



MONTANA FISH AND WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

THE **OUTSIDE** IS IN US ALL.

Meeting Date: October 28, 2021

Agenda Item: Grizzly Bear Relocation Sites

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 20 minutes

Background: SB337, passed by the 2021 legislature, requires the Fish and Wildlife Commission to approve all sites where grizzly bears will be relocated by FWP. FWP staff, working with land management agencies, have assembled a list of potential release sites in each of the Cabinet-Yaak, Northern Continental Divide, and Greater Yellowstone ecosystems. All proposed relocation sites are located within established occupied grizzly bear habitat, and are located both inside and outside of designated recovery zones. Per SB337, FWP will not relocate a grizzly bear that is in conflict that is captured outside of a designated recovery zone, although the US Fish and Wildlife Service or their agents may. The primary reason for relocating a bear is to move it out of conflict or potential conflict. Bears may also be relocated for population augmentation purposes such as in the Cabinet-Yaak, or for the purpose of genetic exchange. While there are many more sites identified than will be used, it is important to have many alternatives as specific sites may not be available at the time a bear needs to be relocated, so alternatives are important. The list of potential sites includes a mix of sites that have been used historically, and new sites.

Public Involvement Process & Results: FWP staff in each region met with their land management agency counterparts to identify sites and sideboards associated with those sites (e.g., time of year). Many of the sites have been used historically and may be familiar to some of the public. The public will be able to review and comment on sites approved by the Commission at their October meeting. The list of release sites will be finalized in December and those approved sites will be available starting in 2022.

Alternatives and Analysis: Alternatives include modifying the list of approved sites by increasing or decreasing the number of relocation sites, or limiting the time for which the sites are approved before needing to be reapproved.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends the Commission approve the list of grizzly bear relocation sites listed in the attached maps and spreadsheets for at least a 5-year period.

Proposed Motion: I move the commission approve the proposed grizzly bear relocation sites as depicted in accompanying maps and spreadsheets for public comment.