



North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration

May 2024



Overview

- EIS and ROD update
- 10(j) rule
- Next steps



EIS Process

- NPS and FWS initiated an EIS process in November 2022 to "evaluate various approaches for the restoration of a grizzly bear population to the NCE"
- Simultaneous rulemaking by FWS consider designating population as experimental under section 10(j) of ESA



EIS Process

Since last subcommittee meeting

- Public comment period on draft EIS and proposed 10(j) rule
 - ~12,700 comments received on draft EIS
 - [Full set available on EIS project website](#)
 - ~12,200 comments received on proposed 10(j) rule
 - [Full set available on regulations.gov](#)



EIS Process

Since last subcommittee meeting

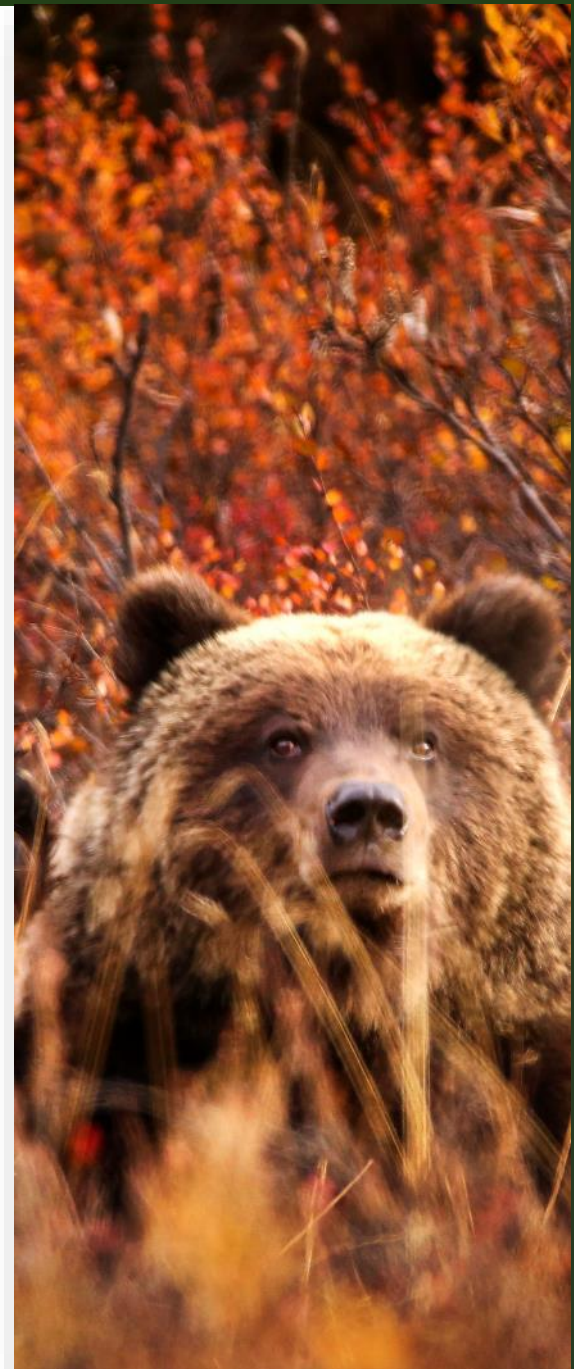
- Common themes:
 - Human safety concerns
 - Concern over livestock, agriculture
 - Use of lethal take, welfare of bears
- Responses to comments, grouped by concern, in Appendix E (page 307) of final EIS and in the final 10(j) rule



EIS Process

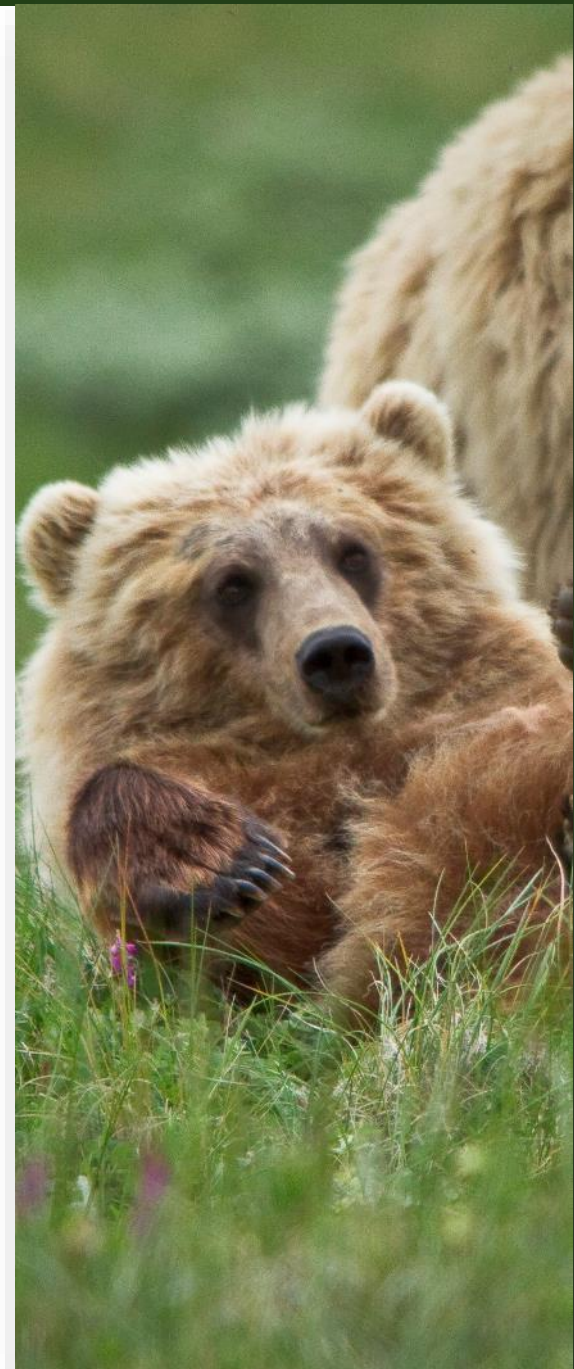
Since last subcommittee meeting

- During winter 2023- 2024, review of the ~25,000 public comments
- Final EIS released on March 21



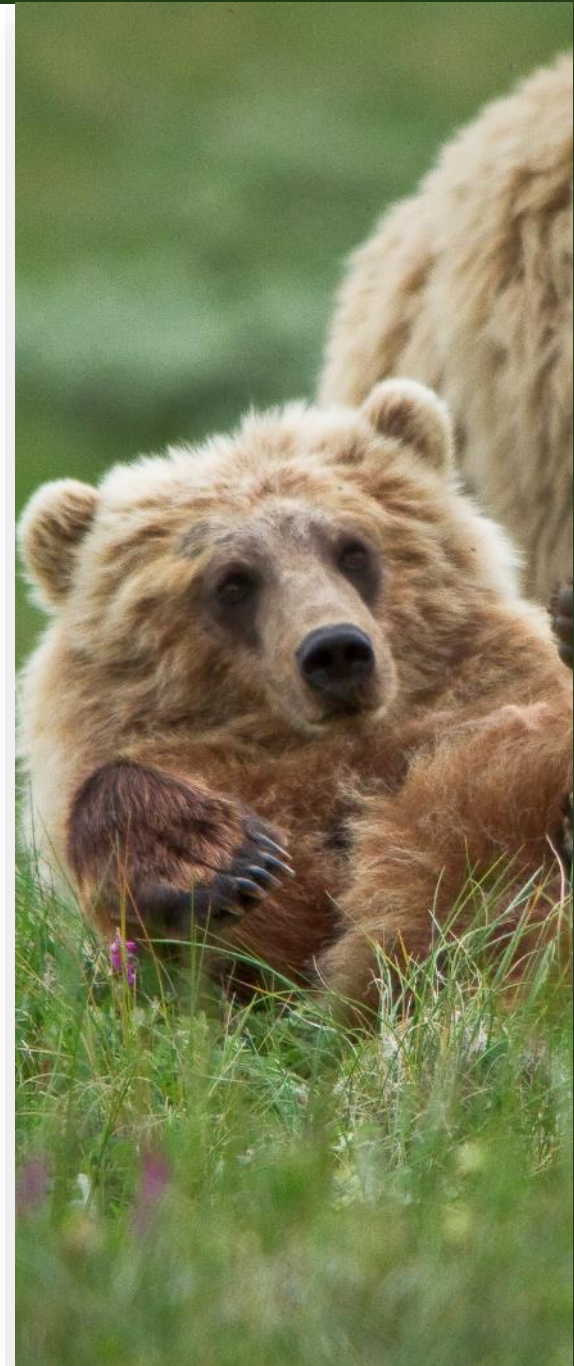
Record of Decision

- Announced April 25
- Considered conclusion of EIS process
- Selection of “Alternative C”, involving the active restoration of grizzly bears under a 10(j) experimental population designation



Record of Decision

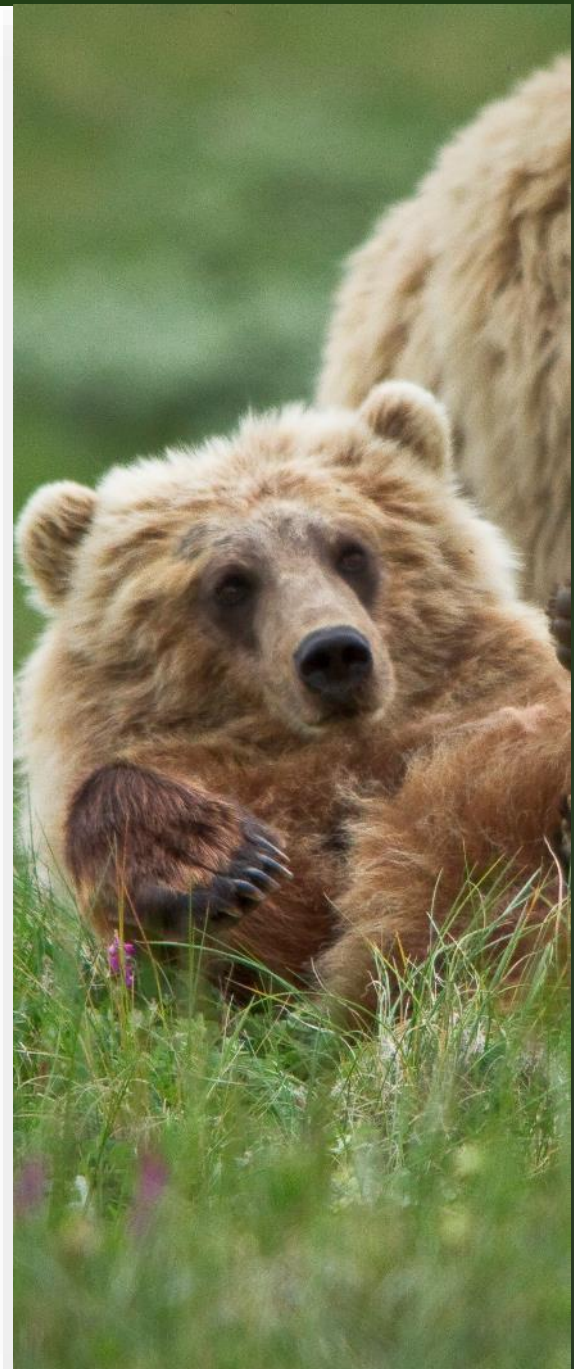
- Translocation of grizzly bears to the NCE from other ecosystems
- Several bears per year for 5-10 years to reach initial population of 25 bears
- Source populations from similar food economies
 - Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem
 - Interior British Columbia
 - Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem



Record of Decision

- Subadult bears, 2-5 years old
- Without a history of conflict
- All translocated bears will be radio collared

- Population of 200 bears expected within 60 to 100 years



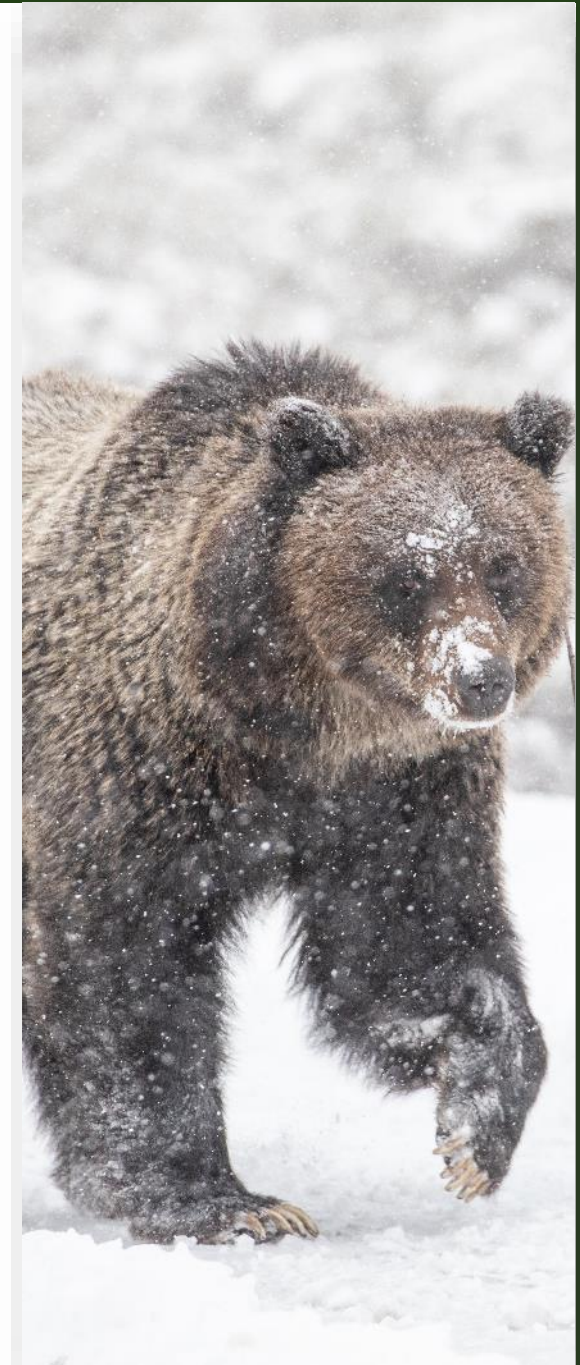
Release Sites

Wilderness areas on NPS or USFS lands, including areas within the Stephen Mather, Pasayten, and Glacier Peak wilderness areas



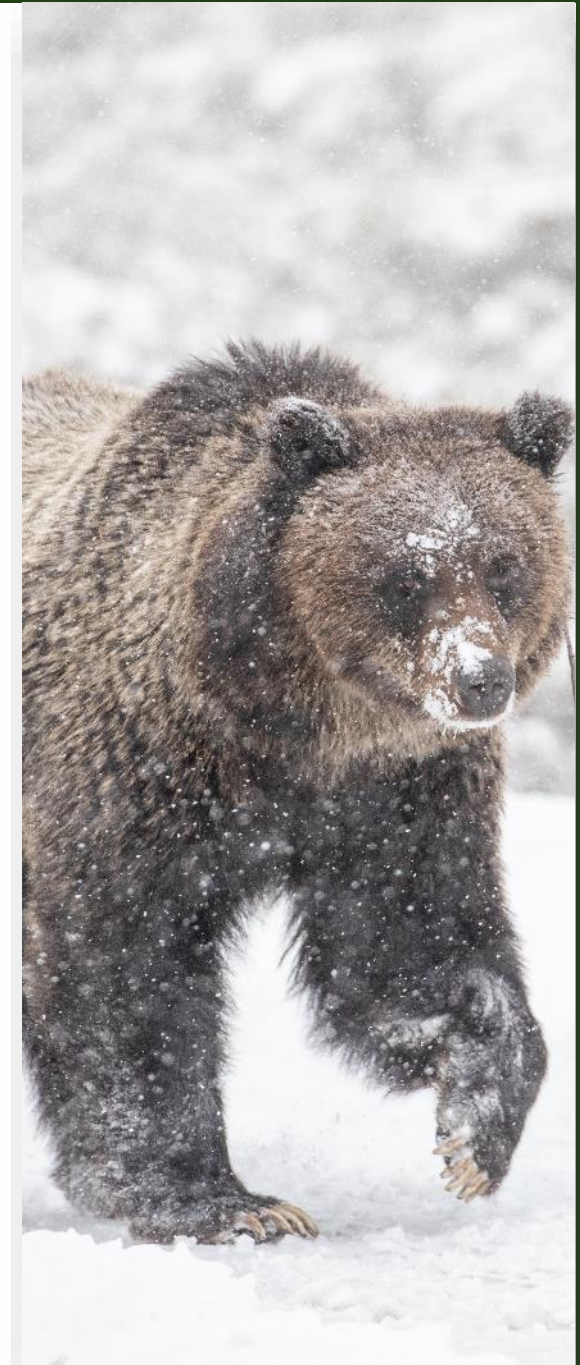
10(j) Rule

- FWS may designate an "experimental population" before reestablishing a federally listed species
- Allows for customized measures to reduce impacts to stakeholders while providing for the conservation of the species



10(j) Rule

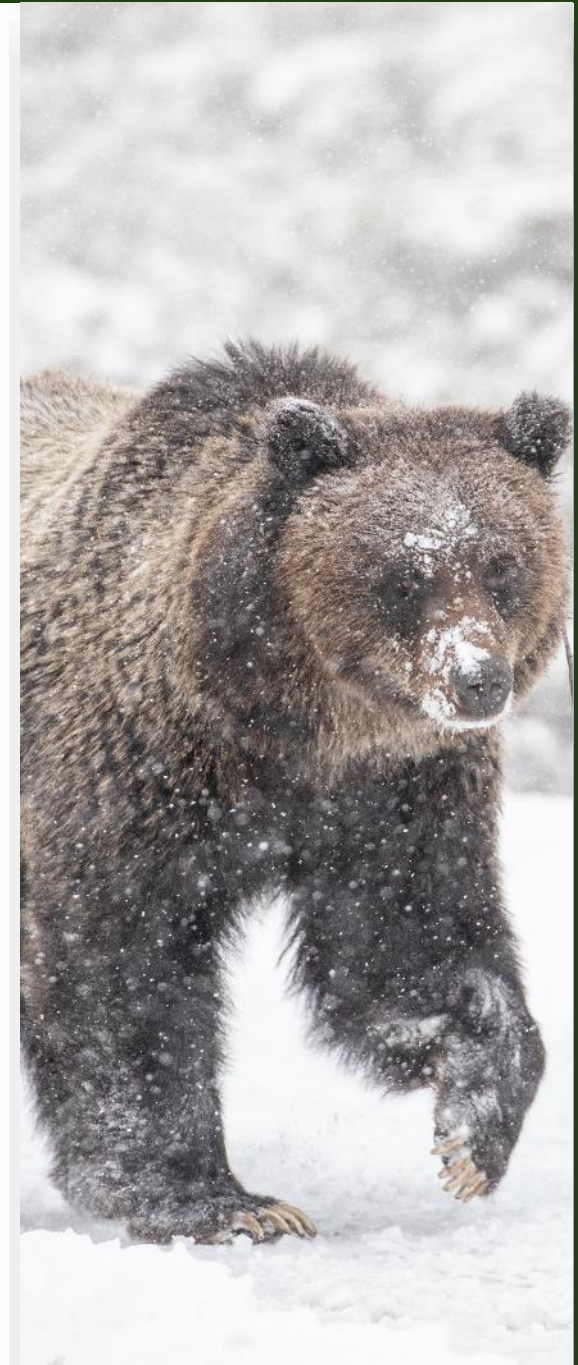
- Published May 3
- “Larger toolbox” that can be deployed earlier to address and prevent conflict
- Aims to provide for the maximum management flexibility on non-federal lands outside the ecosystem
- Measures not available in other ecosystems



Proposed 10(j) Rule

Management Area A: For restoration of grizzly bears on *federal lands*

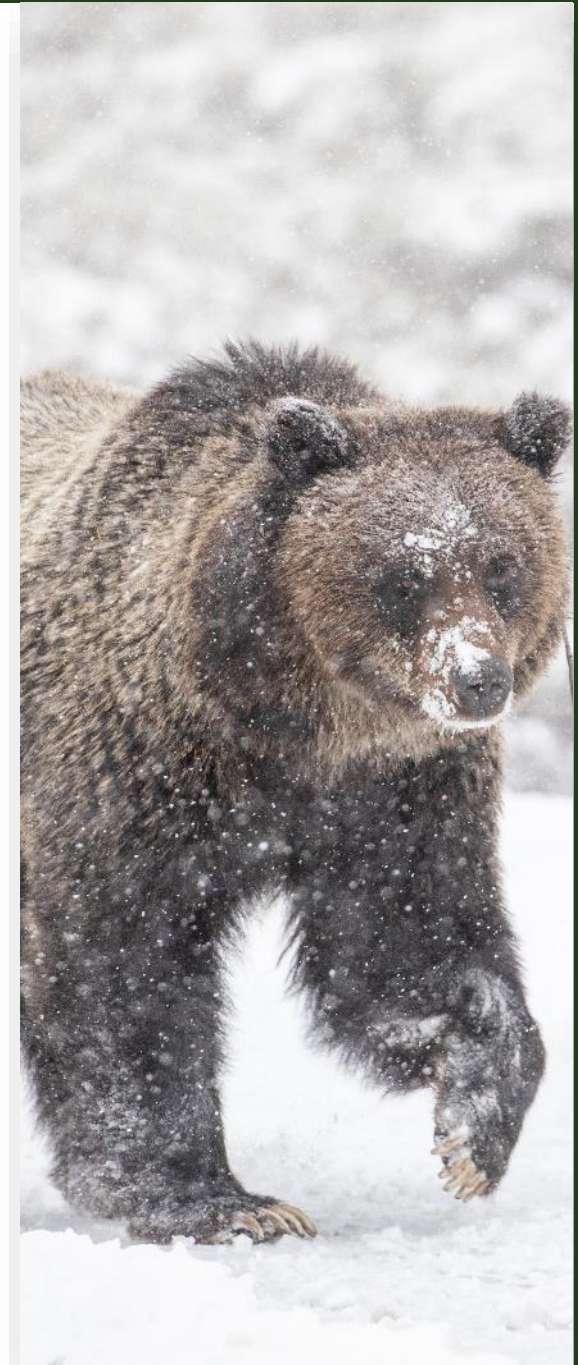
- North Cascades National Park Service Complex
- Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie, Okanogan-Wenatchee, and Colville National Forests north of Interstate 90 and west of Washington State Route 97



Proposed 10(j) Rule

Management Area B: to accommodate natural movement or dispersal by grizzly bears on federal lands

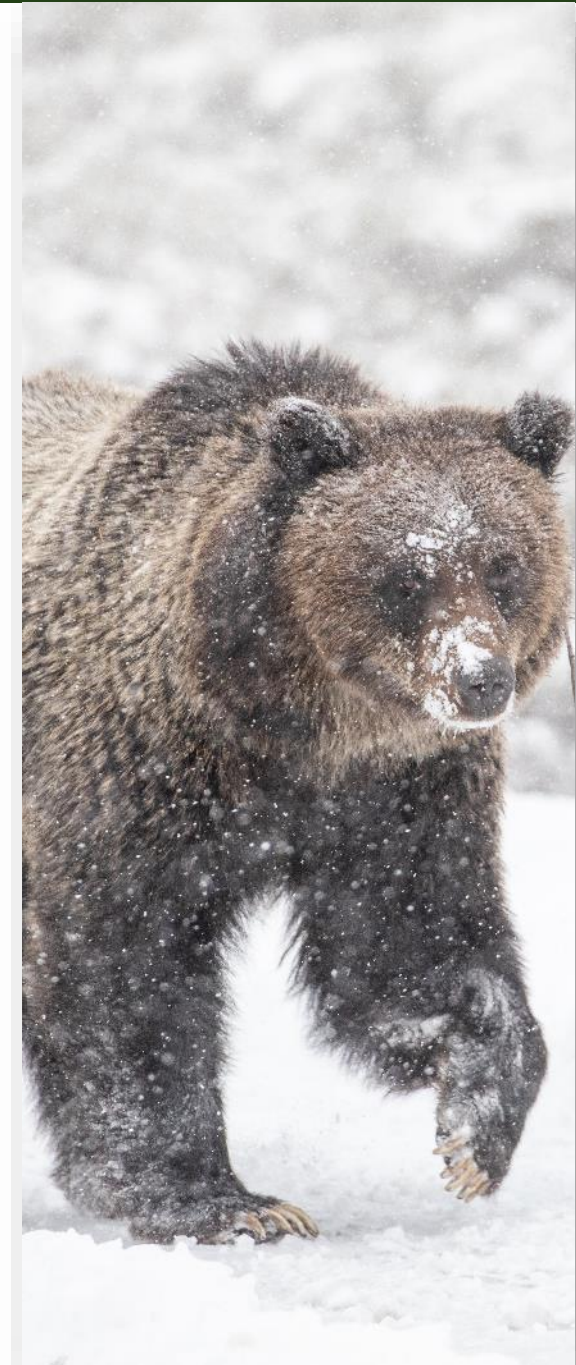
- Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF and Okanogan-Wenatchee NF south of Interstate 90
- Gifford Pinchot NF
- Mount Rainier National Park
- Colville NF and Okanogan-Wenatchee NF lands east of Washington State Route 97, within the experimental population boundary



Proposed 10(j) Rule

Management Area C: to further ensure the safety of humans, bears, and property in areas that may be incompatible with grizzly bear presence.

- All private, state, and local lands
- All other lands outside Areas A and B within the experimental population boundary



Comparison of Take Allowed in Management Areas

Management Area	Take Provision
All Areas	Defense of life
	Deterrence
	Unintentional take, provided such take is non-negligent and incidental to an otherwise lawful activity
	Research and recovery actions
	Relocation of bears, including as a preemptive action to prevent imminent conflict or habituation
	Lethal take by an authorized agency of bears involved in conflict
	Conditioned lethal take by an individual authorized by the Service <i>when depredation of livestock has been confirmed</i>
Area C	Conditioned lethal take by an individual authorized by the Service when a grizzly bear <i>presents a demonstrable and ongoing threat</i> to human safety or to lawfully present livestock or other property
	Conditioned lethal take by any individual of a bear in the act of attacking livestock or working dogs on private land.

Next Steps

- No set timeline for when translocations will begin
- NPS will publish updates on the park website and agencies will work with partners as plans develop



Next Steps

- Coordination with partners
- Education & outreach
- Equipment acquisition, etc.



Resources

- FAQs and info on grizzly restoration:
www.nps.gov/noca/grizzly.htm
- FAQs and info on 10(j) rule:
<https://www.fws.gov/question-answer/north-cascades-grizzly-final-10j-rule-faqs>





Questions?