

BEaR Meeting – April 28, 2010  
Natural Science Museum

Attendees: Sabrina Chandler, Kevin Nelms, Becky Rosamond, Stephanie Hodnett, Shauna Ginger, Brad Young, David Linden, Steven Lewis, Ray Aycock, Stephanie Steele, Patrick Smith, Cathy Shropshire, Shelton Whittington, Richard Rummel, Stephanie Simek, Brittany Waller, Michael Yale, Paul Davidson, Meg Cooper, Shaun Williamson, Kathy Shelton

Meeting called to order at 1:13 p.m. by Sabrina Chandler.

Introductions were made around the room

Mississippi Bears – Brad Young

- Statewide bear map – available by request
- Clairborn Co. – Bayou Pierre/Big Black area biggest increase
  - At least 2 females with cubs in area (One in hills, one in delta)
- Hancock Co. Area – New sightings
  - 1 tagged LA bear in Pearl River Co.
  - Little Biloxi WMA – many sightings
- DeSoto/Marshall/Benton sightings – spring 2009 – Near Holly Springs NF
- Collared bears not included on sightings map
- Number of sightings in area reflects novelty of bears in area – once sightings become more common, number of sightings decreases
- Collared bears
  - 5 females with functioning collars and 4 with collars not functioning
  - All collars now GPS
- A27 – (Donaldson Pt. Bear male) – real time GPS collar – great for about 1 month, then died – VHF function still works, but satellite uplink dead
- C610 (male) – collar dead
- F920 (Hunter Fordice's female) and female cubs Q900 and S19 still in area – S denned in same tree but dropped collar about 2 weeks ago
- G470 (female – now D21) – collar came off, dead on ground
- H910 (female) and E050 – both collars dead
- K515 – just north of Mobile
- L12 – (Horn Lake female) – Collar dead
- N528 – was caught in Meridian originally, found near coast north of Mobile
- O800 – (Anderson Tully male) – dropped collar
- P16 – lost signal probably near Mobile
- T6 in LA
- T20 – (Francis Landing Hunt Club male) – Reappeared on White River NWR this winter
- U755 – Davis Island male – got info from collar, 200 lbs
- V715 – Davis Island male – got info from collar, 400 lbs
  - On MDWFP website – moved back and forth, when water came up last year, both bears stayed on island.
  - Tended to swap back and forth, didn't really stay in same area

- W23 – Davis Island female
- X 835 – (Francis Landing Hunt Club male) -
- Y705 – (Francis Landing Hunt Club male) – on Staten’s Towhead
- Congratulations to Brad and his wife on the birth of their son Reeves

#### BBCC Report – Paul Davidson

- LA wildlife also short on funds
- Second year of \$50,000 Partners Grants +ARRA grant \$50,000 both for work in TX – plant trees
- Also planted 184 acres trees in LA
- Walton foundation grant to develop wooded corridors in LA to provide access into the Atchafalaya Basin from St. Mary’s Parish
- Coastal Forest Program – incentives for coastal landowners to sell or place easement on these areas
  - Working with 3 landowners
    - 1 increase Bayou Teche NWR (family will keep mineral rights) – then get DOT to build wildlife crossing
  - If can get private buy-in, money should continue to come in
- 7<sup>th</sup> Bayou Teche and Birding Festival last week (3 day festival)
  - Successful
  - Does not have the advertising GDBA has
  - Was taken over by local community – they are embracing festival and Bayou Teche NWR
    - Working to increase size of NWR by 50%
- 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of BBCC in 2 weeks
  - Silent auction
  - Baton Rouge
- Bear Coordination meeting in February to try to improve communication with state (LA)
  - Repatriation attempts – 63% of females moved stayed where they were moved to
  - 88% survival of cubs
  - 23 documented new litters from relocated females or their cubs
  - 7-8 killed each year (illegally)
  - More bears killed this year (Confused with hogs??)
- University of Tennessee Study
  - 4<sup>th</sup> year of hair snare study in Madison
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year of hair snare study in coastal area
  - Important to show that recovery has occurred
- Are beginning to get some nuisance bears
- State (LA) beginning to put more biologists on private lands
- Bear Smart website out of B.C. released publication on how to deal with nuisance bears
- East Texas – hair snare studies – really no bears right now
  - East Central TX - Habitat suitability and hair snare study
  - Tim Sigmon in East TX – 1 bear
  - Public opinion study – St. Mary and Iberia Parishes – out of Stephen F. Austen
  - Working Group still active
    - Bear Aware day at 3 zoos (spearheaded by Houston zoo)

#### Update on Bears in Neighboring States – Shauna

- No word from Arkansas
- FWS – Deb Fuller

- Critical Habitat only in LA
- 5-year review – initiated in '07, internal draft should be done, mid-summer this year
- Important since used for funding and to decide whether to list or delist
- Recovery activities – received funding
  - Service considers spotlight species for region since close to recovery – look for podcast in near future at [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov) on recovery efforts
  - Funding used to support several programs:
    - USDA bear conflict management activities in LA
    - BBCC outreach and recovery activities
    - Tensas NWR – repatriation project
    - University of Tennessee/LDWF/Dr. Joe Clark
  - Dr. Clark got extension to continue work developing a habitat assessment tool for the Louisiana black bear.
- Louisiana Office, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program completed a 25-acre black bear project
- Refuge Activities
  - Bayou Teche festival
  - Bayou Cocodrie Wild Things Event
- Jared Laufenberg at University of Tennessee
  - Objectives of research
    - Estimate population parameters
    - Develop rule sets for bear habitat
    - Determine post-release movements, survival and reproductive status
  - Tensas River Basin– through 2011
    - Den checks
    - Hair snare
    - Live trapping – collars
  - Red River Complex
    - Monitor relocated females
      - Post-release movements
      - Age specific natality, recruitment and survival rates
  - Upper Atchafalaya River Basin – through 2011
    - Hair snares
    - Live trapping – collars
  - Lower Atchafalaya River Basin – through 2012
    - Hair snares
    - Live trapping
- Mike Hooker – wants to collar 20 sub adult males in above areas to look at use of corridors – (from Paul Davidson)

#### Great Delta Bear Affair – Meg Cooper

- Overview with pictures
- Youth education day – approx. 400 students (fourth graders)
- In 2010, will be on Oct. 22 and 23
- Effects on Rolling Fork
  - Volunteer opportunities, adult and children
  - Educated the public on the TR story – bragging point for locals
  - Increased wildlife education in local schools

- Increased acceptance of black bear and habitat restoration in the area
- Increased awareness of local natural resources and public lands
- Local envirothon teams have formed and 2 are competing in the state envirothon in May – result of competing in Wildlife Olympics first.
- Rolling fork is embracing it's bear legacy and loves the carved bears around town
  - New city logo
  - New litter campaign
  - Fighting for carved bears in their yards

Meg presented Kevin with a framed GDBA poster in appreciation for his work with the GDBA

- Case Hicks will be working with childrens' hospital and handing out teddy bears while in area

Mississippi Bear Research Update – Stephanie Simek (hope to finish this phase by Dec. 2011)

- Introduced Brittany Waller, new Master's student (finish Dec. 2011)
  - Working on den sites
- (Stephanie working on colonizing)
- Objectives
  - Update historic significance and status
  - Validate and refine potential habitat use model
  - Evaluate models for dispersal and movements to conduct a statewide corridor assessment
  - Predict black bear colonization across miss
- Denning objectives
  - Characterize denning chronology and den characteristics
  - Estimate scale-dependent den-site selections
  - Estimate the effects of disturbance on den-site selection
- Field efforts
  - 3 additional pilots (base areas Starkville, Meridian, and Gulfport)
  - Conducted 8 aerial surveys (den sites – 30 hrs)
  - Located 12 of 13 bears
    - 1 bear never found – male – P bear
    - 6 others have malfunctioning or dead collars
  - Physically located 7 dens for 6 bears
  - 6 dens were in trees, one ground den; variety of species of trees – 2 bears denned in same tree as last year – next year will check old den first (female and male)
  - 2 males observed from but moved, unable to catch
  - 3 males dens unable to confirm, T bear in Arkansas – found from plane twice but never able to locate on the ground; N bear located (had disappeared for 18 months) from air, but could not find den
  - Den checks on 6 of 7 locations
  - 1 den inaccessible and 3 not worked for safety purposes (ex. One 15 feet down in den)
  - Replaced 2 adult female's collars
    - 1 VHF – W – Davis Island (replaced with GPS collar) – also had male cub
    - 1 GPS – J – 2 years of data
  - One female 261 lbs(W) produced one male cub (1.5 lbs cub); born in ground den (interesting because small for time of year, also appears that all cubs Mississippi were born in from ground den)
  - Denning data
    - Visited 12 of 21 old dens for measurement/vegetation work

- Completed 9 sites
- Upcoming Efforts
  - May – flights since out of dens
    - Find the malfunctioning collars (6)
  - June and July – focus on delta area, pull out of coast for now
    - Run 2 – 3 trap lines on Delta National and up into Bolivar County area (2 females up there)
- UT has some satellite collars also that have been modified – will be testing to see how well they work. If good, we may use some of these.
- For October meeting would like Brittany to present also
- Brittany looking at - Distance of dens to road (paved and unpaved), to agriculture, to streams/river
  - May be adding disturbances like timbering operations

#### Administrative

- Minutes motioned for approved by Kevin, seconded by Shaun – approved. Have 15 paid members.
- Treasurer’s report – attached

#### Project Progress

- Website – Shauna
  - Minutes posted
  - GDBA
  - Meeting announcements
  - Get updates from MS State?
  - Pages still missing information
    - Lot more for education and landowners needed. Also missing some basic bear information
  - Would like someone else to takeover webmaster duties
    - Kevin mentioned someone who had contacted him awhile ago about hosting our site for free and maintaining the site for us. Kevin will follow up.
- Black Bear SAFE – Kevin
  - 618 Acres enrolled in FY ‘09
  - 470.7 acres enrolled to date in FY’10
    - 165 – Coahoma
    - 33 – Holmes
    - 48 – Washington
    - 224 – Leflore
- Aerial Telemetry – Brad
  - Really helped fill in gaps.

#### Old business

- Kevin working with company in Indianola to get shirts, etc.
  - Displayed shirts, hat, and mouse pad
  - Suggested cub picture on mouse pad with bear logo in corner for sale at extravaganzas
  - 2 versions of bear logo – one with more brown
  - Does not do stickers or magnets
- Entergy grant – gone
- Documentary film – tabled until find funding

#### New Business

- Administrative project
  - Motioned by Becky, seconded by Paul Davidson, approved
- Vice President
 

Suggestions: Jeffrey Lee, Hunter Fordice,  
Sabrina asked for people to think about it and email her with ideas.

  - Board members
    - Added Kevin Nelms
    - Reinstated all Board members whose terms were up. (Include current board of directors)
  - MS Wildlife Extravaganza
    - Need to attend this year – good way to get our name out.
    - Will try to put together a shift calendar
    - August 6, 7, and 8
      - Kevin, Shauna and Shaun volunteered to cover (with others)
  - GDBA 2010
    - Proposal presented
    - Closeout from 2009 - \$23,673
      - Would like to roll over and use as seed money
        - Shauna motioned to roll over for seed money, Kathy Shelton seconded, approved.
  - Case Hicks
    - Barry Blatson Childrens' Hospital – Teddy bear give away
    - Offering a free additional program during the week of the BEaR Affair – suggested “An evening with Theodore Roosevelt”
      - Could have at Museum with Museum members
      - Could have as fundraiser
      - Make a media affair (Ray)
      - Make a wine and cheese event (Shauna)
      - Cathy Shropshire said we should pay the museum something for it
      - If possible we should partner with the museum – really good publicity
      - Museum would probably sponsor (Ray)
      - Sabrina will check with the museum to see feasibility
  - Announcements
    - Wildlife Society chapter meeting September 16 and 17 at museum
    - October SCWA Oct. 16 – 20 on coast
      - Might be able to sell shirts
    - Do we want to order t-shirts or hats?
      - T-shirts – add website and spell out Bear Education and Restoration Group of Mississippi to shirts.
        - Order 50 ask Kris for breakdown of sizes to order(or check with Lynne Moses)
        - Lighten logo
        - Go with a natural or tan color

Next meeting at Yazoo city library, Thursday, September 30

Meeting adjourned at 4:18 p.m.