

Wallowa Wolverine Project: 2011-2012 - April Progress Report

Wallowa-Whitman National Forest

Field work began on 26 September 2011 and by the end of April 2012, we had established 26 camera stations in and adjacent to the Eagle Cap Wilderness in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest (Table 1). Access to camera sites was on foot, horse, snowmobile, ATV, skis, and snowshoes. The 6 camera stations that had wolverine visits in late winter 2011 were reestablished this season. Ten of the stations were below 6000' elevation (4784'-5820'). The remaining stations were located between 6014' and 7373' elevation. Additional stations may be added in May or June, depending on travel conditions in the mountains. One station was removed (WCAM1) because of its proximity to where the wolverine Stormy was trapped in December to prevent habituation of the wolverine to this site.

Of the 26 established camera stations, 24 (92%) have been checked at least once (total=57 checks) and at these stations, there were 2,680 active camera days. One wolverine (Stormy; Fig.1-3) has been photographed at 7 stations, including 4 stations where he was photographed in 2011. No other wolverines have been photographed to date. Eighteen other species have been detected at the camera stations (Table 2). Marten have been detected at 21 of the 24 (88%) stations that have been checked so far, and marten hair was collected at many of these stations and submitted for DNA analysis.

We flew tracking flights on 6 days (Fig. 4), most in April, and have located wolverine tracks, or probable wolverine tracks, in 3 areas. Snow conditions and weather made aerial tracking problematic this season. Few calm clear days occurred before April and unseasonably warm weather in April caused rapid melting out of tracks even at high elevations.

Camera stations will be run through May and into June for stations at the higher elevations. If funding is available, we plan to run camera stations at high elevations near snowfields that last into late summer, especially in areas of the Eagle Cap Wilderness that were inaccessible during the winter. Few attempts have been made to use camera "traps" during summer to detect wolverines. We will test the effectiveness of summer camera trapping by deploying cameras within the area used by wolverine detected this winter.

Table 1. Camera Stations_Wallowa Mountains_Winter 2011-2012

Station	Set ID#	Location	Elev	Start	# of Checks	# Species
WCAM1	30	Walla Walla_Lostine	4993'	14-Dec-2011	4	6
WCAM2	MX1	Maxwell Lake_Lostine Rd	5484'	28-Sep-2011	6	8
WCAM7	42	Lower Two Pan_Lostine	5890'	28-Sep-2011	6	8
WCAM8	5	Ice Lake Trailhead	5643'	25-Nov-2011	4	3
WCAM10	12	West Eagle Trailhead	5700'	31-Jan-2012	0	
WCAM12	39	Upper Two Pan_Lostine	6398'	28-Sep-2011	5	5
WCAM 13	FC	Falls Creek	6764'	2-Oct-2011	3	8
WCAM16	HC1	Hurricane Crk_Goat Cliffs	5692'	26-Sep-2011	8	6
WCAM 18	60	Standley Cabin	7235'	6-Oct-2011	1	6
WCAM 19	62	Cougar Ridge	7246'	7-Oct-2011	1	3
WCAM 20	43	Upper Dobbin Creek	7147'	8-Oct-2011	1	6
WCAM 21	LD	Lower Dobbin Creek	5598'	14-Oct-2011	1	4
WCAM 22	63	Bear Creek Goat Cliffs	5326'	15-Oct-2011	1	3
WCAM 23	1	Bear Creek Cabin	4784'	16-Oct-2011	1	4
WCAM 25	65	Olive Lake Trail Jct	6014'	19-Oct-2011	1	2
WCAM 26	64	Culver Lake Trail	6190'	20-Oct-2011	1	4
WCAM 27	33	Berger Meadows Trail	6556'	25-Oct-2011	1	4
WCAM28	THC	Thorpe Creek	6720'	5-Dec-2011	1	2
WCAM29	SP1	Summit Point Meadows	7373'	8-Dec-2011	1	2
WCAM30	50	Salt Creek Summit	7060'	16-Dec-2011	3	3
WCAM31	15	Upper Wallowa Basin	5820'	25-Dec-2011	2	5
WCAM32	7	Copper Creek Trailhead	6468'	31-Dec-2011	2	5
WCAM33	52	Upper Copper Creek	7196'	3-Jan-2012	1	4
WCAM34	18	Upper East Lostine	7053'	4-Jan-2012	1	2
WCAM35		McCully Creek	7166'	23-Jan-2012	2	3
WCAM36	PI	Pine Creek	5149'	4-Feb-2012	0	

Table 2. Species detected at camera stations in the Wallowa Mountains by the end of April 2012.

Species Detected	Mammals																Birds			
	G G	U A	C L	F C	L R	V F	C C	O H	L A	M A	N C	T H	G S	M E	P M	E M	C S	P C	N C	B V
WCAM1					x					x		x	x				x	x		
WCAM2	x				x					x		x	x				x	x	x	
WCAM7	x				x					x		x	x				x	x	x	
WCAM8	x									x		x								
WCAM10																				
WCAM12										x		x					x	x	x	
WCAM 13		x		x				x	x	x		x	x		x					
WCAM16	x	x									x	x	x						x	
WCAM 18									x	x		x					x	x	x	
WCAM 19										x		x	x							
WCAM 20										x		x	x			x		x	x	
WCAM 21			x							x		x			x					
WCAM 22							x					x			x					
WCAM 23				x	x							x						x		
WCAM 25										x		x								
WCAM 26							x			x		x	x							
WCAM 27										x		x	x						x	
WCAM28										x		x								
WCAM29										x					x					
WCAM30										x		x						x		
WCAM31										x		x	x						x	
WCAM32	x		x							x		x					x			
WCAM33	x									x		x							x	
WCAM34										x		x								
WCAM35										x		x								x
WCAM36																				

GG=Wolverine; UA= Black bear; CL=Coyote; FC=Cougar; LR=Bobcat; VF=Red fox; CC=Elk; OH=Mule deer; LA=Snowshoe hare; MA=Marten; NC= Woodrat; TH=Red squirrel; GS=Northern flying squirrel; ME=Short-tailed weasel; EM=Least chipmunk; PM=Deer mouse
 CS=Steller's jay; PC=Gray jay; NC= Clark's nutcracker; BV=Great-horned owl



Figure 1. Male wolverine Stormy photographed at a camera station on 29 January 2012.



Figure 2. Ventral pattern on the male wolverine Stormy photographed on 27 January 2012.



Figure 3. Male wolverine Stormy photographed on 14 April 2012, a year after he was first photographed in the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest.

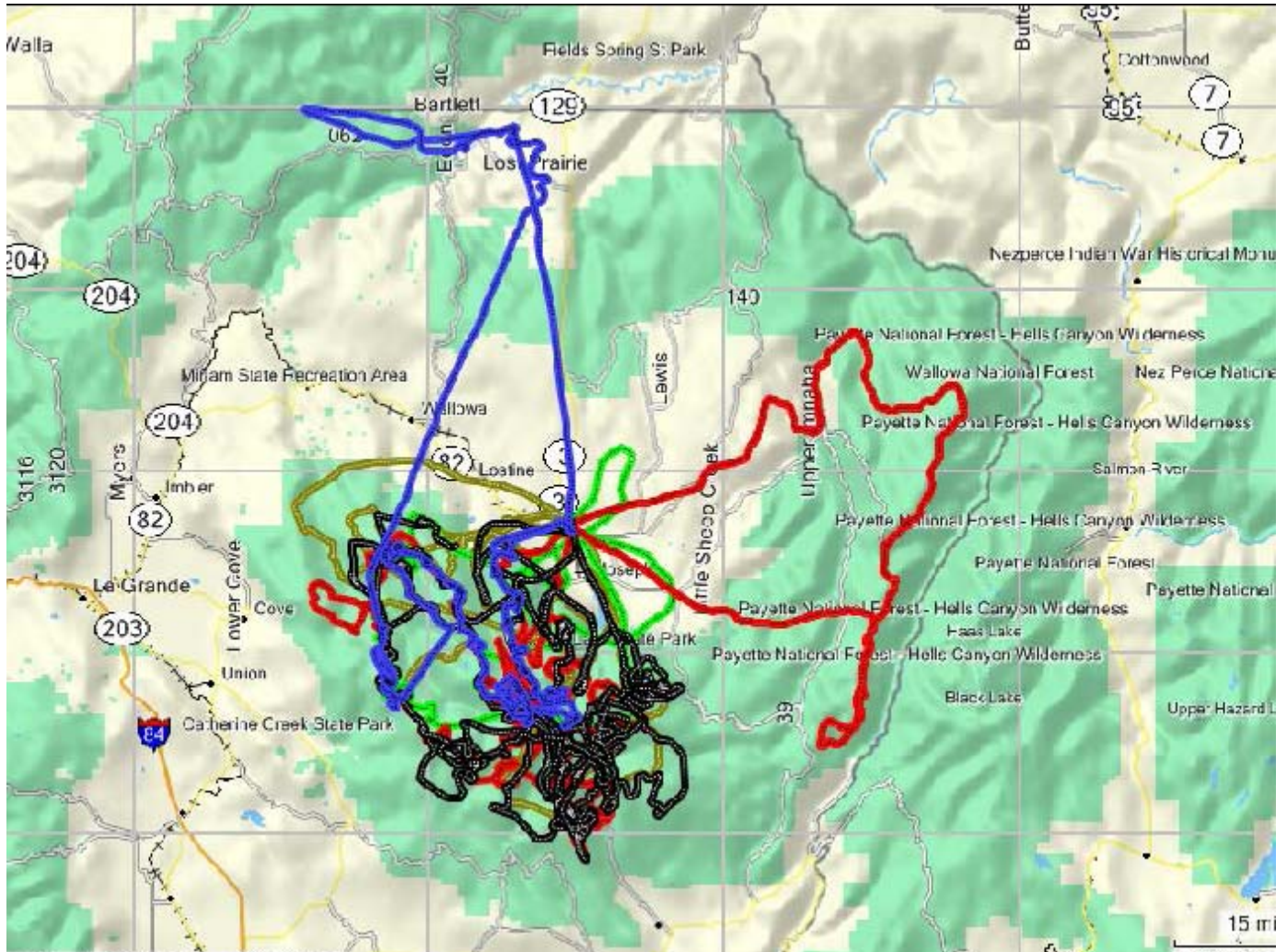


Figure 4. Wolverine tracking flight routes in the Wallowa Mountains in December 2011 and April 2012.

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