



September 19th, 2019

Karen Taylor-Goodrich; Superintendent
North Cascades National Park Service
810 State Route 20
Sedro-Woolley WA 98284

RE: Draft North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan / EIS

Dear Superintendent Taylor-Goodrich,

With this letter the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe is providing comment on the draft North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan / Environmental Impact Statement. The Snoqualmie Indian Tribe [Tribe] is a federally-recognized sovereign Indian Tribe and a signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott of 1855, in which it reserved to itself certain rights and privileges, and ceded certain lands to the United States. As a signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliot, the Tribe specifically reserved to itself, among other things, the right to fish at usual and accustomed areas and the "privilege of hunting and gathering roots and berries on open and unclaimed lands" off-reservation throughout the modern day state of Washington. Treaty of Point Elliot, art. V, 12 Stat. 928." Long before the early explorers came to the Pacific Northwest, our people hunted deer, elk, and bear, fished for salmon, and gathered berries and wild plants for food, medicine, and fiber. Today, many of our members live in the communities of Snoqualmie, North Bend, Fall City, Carnation, Issaquah, Mercer Island and Monroe, and they exercise their cultural heritage and traditions using resources from across what is now the state of Washington, and beyond.

The Snoqualmie People have a special cultural connection with the great bear, and we are committed to the protection and management of all native species. Article XIV of the Constitution of the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe states that:

"Nature and its biodiversity, the environment and the tribal heritage are the responsibility of every tribal member. The tribal government shall endeavor to guarantee for every tribal member the right to a healthy

environment and the possibility to influence the decisions that concern their own living environment.”

To this end, we support taking measures to begin the recovery of grizzly bear in the North Cascades. In particular, we support a cautious approach to recovery, similar to what is outlined in Alternative C from the DEIS. It is our hope that the longer timeline of this approach will allow for continual assessment of recovery progress, will closely monitor any potential conflicts, and will enable the practice of adaptive management to address any anticipated or unanticipated concerns that may arise.

We do acknowledge that as the population of grizzlies in the Cascades grows, the potential for grizzly bear - human interactions will grow as well. Conflicts will likely need to be addressed, and we request the continuing opportunity to weigh in on the best ways address such challenges. Clearly, the safety of tribal members and the general public is paramount; however, we know that it is possible to live in this region with places for grizzly bears and for humans, because the Tribe has done exactly that for millennia prior to the arrival of Europeans. As the grizzly bear restoration plan is implemented, we request continued consultation regarding grizzly bear dispersal both within and outside the North Cascades Ecosystem. This way, the Tribe can be sure to communicate with and provide information to Tribal members who may be exercising their Treaty Rights in areas where grizzly bears may be present.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration. We look forward to further discussion with our federal partners regarding the details of the plan as it is further developed and implemented.

Sincerely,



Robert de los Angeles
Snoqualmie Tribal Council Chairman

CC: Eric Rickerson, State Supervisor, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office
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