

## Down Collar Retrieval Information

Bear # GB726  
Frequency: 163.056  
Picked up by: Craig Whitman, Nick Miles  
Date: 09/18/2012  
Location: Spring Creek, US Sheep Experiment Station, USDA

Collar UTM: 439250 X 4933708 NAD83  
Aerial UTM: 439100 X 4933475 NAD83  
Difference: Aerial UTM versus collar UTM = 280 meters

Date On: 08/16/2012  
Date Dropped: Mort 09/17/2012 East Fork Spring Creek USSES  
Last live 08/30 & 31/2012 W Fork Spring Cr USSES

Collar Condition and Circumstance: Collar condition and circumstance extremely suspicious possibly a dead bear. Collar was hidden in a creek under a rock and small log approximately 15 feet from a hunting camp that had been pulled on the morning of the 18<sup>th</sup> the day after the collar was flown. On our way in to pick up GB726's collar Nick and I talked to a pair of Wisconsin hunters who had just vacated the hunting camp where the collar was found later in the day.

The collar had no marks on it except for two small possible quarter inch long knife or broad head cuts on the exterior of the collar. The cotton spacer appeared pulled apart not cut as some strands of cotton thread appeared to have been pulled through from between the grommets from the far end of the spacer. The separation of the spacer did have a strange angle. Although it appeared to have separated through the holes punched in the spacer at the time of capture. There was an additional tear / cut near one of the grommets. Placement of the collar under the rock and log was artificial as there was no bear sign in the area and all the small fragile limbs were still intact around the collar with no bear hair or sign present. Additionally seven apples and one cliff bar had been thrown in the creek near the collar.

The camp was located approximately 50 meters off the trail on the edge of a small spring creek with a flow of 0.5 CFS. Over story was

mature subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce. The shrub layer consisted of currents, elderberry and willow. Ground cover consisted of pine grass, fireweed, and sticky geranium. Nick and I photographed each of the footprint types found in the camp and carefully circled the camp at 10 meters, 50 meters and 100 meters to attempt to locate a blood trail or evidence of a dead bear or drag marks of a bear that had been removed from the camp.

On the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> Nick and I contacted Red Rocks Lakes NWR, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and Idaho Fish and Game personnel (as this was an Idaho capture) to make them aware of the situation. We also worked with Red Rocks personnel and the grazing permit holder to get a better description of the vehicle that had been parked at the trailhead that morning.

On the 19<sup>th</sup> I returned to the site with MTFWP Conservation Officer, Jim Smolczynski. We further examined the camp and the surrounding area for any sign of a dead bear and searched the area around the aerial location from Monday the 17<sup>th</sup> again. On the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> Jim talked with the Red Rocks personnel and a local land owner. Late on the 19<sup>th</sup> Scott Huntsman the grazing permit holder contacted Bill West the Red Rocks Manager to let him know that he had observed the vehicle from the trailhead in Lima. Scott also had talked with these two hunters the previous week. Dave Farmer the Red Rocks LEO, Jim and I drove to Lima where they met up with the local Sheriff and interviewed the two hunters.

Footprint photos from the camp clearly matched two pairs of boots found in the apartment that they were staying in. Both hunters denied any knowledge of the radio collar. Everything else lined up with them being in the camp from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. One set of boot prints that left the trail walked through the edge of the camp directly toward where the collar was found in the creek was unaccounted for.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Jim continued to interview people in the area and I returned to the site to run the trails and attempt to track the two hunters and the mystery third track from the camp.

At this point three scenarios are in play: first is that someone placed the collar in the creek at the camp sometime after the last live signal

on August 31<sup>st</sup> and before the two Wisconsin hunters set up camp on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September. This was a recognizable previously heavily used camp site with permanent tent frames and hitching post erected. The two hunters claimed that they were the first people to have used the camp site this year.

Scenario two would be that one of the hunters killed GB726 then removed the collar and for some reason brought it back to camp or simply found the collar and brought it back to camp. During our first encounter with the hunters on the trail, one became visibly nervous when we mentioned we were walking in on a bear collar on mortality. This same hunter was also visibly nervous, pale and sweaty during the interview. Also the first thing they blurted out when the radio collar in the creek at their camp was brought up was that since it was in the water there would be no fingerprints. Also I was able to backtrack the nervous individual over to the West Fork of Spring Creek to near where GB726 was located on August 30<sup>th</sup>.

Scenario three would be that someone placed the collar in the camp of the two Wisconsin hunters while they were out hunting on Sunday. The unknown set of footprints in their camp heading toward where the collar was found in the creek would suggest this possibility.



**Photo 1: GB726 cotton spacer cut or torn through three punched holes?**





**Photo 2 Location of GB726 collar: The collar was tucked down underneath the backside of the large boulder just right of center in the frame. A five inch diameter two foot long log was also placed over top of the collar. There was no bear sign in the area.**



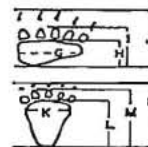
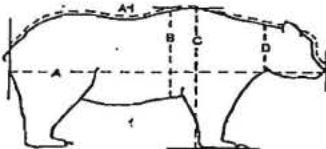
**Photo 3: Unaccounted for foot print from the core camp area of the two Wisconsin hunters.**



### IGBST BEAR TAGGING FORM

Res. or Mgmt? Research		Date: 08-16-2012	Bait: Elk Chest		Bear No. GB726
Method trapped: Culvert		Location: Sawtell Peak, CTNF		UTM: 466825 X 4937017	Datum: NAD83
Trappers: C. Whitman, K. Orozco, A. Sorensen, T. Imthurn, C. Johnson			Agency: USGS-BRD-IGBST, IDF&G		
Immobilization Procedures:		strength of drugs (mg/ml): 285	dose (mg/lb): 4.4	Total mg delivered: 1710	
Time	Drug	Dosage (ml)	Injection Site/Route	Method/Whom	Reactions
1006	Telazol	4.0 ml	Right shoulder	Jab / Whitman	Jump and turn
1013					Tip over
1019	Telazol	2.0 ml	Right shoulder	Hand / Whitman	Light, huffing, lift head
1022					Down
1025					Out of trap
1123					Tongue lolling
1134	Dura-Pen	30 ml	7.5 ml per quarter	Hand / Whitman	None
1145					Back in trap, holding head up
1918					Release on site, ran up hill
Time bear immobile:	1024	Time recov. started:	1123	Time recovery complete:	Unknown

Body Measurements ( cm )	
A. Total Length	N/A
A-1. Contour Lnth.	188.5
B. Girth	117.0
C. Height	N/A



D. Neck Circ.	69.5	Drug Lot #:	Vial ID	mg used	mg discarded	Final Airway Check: X
E. Head Length	41.4	14393	2011-026	570	0	Second eye lube: 1123
F. Head Width	21.5	14393	2011-027	570	0	Baseline exam: X
		14393	2011-034	570	0	

Pad Measurements ( mm )		Sample	Est. Wt: 300	Scale: 392.3	Sex: Male	Age: 3-4	E X	Asc. X		
G	155	K	140	Tooth	Y	Old Markers Present: None	E X	Plp X		
H	80	L	180	Blood	Y	Tattoo: 1032 Both upper lips	Pit: 900.118001337880	N X	Ln X	
I	120	M	220	Hair	Y	Ear Tags Rt.	1032	Color: Red round	M X	P X
J	165	N	250	Tiss.	Y	Ear Tags Left	1032	Color: Red round	Mm X	Eurog. X

Time	Respiration	Temp.	Bioimpedance	Pulse Ox w/out O2 Admin.			Pulse Ox with O2 Administration		
				Time	Pulse	%Sat./ Site	Time	Pulse	%Sat./ Site
1027	8	98.8	Resistance: 96						
1037	8	98.2	Reactance: 12	1028	116	78 Up 2L	1038	103	88 Up 3L
1047	8	97.9	%Fat: 25.59%				1048	106	95 @ 3L
1057	8	97.4 Blanket	Fat Index (1-5): 4				1058	104	95 @ 3L
1109	12	97.5 Blanket					1110	111	93 @ 3L
1119	12	97.6 Blanket					1120	111	93 @ 3L
1128	8	97.3 Blanket					1129	Pink	CR < 1sc

Reproductive Status: Young adult male grizzly, testis descended baculum intact

Radio type:	Collar freq: 163.056	Trans. # 561093B	Color: Butyl with black wrap	Attached with: Cotton spacer with 3 large holes punched
VHF	Ear tag freq: N/A	Release date: 10/01/2013	GPS antennae pos: N/A	

**Body Description and condition:**

Head length sagittal to incisors = 38.7 cm Upper Canine Width 66.1 mm Lower Canine Width 62.9 mm

**Attached collar:** Attached VHF collar: 60 BPM active, 35 BPM mort, 5 hr delay for mortality, refurbished in 2010?, collar was from GB338 deployed in 2010, CR2A release was from GB608 collar.

**Condition:** 4 of 5; scapular spine slightly raised; vertebra, ribs and pelvis not palpable, good musculature, minor subcutaneous fat.

**Claws:** Front right claws # 2, 3 and 4 moderate fraying to quick bleeding; front left claws 2 and 3 moderate fraying to quick, bleeding.

**Coloration:** Dark blond head; dark blond tips on shoulder and flank; dark chocolate leggings.

**Teeth:** Upper and lower incisors light wear, upper I1 flattened, I2 tip flattened, I3 still pointed; canines no breaks, ridge prominent and sharp, heavy aluminum staining; Pulled upper right PM#1 for aging, upper left PM#1 and both lower premolars missing old healed; molars no wear.

**Remarks:** BIA Photo X Tooth Photo X .

**Collected:** Red top blood tubes 4 each = 15 ml serum, 9 each 2 ml cryotubes serum; 12 ml clot , 6 each 2 ml cryotubes clot;

(3 each, 2 ml red top serum cryotubes with 1 ml red top serum each for FW&P)

Purple top blood tubes 3 each = 8 ml EDTA, 4 each, 2 ml cryotubes EDTA to IGBST freezer; each, 4 ml EDTA lavender top to FW&P

Blood swab DNA packets 1 each = 4 each, red top clot, blood swab envelopes

Kidney hair = 1 packet; Hair with roots = 1 packet; Hair without roots = 1 packet (cephalic, pit and ear hair)

Ear plugs = 2 each, 2 ml cryotubes; Tooth = 1 each, upper right PM#1; Blood smear slides, 4 each;

Lysing buffer micro tubes 2 each = 1 each EDTA, 1 each red top clot.



BIA Photograph: GB726, a 3-4 year old, 392.3 pound young adult male grizzly bear at 25.59% body fat.

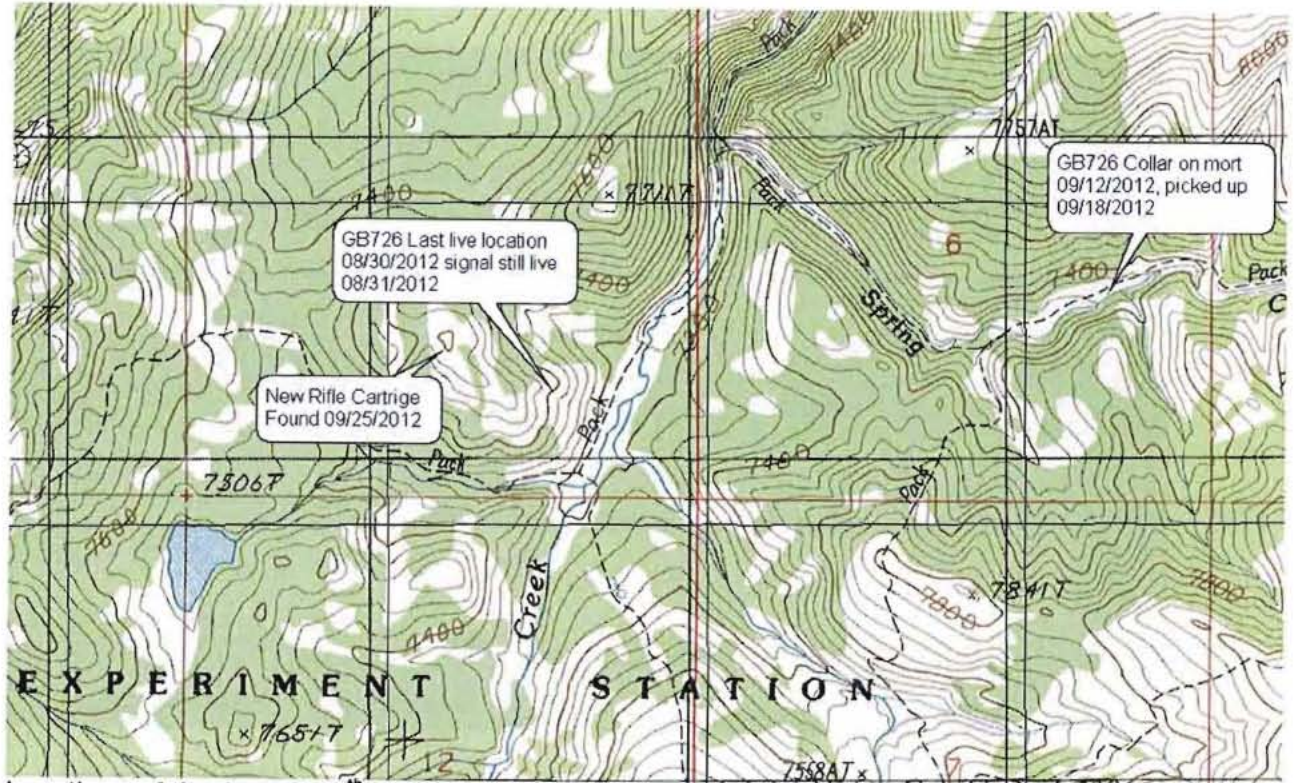


GB726 Tooth Photo





**New rifle casing on top of dead grass located approximately 300 yards from the August 30<sup>th</sup> GB726 aerial location in a sheep grazing area from the same time frame (UTM 437181 X 4933549 NAD83).**



Locations of the August 30<sup>th</sup> GB726 aerial location, spent rifle cartridge found on September 25<sup>th</sup> and location where GB726's collar was found on mortality on the September 12<sup>th</sup> flight and recovered in a vacated hunting camp on September 18<sup>th</sup> 2012. Collar UTM 439250 x 4933708 NAD83, 8/30/2012 location UTM 437527 x 4933405 NAD83.



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Location: Spring Creek, US Sheep Experiment Station, USDA

Collar UTM: 439250 X 4933708 NAD83  
Aerial UTM: 439100 X 4933475 NAD83  
Difference: Aerial UTM versus collar UTM = 280 meters

Date On: 08/16/2012  
Date Dropped: Mortality signal 09/12/2012 Spring Creek, US  
Sheep Experiment Station (USSES)  
Last live location 08/30/2012 Spring Cr, USSES  
Last live signal listened to 08/31/2012 Unknown

Collar condition and circumstance are suspicious, possibly associated with a mortality. The radio collar was found hidden in a small spring creek under a rock and log approximately 15 feet from a hunting camp that was recently vacated. It was apparent that the collar had been artificially placed in this location by a person as there was no bear hair or sign in the area and all the small fragile limbs around the collar were still intact. The hunting camp where the collar was found had been pulled on the morning of September 18<sup>th</sup> seven days after the collar was flown and found on mortality on September 12<sup>th</sup>. Due to a data entry error in the IGBST Bozeman office we initially thought that the collar had been found on mortality at the hunting camp on September 17<sup>th</sup> the day before the camp was pulled and collar was recovered. On our way up Spring Creek to pick up GB726's collar on the 18<sup>th</sup>, Nick and I talked to a pair of Wisconsin hunters for approximately 10 minutes. Later that day we determined these were the two individuals who had just vacated the hunting camp where the collar was found through tracking and matching up boot prints.

The radio collar had no marks on it except for two small possible quarter inch long knife or broad head cuts on the exterior of the collar. The cotton spacer appeared to have been pulled apart and not cut as

some strands of cotton thread in the middle of the spacer appeared to have been pulled through from between the grommets and the separated edges of the spacer were frayed. The separation of the new cotton spacer did have a strange angle and may have been cut with a dull or serrated knife that would have left frayed edges. Also the spacer was separated through the three holes punched in the spacer at capture with a leather punch. This could account for some of the extensive fraying on edges of the spacer. There was also an additional tear or cut on the spacer near one of the grommets. It should be noted here that the radio collar and CR2A mechanical release were recycled from other captures and that only the marks on the electrical tape covering the collar, the cotton spacer material and the new collar clamps can be confidently associated with GB726 his capture and the 28 days that the collar was active. A new serrated edge knife was found approximately ten feet off of and ¼ mile down the trail to the west from where the collar was recovered in the creek. The knife was retained as evidence and turned over to Conservation Officer, Jim Smolczynski along with the collar and other materials.

The hunting camp was located approximately 50 meters off the trail on the edge of a small spring creek with a flow of 0.5 CFS. The camp had been repeatedly used over many years and contained erect wall tent frames, hitching posts, benches and fire ring. Over story was mature subalpine fir and Engelmann spruce. The shrub layer consisted of currants, elderberry and willow. Ground cover consisted of pine grass, fireweed, and sticky geranium. Nick and I photographed each of the footprint types found in the camp and carefully circled the camp at 10 meters, 50 meters and 100 meters to attempt to locate a blood trail or evidence of a dead bear or drag marks of a bear that had been removed from the camp. GB726 was a large bear and weighed 392 pounds at capture so would have been difficult to remove or hide.

On the evening of the 18<sup>th</sup> Nick and I contacted Red Rocks Lakes NWR, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks and Idaho Fish and Game personnel (as this was an Idaho capture) to make them aware of the situation. We also worked with Red Rocks personnel and the grazing permit holder to get a better description of the vehicle that had been parked at the trailhead on the morning of September 18<sup>th</sup>.



On the morning of September 19<sup>th</sup> I returned to the hunting camp site with MTFWP Conservation Officer, Jim Smolczynski. We further examined the camp and the surrounding area for any sign of a dead bear and searched the area around the aerial location from September 12<sup>th</sup>. On the evening of the 19<sup>th</sup> Jim talked with the Red Rocks personnel and a local land owner. Late on the 19<sup>th</sup> Scott Huntsman the grazing permit holder contacted Bill West the Red Rocks NWR Manager to let him know that he had recently observed the vehicle from the trailhead parked in Lima, Montana. Scott also had talked with these two hunters a few times the previous week. Dave Farmer the Red Rocks USF&WS LEO, Jim and I drove to Lima where they met up with the county sheriff and then interviewed the two hunters at an apartment they were staying at that belonged to a local outfitter.

Footprint photos from the camp clearly matched two pairs of boots found in the apartment that they were staying in. Both hunters denied any knowledge of the radio collar. Everything else lined up with them being in the camp from the 14<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup>. One set of boot prints that left the trail walked through the edge of the camp directly toward where the collar was found in the creek was unaccounted for.

On the 20<sup>th</sup> Jim continued to interview people in the area and I returned to the area of the campsite to run the trails and attempt to track the two hunters and the mystery third track from the camp to determine who had been where in the drainage. At the time when the hunters were interviewed three scenarios were in play as follows:

First, was that someone placed the collar in the creek at the camp site sometime after the last live signal on August 31<sup>st</sup>, but before the two Wisconsin hunters set up camp on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September? This was a recognizable previously heavily used campsite with permanent tent frames and hitching posts. The two hunters claimed that they were the first people to have used the camp site that year.

The second scenario would have been that one of the two hunters killed GB726 then removed the collar and for some reason brought it back to their camp or simply found the collar and brought it back to the camp. During our first encounter with the hunters on the trail, one became visibly nervous when we mentioned we were walking in on a

bear collar on mortality. This same hunter was also visibly nervous, pale and sweaty during the interview. The first thing one of the hunters brought up when the radio collar in the creek at their camp was discussed was that since the collar was in the water there would be no fingerprints on it. I was able to track the nervous individual over to the West Fork of Spring Creek to near where GB726 was located on August 30<sup>th</sup> as well.

The third scenario would be that someone placed the collar in the camp of the two Wisconsin hunters while they were out hunting on Sunday the 16<sup>th</sup>. The unknown set of footprints in their camp that headed directly toward where the collar was found in the creek would suggest this possibility.



**Photo 1: GB726 cotton spacer cut or torn through three punched holes? Note smaller tear near the grommet right of center.**

Because Bryan Aber and Nichole Walker both with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game caught the IGBST data entry error, Nichole had been on the September 12<sup>th</sup> flight when the collar was found on mortality, it is now apparent that scenario one is what occurred. GB726's collar was already hidden in the creek and on mortality when the two Wisconsin hunters camped at the site on September 14<sup>th</sup>. The collar was well hidden and would not have been



noticed even from a few feet away. It is likely that the person who hid the collar selected this developed camp spot as it would be used during the hunting season and cause confusion, which is exactly what occurred. It is unlikely that the two Wisconsin hunters had anything to do with GB726's collar and the unaccounted for fresh boot prints in their camp from the 16<sup>th</sup> although strange was another red herring not associated with the radio collar.



**Photo 2 Location of GB726's collar: The collar was tucked down underneath the backside of the large boulder just right of center in the frame. A five inch diameter two foot long log was also placed over top of the collar. There was no bear sign in the area.**

On September 25<sup>th</sup> 2012 Bonnie Whitman, USNPS Law Enforcement Ranger and I visited the area where GB726 was last located alive on August 30<sup>th</sup> along with certified evidence K9 Gator her three year old German Shepard. Conservation Officer, Jim Smolczynski who is in charge of the investigation approved the site visit. A search of the area revealed the aerial location was in the middle of where a large band of sheep had been stationed for several days apparently around



the end of August based on the age of the grazing and droppings. Approximately 300 yards to the northwest of the August 30<sup>th</sup> GB726 aerial location, along the top of the sheep grazing area, we found where the sheep herder had been stationed near the flock. At the top of the hill Bonnie and Gator located one new spent rifle cartridge on top of the dead grass at UTM 437181 X 4933549 NAD83. The cartridge and a piece of cellophane were collected and turned over to Jim Smolczynski. An incomplete search of the area did not reveal a dead bear or any dead sheep. It is unknown if the cartridge has any relationship to GB726 at all. We also made a single loop between the August 30<sup>th</sup> location and where the collar was recovered in hopes that Gator would lead us in on any dead animals in the area. In all we spent about three hours searching the area.



**Photo 3: New rifle casing on top of dead grass located approximately 300 yards from the August 30<sup>th</sup> GB726 aerial location in a sheep grazing area from the same time frame.**





# USDA Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date: January 10, 2012

**Topic:** U.S. Sheep Experimental Station DEIS

**Issue:** Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Subcommittee (YES) comments on the DEIS for Agricultural Research Service (ARS) operations of U.S. Sheep Experiment Station (USSES).

**Key Points:**

- YES recently submitted a letter to the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) supporting the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Biological Opinion Conservation Recommendations on the DEIS.
- ➔ • USFWS recommends the Sheep Station seek replacement lands outside of known grizzly bear use areas for the Sheep Stations summer range and the National Forest's Meyer's Creek Allotment.
- The Targhee National Forest, as a member of YES, concurred with the letter since the recommendations are consistent with LMP direction.

**Background:** The U.S. Sheep Experiment Station proposes to continue historic and ongoing grazing and associated activities in order to achieve their mission of research goals and objectives. The sheep research station is located in the upper Snake River plain at the foothills of the Centennial Mountains, approximately six miles north of Dubois, Idaho. The East and West Summer Ranges are in the Centennial Mountains of Montana. Through memoranda of understanding, the Sheep Experiment Station also utilizes Department of Energy, BLM, and Forest Service lands. In keeping with settlement agreement direction and the existing NEPA analyses for parcels managed by the other agencies, this environmental impact statement analyzes the direct/indirect effects of the proposed actions on ARS properties only. The effects of grazing on the allotments and feed lot are therefore considered in the cumulative effects analyses.

The Targhee National Forest Plan (1997) authorizes continued use of the allotments on NFS lands by the Sheep Experiment Station. The Meyers Creek allotment is identified in the LMP for phase out of domestic sheep grazing on an opportunity basis. Per the LMP, opportunities to vacate an allotment include such events as nonuse violations, term permit waivers where the permit is waived back to the government, resource protection, or permit actions resulting in cancellation of the permit. Several sheep allotments have been officially closed over the past few years in accordance with this direction.

The Forest recently made changes in how the Meyer's Creek Allotment is being managed. The Sheep Station will be authorized to graze sheep for only 6 days on the Allotment, as the sheep trail across the National Forest to Sheep Station lands in Montana. The USFWS concurred with the May affect, likely to adversely affect determination for grizzly bears and adopted the