



STATEWIDE GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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What is the purpose of the plan?

The State of Montana recognizes the grizzly bear as an iconic native species with high value to people and cultures across the state and around the world, and that grizzly bears play an important role in Montana ecosystems and economies. At the same time, they can and do injure or kill people and livestock and cause property damage and economic loss, which may disproportionately affect individuals living and working in bear country. This draft plan will guide management and conservation of the species statewide, with particular focus on the areas where grizzly bears have been documented in recent years or could possibly show up in the near future.

Although bears are federally listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), having a plan in place will both help guide state management and lay out Montana’s vision and general framework for management should delisting occur.

What is the purpose of the EIS?

According to the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), before a proposed state action may be approved, environmental review must be conducted to identify and consider potential impacts of the proposed action on the human and physical environment in the area affected by the proposal. The proposed Statewide Grizzly Bear Management Plan constitutes a state action; therefore, MEPA review is required.

The intent of MEPA is to “...encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between humans and their environment, to protect the right to use and enjoy private property free of undue government regulation, to promote efforts that will prevent, mitigate, or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of humans, to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the state...”. § 75-1-102(2), MCA). In practice, MEPA provides balance, accountability, and opportunity for public involvement in agency decisions that affect Montana’s environment.

MEPA and its implementing rules and regulations require different levels of environmental review, depending on the proposed project, significance of potential impacts, and the review timeline. § 75-1-201, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), and the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 12.2.430, General Requirements of the Environmental Review Process. FWP determined the proposed Statewide Grizzly Bear Management Plan constitutes a major action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment; therefore, according to the requirements of § 75-1-201, MCA, development of a detailed environmental review using the form and prescribed process of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required.

Why now?

Montana has never had a grizzly bear management plan for the entire state and needs one in order to help guide management holistically today and to provide a framework for what state management would look like if bears are delisted.

To date, Montana has operated under the direction of state, federal, and interagency grizzly bear plans for parts of the state (e.g., western and southwest Montana, federal recovery plan, conservation strategies for [Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem \(GYE\)](#) and [Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem \(NCDE\)](#) where grizzly bears are most abundant, but these plans are becoming outdated and don't include management guidance for bears as they continue to expand into other parts of the state. This draft statewide plan encompasses all of these separate plans in a single document.

What's the point if they're still federally protected?

Although grizzly bears are listed as a Threatened Species under the ESA, most of the day-to-day management in Montana is done by FWP and Tribes within the bounds of what listing allows. This plan will help guide that day-to-day work. The plan also serves as a framework for Montana's vision of management should some or all segments of the species' distribution within Montana be delisted and full management authority returned to the state. The plan would reaffirm Montana's commitment to the ongoing conservation and management of recovered populations of grizzly bears in the state and continue the work on recovery in places where populations have yet to reach recovery objectives.

Would the plan specify how human-grizzly bear conflicts would be resolved in any given case?

The statewide plan would increase predictability regarding how state managers would approach individual bear interactions or incidents because it proposes general principles that inform the necessary balancing between the interests of the bear population and of safety and security of people and their property. However, the plan would recognize the importance of site-specific factors in any given case, and that some flexibility in decision-making invariably results in better decisions.

What is the current status of grizzly bear delisting?

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has twice determined that federal protection for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) population was no longer warranted and delisted that population. Both delistings were overturned by federal courts, but the population, and the NCDE population, both have met recovery goals. Montana has petitioned the USFWS to delist grizzly bears in the NCDE and has supported Wyoming's petition to delist the GYE. We're waiting for their response. When considering delisting, past court decisions have shown us that having mechanisms for addressing grizzly bear connectivity, monitoring population objectives and distribution, and regulatory mechanisms in place is important, and this plan would provide that framework.

Is this a plan for delisting the grizzly bear?

FWP acknowledges the great interest many citizens have in the listing status of the grizzly bear under the U.S. Endangered Species Act. ESA listing and delisting are federal processes. Petitions from Montana and Wyoming to delist grizzly bears in the NCDE and GYE areas, respectively (as well as from Idaho to delist all populations south of Alaska) are now under consideration by USFWS. This FWP process recognizes the current federal status of the grizzly bear and anticipates policy under a possible future change in that status. However, this draft document is not a delisting plan or a petition for delisting.

What was the process for building this draft plan?

Recognizing that grizzly bears had been expanding in geographic scope, that conflicts with people appeared to be increasing, and that populations of both grizzly bears and humans were likely to continue increasing at least for the immediate future, FWP had a series of internal discussions in 2018 and 2019 focused on the question of whether existing statewide plans were sufficient to guide future management. This process resulted in the decision to both work with the governor to empanel an independent citizens council to examine these issues and, following that, to replace both existing management plans with a statewide plan. FWP acted as technical support for the 18-member Grizzly Bear Advisory Committee (GBAC), selected by Gov. Steve Bullock in late 2019, but the council remained entirely independent of FWP in its deliberations and in writing its report. Following the GBAC's report (in September 2020), FWP biologist Dr. Rich Harris consulted widely, both within and beyond FWP, to draft this document with the intent of meeting the objectives identified by the process begun in 2018.

How detailed is the draft plan?

The draft plan is very thorough and detailed in its considerations of the issue facing grizzly bears in Montana and facing Montanans who share their state with the species. However, the plan is designed to be programmatic and to be relevant for many years, and thus does not compel specific decisions at the field level. Additionally, because full authority for management presently rests with the USFWS, and because decisions on how to approach specific human-grizzly bear interactions (typically an issue of concern to many) are best made based on situation-specific information, the plan provides only the general framework within which these decisions would be made.

What is the timeline for reviewing this draft plan and associated EIS and how can I be involved?

The draft plan will be open for public comment from Dec. 6 to Jan 5. To review the plan and comment, go online to <https://fwp.mt.gov/aboutfwp/public-comment-opportunities/grizzly-bear-management-plan>

To comment by mail, send to:

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 Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
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 Helena, MT 59620-0701

To comment by email, send to:

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For questions call the Wildlife Division office:

(406) 444-2612

What are some of the main issues that are identified in the Plan, and can you tell me a bit about each of them?

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Role of grizzly bears in Montana	Grizzly bears would continue to be the “official state animal of Montana”, recognizing the importance that Montana plays nationally in conservation of the species. However, contention and uncertainty would continue to surround appropriate policy for bears outside of RZs (or associated DMAs).	Grizzly bears would be seen as a valued part of Montana’s fauna, a species that is both “conservation-reliant” and “conflict-prone”. Under this Alternative, clarity would be added to the expectation of where grizzly bears would be an objective. While expecting their core populations to coincide with existing RZs and DMAs, a lower density of grizzly bears between them would also be an objective for their role in connecting otherwise isolated population cores (recognizing that human-bear conflicts and bear mortalities would be greater between, than in population cores).
Numerical objectives	As currently, there would be no explicit statewide objectives. FWP has committed to NCDE objectives in the NCDE CS, and to doing its part of GYE objectives in the GYE CS (both of which encourage connectivity between areas).	FWP would renew its commitment to recovery and long-term demographic and genetic health of grizzly bears, statewide. FWP is committed to specific numeric goals in the GYE and NCDE as articulated in the 2 Conservation Strategies (CS). However, FWP considers that establishing a statewide numeric minimum, optimum, or maximum population objective would not be useful.

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Distribution objective	No explicit distributional objective would be identified. FWP would manage for core populations in the NCDE, GYE, and CYE. Current FWP plans “envision” (future) biological connections among these as well as to the BE. A goal of the NCDE CS is to provide opportunity for connectivity with other Ecosystems in Montana, but no explicit objective is articulated. FWP would continue to struggle with the meaning of “biologically suitable and socially acceptable.”	Sustaining grizzly bear recovery would continue to be an objective where recovery objectives have been met; achieving recovery would continue to be an objective where objectives have not yet been met. Statewide objectives would include a low density of grizzly bears between RZs (or DMAs where identified) that could provide connectivity among biological cores where feasible. Bears could be moved occasionally if natural connectivity is lacking. Maintaining grizzly bear presence would not be an objective where connectivity between cores is unlikely (i.e., east of NCDE and northeast of the GYE and their respective buffer areas).
Human safety	FWP would maintain a focus on human safety and conflict prevention	FWP would maintain a focus on human safety and conflict prevention
Role of private lands in grizzly bear conservation and management	No explicit direction would be articulated for private lands, but FWP would informally acknowledge the pivotal role private-landowner support would play in broader recovery and the significant contribution of private lands.	FWP would acknowledge the contribution that private lands make in providing habitat for grizzly bears beyond secure areas ¹ , and prioritize commensurate aid to landowners to minimize conflicts wherever they might occur. Where grizzly bear expansion does not contribute to connectivity, FWP would lean toward recommending removal of bears causing conflicts, although would not proactively remove bears that remained conflict free.

¹ We use the term “secure” here — as does ARM 12.9.1401 — as a general term meaning wild places where humans visit but don’t live, where extractive activities are limited spatially and temporally, where roads are primitive and do not dominate the landscape, and where wildlife generally lives with minimal interaction with people. No specific standards are implied.

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Conflict prevention	Focus would be on the NCDE, GYE, CYE and surrounding areas, including Sapphire, Flint, Highwoods and nearby ranges, and beginning in 2022, Bitterroot area.	FWP would continue its active conflict prevention program, prioritizing the same core areas as at present, as well as other areas where bear presence appears feasible and connectivity improved. FWP would continue to research emerging technologies to minimize human-bear conflict, and provide funding and in-kind support to independent research programs
Conflict response	Conflict bears would be controlled as per IGBC (1986), attempting to minimize number of bears removed. FWP would consider conservation as well as human safety and tolerance in addressing conflicts outside core recovery areas. Responses to conflicts would be generally more aggressive when they occur on our near private lands than in remote settings. FWP would not participate in moving federally listed bears causing conflict if captured outside of Recovery Zones.	FWP would continue its emphasis on helping reduce attractants that often precipitate conflicts. When necessary, bears involved in conflicts with people would be controlled as per accepted state and federal guidelines throughout western Montana. Where discretion is possible, FWP would attempt to minimize removal (moving bears or euthanizing them) where connectivity between core populations is likely (while still considering all options) but be quicker to recommend and/or implement removal where connectivity is unlikely. FWP would not participate in moving federally listed bears causing conflict if captured outside of Recovery Zones.
Public certainty vs. agency flexibility in conflict response	FWP would anticipate more flexibility than predictability	FWP would anticipate somewhat more predictability than is now the case because the balancing of the needs of bear and human populations would vary somewhat depending on the biological importance of bears in that area; however, FWP would not adopt a prescriptive approach that indicates “If a bear does x, FWP will always do y”

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Destinations of a bear captured in conflict settings when moving it away from the site is recommended and FWP is allowed to move it under state law (i.e., captured inside a RZ).	Bears causing conflict would be moved to where the probability of causing additional damage is low (and only to sites previously approved by the commission). Since 2009, 84% of destinations have been in FWP Region 1 (72% in Flathead County) Only bears captured within Recovery Zones could be moved by FWP under listed status.	Bears involved in conflicts with people would be moved to where the probability of causing additional conflict is low. However, if a non-conflict bear (non-target or preemptively trapped) animal is captured, FWP would consider moving it to an area outside of that RZ in which connectivity is an objective, the area is already mapped as Occupied Range (see Map 5), and a Commission approved release site exists. FWP would continue to engage with the commission to gain pre-approval of sites within Occupied Range to which grizzly bears could be moved. If delisted, bears causing conflict outside RZs would also be handled in this way.
Moving non-conflict grizzly bears (captured outside RZs) whose origin is uncertain	FWP would have no overall policy; decisions would be made on a case-by-case basis.	If the situation allows, these grizzly bears would be left in place. If moving the bear is required, it would be moved to a Commission approved release site that is within the most recently mapped "Occupied Range", as documented by FWP and/or USFWS researchers (Map 5), and which provides the best chance for the bear to find life requisites while being least likely to come into conflict with humans. The site selected for release need not be located within the presumptive "Ecosystem" of origin, particularly if releasing the bear at the selected site would advance the interests of connectivity. FWP would continue to engage with the commission to gain pre-approval of sites within Occupied Range to which grizzly bears could be moved but would not seek approval of release sites (and would not translocate bears) beyond the most-recently updated "Occupied Range."

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Orphaned cubs	Cubs orphaned after 1 September would be generally left in the wild. Bringing younger orphans to MWRC is discouraged and must follow the MWRC intake policy because i) acceptable permanent captive situations very difficult to find, and ii) re-release into the wild only permitted with pre-approved plan and release area.	Cubs orphaned after 1 September would be generally left in the wild. Bringing younger orphans to MWRC is discouraged and must follow the MWRC intake policy because i) acceptable permanent captive situations very difficult to find, and ii) re-release into the wild only permitted with pre-approved plan and release area.
Conflict management operational structure	FWP would continue supporting bear managers in Libby, Kalispell, Missoula, Choteau, Conrad, Anaconda, and Bozeman (w/ technicians in Red Lodge and Hamilton).	Building on current structure, FWP would prioritize bear specialist FTE where expanding population presents opportunities for connectivity while maintaining efforts in the 3 occupied core areas.
Prioritizing information, outreach, and communication efforts	Efforts aimed at people living, working, and recreating in grizzly bear habitat, targeting both new and long-term residents.	Prioritize efforts where expanding population presents opportunities for connectivity while maintaining efforts in the 3 occupied cores.
Population research and monitoring	As in NCDE and CYE Conservation Strategies.	FWP would continue monitoring, as committed to in Conservation Strategy documents, but would also prioritize finding ways to increase its understanding of bear status where connectivity will be important as well.
Resources required	No change from current.	Slightly more than current baseline.

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Hunting of grizzly bears: Values and beliefs	Goal would be to allow for limited regulated harvest upon delisting of bears, but no specific plans are in place. MCA and ARM consider the possibility of grizzly bear hunting if not Federally listed.	FWP would consider the possibility of tightly managed grizzly bear hunting if not federally listed, but the decision on whether to hunt or not hunt would rest with the Fish and Wildlife commission. FWP recognizes the strongly held views held by many members of the public.
A potential grizzly bear hunt: Functions, expectations, and regulations.	If delisted, hunting would be implemented within a scientifically sound framework that maintains a viable and self-sustaining population, and to garner additional public support.	If delisted and hunting is accepted as having a role, it could be used to limit expansion where connectivity is unlikely (particularly in central and eastern Montana), but would be designed to minimize any reduction of grizzly bear abundance where connectivity is prioritized. In no case would it compromise a viable and self-sustaining population.
Law enforcement	FWP would continue to work cooperatively with federal (while listed) and tribal authorities to deter poaching and apprehend poachers.	FWP would continue to work cooperatively with federal (while listed) and tribal authorities to deter poaching and apprehend poachers.
Recreational use	FWP would consider grizzly bear presence in all planning and decisions about recreating on FWP lands. FWP would continue or expand its program of educating hunters statewide about hunting safely in grizzly bear country.	FWP would consider grizzly bear presence in all planning and decisions about recreating on FWP lands. FWP would continue or expand its program of educating hunters statewide about hunting safely in grizzly bear country.

Issue	A. No action (status quo)	B. FWP Preferred
Motorized access management	FWP would support land management agencies' policies previously agreed to as part of Conservation Strategies. Elsewhere, FWP would continue existing policy of avoiding open road densities exceeding 1 mi/mi ² on lands it owns or manages. FWP would take the view that, outside of areas with specific road density standards, grizzly bears can coexist with humans in areas with moderate amounts of motorized access if human attractants are well managed, conflicts minimized, and mortality of grizzly bears sufficiently low.	FWP would support land management agencies' policies previously agreed to as part of Conservation Strategies. Elsewhere, FWP would continue existing policy of avoiding open road densities exceeding 1 mi/mi ² on lands it owns or manages. FWP would take the view that, outside of areas with specific road density standards, grizzly bears can coexist with humans in areas with moderate amounts of motorized access if human attractants are well managed, conflicts minimized, and mortality of grizzly bears is sufficiently low.
Engagement with community groups	FWP would, as currently, continue informal communication and cooperation with community groups.	FWP would stand ready to adopt the leading role in grizzly bear management but would also acknowledge that success will depend on actions taken by citizens working individually or collaboratively. While not abdicating its important role, FWP would actively encourage bottom-up, community-based efforts to resolve problems in ways that work locally while still respecting the overall values expressed in national or state laws and regulations.
Climate change	FWP would not explicitly consider climate change as part of its grizzly bear management.	FWP would consider the high likelihood that the non-denning season will lengthen with time (probably increasing the likelihood of human-bear conflict, particularly in autumn) as it allocates resources or suggests regulations. FWP would continue to monitor grizzly bear populations as they respond to variation in food resources in response to climate change.

What are some of the main issues that are identified in the EIS, and can you tell me a bit about each of them?

Two alternatives were analyzed under the EIS. Alternative 1 is the “No Action” alternative, which forms the baseline from which the potential impacts of the proposed plan can be measured and Alternative 2 is approval of the proposed plan. Based on the requirements of ARM 12.2.436, Preparation and Contents of Draft Environmental Impact Statements and internal agency scoping and comments received during scoping, FWP identified 19 resources for detailed assessment in this EIS. Impacts of the proposed Statewide Grizzly Bear Management Plan on these resources are summarized in the table below.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats (DEIS Section 3.2)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bear management would look mostly the same except that delisted grizzly bears in conflict outside of secure core habitat areas and outside of connectivity areas would be assigned a lower management priority and would likely be lethally removed at a more frequent rate. Bears in these areas are not critical to reaching or maintaining recovery. There may be short-term, minor, beneficial secondary and cumulative beneficial impacts from increased transparency of how bears outside of recovery areas are to be managed. The continued conservation of habitat for grizzly bears is beneficial to a variety of species. Humans in areas of expanded grizzly bear presence may need to adjust their lifestyles.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution (DEIS Section 3.3)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no direct impacts on water quality, quantity, and distribution in the areas where they occur. Grizzly bear management can have short-term, negligible, beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts to aquatic life and habitats because habitat management for grizzly bears limits human uses and disturbance of habitats. Management to limit open road densities and new developments in primary conservation areas (PCAs) provide benefits for a diversity of fish and wildlife and their habitat, including water quality and water quantity.
Geology; Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture (DEIS Section 3.4)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts. - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no impact on geology, soil quality, stability, and moisture. in the areas where they occur. Grizzly bear management can have short-term, negligible, beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts to habitats because habitat management for grizzly bears limits human uses and disturbance of habitats. Management to limit open road densities and new developments in PCAs provide benefits for a diversity of fish and wildlife and their habitat, including soil quality, stability and moisture.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality (DEIS Section 3.5)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no impact on vegetation cover, quantity, and quality in the areas where they occur. Grizzly bear management can have short-term, negligible, beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts to habitats because habitat management for grizzly bears limits human uses and disturbance of habitats. Management to limit open road densities and new developments in PCAs provide benefits for a diversity of fish and wildlife and their habitat, including vegetation cover, quantity and quality.
Aesthetics (DEIS Section 3.6)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - some people value the potential to view grizzly bears in the wild or knowing they are there. Under this alternative, that opportunity will continue, and potentially increase in connectivity areas. There would be short-term, negligible, adverse and/or beneficial secondary impacts and short-term, minor, adverse and/or beneficial cumulative impacts from the continued presence of grizzly bears. Conservation of grizzly bears and their habitat, particularly in the PCAs, will benefit multiple species and landscapes which contribute to the aesthetics of the analysis area. FWP decisions or actions made within the sideboards of the statewide plan could impact aesthetics for some people.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Air Quality (DEIS Section 3.7)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no impact on air quality in the areas where they occur. There will be short-term, negligible, beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts associated with ongoing protection of affected lands from development and related human impacts within certain segments of the analysis area. Conservation of grizzly bears and their habitat, particularly in the PCAs, will benefit multiple species and landscapes which will be beneficial to air quality of the analysis area.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Unique, Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources (DEIS Section 3.8)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will be managed as protected wildlife at levels sufficient to maintain recovered populations. This alternative clarifies that in areas where grizzly bears contribute to long-term persistence and connectivity, FWP would make all reasonable efforts to recommend (or implement, if appropriate) actions that minimize bear removal. Where that likelihood is low, grizzly bear presence would not be an objective, and FWP would be relatively quick to recommend (or implement, if appropriate) control when conflicts arise. There would be short-term, negligible, beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts from the conservation of grizzly bears and their habitat, that benefits unique, endangered, fragile or limited resources. Conservation of grizzly bears and their habitat, particularly in the PCAs, will benefit multiple species and landscapes, including any unique, endangered, fragile or limited environmental resources located in affected areas.
Historical and Archaeological Sites (DEIS Section 3.9)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no impact on historical or archaeological sites. There would be no secondary impacts. Short-term, negligible, beneficial cumulative impacts may result from commitments to limit development in the PCAs. This commitment to no new developments on the public lands in these areas will help limit potential disturbance to any historical and archaeological sites located within the affected areas.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Energy (DEIS Section 3.10)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct, secondary or cumulative impacts -grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no impact on energy use. Their presence may impact energy development if they occur in an area where energy development is proposed, especially if they remain listed under the ESA. Energy developers would have to consult with the USFWS to minimize and mitigate take.
Social Structures and Mores (DEIS Section 3.11)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	There could be short-term, minor direct, secondary and cumulative impacts, beneficial and/or adverse. Some impacts could be short-term, significant adverse or beneficial, to particular individuals depending on their beliefs and values. Adjustments to social structures and mores will be necessary under either alternative in areas where grizzly bears occur and as grizzly bear distribution expands. Recreationists, landowners, livestock producers may need to adjust lifestyles to co-exist with grizzly bears. Increased clarity on the management of grizzly bears of lower biological importance could impact individuals depending on their beliefs.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity (DEIS Section 3.12)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	Grizzly bears are considered sacred by many affected Native American tribes. This alternative will result in direct and cumulative impacts to tribal cultures by ensuring the sacred grizzly bear remains at recovered levels and are able to connect with cornerstone areas. However, tribes have gone on record as opposing sport hunting of grizzly bears, which could be allowed if the grizzly bear is delisted. In contrast, many Montana residents advocate for hunting grizzly bears. Therefore, there would be short-term, negligible direct impacts to cultural uniqueness and diversity. There would be short-term, minor to significant cumulative impacts. These impacts will vary by individuals depending on their beliefs.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities (DEIS Section 3.13)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - this alternative doesn't restrict access to recreational and wilderness activities. Grizzly bears occur in many areas where humans recreate, including hiking, camping, fishing and hunting. Anyone living in or visiting grizzly country must accept the costs and risk of grizzlies on the landscape. There would be short-term, minor, adverse and/or beneficial, secondary and cumulative impacts on access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities. Some impacts could be short-term and significant to particular individuals depending on their beliefs and values. Depending on a recreationists experience and comfort level their access to quality recreational and wilderness activities could be limited by their choice not to recreate in areas occupied by grizzlies. Expanded distribution in connectivity areas will increase the area where grizzly bears overlap with recreationists, resulting in potential impacts to those recreationist's experience. Implementation of the statewide plan could be viewed by the USFWS as a commitment to adequate regulatory mechanisms, leading to federal delisting of the grizzly bear. Implementation of a hunting season for delisted grizzly bears could have short-term significant impacts to both advocates and proponents of grizzly bear hunting.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue (DEIS Section 3.14)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no direct impact on local and state tax base and tax revenue. There would be no secondary impacts but there would be short-term, minor, adverse and/or beneficial cumulative impacts. Wildlife viewing and appreciation can bring visitors to Montana, but wildlife can also decrease profitability and tolerance of local agricultural businesses, particularly livestock operations. The number of livestock losses could increase if bears move farther outside of their cornerstone areas onto private agricultural lands. Implementation of the statewide plan could be viewed by the USFWS as a commitment to adequate regulatory mechanisms, leading to federal delisting of the grizzly bear. Implementation of a hunting season for delisted grizzly bears could lead to increased revenue in communities where bear hunters visit restaurants and motels.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Agricultural, Industrial, or commercial Production (DEIS Section 3.15)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no direct impact on production. There would be short-term, minor, adverse and/or beneficial secondary and cumulative impacts on agricultural, industrial or commercial production. Livestock losses averaged 92 depredations per year during 2013-2020. The number of losses could increase if bears move farther outside of their cornerstone areas onto private agricultural lands or federal grazing allotments. More aggressive response to livestock conflicts in areas where bears don't connect cornerstone areas could reduce livestock conflicts in those areas. Grizzly bear presence may impact industrial and commercial activity if bears occur in an area where industrial or commercial development is proposed, especially if they remain listed under the ESA. Developers would have to consult with the USFWS to minimize and mitigate take. For some that would preclude development.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Human Health (DEIS Section 3.16)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no direct impact on production. There would be no secondary impacts to human health. There would be short-term minor, adverse and/or beneficial, cumulative impacts on human health. There could be short-term significant, adverse and/or beneficial, impacts to particular individuals depending on their beliefs and values related to the risk grizzly bears pose to human safety. Bear aware messaging and living in bear country trainings would continue to be a focus of FWP education programs to limit negative encounters between bears and humans. As grizzly bear numbers and distribution increase concurrent with human population increases and increased activity in grizzly bear habitat, there will be increases in the number of human-grizzly bear encounters.
Quantity and Distribution of Employment (DEIS Section 3.17)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	
Distribution and Density of Population and Housing (DEIS Section 3.18)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of the existing area.	No direct impacts - grizzly bears will continue to inhabit the analysis area at low density and will have no direct impact on population and housing. There would be no secondary impacts and short-term negligible, adverse and/or beneficial, cumulative impacts. Conservation of grizzly bears and their habitat, particularly in the PCAs, has limited development and thus employment and the need for housing in some cases. Some natural resource industries such as timber have been impacted by presence of federally protected grizzly bears due to limitations on take, resulting in loss of employment in related jobs. This alternative would support delisting which could result in less impact on natural resource industries. Maintenance of existing bear management specialists and the possibility of adding more could impact the distribution and density of population and housing.

Resource	Alternative 1 - No Action	Alternative 2 - Proposed Action
Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals (DEIS Section 3.19)	No impacts - The No Action Alternative would not change the status of any existing plans or goals.	No direct, secondary or cumulative impacts on locally adopted environmental plans and goals. The adoption and implementation of the statewide plan would not influence or change other plans or goals of other plans.

What about hunting?

Hunting is one potential management tool for grizzly bears, if delisted. While the draft plan and EIS identifies hunting as a management option, the plan does not describe in detail what hunting would look like. That would require a separate public process with opportunities for public inputs. That said, the plan provides background on the issue of hunting (including validating disparate views), as well as additional specificity on what various potential hunting proposals might look like should any grizzly bear populations in Montana be delisted in the near future.

Does the plan and/or EIS incorporate the recommendations of the Grizzly Bear Advisory Committee (GBAC)

The draft plan and EIS were developed with a full understanding and appreciation of the GBAC's excellent work and recommendations, and it summarizes its most important conclusions as context. The GBAC's task was not to write a management plan or the associated EIS; thus, it is not possible to draw direct lines of connection between their recommendations and the policies drafted in this plan or the resources analyzed in the Impact Analysis of the EIS. FWP also recognizes that voices other than those represented in the GBAC deserve to be heard. That said, the policies suggested in the draft plan and resources analyzed in the EIS are broadly consistent with the Vision and Guiding Principles provided by the GBAC.

Does the plan address how bears will be managed outside of federal recovery zones?

Yes, while acknowledging that no situation is the same and discretion is needed within individual decisions.