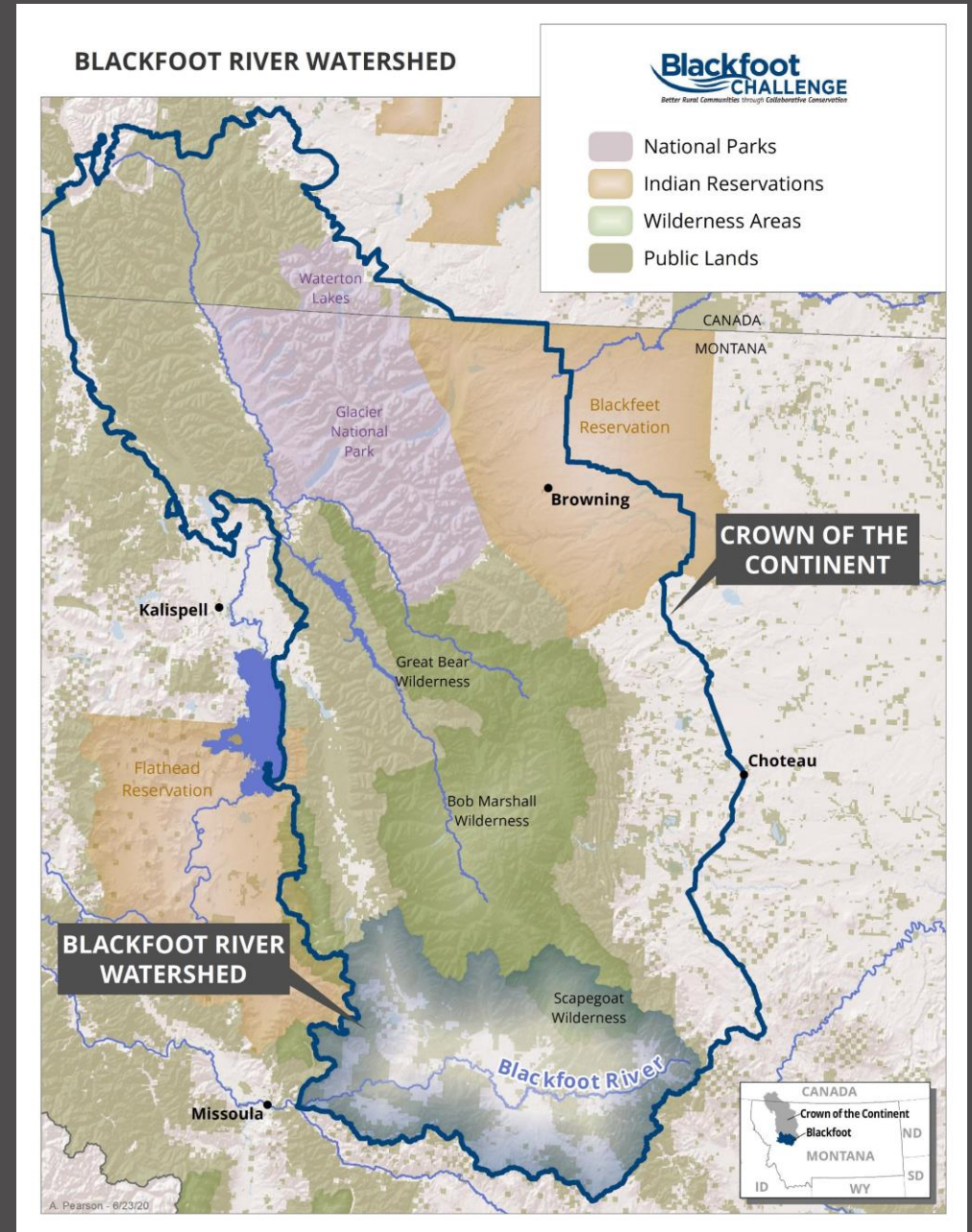
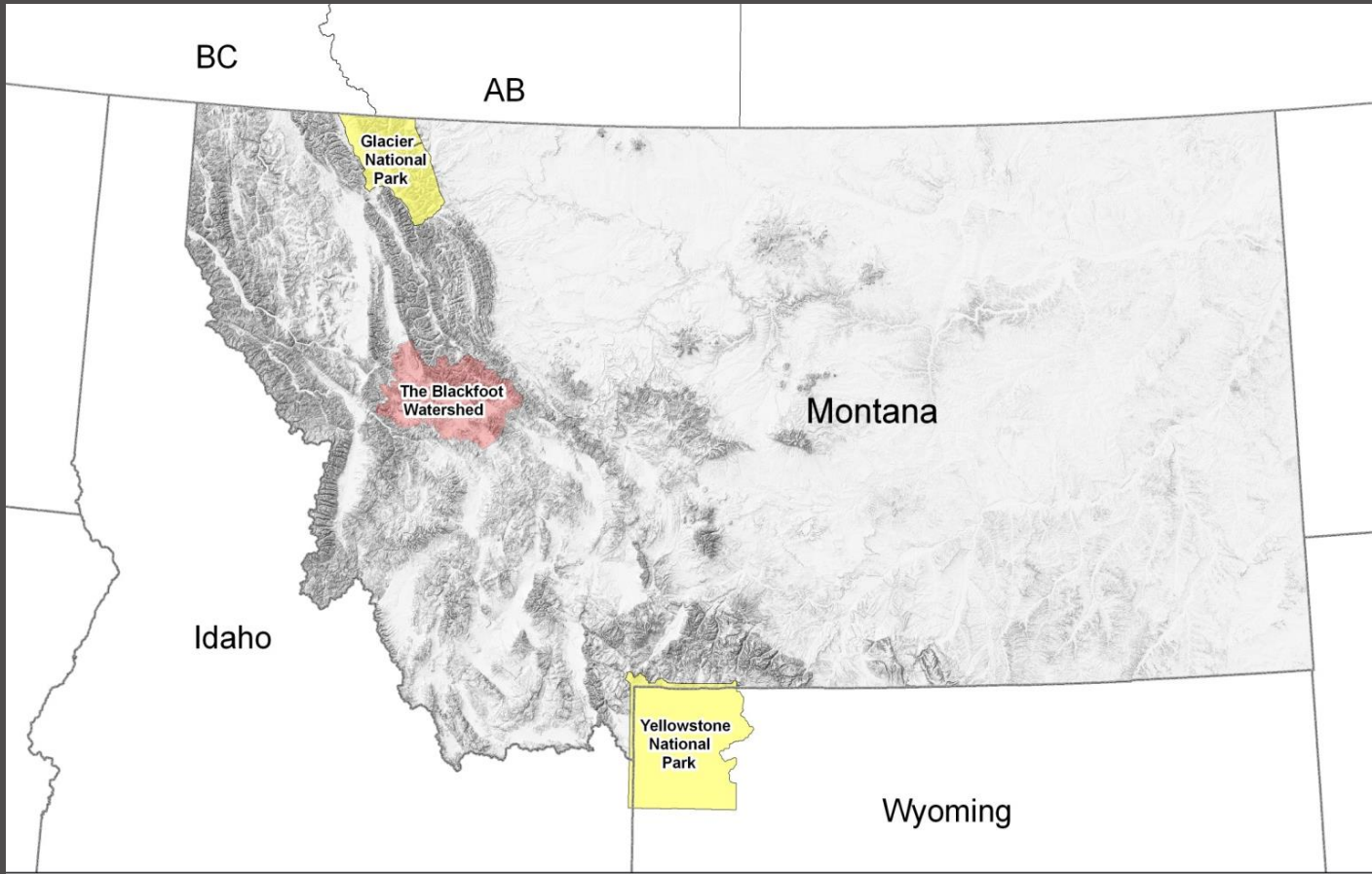


Blackfoot Challenge – *An Overview of our Organization and Our Response to Wolves*

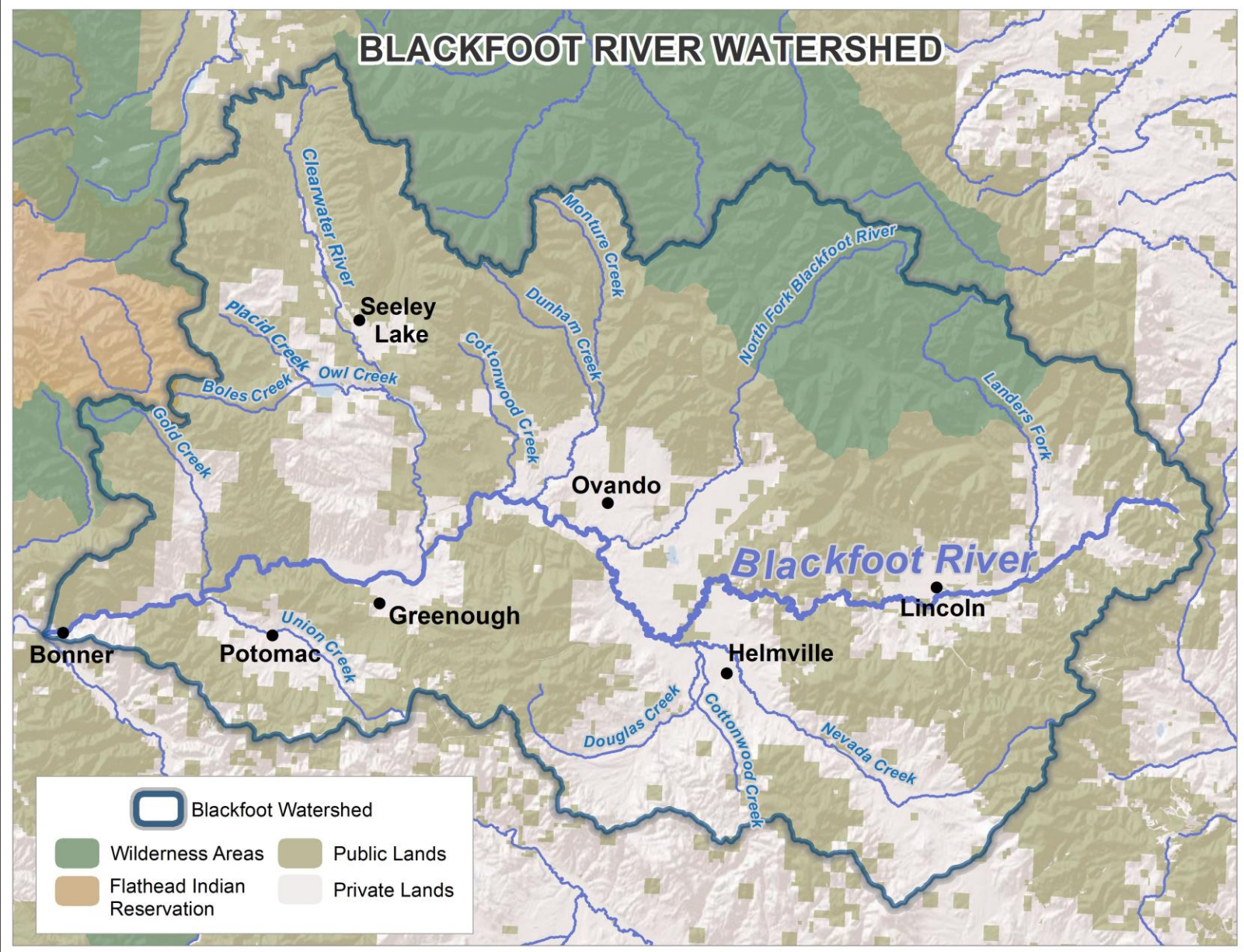


Blackfoot
CHALLENGE

Grand Junction, Colorado
October 10, 2023



BLACKFOOT RIVER WATERSHED



	Blackfoot Watershed
	Wilderness Areas
	Public Lands
	Flathead Indian Reservation
	Private Lands

Blackfoot Watershed



The Blackfoot Challenge – A Collaborative Approach



The Blackfoot Challenge coordinates efforts to conserve and enhance the natural resources and rural way of life in the Blackfoot Watershed for present and future generations.

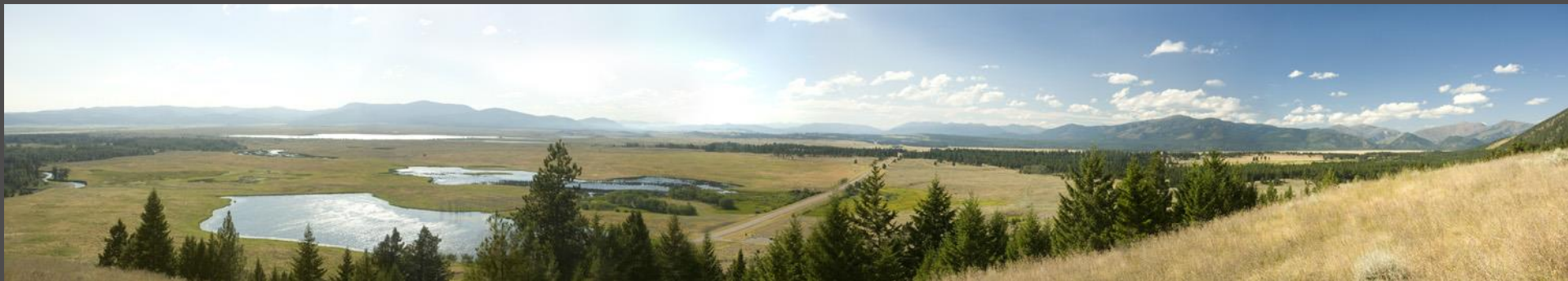


The Blackfoot Challenge

- **Communication** – “Our bread and butter”
 - **Trust** – through public and private partnerships
 - **Inclusive** – communities of place and interest
-



An NGO - Community-Based
Conservation Since 1993





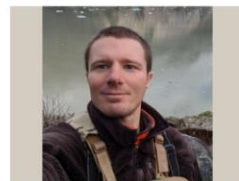
Jim Stone
CHAIR, ROLLING STONE RANCH, OVANDO



Randy Gazda
VICE-CHAIR, RETIRED US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



Jennifer Williamson
TREASURER, NORM WILLIAMSON CPA, MISSOULA



Benjamin Gilles
PARTNER, US FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE



Amy Groen
RESIDENT, MISSOULA



Robert Gump
PARTNER, US FOREST SERVICE, LINCOLN



Dwane Kailey
PARTNER, MT DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION



Pat Kane
PRO OUTFITTERS, OVANDO



Leigh Kelley
PAWS UP RANCH, GREENOUGH



Denny Iverson
SECRETARY, IVERSON RANCH, POTOMAC



David Mannix
MANNIX BROTHERS RANCH, HELMVILLE



Randy Arnold
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS



Karl Hausmann
LANDOWNER, POTOMAC



Jason Jewett
US BANK, HELENA



Todd Johnson
PYRAMID MOUNTAIN LUMBER, SEELEY LAKE



Frank Maus
LANDOWNER, GREENOUGH



Jack Mulcare
LANDOWNER, GREENOUGH



Mike O'Herron
MT DEPT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & CONSERVATION



Patti Bartlett
RETIRED SCIENCE TEACHER, SEELEY LAKE



Chris Bryant
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY



Stoney Burke
LANDOWNER, OVANDO



Erin Carey
PARTNER, US BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



Quinn Carver
PARTNER, US FOREST SERVICE, SEELEY LAKE



Bill Cyr
B & C OUTFITTERS, LINCOLN



Harry Poett
LANDOWNER, OVANDO



Robert Ray
RETIRED MT DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY



Josh Scrcengost
PARTNER, NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE



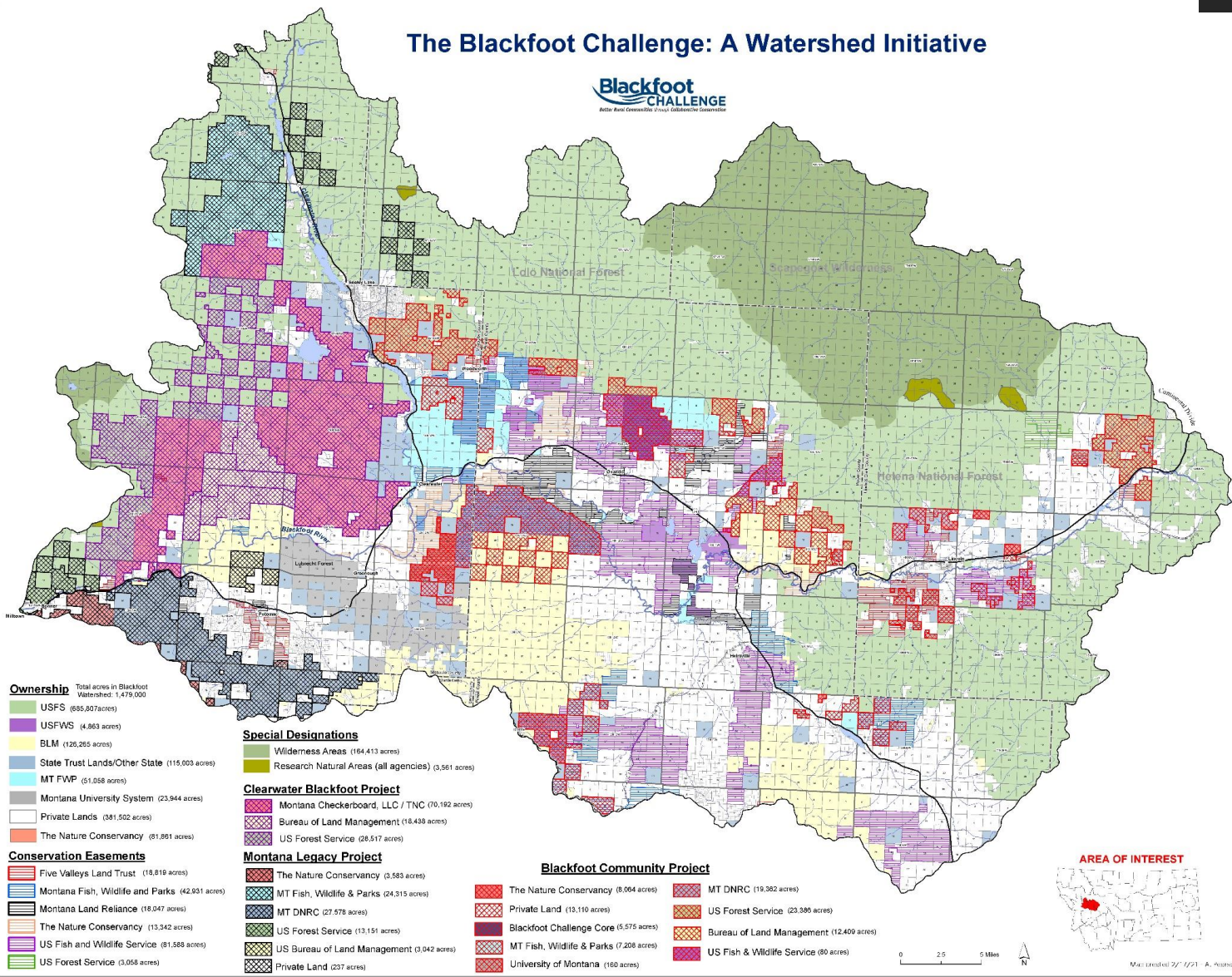
Ryan Thompson
SWIFT CURRENT EVENTS, MISSOULA



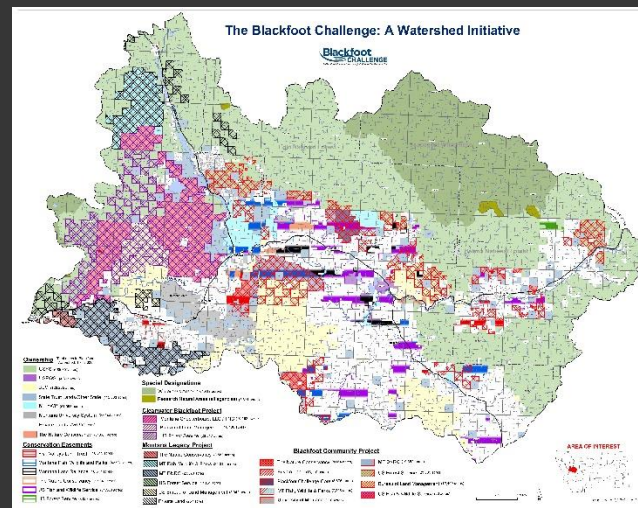
Alan Townsend
PARTNER, UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA FRANKIE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY AND CONSERVATION

30 Board Members

The Blackfoot Challenge: A Watershed Initiative



Governance - Board Members Represent Management & Ownership Jurisdictions



Land Ownership & Management

Federal Agencies

Jim Stone, Chair Rolling Stone Ranch, Ovando
 Randy Gazda, USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife
 Rob Gump, US Forest Service, Lincoln
 Denny Iverson, Iverson Ranch, Potomac
 David Mannix, Mannix Brothers Ranch, Helmville
 Bill Cyr, Lincoln Outfitters, Lincoln
 Karl Hausmann, Landowner, Potomac
 Patti Bartlett, Teacher, Seeley Lake
 Robert Ray, Montana Department of Environmental Quality
 Chris Bryant, The Nature Conservancy
 Josh Schrecengost, Nat.Resources Conservation Service
 Jason Jewett, US Bank
 Patrick Kane, Pro Outfitters
 Jack Mulcare, Landowner, Greenough
 Alan Townsend, U of M – CFC

Stoney Burke, Landowner, Ovando
 George Hirschenberger, Landowner
 Todd Johnson, Pyramid Mtn. Lumber, Seeley Lake
 Mike O'Herron, Montana DNRC
 Randy Arnold, Montana Dept. of Fish, Wildlife & Parks
 Quinn Carver, US Forest Service, Seeley Lake
 Erin Carey, Bureau of Land Management
 Ben Giles, US Fish and Wildlife Service
 Harry Poett, Landowner, Ovando
 Leigh Kelley, Ranch Manager, Greenough
 Amy Groen, Landowner, Missoula
 Dwane Kailey, MT Dept. of Transportation
 Frank Maus, Lubrecht Ex. Forest – U of M
 Ryan Thompson, Landowner, Greenough
 Jennifer Williamson, Landowner, Missoula



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Jennifer Schoonen
WATER STEWARD & FUND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

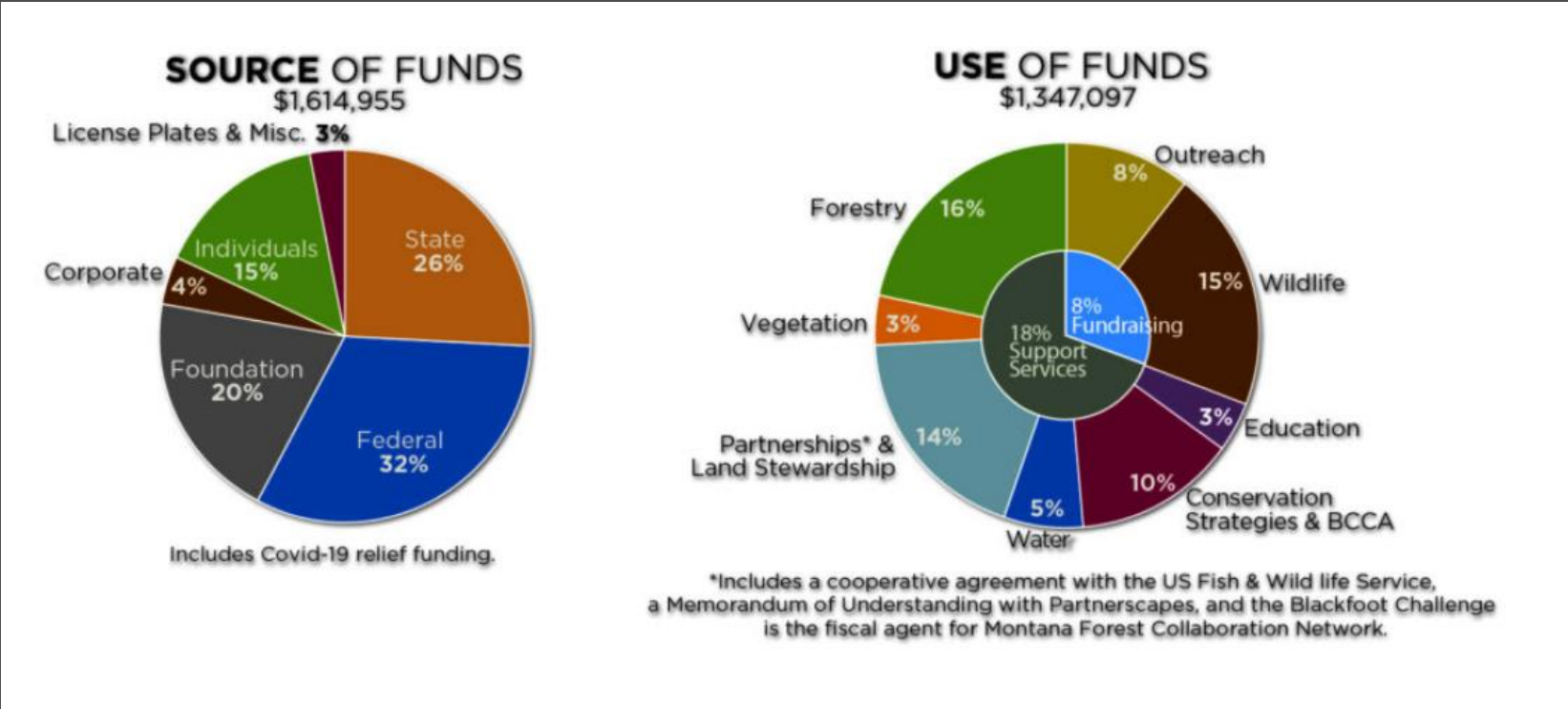


Cindy Super
FORESTRY & PRESCRIBED FIRE COORDINATOR



Brad Weltzien
LAND STEWARD

11 Staff



1.8 million – Annual Budget*

*2024

The Blackfoot Challenge – Collaborative Approach

Key Aspects of Our Process

Inclusive

Consensus driven / the “80:20 rule”

Support a process versus positions

Do not engage in litigation

Partnerships-public and private



The Blackfoot Challenge – Conservation Impacts

- **Land Protected** - 1.2 million acres
- **Community Support** - 5,600 acre forest
- **Native Trout** – Populations restored
- **Drought Response** – In-stream flows maintained
- **Coexistence with Carnivores** – Abundant grizzly bear and wolf populations
- **Restoration** – Trumpeter swan populations; riparian habitats
- **Stewardship** – Land ethic across ranchers
- **Education and Outreach** – Hundreds of area school students



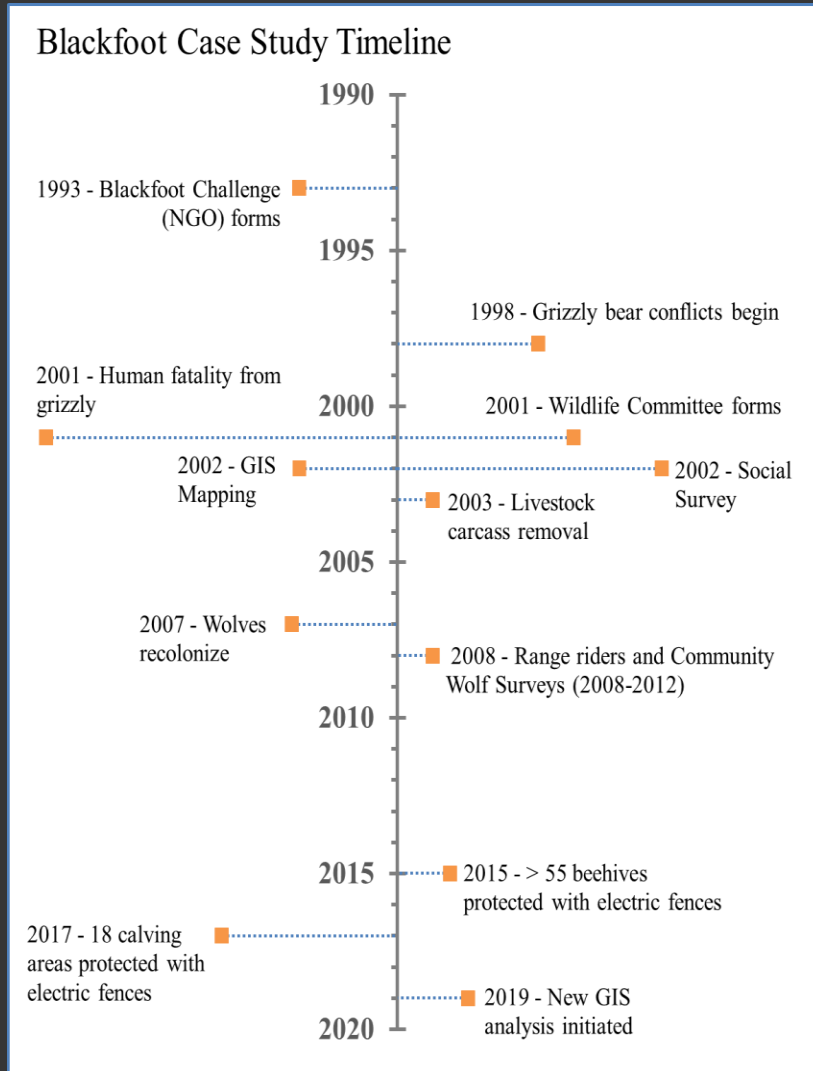
The Blackfoot Challenge – Programs

- Water
- Forestry
- Vegetation
- Land Stewardship
- Swan Reintroduction & Avian Monitoring
- Conservation Strategies
- Education
- ***Wildlife***

Wildlife – Reducing human-wildlife conflict through proactive and preventative strategies.



BC – Wildlife Committee – 22 Years



Phase – 1 2000-2002
Understanding the Problem
Using science - GIS

Phase – 2 2002 – present
Developing solutions – projects

Phase – 3 2015-present
Innovations & new projects
Continued Partnerships

BC – Wildlife Committee 2001



Phase – 1

Understanding the problem

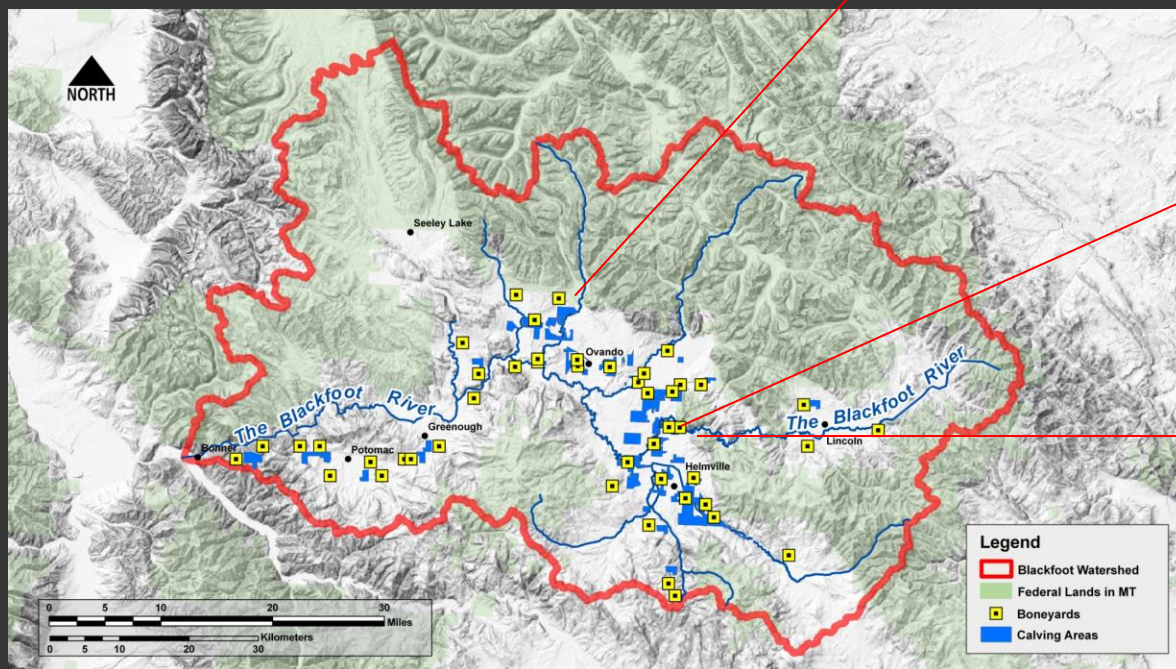
Used science / GIS



Phase – 1

Understanding the problem

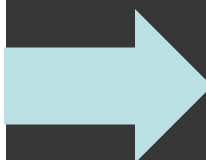
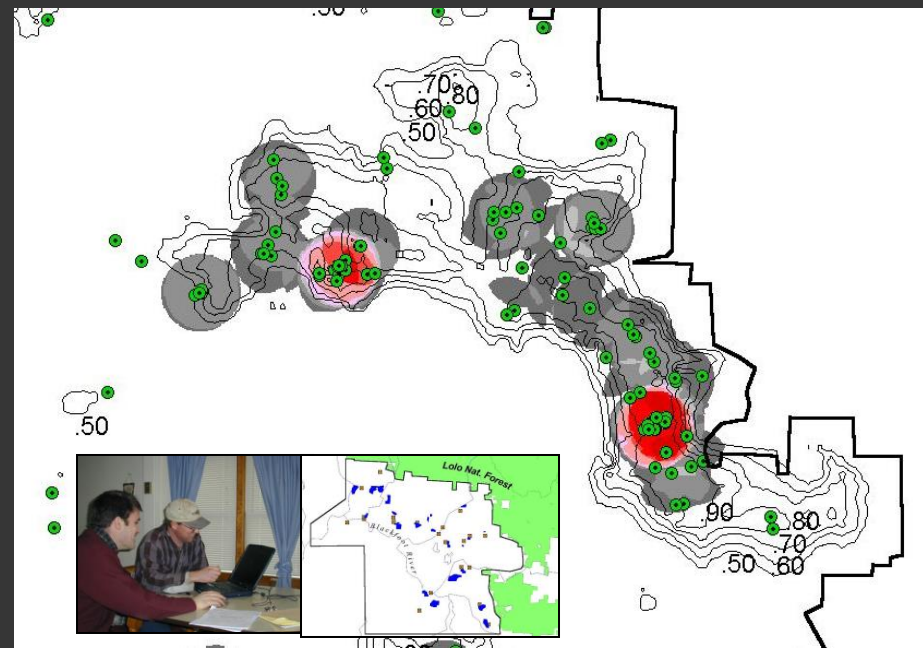
Used science / GIS



Phase – 1

Understanding the problem

Used science / GIS

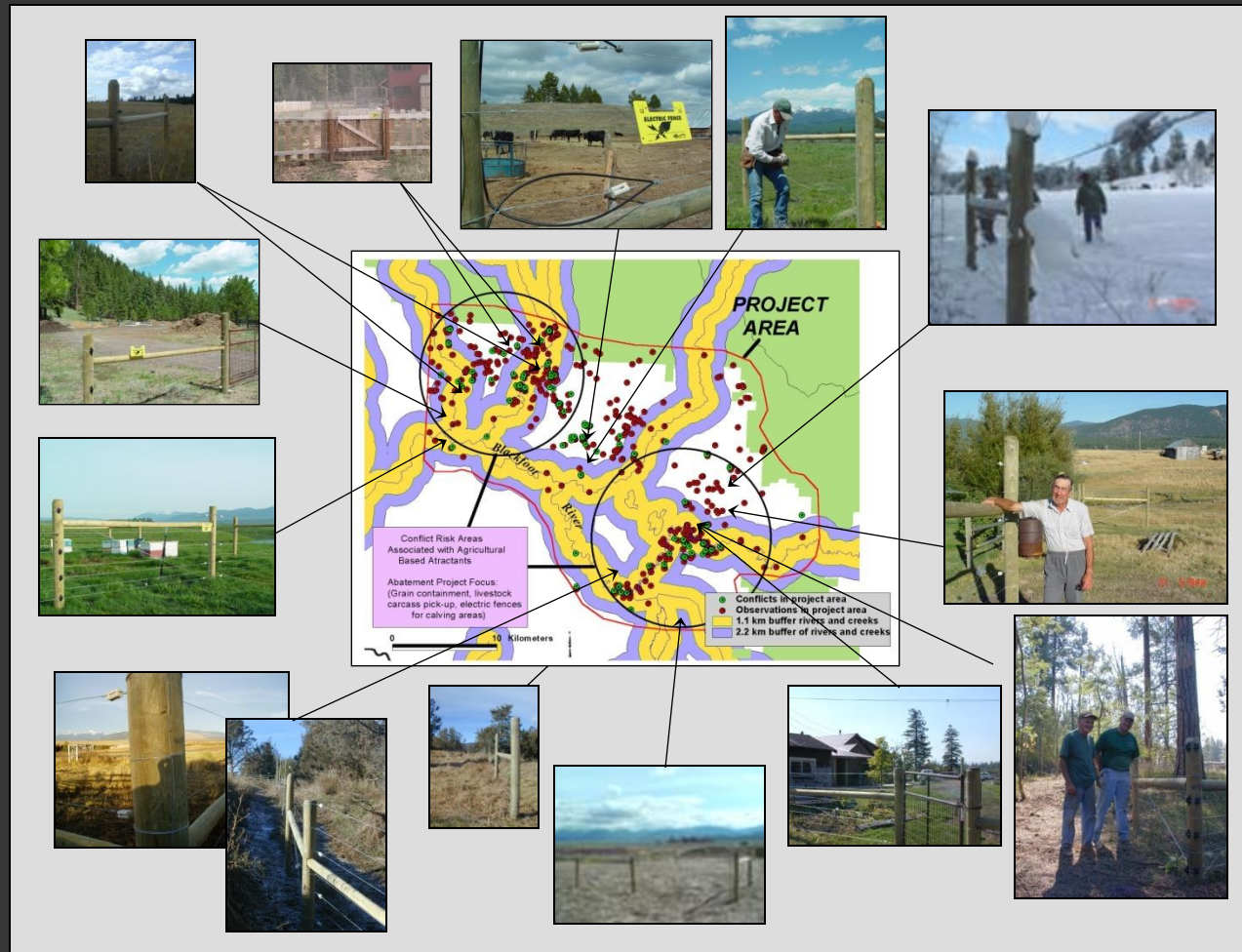


Analysis directed investment for preventative projects

Risk mapping **Hotspots for conflicts**

Phase – 2

Developing Solutions



Electric Fencing Projects 2003-2023

- Electric Fences for Beehives, homesites, and Calving Areas in Hotspots

From 2003-2023

- 60 beehive fences
- 30 calving areas fences
- 10 residential fences
- 2 composting facilities
- 3 transfer site(s)
- 3 portable systems
- 27 NEW e-mat systems

Phase – 2

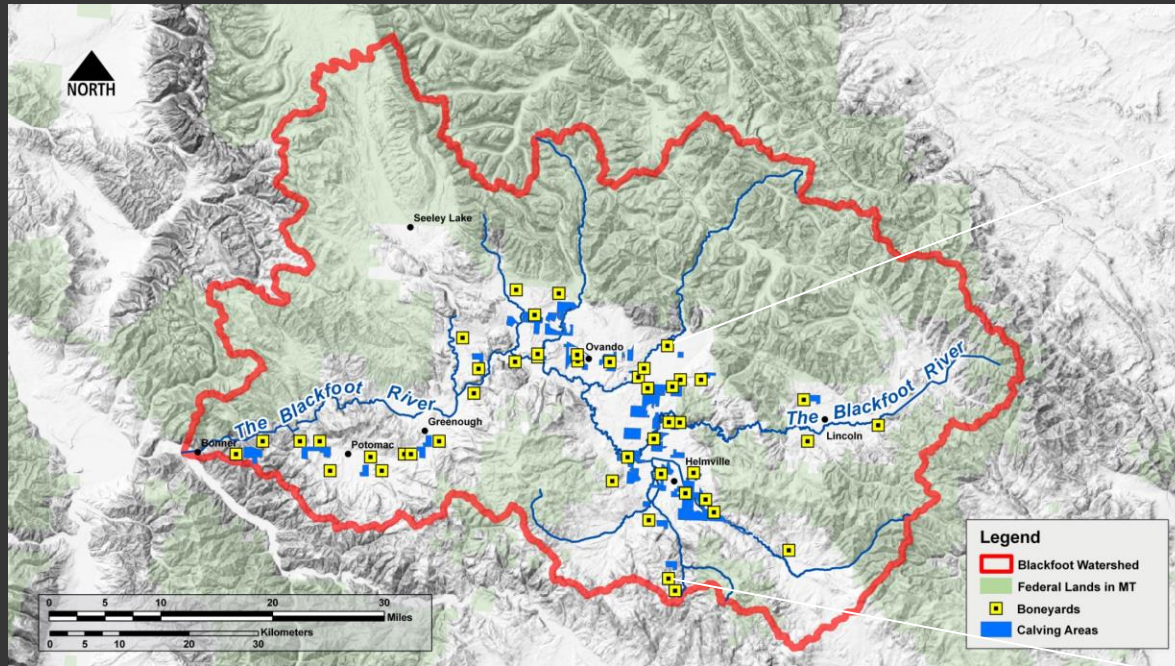
Developing Solutions



Electric Fencing

Phase – 2

Developing Solutions



Livestock Carcass Management

Phase – 2

Developing Solutions



Livestock Carcass Management

Phase – 2

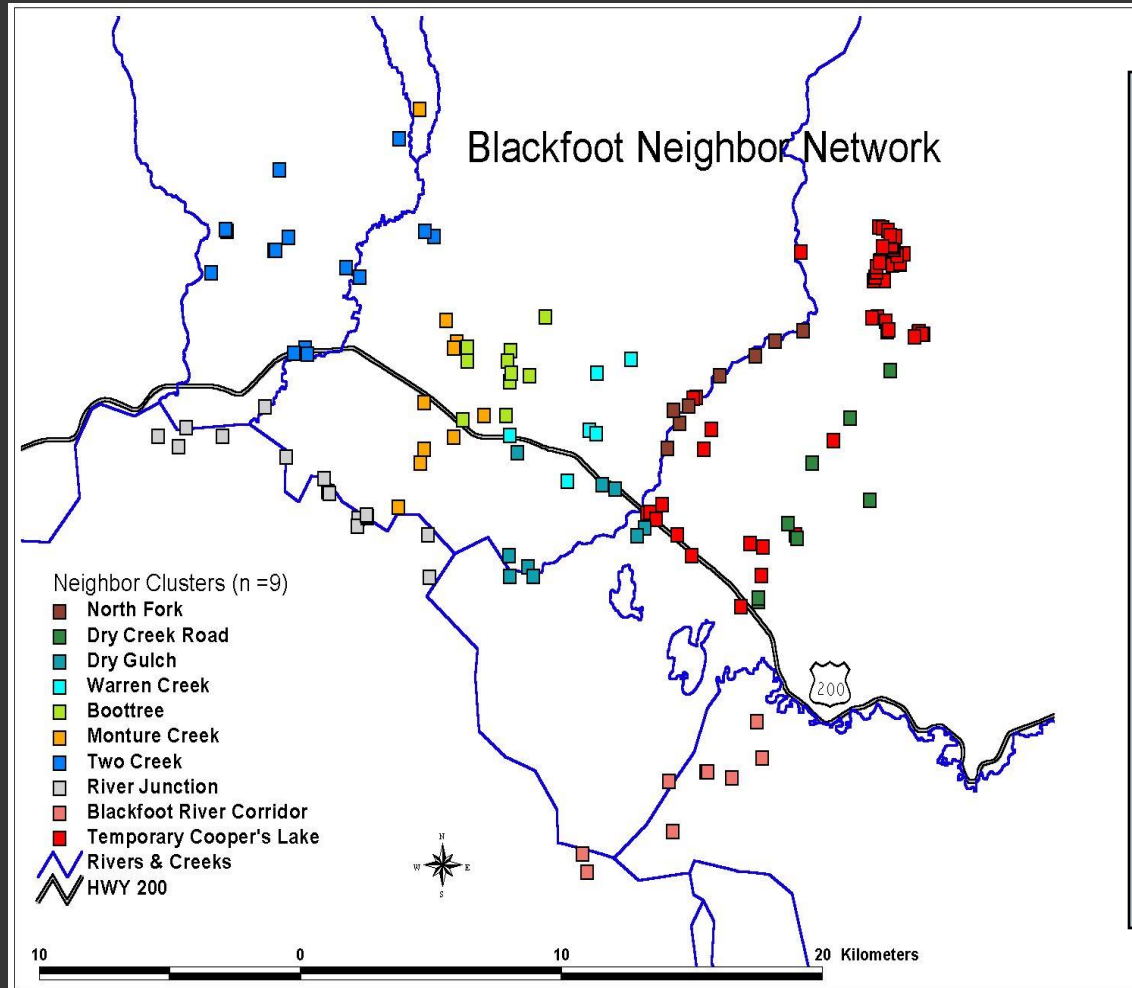
Developing Solutions



Livestock Carcass Management

Phase – 2

Developing Solutions



Purpose:
Rapid communication with over 120 landowners using phone trees, e-mail, and social media to respond to **grizzly bears/wolves** with 9 volunteer coordinators

“Neighbor Networks”

Phase – 2

Community Supported Winter Wolf Survey – 2008-2013

- Identify wolf sign/tracks, approx. numbers, and distribution
- Partnership with MT FWP >100 volunteers annually



Winter Wolf Survey

Phase – 2

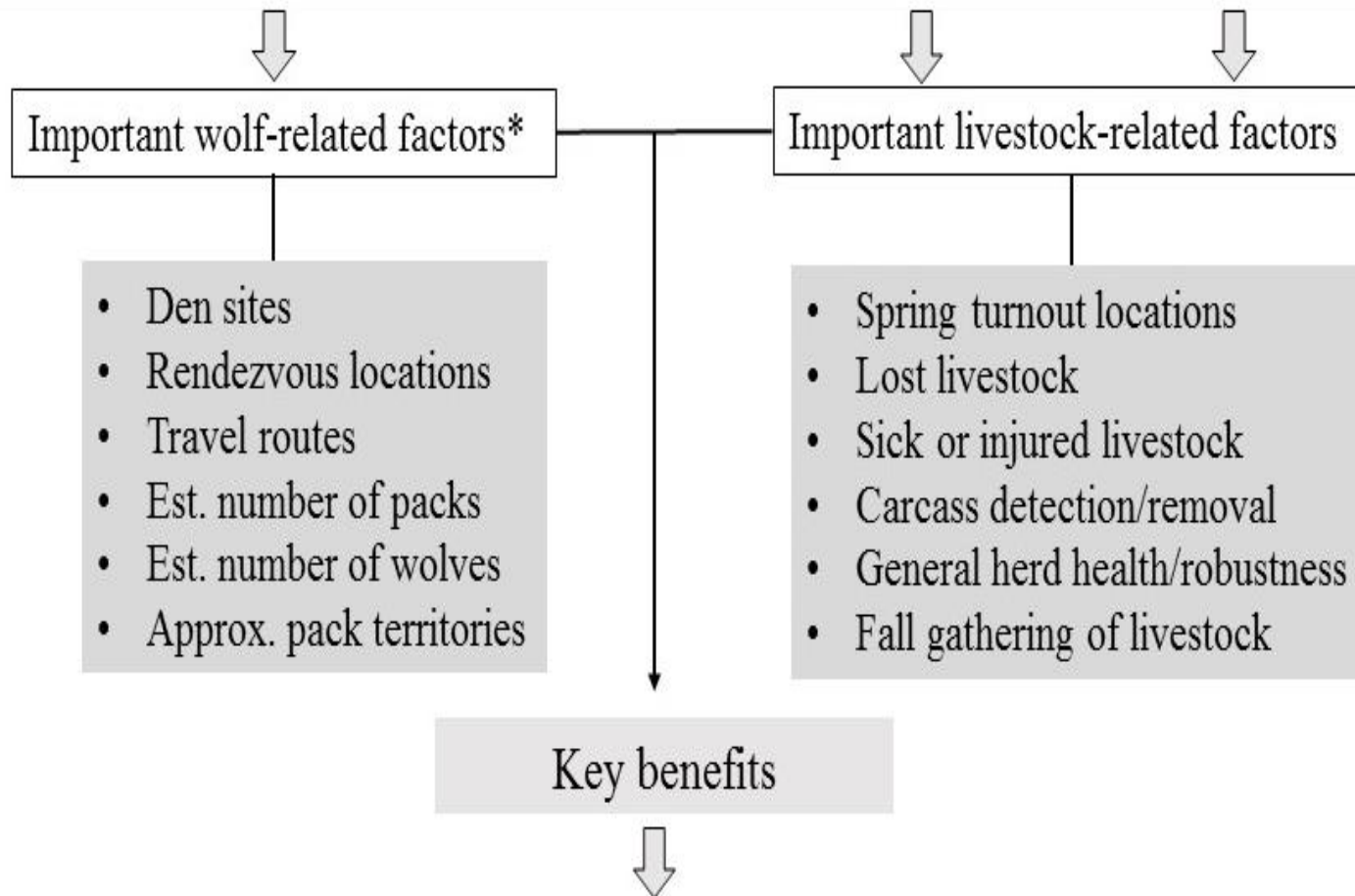
Developing Solutions



Range Rider Program – 2008 - present

Blackfoot Challenge Partnership

MT Fish Wildlife and Parks + Livestock producers + Range riders



1. **Tightly coordinated communication (BC-Wildlife Committee, FWP, and range riders)**
2. **Improved livestock herd supervision rates and increased human presence**
3. **Increased ability to take proactive measures and reduce risk**

Emphasis is on livestock monitoring and health

During the 2022 field season

- (2) range riders and assistants
- 14 ranchers
- 4,600 head of livestock
- 78,900 acres in five communities



Range Rider Program – 2008 - present

Fladry fencing – portable system



Fladry fencing – portable system



Fladry fencing



Fladry fencing



Phase – 3

Developing Solutions – NEW Innovations



Drive-over electric mats in high use areas with electric fence

Developing solutions using practical tools



Drive-over electric mats in high use areas with electric fence

Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools



Developing solutions using practical tools

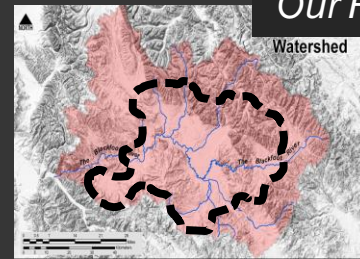


Developing solutions using practical tools

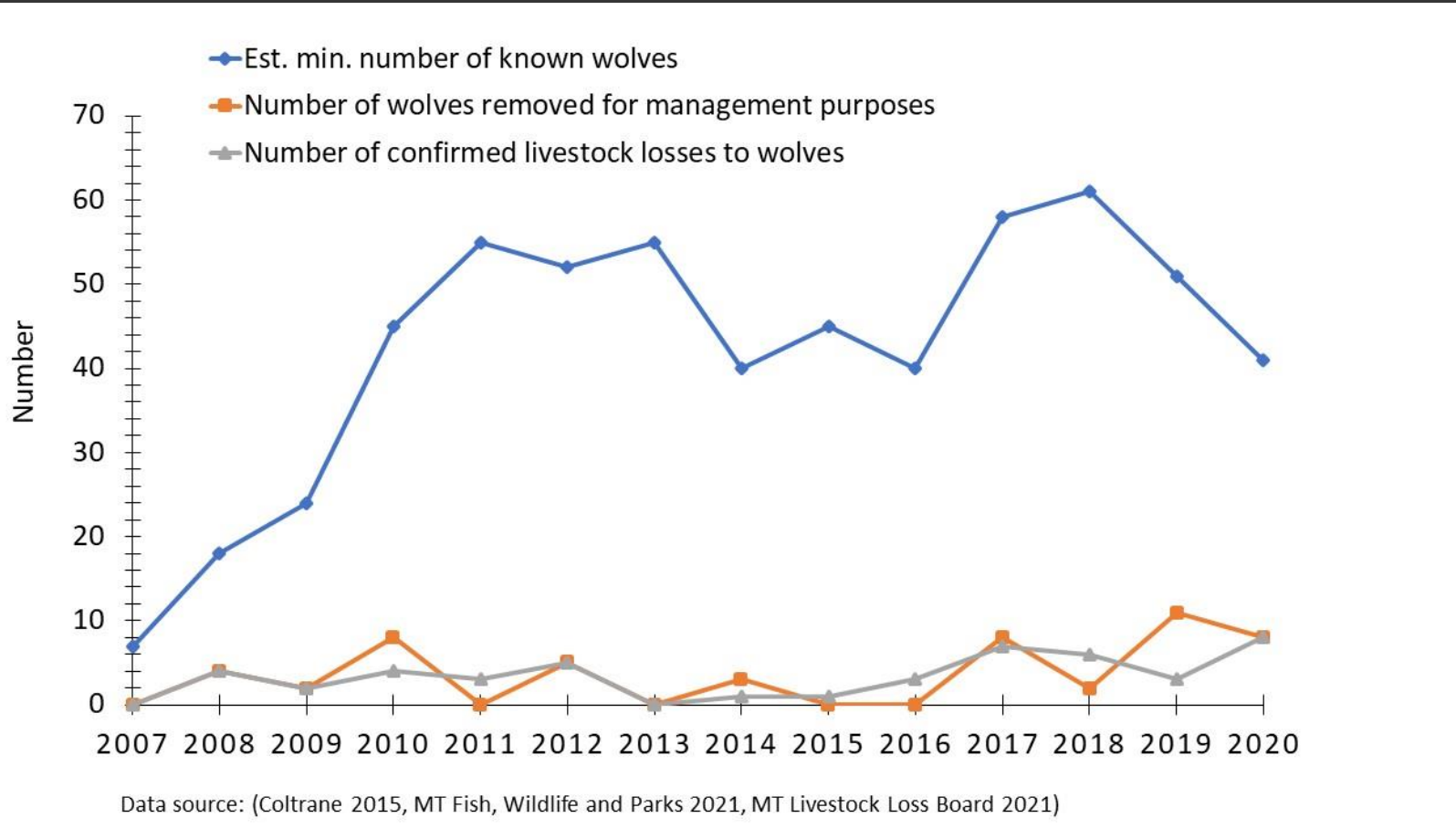


Developing solutions using practical tools



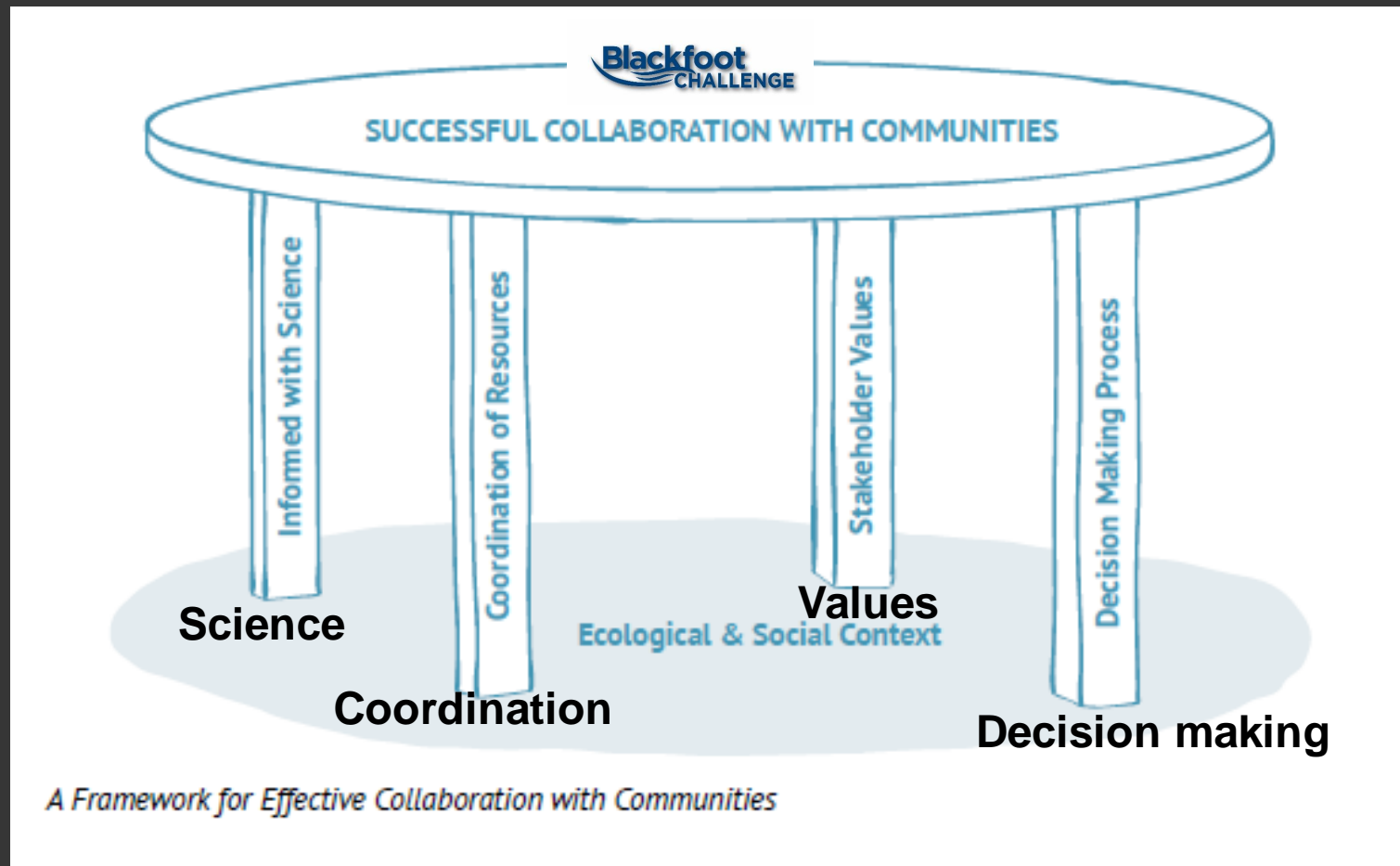


Estimated minimum numbers of known wolves in core area, wolf removals (for depredations), and confirmed livestock depredations



2022 – 10
2023 - 4

The Blackfoot Challenge – Collaborative Approach



Source: Wilson, S.M. 2016. A guidebook to human-carnivore conflict: Strategies and tips for effective communication and collaboration with communities. Slovenia Forest Service – LIFE DINALP BEAR project, Ljubljana, Slovenia. 67pp

Thoughts to consider in Colorado

Coordination

Scale (wolf pack territories* and collective response)

(e.g., carcass management)

Capacity

Is there existing capacity?

Does it need to be developed?

Who can provide this?

Are there focal people? (key opinion leaders from your community?)

Are there funding sources for coordination and tools?

Communication

How can information about wolves be communicated?

How can information about local concerns be communicated?

Can a forum be developed?

*Wolf pack territories (MT)
ave. 200 mi² (518 sq. km)

Thoughts to consider in Colorado

Coordination (continued)

Partnerships (public and private)

Leveraging expertise, knowledge, and resources

wolf ecology

wolf management

livestock husbandry / local knowledge

prevention tools

funding

Thoughts to consider in Colorado:

Recognize and Respect Different Stakeholder Values

Local people who live with wolves

Researchers / Extension

NGOs – who care about wolves

Wildlife Management Authorities

Other interests

Can inclusive and productive forums be developed for discussion?

Invite everyone to the table

Ask the questions, Who is here? Who needs to be here?

Thoughts to consider in Colorado:

Decision-making

Gather relevant information

Collectively define the problem

Collectively define goals

Develop support for actions

Make decisions supported by stakeholders

Implement actions and monitor efforts

A good decision-making process should be: inclusive, fair, factual, and produce results!!

Thoughts to consider in Colorado:

Use Science to Inform Response to Wolves

Is the science believed by stakeholders?

Are there opportunities to involve stakeholders in the generation of scientific data?

Lessons to Consider



Community-shared Goals were Developed:

(goal = protect property / risk reduction)



Focused on Changing Practices and Human Behaviors,
Examples: Electric fencing, livestock carcass removal, range riders



Open Meetings for all Stakeholders

Emphasis on common interests, not special interests



Livelihood Interests / Economic Incentives

Cost-share Projects: Public and Private Funding Sources

Adult male grizzly bear home ranges: 140-590 mi²

(377-1,520 sq. km)

Adult female grizzly bear home ranges: 26-94 mi²

(74-242 sq. km)

Matched Community Response to Correct
Biological Scale (important for carnivores)
Main Project Area Covers ~800,000 acres

Wolf pack territories (MT)
ave. 200 mi² (518 sq. km)



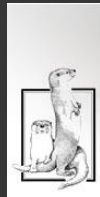


MT. Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks was Willing to Collaborate
and Delegate Power with Local Community for Prevention
Projects

Shared Decision Making and Trust



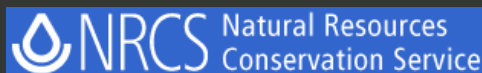
Thank You to our Partners and Funders



NRCC

Special thanks to the Blackfoot Challenge and all members of the Wildlife Committee, the Landowner Advisory Group, the Waste Management and Sanitation Work Group, and the Neighbour Network. Thanks to Granite County Headwaters, Granite County Commissioners, Granite Conservation District, Big Hole Watershed Committee, LighHawk (Chris Boyer), Special thanks as well to T. Smith, J. and I. Weaver, J. and C. Coughlin, G. Coughlin, M. McCormick, L. McCormick, T. Murphy, C. McClure, M. Gahan, D. Pruet, W. Slaght, K. Kovatch, R. Burchenal, D. Iverson, R. Cahoon, L. Flemming, B. Mannix, D. Mannix, R. Mannix, B. Rowland, R. Hall, J. Mulcare, D. Weiss, M. Cravelly, C. Bauer, V. Edwards, P. Sowka, M. Johnson, T. Radandt, A. Klinefelter, T. Bernd-Cohen, J. Stone, J. Stuzman, H. Johnson, G. Neudecker, K. Ertl, C. Servheen, S. Kloetzel, Carol Kulish, W. Weaver, Barb McNally, R. Allen, G. Foote, and K. Schoendoerfer. Special thanks to Traci Bignell and Gary Burnett for expert administrative support. Special thanks to J.J. Jonkel, C. Sime, A. Dood, L. Bradley, M. Long, J. Kolbe, M. Thompson, and B. Henderson of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks for their vision, support, and collaboration. Thanks to B. Friede, P. Basting, C. Helm, and D. Moeller of MT Department of Transportation. Thanks to all of the fencing contractors we've worked with over the years and thanks to Dr. J. Waller, Dr. M. Gibeau, Dr. M. Schwartz, Dr. D. Mattson, Dr. L. Boitani, W. Gilgert, C. Sime, and L. Bradley for various scientific and management-related consultations on various scientific aspects of this effort. Thanks to all partners at the NRCS: D. Smith, P. Lauridson, G. Green, J. Bowe, C. Frazer, B. Weltzein, C. Engelhard, J. Blaine, W. Lujan, T. Prince, D. White, W. Gilgert, P. Husby, C. Mosley, E. Suffridge, P. Matthews, M. Harris, R. Nadwornick, L. Metz, and T. Pick.

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Yale's Environment School