

# Survey of Montanans Regarding Grizzly Bears and their Management

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# Comprehensive survey about grizzly bears and their management

- ▶ Mailed household survey included 41 questions
- ▶ Sent to 5350 addresses November 2019 – January 2020
- ▶ 1783 completed and returned (688 undeliverable)
- ▶ 38% reporting rate ( $\pm$  3.5% confidence interval)
- ▶ Survey weighting was used to ensure representative results
- ▶ This presentation reports statewide results
- ▶ Additional analyses ongoing





# Results

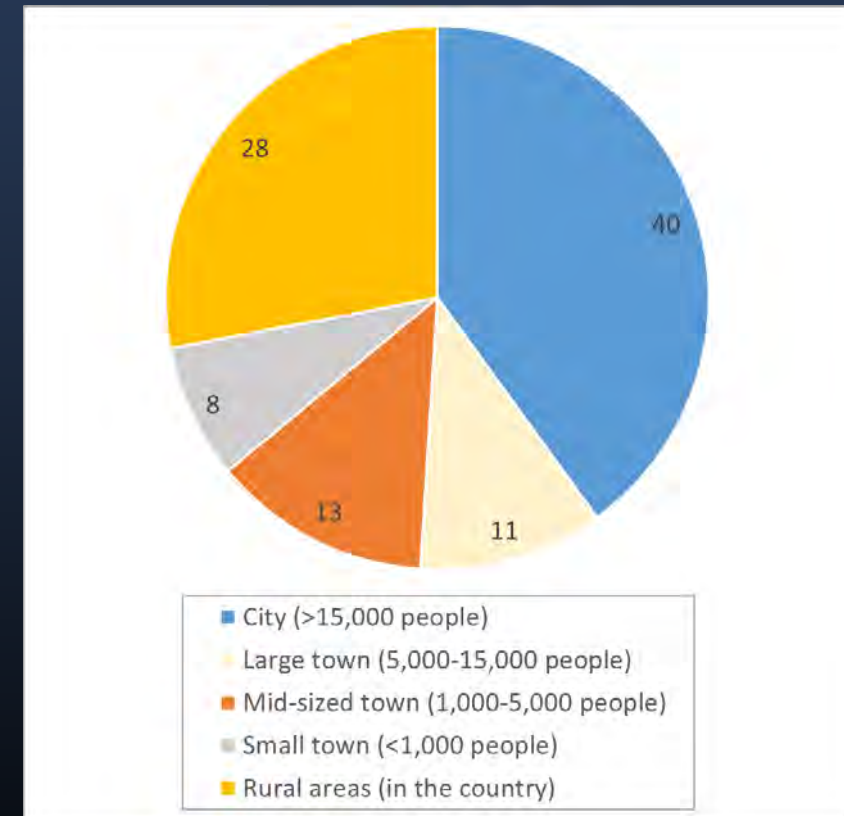
- Characteristics of Montanans, their perceived knowledge and proximity to grizzly bears



# Characteristics of Surveyed Montanans

- ▶ Age: 19-97 years old, average = 50
- ▶ Gender:
  - 49% male
  - 50% female
  - 1% other or not disclosed
- ▶ Industry:
  - 21% agriculture
  - 12% other outdoor industry
  - 6% other industry affected by grizzly bears
- ▶ Participation in outdoor activities:
  - 93% outdoor recreation
  - 53% hunting

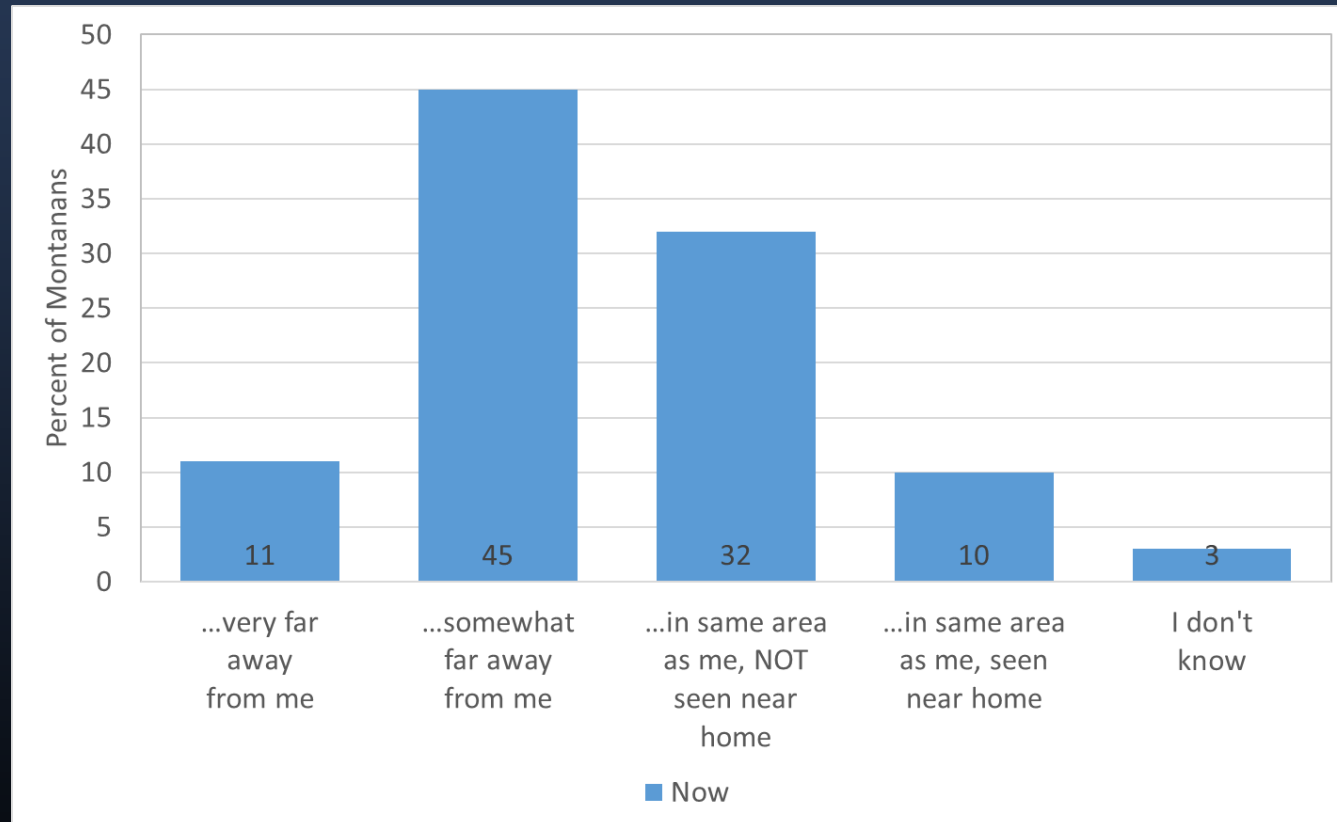
*How would you characterize where you live?*



# Reported experience and proximity to grizzly bears

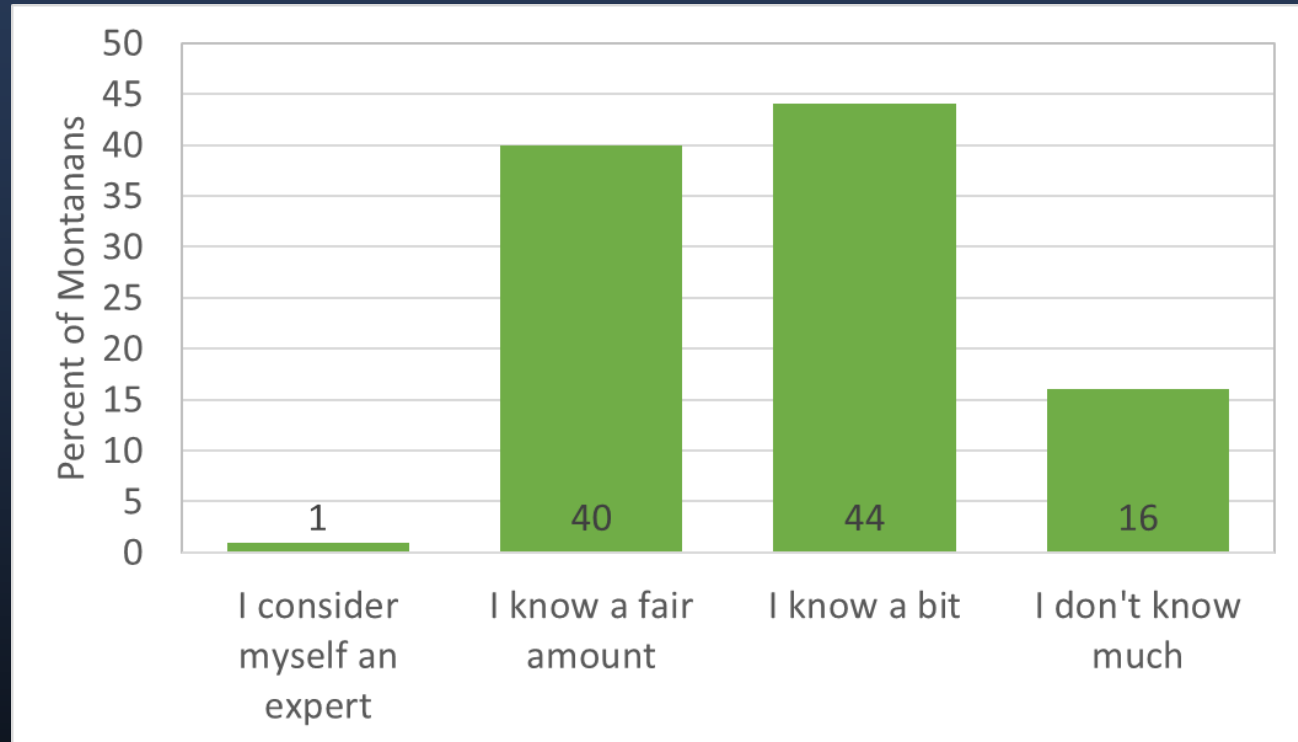
- ▶ 68% of Montanans reported they have *watched a grizzly bear from afar*
- ▶ 48% reported they have *seen a grizzly from outside a vehicle*

▶ *Grizzly bears live...*



# Most Montanans reported some knowledge about grizzly bears

- *How would you describe your knowledge of grizzly bears in Montana?*





# Results

- Characteristics of Montanans, their perceived knowledge and proximity to grizzly bears
- General attitudes and emotional reactions





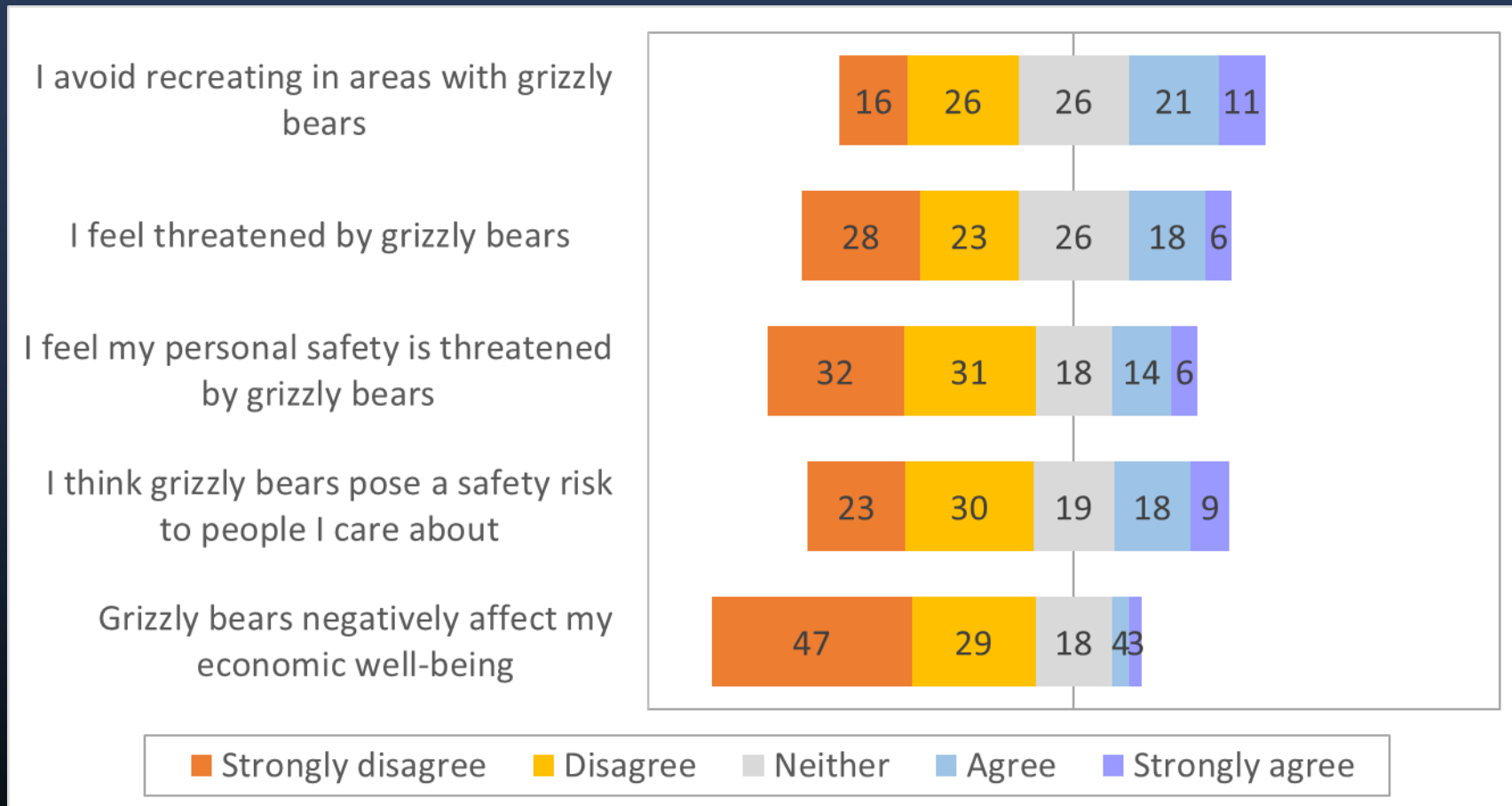
# Montanans showed positive attitudes about grizzly bears

- ▶ *Grizzly bears have a right to exist in Montana* (92% agreed/strongly agreed)
- ▶ *Grizzly bears are beautiful animals* (89% agreed/strongly agreed)
- ▶ *Grizzly bears are part of what makes Montana special* (85% agreed/strongly agreed)
- ▶ *It is important to maintain a self-sustaining grizzly bear population in MT* (75% agreed/strongly agreed)



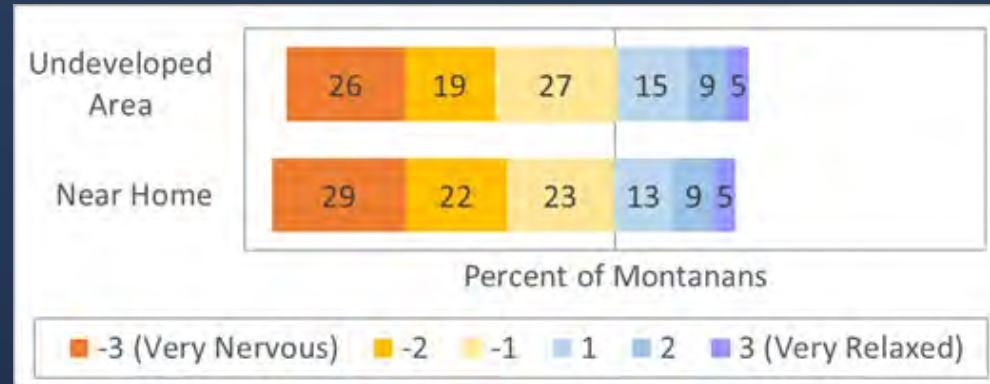


# Views more mixed about grizzly bear-human relationships

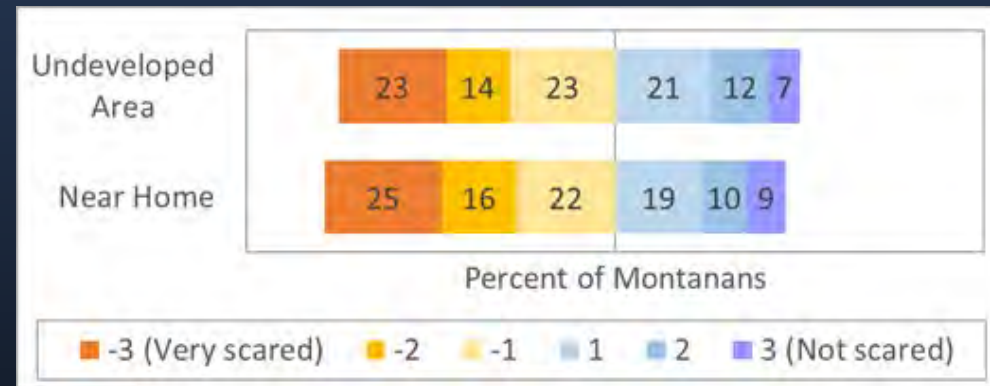


# A majority of Montanans acknowledged nervousness and fear

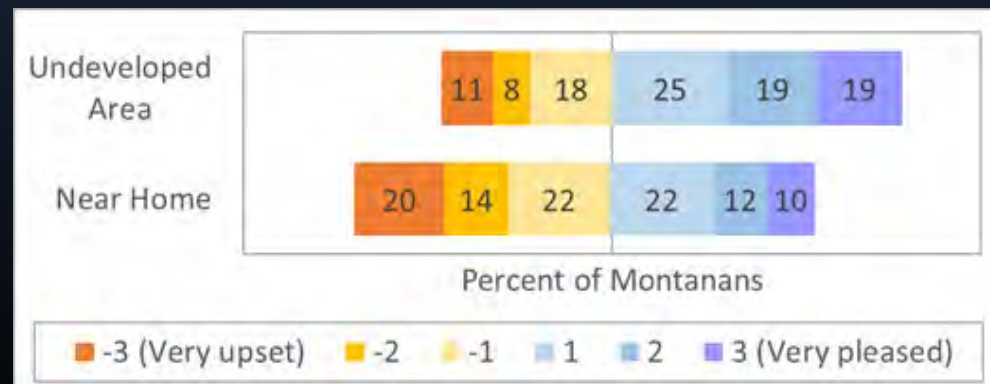
*How would you feel if you were on a hike and saw a grizzly bear...*



*Nervous versus Relaxed*



*Scared versus Not Scared*



*Upset versus Pleased*



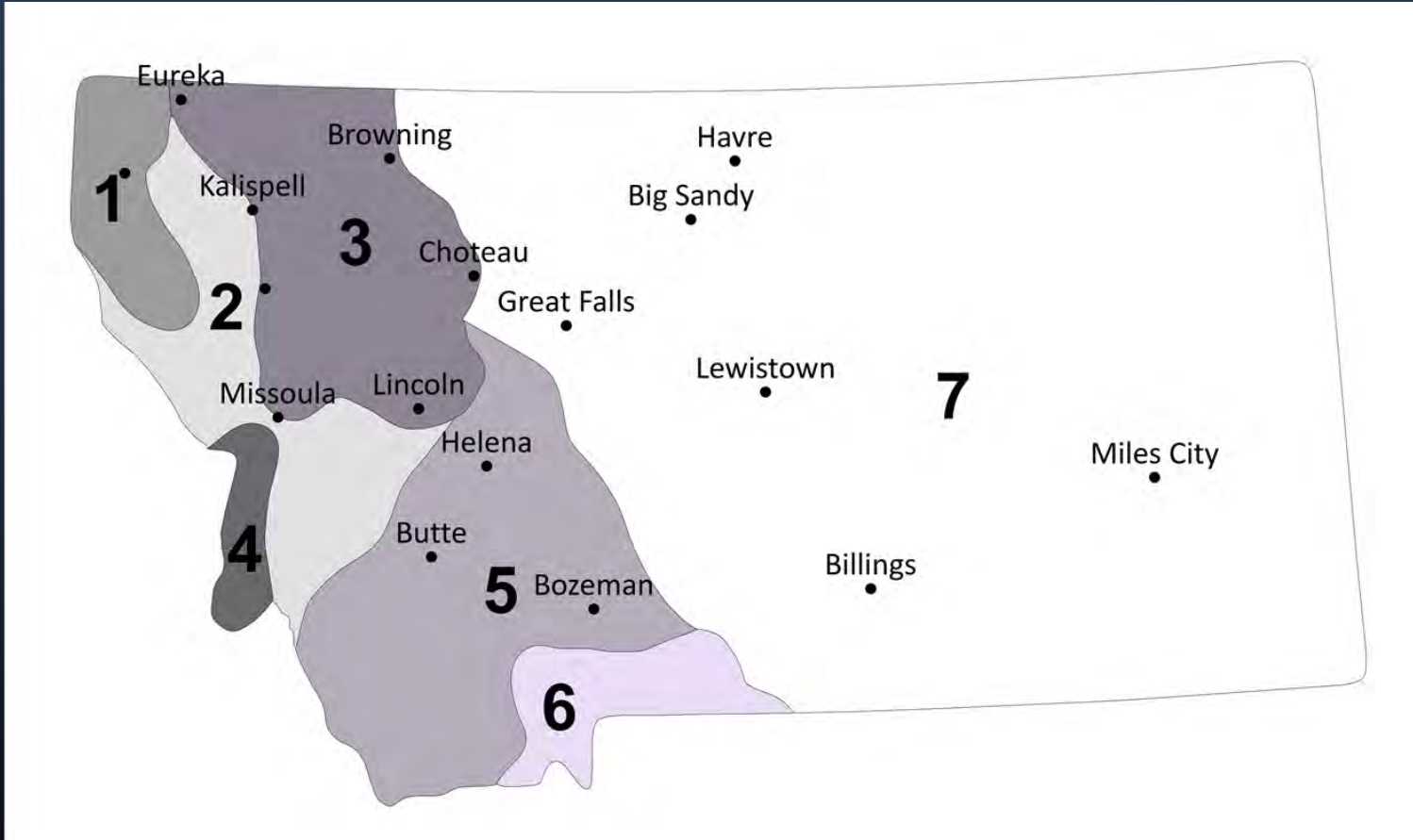
# Results

- Characteristics of Montanans, their perceived knowledge and proximity to grizzly bears
- General attitudes and emotional reactions
- Perceptions of grizzly bear numbers and their distribution



# Views on size of populations

- *The number (or population) of grizzly bears is...too low...too high...right size now*

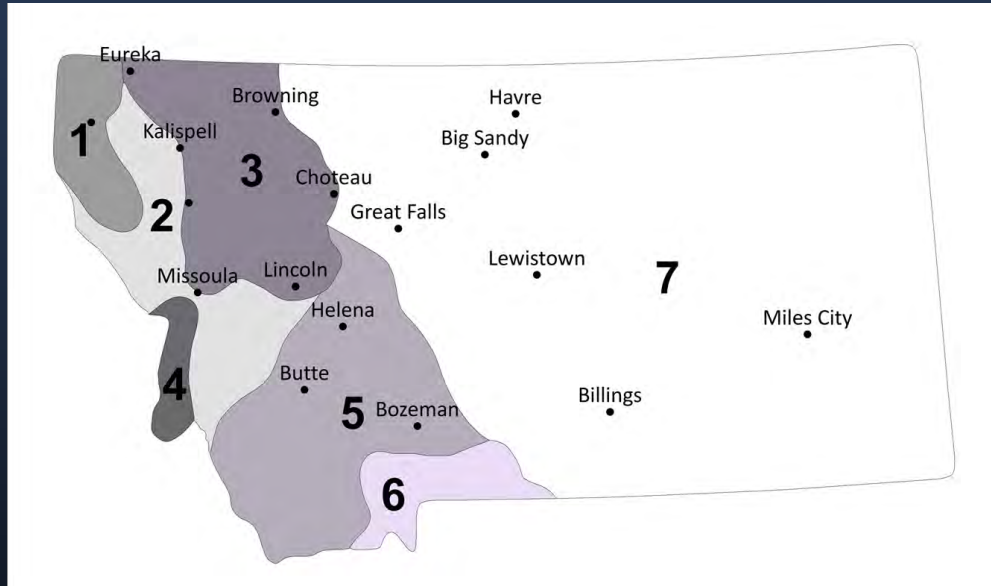


- In 7 mapped areas
- *...in Montana*
- *...where I live*

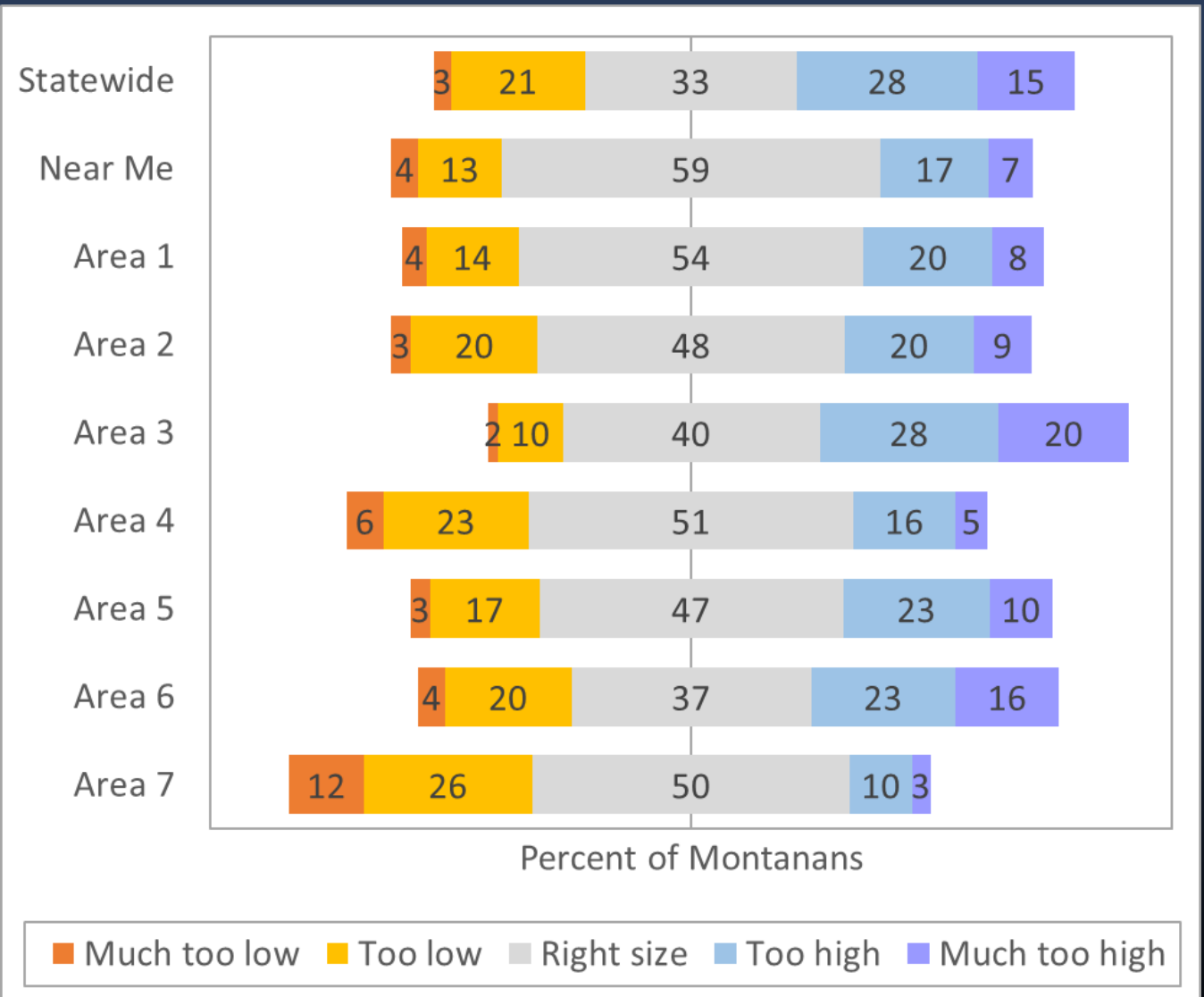


# Mixed (and noncommittal) views on size of populations

- *The number (or population) of grizzly bears is...*

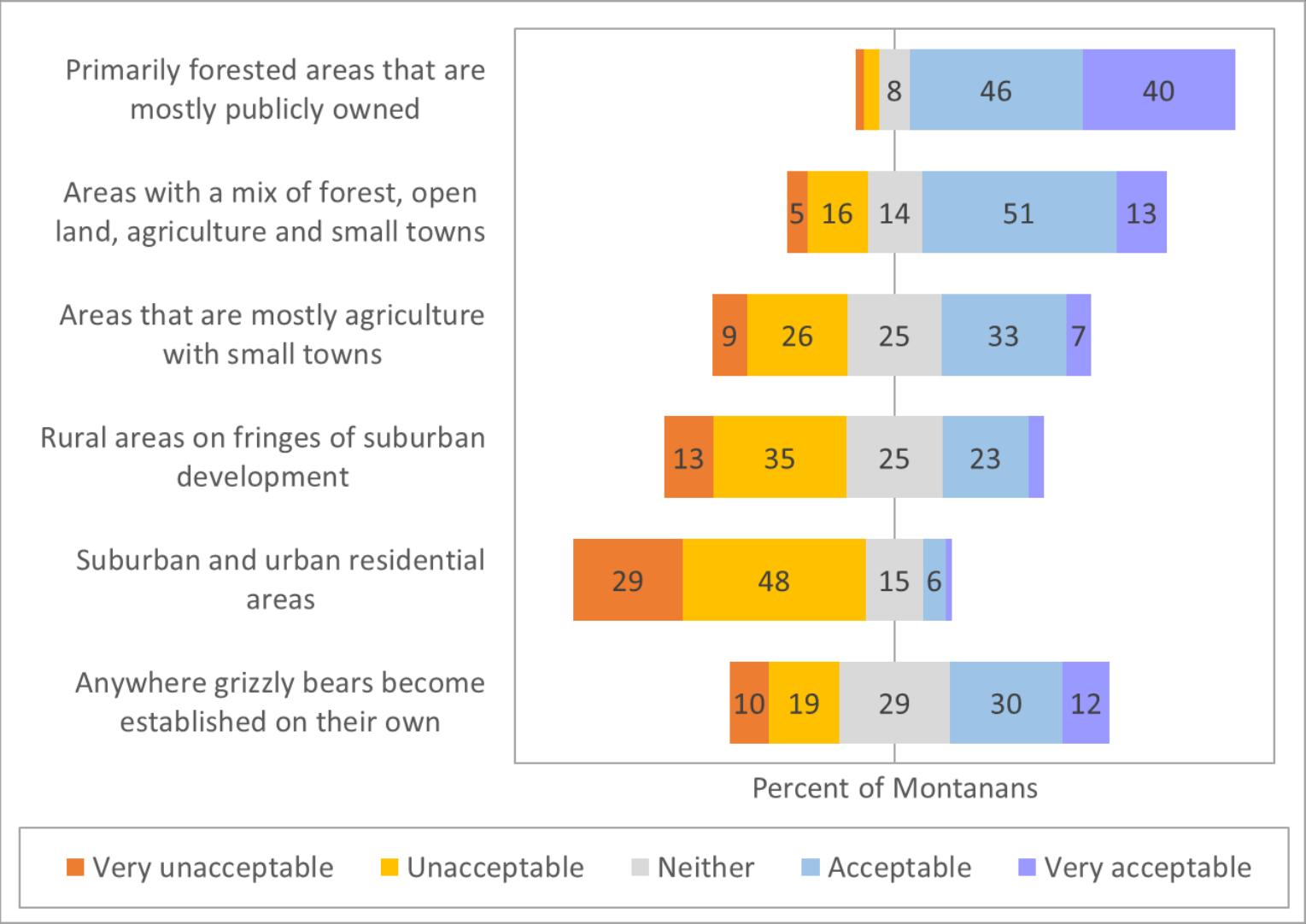


Note: 37-65% of responses = *I don't know*



# Acceptance of bears declines with increasing human presence

*How acceptable or unacceptable is it to you to have grizzly bears living in the following areas in Montana?*



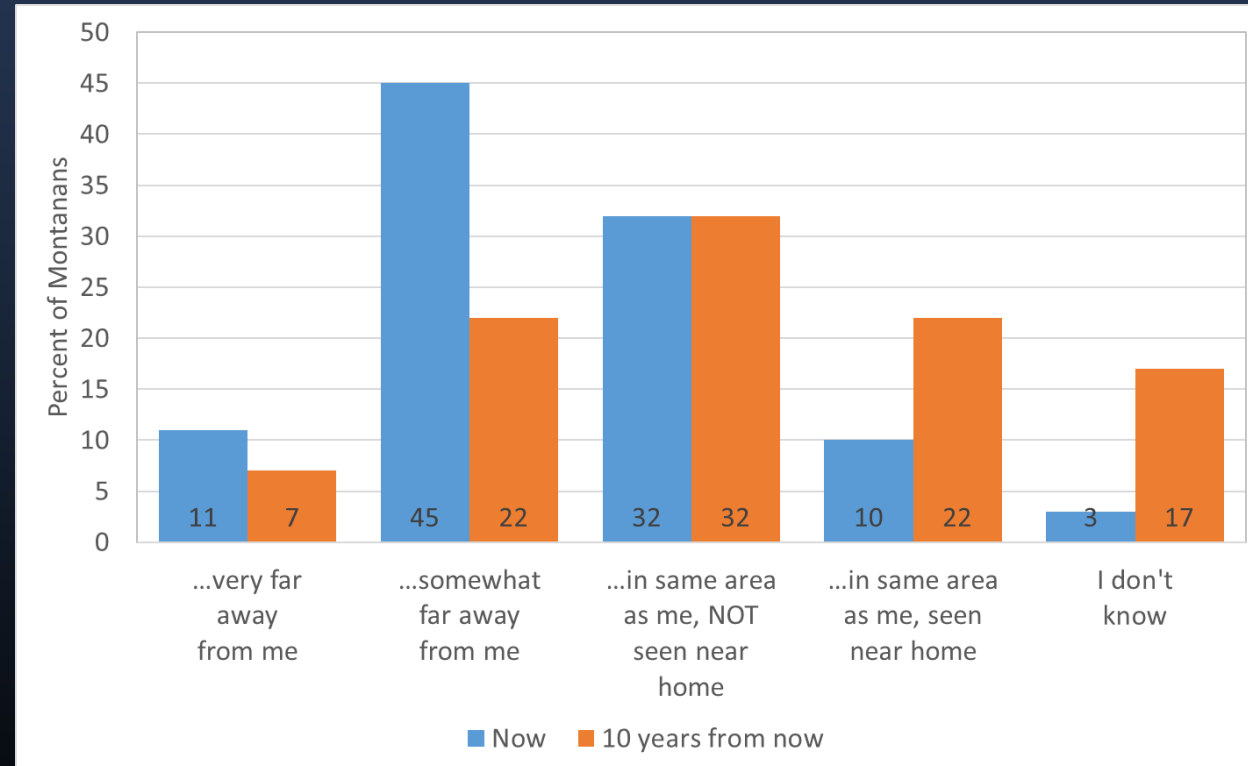
Note: 5-9% of responses = *I don't know*



# Many Montanans perceive expansion of grizzly bear populations

- ▶ A majority (58%) of Montanans agreed/agreed strongly with the statement that '*I think grizzly bears are expanding naturally*'
  - Only 12% disagreed/disagreed strongly with that statement

## ▶ *Grizzly bears live...*



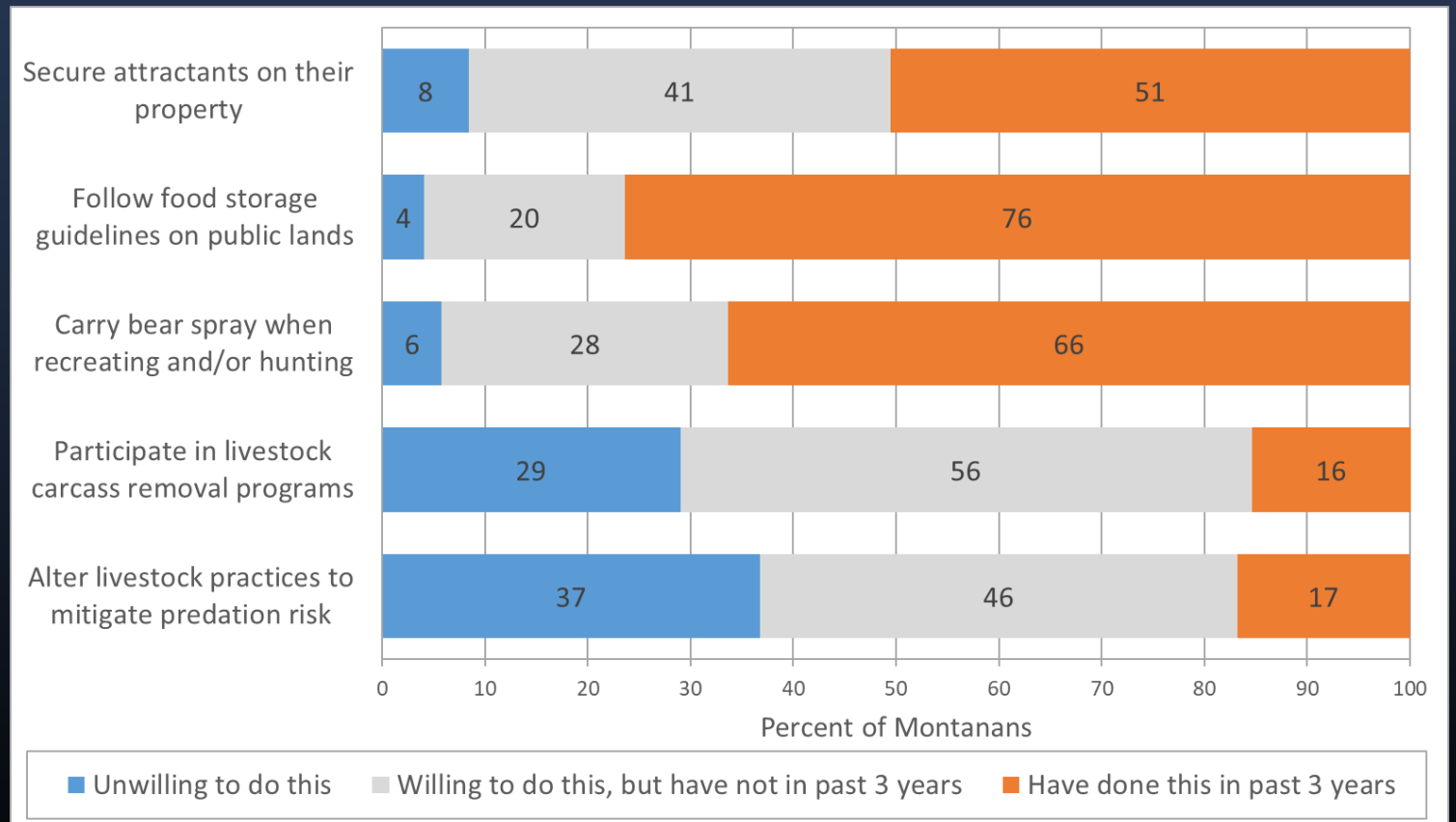
# Results

- Characteristics of Montanans, their perceived knowledge and proximity to grizzly bears
- General attitudes and emotional reactions
- Perceptions of grizzly bear numbers and their distribution
- Opinions about management of grizzly bear populations and bear-human conflict



# Moderate to high willingness to take actions

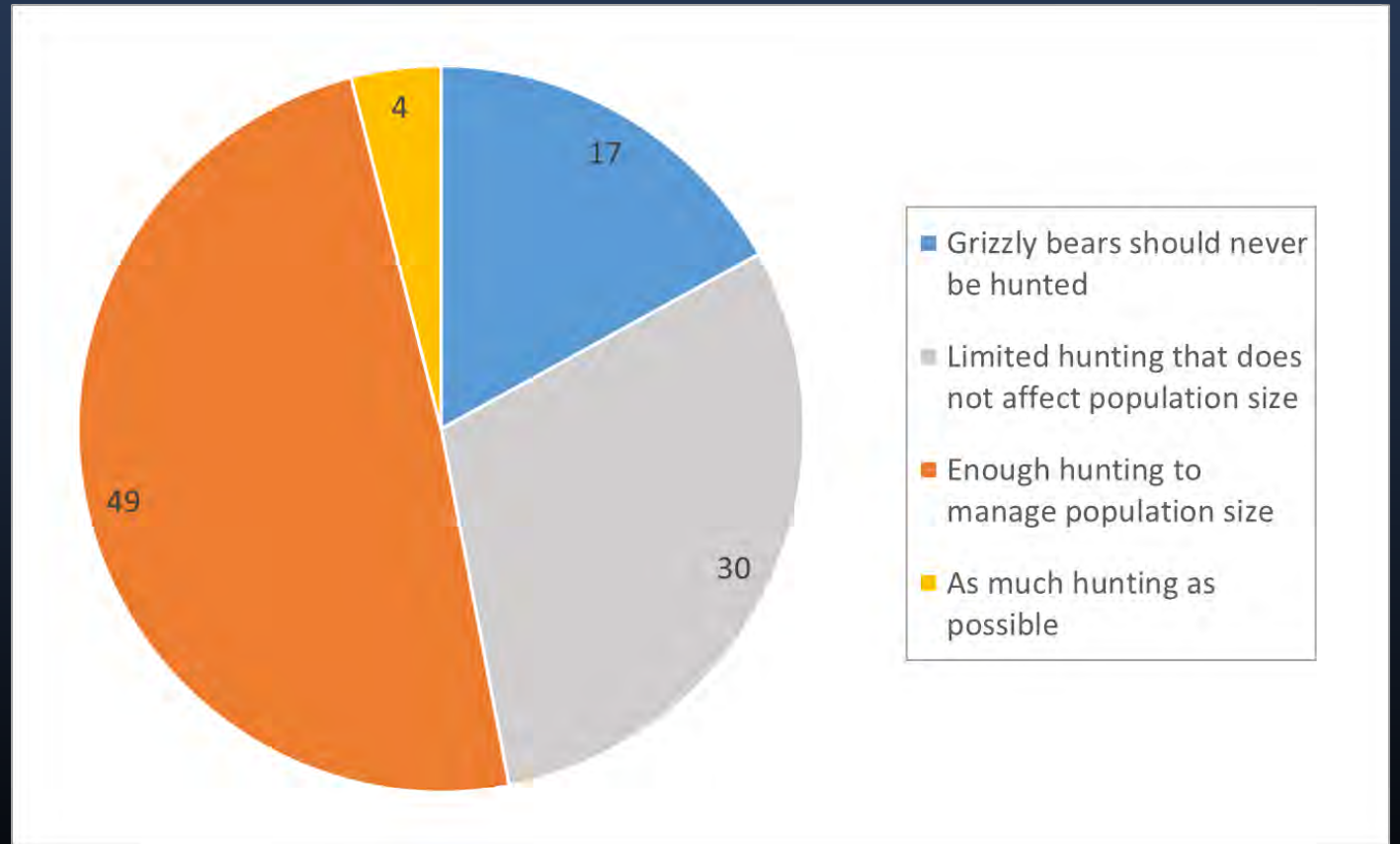
- ▶ A majority (60%) of Montanans agreed/agreed strongly that *people should learn to live with grizzly bears near their home*
  - Still, 20% disagreed/disagreed strongly with the statement
- ▶ Indicate *previous actions or willingness to take actions to reduce potential for grizzly bear-human conflict...*





# High support for potential grizzly bear hunting

- ▶ A majority (61%) of Montanans agreed/agreed strongly that *people should have the opportunity to hunt grizzly bears as long as their population can withstand the pressure*
  - 24% disagreed/disagreed strongly with the statement
- ▶ *What statement best reflects your views toward a potential grizzly bear hunting season?*



# Results

- Characteristics of Montanans, their perceived knowledge and proximity to grizzly bears
- General attitudes and emotional reactions
- Perceptions of grizzly bear numbers and their distribution
- Opinions about management of grizzly bear populations and bear-human conflict
- Summary of key findings







# Advantages

- ✓ High support for grizzly bears: beautiful, special, sustainable
- ✓ Highly acceptable on public landscapes
- ✓ People tend to be pleased to see them, even if they are nervous and scared
- ✓ Almost all Montanans have or are willing to follow food storage orders and carry bear spray



# Challenges

- ✓ Many felt threatened by bears
- ✓ Lower levels of acceptance in areas of human occupancy and agricultural use
- ✓ Many people believe that bear populations are the 'right size now' irrespective of area
- ✓ Fewer people were willing to take actions on their own property than on 'wilder' landscapes







# Thank you

Reports will be available on UM website soon

