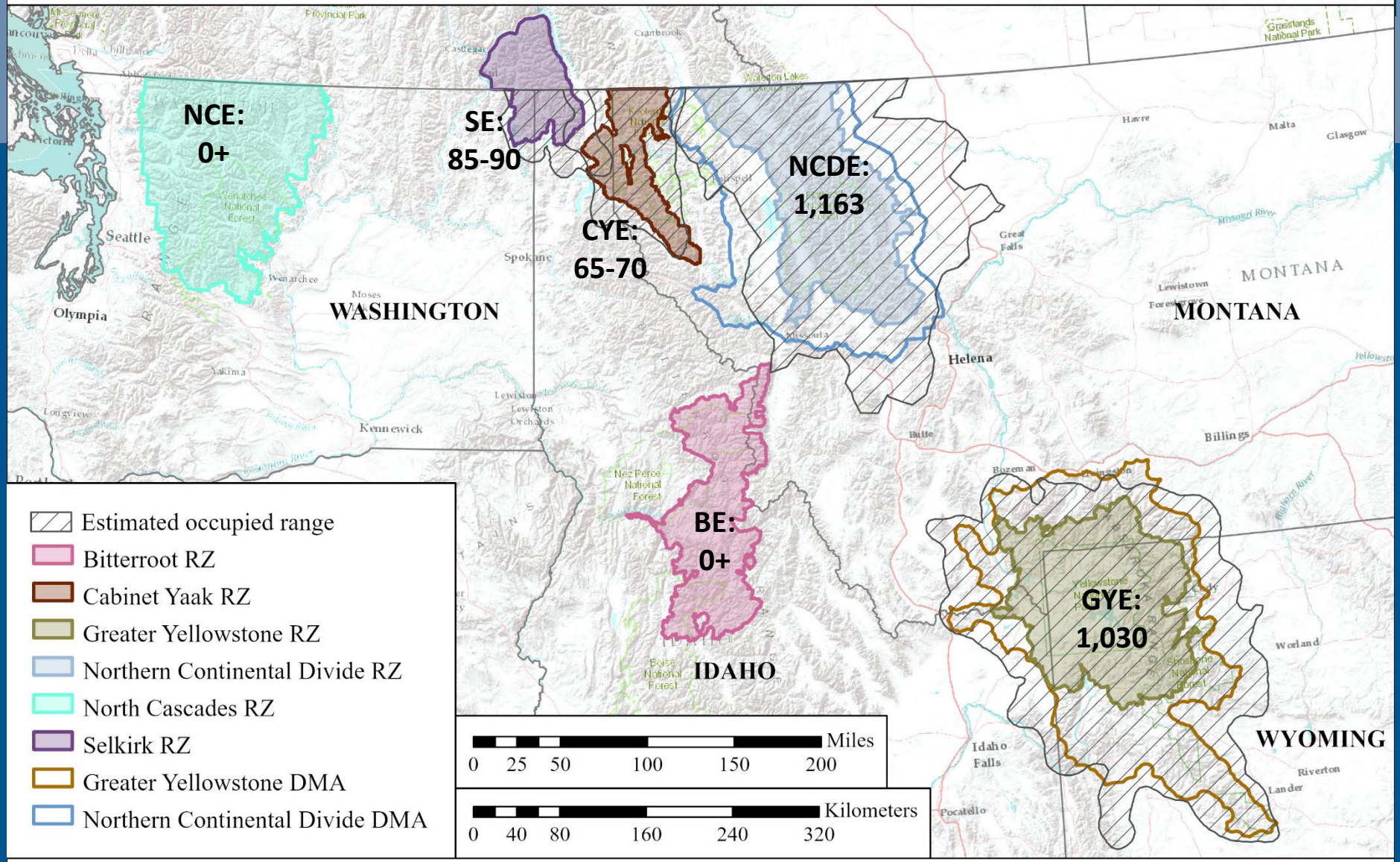
Grizzly Bear Status in the Bitterroot Ecosystem

BE Subcommittee Meeting

April 22, 2025

Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones and Estimated Occupied Range

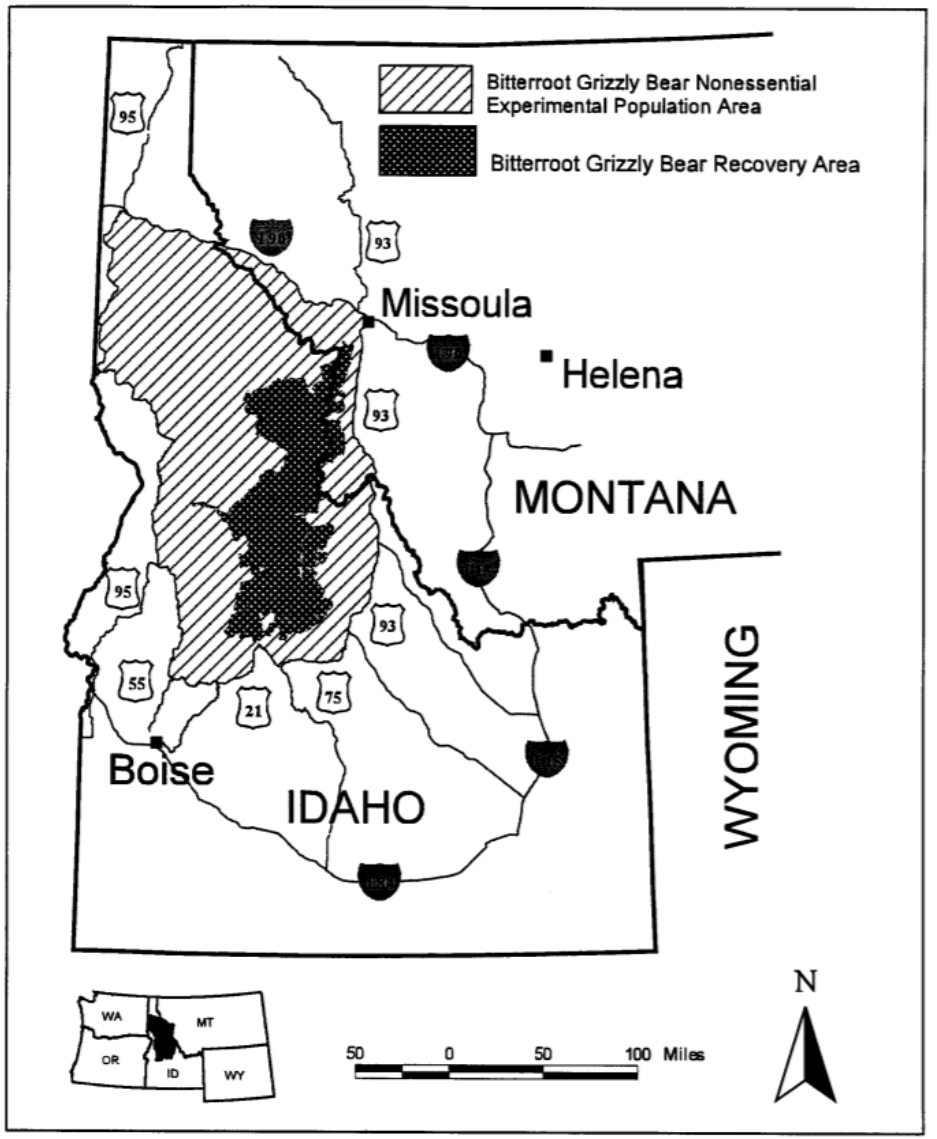


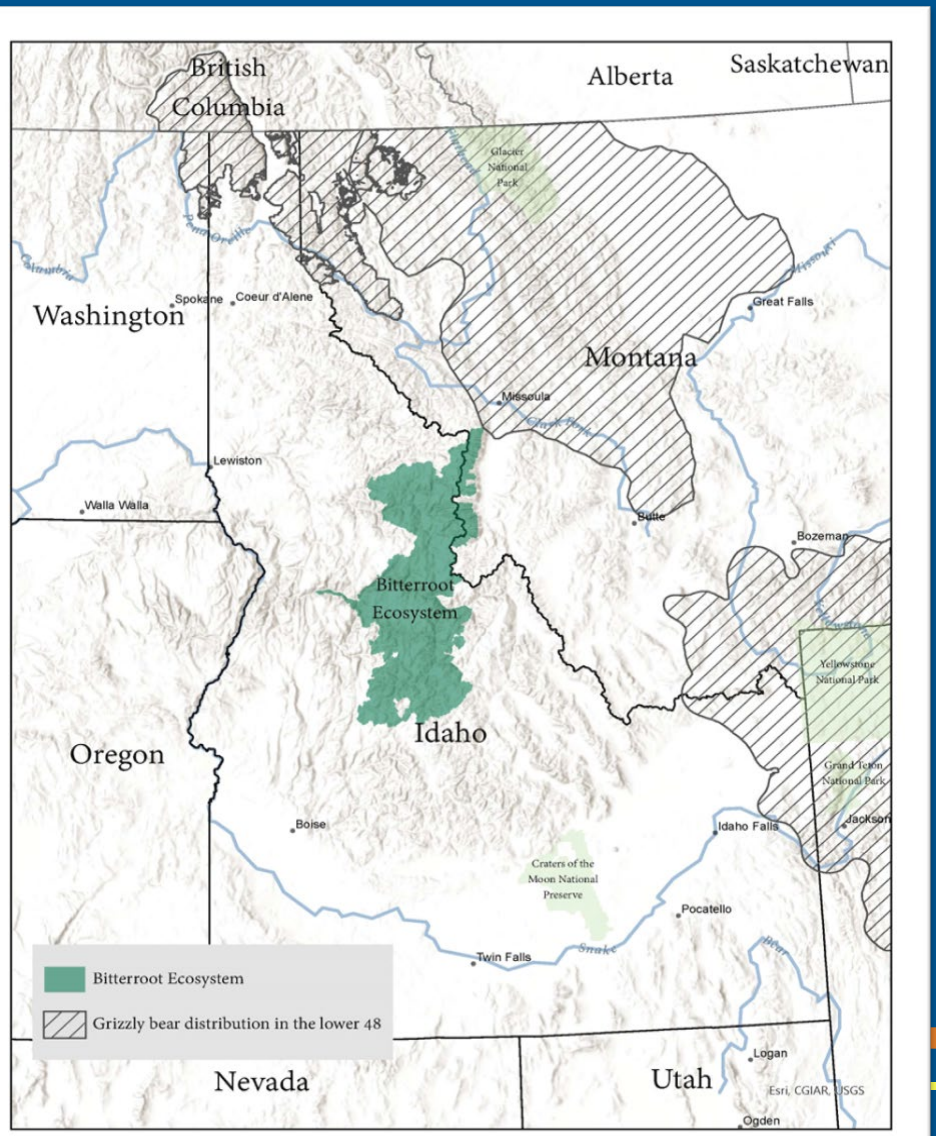
Estimated occupied range is current as of 2022 for the Greater Yellowstone, Northern Continental Divide, Cabinet-Yaak, and Selkirk Ecosystems. There are currently no known populations in the North Cascades and Bitterroot Ecosystems. Current estimated occupied range does not include low-density peripheral locations and represent a minimum known area of occupancy, not extent of occurrence. DMA = Demographic Monitoring Area; RZ = Recovery Zone

Bitterroot Timeline

1996	BE Recovery Plan Chapter Finalized; directs FWS to complete EIS
2000	Final EIS & ROD to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Bitterroot.
	Final 10(j) rule to establish a nonessential experimental population.
2001	Notice of Intent to reevaluate the ROD and select the No Action Alternative. Did not finalize.
	Proposed Rule to repeal the 10(j) rule. Did not finalize.
2018	Grizzly bear (Stevi) trapped in Stevensville
2021	Lawsuit alleging failure to comply with the 2000 ROD and unreasonable delay in completing the 2001 10(j) proposed rule.
2023	Court ruled that FWS unreasonably delayed implementing non-discretionary actions in 2000 ROD.
2026	Court order to produce FEIS and ROD by October 2026.

Bitterroot Ecosystem





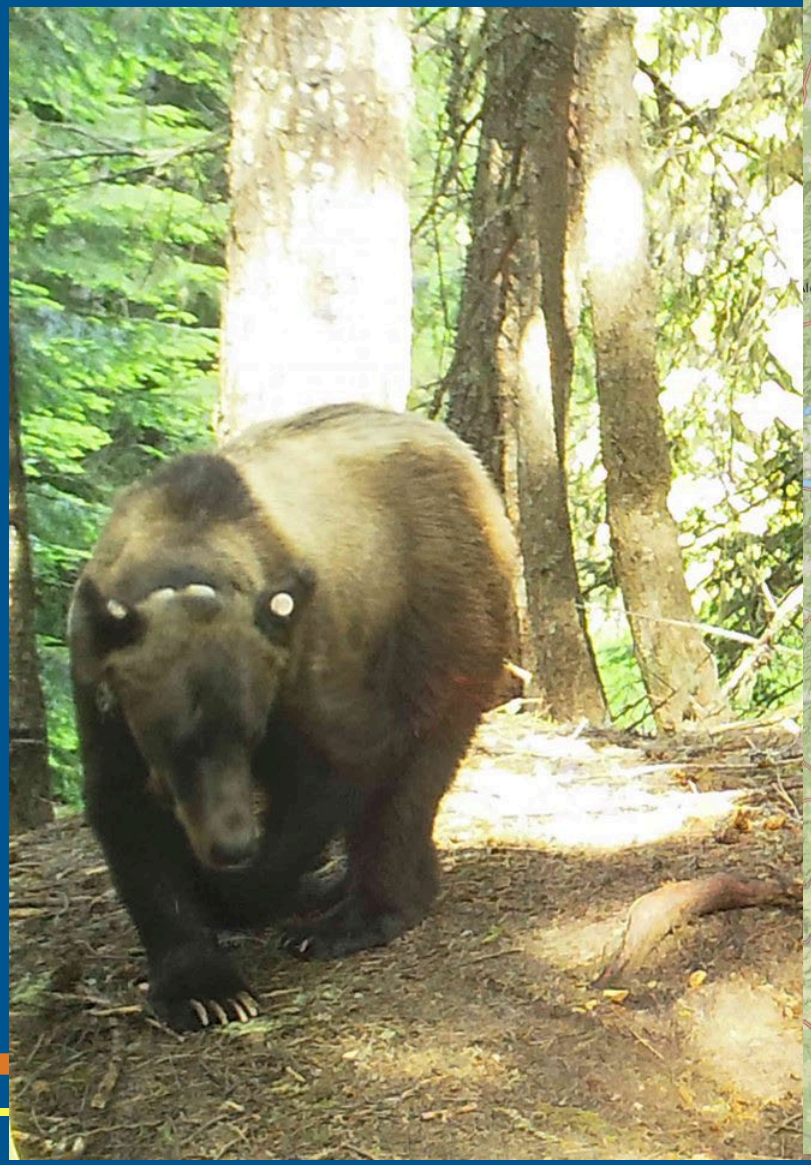
10j Status in the BE

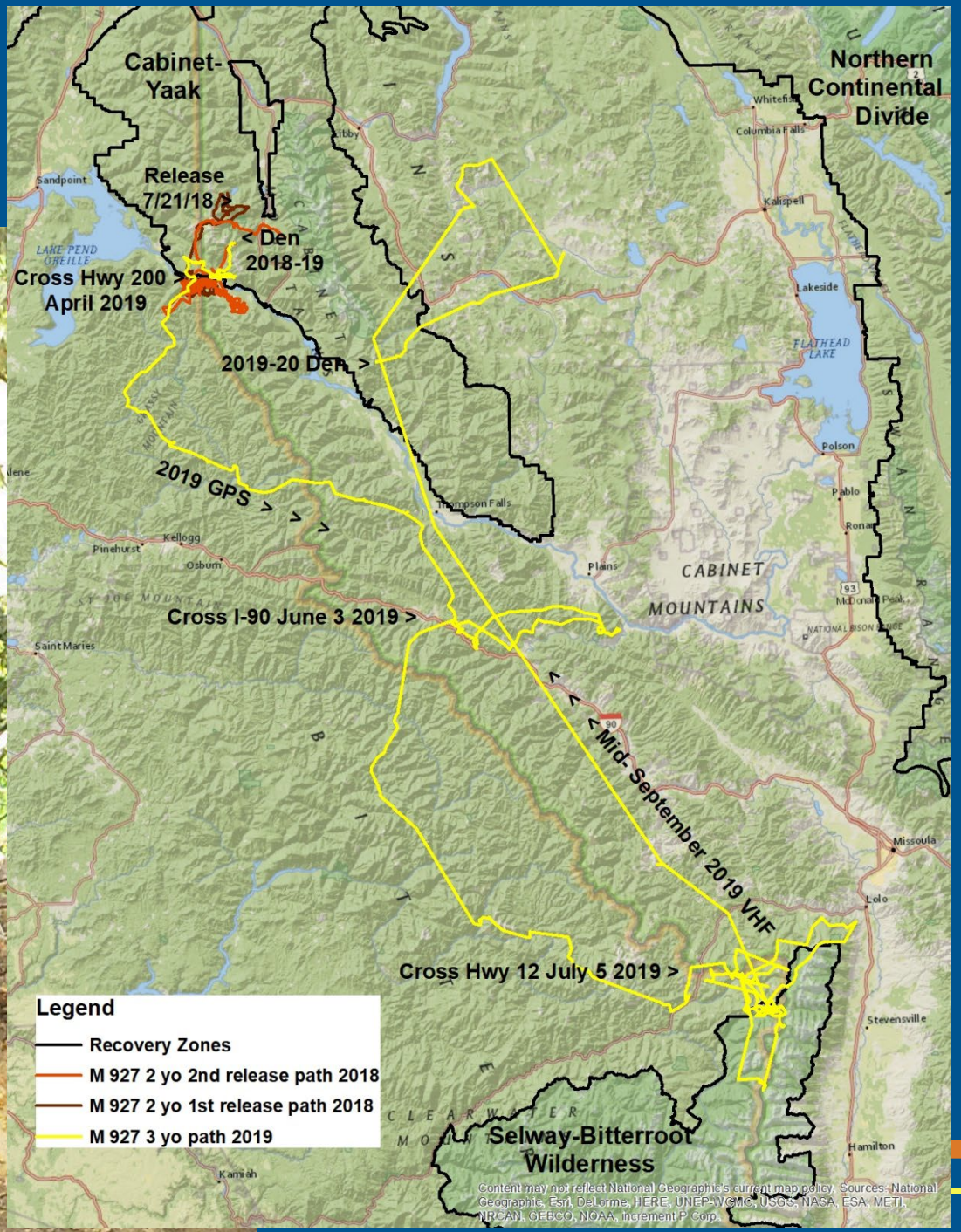
- Intent of the 10j rule was to allow management flexibility for a reintroduced population
  - Human-bear conflict management
  - Reduce Section 7 Consultation Requirement
- We have not reintroduced bears
- Therefore, grizzly bears that are present in the BE are considered Threatened
- Normal Section 7 consultation obligations apply

Bitterroot Recovery Status

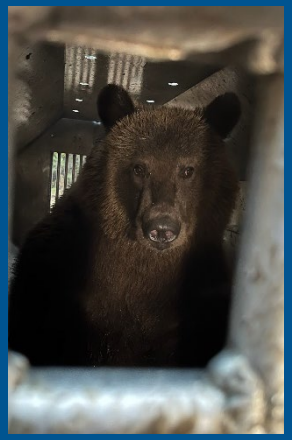
- No known population
  - population: 2 unique females with young or 1 female with 2 consecutive litters
- 2018: Grizzly bear trapped on Stevensville golf course
- 2019: Collared bear 927 travels from CYE to BE recovery zone
- 2020: Photos of lone adult near Lolo Cr
- 2022: 2 subadult grizzly bears trapped near Florence
- 2023: Subadult grizzly bear trapped on MPG

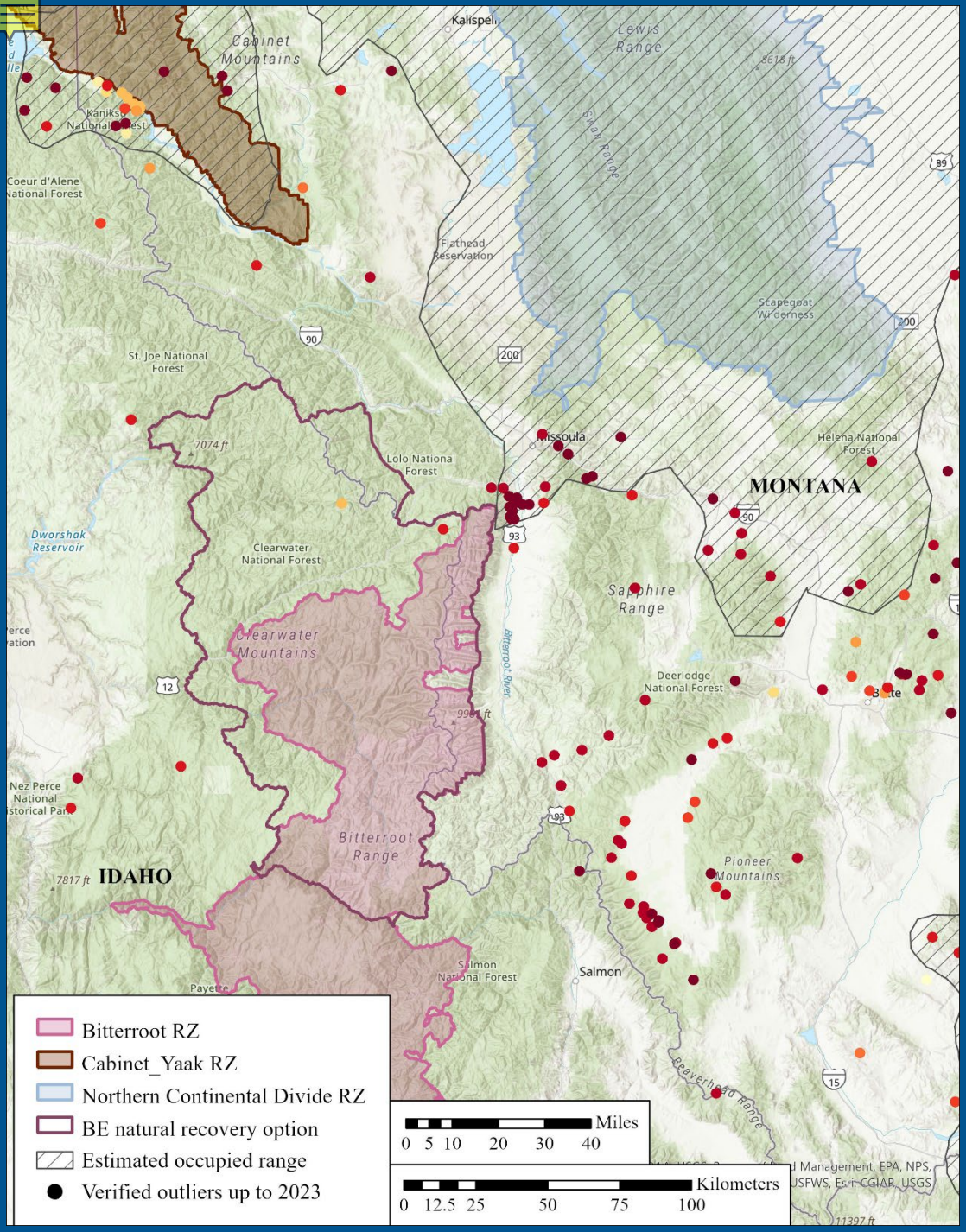
927 travels to the Bitterroot





Verified Outliers





Questions?