



BASIC COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

FOR ROUTINE NON-CONTROVERSIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS



SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Plan title:** USFWS and MTFWP transition grizzly bear relocation responsibilities in Montana
2. **DTS number:** N/A
3. **What is the action triggering this communications plan?** *(Please explain in no more than three sentences)*

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is assuming responsibility for relocating grizzly bears in certain areas of Montana. This is a result of Montana Senate Bill 337, restricting where state employees may participate in grizzly bear relocations.

4. **What is the proposed date for this action? Why has it been selected? Is it flexible?**

July 2022. With grizzly bears emerging from their dens and on the landscape for the season, the potential need for a relocation is increasing.

5. **Which office is leading this communications effort and which other programs, regions or groups are involved?**

Mountain Prairie Region 6 External Affairs with the Ecological Services Grizzly Team and the Regional Director's Office in coordination with HQ External Affairs.

SECTION II: GOALS AND MESSAGES

6. **What story do we want to tell?**

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will now be responsible for relocating grizzly bears to prevent or mitigate conflicts in parts of Montana. This was previously the responsibility of the state.

Relocations will take place to remote areas within U.S. Forest Service units in the state of Montana to prevent and mitigate conflicts with individual bears. The relocation of these

bears is beneficial to both grizzly bears and humans, by moving them away from human development and to areas where they have a better chance of not returning to conflict.

7. What are our key messages? *(These should be top concepts that readers should take away, including an understanding of why this action matters and why they should care, not a list of facts, which should be placed in the appendix. List no more than four!)*

- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will now be responsible for relocating grizzly bears to prevent or mitigate conflicts in certain parts of Montana. The relocation of grizzly bears in Montana has previously been the responsibility of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.
- Relocating a bear from a more developed area to a remote area is mutually beneficial to both the bear and humans, allowing the bear to be removed from another potential conflict, while creating more space between them and human development.
- A grizzly bear is eligible for relocation if they are involved in a conflict, or to prevent them from becoming involved in a conflict. Bears may also be relocated if they have been incidentally caught in other situations, such as wolf traps. Relocation is not an eligible management tool for grizzly bears that are considered a threat to human safety; bears posing a threat to human safety would not be relocated.
- The public can help prevent the need for relocations and make a difference in a bear's life by doing its part to ensure bears never obtain food rewards. Residents of local communities are encouraged to secure attractants around their homes in bear-resistant containers, buildings, or electric fences.

SECTION III: IMPLEMENTATION

8. Implementation timeline *(If not known, put TBD or the number of days/hours before/after the announcement)*

Target Date	Tactic	Responsible
All times are in the Mountain (ET -2) time zone		
Ongoing	Coordinate with Forest Service units	R6: ES Grizzly Team and EA Szuszwalak

Ongoing	Notify local/county agencies of possibility grizzly bears may be relocated to a nearby Forest Service unit	R6: ES Grizzly Team
July 13, 2022 12pm Day prior to announcement	Notify MT FWP, USFS, and County partners of pending announcement	R6: Grizzly Team
July 13, 2022 12pm Day prior to announcement	Notify Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Public Affairs staff of pending announcement	R6 EA: Szuszwalak
July 12, 2022 Day prior to announcement	Congressional notifications	R6: EA Szuszwalak
July 12, 2022 Day prior to announcement	Distribute release and FAQs to local/county agencies	R6: EA Szuszwalak and ES Grizzly Team
July 13, 2022 Day of announcement	Distribute release and FAQs to Montana media outlets	R6 EA: Szuszwalak
July 13, 2022 Day of announcement	Post news release to website (tag MTFO for their page to update)	R6 EA: Szuszwalak

9. Which communications tools are needed to support these strategies and tactics? *(Be as specific as possible about the products identified and who will produce them)*

Tool	Responsible	Due Date
Outreach plan	R6 EA: Szuszwalak	May 2022
Draft news release	R6 EA: Szuszwalak R6 ES: Grizzly	May 2022

	Team	
Develop FAQs	R6 EA: Szuszwalak R6 ES: Grizzly Team	May 2022

10. Social media plan *(Provide a list of accounts to be used as well as sample hashtags, messages, multimedia and other links, etc. as appropriate)*

<p>No social media is planned for this announcement. Social listening will be used to monitor and gauge public sentiment and response to grizzly updates, which can inform future communication.</p> <p>Forest Service units are welcome to share the Service release and messaging.</p>
--

11. Stakeholder contact grids *(For each, paste in a table that provides organization name, contact person, how the person will be contacted, phone or email address as appropriate and a name of the person who will be making contact)*

Internal

R6 Leadership, Ecological Services Leadership, MT ES Field Office, Grizzly Bear Team
--

External

Stakeholder Name	Contact Info	Contact By
U.S. Forest Service	Bitterroot NF, Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, Lolo NF, Helena-Lewis and Clark NF, [others pending information from the Forest Service]	R6: ES Grizzly Team and EA Szuszwalak
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Regional Information and Education Program Managers	R6: EA Szuszwalak
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	Carnivore staff	R6: ES Grizzly Team
Sanders County		R6: ES Grizzly Team

Mineral County		R6: ES Grizzly Team
Missoula County		R6: ES Grizzly Team
Ravalli County		R6: ES Grizzly Team
Blackfeet Nation	Fish and Game Director: gcobell@blackfeetnation.com Environment Director: beo.director@gmail.com	R6: Roya Mogadam
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes	Wildlife Program Manager: whisper.means@cskt.org Environment Director: Michael.Durglo@cskt.org	R6: Roya Mogadam

12. Congressional member email list

Member	District Contact
Senator Tester	Pam_Haxby-Cote@tester.senate.gov
Senator Daines	liz_dellwo@daines.senate.gov
Representative Rosendale	marissa.stockton@mail.house.gov

13. Congressional committee email list

N/A

SECTION IV: PRIMARY POINTS OF CONTACT

- 14. Media coordinators** *(For national-level plans, list at least one person from HQ Public Affairs and others from region/program if appropriate. For regional-level plans, only regional coordinators are required. Enter name, email and phone)*

Joe Szuszwalak, 303-236-4336, joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov

- 15. Congressional coordinators** *(For national-level plans, list at least one person from HQ Public Affairs and others from region/program if appropriate. For regional-level plans, only regional coordinators are required. Enter name, email and phone)*

Joe Szuszwalak, 303-236-4336, joseph_szuszwalak@fws.gov

- 16. Subject matter experts available for interview** *(Must be approved by HQ Public Affairs for an HQ-led announcement or by Regional Public Affairs for region-led announcement. Enter name, email and phone)*

Hilary Cooley, Grizzly Bear Recovery Program Coordinator, 406-243-4903,
hilary_cooley@fws.gov

Jennifer Fortin-Noreus, Grizzly Bear Biologist, 406 243-4994, jennifer_fortin-noreus@fws.gov

- 17. Additional technical experts for reference** *(Enter name, email and phone)*

Questions specific to Forest Service operations (food storage orders, resource questions, etc.) will be directed to the appropriate PAO:

Bitterroot NF: Tod McKay, 406-363-7122, tod.mckay@usda.gov

Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF: Catherine Mcrae, catherine.mcrae@usda.gov

Lolo NF: Kate Jerman, 406-552-7944, katelyn.jerman@usda.gov

Helena-Lewis and Clark NF: Chiara Cipriano, chiara.cipriano@usda.gov

- 18. Are there any non-FWS points of contact for this action?** *(Enter name, organization, role, email and phone)*

Forest Service units have declined 'joint' participation in the announcement, the Service will refer questions regarding Forest Service operations to the appropriate contact.

SECTION V: DOCUMENT INFO

19. Date Created

Created By

04/21/2022	Joe Szuszwalak
------------	----------------

20. Date last edited

Edited By

04/22/2022	Grizzly team
04/25/22	Lolo NF
06/01/2022	Joe Szuszwalak
07/07/2022	Vanessa Kauffman

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

DO NOT PUT OTHER MATERIALS SUCH AS FAQs, NEWS RELEASE OR TALKING POINTS IN THIS SECTION. KEEP THOSE AS SEPARATE DOCUMENTS.

(Consider the following: What is the historical context? Does this relate to other issues that may not immediately be apparent (consider other programs and regions)? Is there a scientific basis to this issue? If so what is it?)

Definitions

Habituated Bear: A bear that shows little to no overt reaction to people as a result of being repeatedly exposed to human stimuli without substantial consequence (Hopkins et al. 2010).

Food Conditioned Bear: A bear that has learned, through prior food reward(s), to associate people, human activities, human-use areas, or food or garbage storage receptacles as sources of anthropogenic foods (Hopkins et al. 2010).

Hazing: Technique where deterrents (i.e., pain, noise, threat, or other unpleasant stimuli) are administered to bears opportunistically to immediately, but temporarily, modify the bears' undesirable behavior (Hopkins et al. 2010).

Human-Bear Conflict: Incidents when bears damage property, obtain human foods (e.g., compost, apiary, pet food, garbage, bird-food, etc.), depredate on livestock, or injure (or kill) humans.