

North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery Outreach

October 2024 Report

Participating entities: Conservation Northwest (CNW), Methow Valley Citizens Council (MVCC), Chris Morgan Wildlife (CMW), Defenders of Wildlife (DOW), National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), Woodland Park Zoo (WPZ), Sierra Club (SC)

Agencies invited to participate in outreach activities: USFWS, NPS, WDFW, Okanagan Nations Alliance (BC)

Abstract: *Between May 1st and October 1st 2024, work done by the above organizations resulted in 20 email newsletter blasts, 60 social media posts, 11 presentations with 550 total attendees, and 4,000 direct contacts at trailheads totaling over 25,000 reaches surrounding the North Cascades Ecosystem.*

Following federal agencies' joint record of decision to move forward with North Cascades grizzly bear reintroduction, a coalition of NGOs was formed in May 2024 and began meeting biweekly to create a communications and outreach action plan ahead of "bears on the ground". Agency representatives were invited to join meetings to provide feedback and assist with gap analysis. The goal of this group is to provide the public with accurate, timely information about bear behavior, ecology, and restoration, to promote safety for people living, working and recreating in bear habitat, and to increase knowledge about grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades Ecosystem. Partners in BC are also participating in this work, and are coordinating with US agencies and NGOs to streamline communication efforts throughout the transboundary ecosystem.

The following is a brief description of the work done up to this point:

GOAL 1: Provide accurate and timely information about bear behavior, ecology and North Cascades grizzly bear recovery.

A. The coalition reached out to several key WA recreation organizations to encourage a more prominent display of information on their websites regarding NCE grizzly recovery and bear-smart backcountry practices. These organizations include:

- AllTrails
 - [Public Lands Program](#) - North Cascades NPS staff must engage to include bear info on AllTrails App.

- Evergreen Mt Bike Alliance
- Pacific Crest Trail Association
- Pacific Northwest Trail Association
- Washington Trails Association
 - Joe Scott (CNW) worked hard to update [WTA's webpage re: bear safety](#).

B. Staff from our organizations coordinated agency presentations at the following events:

- Methow Valley Trails Collaborative (30 members), East Cascades Recreation Partnership (20 virtual attendees, 50 members) and Recreate Responsibly Coalition meetings (35 virtual attendees, 150 members)
- Methow Valley Ranger District All-staff Orientation (75 attendees)
- Wenatchee Valley Museum and Cultural Center Kids Camp (50 local children, 10 teachers)
- REI Seattle Store (90 attendees)
- Chelan County community meetings with MT rancher Trina Jo Bradely (meetings in Chelan, Wenatchee and Leavenworth, approx 120 attendees total)
- Joint Nations Grizzly Bear Summit in Manning Park (70 attendees)

C. WPZ engaged in traditional media outreach including multiple local tv spots and newspaper articles (total possible reach of 9 million people).

GOAL 2: Promote safety for people living, working and recreating in bear habitat.

A. CNW printed several thousand “We Are In Bear Country” stickers, which include 5 tips for living in bear country and QR codes directing people to the IGBC bear safety website. Our organizations are currently distributing them and have compiled an extensive list of locations sprinkled throughout NCE communities.

B. Trailhead ambassador program

- CNW conducted trailhead outreach at three popular trailheads in the I-90 corridor and engaged over 14,000 people about how to recreate respectfully in wildlife habitat, with a large emphasis on bear safety and best practices in bear country (nearly 4,000 bear conversations). We had 31 volunteers helping 3 seasonal staff conduct outreach at Middle Fork

Snoqualmie TH, Pratt Lake TH and Snow Lake TH.

- C. In the Methow Valley, MVCC is part of a local bear-aware working group and recently launched several exciting new projects, including:
- Electric fencing cost-share program (6 fences completed, 13 more currently being built)
 - Backcountry bear can and Ursack rentals (6 cans/2 Ursacks available at two locations in the valley)
 - Community dumpster program
- D. The Sierra Club and NPCA are working with state legislators to increase WDFW funding to produce bear hazard assessments for communities that have a history of human-bear conflict. Working with WDFW, Rep. Shavers (LD-10), and Senator Shewmake (43rd), \$224,000 was secured in the FY2025 budget for four assessments that will target Lake Chelan, North Bend, Whatcom/Skagit County, and Northern Spokane County. WDFW will report progress and offer recommendations to the legislature by December 31, 2024. Their report will also include findings from hazard assessments previously completed in Leavenworth and the Methow Valley.

Future activities include:

- More organized events and presentations targeting specific user groups (i.e. hunters, recreationists, farmers)
- Bear spray demonstrations
- Expansion of trailhead ambassador programs
- Further distribution of “We’re in Bear Country” stickers
- Creation of infographics and/or social media content for recreation groups re: bear safety
- Maintaining awareness of the outcomes of the four community bear hazard assessments funded by the WA state legislature in 2024 and any outreach opportunities identified in each assessment.

There are several agency led initiatives furthering communications and outreach on NCE grizzly bear recovery. For more information on agency actions, reach out to nce_grizzly@nps.gov.

