
GRIZZLY BEAR RESTORATION IN THE NORTH CASCADES OF WASHINGTON

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The North Cascades of Washington was one of 6 recovery areas where grizzly bears were known or believed to exist at the time of listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in

1975. The North Cascades recovery plan identified the need for a National Environmental Policy Act process to evaluate a range of alternatives to restore this grizzly bear population. In January of 2017 the Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan for the North Cascades Ecosystem was released for public comment by the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. This plan evaluated four alternatives for population restoration. Alternative A was “No Action” with continued existing management practices focused on improved sanitation, poaching control, motorized access, education, and monitoring to evaluate natural restoration. Alternative B was “Ecosystem Evaluation Restoration” which would transplant up to 10 grizzly bears to the North Cascades and monitor those individuals for 2 years before deciding whether to proceed with additional releases. Alternative C was “Incremental Restoration” in which 5-7 grizzly bears per year would be transplanted to the North Cascades to achieve an initial population of 25 individuals. Monitoring would determine success of the program and the need for additional releases of bears. Alternative D was “Expedited Restoration” in which 5-7 grizzly bears/year would be transplanted to the North Cascades until a population of approximately 200 individuals was achieved. All action alternatives possess an experimental (ESA 10j) population option. The draft document is available for review and comment through March 14, 2017 at: <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=44144>