



# GOVERNOR'S GRIZZLY BEAR ADVISORY COUNCIL

[fwp.mt.gov/gbac](http://fwp.mt.gov/gbac)

## FINAL REPORT

# Recommendations and Input on the Future of Grizzly Bear Management and Conservation in Montana

AUGUST 2020



# Contents

4	<b>Preamble</b>
5	<b>Vision</b>
5	<b>Guiding Principles</b>
	<b>Section I: Council Recommendations</b>
8	Education and Outreach
10	Conflict Prevention and Reduction
12	Conflict Response and Protocols
13	Grizzly Bear Distribution, Relocation, and Connectivity
14	Resources
	<b>Section II: Council Input</b>
16	Council Discussion around the Role of Hunting
16	Considerations around the Role of Hunting
18	Considerations for a Proposed Grizzly Bear Hunt
	<b>Appendices</b>
19	Appendix A: Governor’s Executive Order
22	Appendix B: Map of Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones
23	Appendix C: List of Acronyms
24	Appendix D: Governor’s Grizzly Bear Advisory Council Members
25	Appendix E: GBAC Facilitators and Technical Support Team
26	Appendix F: Public Comments

# Preamble

Montana's heritage is intimately connected to grizzly bears, and many indigenous peoples have lived with grizzly bears from time immemorial. The Blackfoot Tribe and Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) continue to play essential roles in grizzly bear management and conservation in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), USDA Wildlife Services, and the National Park Service (NPS). The Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council (GBAC or the Council) respects and honors this long-standing relationship, as well as the traditional knowledge that continues to inform management and provide habitat for grizzly bears in Montana.

As grizzly bear populations have been reduced or extirpated throughout much of their historic range over the past century, the populations that continue to reside and expand in Montana are perceived by many from our state and around the world to hold both intrinsic and spiritual value, alongside a recognized ecological importance. The grizzly bears residing in Montana's four recovery ecosystems are considered essential to the continued recovery of the species nationally. Significant progress toward the recovery of this species has occurred since grizzly bears were listed as protected by the Endangered Species Act in 1975.

Continued conservation and management efforts remain necessary. Montana is unique in the continental United States for its maintenance of grizzly bear populations and their core habitats that support connectivity and recovery in landscapes extending beyond primary conservation areas and state lines. The Council recognizes that alongside the wilderness, parks, and protected lands that have provided refuge for grizzly bears over the past century, there is an

essential role for local communities and working lands, both public and private, in helping to maintain a landscape capable of supporting both people and grizzlies. Grizzly bear expansion across the state has and will continue to bring challenges to traditional and emerging livelihoods as the human population of Montana increases simultaneously with the population of grizzly bears. The conservation of this species from past and ongoing management and cooperation, as well as future conservation and management, could offer the opportunity to make the goal of grizzly bear recovery a reality.

The GBAC was charged with developing citizen recommendations for fundamental guidance and direction on key issues and challenges related to the conservation and management of grizzly bears in Montana, particularly those issues on which there is significant social disagreement. The 18 Montanans that make up the Council acknowledge the important task with which we were charged, and worked to bring our diversity of livelihoods, backgrounds, community concerns, and connections to Montana's landscapes into our discussions when crafting our recommendations. We also acknowledge that our recommendations are just that, and stand beside many other agency, tribal, and public contributions. The Council worked to use all information provided by support staff, as well as public comment, to provide meaningful guidance and feedback that will inform, but not constrain, the management and conservation of grizzly bears into the future.

# Vision

We envision fully recovered grizzly bear populations in the four identified recovery areas in Montana and landscapes in-between that accommodate grizzly bear presence and connectivity while maintaining the safety and quality of life of those that live, work, and play in Montana.

## Guiding Principles

The following principles provide the underlying foundational understandings that inform all the Council's recommendations. These considerations should be accounted for in any decision or process related to grizzly bear management in the state of Montana and are representative of the communal voice existing among the diverse individual members of the Council.

1. All those living in or visiting Montana should expect the potential presence of grizzly bears on the landscape, and should have access to education, assistance, and resources involved with coexisting with grizzly bears.
2. The identification of areas between established recovery zones that best contribute to genetic and demographic connectivity is necessary to prioritize resource allocation, focus outreach and education efforts, build social tolerance, and proactively engage local communities and landowners.
3. As expansion occurs outside the four recovery ecosystems and the landscapes in-between them in Montana, FWP and relevant agencies will have to balance this expansion with the need to prioritize resources that support both public and private lands. This would include resources, personnel, and conflict prevention/mitigation strategies well ahead of grizzly bear expansion into unprepared areas.
4. The best available science should inform decisions in all aspects of grizzly bear management and conservation.
5. Strategies and tools aimed at proactively preventing or reducing conflicts are often effective and can be less expensive than compensating for conflict after the fact.
6. Strict enforcement of poaching is necessary for the long-term conservation of grizzly bears.
7. Grizzly bear management requires communication, coordination, and timely consultation among governmental agencies, tribal entities, private landowners, and the public.
8. Montana's diverse landscapes and complex circumstances require flexibility in grizzly bear management decisions.
9. Cooperation with and consideration of working landscapes is essential to the successful expansion and connectivity of grizzly bears. These communities are an important part of the decision-making process.

10. Social tolerance is not uniform; it is a complex topic that is dynamic and variable across space and time. FWP and relevant agencies should strive to cultivate social tolerance through sound management decisions and conflict prevention measures.
11. Addressing the challenges to working landscapes, recreationists, and local communities on both public and private lands will require an inclusive and proactive effort.
12. Voluntary, incentive-based conservation efforts on lands should be encouraged and supported.
13. Both genetic and demographic connectivity are important to the long-term sustainability, persistence, and resiliency of grizzly bears. Connectivity areas will exist in diverse social and environmental settings. Not all these settings are conducive to permanent habitation but should be managed to promote genetic and demographic connectivity in biologically suitable habitat, being mindful that biologically suitable does not always mean acceptable.
14. Increasing recreational use on public lands is an emerging challenge to grizzly bear recovery and management and could negatively affect grizzly bear recovery.
15. The Council recognizes the importance of large tracts of remote secure habitat. Sustaining and improving habitat security, managing road densities, and identifying and protecting natural food resources and other needs will contribute to long-term survival and resiliency of grizzly bears.
16. The effects of climate change should be considered when making decisions about grizzly bears.
17. In order to implement our recommendations, relevant agencies will need new funding from diverse entities and sources. Resources are key to the success of all our recommendations. As resources are developed and utilized, both public and private lands needs must be considered.
18. Grizzly bear conservation is a shared responsibility.



GBAC Bozeman Meeting



GBAC Bozeman Meeting

# Section I

## Council Recommendations

The following recommendations were crafted with careful consideration and consensus from the 18 Council members.

### Education and Outreach

Education and outreach should engage all Montanans and visitors in the shared responsibility of grizzly bear conservation. In order to support, develop, and improve the range of grizzly bear education and outreach between FWP and the public, the Council offers the following recommendations:

1. In recognition of the grizzly bear being Montana's state animal and the strides made since the species was listed as protected under the Endangered Species Act in 1975, the Grizzly Bear Advisory Council recommends the Governor establish a date to annually celebrate and create awareness around the grizzly bear and the landscapes, communities, and continued collaborative efforts in Montana that have contributed to grizzly bear conservation.
2. FWP should provide easy access to education about hunting safely in grizzly bear country for resident and non-resident hunters in Montana.
3. All relevant agencies should provide residents and landowners with accurate information on the effective use of non-lethal methods to haze grizzly bears.
4. Relevant agencies should provide consistent messaging when communicating with the public about the differences among the terminology around relocation, reintroduction, and augmentation, and when each might be necessary or utilized.
5. Relevant agencies should create open and accessible communication channels between bear managers and the public to encourage communal efforts around bear awareness and conflict prevention.
  - a. Support bear managers as they create reliable and easy reports<sup>1</sup> of bear sightings and conflicts near human settlements, towns, and cities.
  - b. Grizzly bear management on working lands will not be a static process. Communication is key to mutual understanding, innovative solutions, and trust. The council recommends regular engagement with working lands managers to inform grizzly bear management and policy.
6. FWP, in coordination with relevant agencies, should create consistency and timeliness around public access to grizzly bear mortality data<sup>2</sup> across recovery ecosystems.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, *Prairie Bear Monitor* and *Missoula Bears* on Facebook.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the *Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team (IGBST)* database used for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

7. FWP, together with partners, should explore ways to inform, promote, and incentivize Bear Aware programs in communities.
8. Relevant agencies should support educational efforts to build a common understanding of perspectives between agricultural producers and urban communities.
9. Relevant agencies should create and use consistent messaging around the use and effectiveness of bear spray.
  - a. FWP should encourage bear spray distribution and training programs across the state, including but not limited to the following:
    - i. Work with Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) and professionals in the outdoor industries to provide bear spray and training and to explore best management practices for businesses around bear safety for employees and clients;
    - ii. Partner with outdoor recreation companies and retailers to offer grizzly bear safety training;
    - iii. Coordinate messaging on the efficacy and use of bear spray with the Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation and the Montana Office of Tourism; and
    - iv. Provide a bear identification and safety video including proper use of bear spray and couple it with the bear identification test online.
10. The Governor's office and FWP should work to fund and create a full time and permanent Grizzly Bear Information, Education, and Outreach Coordinator to

support and contribute to the broader efforts of FWP's Wildlife Stewardship Outreach Specialist. The following considerations were identified by the Council for this position but should be pursued by the appropriate FWP staff regardless of this position being in place.

- a. Develop and maintain a statewide Bear Aware program.
  - i. Together with partners, work to establish a statewide program and a way to certify Bear Aware businesses and communities.
- b. Create a centralized location within FWP that includes available resources and a catalog of educational materials.
- c. Coordinate with stakeholders to provide bear safety information and outreach.
  - i. Identify gaps where additional bear safety information and outreach is needed.<sup>3</sup>
- d. Work with agency partners to address outreach and education needs on public lands.
- e. Continue the FWP Grizzly Bear Education and Outreach Summit to:
  - i. Address conflict prevention, resource concerns, and ongoing challenges; and
  - ii. Create, report, and share consistent messaging and effective strategies.
- f. Work with the Montana Office of Public Instruction, local teachers, agencies, and tribal partners to create and implement a K-12 grizzly bear curriculum.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, a need for further coordination with the tourism industry, vacation rental companies, and realtors.

# Conflict Prevention and Reduction

Preventing conflicts with grizzly bears is essential to the development of social acceptance and the continued conservation of grizzly bears. Proactive, inclusive efforts to mitigate conflict can engage communities, protect private property, maintain human safety, and be an efficient use of limited resources, while minimizing associated bear mortality. The following recommendations are actionable items that can strengthen or support existing efforts.

## 11. Human/Grizzly Conflicts in and around Developed Areas    12. Agriculture

### a. In areas where grizzly bears are or may be present:

- i. FWP, along with local state, federal, and tribal entities, should: provide guidance for land use planning to prevent human/grizzly conflicts;
- ii. Proactively recommend actions to governing bodies on how to minimize grizzly bear conflicts;
- iii. Help local communities identify and use available local grants for conflict prevention; and
- iv. Review and update all FWP subdivision recommendations (2012).<sup>4</sup>

### b. FWP and IGBC should make the research, development, and funding of new and innovative tools and techniques for conflict prevention and aversive conditioning a high priority.

### c. The Governor's office and FWP should work with partners to increase access to federal dollars for grizzly bear conservation and management that includes conflict prevention actions.

### a. We strongly recommend the Governor's Office and the 2021 Montana Legislature fully fund the Livestock Loss Board (LLB) to provide dedicated conflict prevention dollars in order for the LLB to allocate funding for conflict reduction tools and practices.

### b. All relevant state and federal agricultural and wildlife agencies should research and make recommendations on best management practices that help reduce depredations on livestock and non-livestock commercial losses.

### c. Relevant agencies should integrate technology to allow for timely reporting of agricultural conflicts to neighboring farms and ranches.

### d. FWP should increase and diversify partnerships, funding, and support for community-based groups and other organizations to:

- i. Support conflict mitigation efforts and monitoring;
- ii. Expand outreach efforts;
- iii. Provide salary cost shares with local groups; and
- iv. Provide proper resources for livestock producers to implement appropriate conflict prevention measures on private and public lands.

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<sup>4</sup> Fish and Wildlife Recommendations for Subdivision Development in Montana. 2012. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks <http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/livingWithWildlife/buildingWithWildlife/subdivisionRecommendations/>

### 13. Public and State Land

- a. In areas where grizzly bears are or may be present:
  - i. Relevant agencies should create and enforce consistent food storage requirements across state and federal lands;
  - ii. Relevant agencies should work with partners to make bear resistant infrastructure available at all federal, state, and local campgrounds and other public recreation areas;
  - iii. FWP and relevant agencies should continue to work with partners to research and closely monitor impacts to grizzly bears from road densities and other human activity on public and state lands; and
  - iv. FWP should coordinate with public land managers to develop plans to address the general and seasonal impacts to wildlife from recreational use and to prevent conflicts between grizzly bears and people on the landscape, including but not limited to the following:
    - 1. Encourage reduced maximum group sizes for public and special event use in recovery ecosystems;
    - 2. Encourage temporary trail closures and limit special use permits in areas with critical habitat conditions during appropriate times of year;
    - 3. Consider future areas of connectivity in land management decisions;
    - 4. Require that commercial or special use permit applications include specific plans to meet food storage order regulations, manage and reduce conflicts, contain attractants, and minimize impacts to grizzly bear habitat and food resources;

5. Consider identifying areas of Montana with minimal impacts to grizzly bear habitat and minimal risk of conflict to proactively prepare for participation in recreation planning processes; and

6. Ensure appropriate and timely analysis for new and proposed recreation activities<sup>5</sup> in designated core grizzly habitat and connectivity areas on public lands, and move or reroute activities as determined by the analysis.

### 14. Waste Management/Sanitation

- a. In areas where grizzly bears are or may be present:
  - i. FWP and relevant agencies should support the development of consistent local sanitation ordinances that require attractants to be stored in a bear-resistant manner and includes entities for enforcement.
  - ii. Counties and local governments are encouraged to work with local sanitation companies to explore the use of bear-resistant sanitation storage options. Sanitation efforts should be coupled with outreach, monitoring, and maintenance of infrastructure.
- b. Outside of areas where grizzly bears are or may be present:
  - i. Communities and planning boards should proactively explore local sanitation practices.

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<sup>5</sup> For example, e-biking, mountain biking routes, thru-hiking trails, cross country events, etc.

# Conflict Response and Protocols

Timely and consistent conflict response is necessary to build and maintain relationships between FWP and the communities where grizzly bears exist. Building these relationships prior to conflict will help to promote open communication and sharing of information if the need for response should occur. These recommendations are intended to increase FWP and other relevant agencies' abilities to facilitate positive engagement with those living with grizzly bears.

15. The State Legislature and FWP should make bear management specialists Full Time Equivalent (FTE) positions included in permanent base funding, provide each specialist with a year-round technician, and create more of these fully funded positions as needed.

This would:

- a. Allow for transfer of expertise from bear managers to bear managers-in-training;
- b. Improve response time;
- c. Allow bear managers to be proactive and mitigate conflicts; and
- d. Allow time for relationship building, outreach, and communication with landowners, agriculture producers, and local communities.

16. Conflicts should be monitored and reported in a consistent manner across relevant agencies to effectively identify new and/or emerging areas of concern.

17. USFWS and relevant agencies should clarify management protocols for conflict bears and continue to share them with landowners, livestock producers, and communities to maximize transparency.

18. Relevant agencies should periodically review interagency Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) for opportunities to improve efficiency and capacity for conflict response.



*Due to Covid 19, the Council met virtually nine times from March-August 2020.*

# Grizzly Bear Distribution, Relocation, and Connectivity

Genetic and demographic connectivity among Montana's four recovery zones is important to the long-term viability of grizzly bear populations in the continental United States. These recommendations intend to balance the continued importance of public lands with the need for the involvement of private lands to support our vision for an interconnected metapopulation of grizzly bears in Montana.

19. FWP should continue to allow natural movement to new areas between all four identified recovery zones in Montana.
20. FWP and all relevant agencies should clearly define the "landscapes in-between" the four recovery zones in Montana that are important for genetic and demographic connectivity and the long-term sustainability of the grizzly bear.
21. FWP, in coordination with relevant agencies and through a public process, should evaluate and identify those landscapes that can reasonably be considered important for grizzly bear recovery and connectivity from those that cannot, and clearly distinguish these in its management plan. Such a distinction is necessary for determining appropriate relocation sites between the four recovery zones, as well as for prioritizing resources for outreach and education, transportation upgrades, and conflict prevention, reduction, and response efforts. These decisions should be in accordance with current Conservation Strategies.
22. In areas where grizzly bears are or may be present, FWP and relevant agencies should increase and promote research on habitat conditions that could support grizzly bear occupancy in order to better understand and track distribution trends.
23. Relevant agencies should expedite work with landowners, agricultural producers, and communities to prioritize the creation of new suitable relocation areas inside and between recovery ecosystems which further the conservation, connection, and recovery of grizzly bears in Montana while ensuring existing land uses are supported.
24. Any new and existing agreements regarding population augmentation should be evaluated on a regular basis.
25. All transportation entities should coordinate with the Montana Wildlife and Transportation Steering Committee's efforts and the Federal Railroad Administration to reduce transportation mortalities, facilitate movement, and enhance public safety, including but not limited to the following:
  - a. Work with partners to develop a wildlife transportation safety campaign;
  - b. Work with appropriate entities to explore ways to minimize train/bear collisions due to grain spills and carcasses near train tracks;
  - c. Identify and model potentially important grizzly bear crossing points on major highways and seek funding to incorporate wildlife connectivity into the transportation system as infrastructure upgrades are made; and
  - d. Encourage voluntary incentive-based conservation practices in areas identified as important to wildlife passage and support allocating state and federal funding for such efforts.

# Resources

The Council recognizes that current grizzly bear management and conservation resources are inadequate. Moreover, the Council sees the issue of resources as the greatest limitation, and therefore the greatest challenge, in working toward its vision of a landscape that supports both grizzly bears and people. Addressing these resource challenges will require a multi-pronged and long-lasting approach and needs to include public, private, and philanthropic efforts. The Council kept the issue of resources in mind throughout the process of drafting recommendations, and specific resource-related recommendations are included in the relevant sections of this document.

In an effort to start meeting the broader challenge of providing adequate resources, the Council would like to call attention to several of the most critical needs and suggest several ideas that can be used to inform future conversations. Recognizing that there are numerous, creative ways to meet resource needs, the Council focused much of its discussion on identifying existing gaps and systemic needs. By focusing on broad needs rather than on discrete opportunities, the Council hopes multiple funding pathways will be pursued. The Council feels that by fostering and supporting multiple, coordinated efforts, the state stands the best chance of meeting the resource needs it faces.

## Needs:

1. A greater diversity of funding sources as well as greater stability in the resources generated;
2. Increased FWP staff capacity to meet the scope and scale of conservation and management needs and opportunities;
3. Improved access to and an overall increase in resources and tools necessary for the implementation and long-term maintenance of education, outreach, and conflict prevention;
4. Full funding for the Montana Livestock Loss Board compensation program to compensate ranchers for the losses of livestock to grizzly bears;
5. Full funding of the Montana Livestock Loss Board's Livestock Loss Reduction and Conflict Mitigation Trust Fund;
6. Increased funding and support for voluntary, incentive-based conservation efforts undertaken by communities and individuals to improve habitat and/or reduce conflicts;
7. Increased funding and coordination for landscape level wildlife-friendly transportation projects;
8. Funding and support for community-wide bear-resistant sanitation programs to include ongoing monitoring, outreach, and maintenance;
9. Additional public relations efforts around grizzly bear conservation and management; and
10. Funding and support for grizzly bear research and the development of new and innovative tools and techniques for conflict prevention and aversive conditioning.

In addition to identifying these broad needs, the Council developed an initial list of possible sources and ideas to explore to meet these needs. We recognize there are many entities working on this issue in different ways. It would be beneficial for FWP to facilitate further analysis, coordination, and communication between partners around the challenge of resources. Ideas discussed by the Council that merited further research, analysis, and discussion included the following:

1. FWP should continue to explore ways to diversify agency funding. This is important to consider as Montana looks at potential income like the Recovering America's Wildlife and Wildlife Corridors Acts and the match that would be necessary to take advantage of these potential new funding opportunities.
2. Grizzly bears are part of the allure of Montana, bringing millions of tourists to the state each year. Analysis on ways to access tourism related dollars is needed. Other states are also exploring this idea, and could be a resource in this process.
  - a. Work with Montana Office of Outdoor Recreation to explore ideas for funding wildlife conservation through the rapidly growing outdoor recreation community.
3. Establishing diverse, alternative, and sustainable economic streams would benefit both grizzly bears and people.
4. Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservation practices do not currently cover grizzly bear conflict prevention actions. We encourage the NRCS to modify or add new "Conservation Practices:" e.g., carcass pickup and composting, electric fencing, livestock guard dogs, range riding, and other conflict prevention tools.
5. FWP should initiate improved coordination and collaboration to link and leverage existing efforts, tools, and resources and to ensure better prioritization of need.
6. Wildlife friendly transportation infrastructure is important to landscape connectivity and requires significant funding. We encourage FWP and the Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) to continue to work with partners to explore and expand ways to meet connectivity and transportation-related goals.
7. Work with state and national partners to explore, create, and implement a dedicated federally-appropriated grizzly bear conservation fund.
8. In an effort to provide a long-term and stable funding source, the Council considered whether a portion of existing tax revenue could be targeted toward grizzly bear conservation. We encourage broad and inclusive partnerships to continue the exploration of this idea.
9. Voluntary and/or opt-in fundraiser ideas at both the state and federal level should be explored as mechanisms to increase funding for grizzly bear conservation and management.<sup>6</sup>
10. Explore the use of social media to garner funds for education and outreach programs.
11. The Council recommends the continuation of the \$1.38 million federal appropriation Congress allocated in FY20 to pay for nonlethal conflict-prevention specialists employed by Wildlife Services in Montana and other states.
12. The Federal government, state legislature, and public stakeholders should encourage an excise tax on outdoor recreation gear and equipment like the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Acts have done with hunting and fishing gear.
13. Expand the USFWS Wolf Livestock Demonstration Grant Project to include grizzly bears and increase the annual amount of program funding available.
14. To save agency time and effort, the Council recommends the establishment of a voluntary, inclusive citizens' working group to research funding possibilities and create pathways to obtain them.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, a wildlife stamp or license plate.

# Section II

## Council Input

Section II contains input from the Council for items that received substantial consideration but did not lead to full consensus among the members of the Council.

### Council Discussion around the Role of Hunting

Substantial deliberation was given to the role of hunting; however, because of the diversity of interpretations of available science, backgrounds, values, and opinions individually held by Council members, we cannot reach consensus that hunting has a role in grizzly bear management. The Council received a large number of public comments regarding hunting. The comments also represented a large disparity of views and were acknowledged in our conversations. Our process is presented as such and includes opposing views and discussion for context and consideration. The conversation on the role of hunting focused on two threads: (1) consideration of the role of hunting; and (2) beyond the question of whether there should be a hunt, what guidance would the Council like to provide, without consensus, in the event that the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission moves forward with hunting regulations.

### Considerations around the Role of Hunting

The following bulleted lists represent different perspectives on the role of hunting as brought forward by the Council:

#### Considerations supporting the role of hunting

- A grizzly bear hunt would not take place until ESA protections have been removed and grizzly bears are put under state management. At that time, a conservative, scientifically-sound hunt of grizzly bears could take place like other predator species.

#### Considerations opposing the role of hunting

- Public comments made to the GBAC show that hunting of grizzly bears is a highly divisive issue. A grizzly bear hunt could be socially divisive at a time when Montanans need to work together in support of conservation, management, and those challenged with living with grizzlies.

*continued on the next page*

### Considerations supporting the role of hunting

- While hunting can be a useful tool in managing grizzly bear populations, it will not replace the need for conflict prevention.
- If a hunting season is under consideration, cooperating agencies should focus on sharing expertise, best available science, knowledge of geographic areas, and the status of connectivity.
- Although specifics regarding the hunting of a recovered grizzly bear population will be unique to the ecosystem and legal jurisdictions involved, we support hunting regulations that reflect the best available science, are adaptable to changing factors, are established in a public process, and are consistent with standards in the ecosystem specific Conservation Strategies.
- Regulated hunting can provide a tool to manage grizzly bears.
- Council members participated in the FWP social science survey concerning grizzly bears, and 14 of 18 members answered in support of an eventual grizzly bear hunt in Montana.
- Montana has a history of hunters being at the forefront of wildlife restoration and conservation by providing funding, management, and habitat protection that have helped us achieve the wildlife abundance we enjoy today.
- Offering regulated hunting of grizzly bears could solicit, build, and retain support for continued grizzly bear management from the sportsmen groups who have historically funded the wildlife management programs.
- Citations: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LJYub0Xd6hh\\_\\_daq3UhfaftC-Abfs8q6/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1LJYub0Xd6hh__daq3UhfaftC-Abfs8q6/view)

### Considerations opposing the role of hunting

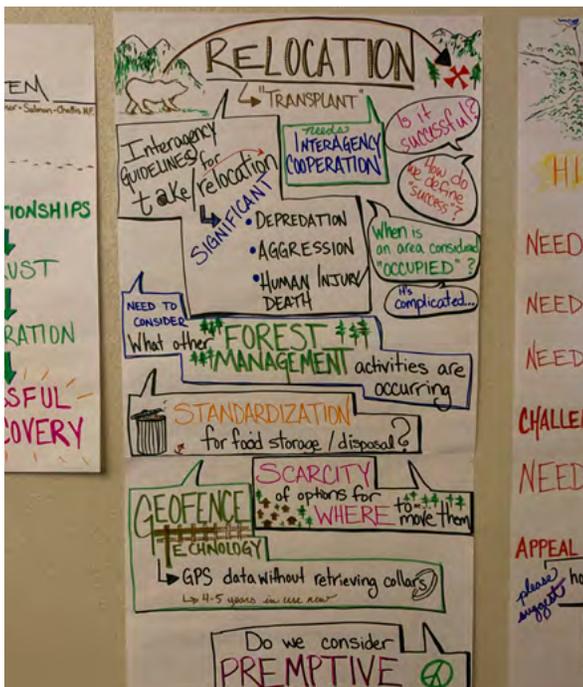
- A grizzly bear hunt will not remedy the financial needs of FWP for grizzly bear management and could jeopardize public support for alternative funding mechanisms.
- Concern over the implementation of an immediate grizzly bear hunt has contributed to public opposition to removal of ESA protections for grizzly bears in the Northern Rockies.
- Hunting grizzly bears might not increase their acceptance, but scientific evidence does show that increased conflict prevention measures and education increase social acceptance of grizzly bears.
- Scientific evidence shows that low hunter-harvest rates, as would be proposed by FWP, do not reduce human-bear conflicts or increase the safety of people around grizzly bears.
- Hunting could be an impediment to movement and population linkage and could threaten the distribution, abundance, and social structure of grizzly bear subpopulations.
- Scientific evidence shows that heavy hunter harvest can reduce bear numbers and distribution, but the low harvest rates focused on males proposed by FWP would likely play a minor role in managing grizzly populations.
- Hunting does not target problem grizzly bears.
- Citations: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VfJIOkNaDEBhZ5QsN8\\_2mObYYG98dsUL/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VfJIOkNaDEBhZ5QsN8_2mObYYG98dsUL/view)

# Considerations for a Proposed Grizzly Bear Hunt

The Governor's Executive Order requested the Council address the role of a grizzly bear hunt, if a hunt were to occur. The following guidelines were provided by a significant number<sup>7</sup> of Council members. We acknowledge that hunting is not likely to be an effective tool for conflict prevention or reduction.

- We encourage the take of bears where the desired outcome is a lower bear density, recognizing that it will not mean no bears in those areas, but where the management challenges are significant.
- Female grizzly bears with dependent young, as well as dependent young, should be protected from hunter harvest.
- Hunting season(s) may also be timed to reduce exposure of females to harvest. Early spring and late fall hunts tend to focus hunting pressure on males.
- Regulations should include dynamic season closure prior to tag delivery based on static population levels.
- Hunting should be limited and follow the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. Grizzly bear license fees should be modeled on moose, bighorn sheep, and mountain goats, with the non-refundable drawing fee going to grizzly bear management and conservation.
  - Tags could include a governor's tag to sell and a SuperTag for everyday people for a chance to draw;
  - Tags should be once-in-a-lifetime tags;
  - Out-of-state hunters must have a licensed guide;
  - No baiting or any use of anthropogenic attractants can be used;
  - Hunters should be strongly encouraged to carry bear spray;
  - People that draw a grizzly bear license should be required to participate in training on grizzly bear ecology, identification, and safety; and
  - Grizzly bear harvests should be reported immediately.

Artistic notes from the Polson meeting.



<sup>7</sup> 14 of the 18 council members contributed to these guidelines.

# Appendix A: Governor's Executive Order

**STATE OF MONTANA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 9-2019**

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**EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE  
GRIZZLY BEAR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
ADVISORY COUNCIL**

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WHEREAS, grizzly bears are valued by people and cultures across Montana and around the world;

WHEREAS, grizzly bears are also feared and can affect people's livelihoods and safety;

WHEREAS, grizzly bear numbers in Montana continue to increase, and have expanded into areas where they have not been for decades, including places key to connecting their populations;

WHEREAS, despite this success, long-term coexistence of people and grizzly bears across the landscape will remain a challenge;

WHEREAS, existing management plans did not fully anticipate grizzly bear distribution across the landscape and as Montana's human population continues to grow, we can expect conflicts between bears and people to increase in frequency and complexity;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the U.S. Forest Service, the National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Blackfoot Tribe, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, currently manage grizzly bears in Montana as "threatened" under authority of the Endangered Species Act;

WHEREAS, four of the six recovery areas identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan occur in whole or in part within Montana;

WHEREAS, recent litigation has created uncertainty about delisting of grizzly bears from the Endangered Species Act;

WHEREAS, it is timely that Montanans work together to determine how the state and its partners will collectively manage and conserve grizzly bears;

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize existing grizzly bear management objectives and existing intra-agency and interagency commitments already in place, including conservation strategies, monitoring protocols, recovery plan criteria, and forest plans;

WHEREAS, the future of grizzly bear management in Montana must maintain scientific integrity, and balance diverse interests and values;

WHEREAS, Montana remains committed to maintaining the long-term viability of grizzly bears and balancing their needs with those of people;

WHEREAS, it is important for the public to have ownership and confidence in grizzly bear management in Montana;

WHEREAS, to ensure its citizens have a voice in the future of grizzly bears, Montana must provide meaningful opportunities for people to engage in a public discussion around grizzly bear management, recovery and conservation; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of all Montanans to bring stakeholders and experts together to recommend statewide strategies for conserving and managing grizzly bears for today and the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVE BULLOCK, Governor of the State of Montana, pursuant to the authority vested in me under the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, Title 2, Chapter 15, MCA, do hereby create the Governor's Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Advisory Council (Council).

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council is to develop recommendations for fundamental guidance and direction on key issues and challenges related to the conservation and management of grizzly bears in Montana, particularly those issues on which there is significant social disagreement.

## DUTIES

1. The Council shall produce a Final Report with discrete, actionable recommendations that provides clear and meaningful guidance to the Governor's Office, FWP, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and other entities with responsibility for grizzly bear management and conservation in Montana.
2. The Council shall recognize grizzly bear management objectives and existing intra-agency and interagency commitments already in place, including conservation strategies, monitoring protocols, commission policies, recovery plan criteria, and forest plans.
3. The Council shall utilize a transparent process that maximizes engagement among people with diverse values and interests. The Council shall consider public input on its recommendations.
4. The Council's recommendations shall identify strategies that achieve the following broad, strategic objectives:
  - a) Maintain and enhance human safety;
  - b) Ensure a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population;
  - c) Improve timely and effective response to conflicts involving grizzly bears;
  - d) Engage all partners in grizzly-related outreach and conflict prevention; and
  - e) Improve intergovernmental, interagency, and tribal coordination.
5. The Council shall have the discretion to examine grizzly bear-related issues that it deems to be important, including at a minimum the following topics critical to its objectives:

- a) Grizzly bear distribution within Montana (including outside of established recovery zones);
- b) Connectivity between ecosystems;
- c) Conflict prevention;
- d) Response protocols to grizzly conflict in different parts of the state;
- e) Transplant protocols;
- f) Role of hunting; and
- g) Resources for long-term sustainability of grizzly bear conservation.

## COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. The Council members shall be solicited through an application process and appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
2. The Council members shall be a cross-section of Montanans representative of different geographic areas and interest categories involved in or affected by grizzly bear conservation and management, including livestock producers, wildlife enthusiasts, conservation groups, hunters, community leaders, tribal members, and outdoor industry professionals.
3. The Governor shall appoint a council member as chairperson.
4. Council members shall serve in an individual capacity.
5. The Office of the Governor, with support from FWP, will engage to further the objectives of this Council. The Council will be attached to FWP for administrative purposes.
6. FWP shall convene an interdisciplinary, interagency technical advisory committee to serve the Council and provide biological, legal, and policy information.
7. The Council may establish procedural bylaws to aid in the performance of its duties.
8. The Council may establish subcommittees comprised of members of the Council to aid in the performance of its duties.

**FWP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 1. FWP shall provide staff to assist the Council in completing its work.
- 2. FWP shall make available experts who can support the Council with technical, scientific, social, policy, and legal matters.
- 3. As the Council begins its work, specific decisions for implementation of management strategies will continue to be the responsibility of FWP.

**OTHER**

- 1. The Council may request consultation, information, and technical expertise from directors or their designees of state and federal agencies, the university system, the public, and other entities related to grizzly bear management and conservation.
- 2. The Council is not a regulatory body; its recommendations are advisory only.

**COMPENSATION**

All Council members shall be reimbursed for travel, meals, and lodging related to Council duties pursuant to Section 2-15-122, MCA.

**DURATION**

The Council shall complete its Final Report and provide its recommendations to the Governor by August 31, 2020. The Council shall then disband unless continued by subsequent executive order.

This Order is effective immediately.

GIVEN under my hand and the GREAT SEAL of the State of Montana this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2019.

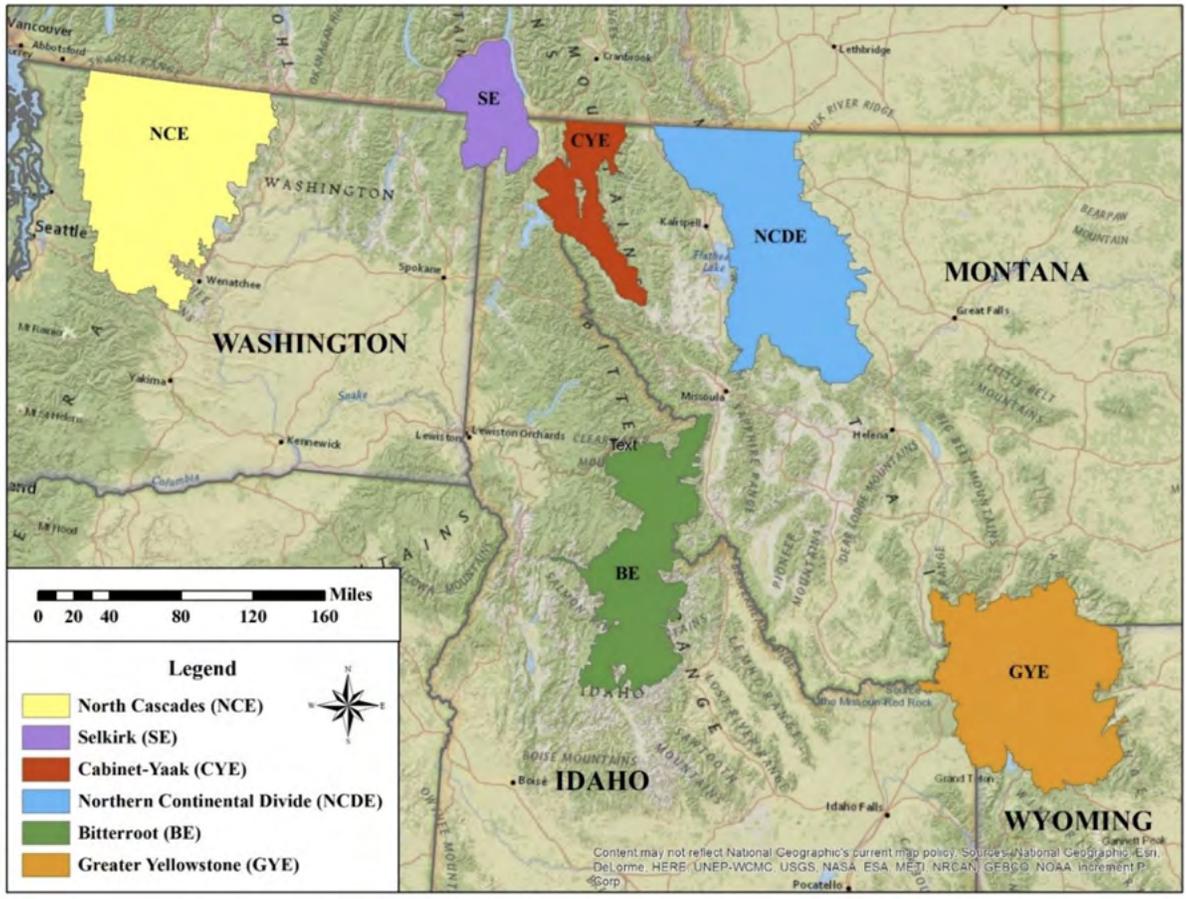


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STEVE BULLOCK, Governor

ATTEST:

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COREY STAPLETON, Secretary of State

# Appendix B: Map of Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones



Grizzly bear recovery zones in the lower-48 States. (USFWS 1993)

## Appendix C: List of Acronyms

BLM: Bureau of Land Management

CSKT: Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

GBAC: Grizzly Bear Advisory Council

IGBC: Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

FWP: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

MDT: Montana Department of Transportation

NPS: National Park Service

USFS: U.S. Forest Service

USFWS: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

LLB: Livestock Loss Board

NCDE: Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem

GYE: Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

IGBST: Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team

## Appendix D: Governor's GBAC Members

**Bret Barney**, Wyola. Qualification: Livestock producer. Barney is the Range Detective and Wildlife Manager for Sunlight Ranch Company.

**Chad Bauer**, Missoula. Qualification: Outdoor industry professional. Bauer is Municipal Market Manager for Republic Services.

**Darrin Boss**, Havre. Qualification: Hunter. Boss is the Department Head for the Department of Research Centers for Montana State University.

**Jonathan Bowler**, Condon. Qualification: Naturalist. Bowler is a sustenance farmer and hunter in the Swan Valley.

**Trina Jo Bradley**, Valier. Qualification: Livestock producer. Bradley is a rancher and advocate in Pondera County on the Rocky Mountain Front.

**Caroline Byrd**, Bozeman. Qualification: Conservation group. Byrd is a conservation consultant and former Executive Director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

**Michele Dieterich**, Hamilton. Qualification: Wildlife enthusiast. Dieterich is a teacher.

**Erin Edge**, Missoula. Qualification: Conservation group. Edge is a Senior Representative for the Rockies and Plains Program for the Defenders of Wildlife.

**Nick Gevock**, Helena. Qualification: Conservation organization. Gevock is the Conservation Director for the Montana Wildlife Federation.

**Lorents Grosfield**, Big Timber. Qualification: Livestock producer. Grosfield is the owner/operator of a family cattle ranch in Sweet Grass County.

**Kameron Kelsey**, Gallatin Gateway. Qualification: Outfitter and livestock producer. Kelsey is owner/operator of the Nine Quarter Circle guest ranch.

**Robyn King**, Troy. Qualification: Conservation group. King is the Executive Director of the Yaak Valley Forest Council.

**Kristen Kipp Preble**, Browning. Qualification: Tribal member. Preble is a rancher on Cut Bank Creek on the Blackfoot Reservation.

**Cole Mannix**, Helena. Qualification: Cole is a conservation professional and part of a ranching family in Helmville, MT.

**Heath Martinell**, Dell. Qualification: Livestock producer. Martinell is a rancher in Beaverhead County.

**Chuck Roady**, Columbia Falls. Qualification: Community leader. Roady is the Vice President and General Manager for F.H. Stoltze Land & Lumber Company.

**Gregory Schock**, Saint Ignatius. Qualification: Livestock producer. Schock is the owner of Schock's Mission View Dairy.

**Anne Schuschke**, East Glacier. Qualification: Outdoor industry professional. Schuschke is an early elementary teacher in Browning and Expedition Leader and Naturalist for Natural Habitat Adventures.

# Appendix E: GBAC Facilitators and Technical Support Team

## FACILITATORS

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**Shawn Johnson**, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, University of Montana

**Heather Stokes**, Center for Natural Resources & Environmental Policy, University of Montana

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT TEAM

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**Dale Becker**, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

**Rich Harris**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Gary Bertellotti**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Scott Jackson**, US Forest Service

**Jodi Bush**, US Fish & Wildlife Service

**Ken McDonald**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Gerald “Buzz” Cobell**, Blackfeet Nation Fish & Wildlife

**Lauren Monroe**, Blackfeet Tribal Business Council

**Hilary Cooley**, US Fish & Wildlife Service

**Chris Savage**, US Forest Service

**Cecily Costello**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Bill Schenk**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Stacy Courville**, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes

**Charlie Sperry**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Vivaca Crowser**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Sara Sylte**, Wildlife Management Institute

**Kraig Glazier**, USDA Wildlife Services

**Dillon Tabish**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**Mark Haroldson**, US Geological Survey

**Martha Williams**, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

## Appendix F: Public Comments

The Council would like to thank everyone for their engagement in the Council's work. In addition to comments provided during Council meetings, the Council received over 16,000 comments through the public comment portal on the Council's website. Comments submitted online can be accessed at:

<http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/grizzlyBear/gbacPublicComments.html>



Back row, left to right: Heath Martinell, Caroline Byrd, Anne Schuschke, Bret Barney, Governor Bullock, Kristen Kipp Preble,  
Jonathan Bowler, Nick Gevock, Chad Bauer, Greg Schock

Middle row, left to right: Michele Dieterich, Trina Jo Bradley, Robyn King, Lorents Grosfield, Heather Stokes, Shawn Johnson

Bottom row, left to right: Chuck Roady, Cole Mannix, Erin Edge, Darrin Boss

Not pictured: Kameron Kelsey

*The Council would like to thank everyone who attended and presented at its meetings, provided information and resources, and provided input and feedback on its process and report.*

