

North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration

May 2023





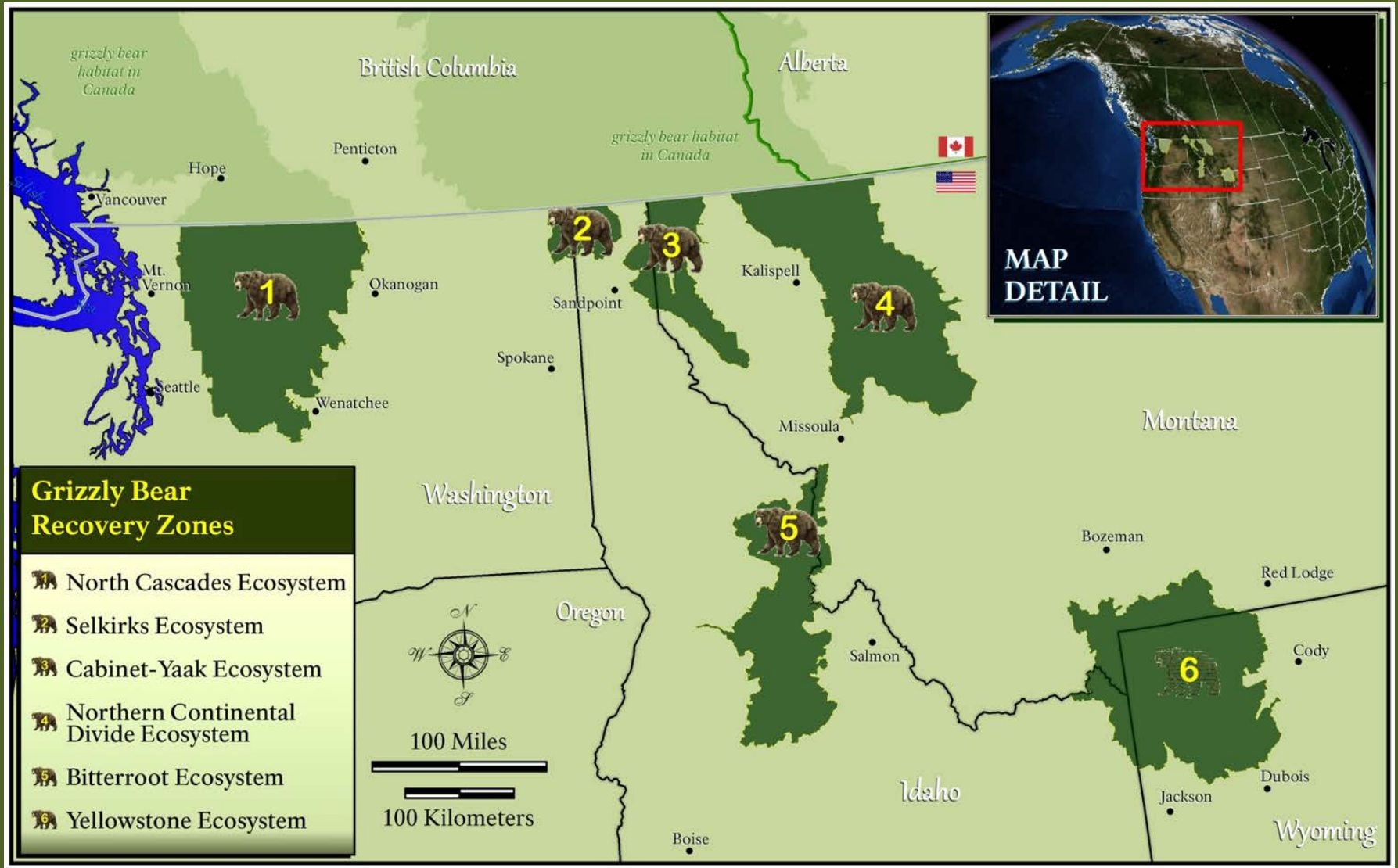
Overview

- 1. Review of North Cascades Grizzly Status**
- 2. EIS Process Overview**
- 3. 10(j) Rule**
- 4. Timeline and Next Steps**





Grizzly Bear Recovery Zones





North Cascades Recovery Zone

13,500 square miles

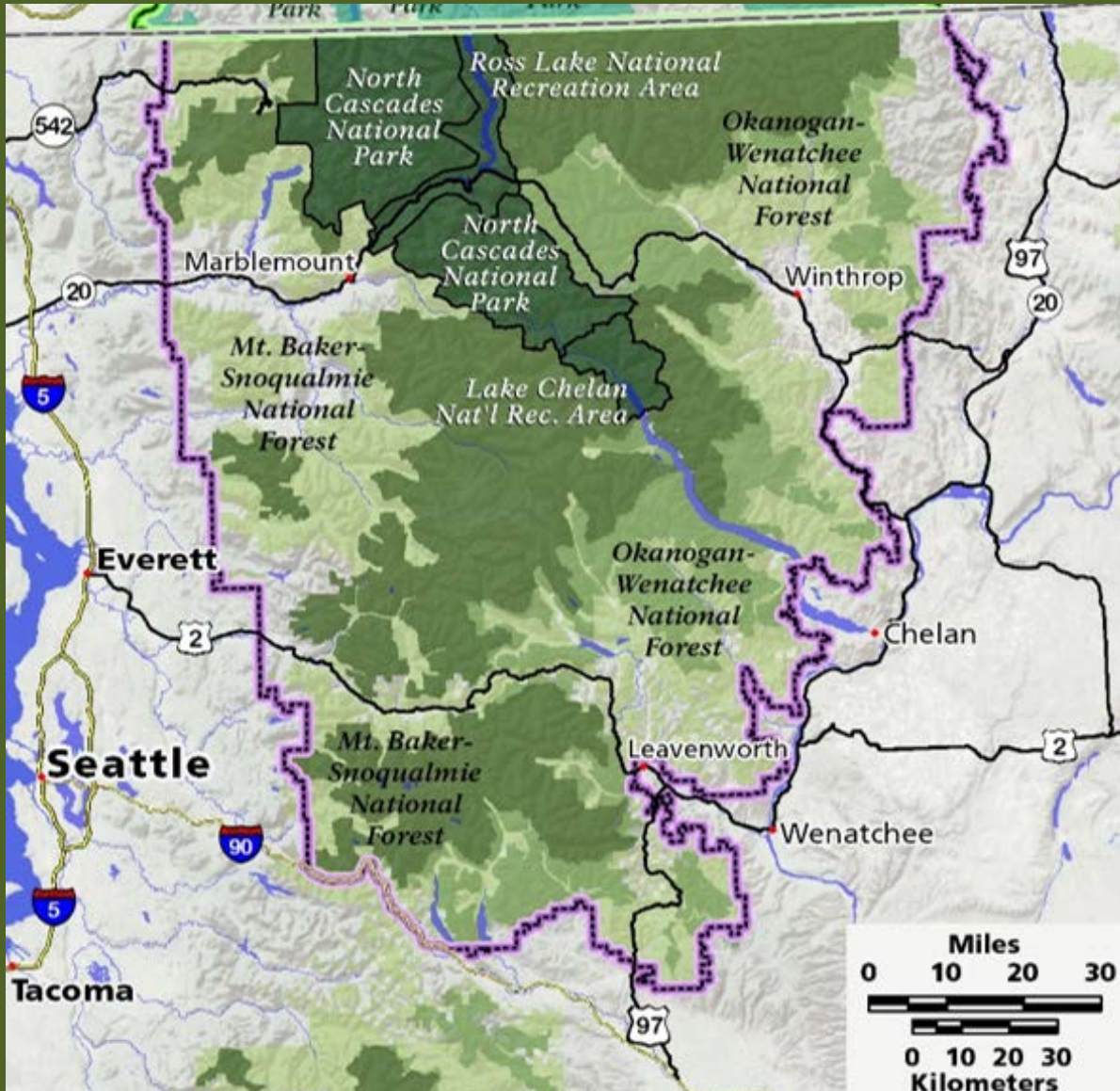
(US: 9,777 mi², Canada: 3,745 mi²)

U.S. portion alone is larger than the state of New Jersey





North Cascades Recovery Zone



Primarily Federal Management

- 89% Federal
- 7% State
- 1% Local
- 3% Private



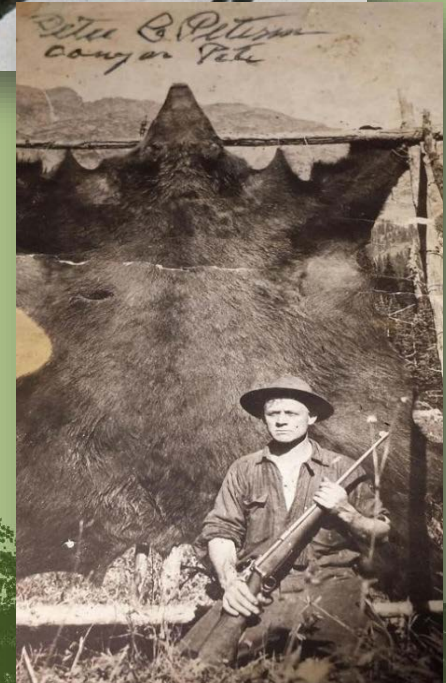
Population Status





Status in NCE

- Population in the North Cascades was decimated primarily by direct killing, not habitat loss
- The last known grizzly bear to be killed by a hunter was in 1967
- Last sighting in 1996, last female with young in 1991





New EIS Process Overview





New EIS Process

- Notice of Intent to begin a new EIS process was published on November 14, 2022
- To "evaluate various approaches for the restoration of a grizzly bear population to the NCE."
- Simultaneous rulemaking for a 10(j) designation





New EIS Process

- NPS and USFWS are joint lead agencies
- WDFW likely to participate as a cooperating agency
- British Columbia and Okanagan Nation Alliance are recognized as key partners in cross-border coordination





Purpose

The purpose of this plan/EIS is to determine how to restore the grizzly bear to the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE), a portion of its historic range.

Action is needed at this time to:

- Restore grizzly bears to the NCE because they are functionally extirpated from the ecosystem.
- Contribute to the restoration of biodiversity of the ecosystem for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations
- Enhance the probability of long-term survival of grizzly bears in the NCE and thereby contribute to overall grizzly bear recovery.



Proposed Action

- **Under the proposed action listed in the Notice of Intent, approximately 3 to 7 captured grizzly bears would be released into the NCE each year over roughly 5 to 10 years**
- **Goal of establishing an initial population of 25 grizzly bears.**





Proposed Action

Source populations of bears could include interior British Columbia, Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem, or Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem





No Action Alternative

Continuation of Existing Grizzly Bear Management

- Existing management practices would be followed and no new actions would be implemented.
- Management actions would continue to be focused on:
 - improved sanitation
 - poaching control
 - motorized access management
 - outreach and educational programs to provide information about grizzly bears and grizzly bear recovery to the public
 - research and monitoring to determine grizzly bear presence, distribution, habitat, and home ranges



Action Alternatives

Elements Common To All Action Alternatives

- **A self-sustaining population through the combination of capture and release of grizzly bears into the NCE and subsequent reproduction.**
- **A similar approach for:**
 - the capture, transport, and release of grizzly bears
 - enhanced public education and outreach
 - guidelines for management actions to prevent or respond to human-grizzly bear conflicts
 - the replacement or additional releases of grizzly bears, access management, and habitat management
- **Any released bears lost to mortality or emigration would be replaced.**



10(j) Experimental Population Designation





10(j) Rule

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is doing a simultaneous rulemaking process to consider designating the population as experimental.





10(j) Rules

- **USFWS may designate an "experimental population" before reestablishing a threatened or endangered species in an unoccupied part of its range.**
- **Allows for customized measures to reduce impacts to stakeholders while providing for the conservation of the species, developed in collaboration with stakeholders.**





10(j) Rule

- Examples of previous 10(j) designations include the black-footed ferret, bull trout, California condor, whooping crane and wood bison.
- Recently proposed 10(j) rule for gray wolf in Colorado





10(j) Rule

Additional management tools provided by a 10(j) *could* include:

- Retrieving released bears that move outside the NCE or venture into areas with a high potential for conflict;
- Lethal or non-lethal removal bears involved in conflict;
- Capture and handling of bears for purposes of monitoring and research
- Issuing permits to private landowners to haze or kill bears that are attacking livestock on private lands when it has not been possible to capture or deter depredations through other means.



Timeline





Schedule/Milestones

✓ Nov-Dec 2022	Notice of Intent and Public scoping
✓ Nov-Dec 2022	Public Comment Period
Winter 2022-2023	Development of Alternatives
Summer 2023	Notice of Availability of Draft EIS and proposed 10(j) rule
Summer 2023	Public Comment Period
Spring 2024	Notice of Availability of Final EIS and 10(j) rule
Spring 2024	NPS/FWS Record of Decision



Questions?

