



Committee of the Whole

Heidi Beazizo

Council Initiated:

Yes

No

ECAF: 2024-0141

Motion: 24-073

Type:

- Contract
- Board Appt.
- Code Amendment
- Budget Action
- Other

Requested Handling:

- Normal
- Expedite
- Urgent

Fund Source:

- General Fund
- Other
- N/A

Executive Rec:

- Approve
- Do Not Approve
- N/A

Approved as to

Form:

- Yes
- No
- N/A

Subject: Approving an MOU related to the Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan

Scope: The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is between Snohomish County and the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife service and National Park Service, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, establishing Snohomish County as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan.

As a Cooperating Agency, Snohomish County is recognized as having special expertise in the following areas: social and economic conditions, recreation and tourism, county government services, and funding needs and sources as they relate to adjacent land uses within Snohomish County (excluding state and federally owned land) either encompassed within and/or adjacent to the boundaries of the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE); Snohomish County's commitments as a Cooperating Agency in the development of the EIS are outlined in Article III.B.

The MOU also establishes the County Director of Conservation and Natural Resources as the Key Official in this work.

Duration: Agreement is in affect until a Record of Decision is issued or upon the publishing of a Federal Register announcing termination of the EIS process by the Department of Interior. Termination is also allowed with 30-days advance written notice by any party.

Fiscal Impact: Current Year Future-Year N/A

Authority Granted: Authorizes the County Executive to execute the MOU between Snohomish County and the United States Department of the Interior, United States Fish and Wildlife Services.

Background: The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and National Park Service (NPS) are jointly preparing an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to determine how to restore grizzly bears in the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE) which project area extends into portions of Snohomish County.

Snohomish, Okanogan, Whatcom and Skagit Counties submitted a joint letter to the NPS requesting Cooperating Agency status under NEPA on May 8, 2023.

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Cooperating Agency status was extended to Snohomish County on December 15, 2023; 40 CFR 1501.8(a) requires the execution of a mutually agreeable MOU to finalize Cooperating Agency status.

Requested Action: Assign to COW for Council consideration on February 6, 2023