



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



# North Cascades Ecosystem

Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan & Environmental Impact Statement



# Welcome

To the North  
Cascades Ecosystem  
Grizzly Bear  
Restoration Plan/EIS

# Public Scoping Open House

# Please Sign In

Because of your interest in the North Cascades Ecosystem, we are requesting your input in the development of a Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (Plan/EIS).

Your participation is vital to our planning process.







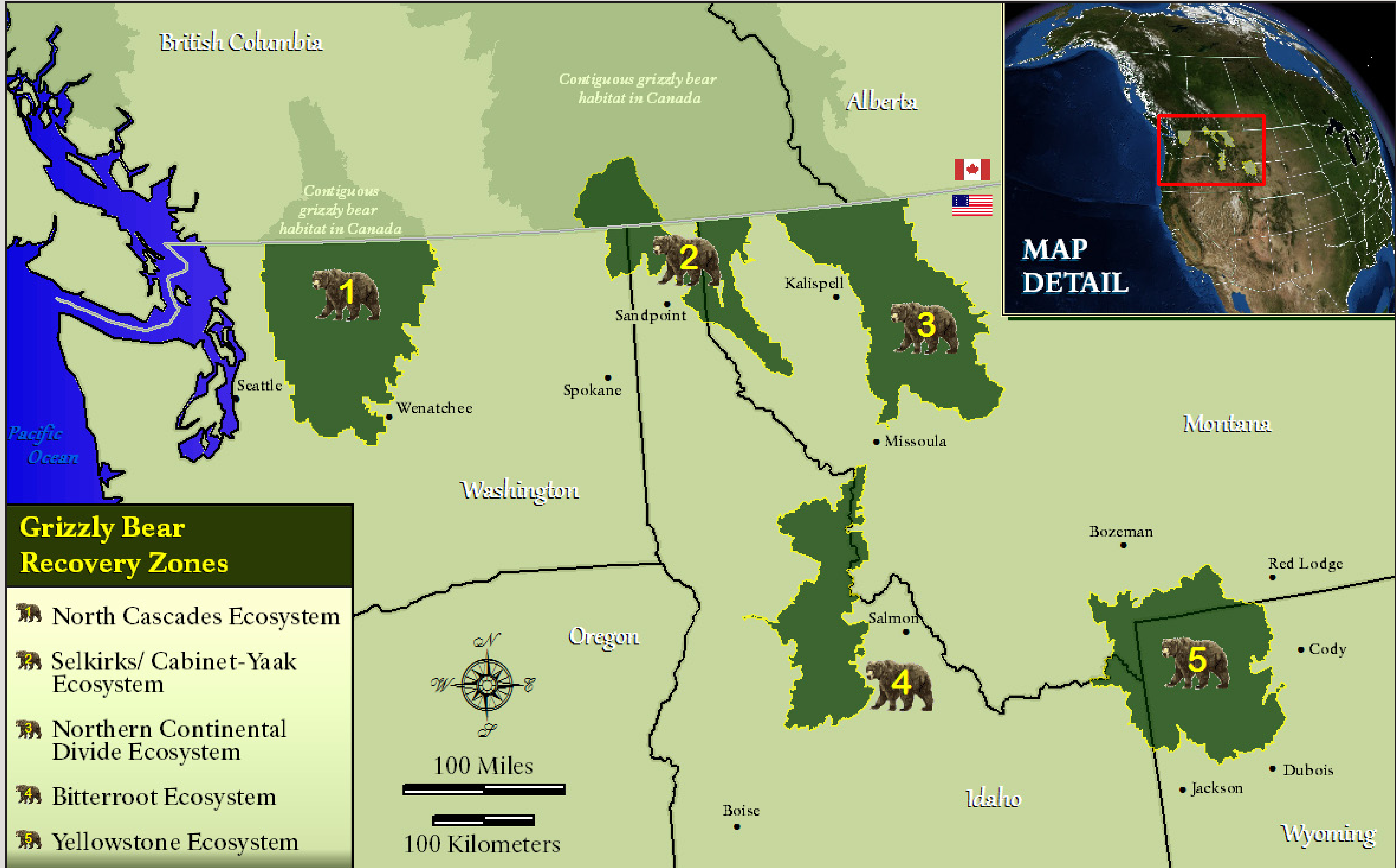
# North Cascades Ecosystem

## Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan & Environmental Impact Statement

# National Grizzly Recovery Efforts

Grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) once existed throughout western North America and into northern Mexico. The Lewis and Clark Expedition encountered their first grizzly bears not long after departing from St. Louis, Missouri in 1805. During the 19th century an estimated population of 50,000 was reduced to possibly fewer than 1,000 grizzly bears in just a few decades. Today only 5 isolated populations survive in the contiguous United States (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1982/1993).

In 1975, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) listed the grizzly bear as a threatened species in the lower 48 states under the Endangered Species Act. The FWS approved a Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan in 1982 and approved a revised Plan in 1993.



The remaining populations are managed within five recovery zones: the North Cascades Ecosystem (NCE), Bitterroot Ecosystem (BE), Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE), Selkirk/ Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem (S/CYE), and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE).



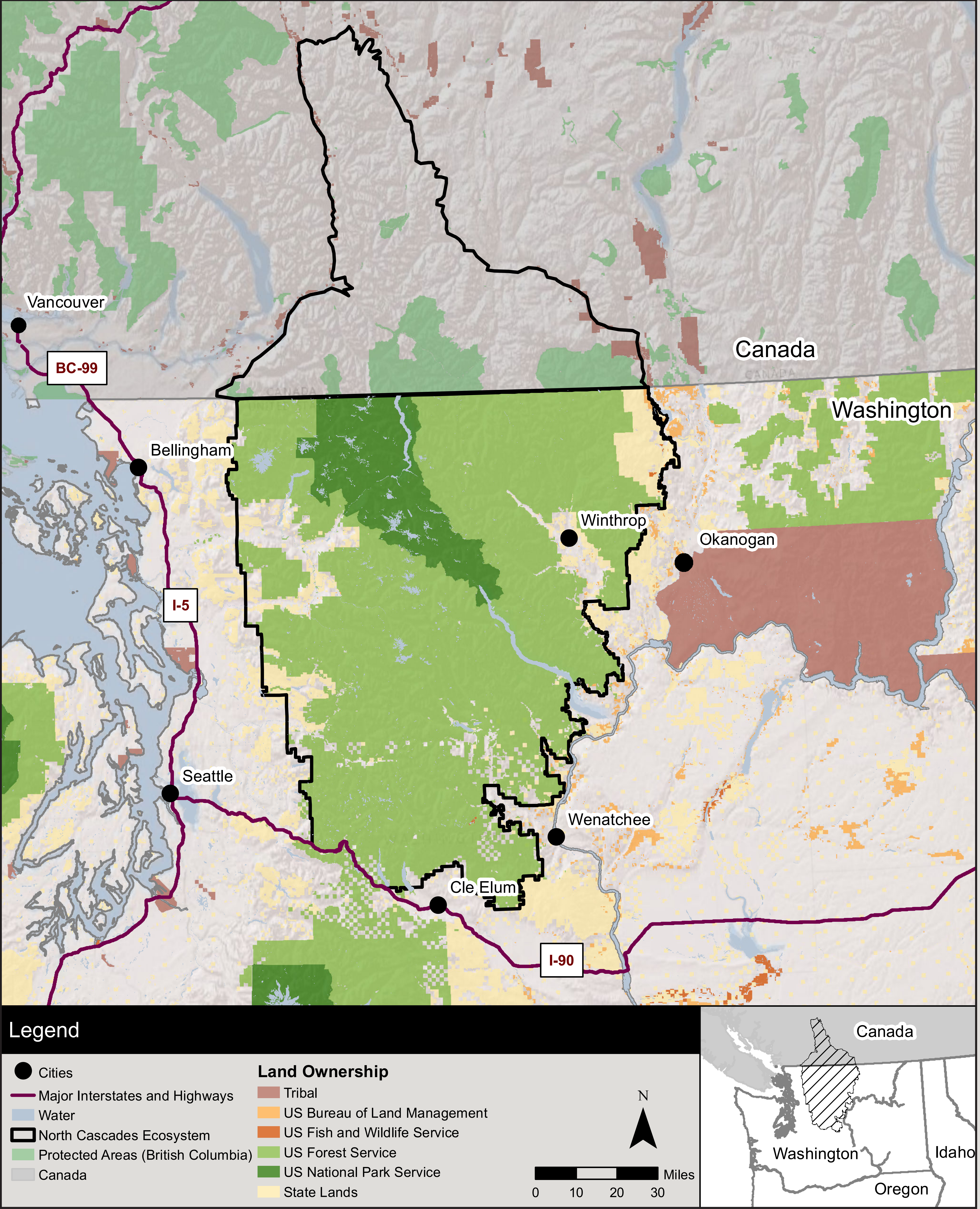


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# North Cascades Ecosystem

Situated in the core of the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE), the North Cascades National Park Service Complex is surrounded by more than 2.6 million contiguous acres of federally designated wilderness, including protected lands and de facto wilderness in British Columbia, Canada. The NCE constitutes a large block of contiguous habitat that spans the international border but is isolated from grizzly bear populations in other parts of the United States and Canada.







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### Background

Research indicates the North Cascades ecosystem (NCE) is capable of once again supporting a self-sustaining grizzly bear population. However, there has been only one observation of a solitary bear during the past 10 years. Given the low number of grizzly bears, very slow reproductive rate, and other recovery constraints, the NCE grizzly bear population is the most at-risk grizzly bear population in the United States today.



The FWS recently reaffirmed that the NCE grizzly bear warrants uplisting from Threatened to Endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

The main threat to grizzly bears in this recovery zone is the small population size, with resulting demographic and genetic risks. Natural recovery in the NCE is challenged by the absence of verified reproduction and isolation from any contiguous populations.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to consider the environmental impacts of a proposed action and alternatives to that proposal, including a “no action,” or status quo, alternative, before making a decision on what action to take. The FWS and National Park Service (NPS) are co-lead agencies in this planning process. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) and the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service (USFS) will serve as cooperating agencies.







# North Cascades Ecosystem

## Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan & Environmental Impact Statement

# Purpose and Need for Action

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## 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.

## Need

Since the NCE grizzly bears are at risk of local extinction, action is needed at this time to:

- Avoid the permanent loss of grizzly bears in the NCE
- 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 and conservation of grizzly bears within the lower 48 States and thereby contribute to overall grizzly bear recovery
- Support the removal of the grizzly bear from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife Species







# North Cascades Ecosystem

## Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan & Environmental Impact Statement

# Objectives in Taking Action

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## Objectives

**The objectives of this Plan/EIS are to:**

- Restore a grizzly bear population as part of the natural and cultural heritage of the North Cascades ecosystem
- Provide Pacific Northwest residents and visitors with the opportunity to again experience grizzly bears in their native habitat
- Seek to support tribal cultural and spiritual values, as well as environmental and natural resource objectives related to the grizzly bear
- Expand outreach efforts to inform and involve the public in the planning process, and build understanding about grizzly bear recovery







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### Issues

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Issues can be problems, concerns, conflicts, obstacles, or benefits that would result from an action. Issues can also be problems that the no action alternative (i.e. status quo) would perpetuate. Examples include:

**Wilderness** -- The use of aircraft in the capture, release, or monitoring of bears in designated wilderness areas could adversely affect the wilderness character of these areas, while the recovery of grizzly bears will increase the overall biodiversity and natural quality of these wilderness areas.

**Wildlife and Habitat** -- Grizzly bears, bull trout, salmon, and several endangered bird species are known to be present within the North Cascades ecosystem and could be affected.

**Visitor Use and Experience** – Recreational tourism and economic factors are important considerations.

**Human Safety** -- Visitor safety concerns warrant the analysis of safety impacts.







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### Impact Topics

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Impact topics are a means of organizing the discussion of issues and analysis of impacts. Impact topics can be thought of as “headings” used in the NEPA document that represent a resource or element of the human environment.

Initial impact topics to be considered in this Plan/EIS include:

- Wildlife & Habitat
- Threatened & Endangered Species
- Wilderness
- Soundscapes
- Human Safety
- Visitor Use & Experience
- Socioeconomics
- Cultural Resources
- Long-term Management of Resources or Land/Resource Productivity







# North Cascades Ecosystem

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# Alternatives

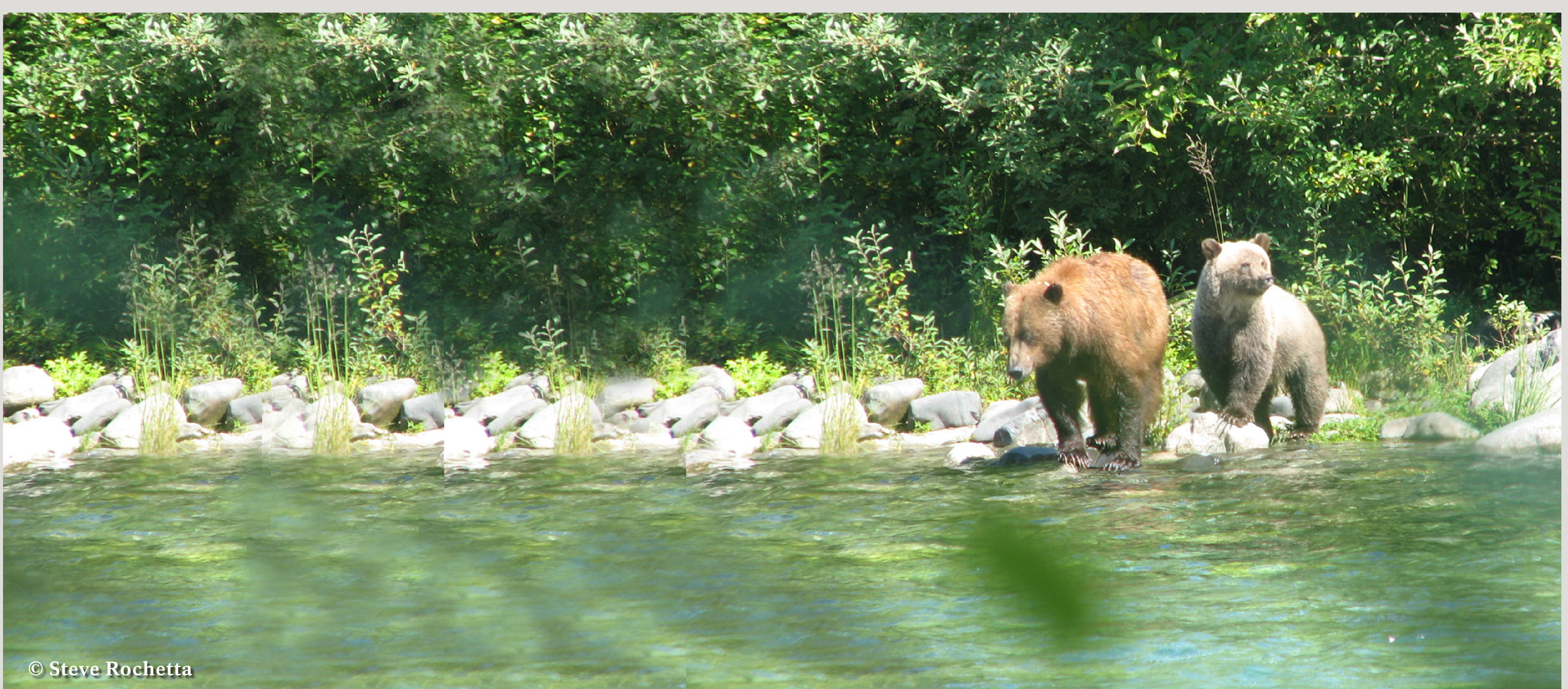
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### NEPA requires federal agencies to:

- Consider a range of alternatives; and
- Fully evaluate all reasonable alternatives that address the purpose of and need for action, including the No Action alternative.

Please provide us with your thoughts about this initial list, and offer any ideas you might have for additional alternative elements for restoring grizzly bears.

- The No Action Alternative (status quo)
- Active restoration alternatives, including moving grizzly bears into the NCE as:
  - » A Threatened population under the ESA
  - » An experimental, or 10(j), population under the ESA, which allows greater flexibility in restoring the grizzly bear, so long as management actions are still in accordance with the ultimate recovery of the species.





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# NEPA Process & Schedule

NEPA regulations require federal agencies to involve the public when making decisions with the potential for environmental impacts.

These public meetings are a part of the scoping process, which is intended to collect comments and gather information from the public. They provide a way for you to learn about and provide early input into this Plan/EIS process.

Steps in this Plan/EIS Process		
Fall 2014	Internal Scoping	
Winter 2015	Public Scoping	WE ARE HERE
Summer 2016	Draft Plan/EIS Release and Public Comment	
Spring 2017	Final Plan/EIS Release	
Summer 2017	NPS/FWS Record of Decision	







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# How To Comment on the Plan/EIS

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**1.**

**Submit comments electronically at:**

**<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/NCEG>  
(preferred method)**

**2.**

**Mail or hand deliver comments to:**

**Superintendent  
North Cascades National Park Service Complex  
810 State Route 20  
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284**

**3.**

**Submit written comments in-person  
at this meeting**

**Please submit your comments by March 26, 2015.**

Comments will not be accepted by fax, e-mail, or in any way other than those specified above. Bulk comments in any format (hard copy or electronic) submitted on behalf of others will not be accepted.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

