

BREAKING BEAR-IERS:

A Communication Plan for the
California Grizzly Research Network



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June 7, 2019*

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Recommendations

- **Use the exercises below to create summary content about the group as a whole.** This should be brief and ready to share with all group members and anyone requesting information, especially reporters. This could be effective in several ways -- as a page on the website, or as a package ready to send to anyone who wants to know more. This will help members feel more confident about sharing a message that has been workshopped as a group. It could also help with gate-keeping media requests by beginning the interaction with a clear message. For example, communicating that group members are not going to answer the question of whether Grizzlies should be reintroduced to California.
- **Subgroups should do the exercises and share their material with the entire group.** It will help other members feel comfortable speaking about parts of the project they do not have expertise in and allow them to direct questions to the correct person.
- **Create a separate email address alias and perhaps a role in the group to handle media requests.** This will formalize the process and split up responsibilities as the group continues to grow and share their work.
- **Discuss and document which group members are willing and interested in being interviewed.** This way, everyone knows where media requests should be directed, especially for questions best answered by a certain subgroup.
- **Consider writing and releasing your own press releases.** Releasing content written by members will start to give the group more control over how they are portrayed. You can share the group's message and story on your own terms.
- **Work through the exercises periodically.** It generates important conversation. It is helpful individually or as a group check in activity. It is especially great for practicing concise and thoughtful answers during interview preparation. Also revisit them as the group progresses. This will help everyone think critically about key messages and talking points for the group.
- **Consider compiling a few FAQs for the website.** This is another way to make it clear what the group is doing and remain consistent. We recommend this one as a starting point:

Q: Should Grizzlies be reintroduced to California?

Example A: The California Grizzly Research Network does not have a position on this issue. We are interested in the information Californians would need to know if

reintroduction were considered in the future. By conducting research on the California Grizzly, the group is providing the public and decision makers with the information they'd need to discuss reintroduction and related issues.

Note: this is also a nice segue into the role of subgroups in answering specific questions about grizzlies

Message Builders

Message Grid Worksheet

ISSUE: Who is The Grizzly Research Network?

Try to complete each section in only 1-3 sentences, using language that is appropriate for the chosen audience.

Problem?/What?	So What?	Now What?
<i>What happened or will happen? What issue is being addressed or population being served? Why does this organization exist?</i>	<i>How is this problem relevant to the audience? What critical questions does this information cause you to ask? What broader issues arise from the problem at hand?</i>	<i>What thoughts, feelings, and actions should the audience take away from your message? Where might this reflection lead into the future?</i>

AUDIENCE	Problem?/What?	So What?	Now What?
Audience 1:			
Audience 2:			

Audience 3:			
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Sample Message Grid

ISSUE: Who is The Grizzly Research Network?

*explain difference between problem, solution, so what?

AUDIENCE	Problem?	Solution?	So What?
<p>Audience 1: Conservation Minded Californians</p>	<p>The California Grizzly bear is an iconic character, prevalent on the state flag, as a school mascot, and a source of identity for many citizens. Little research has been done on California grizzly bears, which were last sighted in 1924, and last studied in the 1950's. With increased interest in bringing back the California grizzly, there is much to be understood about how the species interacts with our communities, natural resources, and the historical context of the species in the state.</p>	<p>The Grizzly Research Network is gathering relevant information that could inform the decision to reintroduce the species. Group members work on distinct projects based on their expertise. Bringing together this information from different fields provides context for a reintroduction, from both the human and ecological perspectives.</p>	<p>The research that the group produces can inform Californians on how a reintroduction would impact people, natural resources, and policy. Understanding the potential benefits and consequences of reintroduction using rigorous techniques across disciplines will better inform future decisions related to California grizzlies.</p>

<p>Audience 2: Academics</p>	<p>Species reintroduction is increasingly considered as a viable option for conservation efforts. However, these programs are notoriously expensive, complicated, and have low rates of success.</p>	<p>Answering the question of what we would need to know is a way to anticipate challenges, expectations, and paint a picture of what reintroduction may look like. The California Grizzly Research Network is using multidisciplinary work to answer this question and inform a science based conversation that promotes informed, cost effective, and long lasting decisions.</p>	<p>Reintroduction affects ecosystems and people. Using a species with high public interest like the California Grizzly as a case study allows the group to discuss complex and nuanced questions related to cultural and historical value, public opinion, ecological feasibility, and others.</p>
<p>Audience 3: General Public Californians</p>	<p>Grizzlies are a historic and important part of California ecosystems. Though many people have shown interest in California Grizzly reintroductions, we know very little about what a possible future with Grizzlies would actually look like. What we do know is that previous large carnivore reintroductions have been limited in number with mixed results.</p>	<p>By bringing experts from ecology, history, paleontology, and more, the California Grizzly Research Network identifies the information and scientific data that we still need to acquire to be able to better understand what a Grizzly bear reintroduction would look like in the state of California.</p>	<p>If Californians choose to reintroduce Grizzly bears, we should be as prepared as possible to make that reintroduction successful. To do this, we need to understand how Grizzlies have interacted with the California landscape historically and how they may interact with it in the future. Additionally, we need to identify the gaps in our ability to predict how Grizzlies will interact with people and the landscape.</p>

27-9-3 Example

Ex. Interview for High Country News (online and print magazine)

1. Who is the audience for this particular message? (i.e. a lawmaker, volunteer, prospective advocate, donor, colleague from a different department, reporter, etc.)

Reporter and the public, specifically readers of High Country News (non-profit media org). They are a prominent source of regional environmental news in the American West.

2. What might appeal to their direct self-interest? (What's in it for them? Why should they care?)

Readers are interested in/ concerned about land use and lifestyle in the American West, and are probably also residents. These are people who may already live with Grizzlies, or who may be affected by their loss/reintroduction.

3. What do you want your audience to think or understand about your issue?

Asking the question "What would a future with this species actually look like?" allows researchers to collect information that can be used to support fact and science based policy. The multidisciplinary approach is a powerful way to produce rigorous and creative results.

4. How do you want them to feel about what you have said?

That the group is not advocating for grizzly reintroduction, but using it as a case study that is representative of the larger themes and direction of modern conservation. The most important thing about this research group is their approach. They operate under the premise that it should be left to the public to decide what the right thing to do is (i.e. "should we reintroduce grizzlies?").

5. What do you want your listener to do after they hear your message?

Understand the mission of the group (i.e. NOT advocates)

Apply this thought process to other conservation issues

27 words, 9 seconds, 3 points

Using the grizzly case study, the group aims to understand what we need to know about a species and place before reintroduction can be considered.

The group is a team of historians, ecologists, and political scientists dedicated to furthering fact based discourse on conservation, balancing our responsibility to both people and nature.

We are exploring what we would need to know to reintroduce grizzlies to California.

Grizzlies are a particularly complex example to explore because they are large carnivores with great social, cultural, and ecological value to California.

This question requires us to consider both natural and social science. Our multidisciplinary approach allows us to creatively and thoroughly tackle the complex nature of species reintroduction.

Ex. The Grizzly Group, local radio interview

1. Who is the audience for this particular message? (i.e. a lawmaker, volunteer, prospective advocate, donor, colleague from a different department, reporter, etc.)

Santa Barbara County public radio listeners

2. What might appeal to their direct self-interest? (What's in it for them? Why should they care?)

Researchers are local, learning about the history of where they currently live (i.e. Grizzlies used to live here)

3. What do you want your audience to think or understand about your issue?

The Group works to inform a conversation about the potential for reintroduction by looking at historical context, ecological potential/ consequences, public attitudes, and ethical/political issues. The Group consists of researchers at a variety of points in their career, offering Master's, PhD, and Post-docs the opportunity to engage in unique, multi-disciplinary work.

4. How do you want them to feel about what you have said?

Want people to feel inspired to engage in the conversation and learn more about the history and scientific contexts of reintroduction when thinking about large carnivores, rather than simply conservation benefit vs. human risk

5. What do you want your listener to do after they hear your message?

Become more informed on the topic of carnivore reintroduction, at least to realize that it is not simply science vs. the people. The actual reintroduction process would be hugely complex.

27 words, 9 seconds, 3 points

The Grizzly Research Network is a group consisting of graduate students, Post-docs, professors, and specialists from different disciplines to talk about the mechanics of a possible Grizzly reintroduction in California.

Grizzly reintroduction is a hugely complex issue, and the Group aims to provide information to host an informed conversation about the mechanics, consequences, and benefits of a reintroduction.

ABT Worksheet

The purpose of the ABT method is to consolidate your main message into the simple form of:

___(1)___ AND ___(2)___ BUT ___(3)___ THEREFORE ___(4)___

The first two blanks should include key pieces of background information. The third blank should explain the main problem that your research addresses and the fourth blank should provide your solution. The ABT method is useful as a tool for crafting elevator pitches, research summaries, or simply practicing succinct communication about your research.

Note that there are many variations of the terms “and”, “but”, and “therefore” that can be used in the ABT statement. Sometimes, the use of one or more of the terms is not necessary (see example ABT statement).

Alternative forms of “and”:

- Also
- As well as
- Additionally
- Plus
- Conjointly
- Likewise
- Together with
- Too

Alternative forms of “but”:

- Although
- However
- Nevertheless
- On the other hand
- Yet
- Except

Alternative forms of “therefore”:

- Accordingly
- So
- Then
- Thus
- Consequently

ABT Example

Before hunting and development pressures caused their numbers to dwindle and then vanish, Grizzlies used to live in California in large ranges of suitable habitat. (AND) Some people think that a Grizzly population could be reintroduced to California and thrive, BUT we don't even know whether the current environment in California is still suitable for them, nor whether the public would be willing to coexist with Grizzlies. THEREFORE, to have an informed and thoughtful conversation about the reintroduction of Grizzly bears, our group is using scientific and historical research and public opinion surveys to determine what a potential Grizzly reintroduction in California would look like.

Additional Talking Points

- The California Grizzly Research Network discusses the feasibility of Grizzly Bear reintroduction in California by bringing together researchers from multiple fields, including ecology, history, and policy.
- The California Grizzly Research Network is a multidisciplinary research group seeking to understand whether Grizzly Bears *could* be reintroduced to California.
- The California Grizzly Research Network is a research group commonly mistaken for an advocacy group. They seek to understand what kinds of information would best support an informed conversation surrounding a potential reintroduction of Grizzly bears into California.

Sample Elevator Pitches

The California Grizzly Research Network is a group of researchers at UCSB that is determining what we would need to know if we were to reintroduce a large carnivore in California. Species reintroduction is notoriously difficult to get right. Despite this, it is an option that many conservationists discuss as people decide how to interact with and manage wild places going forward. The Network is using the California Grizzly bear -- which went extinct 100 years ago -- as a case study to determine what we would need to know if we chose to bring it back. Using their expertise in ecology, political science, and history, the Network is filling knowledge gaps about this iconic species. A few findings so far include that the California public cares deeply about the issue, but know little about bears, and that California Grizzly bears used to have a 90% vegetarian diet. Additional work includes researching the historical and cultural aspects of people's relationship with grizzly bears in California and identifying suitable habitat. Overall, the Network is gathering and sharing the information necessary for the public and decision makers to have an informed, science-based discussion about a complicated and controversial topic by painting a picture of what coexistence might look like.

The Grizzly Research Network is based at the University of California - Santa Barbara, and is working to understand what types of knowledge would be useful for informing a reintroduction of a large, carnivorous species. Conservation efforts to reintroduce wildlife have historically been contentious, often pitting citizens that might experience interactions with the reintroduced species

against conservationists or animal rights activists. Using the California Grizzly as a case study, the group brings together specialists from different fields to better inform a conversation about reintroduction. This includes ethical considerations and current public knowledge, the application of ecological principles to understand how Grizzly habitat may have changed over 100 years, and comparing this case to other similar bear species globally. This project is an exercise in extending interdisciplinary work into the realm of species conservation - understanding the many facets of the species, and how a reintroduction might interact with people, can be used to inform the public and policy makers' future decisions.

Preparing for Media Interactions

Following an inquiry for a media interview, it is important to prepare and set up the interview for success. The following notes and associated worksheets are intended to be used as tools following the initial contact. This will help prepare Group members for a variety of interview scenarios and ensure that members are sharing key Group messages in an interesting and exciting way.

Do Your Homework

Become familiar with the publication, and even the author who will be interviewing you. It might be useful to follow up the interview inquiry with questions about what the author specifically wants to ask about or with a statement explaining what topics you are willing to speak about during the interview. This can help give you a sense of where to focus your preparation efforts, and whether there needs to be any preemptive acknowledgement of topics you will not be able to discuss during the interview.

Identify Yourself and Your Message

Clearly determine how you want to present yourself in the interview. Because The Grizzly Research Network may only be a piece of your overall work, be sure to identify yourself accordingly. This may mean clearly defining your job (e.g. Professor of History) and how that relates to the Group. Utilize the Messaging Worksheet (pg. XX) for further practice. Keep in mind that how you frame the message may differ between audiences. Consider the audience at hand, and determine at least one way that they might feel engaged with your message - is it local? Does it support something the audience believes in? Will it improve the audience's experience with something?, etc.. Also do your best to avoid technical terms, jargon, and terms with discipline specific meanings that could be confusing or misinterpreted.

Pointers by Type of Media

For all media types that involve an interview, keep in mind that you are preparing both for the audience of the journalist, and for the outlet that the interview will be published in. Journalists have certain criteria that they must meet:

- An editor or producer's concept of the story
- A unique style that draws the audience in, some journalists may have regular followers
- Often, write and produce quickly
- Want to inform the public of research in an engaging way - not necessarily educate audience

Print

Print journalism uses quotes to build a story and provide background to support that story. Practicing quotes that beautifully summarize your work, mission, or outcomes can yield a resulting newspaper with a strong story. Introduce new points throughout the interview that build on the story you are telling - this can guide the conversation, and spark new questions if the interviewer is trying to ask something you can't, or don't want to answer. If there are questions you do not know the answer to, or the answer may not reflect the work of the Group, it is best to say so. Practice a clear answer to questions that Group members have expressed concern about.

For example, when asked whether this work will tell us if Grizzly bears should be reintroduced, a potential response might be:

Our work can inform the policy makers, land managers, and the public about the feasibility of Grizzly reintroduction from a variety of perspectives. We look at how habitat and food availability may impact reintroduction success, as well as how communities feel about those reintroductions in areas near them.

OR

The California Grizzly Research Network does not have a position on this issue. We are interested in the information Californians would need to know if reintroduction were considered in the future. By conducting research on the California Grizzly, the group is providing the public and decision makers with the information they'd need to discuss reintroduction and related issues.

Any areas that are particularly challenging to explain, or may be misinterpreted, should be well-considered and put into words before the interview. This will improve clarity and build the overall story.

Radio

A taped interview (phone or in-person) may use similar techniques to the print preparation. Radio shows often use quotes that are succinct and pack a punch - practicing messaging and exact

wording can be critical. The 27-9-3 rule can be useful here - a 27 word, 9 second blurb that highlights 3 main points. See attached worksheet on page XX.

Live radio interviews are similar, but you may repeat points for emphasis and to inform listeners that start listening late.

Television

Like radio, television interviews often make use of short sound bites. Further preparation using the 27-9-3 rule can be useful here as well.

Pointers for Taking Control of Interviews

Maintaining your story and main points will result in a consistent story and often reduce the likelihood of being asked a question far off-base from what you hope to convey. Having a clear storyline in mind will help the interview flow the way you would like it to.

Should questions come up that you can't answer or distract from your messaging, there are a few phrases helpful to redirect the conversation. For example:

- "That is a good question, but what is really important/interesting is...."
- "Let me give you the latest information in...."
- "That is one point of view, but let me give you another..."

Remember it is ok, and better to say that you don't have an answer for them. Instead, offer a related insight or point them to a resource they may find interesting / that could answer their question more directly (maybe a group member from another sub-group with specific expertise).

You can even map out what you are saying to preempt questions that you are prepared to answer. For example, when describing whether Grizzly habitat still exists as it did 100 years ago in California, you may end the statement with, "the habitat is there but food resources have shifted." The natural next question would be about what food resources Grizzlies have historically utilized.

Models of Science Communication

The Deficit Model

The Deficit Model is motivated by the general public's lack of knowledge on an important topic that the science communication at hand may help inform. The model follows that if the deficit is filled, a more informed audience will be better equipped to think about the science-related issue. Overall,

this model is a call to increase science literacy in order to make informed decisions in a world with rapid changes in scientific theory and technology.

The Contextual Model

In this model, the scientist puts themselves in the shoes of their audience in order to relate to the audience's needs, values, and existing knowledge. This model may be informed by the following questions:

- What does the audience already know about this topic?
- Why does the audience need the information I am communicating to them?
- What will the audience do with this new information?
- How will the audience best understand the methods I used?
- What is the future of my research and how will it apply to my audience?

The Participation Model

Scientists, public and other applicable audiences, and policymakers participate in discussions about science. This may take place in a community meeting, conferences, or open comment periods. In the current setting in which media, policy, and expert knowledge interact regularly, a shift towards the participation model makes sense. Engaging with these different groups can bring together ideas and information to inform sustainable decisions. At the same time, this model depends on these interactions being critical, and opens the door for further critique and questioning of scientific research. This interaction can foster relationships between science and a public audience, and encourage further scientific literacy.

This model requires some more broad information to engage the audience. General audiences are more interested in scientific learning, but frequently need a broad introduction and exciting "highlights" to be peak interest. On the other hand, it will be more straightforward to reach more motivated listeners/viewers with personal interest in the topic - differentiating these audiences can help guide the story you tell about both your own and the Group's work.

Audience Specific Information

(Interested) General Public

Includes:

- Local news outlets

- Free and open lectures
- People you meet at networking or outside of work events

This can include members of the public with interest in conservation efforts that range from slight to critically interested.

How To Connect To This Audience

- Bring the research to them - would it impact them locally or where they like to go? (e.g. Public lands), Does it tie into a storyline most people are familiar with?
- Avoid using jargon and acronyms that are specific to the discipline. The level of this depends on the specific outlets to which you are speaking, but generally break down big concepts into bite-sized pieces.
 - For example - Reintroduction. Reintroduction in the conservation field refers to a group bringing a species back into a region where the species previously existed, but has been eradicated in recent history. This can be done a number of ways - individuals from other areas or from animal rehabilitation groups/zoos might be used to reintroduce a species.
- Avoid digging into your methods, at least in the beginning. First, introduce why the audience should care about your work and findings. Start with your take home message, build on the “So What?” and then add in interesting supporting details. In interviews, this is a good place to start to guide the interview. Again, many interested public audience members will want to engage, but may not be familiar with discipline-specific methods and technologies.
- Using metaphors and analogies can be useful for this audience. Again, it can make your work more relatable to people who are interested, but may not know much about your field.
 - For example - Diet Group - The diet group looks into the types of food historic Grizzly populations ate in California. The technology we used is similar to blood draws at the doctor - a small sample allows us to take a peek into what their meals consisted of - mostly vegetation or mostly meat, for example.
- Trust that you are the expert and speak confidently about your work. This may require significant preparation to be able to tell the story of your research in an engaging way for the audience at hand.

Conservation-minded/Land managers

Includes:

- Land managers - public lands, land trusts

- Land owners
- Conservation non-profits
- Donors
- Citizens in environmental, restoration, conservation, or related fields

How To Connect To This Audience

- Similar to the general audience, connect to managers and conservation professionals by highlighting how it relates to them and their own work.
- More technical terminology may be used, but be mindful of what methods and information is relevant to this group.
- Managers and professionals will mostly be interested in the outcomes and impacts of your findings. Highlight these findings early on.
- Avoid judgement and opinion here. The Grizzly Research Network has made it clear that they are interested in facilitating an informed conversation about reintroduction. Practice ways to avoid answering questions that refer to your judgement.
 - For example: Q: If the habitat is available, then why wouldn't we reintroduce a species that was lost largely due to human hunting and land-use change?
 - A: Our work has highlighted a number of areas that appear to be sufficient for Grizzly habitat based on knowledge about where grizzlies lived before they were eradicated from California, other similar populations around the globe. However, there are many other important factors, especially some California-specific challenges such as human communities that may be impacted, conservation policy, and funding, to name a few. The actual reintroduction of a species would require conversations with a number of stakeholders, citizens, and experts. This is a step that the Grizzly Group does not intend to convene.

Academics

Includes:

- Professors and researchers in related fields
- Graduate and undergraduate students in related fields
- University audience at a speech/lecture

This audience generally is more familiar with research methods and likely understand multidisciplinary groups like The Grizzly Research Network.

How To Connect To This Audience

- While there still may be some diversity in expertise in these audience members, they are likely attending a lecture or course based on previous experience and interest.
- Often more interested in the innovation your work offers to the field - whether this is an innovative method or a bringing together of different fields.
- Be clear on the message of your communication with the academic audience - this audience can get into more details about specific projects and techniques, so be clear in where you are focused.
- Think about how the audience can continue to be engaged with your work or the Group. These audiences are more likely there for personal and professional interest, and may want to know more and stay connected to the work.

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Press Releases

Press Release Sample

The California Grizzly Research Network



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Name, Position in Group (or Subgroup Membership)

(XXX) XXX-XXXX, grizzly@bear.com

Grizzlies don't live in California anymore, but research shows that most people think they do

A survey from The California Grizzly Research Network shows that Californians want to reintroduce grizzly bears, despite the fact that most Californians are unaware that they're extinct

SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA - The California Grizzly Research Network learned from a survey of 980 Californians that two-thirds of Californians support grizzly bear reintroduction, while only one-quarter of respondents initially knew that grizzly bears were extinct in California. The California Grizzly Research Network, an academic group based out of the University of California - Santa Barbara, performed this survey to better understand whether Californians support grizzly reintroduction and what drives support or opposition to reintroduction. The overall mission of the Network is to promote a more informed conversation about grizzly reintroduction in California by gathering scientific and historic information about the bears.

The survey revealed that an individual's political ideology does not appear to be a strong indicator of whether they will support or oppose grizzly reintroduction to California, though personal characteristics like altruism were common in individuals who supported it. Californians do not view grizzly reintroduction as a political issue, but as a personal issue which is affected by their own experiences, beliefs, and values.

Individuals who felt that grizzly reintroductions would cost them greatly were significantly less supportive of reintroduction due to where they lived, worked, or the nature of their employment. Additionally, when people perceived grizzly reintroductions as posing a potential threat to them, they were less supportive of reintroduction, regardless of personal attitudes like altruism and biospheric values. In contrast, individuals who believed that reintroduction as would lead to greater benefits to society were more supportive.

The biggest challenge faced by land managers and policy makers will be a lack of public awareness surrounding current grizzly bear ranges and behaviors. This study has shown that California residents' feelings about grizzly bear reintroduction are driven by personal values and how people perceive associated benefits and threats. Although there currently no proposals to reintroduce grizzly bears, public interest on the topic has grown. In 2014, the Center for Biological Diversity petitioned the US Fish and Wildlife Service to list California as part of the native range of grizzlies, but was rejected. Future efforts may be more successful if they also seek to improve awareness of grizzly bears, their ranges, and other implications related to their return.

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Press Release Template

The California Grizzly Research Network



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT

Name, Position in Group (or Subcommittee Membership)

(XXX) XXX-XXXX, grizzly@bear.com

Catchy Title (limit to one line of text)

Short summary of article providing more background information (limit to two lines of text)

CITY, STATE - Begin body of press release. Press releases are structured differently than traditional academic papers. Press releases should first provide results intermixed with discussion followed by background. Methodology should be limited and in the middle (in comparison with academic papers, which provide background, methodology, results, and discussion at the end).

Press releases should be written under the assumption that they will be published verbatim in another source. The standard format for a press release is to end with three hashtags.

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