



STATE OF WASHINGTON
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

November 13, 2023

Don Striker
Superintendent
North Cascades National Park
810 Star Route 20
Sedro Woolley, WA 98284

Re: Comment in favor of Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan - North Cascades Ecosystem, Washington

Dear Superintendent Striker:

I am writing to express my support for the federal restoration of grizzly bears (*ursus arctos horribilis*) to Washington state. Grizzlies are native to Washington state and should be returned to their original station in nature, where they would help to restore balance to our state's natural heritage and ecosystem.

The North Cascades ecosystem is a prime habitat for grizzly bears. This region provides excellent habitat for grizzly recovery, as do the various wilderness areas in the North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery Zone. Despite this fact, the last confirmed grizzly sighting in the North Cascades was in 1996. In Washington state, grizzlies are identified as a "species of greatest conservation need" in our State Wildlife Action Plan.

According to the federal alternatives for action on reintroduction, grizzlies would be reintroduced slowly over a period of years. This is a reasonable method for proceeding with reintroduction, one that would give Washingtonians time to acclimate to the presence of the species. Alternative C would allow flexibility and be less restrictive for management – benefiting people, property and bears. This alternative demonstrates that the agencies have heard and are responsive to local concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan for the North Cascades Ecosystem.

Very truly yours,

Jay Inslee
Governor