

Grizzly Bear Indigenous Knowledge Summary

Report Validation Workshop

NWT

Part of the

Species At Risk Act Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project

With support from the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources

Canadian Wildlife Service - Environment and Climate Change Canada

Kirsten Wilcox, Species at Risk Biologist

Rhiannon Pankratz , Northern Liaison Biologist

Bruce Laurich, Species at Risk Biologist

Wednesday, January 11th, 2023



Environment and
Climate Change Canada

Environnement et
Changement climatique Canada



Thank you
Haj'
Máhsi
Mahsì



Beadwork and Photo by Carmen Leeming





The intent of this workshop is ensure the Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears gathered in the original workshop is correctly and respectfully represented in the report.

CWS Grizzly Bear Working Groups



- Kirsten Wilcox
- Bruce Laurich
- Rhiannon Pankratz

Northern Region



- Ross Vennesland
- Undiné Thompson

Pacific Region

- Diana Ghikas
- Wendy Eskowich

Prairie Region



CIER | Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources



Melissa Gus
Research Associate



Kate Hewitt
Project Manager



Shianne McKay
Senior Project Manager



A close-up photograph of a brown bear sitting in a field of tall, dry grass. The bear is looking slightly to the left of the camera. The background is blurred, showing more of the natural habitat with some bare branches.

Introductions and reintroductions

Agenda

1:00 PM	Introductions, purpose and warm-up
1:30 PM	Background and introducing the report
1:45 PM	What We Heard – themes in the summary report and discussion
3:00 PM	Break
3:15 PM	What the report looks like and how we represent your participation Next steps
4:00 PM	Closing comments and breakout sessions



Housekeeping



What are your first impressions of the Grizzly Bear summary report?

Answer online at [PollEv.com/cier](https://www.poll-ev.com/cier)
OR Text the word "CIER" to the number 37607
OR enter your answer in the meeting chat or verbally



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Grizzly Bear Indigenous Knowledge Workshop

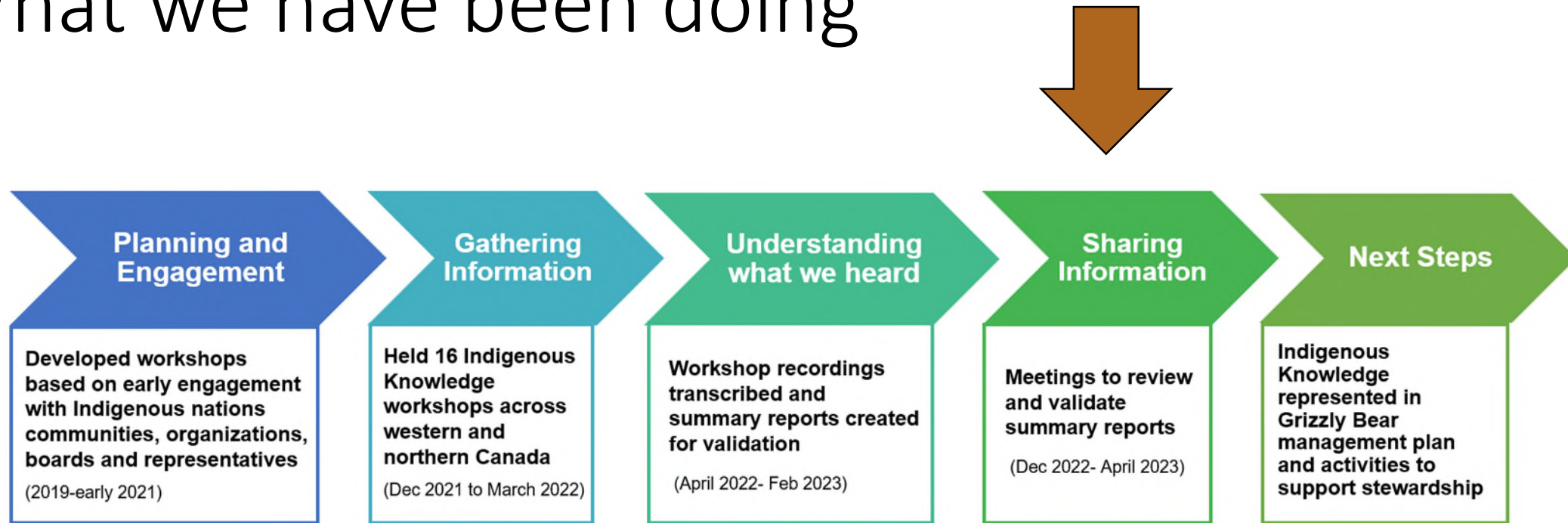
February 17, 2022



What actions by governments and communities should be taken to ensure healthy populations of Grizzly Bears in your area?

What factors do you think affect Grizzly Bears and their habitats in your area?

What we have been doing

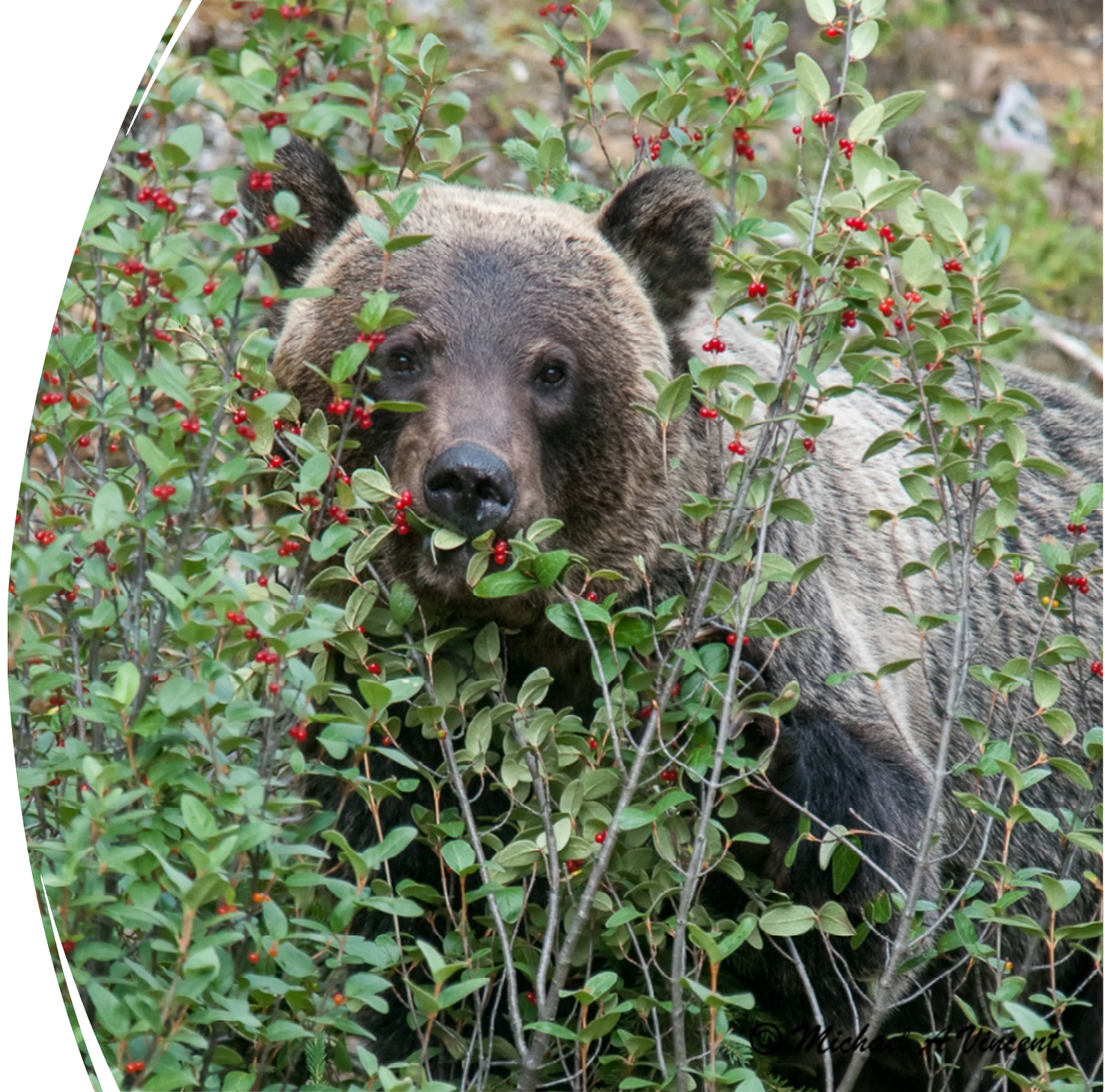


“Traditional knowledge of the aboriginal peoples of Canada should be considered in developing and implementing recovery measures” (SARA, 2003)



Knowledge gathered in
summary report:

- Included in the federal
Grizzly Bear management
plan
- Made publically available



Questions?



© Government of Yukon



What We Heard



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Grizzly Bear Workshop

NORTHERN



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NWT

THURS FEB 17 2022

LIVE GRAPHIC RECORDING BY Aaron Russell
conference doodles.com

Themes in the Summary Report

Why help Grizzly Bears?

-Respect: *"It's our food"*

-Sacred: *"A bear was once a person just like us"*

Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears

- Personal experience or Elder's experience:

"We have that knowledge, and we should be able to pass those things on"

What do Grizzly Bears mean to you?



Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats

Grizzly Bears are not a big problem or Grizzly Bears aren't seen very often, but there are threats to Grizzly Bear health and survival:

-Humans destroying Grizzly Bears – ***“biggest predator is us”***

-Increased contact between Grizzly Bears and humans ***“Once they butcher an animal, a bear would show up”***

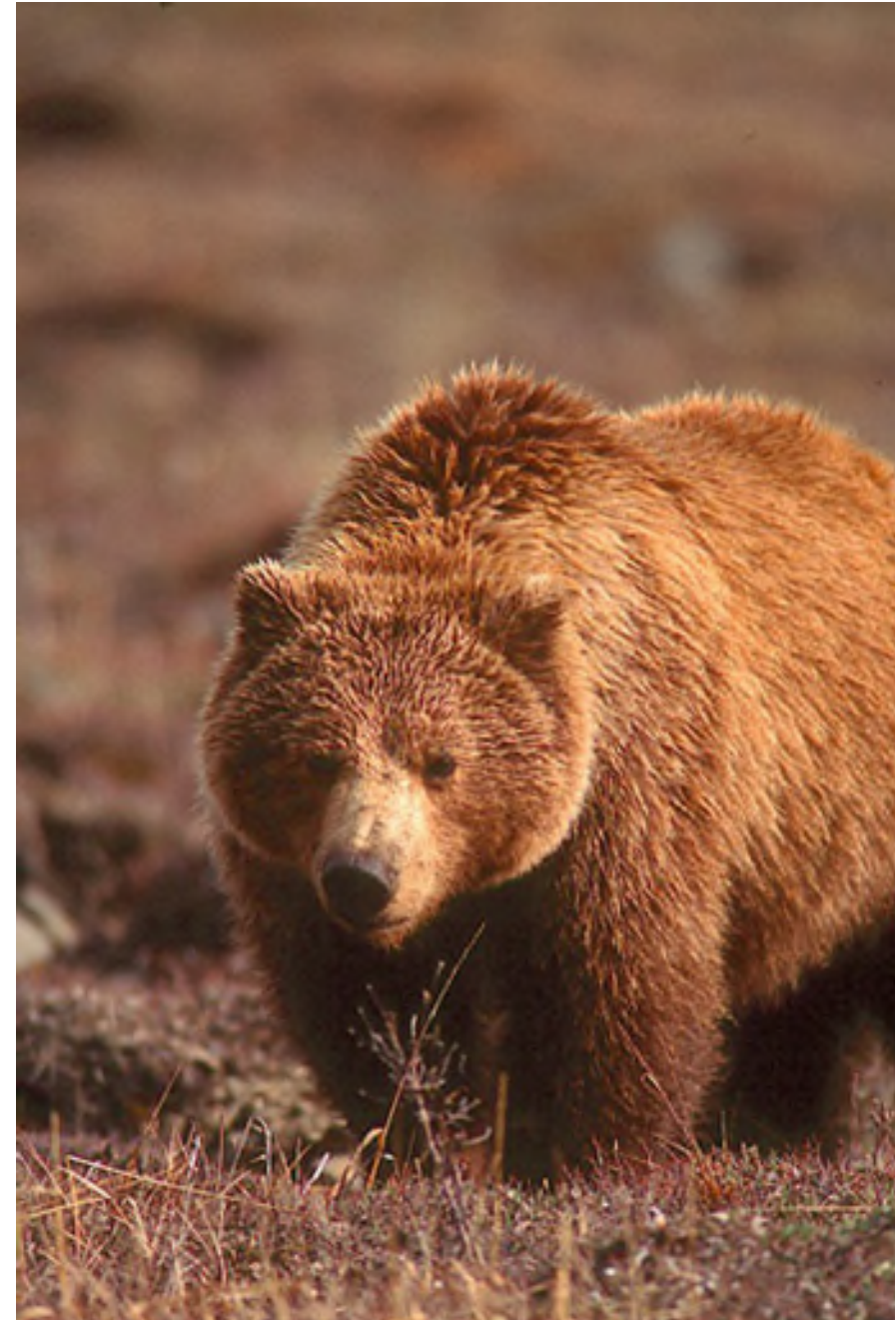



-Climate change: ***“Climate change is really going to determine how, what bears do”***



Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats

- Resource development: ***human settlement, cutlines, oil development, and winter roads***
- Lack of public awareness about Grizzly Bears ***“We need a lot more information”***
- Government-community differences in knowledge and values that are used to make decisions: ***“It's a matter of trying to get that really recognized so that governments can feel comfortable with our knowledge, with our experiences, with our people observing and things like that, and our ways of handling endangered species”***



A close-up photograph of a brown grizzly bear standing in shallow, rippling water. The bear's fur is thick and brown, with some lighter patches on its neck and chest. It is looking slightly to the left of the frame. The water is a deep blue-grey color with small ripples.

What people can do to help Grizzly Bears

“They have to look at in terms of how they could deal with the problem themselves in that area”

What People Can Do to Help Grizzly Bears

Increase public awareness of Grizzly Bears, especially for people who are out on the land and youth: ***“It’s Got to be Pretty Straightforward”***



Improving Relationships with Grizzly Bears: ***“We cannot be dominant over wildlife anymore”***

Taking Care of the Land: ***“You got to keep it very clean”***



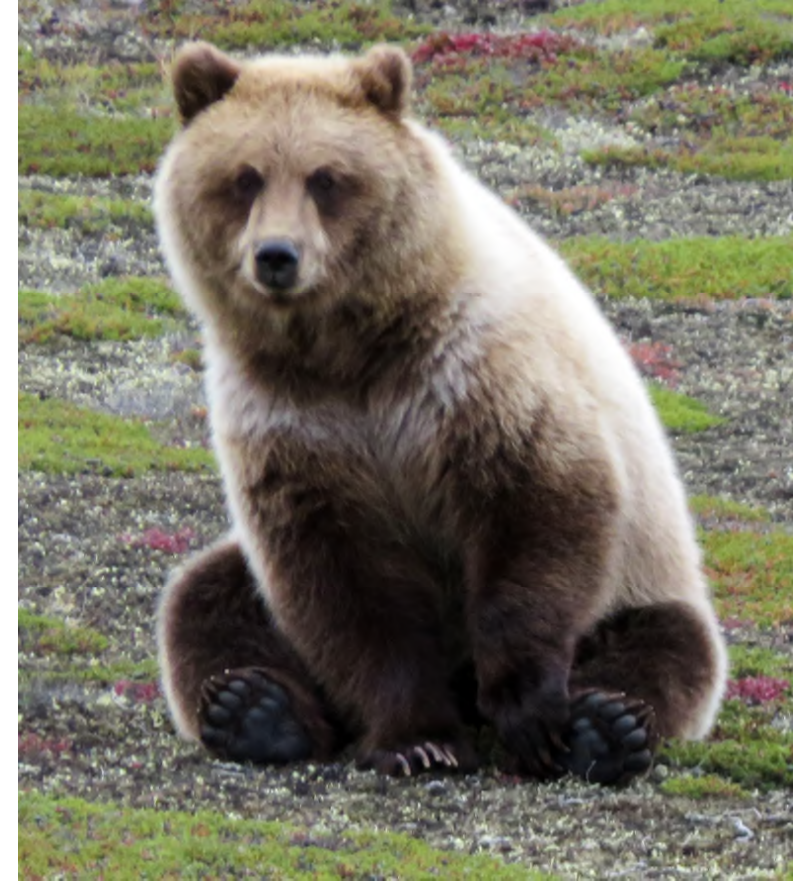
What People Can Do to Help Grizzly Bears

Include Indigenous People

Include traditional Indigenous knowledge when working on Grizzly Bear plans ***“Bring back the knowledge of our ancestors”***

Support Indigenous decision-making around protecting Grizzly Bears and their habitats ***“We want to make our own people make their own decisions”***

Use Indigenous language and understandable language ***“it’s important to recognize a language to describe the knowledge or the stories that people are telling and in this case about the Grizzly Bears”***



3:00 Break



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A photograph of two brown bears in a natural, open landscape. The bear in the upper left is sitting upright, looking towards the camera. The bear in the lower right is lying down, facing away from the camera. The ground is covered with a mix of green mosses and small, reddish-brown plants. A semi-transparent text box is overlaid on the right side of the image.

What the Summary Report
looks like



Photo credit: Syd Cannings

Indigenous Knowledge of Grizzly Bears in the Northwest Territories

Report to participating communities and nations
and project partners |

Acknowledgements

Community Members in Attendance

Summary

Background

Methods

What We Heard – Results

Conclusion

Graphic Recording

CWS-ECCC and CIER staff list

Bibliography

Appendix



Community Members in Attendance

Angus Lenny - Tulita

Dave Taniton - Délıne

David Menacho - Tulita

Deborah Peterson - Fort McPherson

Dolphus Baton - Délıne

Eugene Pascal - Aklavik

George Niditchie Jr - Tsiigehtchic

John Edwards - Inuvik

John Norbert - Tsiigehtchic

Leon Modeste - Délıne - Elder

Shauna Gully - Fort Good Hope

Zehtse (Walter) Bezha - Délıne

Is your name and community correct?

How would you like to be identified?

Would you like to share a biography?

Would you like your Nation, group, or organization that you represent included here?



Quoted by name

Grizzlies are Sacred: “A bear was once a person just like us”

Walter and Dolphus talked about the sacredness of Grizzly Bears. They mentioned that grizzlies are in stories, and explained that the bears once spoke, that they listen to people, and that they have spirits:

There was a bear that spoke once. I mean that that goes into our history and there's all kinds of information that you can get from that. He said it's an icon species, it's one of the species that, like I said, I use the term sacred because, that for me that really makes it the species that we really have to respect. (Walter, translating for Dolphus)

A bear was once a person just like us. And everything you say again, we said that many times, they're listening. (Walter)

Whenever we talk about, especially about wildlife, you need to look, to go back to the background, that the beliefs of wildlife, the relation of wildlife, the fact that wildlife has spirits. (Walter)



Thematic analysis

Threat	Number of times mentioned in the workshop
Government-community differences	13
Destroying Grizzly Bears	10
Human-Bear interactions	10
Lack of public knowledge about Grizzly Bears	8
Resource Development	5
Cut lines	2
Oil and Gas	2
Human Settlement	1
Climate Change	4

What people can do to help Grizzlies	Number of times mentioned in the workshop
Respect Grizzly Bears	20
Have a good relationship (e.g., Fat Bear contest, not talking about the bears, leaving them alone, good relationship in general)	14
Stop killing Grizzlies	4
General respect for Grizzlies	3
Realize that humans don't manage or own Grizzlies	2
Realize that humans are not a better species than Grizzlies	1
Stop thinking of Grizzlies as resources	1
Increase public awareness	14
Include Indigenous knowledge	19
Support Indigenous decision-making	12
Learn to live with wildlife	11
Use Indigenous language and understandable language	6
Take care of the land: Keeping it clean	4

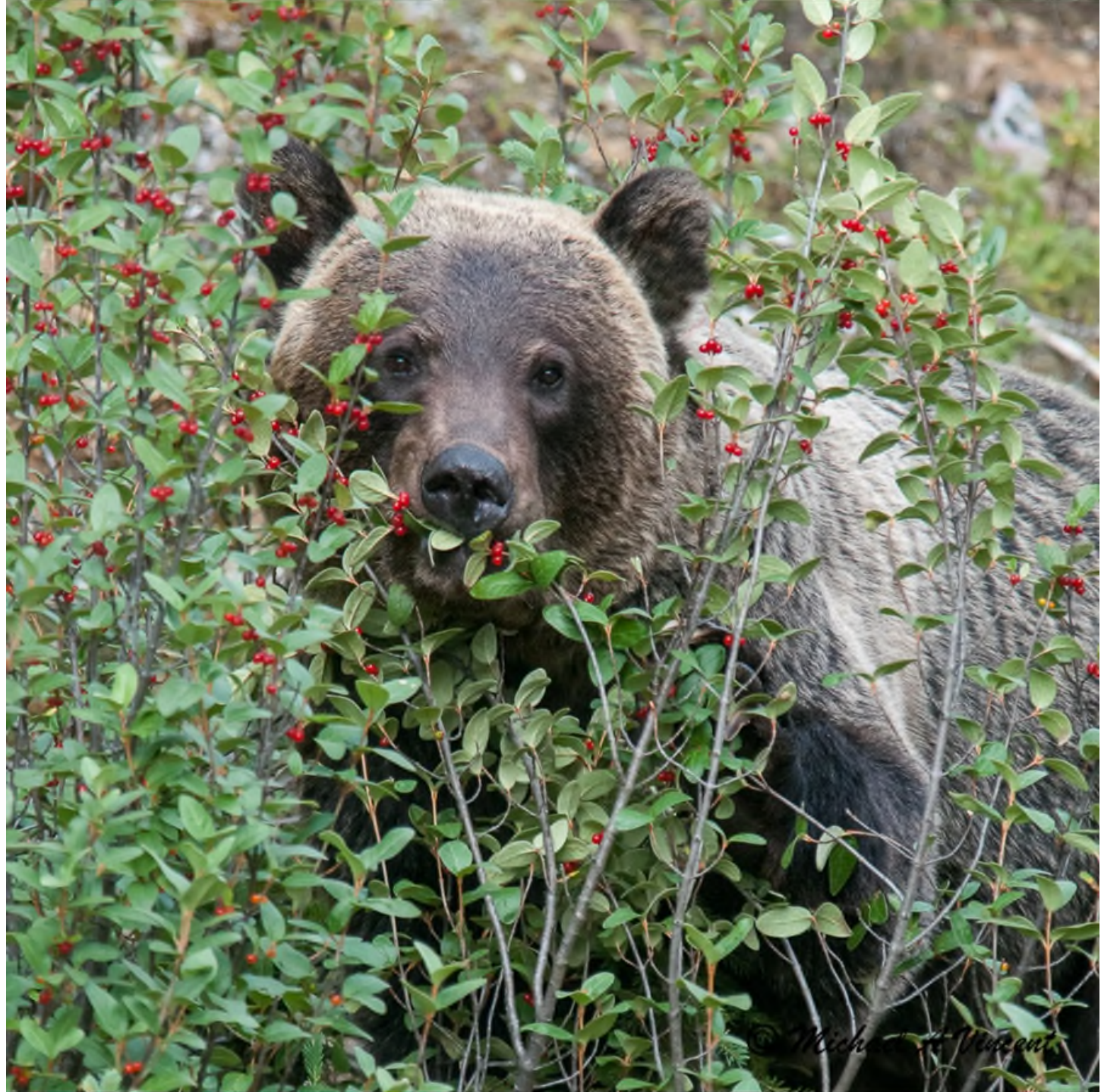


Review of Next Steps

Finalize workshop summary reports

- Feedback by end of January 2023
- Opportunity for capacity funding for in-depth editorial review

Prepare draft management plan including IK from summary reports



Feedback?



Break out Sessions

Please stay on the call to review your quotes and/or provide any other feedback you would like to share

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OR put it in the chat!





Thank you
Haj'
Máhsì
Mahsì

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Quotes by Eugene Pascal

Respect for Grizzly Bears

For Grizzlies in the past we used, our ancestors used it for medicinal or food for... things like that. But I think throughout the past couple of generations, we've moved away from that.
(Eugene)

Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears

People from here we have to try and get the kind of knowledge back as to how we used to live with them in the past, side by side or whatever.

Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats

We had problems in the past, of overharvesting, things like that. (Eugene)

Quotes by Eugene cont.

Government-Community Differences

You're talking about Grizzly Bear, and then it gets threatened or endangered. There will be federal legislation that most likely will rely on science. Which is pretty difficult to get the population estimate and things like that. And so, my concern is that we sat down, that we don't want federal or territorial legislation limiting us. We came to agreement with the Inuvialuit and territorial government on Grizzly Bear management, and that's what we're following and it's voluntary. Our members know that and they honor that. But then that's something that that kind of worries me is that in the future species that affect us around here gets put into legislation, it might be difficult to change that around...It's a matter of trying to get that really recognized so that governments can feel comfortable with our knowledge, with our experiences, with our people observing and things like that, and our ways of handling endangered species and things like that. That's something that kind of concerns me.

How to Include Indigenous Knowledge to Protect Grizzly Bears

I know we can get a pretty good idea as to the health of the population, through our people, through the users of the land, through their observation, through their experiences.

People from here we have to try and get the kind of knowledge back as to how we used to live with them in the past, side by side or whatever.

Quotes by Eugene cont.

We want to make our own people make their own decisions

We had problems in the past, of overharvesting, things like that. And what we've done along with the Inuvialuktun is work on a management plan which is voluntary, which is not put into law. But we Aboriginal groups agreed to that and the government. And we're following that as best we can and we still are. (Eugene)

We are in the process of trying to review and come up with possible changes within the existing plan. And most of that knowledge was used by our experiences here at the community levels with the species and with the environment. And I think that has to carry more clout, especially on species that are difficult to study or difficult to get population estimates and things like that.

Improving Relationships with Grizzly Bears: Taking Care of the Land

I think at one time, we had at least a dozen [bears] there every summer. It became a safety issue. And I think unfortunately, we had to deal with that as a community, as a region, as government, as every local government. It was dealt with and these are the things that we are asking ourselves now is how can we, what can we do to not attract bears like this to be so close to our community and be a threat. (Eugene)

Quotes by David Menacho

Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats: Human-bear interactions

One of the biggest things is probably climate change... We see, maybe about 60 or 50 kilometers south of Tulit'a with the cougars. I mean, these things were never down here. And this was a worry given from our Elders that had told us this before... You're talking about this Grizzly Bear out in Far East in Edmonton maybe the things are happening now. So yeah, I mean, you could see that down here in Tulit'a, around that area we never did see Grizzly Bears. Walter make a good comment that maybe it's the climate change that's happening and they could be overpopulated. They could be starving that could be moving down, coming closer down, getting off the mountain range.

Quotes by Angus Lenny

Respect for Grizzly Bears: Grizzlies are “an Icon Species”

We don't kill the animals unless we really need to. In the olden days, I guess that's what they used to do, for food when people were hungry in the, in the mountains and so on. (Angus)

Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats: Human-bear interactions

I think we had a number of tourists come down the Mackenzie Valley and down, I think about 25 miles out of the community, we had a tourist come and they were taking pictures of the land and taking pictures of the area where they're traveling and this quite a famous photographer was mauled by a Grizzly Bear. Before that, we would never, you know hear of Grizzly Bears being in the area. (Angus)

Quotes by Angus cont.

Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats: Resource Development

We find that maybe if the Grizzly Bears are not you know, populating or they're being pushed to the northern parts of the continent because of people, human beings that are populating different areas and so on and they're taking their habitat away and their food away from them and so on.

Speaking with the Elders in the 1970s, when they used to do cut lines on the land, to survey the land, and so on, these cut lines they were done by cats and so on to make the little lines and all the stuff here. And it has taken a long time for the vegetation, the trees and so on to grow back. But those cut lines had really quite an impact in terms of animals moving on the lines and coming closer to the community and so on. Every now and then you would have Grizzly Bears coming following those cut lines to the water source on the Mackenzie River.

When we look at any type of economic development coming into our part of the territory for the Sahtú Dene Metis, like the winter road that's open right now then it gives access to animals to travel, but in the summertime, you still have the cut lines for these roads that these animals follow. And I think that has an impact. And it does disturb the animals, the moose and caribou and we're starting to see a bit more Grizzly Bears coming into our area, but not really that much.

Quotes by Angus cont.

But we see we're starting to see an increase and we can't determine why they're coming down, maybe curiosity. Maybe there's oil and gas development on different parts of the area around here that they become curious about. (Angus)

Government-Community Differences

That's sometimes how government, when they don't consult with the, the people and the communities, they, they put all kinds of conditions down that you can't do this, can't do that and so on and that's not, not right. And the government has to consult all the time you know. Anytime they try to make any laws or regulations pertaining to animals, even Grizzly Bears in this case, and I think the combination of science and traditional knowledge on Grizzly Bears or anything that we study is, is really important. (Angus)

What People Can do to Help Grizzly Bears

I would think that you know, as development happens in isolated areas in the north and so on that Grizzly Bears could be an issue and for these people...They have to look at in terms of how they could deal with the problem themselves in that area.

Quotes by Angus cont.

Increasing Public Awareness of Grizzlies

I just would recommend that more studies be done of the Grizzly Bears in our area and the mountain areas as well too within our region.

Keep the information very clear, very, very clear, very simple, have a lot of you know, photography. (Angus)

Teaching Children About Grizzly Bears

Get it into the schools, to, to talk about it with the kids, get the parents interested in telling old time stories about Grizzly Bears to their kids like they used to. The parents are the teachers of the, of their own kids, not the schools. You know, you don't depend on the schools to give the, the kids all the knowledge. I mean the parents have to take that responsibility and pass that traditional knowledge on to their children as well too. (Angus)

How to Include Indigenous Knowledge to Protect Grizzly Bears

I think the combination of science and traditional knowledge on Grizzly Bears or anything that we study is, is really important. Because I think people in general, the Canadian population is sure to learn a lot from each other and that's one of the reasons why we, I guess, have these conferences so we could understand what's happening.

(Angus)

Quotes by Angus cont.

It's really important to use some of the Indigenous languages

You're dealing with a lot of people here that don't you know, that speak a, a second language or a first language which is their language.

It's really important to use some of the Indigenous languages in written form to, because people that speak the language when they see their language written down, they, they feel good about it because they feel that they own it you know. And it's really important to recognize a language to describe the knowledge or the stories that people are telling and in this case about the Grizzly Bears. (Angus)

Improving Relationships with Grizzly Bears: Taking Care of the Land

And we respect them. We clean the area up and we make sure we take the garbage off the land when people travel on the land. (Angus)

Existing with Grizzly Bears: "You have to learn to live with the wildlife"

We keep away from them, they keep away from us. (Angus)

Quotes by Angus cont.

Respect for Grizzly Bears: We cannot be dominant over wildlife anymore

But we respect the animals, I mean, the Grizzly Bears when they do come. We don't talk about them too much. But we understand that we have to live with them. (Angus)

I think people also should learn about we don't manage them. I mean we really brainwash people telling them that we manage them, we don't. We have to qualify that and here in, it's a favour say of Elders here, they, they take care of themselves. And they're their own boss.

Quotes by John Norbert

Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears: “That’s What My Elders Told Me”

I learn all from the Elders, by their stories. (John N.)

[Elders] told me stories about Grizzly Bear right now we're talking about and all that. What happened to them and only sometimes they tried to kill it and they shoot at the wrong place and the bear gets mad and that's really dangerous then. So you got to make sure you got to shoot when you're going to kill a Grizzly Bear. That's what they told me anyway. And I still remember that and don't fool around with dogs and all that and don't fool around when they got cubs, they are dangerous when they got cubs.

Another thing you don't make fun of them. They don't care you if make you make fun of them and then that's not an animal to make fun of. That's what my Elders told me anyway.

Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears

These animals all live out on the land; corridors, creeks, running creeks, small rivers, where there's a lot of fish, trout, any kind of fishery. They look for that all summer, and berries and all that stuff. They live on that all summer, so they could sleep all winter on that. That's the way they live. (John N.)

John N. cont

Issues that affect Grizzly Bears and Their Habitats: Human-bear interactions

These animals, they smell [food that people leave behind] and that's why they go into the camp if something smelling in there. (John N.)

Lack of Public Knowledge About Grizzlies

We have to try real hard to you know, learn the young people about the country and where to go and where not to go and all that stuff you know. It's only safe in creeks up in the, in the fall, they got to know all them, the places where you know, some creeks never freeze all that stuff. They have to know all that and they don't know it but it's partially our fault because we don't train them. (John N.)

Teaching "people that are going to be on the land"

I think we should be training the young people who are going to be trappers and hunters and everything for the next stage...They need to get trained and maybe have a workshop with them and while we're still able to move, we could show them you know. Show them how to survive out in the land. (John N.)

John N. cont

We want to make our own people make their own decisions

I don't know how the Grizzly Bear management plan started here. But not too long ago, I remember that a long time ago when it started. And today, it's still going on. (John N.)

It's really important to use some of the Indigenous languages

Make it in our own language and all that. It's very important for the people you know, so they can make use of it and learn from it. (John)

Improving Relationships with Grizzly Bears: Taking Care of the Land

It's about your camp. You got to keep it very clean, top shape and when you leave you don't leave anything behind especially meat and stuff like that, when you're done...Keep everything clean, your garbage away from your camp and all that. (John N.)

Quotes by Dolphus Baton

Grizzlies are Sacred: “A bear was once a person just like us”

There was a bear that spoke once. I mean that that goes into our history and there's all kinds of information that you can get from that. He said it's an icon species, it's one of the species that, like I said, I use the term sacred because, that for me that really makes it the species that we really have to respect. (Walter, translating for Dolphus)

Indigenous Knowledge about Grizzly Bears

He says that, of course, the bears hibernate, and in the fall time in the late fall, and you don't generally see them till spring. (Walter, translating for Dolphus)

Respect for Grizzly Bears: We cannot be dominant over wildlife anymore

One of the other things he says we don't we don't bring up that the subject about the bears and very often here and Délı̄nə, we don't hunt them. And we don't- we- basically, I guess what he's saying, our relation is I think, pretty good. Aside from odd bears that go into the camps, and the ones that go into the community. (Walter, translating for Dolphus)

Quotes by Leon Modeste

Respect for Grizzly Bears: Grizzlies are “an Icon Species”

It's our food...it is very tasteful, he said. (Walter, translating for Leon)