Liberal Population Model	1715	2321
Conservative Population Model	1231	1703

Table 6. Population estimates for B-17 from four models.

For purposes of calculating mortality objectives to correspond with the strategic goal in the DAU, the 2011 presumptive post-hunt population of 1600 independent bears will be used. This is based on the suite of models and extrapolations above and is supported by the ranges provided by those estimates. Overall mortality and hunter harvest objectives will be calculated based on this population projection and application of the harvest criteria that are appropriate for the selected strategic goal.

## Mortality Objectives

### *Total Mortality Objective*

The preferred alternative is to increase total mortality in the population in an effort to reduce damage and nuisance situations in most years with good forage conditions, while maintaining hunter opportunity and success rates. These goals correspond to an off-take rate at the upper end of the 10-15% off-take rate needed to stabilize the population, into the lower end of the 15 – 20% off-take rate to suppress the population.

With a population estimate of approximately 1600 independent bears in B-17, this will translate to an overall mortality objective of approximately 240 – 320 bears annually, until three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest is comprised of greater than 50% sow in the total sow harvest.

At that time, a formal public input process will be implemented to obtain information from a cross-section of hunters, landowners, and other interested stakeholders regarding hunter satisfaction and tolerance of current game damage and nuisance situations. This public input, combined with other harvest composition indices and hunter success rates will be used to determine if the population is at an acceptable level. Recent annual forage conditions will be used as a check for the other indicators to

balance the increased success rates and higher levels of damage and nuisance situations that arise from forage failures.

Future management decisions, including harvest objectives, will be based on this evaluation. If the above-mentioned indicators support a smaller population size, increased harvest objectives will be maintained until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years of harvest exceeds 60% adult sow in total sow harvest. If stabilization or an increase of the bear population in B-17 is warranted, harvest objectives will be decreased until either the three-year running average or two consecutive years' harvest composition indices demonstrate that the desired population trajectory is being met.

**Hunter Harvest Objective**

Annual hunter harvest objectives are determined by deducting the 3-year running average amount of non-hunter mortality from the total mortality objective. The 3-year running average of non-hunter mortality for 2009 – 2011 is 45 bears. Based on an initial total mortality objective of 240 – 320 bears annually, the resulting hunter harvest objective will be 195 – 275.

It is likely that non-hunter harvest in 2012 will be nearly double the average due to drought and a nearly complete forage failure. This situation highlights the necessity of flexibility in annual bear harvest and management. It may be necessary to use 5-year running averages when abnormally high or low non-harvest mortality occurs due to environmental causes.

**Harvest Composition in Hunter Harvest Objective**

Based on the preferred alternative of initially suppressing the population, the initial harvest composition criteria are outlined in Table 7 .

<b>Harvest Composition</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
<b>Adult Males in Total Harvest</b>	25 - 35 %
<b>Females in Total Harvest</b>	30 - 40%
<b>Adult Females in Female Harvest</b>	>50%
<b>Total Annual Mortality</b>	15 - 20%

Table 7. Preferred alternative harvest composition criteria.

**Game Damage and Human Conflict Objectives**

Standard CPW management techniques will be employed in B-17 to reduce game damage and human conflicts with bears. Due to the inherent variation in the types of conflicts, the costs associated with damage claims, and the influence of forage conditions on these situations, it is unreasonable to identify quantitative objectives to game damage and human conflict levels. A formal public input process will be implemented once the adult sow component of total sow harvest exceeds 50%. This process will enable local personnel to evaluate the socio-political tolerance of the nuisance and damage situations and incorporate these conflicts into the next stage of management strategies.

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## **APPENDIX A: STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ALTERNATIVES**

### ***Stable population trend***

To achieve a strategic goal of maintaining a stable bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates will fall in an intermediate range. Total mortality, should fall within 10-15% of the total population. Proportion of adult males in the harvest should be within 25-35%, with all females making up 30-40% of harvest. Additionally, adult females should comprise approximately 45-55% of the female harvest. Within the framework of an overall stable population, flexibility in off-take rates will be maintained to manage for minimized game damage and human/bear conflicts in localized areas of concern. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should point toward a stable population.

### ***Decreasing population trend for 3 years, then stable population trend***

To achieve a strategic goal of decreasing, then maintaining the bear population in B-17, harvest and total mortality rates would be in the liberal range, and then reevaluated after three years. Total mortality would increase to 15-20% of the total population size. Proportion of adult males in the harvest can be low, even below 25%, with total female harvest rates going over 40%. Additionally, adult females could comprise over 55% of the total female harvest. Populations in areas with conflict and damage could be suppressed to low levels. After three years of decreasing the population, the sex and age composition of mortality and harvest would be reexamined to determine if the increased harvest had impacted the population. This information, combined with analysis of damage and nuisance complaints, would inform decisions on whether to continue with higher harvests, or whether the population was within an acceptable range. If so, overall harvest and mortality could be decreased to stabilize the population. Not every management index must be in complete agreement, but most should initially point toward a decreasing trend, followed by a stable trend.

### ***Decreasing population trend***

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# APPENDIX B: PUBLIC SURVEY

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

### Introduction

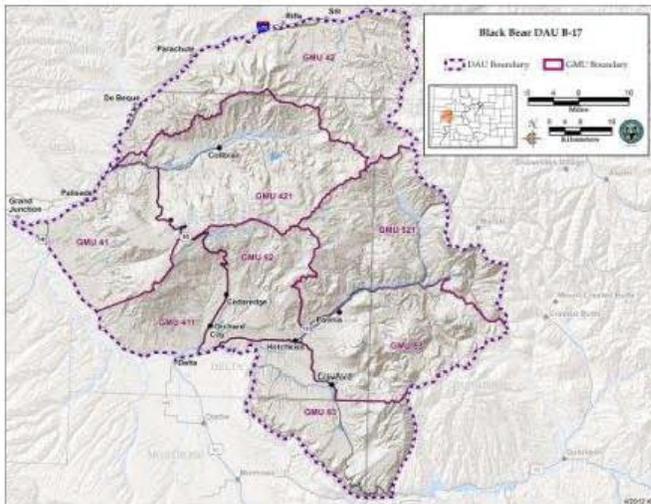
Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) is updating the black bear management plan for the Grand Mesa area. Obtaining input from a diverse spectrum of stakeholders who care about bear management is the first part of this process. This plan will outline goals for bear management in portions of Mesa, Delta, Montrose, Gunnison, and Garfield counties (see map below) and includes Game Management Units (GMUs) 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53, and 63. This bear management area is large and encompasses a diverse mix of bear habitats, land ownership and human densities, and people living in the area have diverse views about how bears ought to be managed. As such, the Grand Mesa bear management plan must be flexible enough to balance hunting and non-hunting sources of bear mortality to maintain bear populations across the entire area. In addition, the plan must attempt to balance desires for bears to view and hunt with a desire to limit negative interactions between humans and bears. The following questions will help CPW understand your desires regarding black bear population management in this area. If you have any additional comments not addressed in the survey, please enter your comments in the last question of this survey.

If you have any questions about this survey or the management plan, please contact Stephanie Duckett, Terrestrial Biologist, or JT Romatzke, Area Wildlife Manager. Only comments received via the online survey or in written form will be accepted. Written comments can be submitted to Stephanie Duckett, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, 711 Independent Ave., Grand Junction, CO 81505. All survey responses and written comments must be submitted by May 31, 2012.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Duckett  
Terrestrial Biologist  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Grand Junction, CO

JT Romatzke  
Area Wildlife Manager  
Colorado Parks and Wildlife  
Grand Junction, CO



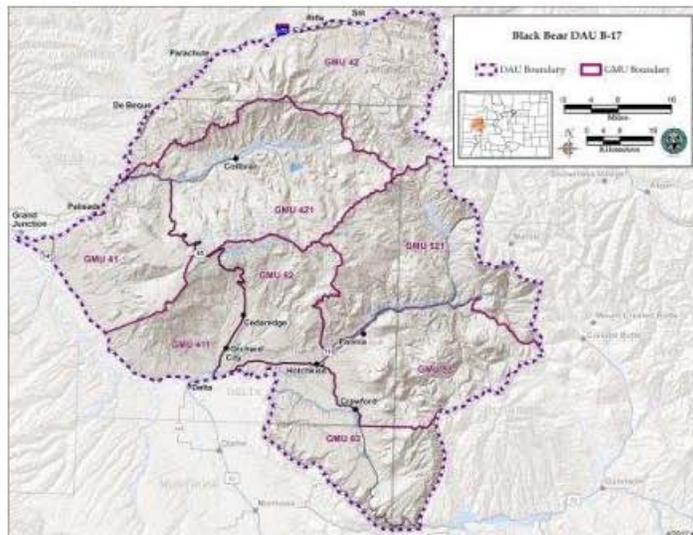
# Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

**1. Are you a resident of Colorado? (Please check one.)**

- Yes
- No

**2. Do you live in GMU 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 or 63? See the map below, which shows the boundaries of GMUs 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 or 63. (Please check one.)**

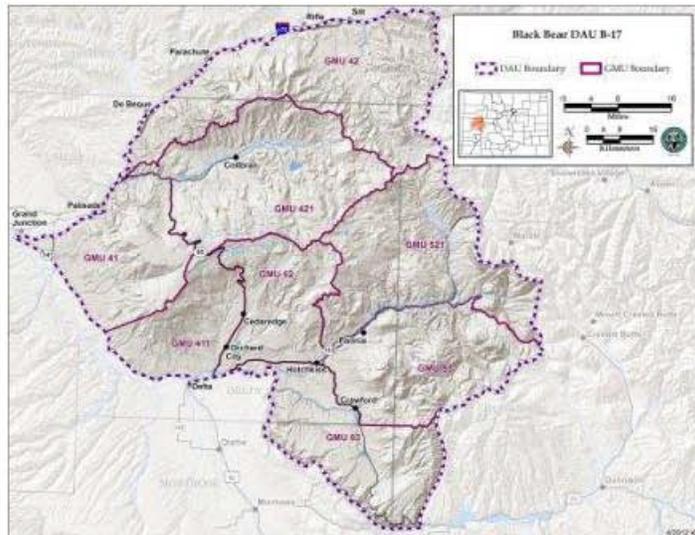
- Yes
- No



# Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

**3. In which of the following GMUs do you live? See the map below, which shows the boundaries of GMUs 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 or 63. (Please check one.)**

- 41
- 42
- 421
- 411
- 52
- 521
- 53
- 63



**4. People are involved with wildlife in many ways. Which of the following statements best describes your current level of interest and involvement? (Please check one.)**

- I am interested in wildlife, BUT I don't do much that is specifically related to wildlife.
- I am interested in wildlife, AND I actively take part in wildlife-related activities.
- I am NOT very interested in wildlife AND I don't do much that is specifically related to wildlife.
- I am NOT very interested in wildlife, BUT for various reasons I am involved in wildlife-related activities.

**5. The following are some ways that people interact with wildlife. Have you participated in these activities in the past 3 years? (Please check one for each item.)**

	Yes	No
a. Learned about wildlife by reading or watching television	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Spent time watching or photographing wildlife or birds	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Hiked, walked or biked in natural areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Rode an ATV, Jeep or dirt bike in natural areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Worked on a ranch or farm	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Camped	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Hunted any wildlife	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Fished any fish species	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Guided or outfitted individuals to hunt in Colorado	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. Participated in or commented on a CPW wildlife management plan or BLM, USFS or other federal land use plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Participated in or commented on a county, city or other local land use plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**6. How important are black bears to you? (Please check one.)**

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Neither Important, nor Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Very Unimportant
- I am not sure.

**7. Which of the following best describes your general attitude about black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)**

- I do not enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and regard them as a nuisance.
- I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa, but worry about problems they may cause.
- I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and do not worry about the problems they may cause.
- I do not have particular feelings about black bears in the Grand Mesa.

**8. How important is it to you to know that black bears live in this area and that their populations will continue to exist in the future? (Please check one.)**

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Neither Important, nor Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Very Unimportant
- I am not sure.

**Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print**

**9. In your opinion, how important of an issue are negative interactions between humans and black bears in the Grand Mesa? (Please check one.)**

- Very Important
- Somewhat Important
- Neither Important, nor Unimportant
- Somewhat Unimportant
- Very Unimportant
- I am not sure.

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

### 10. How often have you experienced the following interactions with black bears in the past 3 years in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one for each item.)

	0 times	1-2 times	3-4 times	5 or more times	I am not sure.
a. Saw black bears in the wild, parks or preserves	<input type="radio"/>				
b. Saw black bears in urban or suburban areas of town	<input type="radio"/>				
c. Saw black bears near my home	<input type="radio"/>				
d. Had a black bear break in to or attempt to break into my garbage	<input type="radio"/>				
e. Had a black bear damage my garden or fruit trees	<input type="radio"/>				
f. Had a black bear damage my agricultural crops	<input type="radio"/>				
g. Had a black bear attack or harass my livestock	<input type="radio"/>				
h. Had a black bear damage my bird feeder, pet feeder, or grill	<input type="radio"/>				
i. Had a black bear cause damage to other property (e.g. fences, car, garage, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>				
j. Had a black bear attack or harass my pets or livestock	<input type="radio"/>				
k. Had a black bear enter or attempt to enter my home	<input type="radio"/>				
l. Knew someone who was attacked or harassed by a black bear	<input type="radio"/>				
m. Was attacked or harassed by a black bear myself	<input type="radio"/>				

**11. Based on your experience, how has the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area changed over the last 10 years? (Please check one.)**

- Increased greatly
- Increased somewhat
- Stayed the same
- Decreased somewhat
- Decreased greatly
- I am not sure.

**12. How would you like to see the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area change over the next 10 years? (Please check one.)**

- Increase greatly
- Increase somewhat
- Stay the same
- Decrease somewhat
- Decrease greatly
- I am not sure.

**13. How important is it to you that the change in black bear populations you indicated in the previous question occur over the next 10 years? (Please check one.)**

- Very important
- Somewhat important
- Slightly important
- Not at all important
- I am not sure.

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

**14. To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.)**

**I believe that CPW is currently doing an adequate job of managing black bears in GMUs 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 and 63.**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree, nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I am not sure.

**15. To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.)**

**I believe that hunting, watching and other bear-related forms of recreation contribute substantially to local economies of Mesa, Delta, Montrose, Gunnison, and Garfield counties.**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree, nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I am not sure.

**16. Have you hunted black bears in Colorado?**

- Yes
- No

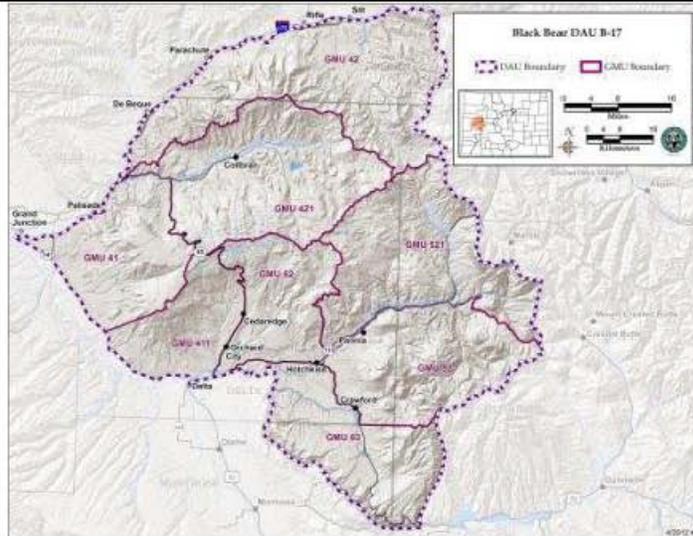
**17. Have you hunted black bears in GMU 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53, or 63? (See the map below.)**

- Yes
- No

**18. In which GMU did you hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa? (Please check one.)**

- 41
- 42
- 421
- 411
- 52
- 521
- 53
- 63
- I am not sure.

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print



**19. Overall, how satisfied were you with your black bear hunting experience(s) in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)**

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied
- Somewhat unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
- I am not sure.

**20. Which of the following methods did you use to hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check all that apply.)**

- Encounter
- Predator call
- Spot and stalk
- Still hunting or tree stand
- I am not sure.

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

**21. Which of the following is the most important reason that you hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)**

- To provide meat for myself, family, and/or friends to eat
- To enjoy nature and spend time outdoors
- The chance to harvest a trophy black bear
- The opportunity to hunt black bears each year
- I am not sure.

## Grand Mesa Bear Management Plan print

**22. Did you attend a public meeting held by CPW to discuss the black bear management plan in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)**

- Yes  
 No

**23. Which meeting did you attend? (Please check one.)**

- Grand Junction  
 Hotchkiss  
 Rifle  
 Collbran

**24. Were your questions and concerns regarding black bear biology and management in the Grand Mesa area adequately addressed at the meeting? (Please check one.)**

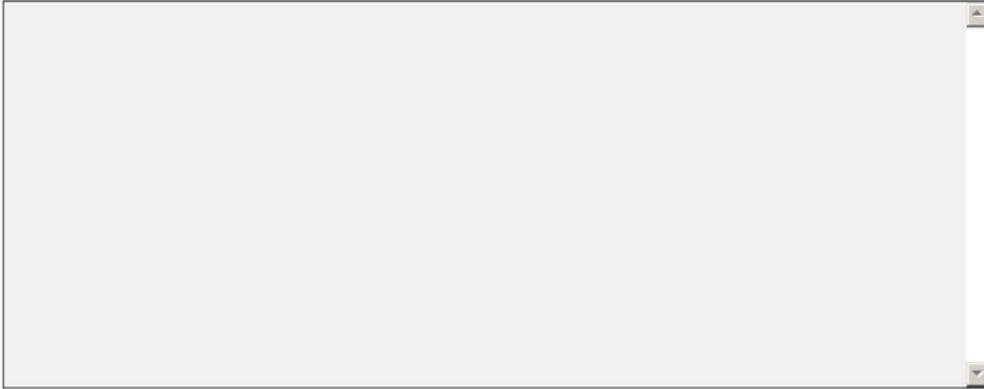
- Yes  
 No

**25. Which of the following alternatives would you prefer to guide CPW's decisions about the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area in the next 10 years? (Please check one.)**

- Maintain a stable population of black bears at current levels. Black bear populations, and therefore, hunting opportunity will remain at or near current levels, but may fluctuate in response to mortality from other sources such as bear-vehicle collisions . Bears will be seen in the area as often as they are now and the number of negative interactions with bears will remain constant.
- Short term population decrease from current levels, then maintain a stable population of black bears at decreased population size. Black bear hunting opportunity would increase in the next 1 to 3 years, but decrease after that time as fewer black bears are available for harvest. Bears may be seen less often, but the number of negative interactions with bears may also decrease.
- Long-term decrease in population size from current levels. Black bear hunting would increase in the short-term, but will decrease in the long-term as bear populations decrease. Bears will probably be seen less often, and the number of negative interactions with bears probably decrease.
- I am not sure.

**26. Why did you choose the management goal, above, that you would like to see guide black bear management in the Grand Mesa for the next 10 years? (Please describe.)**

**27. Please use the space below to write any additional comments or observations about black bear management that you would like to share.**



## APPENDIX C: PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

1	Are you a resident of Colorado? (Please check one.)		
		Yes	93.0%
		No	7.0%
2	Do you live in GMU 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 or 63? (Please check one.)		
		Yes	63.9%
		No	36.1%
3	In which of the following GMUs do you live? (Please check one.)		
		41	18.1%
		42	23.6%
		421	12.5%
		411	7.6%
		52	13.9%
		521	6.3%
		53	13.2%
		63	4.9%
4	People are involved with wildlife in many ways. Which of the following statements best describes your current level of interest and involvement? (Please check one.)		
		I am interested in wildlife, BUT I don't do much that is specifically related to wildlife.	9.0%
		I am interested in wildlife, AND I actively take part in wildlife-related activities.	90.1%
		I am NOT very interested in wildlife AND I don't do much that is specifically related to wildlife.	0.0%
		I am NOT very interested in wildlife, BUT for various reasons I am involved in wildlife-related activities.	0.9%
5	The following are some ways that people interact with wildlife. Have you participated in these activities in the past 3 years? (Please check one for each item.)		
		a. Learned about wildlife by reading or watching television	
			Yes
		No	6.8%
		b. Spent time watching or photographing wildlife or birds	
			Yes
		No	10.8%
		c. Hiked, walked or biked in natural areas	
			Yes
		No	9.0%

5 The following are some ways that people interact with wildlife. Have you participated in these activities in the past 3 years? (Please check one for each item.)

<b>d. Rode an ATV, Jeep or dirt bike in natural areas</b>		
	Yes	78.2%
	No	21.8%
<b>e. Worked on a ranch or farm</b>		
	Yes	64.6%
	No	35.4%
<b>f. Camped</b>		
	Yes	91.3%
	No	8.7%
<b>g. Hunted any wildlife</b>		
	Yes	91.3%
	No	8.7%
<b>h. Fished any fish species</b>		
	Yes	93.2%
	No	6.8%
<b>i. Guided or outfitted individuals to hunt in Colorado</b>		
	Yes	21.9%
	No	78.1%
<b>j. Participated in or commented on a CPW wildlife management plan or BLM, USFS or other federal land use plan</b>		
	Yes	41.1%
	No	58.9%
<b>k. Participated in or commented on a county, city or other local land use plan</b>		
	Yes	38.7%
	No	61.3%

6 How important are black bears to you? (Please check one.)

Very Important	57.2%
Somewhat Important	36.5%
Neither Important, nor Unimportant	3.8%
Somewhat Unimportant	1.4%
Very Unimportant	0.5%
I am not sure.	0.5%

7 Which of the following best describes your general attitude about black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)

I do not enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and regard them as a nuisance.	3.3%
I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa, but worry about problems they may cause.	48.1%
I enjoy black bears in the Grand Mesa and do not worry about the problems they may cause.	42.9%
I do not have particular feelings about black bears in the Grand Mesa.	5.7%

8 How important is it to you to know that black bears live in this area and that their populations will continue to exist in the future? (Please check one.)

Very Important	76.1%
Somewhat Important	14.8%
Neither Important, nor Unimportant	6.2%
Somewhat Unimportant	1.4%
Very Unimportant	1.4%
I am not sure.	0.0%

9 In your opinion, how important of an issue are negative interactions between humans and black bears in the Grand Mesa? (Please check one.)

Very Important	43.3%
Somewhat Important	34.3%
Neither Important, nor Unimportant	11.9%
Somewhat Unimportant	6.7%
Very Unimportant	2.9%
I am not sure.	1.0%

10 How often have you experienced the following interactions with black bears in the past 3 years in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one for each item.)

<b>a. Saw black bears in the wild, parks or preserves</b>		
	0 times	14.1%
	1-2 times	19.0%
	3-4 times	18.0%
	5 or more times	48.3%
	I am not sure	0.5%

**10** How often have you experienced the following interactions with black bears in the past 3 years in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one for each item.)

**b. Saw black bears in urban or suburban areas of town - 0 times**

	<b>0 times</b>	<b>55.4%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>29.2%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>6.9%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**c. Saw black bears near my home - 0 times**

	<b>0 times</b>	<b>48.7%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>9.0%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>13.1%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.5%</b>

**d. Had a black bear break in to or attempt to break into my garbage**

	<b>0 times</b>	<b>86.4%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**e. Had a black bear damage my garden or fruit trees**

	<b>0 times</b>	<b>88.5%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>4.0%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**10** How often have you experienced the following interactions with black bears in the past 3 years in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one for each item.)

<b>f. Had a black bear damage my agricultural crops</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>93.4%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>3.0%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>g. Had a black bear attack or harass my livestock</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>82.7%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>h. Had a black bear damage my bird feeder, pet feeder, or grill</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>91.5%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>6.0%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>i. Had a black bear cause damage to other property (e.g. fences, car, garage, etc.)</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>83.2%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>9.1%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>4.1%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>3.6%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**10 How often have you experienced the following interactions with black bears in the past 3 years in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one for each item.)**

<b>j. Had a black bear attack or harass my pets or livestock - I am not sure.</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>81.8%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>4.5%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.5%</b>
<b>k. Had a black bear enter or attempt to enter my home - 0 times</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>92.4%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>6.1%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>l. Knew someone who was attacked or harassed by a black bear - 0 times</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>71.0%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>20.0%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>6.5%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>2.5%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>m. Was attacked or harassed by a black bear myself</b>		
	<b>0 times</b>	<b>88.1%</b>
	<b>1-2 times</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
	<b>3-4 times</b>	<b>1.5%</b>
	<b>5 or more times</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
	<b>I am not sure</b>	<b>0.0%</b>

**11** Based on your experience, how has the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area changed over the last 10 years? (Please check one.)

<b>Increased greatly</b>	<b>35.2%</b>
<b>Increased somewhat</b>	<b>28.6%</b>
<b>Stayed the same</b>	<b>19.5%</b>
<b>Decreased somewhat</b>	<b>1.4%</b>
<b>Decreased greatly</b>	<b>1.0%</b>
<b>I am not sure.</b>	<b>14.3%</b>

**12** How would you like to see the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area change over the next 10 years? (Please check one.)

<b>Increase greatly</b>	<b>5.8%</b>
<b>Increase somewhat</b>	<b>23.1%</b>
<b>Stay the same</b>	<b>27.9%</b>
<b>Decrease somewhat</b>	<b>29.3%</b>
<b>Decrease greatly</b>	<b>10.6%</b>
<b>I am not sure.</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

**13** How important is it to you that the change in black bear populations you indicated in the previous question occur over the next 10 years? (Please check one.)

<b>Very important</b>	<b>46.2%</b>
<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>37.5%</b>
<b>Slightly important</b>	<b>10.1%</b>
<b>Not at all important</b>	<b>2.9%</b>
<b>I am not sure.</b>	<b>3.4%</b>

14 To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.) I believe that CPW is currently doing an adequate job of managing black bears in GMUs 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53 and 63.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>27.6%</b>
<b>Neither agree, nor disagree</b>	<b>17.1%</b>
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>16.7%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>17.6%</b>
<b>I am not sure.</b>	<b>3.8%</b>

15 To what extent do you agree with the statement below? (Please check one.) I believe that hunting, watching and other bear-related forms of recreation contribute substantially to local economies of Mesa, Delta, Montrose, Gunnison, and Garfield counties.

<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>49.8%</b>
<b>Somewhat agree</b>	<b>21.1%</b>
<b>Neither agree, nor disagree</b>	<b>12.9%</b>
<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	<b>6.7%</b>
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>8.6%</b>
<b>I am not sure.</b>	<b>1.0%</b>

16 Have you hunted black bears in Colorado?

<b>Yes</b>	<b>80.9%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>19.1%</b>

17 Have you hunted black bears in GMU 41, 42, 421, 411, 52, 521, 53, or 63? (See the map below.)

<b>Yes</b>	<b>68.9%</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>31.1%</b>

18

In which GMU did you hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa? (Please check one.)

41	7.1%
42	25.3%
421	23.4%
411	3.2%
52	7.8%
521	11.0%
53	11.7%
63	4.5%
I am not sure.	5.8%

19

Overall, how satisfied were you with your black bear hunting experience(s) in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)

Very satisfied	28.9%
Somewhat satisfied	27.7%
Neither satisfied, nor unsatisfied	24.7%
Somewhat unsatisfied	6.6%
Very unsatisfied	7.2%
I am not sure.	4.8%

20

Which of the following methods did you use to hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check all that apply.)

Encounter	21.2%
Predator call	9.8%
Spot and stalk	41.7%
Still hunting or tree stand	22.0%
I am not sure.	5.3%

21	Which of the following is the most important reason that you hunt black bears in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)	
	To provide meat for myself, family, and/or friends to eat	12.1%
	To enjoy nature and spend time outdoors	26.1%
	The chance to harvest a trophy black bear	22.4%
	The opportunity to hunt black bears each year	30.9%
	I am not sure.	8.5%
22	Did you attend a public meeting held by CPW to discuss the black bear management plan in the Grand Mesa area? (Please check one.)	
	Yes	9.7%
	No	90.3%
23	Which meeting did you attend? (Please check one.)	
	Grand Junction	25.0%
	Hotchkiss	25.0%
	Rifle	15.0%
	Collbran	35.0%
24	Were your questions and concerns regarding black bear biology and management in the Grand Mesa area adequately addressed at the meeting? (Please check one.)	
	Yes	77.8%
	No	22.2%
25	Which of the following alternatives would you prefer to guide CPW's decisions about the number of black bears in the Grand Mesa area in the next 10 years? (Please check one.)	
	Maintain a stable population of black bears at current levels.	56.8%
	Short term population decrease from current levels, then maintain a stable population of black bears at decreased population size.	21.4%
	Long-term decrease in population size from current levels.	17.0%
	I am not sure.	4.9%

**26 Why did you choose the management goal, above, that you would like to see guide black bear management in the Grand Mesa for the next 10 years? (Please describe.)**

1	Bears wouldn't be seen around my cattle, Bears wouldn't be putting their muddy paws on my vehicles, or home windows wondering what we were watching on TV, The deer and elk herd populations would also increase from fawns/calves being killed, (with an increase in mountain lion quotas would increase these populations) 4. The people / bear conflicts would decrease if there was more acreage per bear to help subadults define their home ranges 5. With few bear, forage would increase, allowing bears the opportunity to develop into 'trophy' bears
2	A decrease over a longer period of time would be less visible to folks out east that removed our oportunities for trapping, use of hounds, spring hunts, and baiting.
3	Actually, I am a huge nature lover, and I don't see that there is a problem with Black Bears in the area, I do believe it's uneducated people that create the problems we have with them, leaving food out, not picking up there fruit from their trees that drop to the ground, not having bear proof garbage containers. We cannot forget we moved in on them, they are only doing what comes naturally to them, and if it's a dry winter, that just increases their activity because of lack of food. Hunting them does not solve the problem, and the two times out, is the most stupid law that I ever heard of.
4	Although we have not experienced any problems with bears, our neighbors have. We do not know what the current population of bears is, but we do know that the population has increased greatly over the past 40 years. When I was a child, I only saw bears one time on Grand Mesa. Now we hear about bears frequently, and we see signs of bears on trails and roads. We have not hunted bears, but we recognize that control of the population of predators has far-reaching impact. Frankly, we have more problems with deer than with bears! We trust that the wildlife experts will make good decisions for all involved.
5	As an avid elk hunter, the number of black bear sightings has increased significantly over the past 10 years. Although I feel preserving the black bear population is important for many reasons, I think the population may be getting a little out of control at least locally.
6	As the population in this area expands, there are less and less places for the wildlife, therefore the numbers of wildlife have to decrease. The areas that are left can not support even the number of animals there are now. And as the prey disappears - even slightly - any increase in the number of preditors will lead to more human issues. From my experience growing up here, 15 years ago, if you saw a bear it was very exciting. Now the feeling, is more of oh crap there is another one. And as bears are relocated from places like Aspen, they move out the bears that have lived in an area due to the amount of area the bears call their territory. I am not an expert but this seems to be causing major issues in the areas near where bears are relocated to. All of this is a result of the fact that as the population of people grows, there simply is not room for the number of bears, mountain lions or any other wildlife to grow.
7	Bear management isn't like deer or elk management, hunting doesn't influence population size like it does for deer and elk. A prime example is the West Muddy country were bears a lot of bears are killed each year because of game damage. Fall food failure is more of a factor in bear poulation numbers then hunting.
8	Bear numbers at current levels are creating human conflicts that need to be reduced.
9	Bear populations are at a healthy level and numbers should be managed through hunter harvest. This strategy provides outdoor opportunities for hunters and revenue for the State of Colorado.
10	Bear populations are to high, the resent weather patterns have made natural food sources in limited supply, so bears go to dumpsters and become used to people. You are bound to have sirius problems. bear numbers half to go down or we are going to start having bears starving to death or even worse becoming more aggressive towards people.
11	Bear populations should be maintained in 421. It is critical that they do not increase. Spring bear hunting in Colorado needs to be re-instated.

12	BEARS ARE GOOD TO BRING HUNTERS IN FROM ALL OVER THE USA AND THEY ARE A CHALLENGE FOR US TO HUNT AND A DELIGHT TO SEE. JUST THIS SPRING, WE HAVE SEEN 6 BLACK BEARS AND ONE GRIZZLEY BEAR ON OUR RANCH.
13	bears are part of natures plan. i enjoy seeing them and watching them. i am also a sportsman and attempt to harvest one. there seems to be a problem with bears in urban areas. this issue needs to be addressed to keep humans and pets from harm.
14	Bears are predators. They eat livestock and game animals and are dangerous. Hunting is best done by baiting. All predators should be controlled.
15	bears are there but hear of little conflict with people normal years
16	Because bears are just as important balance in the wildlife as the other game animals. One thing I would like to see stop is the 3 strikes and the bear killed. I think these 3 strike bears should be transported to remote areas.
17	Because I believe the CPW/DOW management of wildlife, specifically black bear, has been the result of caving to special interest such as dropping spring seasons, rather than based on best management practices and the population has now gone across the state to the point of "negative" interactions caused by over population. This is also effected by suburban encroachment which should be part of the management plan.
18	Because it is important for our large wild animals to be well represented in the wild for the health of our forests and for the experience for city folks to see them and for hunters.
19	Because there was not an option to increase the bear population and hunting oportunities. Why not?
20	Because there's too many bears and too many negative encounters.
21	Because your survey had no option to increase the number of black bears, which would have been my first choice.
22	Been hunting in unit 42 for the last 4 years. In the last 2 years it seems the population is out of control and every trail i was walking on to hunt elk i would see a bear somewhere near. I would like to see a better control on bears so the elk/dear population stays at normal. I like to be out in the wild but fear to have a run in with a mom and a cub it always seems like you have to be watching your back everywhere you go so you dont get in between the mom and the cubs. I talked to a guy that is exactly what happened to him but good thing the mom didnt come at him closer then 10 yards.
23	best opportunity for hunting
24	Black Bears are part of the natural ecosystem. Although there are bear/human conflicts we need to maintain a balanced environment and I would vote for the bears.
25	Black bears don't seem to be a problem on the mesa . People that I know that have a cabin on the mesa have never said that they have had problems with bears . I fly fish on the mesa every week all summer and have never seen a bear in the woods , only on highway 65 . You are doing a good job with the bears .
26	Bring back a spring season to help control the bear population!!!!
27	Bring back the Spring hunt.
28	By maintaining a stable population, the ecosystem in wildnerness and outlying areas would offer both naturalists and hunters oportunities to enjoy bears in their natural habitat. be encouraging harvesting (hunting) in areas around area where bears are intrusive and causing damage the mortality of bears caused by vehicle collisions and animals destroyed by government hunters and law inforcement would be minimized.
29	Dont believe there is a problem with the current population of bears
30	Enjoy seeing and hunting bears in GMU 42.
31	From my personal experience there appears to be a substantial number of bears in the areas that we visit for camping and hunting. (Unit 521). We encounter bears alot and the sows that we encounter seem to have 3 cubs many of the times, so reproduction seems good. From these personal observations, it appears that the population is high and could be reduced. We have not had bears in our camp as we keep a very clean camp, but while hunting we have had them get into our kill sites and damage the downed animals and meat.

32	have been in the area for over 40 years and have witnessed the population increases and the shortening of the bear seasons by the public ballot. Encounters with humans and bear kills on livestock have increased. They really influence the elk and deer percentages in the spring. There are too many bear!!!
33	Having hunted for Black Bears in GMU 421 with unsuccessful results last season, combined with not seeing any bears recently(past 3 years) makes me think that the bear population could stand to be increased slightly or maintained at the current levels.
34	Hopefully by short term decrease n bear population it woudl result in less numbers of negative interactions with bears resulting in less property distruction from bears and fewer bears being moved or put down by law enforcement.
35	Human behavior and activity can and should be changed to reduce negative interactions with bears. Not all activities desired by residents should take precedence over bears such that their population should be reduced to make such activities less hampered by bear interactions. If anything, bear numbers or problem bears should be controlled by hunter harvest. Regulations should be flexible enough to permit take of problem bears at the time and season and location dictated by the problem.
36	hunting purposes and want to make sure that they are still around for my kids and grand kids in the future
37	i believe based upon indirect evidence ive noticed over the years that there is a significant amount of poaching of bears in the west elks.
38	I am an avid hunter, mostly for bears! First big-game I ever killed. I admire bears, love living amongst them and look forward to seeing them here in Collbran. I live near the end of Kimball Creek Road, on property with a cabin that has bears occasionally on it from now until they hibernate. We respect the bears, they have done some damage over the years, but we learned early on to bring in bird feeders, dog food, ice chests and even toilet paper...ha!! They are inquisitive and fun to watch, not just to hunt. We've had them pull wiring out of our tool trailer, eat a seat cushion on a snow machine and get in to our dumpster time and time again.....even with chains on it. We choose to live amongst bears. We also choose to hunt them, and as hunters, we feel there are way too many bears in our area. We see them in downtown Collbran through-out the summer, we are business owners on Main Street and have come face to face with bears at our screen door before. I would never want to see bears massacred, but I do firmly believe that we need to bring back Spring hunting. We need to get a more manageable number of bears here, so that we don't see them on a fairly regular basis, so that they become a little more scarce, so that they don't come into human contact so much that they are tagged and then killed because they did it one time too many. We know of people that have been allowed to slaughter bears on the Grand Mesa, because they were a nuisance....how is that fair to the bears!! Give the hunters the chance to manage bears and get their numbers down, by allowing us to get a tag every year, which...does not mean a harvest! Fall bear hunting is hard, and I've tried all the methods. We need a Spring Hunt, for Boars. We regularly go to Canada, Saskatchewan in the Spring and Ontario in the Fall to hunt....over bait! They seem to have the bear populations in check, without the problems we have here in Collbran with bears in town. That's what I'd like to see, Spring "managed" Bear Hunting! Manage it over the years to come, not short-term.
39	I am concerned of the number of bear that are coming into populated areas.
40	I am interested in seeing stable or increased hunting opportunity. Like to see spring bear hunting and baiting available again.
41	i am not sure
42	I am satisfied with CDWs current black bear policy/season
43	I appreciate the hunting and viewing bears and in the past we havent seen many bears.
44	I beleave the population is okay now. We should not let it get higher or we will see more bears going into more citys & towns and cause problems. People have to realize we are building & moving into the bears country and we have to learn ti live with them. I do not want to push them out.

45	I believe a good population of bear in the Grand Mesa area will be good for the environment, hunting, and recreation viewing. Seeing the local native animals in our area is what makes Colorado such a great place to live. All types of people (hunters, hikers, animal watchers, and visitors) should have the opportunity to enjoy the beauty and wonders (bears) of Western Colorado.
46	I believe a limited spring bear hunt for Colorado residents would keep population of bears down. If opened to out of state hunters, money becomes the object and not bear population control.
47	I believe black bears are an important part of our world and decreasing the population would only hurt the natural life cycle. We went through this in the 1980's and it took a while to build the population back to a "normal stable population". Mainting where it is at is the right thing to do.
48	I believe that bears contribute both to the overall balance of nature and the enjoyment of humans. An educated population can coexist with bears and bears are a necessary part of our environment. We live on the river and have had bears in our yard forced down by hunger, as long as we kept our distance and did not entice them with food they minded their own business. In the wild I have never had one bother me though I have seen them while hunting other species.
49	I believe that black bears have a negative impact more than biologists believe. The deer herd has steadily declined over the past 5 or so years and bears contribute to this. As a result I believe we need to harvest more predators in this DAU over the next 10 years to help the deer herds.
50	I believe that if you decrease the population over a longer time frame we will still have a great quality bear in our area. Over the past five or so years I have found that most of the bears in area 42 have all increased in size 300# plus. I have found that our problem bears are the younger ones at lower elevations closer to more populated areas and aren't afraid of the human race. I would love to say that a spring bear hunt would help with this but kind of think its a double edged blade. We hunt in the spring and kcock down the population alright but then what do you do in late summer when things are drying up and the bears head to town to look for food. I love hunting bears in the fall of the year as that is my favorite time to be out and never lack for seeing plenty of bears with that said from Sept 15th 2011 to Sept 25th 2011 I encountered 15 different bears in one 1/4 section in area 42 that is a bear plus every day. That may be a bit to many bears in one area??? I guess what I am saying is I would like to see the population decrease but I don't want it to disappear over night either. I look forward to seeing what the near future looks like!!!
51	I believe that the population needs to be decreased as soon as possible.
52	I choose the first one due to the fact I hunt the south side of the mesa 411 52 521. and that fits well in my opinon because of the time I spend in the field and air. from what I see there is not and overabundance of bears in 411, 52, 41 or 521. But time I have spent on the ground and in the air in units 421, 42 and 43 seems to be a bit different. I belive I have seen twice the bears in 421,42 and 43. I Think what I would like to see is units 411, 52, 41 and 521 be separated from the rest and put on there own management with the goal to increase population by no more than 8% to 10% by letting out a few less tags. as for the units I did not mention thats becuse I have spent little to no time in them.
53	i chose it because populations in any species can vary at times. Therefore we should maintain the population of bears in a stable way. People who live amoungst nature should educate themselves on how to handle bear encounters so they are positive, as growing up in National Parks I have seen a lot of idiots (people not bears)when rules were followed negative encounters did not happen and nature takes care of itself.
54	I chose it because the bears are eating many deer and elk calves and fawns. As well as my livestock. I don't hate bears but think they need to be controlled as they are out of hand. They are also becoming less afraid of humans and more dangerous.
55	I chose the second management goal because i felt that the number of bears in area 42 was a bit too much. Although i only saw a few bears while trying to fill my tag last season, I saw plenty of sign that would suggest a dense population. I feel that a slow decrease in population is the best solution. Too rapid of a decline could result in an unstable population i.e. Poor Boar to Sow ratio or vice versea. A smaller population would no doubt decrease the odds of negative bear interaction with humans and human property.

56	I chose this alternative because it indicates the existing habitat is sufficient to support and maintain the present bear population. If so, then manage them that way. Bear populations should not be reduced because of negative interactions with people who have built and/or continue to build their cabins/houses in areas that was or currently is bear habitat.
57	I chose this because it would allow the DOW to open up the spring bear hunt which was taken away many years back. I along with many fellow hunters believe that by bringing back a spring bear hunt with limited tags would really help to cut down on the negative encounters and the bear population.
58	I chose this management objective because I like how many black bears there are right now. I would like to see hunters have the opportunity to take more of them though.
59	i did not like any of the choices given
60	I didn't see any black bears during my hunt last year. Should the population decrease then i will have no incentive to purchase a black bear tag this year or the following 10 years. I want to kill a black bear, and one that is of a trophy size, I don't want to feel like i end up shooting a small black bear that just reached maturity.
61	I don't believe we are "over-run" with bears at this point in time and we are constantly encroaching on their home territory so I feel humans just need to accept that they are the trespassers as it were and learn to live together i.e. don't leave food or garbage out, keep pets in where they are safe or forgo having pets, and use common sense around wildlife. I don't want to see the bear population increase much because then too many are competing for the available food sources, which in turn could create more interaction with humans to the detriment of both species. I've caught a lot of flack over the years because I voted to do away with the spring bear hunting season - that we're soon going to be (ahem) "hip" deep in bears, but the simple solution there is to just issue more licenses during the fall hunting seasons. It seems hunting season runs from August thru December anymore anyway, so the hunters should be able to take a few more bears and keep the population in check that way.
62	I don't see a problem with the bear population in Unit #521 when I hunt there. However, after talking to several of the farmers, ranchers and cattlemen who actually live there year round and hearing about the ever increasing aggressive encounters they're having with the bears, I can see why they would want to see the population reduced.
63	I don't want to go to extremes managing bears, but they do need to be hunted in these areas. In the past 20 years their numbers, in my opinion, have tripled. I love to hunt with my family, therefore I don't want it to slow down after 1 to 3 years.
64	I enjoy bear meat and like hunting them. I think that they are an amazing creature. I am concerned that a smaller gene pool will be detrimental to the bear population. I am also frustrated that with being a Colorado native there are times when I am unable to draw a bear tag because of "management" numbers and allocating a number of those licenses to non-residents.
65	I enjoy looking for bears in the spring and see sows with cubs, take pictures every chance I get. Always look for boers looking for sows to hopefully find a big one to look for at hunting season. I enjoy every moment I get to see one. Not very lucky harvesting them but enjoy being out looking for them. Hope to see a bigger population to better my odds.
66	I enjoy seeing the bears when you search for them. They belong here as part of the current ecosystem
67	I enjoy the black bears both for observing and hunting and would like to see the population remain the same or increase slightly.
68	I feel that bear, as predators, help manage the health of game herds, which in my opinion belong in these units. And, while sorry for livestock losses, in my opinion wild herds and predators should have precedence over domestic stock, at least on public lands.
69	I feel that it is important to have bears to balance the ecosystem. Hunting should be based on population and possibly increased in the areas higher population where there are more human encounters and decreased in the lower population areas where there is less population. Possibly maintaining the number of bears harvested but adding a spring hunt to help control problem bears.
70	I feel that the number of bears is currently at a good level and will continue to allow hunters a chance to harvest a bear to provide food for their families.

71	I feel the population, by the numbers of bears I see while enjoying the outdoors, have seemed to remain constant in the last decade. CPW should not have their opinion swayed by local landowners or ranchers. These people choose to live in an area that has a healthy bear population. When people practice the good advice given by the bear aware teams, bears generally do not pose any real serious conflict. These people are free to move to areas that bears do not inhabit. Thank you.
72	i have 4,400 acres of ranch straddling gmu 52 and 521. we run cattle and occassionally sheep. the number of bears in the past 12 years has increased dramatically, and the number of very large old sows and boars is increasing. the current hunting scheme is not reducing the large aggressive, damage causing bears.
73	I have bears at my house evry spring/summer for the past 3 years. If in the months of april/may a bear has come down this low there is too many bear.
74	I have had black bears break into my camp. I think there are too many bears in this area and that they are becoming a real problem and threat to domestic livestock.
75	I have hunted in GMU 63 (Crystal Creek area) for 23 years and have camped and fished in the area for over 30 years. Until about 1990 I had only seen approx. five to ten bears. In the last five years I can usually find a bear every day while bow hunting in Aug. and Sept. It normally takes 2 points to get a rifle tag and most of the hunters I have come across with rifle tags hunt the roads and don't get far from them, which most often does not result in harvesting a bear. The only issue I have with number of bears at this time is that I often take my grand kids camping in this area and I am concerned for their safety due to them being small and could be mistaken for prey by bears. This is always possible in the forest, but with the number of bears in my unit, I keep the little guys close at all times. I feel we could thin out the bears a little. Last archery season my wife and I saw three different sets of sows and cubs. Two had twins and one sow had three little guys. I have never seen this many sets of sows and cubs in one year.
76	I have never had a negative bear interaction. If you maintain the bear population about the same and educate the public on how to react to them, then I should be able to enjoy bear hunting and sighting for years to come.
77	I have never harvested a black bear yet, but I feel the population is about right. If there was a over population, I would see them all the time. Most of the encounters that I have heard about is mainly related to the availability of their food source.
78	I have on average 2-4 bear "encounters" during hunting season each year depending on the number of seasons I hunt. I have had one bear come onto a balcony and get into the grill. I do not see the bears as overly threatening to humans as long as proper procedures are taken when hiking or watching wildlife such as bear spray or side arms. I think the population has been well managed but also see that there is a definite need for population management in other units other than Grand Mesa such as Aspen and Basalt area.
79	I have seen more bears in the last 2 years than in the past. They are becoming a nuisance during trips in the field. They are less likely to flee humans. They are harassing livestock and have watched them chase young elk and deer. I encountered one that would not leave. We had to ride around him and he watched us all the way. Hunters buy a tag usually not for a bear hunt specifically, but for a chance encounter. If baiting were available as a tool, I believe the hunts would be more successful, more likely to draw bear hunters to the state, a more precise management tool and contribute to the local economy.
80	I have witnessed a major increase in bear population and negative bear/ human encounters since elimination of spring bear season , baiting and hound hunting and the resulting reduction hunting opportunities. Increasing hunting opportunities will reduce numbers somewhat but more importantly the overall bear population will become smarter and regain their fear/respect for humans.
81	I keep hearing that there are to many bears from people I know. People that live in the areas and spend time outdoors either hunting, guiding or ranching.

82	i like the bear population how it is i just think we need a spring season to control the numbers better. Allowing houndsmen to pursue the bear in the spring would be a great way of controlling problem bears. Even if houndsmen didnt kill the bear, if they were allowed to run the bear off, it would put the fear of humans and dogs back in the bear, therefore they would stay away from human encounters and towns. There was never this many problem bear being killed back when we had a spring season for houndsmen. Now the DOW is shooting a ton of bears and just leaving them to rot instead of letting a sportmen enjoy the hunt and animail all at the same time the DOW makes bear tag money
83	I like to view and hunt black bears. I don't want to see them go away
84	I live up Leroux Creeek,at 7500ft.I raise goats.2years ago an old sow was teaching her 2 cubs how to hunt.They killed 19 goats in a week and a half.The government hunter took care of the problem bears,but I still have not been reimbursed for my loses.Last year I lost about 5 goats to bears.They can slip in in broad daylight without being seen.If this year is dry,most likely,I'll have more losses.
85	I love to see,watch, and hunt bears.
86	I mostly just don't want to deal with bears getting into my camps. Also am slightly concerned about bear predation on deer fawns, as many of these units are well below their objectives. Figure anything we can do to help the deer population out would be a good thing, and if that means bears are going to take the hit, then so be it. Not particularly concerned about their population numbers, nor am I concerned about seeing them often in the wild. Certainly understand and feel for those who deal with problem bears, and assume that having fewer bears around would be a good thing for all involved.
87	I saw 2 bear and my son saw 47 bear last year
88	I see so much bear sign in the area that it makes me uncomfortable while hunting, fishing and camping.
89	I spend a lot of time in the Grand Mesa area hunting, fishing, camping and 4-wheeling. We get the oportunity to see bears often and enjoy it. The bears we have see and come in contact with want nothing but to be left alone and have always gone on their way with no trouble. I have never had a bear come into camp and do any damage though they have walked thru and one time pulled a shirt off a line I had it drying on and another time one turned rocks over in the stream most of the night with it's cub next to our tent. I have never had one try to get into the trash or my food...can't say the same for the racoons though. I like the bear population, with the current availability of licences like it is.
90	I spend all most three months a year on the mesa. During September I will see bears every day. A population of this size needs to have stricter management. During third rifle w see the same results hearse heading back to the high country to hibernate. I sure wish there was a spring bear season!
91	I think it is healthier for the population to have a few less animals and less problems with bearts will reflect well on the DOW..
92	I think that the existing program is working just fine. We see plenty of bears and have very little problems with them.
93	I think the current level of bears is not a huge issue, although limiting bear/human interaction somewhat seems like a good goal.
94	I think theirs to many bears
95	i think there are plenty of bears in the counties now and it should stay that whay.
96	I think you nee to reinstate the spring bear hunt. There are just way to many bear lion and everything. Especially as dry as it has been. The ones you've had to put down would have made alot of money if you would have sold spring bear permits. Rather than have to put them down. I'm from the old school and in the 40s just on our summer range they killed 3 cows. So we trapped them and just on our place we got 13 bear. And there wasn't near the population there is now. Also you need to put a bounty back on lion.
97	I travel to colorado to hunt bear and believe i have a good chance to harvest an animal based on the number of bear I see.

98	<p>I used to be a thrill as a kid riding on the mountain to see bear sign. Now, it is an every trip occurrence to see the bear itself. As a stock grower, if I lost an animal, I used to be able to tell the cause of death, now all I see is what wasn't cleaned up by the bear: so what was the cause of death to my animal? As a stockgrower, I know what the sex of my animals off-spring is. If I were to 'estimate my stock sex and herd size scientifically' as CPW does with elk, deer, moose, bear and lions, I wouldn't know how many ewe and ram lambs, steers or heifers I had for sale. There are ways of determining the sex of your critters: field work. If baiting bears was brought back into Colorado hunting, a hunter would be able to determine the sex of the bear, no cubs present after some time watching, odds are its a boar; if a cub is present it is a female. Because it is illegal to shot a sow with cubs, how many are shot with out being reported due to spot and stalk and moments of opportunity? The statement about more sub-adult males and females being taken during seasons, is not solely because these bears are 'moving more', it is because the mature adults have established their home ranges and running the youngsters out, defending their territory. Simple animal behavior. Due to the estimated population of bears on the Mesa, we have seen a decline in the number of deer and elk. Bull and buck quality are down. There is a direct corralation between the number of predators (bear population increasing) and prey animals (mule deer and elk decreasing). Look at what happened to the jack rabbits and coyotes. Yeah, we're out of jack rabbits. If the bear (and mountain lion) population numbers were brought down below the carrying capacity, the other big game animals would again be at desired population levels. The overall quality of Colorado hunting would also increase back to previous levels on various criteria: Quality of animals, more satisfying hunts (all species), more revenues to CPW in licences sales from in and out of state, more economic revenues for our hunting communities from out of state hunters and thusly, more tax dollars generated to the State as well. Because of the population numbers in the state, not just B-17, more hunters are probably settling on their kill due to the frustration over the lack of an opportunity for a trophy bear. Population reduction would allow for more trophy hunting opportunities statewide, more importantly on the Grand Mesa.</p>
99	<p>I would like for my children and grandchildren to have the same opportunity to see and hunt bears as I have had</p>
100	<p>I would like to have the opportunity to hunt a trophy black bear in the GMU which I live.</p>
101	<p>i would like to see more bears available during hunting seasons.</p>
102	<p>I would like to see the black bear population remaing at its current levels as to provide hunting opportunities to hunters who need the meat to feed thier families. The revenue brought in from hunting bolster the local economy thus benefiting the residents. Lowering black bear numbers lowers hunting oppurtunites in the long-term thus lowering food sources and local hunting revenues. I feel that teaching people to be "Bear-Aware" is a much better solution for the continuation of bear hunting across the Grand Mesa for many generations to come.</p>
103	<p>I would like to see the deer &amp; elk populations grow like they used to be.</p>
104	<p>I would liketo have a spring bear hunt as well as be able to bait bears . The problem with the bears would go away if they were hunted more effectively as in other states. I have hunted bears in colorado for years and have yet to harvest one. I have seen sows and cubs and lots of sign but no shootable boars. Baiting would allow a higher selective harvest.</p>

105	<p>In my estimation this is a geographically habitat problem. The bear population in unit 521 has been decreasing over the last ten years. I hardly see a bear or evidence of bear on my property during the spring and summer anymore and never during the September hunting season. The drilling of natural gas wells and the development of private land, I believe to be the main factors in the scarcity over the last ten years, especially the last three years. The natural gas well drilling fracing process has caused many natural ponds to disappear in area 521, two on my property alone. To say nothing of the constant 24-7 drilling noise process for months &amp; months. So part of the necessary habitat is disappearing in drilling areas causing the bears and other wildlife to migrate to other areas where habitat or water in this instance is more plentiful and the noise levels are tolerable. This is evidenced to me by the number of bears sightings along highway 133 near West Muddy and Paonia Reservoir, where this more water and the increased sighting of game away from drilling areas. Keep up all the good work you do, protecting our wildlife and sustaining populations, but this mass panic attack on the natural resources by greed from gas companies has got to be controled. These visual habitat effects have been delayed in the past and we are just now beginning to see and experience how disturbing the natural environment for the wildlife effects their natural habitat, behavior and causes wildlife migration. This effect will be more prevalent and evidenced as more habitat is disturbed. Thanks for hearing one man's opinion on the subject!</p>
106	<p>In my opinion, Black Bears are an important resource in DAU B-17 and the entire state. I do not believe there is substantial reasoning for reducing the Black Bear Population in this area. The human population has increased...and this accounts for the Human/Bear interactions being seen. As a hunter and wildlife/nature enthusiast I spend a lot of time outdoors hunting, fishing, hiking etc. I have seen very few bears (3 bears in the last 10 years). I spend a majority of that outdoor time in prime bear habitat. I have hunted for bear and so far I have not been successful in filling a tag. I am an experienced hunter...and I have been successful hunting bear in States other than Colorado. I am of the opinion that the current bear population should remain stable...neither increasing nor decreasing. If the Black Bear population were only minimally reduced it could be done in a way that was perhaps more financially rewarding for the CPW. The cost of managing the Black Bear population could be better assisted in the following way: 1.) The cost of Archery Bear Licenses could be reduced. This might entice more people to hunt during Archery season. The success rate for Archery Bear Hunting is usually rather low. This would allow the Black Bear population to remain fairly constant while allowing the CPW to sell more licenses. 2.) Offer Archery hunters who have purchased a bear tag during archery season the opportunity to hunt bear again during the rifle seasons. People enjoying hunting with their friends and family. Giving hunters the a greater opportunity to hunt in both seasons will allow you to sell more licenses and it will allow hunters a better opportunity to join their friends and family who do not hunt during the archery season. This might also allow the CPW to manage the financial aspects of controlling the Black Bear population, without substantially decreasing the over-all number of bears in this DAU. 3.) Perhaps the cost of Elk or Deer Licenses could be reduced for people who have also purchased a bear license. This encourages a hunter to purchase more than one type of license. The idea of decreasing the Black Bear Population in DAU B-17 is not appealing to me as a hunter. It makes me feel less interested in purchasing a bear license. ( Less is NOT more in this situation). More or a stable population of bears available to hunt, and lower license fees is an incentive to continue purchasing bear licenses. Less bears available to hunt (at any cost) is unattractive to hunters. As hunters, we are not seeing a population of Black Bears in need of being diminished. There must be other effective deterrents and methods of management available to the CPW to help address any negative Human/Black Bear interaction. I know that in California a man named Steve Searles successfully utilized alternative methods of managing Black Bears in close proximity to Human populations and property such as crops or cattle. CPW should look into these methods. Hunting is a sound method of controlling the Black Bear population here in Colorado. However, if the population is reduced from it's current condition, I feel that hunters will loose the incentive to purchase a license. This would be counter productive for the CPW, the Hunters, Wildlife Enthusiasts as well as for the Black Bears. The economic benefits brought to these areas by hunters would also be diminished. I do not feel that reducing the population of Black Bears in DAU B-17 would be beneficial in the long run. Lets use our heads and find a better way of addressing the issues at hand. Thank you for listening to my opinion. I know that I am not alone in this view.</p>

107	I've been hunting bears in unit #53 for many years and I am very disappointed in the bears that's been shot by ranchers and left to lay in the fields. I think that the Division of Wildlife should allow more tags for hunting bears which would supply more income to the Division of Wildlife and won't leave the bear meat rot in the fields.
108	Leave the bears alone. We do not have a bear problem, we have a people problem.
109	like bears in the wild
110	Longer Season, More tags
111	Maintain the population and educate the public about bears. Make it manditory for people living near bear populations to comply with bear safety.
112	most people who live in the area and care about the wildlife already do what is neccasary to not have negative encounters.
113	My main reason is hunting and for all the time I spend hunting, the over all population is finally at a level that makes it worth well. Some irresponsible people with bird feeders or food in camp sites and home /camps leave food out and see 2 bear multiply it by 50 and say we have a problem. May be they should not be in the woods. Or maybe we should control them. (Fines)
114	Need to issue more tags for sportsman instead of having DOW officers kill 200 plus a year. Bear tags should be over the counter tags. Bring back spring bear season and the use of dogs.
115	open spring season !!! too many bears are bing killed by ranchers in the spring, and im not allowed to hunt one with my bow !?!? somthing is wrong with that !
116	People and their trashy habits combined with their ignorance of wildlife is the problem. Bears live in the woods. This is THEIR home.
117	Problem bears will decrease I would liketo see a spring hunt again and the use of bait & dogs reintroduced.
118	Reasonable plan to see if positive changes can be brought about. This is more probable plan which will come to pass.
119	Since the early 1990's Cub Bear Initiative we have seen a drastic increase in bears. The DOW should make decisions on management and allow Spring Bear hunting and or baiting to effectively manage the population since it is by far the best way to manage the population.
120	So I can hunt them or just to see bear on all the GMU and all Colorado!
121	The bear population in Colorado is at an all time high. A decrease in the bear population would be beneficial to other big game animals. The bear population in Colorado CAN NOT be controlled with the current bear hunting policies.
122	The bear population in GMU 421 has greatly increased in the last 10 years because of the spring season being stopped. If you are serious in really helping the bear management population, bring back the spring bear season, instead of hiring persons to go shoot and destroy bears to decrease the population. Highly unfair and not right to us who want to hunt bears and who apply for the tag when you hire killers to destroy bears because of the population; especially when it takes us hunters at least 1 preference point to draw this tag. Its not the bears falt they have multified. The spring season would greatly help the economy and bring in so much more moneys to the specific areas involved, including outfitters, local buisnesses, ect.
123	The black bear has just as much right to live as we do and there are too many people & too many bears. Any living thing should not suffer from starvation or have no place to rest. I think there are getting to be so many bears that there is not enough food or shelter for them. When I answered very important, that is because we have livestock and when the bears get low in food, I worry eveynight that they will come kill our livestock. As long as the bears stay in their world and we stay in our little world, we will all get along. If you are visiting the black bear world and encounter a bear and don't like it, then don't visit. We must learn to share this land. I think the 2nd and 3rd anwser say the same thing. Short term hunting to less hunting later. I think bears need to be manage & respected all the time.
124	The current bear population and hunting regime provide good hunting opportunities for those who will scout and work a little for a bear. The September bear season was exceptionally well designed, a carefully designed spring season should be OK

125	THE LAST THREE YEARS I HAVE A TRAIL CAMERA ON A WATER HOLE WITH AT LEAST SIX DIFFERENE BEARS COYOTES BOBCATS ELK MOOSE ETC.
126	The main problem is that the only truly efficient way of hunting black bears is and controlling the population is baitting and the use of dogs this needs to go to the head man in quit quit letting the nonhuntind public and city people decide how bear population is managed.
127	The Mesa needs a bit of "bearness"
128	The predation PROBLEM is out of control in Colorado and there are people trying to protect them and close down all hunting!!!!
129	The statement is the closest to my opinion. While we do see a lot more bears, I do not know if we have more bears. I know we have more bears than we did when I was growing up here in the 70's and 80's. But I don't know if we just see more down closer to the towns now or not. I was not able to attend the Collbran meeting and missed out on some very important information.
130	There are several large flocks of sheep in our area. Every year they lose a lot of sheep to bears in the wilderness areas. But these areas are not the problem areas ( human bear encounters ). Towns and urban areas are the problem. The bears in these areas are not afraid of humans, in fact a lot of bear feeding takes place in these areas. A short term increase of hunting may help with both problems.
131	There are way too many bears! Proof of this is easily shown by the high numbers of bears slaughtered the past 3 or 4 years by the so called DOW professional hunters that are called in to kill the bears that wander into communities, orchards, etc.. Why isn't there more effort put in by the DOW in calling in youth and or senior hunters w/bear tags to harvest these problem bears? Why not allow anyone purchasing an elk or deer tag (resident or nonresident alike) the option of getting a bear tag for free or at a much reduced price. How about a spring bear season again??? For most of Colorado domestic sheep ranchers are a thing of the past and in years past these sheep ranchers kept the bear population in check along w/coyotes and lions. It's not rocket science as to why our deer herds suck -- it's called predators > bears, lions and coyotes. Instead of all the dollars being wasted on new DOW vehicles, buildings, etc., some of these dollars should be spent on predator control. We sportsmen are also waiting to hear what became of that \$30 million plus that the DOW misplaced, lost or ???
132	There is no alternative for increased bear populations, only stable or decreased populations. I see very few black bears in this area compared to other areas of the western US in which I have lived and do not feel that the bear population necessarily needs to decrease.
133	There is not a bear problem.
134	They are magnificent animals that every outdoors person should have a chance to view. people need to be smart when encountering them
135	they need to be controlled and they do not need to be in our towns and city's where they are a problem, we have a problem with them right now.
136	they still need thier space
137	They were here first, and we must protect the ecosystem, for our own and their sake. All God's creatures are deserving of our stewardship.
138	To decrease bear activity at the lower level elevations and provide more hunting opportunities.
139	To decrease urban encounters and reduce fruit destruction.
140	to keep the bear population down to a more managable count,and to keep them away from human encounters. I like to see bears but i dont like to see them in trouble. Afterall we are moving in on them they are not moving in on us.
141	To provide more hunting
142	want to see the number of bears increase
143	We bowhunt Elk in Area 42. Our group saw over 12 bears during day light hours. One bear destroyed our cook tent, another follow my brother quit aways while bow hunting, and put paw prints on his tent. Our concern is Elk Calf predation and Nuisance Bears around campsite.

144	We had many bear on our property year before last. Not good.
145	We have had black bears on our deck. I don't want them to disappear, but I don't want them to increase.
146	We have more bears then anything else on our property. Maybe chipmunks out populate them but that's about it
147	We have too many bear coming down when there is the least problem of food.
148	we have too many bears
149	We have too many bears but they don't ned to be wiped out all at once.
150	we just have two menney bears being killed by the dow. we need more tags for the hunter.
151	We like seeing the black bear. We have only had one negative experience and that was a "trouble" bear that had been relocated to our area.
152	We live, ranch, and farm in bear country. They live here so do we. We need to learn to co-exist. I know there are many bears in the area. In the Grand Mesa area there are many bears in the wild and staying in the wild. I believe if there is a "problem bear" that we should take care of him by a case to case basis. My only problem with bears is that where I hunt they are so highly populated they push the elk out (Cottonwood Creek). I see bears all the time and more often then not they leave when they see a human. I know a few ranchers that have problems with them attacking calves and I believe those bears should be killed. Increasing the tags in the area will only make hunting pressure increase and we already suffer for elk and deer hunts. Thank you for your time.
153	We need to target removing bears from low lying areas where bears, humans & human habitat are affected. As the drier climates come around, bears keep migrating down & causing more problems. When I started hunting, you were lucky to see one bear in a hunting season. Now when you go out, you are liable to see 2 or 3 a day. So you know the population has grown drastically over the last few years. We are seeing a lot of juvenile bear, we do believe that the smaller bear are the ones causing all the problem, since they are being run out of the higher country.
154	we should also consider a hound pursue season, bears learn that hanging around humans isn't always fun.there's nothing to fear
155	While archery hunting in unit 52 over the last few years I have had more encounters with bears than I have had in the twenty years I have been hunting. Two of which were negative experiences where the bear showed aggression by jaw popping and standing there ground. I personally not very interested in harvesting a bear myself but do not enjoy have such negative experiences while archery hunting. Usully its the opposite, when a black bear sees or smells a human usually they turn and run but over the last few years the bears I have encountered did not have this fear of humans. This brazen behavior concerns me for other archery hunters as well as myself. I feel greater hunting pressure would help reduce the amount of bears in my area if not hopefully put a little more fear in them to reduce the number of encounters. Can we bring back the use of hounds??????
156	With a small decline in the population you can still keep your predator to pray in check and conserve the bear for years to come for a younger generation and keep your problem bears out of the gene pool.
157	You didn't have a goal of increasing the black bear population.

Please use the space below to write any additional comments or observations about black bear management that you would like to share.

1	Thanks for your talk and information. These critters sure don't hurt or bother me. Current levels are fine. No increase in my sightings (5 per year) in last 3-5 years. Go Bears!! GMU#53 Having lived for 6 months every year since 1981 on Kebler Pass (close to cow camp (mile post 12)) and observed 150 bears (5 per summer average). I had them on my property and on the property of neighbors whose cabins I maintain. In all this time I only know of 3-4 times of a bear break and enter a cabin (a couple of those on the Hotchkiss ranch (my neighbors)). I support current levels of bears because I've rarely seen problems or any major damage. Out of all 150 bears I've seen (honest and accurate #) I've only had one (3 years ago August) that did not turn and run at seeing me. This full size bear had an attitude and would not run away at my urging unlike the other 149 I've seen. He did not attack - He just moved at his own speed and direction regardless of me jumping up and down, waving arms, etc. I've wondered if he was a problem catch and release bear (from Aspen??) but Kirk Madriaga says they don't release them in our area.
2	1. Should consider the way bears can be hunted in the future. Things like limited spring bear hunts and different methods of hunting (baiting) can help keep bear population at a optimal levels. 2. Maybe rethink the 3 strikes and out method of controlling nuisance bears. Instead of euthanizing bears, consider moving them to others state wilderness areas with declining black bear population and/or possibly donating the bears to zoos world wide.
3	A spring bear hunt to help manage the population. This gives the hunter a chance to size up the animal to make sure they are not shooting a sow with a cub.
4	All comments in #26
5	As a resident of GJ and not a hunter I would agree that hunting is a plus for the economy. However, the population of black bear in my opinion should be as large as possible without danger to the humans.
6	as a sportsman i would like to see some hunting regulations changed to allow for better oppurtunities to harvest them. possibly baiting or the use of dogs. this would also greatly help the numbers control.
7	Based on where I live, personal sightings of bear, personal experiences on my ranch w/ bear, and bear hunting experiences, Management of the bear population at this time is critical. I personally feel that a better hunting management plan will take care of the population control.
8	Bear need room to survive without encroaching into populated areas. A spring hunt could be beneficial. There are very few hunters that can find or track bear, so a means to attract them would be beneficial, bait, dog, etc.
9	Bears are a predator that is partially responsible for the decline in mule deer whether people want to realize it or not
10	BEARS WERE BAD WHEN WE HAD THE SHEEP. NOW THAT WE DON'T HAVE SHEEP, THEY DON'T SEEM TO BOTHER THE HORSES AND CATTLE. ONLY ONE TIME DID A BEAR TEAR INTO THE PORCH WHEN WE WERE IN THE HOUSE. WE ENJOY ALL OF THE WILDLIFE AND WANT TO CONTINUE TO HAVE A HEAVY POPULATION. WE ARE EXTREMELY CONCERNED THAT THE COYOTES HAVE KILLED SO MANY FAWNS OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. WHEN THERE WERE SO MANY DEER IN THE 50'S AND 60'S THERE WEREN'T NEARLY AS MANY COYOTES AND SOME OF THE NEIGHBORS WERE TRAPPING THEM.

11	Because we go to Canada so much, were they can hunt over bait. We see how that works for long-term management. Both places we go to are small towns, like Collbran. You see the bears out in the wild...you do not see them all over town. I think because the bears come out of hibernation, they remember the previous years bait areas, and they go back to them, thus staying out of the civilized areas. And just because we are hunting over bait, does not guarantee a harvest. Many times we come home empty-handed. I've spent a whole day in a stand, watching just a last years cub come in, filming his antics and enjoying just being amongst the bears in their habitat. I would never dream of shooting one like that!! We know how to identify boars from sows and we try to only shoot at the boars. We wait and watch what comes in, watch to see if young cubs follow, or if they act strange as if a bigger bear is out there. We have taken young hunters out to the stand and let them just sit and watch the bears, up close and personal, but safe from a tree stand. I've tried hunting them in the Fall here in Colorado from a tree stand, but it's just luck if one comes in while you're there. We've done the best here, by just sitting up on a high vantage point and glassing, watching for movement in oak trees, berry bushes or crossing an opening. We hunt the Battlements, from the Kimbell Creek trail, into Smalley's and Bear Gulch. We know the bears are there, but we don't always see them during hunting season...nor harvest them,
12	Black bear hunting in colorado is a JOKE!!! The design of the hunt with other big game hunts going on at the same time decrease the chance of taking a bear. Depredation and crop damage across the state costs the sate hundreds of thousands of dollars every year, the state could off set this cost by allowing a spring bear hunt again with the use of being able to use bait and hound dogs again, that would also help lower the amount of bears.
13	Black bears are important to the wildlife balance and to hunters, outdoor sightseers. I strongly recommend doing away with the 3 strikes rule, if a bear comes to 3 strikes then it needs to transported to remote areas and let loose. Why should a bear die because it's looking for food it's doing what comes natural to any animal and that is survive. People should be held more responsible to their ignorance, fines and what not.
14	Bring back a spring season for bear!!!!!!
15	Bring back baiting of bears this will let hunters be more discriminate about the bears they kill. ie. older larger bears or problem bears. Larger fines for the people that feed the bears or leave their garbage where bears can get into it. There are a lot of ways to try and help the problems, but you will have to DO something. Just sitting back and have meetings and more meetings will accomplish nothing.
16	bring back spring bear hunting over bait i have been bear hunting over 50 years and i beleive hunting with hounds and over bait is the most ethical and selective method i also beleive that there is a much higher percentage of sows with cubs now killed since baiting and the use of hounds is prohibited. i know how difficult it is during the sept. season to see small cubs with a sow when the grass is high in the gambrel oak type habitat. i have personally found several dead sow bear abandoned while bowhunting
17	Covered in 26.
18	Decrease Bear Tags and allow baiting in specified areas. Higher success rate on filling a bear tag would also get more people interested in harvesting a bear.
19	Educate the general public on how to interact with bear and everyone wins
20	Food sources on Grand Mesa can be limited, especially in dry years. Bears come to town and agricultural areas. They are not a game animal as are ruminants. They are dangerous. I have had bears in with my livestock and they do great damage to my friends and neighbors herds.
21	Hunt options: bring back the spring bear hunt, allow bait during the fall hunts, specify sex during hunts: use of bait to watch the bears to determine if sow or boar, allow second bear tag for use with other hunt: example: hunt 2nd rifle for elk, sell a bear tag; buy a OTC deer tag with OTC bear tag, or allow sale of second bear tag for different rifle hunt. Refer to 26.
22	Hunters should beallowed to bait bears .

23	I agree with the hunting changes re: bear that have been instituted over the years here in Colorado. These are marvelous animals and deserve to be treated humanely, even during a hunt. Over the past few years, I have been privileged to spot a cinnamon phase juvenile and one bicolor bear, along with a giant boar (which was scared to death of us!) and a very young sow with new twins. We have had bear in camp and we've smelled bear in the brush or seen numerous bear sign on atv rides. My elderly parents live right on Surface Creek and have had numerous sightings between their house and the creek...no bear incidents in over 55 years. Maintaining bear populations at the present level helps assure that my grandchildren, some who are learning to hunt, will have the same opportunities to interact with black bear as I have had in my 63 years.
24	I believe that a more successful management tool of the bear population would be to allow bating or scent usage with hunting bears for the following reasons. 1) With bating or scent usage the hunter is able to be far more selective to be able to harvest older bears which often times become problem bears and dangerous bears. 2) Bating or scent usage allows hunters to have a great probability of not shooting a sow with cubs which again results in problem or dangerous bears as orphaned cubs are not trained properly by their mother. 3) Bating bears allows for a somewhat of a more controlled or planned encounter with a bear where the hunter is profited with the opportunity to observe the bear longer to be able to take a quality kill shot. The two bears that I have killed I happened upon. I was hunting in an area know for a good population of bears. Last year I was unsuccessful and I hunted actively all season, saw lots of sign but no bear. I also direct a Bible Camp in unit 421. During the spring and fall we have a good amount of bear activity. We are careful with our trash removal which helps. We also have dogs around the property which helps to keep bears away as well. In the past we have had bears trapped out with them so far being younger bears. We have had bear damage from time to time. They seem to like tetherballs.
25	I believe you have the chance to start a youth hunting program to help you in the management of big game animals. Such as offering a few combo tags for the youth such as a deer/bear or elk/bear the dates are to many to list but i feel this gives us a better chance at getting youth in to the outdoors and helping maintain good heard management. in the meeting the number of bear takin was around the 100 range out of 2500 tags with the increse in tags to 4500 make 500 or so for the youth. thank you for your time.
26	I dont hunt bears. i only go fishing
27	i dont want to fill the area up with someone elses problem bears and then we have a problem to deal with
28	I feel bears maybe having a negative impact on mule deer population i.e. fawn survival.
29	I feel that bears in residential areas should be given only one chance to be removed. I feel that hunting should be encouraged in areas adjacent to residential areas to reduce pressure. #19 Few bears in woods, many bears in residential areas.
30	I feel that the DOW for Colorado should offer a price reduction for other big game tags when a hunter purchases a black bear tag. This should hold for both archery and rifle season. The DOW will sell more tags and reduce the black bear population by hunters. The DOW sells more tags, and hunters have more oppourtunities of filling at least one tag making the time in the woods well spent.
31	I have been hunting black bears in unit 53 and have had the good fortune of seeing 2 bears in 2 years. Both of the bears I encountered were not of trophy size, although I am fairly sure there are a couple that qualify in the unit. I have spoken with hunters both local and out of state that are interested in hunting for trophy black bear, but are not impressed with the animals they have seen. This negative feedback tends to spread quickly and results in fewer sold bear tags. While that may give the bears in my area a chance to increase in size and population, it does not bode well for game management as a whole. All in all, an increase in bear population, results in an increase in bears being hunted. I would like to hunt and see more trophy size black bears.

32	I have bought bear tags for as long as I have been hunting. I am 28 years old and a very hard core hunter and I spend every possible day hunting I can, yet I have never shoot a bear or had the opportunity to shoot a bear. I hunt private and public ground and tried it all. bears are hard to hunt and i am to young to have enjoyed the days of baiting but to my understanding is that bears were not a problem then. We halt to bring back baiting and mabe even chasing with dogs to bring the bear population down. I have got on the DOWS web site and read that the DOW kills more problem bears in the city limits of aspen then all the hunters put together in area 42 and every bear has to be tagged so the numbers should be close, has you know there is a problem with that. As a hunter and knowing several hunters just raising the number of tags is going to help but it will not solve the problem. thank you.
33	I have found that due to overpopulation the bears are becoming more aggressive. They have no fear of vehicles, camps, etc.
34	I have lost livestock to bears but also understand that I live in the bears habitat. I now have Gaurdian dogs to protect my herd and have not had an issue since. I realize that the initial losses I had to bears was due to my ranch management. I enjoy seeing bears in the wild and in the area I live and I am teaching my childern how important of a role they play and that it is good to respect them from a distance.
35	I have no interest in killing bears because I have no interest in their meat. However, the chance to let others on and help curb the population would be a great one.
36	I never hunted bear until the spring season hut was canceled so now I am an avid bear hunter.
37	I seldom see bears in the wild in this area. Even away from the towns and populated rural areas, it is a rare occurrence to see a bear. The bear population is heavily influenced by mortality associated with sheep ranching and grazing on public lands, and I would like to see that monitored much more closely than it currently is, and taken into account when developing management plans. I would also like to see that data published in conjunction with legal take from hunting so that the public can understand the impacts of this in relation to legal hunting. I would also like to see the department publish data on where problem bears from other areas, such as Aspen, are released back into the wild, and if those bears are released into this area and cause further problems, that the department consider alternatives to release of problem bears into this area. The draft management plan is not available online, so I am wondering at the prupose of the current comment period. Without a plan to evaluate, comments cannot be directed toward specific parts of the plan. I would like to see another comment period after the draft plan is published so that it can be fairy commented upon.
38	I spend a lot of time in the West divide creek area watching and hunting bears so if you would ever like to ask me any questions please feel free to call me.
39	I summarized this in the previous question.
40	I think maybe have a special season to hunt with dogs to get a better handle on the bears since people hunting them are not have a good success rate or not putting in for tags. like myself i only get a bear tag so i can carry a hand gun while hunting elk in case i have a run in with a bear cause i am not crazy for the bear meat. Hope this helps you all out!

41	I think the need for hunters to take the animal to the ranger station within 5 days is a hassle. Most of the time when we head home the station is closed (Sunday), this forces us to leave early or make a special trip down when we get a bear. Make it 7 days so we can get home and then take it in. I also think the bear population is good in the Mesa. We get the chance to see them and take pictures and hunt them. If we kill more off we will not have as many opportunities to see or hunt them. I spend 4 to 8 weeks (not weekends but weeks) in the Mesa and have NEVER had a negative encounter with a bear. A little common sense with waste and food does the trick. Both my wife and I have walked up on or had bears walk up on us; every time the bear has left when it realized we were there. If people are having problems we should educate them not kill more bears. A few years ago a hunter wounded a bear in unit 421 (High Tower area) and was attacked; the DOW went in and killed a lot of bears, tore up the country side with their bikes and after all that found the wounded bear dead. Not only did it ruin all the hunting for that year in the area because of the activity but it took about 5 years for the bear population to come back. A wounded animal has the right to protect itself without it's whole species being wiped out of the area. We all need to use some common sense. If an animal is wounded in the area post a warning sign(s) (like you do for moose in the area for hunters), don't kill them all hoping you get the wounded one. Again, educate the people don't kill the wildlife that we all like to watch and hunt.
42	I think the spring bear hunt should be brought back and that the use of bait be allowed while hunting black bears. I also think that all decisions regarding the management of wildlife should be made by professional wildlife managers and not by the bleeding hearts of unknowledgable individuals in voting booths.
43	I wish that we were allowed to use bait stations.
44	I would like to see the black bear archery season start at the same time the deer and elk season starts. A lot of folks that I have talked with have a limited time to hunt and like to hunt the opening week of season but are unable to hunt bears because of the later opening date. There is no biological reason that I can think of to postpone the opening date. The CPW should change this.
45	I would like to see the black bear population go down. i think there are to many. when you walk in the woods all you see is bear sign. it makes me uncomfortable.
46	I would like to see the CAPS lifted for archery tags. This would allow more people that get out and hunt the option to get a bear tag. We will probable never see this again, but I believe that the population numbers are high enough to bring back bating for a few years. Like I stated earlier I can find a bear on most days, one just needs to get out and move slow.
47	I would love to see the state do a carry over program for unfilled tags. I'm not saying don't charge for the tag but allow the hunter to renew an unfilled tag to another season. From archery to rifle and from one rifle season to another. I have never under stood the reasoning behind this and the reasoning behind only being able to hunt a bear in any rifle season when you have a deer or elk as well. Maybe if we were able to keep hunting through out the seasons it would help with the population control and, keep generating revenue for the state, This type of program should be looked at for all big game animals during the big game hunting seasons what would it hurt?? Nothing !! The biggest thing it does is raise more \$\$\$\$ MONEY !!!! and allows the hunter a better chance at taking there game. This year it looks like you can have two bear tags for unit 42 /41.... one for a std season hunting any place in your area and list B tag for private land only. Are you kidding me how many of these tags do you think are going to be sold why limit where a person can hunt just roll over the tags from one season to the next for a fee and stop restricting where and when a person can hunt. Look at it this way unless you have mass amounts of private land at your beck and call why would you even think about this type of tag for a bear. I come from a great family that does have private mountain land to hunt but for that hunter out there that does not this tag makes no scense and as a land owner that can get this private land tag it allows me to be able to hunt longer for my bear. Why LIMIT this tag to PRIVATE land only. Taking a bear in any season is pretty tough. Why not increase the odds alittle bit. I know that the DOW gets asked all the time to start a spring bear hunt, wouldn't doing something like this be a better idea for bear population controll.
48	I would strongley recommend that they bring back the spring bear hunts

49	I wrote my suggestions on the previous question page.
50	If it is a low snow year give out more licenses because feed is going to be poor up high and bears will be moving down. In good snow years keep numbers normal.
51	If the Black Bears disappear, we will answer to their creator.
52	If the current levels are maintained combined with a slightly reduced cost in early season (archery/muzzle loading) bear and elk tags would increase the revenue produced by causing the number of bear and elk tags sold to increase overall. This may also help put more pressure on the bears in these units and assist in management of the population. Population reduction efforts also reduce the number of large bears in these units, which causes more out of state hunters to be less interested in purchasing a bear tag for these units, this results in lower revenue from out of state hunters. Overall, from a hunter standpoint, as well as being an individual that lives in one of these GMU's, I think a healthy bear population helps bring in revenue to the economies of the region. From lodging and fuel to meat packaging and groceries, a successful hunter spends money while enjoying their hunt.
53	If you don't want to have bears on your property or you are scared of bears move to New York. Bears and bear hunting is a part of Colorado. LETS KEEP IT THAT WAY!
54	If you had a spring season you would eliminate most of your bear problems. Even just a houndsman pursuit season like Utah has. Then the problem bears would be ran out of human encounters and towns. You could charge a \$100 or \$200 per pursuit permit and make a bunch of extra money for the game and fish. I understand a spring houndsman season has to go to a vote to implement but think about just a spring houndsman pursuit season, don't necessarily have to harvest the bears.
55	I'm pretty sure that most bear hunters are simply opportunistic bear hunters, and don't really care about trophy sizes, just the opportunity to kill one in conjunction with elk or deer hunts makes them/us happy. So, I see no harm in issuing more licenses, especially if it will help reduce negative human-bear interactions and possibly help fawn recruitment. Lastly, bear licenses are more expensive than deer licenses, and nonresidents buy a large percentage of the licenses, so we can make up the revenue losses from the deer declines by selling more bear licenses. Decreasing bear numbers can't possibly hurt deer or even elk numbers, but may help them, so let's give that a shot.
56	In more heavily populated and troublesome areas, consider a spring bear hunt! Legislation and public comments and ultimate votes from rural Colorado populations versus Colorado Metro Denver, where the killing of mama bears with cubs is all they saw and thought of when they voted. Real rural life experience and situations with bears must overshadow the Disney-ism opinion.
57	In places where bears are troublesome, it would be great to see the state bring in hunters to help control the population, just like they did with the sheep. This way the meat is not wasted.
58	Just my opinion black bears and human conflicts primarily in residential and rural areas are most likely the result of human food conditioning of bears. Since humans are supposedly way more intelligent than bears it would seem that we could be taught to apply better garbage and food storage practice or intentionally feeding bears resulting in human conflict with bears may be fines imposed on violators would decrease the amount of conflicts all by itself. I would be all for a good stiff fine to human created conflicts.
59	Keep bear hunting in Colorado
60	Leave the bears alone. Perhaps help them out in low food years so they stay in the high country. Take food to them as you do for deer and elk when they are in trouble.
61	Leave them alone, and let them live, quit having people move in on their territory.
62	Measures to produce trophy bears, could be a boost for economy. Tighter restrictions on tags for the sex of bear, in order to maintain a stable male to female ratio.
63	More hunting opportunity.
64	More studies should be done on Bear populations to be sure before any real action takes place. It would be very sad if it ends up like it did with the grizzly bear here in Colorado, we hardly ever see one they have become ghosts just like the wolf. Hunting is great if you need the meat, but most are out for a trophy at least the ones who are paying big money and it should be about more than money.
65	More tags, spring season, be able to use dogs.

66	One needs to understand that when many people see bears that that is an indication of an overpopulation of them. Bears are secretive so when they are less so that is a good indication as well.
67	open archery limited spring bear season, i talked to one rancher last year when bear hunting. he told me killed four bears in the spring and they were left to rot ! why am i not allowed to fair chase spring bear with my bow !!!??? its just wrong!!! look at the facts.
68	Open it up to more hunting
69	People are going to get killed by starving bears until the population is decreased and bears see people as danger instead of food. Dangrous bear encounters have incressed since baitting and dogs were outlawed. Batting and the usr of dogs eliminates the killing of sows with cubs and promots harvesting mature bears. Also it teaches bears that people are dangrous.
70	Please do not let sound wildlife management practices be overridden by radical environmentalists and the uneducated non hunting public.
71	Proving goat losses to bear is very difficult.They tend to devour everything and just leave tracks.I have seen bears cross through my place without doing any damage.It's the ones you don't see that are killing.I did draw a bear tag last September,and of course there were no bears on my place that whole month.My trail cams showed at least 6 different bears here through the summer.I only have 85 acres,that's a lot of bears.Without more leaway to thin the population,I'm going to continue to have problems.This summer looks like it's going to be dry.That's really bad for me.I have most of the coyotes scared to come around here.The bears have no fear.
72	Public meeting was helpful, informative I thought.
73	Reducing bear numbers to placate ranchers, or others who are just anti-pradator woul dbe a mistake. Making it too easy for lazy hunters to kill a bear would also be a mistake.
74	SEE 26
75	See previous. I will be attending the meeting mentioned.
76	Sheep ranchers shouldn't be able to kill bears just because they may have killed on lamb.
77	Since spring bear and baiting has been banned populations accross the state have steadily increased. The division said this would not happen,, It did. Baiting is a great tool. It removes bears that are prone to associating people and food from the population. It also teaches bears that people and food are dangerous. You need to woek on reinstating baiting as a management tool. showing the public it allows for a more selective harvest and removes problem bears easily.
78	SPRING Bear season!!!! Hunt Bear with dogs.
79	State and federal game and fish officials along with other "non hunters" kill over 1200 bears in 2011. Legal hunters kill just over 800 bears in 2011. What is wrong with this picture???? Game management officals need to keep their guns in their holsters and let "legal" revenue geneRating hunters do the killing. Reinststate baiting to increase hunting opportunities and take out the "sucker" problem causing bears. YOUR JOB IS TO MANAGE, NOT SHOOT BEARS! DO YOUR JOB,let the hunter harvest the animals.
80	Thanks for allowing my input and good luck with your planning.
81	The Black Bear has the right to be in their environment, but there does need to be some control over the population, and truthfully you hardly ever see any, only if your lucky, especially if your bear hunting.
82	The makeup of units 421/42/41 is very hard to hunt black bears. Very few good deep canyons to spot and stalk bears. Of course would welcome more oppportunity on a spring bear hunt (without dogs).
83	The more hunting opportunities the better. Bears and lion that are hunted for nuisance should have the opportunity for a hunter to fill a tag instead of a state hunter just shooting them. The way it is presently done the meat should be at least donated. I talked to a sheep herder last year and he said between his men and a state hunter that, area ranchers hired they killed 13. Way not contact a hunter in the area to go with the hounds man to shoot the bear so the meat in utilized.
84	The Spring bear hunt needs to be reinstated to meet harvest objectives.

85	There is no reason why the bears cannot receive a helping hand in years when lack of food brings them to town. You feed the deer and the elk in years like that. Lets give the bears more opportunities and stop killing them for looking for food. People cause most of the bear problems, not the bears.
86	There seems to a good population of bears in the spring but I have a hard time finding them during the Sept. hunt, trying to get more educated to better my odds. Not sure about the management you have on the bears but would like to know more about it. Hope I helped out on this.
87	We believe that you need to work more closely with ranchers in the lower lying areas where bear population is greatest. Make it easier for the land owners to get permits to control the bears.
88	We need a spring season and to be able to bait bears to effectively harvest bears otherwise the only bears being harvested are just stumbled into when taken. Give hunters the ability to help dow.
89	We seem to see more ear tagged bears around in the last 3-4 years than we have ever. We have had quite a few bear sightings and even one in the garage. I grew up in Collbran and we may see a bear a few times a year and now living in Mesa, I see a bear 10 - 12 times a year. If we do have an over population of bears, I would like to see the amount of bears decreased to a maintainable level. Maybe a draw spring season on bears and only take a minimal amount. We love the outdoors and are avid hunters. I have taken a bear and usually get a bear tag for the fall. But I would only use my bear tag is we have a nuisance one or it was attacking our livestock. Good luck and it's good that you asked for public opinions.
90	We would rather see the DOW hand out tags to people who will kill and use what they kill rather than hear about the DOW hiring out so called professionals to reduce the population and waste the animals! Baiting and a spring bear hunt would be some simple ways to reduce both the population and the negative encounters with humans.
91	We would suggest an increased harvest of Bears in the Grand Mesa area. Our group seen more Bears than Elk on our bow hunting trip in the fall of 2011. Our biggest concern is Elk Calf predation in the spring. We would also suggest that more good camping spots be developpe for hunters at least in Area #42 Where we Bow hunt there there is quite a few Non Resident Bow Hunters and most of them are older fellows. We spent a good sum of money on License, hotels, gas, food, hunting gear ect. I know that this benefits the State of Colorado DNR program as well as the local businesses. Lastly , we appreciate your efforts and the oppertunity to hunt in Colorado and we hope this information will only improve the quality of the experience. Thank You
92	Whats highly unfair to the hunters wanting to hunt bears is the CPW hiring killers to go destroy bears and then to bury these dead bears, or burn them, and theres not a bit of bear information you got from them. Then the CPW expects us who harvest a bear, to bring it in to a check station, and to have every bit of information ready on our bear including location, color, size, male or female, and have all the meat in possession....ect...ect.. All value was lost of those bears when destroyed of and disposed of. Very wrong and unfair. Its not the bears fault that they were given the chance to over populate. Theres lots of bear hunters who would have loved to tag one of these bears that the CPW employee destroyed. It takes us hunters at least 1 year waiting to draw this tag and the CPW is out there destroying bears. This isnt the way to manage the bear population. Bear hunters know how to judge a bear, verses male or female; sow with cubs, so on and so on. Spring season also gives the hunter time to evaluate the bear before harvesting it. If you are really serious in managing black bears, bring the spring season. It works.

93	<p>When I was a kid it was a rare occurrence for someone to see a bear around here. Now, I see a bear or bears almost every day I am in the mountains throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall months. I see them when I am checking cows, when I'm fixing fence, when I'm fishing, hunting, guiding hunters, etc. I see them quite often crossing the roads and highways. I have not personally lost any calves to a bear yet, but I have had them chase my cattle and harass my dogs. I have also had multiple occasions where a bear had no fear of me and actually came at me. Several friends of mine have actually been charged and attacked by a bear. If something isn't done soon to decrease the population, it is just going to get worse. I know the government trapper well and it is absolutely crazy how many bears he kills. Why are tax payers paying his salary to kill bears and lions when hunters could be doing it and making the State money??? Makes no sense to me. In my opinion bear tags should be unlimited and over the counter. I still do not believe this will control the bear population because bears are hard to hunt and most people will still be unsuccessful. I believe that in order to control the bear population, you will have to allow baiting bears again and/or running bears with dogs, at least on a limited basis. I think this should be done like lion hunting with a call-in hotline and a quota in each unit.</p>
94	<p>When spring bear hunting and hunting with hounds in Colorado was stopped, the bear population has had a steady increase from that point until now. Spot and stalk hunting methods CAN NOT control the bear population in Colorado.</p>
95	<p>When the game and fish or Division of wild life have to kill the bears, you may as well let people hunt them. You can maybe bring in some hunting \$'s and the end result is the same. One day I think a bear will find where we store our grain. Then we will have a problem. I think they are going to be very hungry this year due to the lack of water. Let's hope we get a lot of rain. I have not had any livestock lost yet. We have had bears move through many times. We have guard dogs and the bears seem to move away from them. Hope this keeps working. I have dairy goats. We have had a few Mountain Lions also and so far the same results. We did have a Mountain Lion tree a domestic cat.</p>
96	<p>would like to see a spring bear hunt open up again, mostly in problem areas like aspen and vail</p>
97	<p>You have to many city people that don't understand you have to keep the population down. I saw a spike buck on my place this morning and he is so thin you could count all his ribs. I just hope you will have more seasons on everything. Please, it is for there good as well as our safety.</p>
98	<p>You need to work on your form. When it asks "Do you live in these units and you answer "No" why is the next question "In which unit do you live?" without at least giving an N/A option? Metrics are only as good as the question asked.</p>
99	<p>You should have added questions to understand where interested survey participants come from outside the target Grand Mesa area. The bears of the Grand Mesa area belong to the citizens of Colorado and its visitors, not just the residents of the Grand Mesa area.</p>

## APPENDIX D: UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE INPUT



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

White River  
National  
Forest

Aspen-Sopris Ranger District  
PO Box 309/620 Main St.  
Carbondale, CO 81623  
(970) 963-2266  
Fax: (970) 963-1012

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**File Code:** 2600

**Date:** May 31, 2012

**To:** JT Romatzke, Area Wildlife Manager  
**From:** Phil Nyland, District Wildlife Biologist  
**Cc:** Scott Snelson, District Ranger  
**Subject:** DAU B-17 alternative

Mr Romatzke:

I am providing input to the B-17 plan. I have read the alternatives and conclude that the middle alternative is the appropriate population management strategy for black bears in this area. It provides DPW managers the ability to respond to localized nuisance complaints in a timely fashion and as needed. At the same time, it allows for long-term public and outfitter bear harvest, which can be important economic opportunities for many towns in the DAU.

My district is east of this DAU, and in the past 10 years we have seen a tremendous number of nuisance bear incidents; much more than within this DAU. Having an stable bear population is important to me as a Forest Service biologist. This alternative, when fully implemented could provide areas where nuisance bears could be successfully relocated; the bear population could absorb some additional individuals and there is good capable food resources present to support relocated bears.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment. Please include White River National Forest in the planning process for other upcoming bear DAU plans.





United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

White River  
National  
Forest

Rifle Ranger District  
0094 County Road 244  
Rifle, CO 81650  
(970) 625-2371  
FAX (970) 625-2532

File Code: 2670

Date: May 10, 2012

Stephanie Duckett  
Colorado Parks & Wildlife  
711 Independent Ave  
Grand Junction, CO

Dear Stephanie Duckett:

Thank you for your request for input into the B-17 Grand Mesa Black Bear Data Analysis Unit Management Plan. Rifle Ranger District administers lands within the GMU 42. We do not have a good overview of the entire Data Analysis Unit. Upon consultation with various resources on the Rifle Ranger District, our recommendation from a GMU 42 perspective would be the following alternative:  
Decreasing population trend for 3 years, then stable population trend.

As an additional comment, Rifle District Ranger Glenn Adams would like the Colorado Parks and Wildlife agency to consider the use of spring hunts for population control.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to make comments toward this process.

Sincerely,

GLENN R. ADAMS  
District Ranger

