

APPENDIX 19. EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT: "SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE SCOPING OF ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES FOR GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY IN THE BITTERROOT ECOSYSTEM" -- USFWS, SEPTEMBER 1995

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes public responses to identify issues and to suggest management alternatives for the development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the reintroduction of grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains of central Idaho and western Montana.

Public Involvement

In 1993 an interagency task force, working with a citizens' involvement group, drafted a chapter to the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. This chapter outlines reintroduction as the proposed method for recovery. In response to public comments from local communities of central Idaho and western Montana, several changes were made in the final chapter. In 1995 the Fish & Wildlife Service continued public involvement and assembled an interdisciplinary team to begin the EIS process. Team members include specialists from the Fish & Wildlife Service, Forest Service, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, and the Nez Perce Tribe.

A public Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register on January 9, 1995 (Vol. 60, No. 5) on pages 2399-2400. The notice was furnished as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (40 CFR 1501.7) to obtain input from other agencies and the public on the scope of issues to be addressed in the EIS. The preliminary issues identified in March 1995 were:

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|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| * recovery options and legal classification of grizzlies | * illegal killing of grizzly bears |
| * possible restrictions on human uses of public lands | * participatory role of citizens in grizzly bear recovery |
| * geographic boundaries for recovery | * concern for human safety |
| * location and cost of a reintroduction program | * control of nuisance grizzly bears |

Three preliminary alternatives were also identified and published in a Scoping of Issues and Alternatives brochure. This brochure was sent to 1100 people and distributed at seven open houses in July 1995. The scoping brochure detailed the EIS process, provided background information, identified preliminary issues and alternatives, and described the purpose and need of the proposed action.

Seven public scoping open houses were held in Grangeville, Orofino, and Boise in Idaho; in Missoula, Helena and Hamilton in Montana; and in Salt Lake City, Utah in early July (July 5-11) with a 45-day public comment period on the proposal ending July 20. Over 300 people attended these scoping sessions and offered comments on the proposal, the preliminary issues and alternatives, and voiced their opinions on grizzly bears and reintroduction.

On July 25, 1995 Dr. John Weaver, team leader for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, announced a 30-day extension of the public comment period to August 21. This extension was requested by numerous public interests with varied opinions on this complex topic.

Written comments on the preliminary issues and alternatives were received from over 3,300 individuals, organizations and government agencies. These comments arrived in over 565 letters, open house meeting notes, six petitions, and six form letters or postcards.

This analysis of the public's responses describes what people have said as completely and directly as possible without assigning weights or recommendations. The system used was objective, reliable and traceable. All responses received by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by the close of the extended comment period (August 21, 1995) were considered

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in the production of this summary. Comments received after the close of the comment period will be considered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in the development of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement; however, will not be reflected in this report.

It is important to note this analysis is not based on vote-counting. The public involvement efforts of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are intended to gather information and ideas from the public on the purpose and need for the proposal, the preliminary issues & alternatives, and to identify any new issues and alternatives for development of the Draft EIS, not to simply count votes. While quantitative information is gathered and is important in assessing demographic information, that is only part of the information analyzed. It is the reasons for people's concerns, preferences and criticisms that are sought in this process. Therefore, one will find little mention of total numbers in this summary, but rather more qualitative information indicating trends in public opinion.

THE PUBLIC COMMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

The analysis method used for this project provides a means of categorizing each person's comments into separate subjects, then grouping like subjects together so that the public's comments can be more thoroughly examined. It displays public concerns and support on preliminary issues and alternatives with selected quotes to reinforce similar comments. It provides a traceable, visible system for displaying public comments without injecting interpretation or judgment.

Responses were received in the form of letters or postcards, petitions, form letters, and open house meeting notes. Each response was first given a unique identification number. A coding system was developed to assign demographic information to each respondent and to record opinions related specifically to this strategy. Demographic information included identification of who the respondent represents, the medium used for responding, and where the respondent lives (geographically).

Respondents were classified in one of the following categories, referred to in the coding system as 'Organization Types':

Individual Citizens; Professional Scientific Organizations; Organized Groups; Schools or Universities; Youth; Federal Agencies; State Government/Agencies; County Government; Congressional/legislative representatives; or Tribal Government.

Next, substantive comments that supported or opposed particular provisions of the various alternatives were coded, along with particular reasons for support of, or opposition to, that alternative. New alternatives were also described along with opinions from various factions on those new alternatives. Substantive comments pertaining to particular issues were likewise coded. All substantive comments, accompanied by the appropriate codes and demographic information, were then entered into a computer database for easier sorting and retrieval.

At all times, objectivity and fairness were stressed in this public comment analysis. All respondents' values, perceptions and opinions were recorded, including those based on misinformation. The exact words of each respondent were used rather than summaries of the person's words to insure accuracy and objectivity. All letters were read at least three times by the 'content analysis team.' A coder first read the entire response to gain an overall understanding of the respondent's viewpoint, then re-read the response, highlighting and coding substantive comments. To maintain accuracy and consistency, a coding supervisor or another coder would then check the coded response. If questions arose, they would discuss the response and come to an agreement on the appropriate coding.

Comments on technical or complex letters were coded and included in the database, and also "red-flagged" because of their length and detail. Copies of all the documents have been provided separately to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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for more in-depth review.

Any respondent's substantive comments can be found in the database; the original letters and coded copies have been filed for reference. A cross-reference file lists each respondent alphabetically and by a unique identification number, thus original letters and coded copies, which are filed numerically, can be located.

The content analysis team consisted of 9 people. They were employees from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. A list of team members is in Appendix C of the original document (project file). The analysis took place in Missoula, Montana, and was completed in about 14 days.

DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

This section presents demographic information of the responses received. Information displayed includes *who* responded (individuals, organizations, agencies, etc.), *how* they responded (letter, hearing, etc.), and *where* they responded from (in general terms).

WHO RESPONDED

Organization Type	Number of Signatures
Individual Citizens	3,168
Businesses	13
County Officials	3
Organized Groups	45
Congressional / Legislative Elected Officials	4
City / municipal / local government	2
State Government / Agencies	4
Schools, Universities	4
Youth	2
Tribal Government	2
Total	3,247

HOW THEY RESPONDED

Response Type	Number of Responses	Number of Signatures
Letter or Post Card	565	1,311
Open House Attendees	306	306
Petitions	6	809
Form Letters	6	821
Total	883	3,247

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WHERE RESPONDENTS ARE FROM

Geographic Area	Number of Written Responses
LOCAL: MT Counties of Ravalli, Mineral, Missoula; ID Counties of Clearwater, Idaho, Lewis, Nez Perce, & Shoshone.	399
REGIONAL: Rest of counties in Idaho & Montana. Adjacent States of WA, OR, NV, UT & WY.	173
NATIONAL: Rest of U.S. and International	125
TOTAL	697

*This figure doesn't account for names on petitions or form letters, the people who attended open house meetings, or for those who did not give an address.

FORM LETTERS AND PETITIONS

Form Letters

As letters were received, noticeable trends and similarities amongst them became apparent. Six different form letters were detected totaling 821 signatures. The individual comments on the form letters are reflected in the issues and alternatives chapters of this report. Four of the six form letters were against reintroduction of the grizzly bears with human safety being a big concern. A post-card generated by Alliance for the Wild Rockies was received from 779 individuals (431 local; 100 regional; and 248 national). These postcards support the Conservation Biology Alternative (as outlined by Mike Bader for the Alliance for the Wild Rockies) and ask that it be incorporated into the Draft EIS. This alternative would:

- ** Reintroduce grizzlies as an augmentation to the existing population, with full status as a threatened species under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act.
- ** Expand recovery zone to include all of Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness and adjacent roadless lands (total of 15,800 square miles).
- ** Create linkage corridors of protected habitat to ensure genetic exchange for population viability.
- ** Translocate bears only from unthreatened populations.
- ** Complete research on habitat types, quality and distribution throughout expanded recovery area.
- ** Combine the reintroduction with active wildland recovery efforts (road obliteration and revegetation) to restore grizzly habitat and linkage areas.
- ** Establish habitat management standards including limits on open and total road densities.
- ** Provide for full involvement of the independent scientific community in all aspects of reintroduction.

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Petitions

Six different petitions were received containing 809 signatures. Most of the petitions were from local individuals; however, two were generated in Colorado and California in support of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies' form letter described above. A summary of the petitions' major concern(s); area of the highest percentage of signatures; and total number of signatures follows:

SUMMARY OF PETITIONS

Issues / Concerns	Number of Signatures	Area where petition was generated
#31 - Oppose reintroduction; human / livestock safety & orchard / crops concerns.	42	Local; Ravalli & Missoula Counties.
#32 - Oppose reintroduction & request withdrawal from proposed rule making.	40	Local; Ravalli & Missoula Counties.
#33 - Oppose reintroduction; concerned with closing Magruder Corridor; cost to implement; and effects to humans and domestic animals.	47	Local; Ravalli County.
#34 - Support reintroduction & Conservation Biology Alternative described in Form Letter discussion above.	13	National; mostly Colorado.
#35 - Support reintroduction & Conservation Biology Alternative described in Form Letter discussion above.	48	National; generated in Pasadena, California.
#36 - Oppose reintroduction; feel it is threat to life & property and will restrict use of the area.	619	Local; Ravalli & Missoula Counties.
Total	809	

OPEN HOUSES FOR SCOPING ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVES

Open houses were held in July 1995 in seven different communities. The issues and concerns from each of these gatherings were very similar to those summarized in the Issues and Alternatives section(s) of this report. Some of the open houses raised site-specific concerns and those are identified below.

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SUMMARY OF OPEN HOUSES

Date and Location of Open House	Number Attending	Site-Specific Questions / Concerns
July 5, 1995 Grangeville, Idaho	35	None
July 5, 1995 Orofino, Idaho	33	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wait until ESA changed before proceeding further with reintroduction efforts. 2. Broad support for coalition's "citizen management committee" alternative. 3. Why was Salt Lake City chosen as a regional city for these meetings, and not Spokane or Portland?
July 6, 1995 Hamilton, Montana	125	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Noxious weeds - bears transporting weeds/seeds in fur. 2. Ravalli County Commissioners are opposed to reintroduction. 3. Who is responsible if someone is killed or maimed? 4. Irrigation users maintaining wilderness dams are concerned with danger of working near bears. 5. Was economic stability of this area considered? 6. Effects to outfitters/guides businesses? + and - 7. Why was the River of No Return deleted from the recovery area? 8. Fire suppression & its role in vegetation & therefore food for the bear hasn't been addressed. 9. Don't like this format for a meeting; should break into small groups & then report back. 10. Provide rental service for bear food containers. 11. There is no compensation fund for "registered livestock".
July 6, 1995 Missoula, Montana	65	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Extend the comment period to allow for extensive public participation. 2. EIS must evaluate a habitat protection plan. 3. Concerned with conflicts with landowners in lowland spring habitat. Protect bears during spring migration to lowland creeks.
July 10, 1995 Boise, Idaho	31	
July 10, 1995 Helena, Montana	10	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many bears do we need in North Continental Divide, Yellowstone & Selway-Bitterroot Area for declassification? 2. Linkage zones between 3 areas? Do they work? 3. Is there enough food available in Selway to support healthy grizzly population? 4. Have science committee make recommendations to an Advisory Committee who advises the lead agency responsible for management.
July 11, 1995 Salt Lake City, Utah	7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People who are outdoor enthusiasts and supporters elsewhere are generally not in favor of reintroduction of grizzly into Selway-Bitterroots. Want one area in the Region without grizzlies.

CHAPTER 2 - COMMENTS ON THE ISSUES

INTRODUCTION: This section addresses each of the issues identified in the analysis of public comments. The issues are presented in order of the codes displayed in Appendix A, Content Analysis Code Lists, in the original report (*in project file*). The code numbers were assigned during the analysis process as a tool for the content analysis team to categorize comments. Selected quotes from respondents are used to provide a flavor for the comments received on a particular issue.

100/101/102/103 - GENERAL COMMENTS ON STAGE OF PROCESS (PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT/NEPA PROCESS/RULEMAKING, ETC.)

100 - Stage of Process. Several respondents comment on this stage of the process as if it was a draft environmental impact statement rather than scoping for issues and alternatives. The comments reflect an overall concern with the limited number of alternatives and their narrow range, that the issues were not developed fully in the informational brochure, and a “need” is not clearly defined. Others note vague and contradictory facts and information including the meaning of “experimental population”, how long this program will continue, numbers of bears, a missing report and, most notably, what happens if this entire effort is a failure.

“It would be nice to have more than one viable option.”

“When making the Draft EIS please be less vague in the information provided so that a citizen may make informed comments. I would like to know more about what it means to be an experimental population, what is concerned and what will be done with the population should this introduction be deemed a failure. I also wondered if this program will be carried out longer than 5 years.”

“In the Need and Purpose section of the Proposed Action they want to introduce 20-30 grizzly bears over a five year period, but in the alternatives their numbers are different, which ones are correct?”

“The pamphlet distributed by the Bitterroot EIS Team, The History of Grizzly Bear Recovery in the BE, states that in 1986 a 'status report concludes that a resident population of grizzly bears was eliminated from the Selway-Bitterroot area 50 years ago'. In my extensive research of materials relating to the Bitterroot Grizzly I have not come across this status report.”

Two new alternatives, which are discussed later in this report, were submitted during the comment period. They are:

1. The Citizen Management Committee Alternative submitted by a coalition of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF), Intermountain Forest Industry Association (IFIA), Defenders of Wildlife (DOF), and the Resource Organization on Timber Supply (ROOTS).
2. The Conservation Biology Alternative submitted by Alliance for the Wild Rockies.

The Conservation Biology Alternative has already gained many supporters.

“I wholeheartedly support the plan from the 'Alliance for the Wild Rockies'.”

“...submit a Conservation Biology Alternative for inclusion in the Environmental Impact Statement.”

“I’m writing in support of the conservation biology alternative in the environmental impact statement.”

Several respondents are concerned that this process will severely restrict their traditional uses of the forest. They feel they are receiving mixed messages on whether restrictions will come with the bears.

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“We [Bitter Root Back Country Horsemen] are skeptical when told that grizzly bears can be introduced in a manner that will not shut down the traditional uses of the forest...at a recent presentation to our club by a U.S. Fish and Wildlife representative, we were told that we should all be able to work together to prevent closures and other restrictions, even in problem areas. But in the bulletin...‘Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem - Answers to Citizens Questions’, quoting a sentence on page 15, ‘...some road closures and/or seasonal restrictions may be necessary for grizzly bear security’.”

101 - Public Involvement. Several people commented that the public did not receive adequate notice of the open houses, particularly “starting time and the location.” A few commented that the open house format hindered input and that the facilitator was biased and did not allow equal time for both sides.

“Inadequate notice was provided for this important hearing. Our office, and many other interested industry groups received no written notice.”

“Our knowledge concerning your plans to reintroduce grizzly bears (at this time) is limited to the “Missoulian” newspaper article, titled “Return of the Grizzly.”

“The first public input meetings articles in the paper did not give the time or place. A lot of working people didn't know about it until evening when they read their paper, then it was too late to go.”

“[The facilitator] allowed several anti-bear advocates to speak up to four times while pro-bear advocates were waiting to speak. Dividing the room tit-for-tat along ideological lines is not a democratic process...People divided into small groups, limited to brief time periods, and an agenda might have arrived at some modified assumptions and conclusions.”

Many respondents commented that there was a need to extend the public comment period. After the decision was made to extend the public comment period, several respondents thanked the agency for doing so.

“Please note that the press release notifying the public of your plans gives a very narrow window of response time. I suggest that you extend that response time so that news of your proposed project can reach more interested parties and give them time to respond.”

“We would like to request that the comment period be extended for 30 days in order to fully research this complex issue and to contact grizzly bear experts for their input.”

The newspaper article in the Missoulian on July 7 quoting an official of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as saying that most people who attend public hearings are “extremists”. This generated a flurry of comments from those people attending the Hamilton open house as well as others who had read the alleged comment in the newspaper.

“Since when is it extreme to voice one's opinion?”

“I hope you will listen to the public and not assume that because we don't share your views we are “extremists”, nor that those who don't voice opinions must share your ideas.”

“Your so-called expert...is talking through his hat when he claims the objectors are “extremists” and not representative of the people's voice. We haven't talked to a single person in favor...I know you will pay no attention to what the local residents want...and will go ahead with your plans, but it will further lower your reputation among the residents if you do.”

A few people stated that they felt the decision for grizzly recovery is already made and the comment period is merely

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a mandatory step in the EIS process.

“I feel expressing my views to you folks is a waste of time. I sincerely believe the biologists who are putting this together have already made a decision and are merely playing more of their silly games with the taxpayer, taxpayer dollars and federal lands. ...”

“Much confusion exists regarding the place of public involvement in the decision process. Do the residents really have a vote on the final decision?”

Several local respondents feel their concerns should have more weight than comments made by people in other parts of the country. These local citizens feel they will be directly impacted by reintroduction of the grizzlies into the area because “we live here, our children live here, and our animals live here.” Several respondents in the Salmon, Idaho and Challis, Idaho area felt their newspapers did not receive adequate notification for this project. Some of these folks also felt an open house should have been held in Salmon/Challis area rather than in Salt Lake City.

“To those in the urban sites...the bears are being recovered into the Wilderness, when in fact they are being introduced into our backyard.”

“Eastern populations and bureaucrats should not be dictating what we Western folks have to contend with on a regular basis.”

“The bulk of the residents are opposed but feel the decision is already made, so why comment? Eastern money and pressure will get it done.”

“Why do you propose to introduce the grizzly into Central Idaho without putting any information in the local papers in Lemhi or Custer Counties in Idaho?”

A few people commented that they support involvement of the public and would like to create a citizen's oversight committee to review and monitor the grizzly bear plan.

“Management plans must accommodate both the needs of the bears and human concerns. It is important that local people are not only involved in the current planning process but a local advisory committee should be formed to work with State and Federal agencies.”

“Provide for and elicit the full involvement of the independent scientific community in all aspects of reintroduction.”

Several respondents in favor of reintroduction do not want the location of the reintroduced grizzly bears made available to the public or the press. Most feel this would not only jeopardize the bears' security and safety, but the press as well. Some local respondents wanted the location published in order to “stay away from those areas.”

102 - Compliance with NEPA Process. Several respondents believe the decision has already been made, and outside of complying with the NEPA process (National Environmental Policy Act) they see little value in preparing an Environmental Impact Statement.

“Not only is your plan substantively flawed, but the fact that you essentially already have a plan in place but are only now starting the NEPA process suggests that you're just fulfilling the letter of the (NEPA) law, without any intention of taking public comment seriously.”

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103 - Rulemaking for Experimental Population to be presented as Part of draft EIS. No one commented on rulemaking in particular. However, most of the comments pertaining to an experimental population are covered in code 209.

200 - MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Management strategies were outlined briefly in the description of the alternatives provided in the scoping brochure for this project and the Question & Answer pamphlet. Most respondents see a “gap” in “how-to” manage the reintroduction as presented. Several specific suggestions are covered in the sub-category writeups for this subject (codes 201-211). The comments reflected below are more general in nature.

Some new alternatives were generated from various coalitions with numerous individuals rallying to support their favorite “new alternative” they want incorporated and analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Those alternatives are described in the New Alternatives section of the report and attached as Exhibits (*see original report in project file*) so the reader can fully grasp the intricacies of each. Overall, there was more support for these new alternatives and their management strategies than for those described in the scoping brochure and pamphlet.

1. Citizen Management Committee Alternative: See Exhibit 1, Letter #719 (*in project file*). This alternative was submitted by a coalition of the National Wildlife Federation, Intermountain Forest Industry Association (IFIA), Defenders of Wildlife, and the Resource Organization on Timber Supply (ROOTS). This proposal contains four key elements:

- (A) Reintroduction of a nonessential experimental population;
- (B) Citizen management (through a Citizen Management Committee);
- (C) Focus on the designated wilderness areas as the core for recovery; and
- (D) Minimal social and economic impacts.

2. Conservation Biology Alternative: See Exhibit 2, Letter 714 (*in project file*). This alternative was submitted by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies. The letter points out several problems with the proposed alternative and introduces their new Conservation Biology Alternative:

- (A) The “Experimental, Non-essential” Designation is not a legal alternative;
- (B) Grizzly Bears would receive less protection of their habitat;
- (C) The Recovery Zone is artificially small;
- (D) The population recovery goal is too small;
- (E) Source Bears may not be available;
- (F) More alternatives need to be developed;
- (G) Need a Conservation Biology Alternative.

Several people commented on what they see as appropriate number of bears to bring in initially. Comments ranged from “ten bears per year to ‘jump start’ recovery” to “no bears because I don’t support reintroduction...” Some people favoring the Conservation Biology Alternative question whether the source bears would even be available from southern B.C. due to effects on grizzlies from hunting in the area. Several people believe a remnant population already exists in the Bitterroot Ecosystem and this proposal would simply “augment that remnant population”.

“Grizzlies taken from an area such as Canada, where there is an abundant food supply, both vegetation and fish, will not survive in an arid climate as the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness Area and the Bitterroot mountains where there is a decline in the available forage for Grizzly.”

Some considerations for the draft E.I.S. were raised with the most frequent comment being a need for more alternatives. Still others feel habitat quality must be quantified.

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“There was a reasonable presentation of the accepted history of the griz in the area, but no mention of current scientific thought. The recognized needs of a viable population were not discussed. The known parameters of individual bears in the given variance of habitat was not mentioned.”

“Satellite map the vegetation of the recovery zone including the specific release site; and undertake the translocation project as a rigorous scientific experiment...A system for mapping vegetation should include vegetation classification based on plant succession...quantitative detailed ground truthing...a standardized color code for vegetation and terrain features...the “supervised” approach to computerized vegetation analysis.”

201 - CAPTURING AND RELEASE METHODS

The major concern voiced by respondents is to translocate bears from unthreatened populations only, as documented by scientific data. Some were also concerned with the humane handling of bears, with many commenting “the bears are happy where they are so why move them!” Some commented that contact with humans during transportation should be minimized; only the team transporting the bears should be allowed in contact; and media footage should be limited to trained personnel only. Several feel the same team should accompany the bears on their entire journey. A few commented on where the bears should come from that will be released; most of these individuals do not support the bears coming from Canada, but rather prefer other areas such as Alaska.

“Its [reintroduction] unfair to the bears. They are drugged and removed from a familiar environment containing sufficient food sources and transported to an unfamiliar place containing food sources of questionable adequacy.”

“It seems a cruel twist of fate for a program undertaken in response to the Endangered Species Act to result in actions that capture perfectly happy Grizzly bears, haul them to an unfamiliar area, hang a radio collar on them, and turn them loose to see if they can 'make it'. The bears are pawns in a social conflict and as such are undoubtedly expendable in this game of power politics.”

“Alaska should be considered as a possible source for the grizzly bears because we cannot always look to the Canadians to supply us with species that we run out of...There are also economic reasons why the grizzly bears should be obtained in Alaska.”

“The Fish and Wildlife Service should carefully choose its source area for getting bears for the reintroduction effort. Under no circumstances should bears be removed from an area if removal would imperil the population in that area.”

202 - STRATEGIES TO CONTROL NUISANCE BEARS

Most respondents commenting on this topic feel that if bears wander out of the wilderness boundary they should not automatically be considered problem bears. Many feel the bears will move where there is an adequate food source and question whether the proposed site has enough food to keep the grizzly contained. Several respondents do support the concept of relocating or disposing of problem bears. Not surprisingly, people who support relocation or killing problem bears are local residents.

“Reintroduced bears that establish their territory outside of the wilderness boundaries should be left undisturbed and not moved back to the wilderness unless they are becoming ‘problem bears’.”

“I do not want the Bitterroot Recovery Zone to become a mortality sink, acting only as a killing ground for “surplus” bears as appears to occur in the Cabinet/Yaak recovery zone.”

“The food the bears used to survive on is now greatly depleted so the bears will be forced to migrate toward

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food--namely farms and ranches on the edge of the mountains...people will be out in force to hunt them down and kill the remaining bears.”

“If the USFWS insists on reintroducing grizzly bears, over the objection of the State of Idaho, the following parameters must be included in the recovery plan: No restrictions or qualifications should be placed on citizens in the protection of themselves, their families, or their property.”

203 - ILLEGAL KILLING OF GRIZZLY BEARS

Several people commenting on this issue feel the punishment for poaching should be tough and law enforcement surveillance increased. Their suggestions include higher fines, longer imprisonment, public humiliation, and zero tolerance for killing grizzly bears. Others had a different viewpoint because they feel killing grizzly bears in self-defense is acceptable as well as mistakenly killing grizzlies during the spring black bear season. Some respondents are unclear about the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (or the interpretation of the Act by the courts) when a person kills a grizzly in self-defense.

“If poachers kill any bears, the penalty should be tough...high fine, imprisonment & public humiliation...put their picture in the paper and name too.”

“The killing of any grizzly, for whatever reason, should be cause for felony proceedings, all agency personnel included.”

“An administrative law judge from the Department of the Interior has ruled that man cannot defend himself against a grizzly bear and then later claim self-defense, IF he “intentionally placed himself in the zone of imminent danger”. Therefore, an individual who kills a grizzly in self-defense will still be subject to the civil penalty provisions of the Endangered Species Act. If the above doesn't cause butterflies in your stomach, you are not living close enough to the involved Reintroduction Area.”

“Self-defense...is an issue that has to be addressed without a person being subject to a ridiculous fine.”

“Potential conflicts with spring black bear hunting in the recovery area should be addressed to minimize the accidental killing and harassment of grizzlies.”

204/205 - RECOVERY AREA (GEOGRAPHIC BOUNDARIES/SIZE/ AND RANGE)

Size of the Recovery Area Boundaries: Most of the respondents commenting on this particular issue provided their interpretation of what the boundaries should be. A popular comment was to “allow bear recovery on all of our public lands, not just designated wilderness areas”. A few respondents feel 'buffer zones' of adjacent roadless areas which are not (yet) designated wilderness need to be included in the boundaries. Numerous folks feel the area should be expanded to include the “Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness” and another frequent suggestion was “lands north of the Lochsa River (Highway 12)”.

A few people, on the other hand, feel the boundary needs to be restricted to only wilderness area boundaries. Several people who do not favor grizzly reintroduction take exception with the area boundaries, particularly around the Bitterroot valley. Many site the difference in terrain between the Bitterroots and the Bob Marshall or Yellowstone.

“Include in E.I.S.: Recovery area within the wilderness area only.”

“The western slopes of the Bitterroot are very steep, rocky and full of brush and blowdowns, not the wide trails and vistas of the Bob Marshall. You encounter a grizzly on these trails, and there is no where for you to go and the bear knows it.”

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“I have lived in the Bitterroot for 36 years...The terrain in the mountains here is different than the Bob Marshall or Yellowstone areas. Meeting a grizzly on these trails would be a no-win situation...These canyons leave little room for people and bears to by-pass each other without incident.”

Numerous respondents take the opinion that grizzlies should be left where they are but not purposely reintroduced anywhere. They feel “there are plenty of grizzlies in the Yellowstone Area, the Glacier area, the Canadian and Alaskan mountains” and they like the idea of having one place they can go that does not have grizzly bears. Several respondents provide creative places to reintroduce grizzlies such as Washington, D.C.; numerous cities in California; Central Park, etc. Emotions run high and there are strong feelings on not having grizzly bears, particularly from folks in the Bitterroot valley.

“If these flower sniffing environmentalists...are so infatuated with saving these predators, then take them and your selves and go back to East L.A. California or whichever rat hole place you come from and transplant them there because we sure as hell don't want you or need you, your Grizzly Bears and/or wolves in Montana...I am speaking as a Native American, Native Montanan and as a fourth generation Native Bitterrooter and damn proud of it.”

A local form letter included the following statement “...Dangerous grizzly bears belong in the Wilderness areas--NOT in the People areas of our National Forest!”

Positive Comments on the Boundaries: Not all comments were critical of the boundaries for the reintroduction. A few people said they thought the proposal was a good one. A few said, “The Bitterroot seems to be an obvious link between grizzly populations in Canada and the southern Rockies”. Another respondent supports the concept by saying:

“I have spent a lot of time in the Bitterroots and there are few places left that would suit the Grizzly bear better than the Bitterroot Ecosystem.”

Confusion on the Boundaries: Several respondents were confused and/or misled on what the boundaries are and would like to have that clarified in the Draft E.I.S. The most frequent comment was “the public is being misled when your publications state that the introduction will be in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, when in reality the boundaries encompass vastly larger areas of the National Forests.”

“There is confusion when the project materials are reviewed re the biogeography (maps of the various areas associated with the plan). The original range of grizzly bears is shown on a map, but we can't assume anything about local distributions, densities and seasonal movements of grizzlies within those range distributions. Also, the shading on several versions of the maps provided suggests the Bitterroot Ecosystem (BE) extends from south of Boise, ID, to somewhere north of Coeur d'Alene, ID & NE of Missoula, MT...collectively the boundaries of several R1 national forests in MT & ID. The size (sq miles) of the BE isn't given (100 miles X 200 miles = 20,000 sq. miles)? But our attention is then focused away from the very large BE area, to the smaller 5500 sq mile “Grizzly Bear Evaluation Area” which includes all of the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, a large piece of the Clearwater Forest and northern end of the Frank Church-RNR Wilderness...Is the 20,000 sq mile BE area the target of the eventual 200+ grizzly bears, or is it the smaller 5500 sq mile area that's going to support the 200 bears?”

“Your map in the paper shows the recovery area ending at the Salmon River on the south but your accelerated reintroduction plan says you want to place them to the south end of the River of No Return Wilderness. That includes another 100 miles south of the area on your map. Why didn't you show that on your map in the paper? It seems like you don't want the public to be aware of what you are doing and the total area impacted.”

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Sufficient Critical Feeding Habitat: Of primary concern to several respondents is inclusion of sufficient low-elevation spring and fall feeding habitat. They feel enough habitat must be identified and included to insure the bears' survival during years when the bears' food sources might fail.

“Designation of the boundaries of the reintroduction zone must include sufficient critical feeding habitat for a viable population, including the examination of lands north of the Lochsa River.”

“As grizzly populations grow, they must be allowed to expand their range into relatively low elevations. We have to get away from the idea that grizzly bears can only live in the mountains.”

206 - RECOVERY TIME

A few people commented on the length of time recovery would take with those who favor grizzly bear reintroduction preferring the accelerated basis and those who do not want grizzly bears reintroduced preferring “no action”. Several people wrote that while they support grizzly bears, they feel that the bears should come into an area on their own or 'let nature take its course' and do not agree with artificially reintroducing the grizzlies into an area.

207 - FAVOR TO SPECIAL INTERESTS (CAVING IN)

A modest number of respondents (less than 10) point fingers at other interests claiming they are waging undue influence in the process. Some claim the “environmentalists” are trying to “lock up” the woods to multiple-use by supporting reintroduction efforts. On the other side, there are claims that the “timber industry” is unduly influencing the process by restricting the boundary area to designated wilderness only.

“It appears the agencies have and are buckling under to timber industry pressure to restrict grizzly habitat to designated wilderness only.”

“I believe this is a...transparent attempt by the federal government to gain more and more control over our lands and the activities on them - i.e. now that we have a few bears in the woods in central Idaho, we need to stop all logging so the bears will multiply better.”

208 - MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The most popular comment on this issue was to solicit peer review during all aspects of reintroduction from the independent scientific community.

“Provide for and elicit the full involvement of the independent scientific community in all aspects of reintroduction”.

“...qualified members of the scientific community needs to be an integral part of the recovery team and...offered the opportunity to bid on various aspects of the project...It would help to insure objectivity and lend credibility to both research and management results. Develop and apply new management and monitoring techniques that are more precise and less intrusive on the populations than current ones.”

One person commented that the problem with documenting the presence of grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Ecosystem comes with the criteria for judging reported observations.

“According to current criteria “only trained biologists” are able to confirm observations. The idea that only a “trained biologist” can differentiate between a grizzly bear and a black bear is ludicrous...The current system for evaluating reported observations should be redesigned to more accurately reflect the ability of today's more sophisticated back country users.”

209 - EXPERIMENTAL/NON-ESSENTIAL POPULATION & AREA

A significant number of people commented specifically on the experimental/nonessential designation proposed for alternative 2. There are as many respondents opposed to this classification as in support of it.

Supporters of the designation say it will provide more flexibility in management options and will win more local support for bear recovery.

“Please register my support for reintroduction of the grizzlies as an experimental population. It is my belief that this option will restore bears effectively and has the greatest potential for winning local support.”

“I support the experimental, non-essential proposal that you have made because I believe that it will allow economic consideration in the region ...throughout the restoration process. It is critical to gain local support in order for the restoration to succeed.”

“ROOTS [Resource Organization on Timber Supply] supports reintroduction of an experimental, non-essential population under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act, the purpose of this section is to help accelerate recovery of a species in the wild but without all the consultation requirements of a natural population. In addition, this section promotes local acceptance of experimental populations because of it allows greater management flexibility.”

“We support nonessential experimental designation because this option ensures maximum flexibility for reintroducing and managing grizzly bears in the Bitterroot ecosystem. Under this designation, innovation is fostered and social and economic impacts can be minimized.”

Those who are opposed say that designating the grizzly bears as experimental and nonessential would be in direct violation of Section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act. They feel this would be contrary to the purpose of the ESA since this designation reduces the level of protection to the grizzly by treating it as a “proposed species” under Section 7 (because the recovery area is outside a national park or wildlife refuge). Several respondents feel if the bears are reintroduced they should be fully protected under the Endangered Species Act. The point is also raised that there are reports that grizzlies are already in the area, “so the non-essential experimental provision under ESA should be abandoned.”

“While I am a strong supporter of immediate reintroduction, I oppose “experimental, non-essential population” status. The bears should retain full ESA protection given that natural migration is also occurring.”

“The ‘Experimental, non-essential’ designation is not a legal alternative: Reports of grizzly bears are still received from the proposed recovery region. Reliable sources including grizzly bear researchers, believe a small population of grizzly bears still remain in this region. Thus, the...designation would not be legal under section 10(j) of the ESA, which specifies that experimental populations must be wholly separate, both geographically and biologically, from other populations. According to the Fish and Wildlife Service's own maps, the Bitterroot area is less than 40 miles from an established grizzly bear population in the Cabinet Mountains.”

“We think that viable linkages may exist between the Selway/Bitterroot, the GYE and the NCDE, making application of 10(j) inappropriate. The occasional sightings reported in scoping may be indicative of these linkages. Protections given species proposed for listing have proven ineffective. We do not think an expensive recovery effort should be jeopardized in this way. The inability to designate critical habitat would only threaten recovery objectives even more.”

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Some individuals feel the experimental designation is premature and potentially harmful to grizzly bear recovery because it is not supported by enough research. Some respondents feel more extensive monitoring is needed in the recovery area before the grizzly is given an experimental or nonessential designation.

210 - CONSULTATION WITH FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Two respondents support the consultation requirements under Section 7 of the ESA and feel it should remain in place for activities with potential effects on roadless and other habitat needed for full recovery.

211 - HABITAT PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

Most respondents commenting on habitat protection requirements feel habitat should either be protected throughout the entire range or only within wilderness boundaries. Those who support reintroduction efforts prefer the entire recovery area and those who do not want grizzly bears in the area prefer that requirements do not occur at all or only in the wilderness. This latter group sees requirements for habitat protection as interfering with other uses of the forest, i.e. logging, building roads, access, etc.

“Habitat protection in the Greater Salmon-Selway ecosystem must be a priority for your agency if this reintroduction is to be more than a manipulation of a small population of grizzly bears in a too small recovery zone...We need complete protection, including Wilderness designation for all roadless Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands...including recovery of lands within the ecosystem back to wilderness condition.”

Some individuals provide specific examples of what they would like to see included as habitat protection requirements.

“Initiate habitat recovery efforts in and around the recovery area to facilitate exchange of bears with populations in the Cabinet and Selkirk areas. Active wildland recovery efforts to restore grizzly habitat and linkage areas shall consist of extensive road obliteration and revegetation.”

“Low-elevation spring habitat must receive special attention.”

“The bears need security from roads and motorized recreation. Logging activities should be minimized.”

“One individual expresses a distrust that Forest Plans provide adequate habitat protection.”

“The current proposal would rely on Forest Plan management...court rulings have shown that the Forest Plans in this region do not provide adequate habitat protection for grizzly bears.”

300 - LAWS, RESTRICTIONS, RIGHTS, AUTHORITY

A large number of respondents expressed the need for a local citizens management committee or local advisory committee. Several stated that management should remain with the USFWS, States and Tribes.

Develop Citizens Management Committee

“I would recommend that local grizzly management concerns be addressed through a local advisory committee comprised of a broad cross section of interests. Overall and day-to-day management responsibilities should reside with the USFWS, the states and the tribes.”

“We are adamant in insisting that a citizens management committee be established and that authority for citizen involvement not be downgraded to an advisory status. This provision is absolutely key in gaining local support for a reintroduction plan.”

“A local working group should be established to develop a set of concerns with grizzly bear reintroduction.”

Numerous individuals signing a petition request that reintroduction be withdrawn from proposed rule making. Several individuals, after seeing the coalition of the Citizen Management Committee, wrote that they were opposed to that groups' proposal to form a citizen management committee.

301 - FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL & TRIBAL AUTHORITY

There were numerous comments regarding who should have jurisdiction over management of the grizzly. While several respondents support local citizen involvement, they also stated that overall day-to-day bear management responsibilities should reside with the USFWS.

“Overall and day-to-day bear management responsibilities should reside with the USFWS, the state wildlife agencies, and the tribes. The grizzly bear recovery program is, ultimately, a responsibility of the federal government, not of the states.”

“Local grizzly management concerns would be addressed through a local advisory committee comprised of scientists and others interested in the Bears recovery (not by local county commissioners or logging executives).”

“Ongoing bear management responsibilities should be shared by a wide range of interests including local, state and tribal governments with the US Fish & Wildlife Service maintaining a predominant role.”

“A panel of scientists, biologists and ecologists, should have overall authority within the recovery effort. The 'political' or 'public' steering committee should act as an advisory body. This would allow the primary mission of grizzly bear recovery to drive the process while retaining the perspective of public concerns.”

“Local elected officials should not have management authority over the reintroduced grizzly bears! County, tribal and soil conservation district governments usually have no motivation or expertise in grizzly bear or grizzly bear habitat management and research...”

302 - RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF PUBLIC LANDS

One of the overriding reasons respondents oppose the reintroduction is fear that doing so would bring additional closures to access in the area. Most of these comments came from local residents who enjoy the amenities of the backcountry and feel that reintroduction of grizzly bears will effect them directly. Several feel this is just another way to 'lock up' forests to recreational use. They feel areas will be closed to protect the people as well as the bears and traditional uses of the area will discontinue. Several respondents are concerned with the possible closure of the

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Magruder Corridor. Others who fear access restrictions say they favor the “no action” alternative.

“As I look at the areas of the reintroduction the thoughts of area closures come to mind. Every year that new closure maps are published there are more road closures, trail closures (to motorized vehicles including trail bikes) and less access by outdoors enthusiasts. If this slow but steady closure program is continuing without reintroduction of the grizzly bear, it is only natural that most of these areas will be closed to human access as the bear is introduced and expands its range.”

“Putting aside such a huge amount of land as a recovery zone for grizzly bears is unbelievable to us. Our lands to hunt and fish on are already being more limited each year by more roads being blocked off.”

“...introducing grizzlies is like putting a “closed to hiking” sign on the entire area.”

“We [Bitterroot Back Country Horsemen] are skeptical when told that grizzly bears can be introduced in a manner that will not shut down the traditional uses of the forest...at a recent presentation to our club by a USFWS representative we were told that we should all be able to work together to prevent closures and other restrictions, even in problem areas. But in the Bulletin... “Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem - Answers to Citizens Questions”, quoting a sentence on page 15, “...some road closures and/or seasonal restrictions may be necessary for grizzly bear security.” This somewhat contradictory view illustrates our point -- the restrictions will come with the bears, whether planned by the [agency] or not, and these restrictions will get worse over time.”

“Grizzly bears moving into an outfitter's area of operations or near permitted camp sites will have the priority use and all human activity will be terminated.”

A few respondents feel restrictions are necessary to protect the grizzly bear and to protect the habitat.

“I am in favor of preserving large tracts of intact, unlogged and unroaded ecosystems; if the bears are the only way to achieve that goal, then I am in favor of the bears.”

“I would much rather have a few grizzlies roaming around than dozens of logging trucks, road graders and other heavy machinery tearing at the earth.”

“I am willing to sacrifice some backcountry areas, closing them if needed, to provide protection for the bears. I am an avid hunter and backpacker, and I feel that the introduction of grizzlies is a good thing.”

303 - PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

A few respondents expressed concern that they did not have the right to protect their private property from the grizzly bear. They felt they should have a legal option of killing a bear in defense of life or property. They point out that the burden of regulations to property owners will be “oppressive”.

“Our private property rights on our permanent easements on our irrigation dams will be violated by this introduction. We feel recovery zones will bring bear protection regulations which will also endanger our property rights.”

“[Idaho Farm Bureau Federation] has serious concerns about the impact these animals will have on the agricultural/ranching industry.”

“If the USFWS insists on reintroducing grizzly bears, over the objection of the State of Idaho, the following

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parameters must be included in the recovery plan: There must be no additional federal limits placed on the use of public or private lands outside the boundary of the Reintroduction Zone.”

“Your booklet on page 13 says grizzly bears cannot be killed by members of the PUBLIC IN DEFENSE OF PROPERTY. This alone is reason enough to say NO NO NO to the reintroduction of the grizzly bear...when the laws or rules say we cannot protect our properties, this is going far too far.”

304 - ESA (ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT)

A great number of respondents believe the bear must be reintroduced under the Endangered Species Act. These people want the grizzly bear fully protected under the ESA and feel any attempt to do otherwise is against the law. They believe the experimental nonessential designation would not ensure the safety of the bears being introduced into the area nor the safety of any bears that might already be there. However, a few respondents felt the experimental nonessential designation would give needed flexibility (Refer to other comment on issue 209).

Many respondents feel the grizzly bear is not an endangered species due to the numbers that already exist in other areas. Some feel the ESA should be abolished, particularly those who favor the “no action” alternative.

“It is time we stopped merely paying lip service to the idea of species protection and preservation and started actually accomplishing the goal of protecting our natural heritage.”

“I believe that full protection of individual bears under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing provision be awarded relocated bears. Livestock are not common in the Bitterroot so the need for nonessential experimental population status seems questionable. I firmly believe that consultation requirements under Section 7 of the ESA should remain in place for activities with potential effects on roadless and other habitat needed for full recovery.”

“Grizzly females may take up to 10 years or more to replace herself with a daughter of breeding capabilities. This is if the Mother bear has a daughter in her first litter. I recommend fully protecting the grizzly under the Endangered Species Act for at least 15-20 years, so there will be a guarantee of established breeding females to replenish grizzly populations.”

“The artificial introduction of grizzlies creates inevitable and numerous conflicts between humans and bears. An unintended effect of this will be to actually erode public support for the Endangered Species Act.”

In Opposition

“It is wrong for us to treat the grizzly bear as if it were an endangered species. There are thousands of them living in Canada and Alaska. The fact that there are relatively few in the lower 48 states does not concern me one bit.”

“We have observed that animal rights groups and wilderness special interest groups use the Endangered Species Act to push their own goals of restricting and denying traditional forest uses as; Forestry, grazing, water use, hunting, fishing and recreation. Citing exaggerated threats to certain species of wildlife.”

“I support the 'No Action' alternative which would allow Grizzly Bears to populate whatever portions of the public lands they choose...the Grizzly Bear is officially categorized as 'Threatened', the Grizzly is in actuality, neither 'threatened' or 'endangered'. They thrive very nicely in a variety of habitats. In fact, in Montana, grizzly management by the State Dept. Fish, Wildlife and Parks maintained a sizable Grizzly population without undue disruption of other activities, and some hunting was allowed.”

“I have seen no compelling evidence that suggests the reintroduction of grizzly bears to the Selway-Bitterroot

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area of Idaho and Montana is essential to the survival of the species. In fact, the grizzly bears have done so well in the Yellowstone area that there is a movement to have the Yellowstone population de-listed.”

“This frustration (with grizzly reintroduction) stems from the unreasonable and irresponsible manner the USFWS has exhibited in handling grizzly bear recovery efforts in other portions of the state. Grizzly bear populations have been meeting and exceeding population parameters in both the Glacier National Park and Yellowstone National Park Ecosystems for many years. Yet as grizzly populations reach these recovery goals, the USFWS continues to ignore the possibility of relaxing regulations that restrict activities in these areas. Instead, as old goals are met and exceeded, the agency develops new standards for the population to meet.”

305 - INTERAGENCY GRIZZLY BEAR COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

The only comment received on this issue was that there appeared to be a “decision” made by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee on reintroduction so why waste time having public involvement and going through the NEPA process on it now.

306 - STATE OR PRIVATE BEAR MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST

No one responded to this particular issue; however, the concerns for state or private bear management are covered in issue 301.

307 - COMPLIANCE WITH FOREST PLANS

Two respondents commented on compliance with Forest Plans. One was critical of Forest Plans and whether they do an adequate job of protecting biological corridors and habitat; the other comment raised by the Citizen Management Committee referred to using the existing standards and guidelines of the Forest Plans unless deemed otherwise.

“I remain unconvinced that current Forest Plan directions are sufficient to protect biological corridors for the long-term proliferation of the bear. All the available habitat must be linked in a system of biological corridors such as proposed by the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.”

“[Citizen Management Committee] Initial Standards & Guidelines: Existing forest plan standards and guidelines for current wildlife management will be deemed adequate unless the Committee determines otherwise.”

308 - WILDERNESS ACT

Although numerous respondents spoke to wilderness in other issues, the Act itself was only referred to in the following comment:

“According to Forest Service interpretation of the Wilderness Act, all animals, plants, trees, fish, etc. in Wilderness Areas are to be left to nature. How can they reintroduce grizzlies in Wilderness since they have been gone long before the Wilderness Act was passed in 1964?”

400 - ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

A majority of respondents in favor of reintroduction feel the grizzly is a necessary component of the ecosystem that is now missing. Some people, however, feel the ecosystem has evolved with the absence of the grizzly, and that its return would upset the existing ecology. Quite a few people mention there is a lack of food supply particularly grasses and forbes, berries, pine nuts, and that there is a lack of anadromous fish. Red cedar is the indicator species for moisture; this suggests that the Bitterroot is somewhat drought. Many feel it is necessary to restore good habitat conditions before reintroducing grizzlies. If the Bitterroot provided suitable habitat, the bears would be there already.

“The productivity of the area is on a downward trend because of the encroachment of noxious weeds,

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especially spotted knapweed and sulphur cinquefoil. Grizzly bears will likely contribute to the problem of further reducing vegetational diversity because of their habits.”

“...Reintroducing grizzlies to the Selway-Bitterroot is necessary to the survival of the bear in the lower 48 states.”

“By taking happy bears from Canada and putting them into a new environment in Idaho we do a great disservice to the bears.”

“You are proposing to take bears from healthy ecosystems and dump them in an area where they are sure to have an uncertain future. Already salmon, cutthroat trout, bull trout and whitebark pine in the Selway Bitterroot ecosystem are on the verge of disappearing. All were forage species for the great bear...The number one priority should be to reestablish the natural diversity that existed prior to the grizzlies' elimination.”

“I really want to see grizzlies remain in the Northern Rockies forever. Establishing a third population would help a lot to meet this goal, and the Selway-Bitterroot is about the only undisturbed large area left.”

“I support the reintroduction for the following reasons: increased habitat for grizzly bears, increased biodiversity and increased population of an endangered species.”

A few people commented that reintroduction should be guided by biological factors.

“A Conservation Biology Alternative that has been suggested by the Alliance for the Wild Rockies is most consistent with this crucial approach, and must be evaluated.”

“I would like to see an alternative developed that would restore the land in grizzly bear management units to a condition usable to grizzlies.”

401 - GRIZZLY BEAR AS A MISSING COMPONENT OF THE ECOSYSTEM

Many people feel the grizzly bear embodies the “wild” in wilderness. Several people stated that the survival of the grizzly indicated a healthy ecosystem for all species, including human. One person felt bears are necessary for human health research in prevention of osteoporosis and heart disease, etc.*

* “While denning, bears do not lose bone mass. Bears are unique in the animal kingdom in this regard. No other animal exhibits this phenomenon nor can any other animal system be manipulated to behave in this manner. I am currently in pursuit of the substance made by bears which prevents osteoporosis.” Bears do not develop heart disease despite the fact that they have very high serum cholesterol levels. ... Serum from bears is highly nutritive for cells growing in tissue culture. Bears are able to handle urinary wastes for five months without urinating. ...Bears have very powerful immune systems. ... Bears secrete a bile acid which has proven useful in the treatment of gall stones. It is therefore of utmost importance to human medicine and medical science that strong efforts are made to preserve ursine genetic biodiversity in order to provide material from which to do scientific research...”

Several people felt that we should leave nature alone; adding grizzlies constitutes change. Let nature take its course. Several people thought habitat needs improving before reintroducing bears. They suggest resuming the anadromous fish runs, return fire into the ecosystem, and improve vegetation food supply. Some commented that it is necessary to restore nature's imbalance.

“It will restore a vital missing link to Idaho's wilderness and probably secure the existence of the “great bear”

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in the lower 48 states.”

“Grizzly bears...are a part of the natural world and I want to know they have suitable habitat. Also that they have a better chance of survival because they have a corridor for dispersal and biological or genetic diversity.”

“The grizzly bear is an indicator species that shows how the ecosystem it lives in, is coping. The grizzly, being a top predator of the food chain, needs to thrive in a wilderness habitat (where there are no roads).”

“The ecosystem balance needs the grizzly more than it needs further human utilization.”

“The grizzly is the quintessential symbol of the wild, and belongs in the Wilderness. The bear's reintroduction into the Selway-Bitterroot area would help restore the delicate balance of nature that existed before hunting had such devastating effects on the species.”

“The grizzly bear should be returned to the Bitterroot Ecosystem. The grizzly bear adds natural diversity to land systems.”

“Since the bears are doing so well where they are, leave them there. If the bear wants to come to the lower 48 let them do it naturally on their own.”

402 - IS GRIZZLY NATIVE TO BITTERROOT ECOSYSTEM

Several people felt the key to developing a secure grizzly population south of Canada lies in recovering more of the bear's historic range and increasing bear numbers. Some people felt that (a few) grizzlies already exist. Many people questioned that grizzlies were ever in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness area because the habitat is not good and historical records don't support it.

“No mention of grizzly in the Bitterroot Valley in the Lewis and Clark diaries. It appears grizzlies were primarily in the plains, along the rivers and following buffalo herds.”

“The grizzly bear once roamed throughout the area. Lewis & Clark commented in their journals that they had killed eight grizzlies around what is now Kamiah.”

“I don't believe man had anything to do with the grizzly disappearing from these areas...I don't think there ever was a small population in the two areas.”

403 - WHAT IS A VIABLE GRIZZLY POPULATION? NUMBER OF GRIZZLIES?

Many people favoring reintroduction felt that the rate of reintroduction should be increased and that the population recovery goal is too low. Some feel the goals of recovery should be set before placing any bears. Some people stated that grizzlies are no longer in danger of becoming extinct and that there is no documented proof of grizzly bears in the Clearwater drainage area. A few people stated that bears are a nuisance on the Rocky Mtn. front and “no one is doing anything about it”. Some said it is not necessary to place bears in SBW to maintain a population. A few stated that a lack of grizzly sightings in Bitterroot Ecosystem indicates a lack of use.

“Several years ago the Montana Fish and Game Dept. offered to give surplus grizzly bears to the fish & game departments of all lower 48 states, Canada, and Alaska. In those unenlightened times we imagined that there were too many grizzlies in Montana.”

“The CMC will determine a final recovery goal when sufficient information on the experimental grizzly bear population is available.”

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“Allendorf, Harris & Metzgar (1991) showed that a minimum viable population of grizzly bears is between 1,670-2,000 bears, much higher than the current recovery plan considers.”

“The proposed “recovered” population of 280 bears seems too small to be a viable population especially if their population is isolated.”

404 - TRAVEL CORRIDORS & LINKAGES (RANGE OF GRIZZLIES)

Many people felt that travel corridors between ecosystems must be identified, established and maintained. Corridors would allow genetic intermingling and they are critical for long-term survival of the grizzly bear. Corridors are essential to link isolated populations of grizzlies for dispersal and biological or genetic diversity.

Comments on designated area:

“To assume grizzlies would remain within designated area is wrong assumption.”

“Should include lands north of the Lochsa River (critical low-elevation spring habitat).”

“Not realistic to establish corridors for natural recolonization.”

“Relocating bears isn't the answer--create corridors and preserve wilderness for unrestricted passage for bears to relocate themselves.”

“In order to provide for genetic interchange and to improve security for migrating grizzly bears there should be road closures and reclamation along possible travel corridors. Likely locations include Allan Mountain/Anderson Mountain, the Pioneer Ranges, and the Sapphire Range.”

“Natural recolonization won't work as bears don't range far into new areas.”

“Wildlife has lost too much ground to aimless and thoughtless development.”

“Map potential corridors with GIS technology.”

“Corridors between ecosystems are not realistic any more. More feasible to relocate new bears into Yellowstone to maintain vitality.”

“Any activity within corridors must be approved by USFWS and Nez Perce Tribe.”

“Should expand recovery zone to include Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness.”

“Consider alternative by Selway-Salmon Grizzly Coalition.”

“Travel corridors that would allow bears to intermingle with neighboring grizzly populations in the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems must be designated and protected. Logging and road construction are slowly eliminating such corridors.”

One person said sufficient corridors exist.

405 - EFFECTS ON GRIZZLY FROM HUMAN INCURSIONS OUTSIDE WILDERNESS (LOGGING, ROAD BUILDING, MINING & ORV)

Many people stated the necessity to keep the recovery area off-limits to road building and logging.

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“Unprotected roadless areas should be designated as protected grizzly habitat, off limits to road building and logging.”

“There are bears who have already wandered down, so don't stop them from doing so by building more roads or fencing more land.”

“Failure of Forest Service to close roads to protect habitat is responsible for loss of species because of harassment, poaching and safety.”

“If your bureaucracy has energy and money to burn---concentrate on protecting the habitat near the Bob Marshall and Yellowstone ecosystems: limit the logging and mining by buying the private lands/and or otherwise curtail the habitat reducing qualities of these activities. And stop building roads near these areas!”

“Immediate closure of the Magruder Corridor road is necessary for a serious reintroduction of grizzly.”

“No ORV use, including snowmobiles. Many structures have been built in crucial bear habitat. Removal of structures with rehabilitation of sites and a ban on construction of any new facilities is necessary.”

“Closure of Salmon River to motorboats is essential as well as elimination of airstrips in wilderness.”

“Restriction of logging to seasonal small post and pole cuts and firewood sales should be limited to along major arterial roads outside of designated wilderness.”

“Complete withdrawal of mineral or energy entry in Salmon-Selway Ecosystem.”

“No rodent or predator poisoning in ecosystem.”

Many respondents provided suggestions for restructuring logging and logging practices including following:

“Move toward selective cuts.”

“Promote non-motorized logging and then eliminate logging roads.”

“Roads closed to bears should include ATV & motor bikes.”

“Utilize helicopter logging or other such lower impact methods should be the preferred method in the recovery area.”

“Road obliteration and revegetation must always be encouraged in grizzly bear habitat.”

Several respondents feel the area won't support bears for reasons including the Columbia dams have blocked fish migration and fire suppression has altered the habitat/vegetation.

406 - POPULATION CORRIDOR LINKAGES

Many responded that recovery of the grizzly is dependent on habitat corridors connecting bear populations. Many believe current populations are not adequate to sustain the species due to isolation and limited numbers. Several people believe that reintroducing bears to the Selway-Bitterroot ecosystem could begin to link existing isolated bear populations in northwest Montana and Yellowstone National Park.

“Your agency needs to recommend reintroduction or augmentation with protection of biological corridors for interbreeding populations and general dispersal in the following areas: Cabinet-Yaak (Montana/Idaho), Gila-Blue Range-Aldo Leopold (New Mexico/Arizona), South San Juan-Weminuche (Colorado), High Uintas

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(Utah), Hells Canyon (Idaho/Oregon), North Cascades-Kettle Range (Washington), Siskiyous-Marble Mountains-Kalmiopsis (California/Oregon)."

"...the key to developing a secure grizzly population south of Canada lies in recovering more of the bear's historic range and increasing bear numbers. This could link grizzly populations in Yellowstone and Montana."

"Large areas of wild habitat connected by biological corridors is probably the most critical issue in grizzly bear recovery."

One person stated that "to isolate Bitterroot Recovery...is politics, not science."

Another stated that the Bitterroot is no longer an intact ecosystem.

"...the Bitterroot area is a fragment of a former wild ecosystem, and is no longer an intact, whole ecosystem....western Montana is now a human settlement....It is therefore not going to be prudent -- or realistic -- to regard the eventual recovery of the grizzly in the Bitterroot as something that can be done...without also achieving recovery in related areas, or without planning for the corridors..that still connect the related areas."

407 - EFFECTS "TO" GRIZZLY (GENETICS, DISEASE, COLONIZATION, ETC.)

Numerous people responded that the recovery of the threatened grizzly bear is dependent on habitat corridors connecting bear populations. Corridor linkage is critical and necessary for genetic viability.

"To allow for genetic intermingling of bears in the Greater Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide Ecosystems, travel corridors must be addressed and designated."

"The experimental population plan would allow isolated grizzly populations to be connected, improving genetic health..."

"...we must realize that inbreeding can be just as much a danger to bears as any other creature."

"Possible linkage zones should be studied and established so that gene pools can remain healthy."

"Bears need to intermingle genetically with other populations so viable travel corridors must be protected."

Several people stated there is an inadequate food source for the grizzly bear in the area.

"I truly do not believe there is food source enough for the bears to stay in the unpopulated mountains."

"Here in the Bitterroot a bear could eat all the berries in one day."

"I feel the lack of feed has a lot to do with the lack of game."

"The lack of food because the salmon quit running...dryness of the area, isn't good black bear habitat."

408 - HABITAT SECURITY

A great number of people commented on the importance and necessity of roadless areas for adequate grizzly bear habitat. Many feel road density standards need to be enforced. Several people stated the importance of closing roads to all motor vehicles to curtail use.

"After human caused mortality, the greatest threat to reintroduction success is the slow destruction of secure habitat. Road density standards must be adopted."

"Road densities must be reduced to protect the bears..."

Appendix 19 - Summary of Public Comments on Issue and Alternative Scoping

“Strict road density standards, necessary for the grizzly's habitat security, must be adopted and rigorously enforced.”

“Habitat security must be a high priority through the implementation of road density standards.”

“Close as many roads in the habitat as possible...Prohibit big clearcuts and limit mineral exploration and development. Keep black bear hunters out of grizzly habitat.”

“Grizzly bears need habitat security, particularly from roads and motorized recreation.”

“Openings created by logging activities and road building must be minimized.”

“...requirements for security include protection from mortalities, quality habitat remote from human activities and adequate food resources.”

“...habitat protection, including limits on road densities should be an integral part of the plan.”

Several commented on the need for critical low elevation spring bear habitat.

“Critical spring low-elevation habitat should receive attention and protection.”

500 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY

Many people were concerned about the effects the grizzly bear would have on various aspects as identified in the categories that follow. The number one concern is the effect the bear might have on human health and safety. This issue is raised the most by the local residents who live adjacent to the proposed area for reintroduction. Many people feel a direct threat from the prospect of having grizzly bears introduced into their back yards, and some of those folks feel that people are more important than the grizzly bear. Some raise the issue of who will be responsible for bear-human conflicts - that is not clear in the scoping information.

“More grizzlies in the area would create many bear to human or bear to livestock conflicts.”

“If the people with glorified ideas about grizzlies want to make laws to increase their numbers in Idaho they should live here, walk these trails in the back country, camp in a tent, and try to raise livestock in a bear-infested environment. The black bears are problem enough.”

“The last thing humans or grizzlies need is a bunch of hungry bears descending from the mountains in search of food.”

The supporters of the Citizen Management Committee Alternative (*See Exhibit 1 of original report in project file*) point to the clause that identifies who will be responsible for human/bear encounters:

“[Citizen Management Committee] Initial Standards & Guidelines: The Committee will be responsible for determination of appropriate responses to grizzly bear and human encounters, livestock depredations, and other conflicts arising from the reintroduction and recovery of grizzly bears within or in the immediate vicinity of the Experimental Area.”

501 - HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY

Numerous people responded that they feel the grizzly bear poses problems with human safety. Safety is a very volatile issue with many respondents speaking from the heart with anger and emotional pleas concerning the danger they see for themselves and their family. Several say to “put human safety first”. Many people speak of relaxing, enjoyable trips taken into the area and how the grizzly bear would change that to one of fear. Some refer to the problems with grizzly bears in other areas such as Glacier National Park and the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

“100 living grizzlies is not worth one innocent person's death (especially if I'm the victim).”

“In the past it has been very relaxing and enjoyable to hike and not have to worry about the dangers of the grizzly.”

“The Bitterroot Mountains are one of the few areas in Montana where people can hike and camp without grizzly bears...We need some places that we can go to enjoy the outdoors without having to deal with grizzly bears.”

“Years ago we would take pack horses and ride into the Bitterroots to hunt elk. We slept in the open and picketed the horses in the meadows without fear of interruptions. With the introduction of the grizzly, all of this would be lost. We would have another Glacier Park problem.”

“With the reintroduction of grizzly bears you will create a situation where people go into the hills of Idaho for recreation armed against bears. There are already enough armed people in the hills.”

“I can assure you that I will not allow one of these animals to attack me, my family or my livestock...I'll shoot the bastard.”

“I have two children and spend a lot of time in the woods and own property in the wilderness. I don't want to have to worry about my kids being attacked or killed by a grizzly.”

“Residents already contend with black bears and mountain lions coming out of the wilderness area why add grizzlies to the list. Why take the risk of many human injuries in the years to come for ecology of today.”

“People hike in these mountains because this area is safer than other wilderness areas. People who spend a lot of time in grizzly country respect the danger and do carry guns. They know this is illegal, but are willing to risk a fine when protecting one's life.”

“...You say the bears run away when they hear humans coming; let me point out that most trails are along creeks and they cannot hear you coming.”

“Grizzlies are...like a terrorist. He does not strike many times but you constantly have to be on guard for him.”

“I live in Lemhi County and do not want the grizzly moved into this area. I don't want to have to pack a gun every time I go out side. I do not want the grizzly tearing down my fence to get to my garden and orchard. I have enough problems with the black bear but I don't live in fear.”

“I own and operate a family guide service over 65 years. We have taken thousands of people into the back country and would like to continue. This may not be possible with the introduction of the grizzly bear.”

“Grizzlies do not scare so easily - if at all. These bears would be too close to our homes and families to be a safe situation. Please do not place these aggressive animals so near to what is dear to me, my family.”

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“Please no grizzly bears in the Bitterroot mountains! We have the last cabin before you go into the wilderness at Sula and it is our bit of heaven under the Big Sky.”

Only a few people stated that human safety was not a concern; most of those commented on educating the public and that the issue is exaggerated out of proportion.

“I hike and camp in the Bitterroot and would not mind taking extra precautions to avoid grizzly bears. Everyone who hikes in Glacier Park has learned to hike in groups, make noise, and handle their food. People who visit the Bitterroot could learn the same things.”

“When a hiker whines about fear of bears and the need for safer trails, I say we need more bears. Preferably hungry ones.”

“It is an increasing population of humans, not wildlife which causes the greatest challenges for local government by placing heightened demands on services from law enforcement, health, social service, and fire agencies.”

“In twenty years of backpacking in Montana wilderness inhabited by grizzlies, I've yet to see or have my camp raided by one.”

“Certainly there will be an increased risk of human-bear confrontations. Most problems arise because of some foolish behavior by the humans. Grizzly bears are one of the most impressive creatures on this earth, but they should be respected not feared needlessly.”

“I've read that there has been no recorded grizzly attacks on a group of 5 or more. If people were responsible with their food; it wouldn't attract bears into camp.”

502 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON LIVESTOCK AND PETS

Several people expressed their concern regarding loss of livestock and pets to the grizzly. They feel it is probable that the grizzlies will supplement their diets with domestic livestock and domestic pets. Some stated their concerns for the cattle ranchers and said that compensation for livestock lost should be part of the plan.

“Grizzly bears do indeed come down out of the mountains and attack livestock: cattle, sheep, hogs and even domestic pets.”

“Most ranchers have a tough enough time making ends meet and making a living.”

“The potential danger to humans and livestock in this populated area would be very high if these animals are reintroduced to the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness area. In the early fall we would have to deal with bear problems in our orchards and crops.”

“I am also a stock grower I'd hate to raise my calves for grizzly food.”

Several commented that the grizzly wasn't a threat to livestock. The rightful place for the grizzly is in the wilderness and public land should not be just for the ranchers to graze their livestock.

“Concerns of cattle ranchers can be adequately addressed and appropriate compensation should be part of any plan.”

I am a rancher, raising cattle and sheep over the past twenty years in the Greater Yellowstone area. I realize that on occasion the grizzly can become a threat to my livestock and my livelihood. I have made Montana my home; I am willing to chance that very remote possibility. I have chosen to remain in Montana because of its singular beauty and diversity of wildlife and along with that comes the responsibility to protect and nurture our

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natural areas. The grizzly really gives Montana it's uniqueness, and deserves every chance for survival.”

“I strongly support the notion that native wildlife (e.g. bears, coyotes, cougars, etc.) should receive priority where conflicts arise with domestic livestock. That is where predators belong!”

“We do not favor killing of bears who kill livestock (especially public lands grazers). Use other methods, reduce and halt public lands grazing, and alter the IGBC guidelines.”

“As a rancher I have to laugh at worries of other ranchers about their livestock. Bears are not major predators and if one like that occurs come up with license for bid just like these high priced sheep tags and allow hunters to harvest the bear and part of the money could go for compensation of killed livestock.”

503 - EFFECTS OF THE GRIZZLY ON BIG GAME SPECIES

A few people stated their concern for the livelihood of wildlife in the area. The biggest concern is for the elk herds and how they would be affected by the grizzly bear. Many point out that grizzly bears can devastate elk calf populations. People are also concerned with the effects on black bear, deer populations and big game hunting opportunities.

“The most dramatic and immediate consequences will probably be to the fragile black bear and mule deer populations.”

“Grizzly bears will reduce the survival of elk calves that are already heavily impacted by black bears.”

“Fish and Game officials know the effect the grizzlies will have on the elk and moose populations. It was only a few years ago that black bears were killing so many new-born elk calves that they had to haul some of the bears to new territories.”

They will have a detrimental effect on elk calving during the springtime along the Selway and Lochsa Rivers.”

504 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON HUNTING OPPORTUNITIES

Several people stated that conflicts with spring black bear hunting in the recovery area needs to be addressed to avoid accidental killing of grizzlies. Some say that a halt to spring black bear hunting should be considered. Some sports hunters are concerned with the restrictions on access that might come with grizzly bear reintroduction.

“Bears need protection during the spring black bear hunting season, to minimize injury and disturbance.”

“No black bear baiting or use of dogs should be allowed in grizzly bear designated habitat. Hunting should continue during big game seasons.”

“If grizzlies are introduced, it will be a matter of time before hunters and other sportsmen have less access to these lands.”

A few people stated that when the grizzly bear is recovered, they should be allowed to hunt them. Other hunters voiced their support for the grizzly bear.

“I have used the back country and have observed that when grizzlies are not hunted at all, they do become less cautious of avoiding humans.”

“I am also a hunter and spend much time in the woods year-round. I can think of no greater high than seeing one of these magnificent bears in the wild and I never have any intention of hunting the king of the forest.”

“I would be in favor of limited hunting for grizzlies in the future (once populations allow it), this would keep the grizzly under control and they would have fear of man.”

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505 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON OUTFITTERS/GUIDES

A few outfitters and guides stated that they were concerned about hunting opportunities and for the safety of their clients. They feel their livelihood would be directly affected by grizzly bears in the area. Some say their clients will stop coming if there are grizzlies in the area, and that their clientele comes to the area to have an option for good hunting without grizzly bears to contend with such as in the Bob Marshall Wilderness. They also felt that the grizzly bear would prey upon elk and deer and therefore reduce the game harvest for hunting.

“The grizzly would be detrimental to our outfitting business making it impossible to fulfill our obligations to our clients. Our livelihoods are at stake. Many of us have spent years building our business which would be disrupted with one sighting of a grizzly in our permitted and licensed area of operation.”

“There would be possible curtailment of access to camps, rivers and trails for the guided public. Changes in black bear hunting opportunity and impact of grizzlies on other wildlife populations would affect the outfitters and guides.”

506 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON OTHER RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Several people who use the Bitterroot for hiking and camping were very concerned about the reintroduction of the grizzly bear. They avoid the Bob Marshall and Glacier National Park because of the presence of grizzlies. Some feel grizzly bears would infringe upon the safety and solitude they enjoy in the Bitterroots, and that there will be more closures and restrictions in the areas they use for hiking and camping. Some raise the issue of safety to those who float the Salmon River.

“I oppose the reintroduction of grizzly bears. I do like to fish and would feel the need to carry a firearm for my protection.”

“The Bitterroots have always been a refuge for me, a place where I can hike alone or with a family member. I can even bring my dog. Experiencing the wilderness in a grizzly-free region was more uplifting than the experience of seeing the bears.”

“I am among the many who have avoided the Bob, Scapegoat and Glacier because of the grizzlies.”

“The concerns I address are of control and access. The boundaries presented in the grizzly bear program are too broad and the possibility of conflicts for access to trails. No where in the entire plan is there any reference to the backcountry horse person and the impact the recovery program has on them.”

“I and friends backpack, hike, and camp there and do not wish to encounter a grizzly bear.”

“Reintroduction is unfair to campers and hikers seeking silence and solitude...If they wear bells or other noise makers to avoid surprising bears the noise will disturb fish and frighten photogenic rare birds.”

507 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON OTHER PREDATORS

A handful of respondents are concerned with the effects the grizzly would have on other predators. Most felt there are already enough predators in the area especially considering the prey base and food supply.

“The population of a predator is dependent on prey. Available foods are now being taken by predators already living in these areas.”

“Winter killed elk will be cleaned up by the wolves and coyotes.”

“Grizzly bears need a high protein/fat diet to get them ready for winter. They will be in competition with the black bear and coyotes for gut piles.”

508 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON OTHER ENDANGERED SPECIES (SUCH AS LISTED SALMON)

Some concerns were raised about reintroducing the grizzly bear in an area where the Chinook Salmon and steelhead are threatened. They point out that fish is a food source for the grizzly bear.

“Already salmon, cutthroat trout, bull trout and white bark pine in the Selway Bitterroot ecosystem are on the verge of disappearing. The ecosystem should be in good working order before the grizzly is returned.”

“Grizzly bear population in the headwaters of the Selway and Salmon Rivers will work against efforts to aid the Chinook Salmon and the Steelhead. Grizzly bears eat these fish.”

“Since we are trying to recover the salmon it's poor judgement to think about grizzly reintroduction in the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness.”

509 - EFFECTS OF GRIZZLY ON OTHER ANIMALS, FISH, BIRDS, ETC.

One respondent requests that the analysis focus on all threatened and endangered life, including invertebrate life, insects, plants, etc.

“...How misleading it is to concentrate on the bear while giving brief attention to the base of invertebrate life, insects, plants, and associated mammals on which all mammal life depends. Protecting the grizzly cannot be considered in a vacuum. Cannot the agencies administer and discuss all creatures great and small that are threatened and endangered by subdevelopment, timber management, grazing and mining?”

600 - ECONOMIC/SOCIAL

Several people are concerned that the grizzly bear is being considered as more important than the livelihood of humans. Some commented on the economic impact that reintroducing grizzly bears would have on the livestock industry. Some also feel their “quality of life” would be threatened and the way of life as they know it would change. Numerous comments point to the high cost of implementing the reintroduction efforts in particular and the high cost of government spending in general.

“We use the Orofino and Grangeville, Idaho area for recreation and our livelihood (cattle pasture). The grizzly will cause continual property damage along with the killing and maiming of people.”

“...the proposed bear recovery plans make the existence of a few animals more important than the livelihood of human beings.”

“If the grizzlies come back naturally, so be it, but no money should be spent and no human measures taken to introduce them in the proposed area.”

“Any restrictive actions taken as a result of grizzly bears moving into a current outfitter's area of operation would be detrimental to our business making it impossible to fulfill our obligations to our clients.”

“...management plans must lead toward long-term recovery of the grizzly bear and minimize social and economic impacts.”

A handful of respondents feel the grizzly bear would actually bring more tourists to the area and therefore benefit the economy.

601 - SPIRITUAL/CULTURAL

This issue relates to the spiritual symbolism of the grizzly bear, its cultural significance to the West, preserving the grizzly for future generations, and the benefits of simply knowing that grizzlies exist in the reintroduction area. A few

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commented on the complexity and mystery associated with the wilderness and that grizzlies being returned to the area would make the wilderness whole again. Many speak to their respect for nature and “there should be some humility on the part of humans so the natural ecosystems can flourish.”

“We need the grizzly bear in our wilderness areas for spiritual purposes; the presence of the grizzly bear enlivens and ennobles humankind. The grizzly bear may prove to be valuable to medical, physiological, and social science someday to help preserve our own kind.”

“I am for reintroduction as part of an effort to reintroduce sanity, big wilderness, and respect for nature in place of the nefarious and ultimately self-destructive idea that the earth exists solely for humans to use and abuse.”

“In twenty years of backpacking in Montana wilderness inhabited by grizzlies, I've yet to see or have my camp raided by one. Moreover, the theoretical danger they present enhances my experience.”

Some individuals, particularly from the local area, say the reintroduction of the grizzly bear would “decrease the quality of my wilderness experience.”

602 - ENJOYMENT OF GRIZZLY (WATCHING, ETC.)

Several people mentioned that they would like nothing more than to see a grizzly bear in the wild. Several commented that they would appreciate being able to see a grizzly bear in the wilderness rather than behind bars in a zoo. One said there is a need to restore the top carnivore on earth.

“I have hiked and backpacked into the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness regularly since 1967...there is nothing I would like more than to see a grizzly in the Bitterroot.”

“Living as I do, so near occupied grizzly habitat, I hope for the day that they can once again frequent our “backyard” here in the Tobacco Roots.”

“The idea of having another of Montana's original predators restored to this area is very exciting.”

“As a landowner in Idaho, I take special joy in watching bears in the wild and hope their population continues to increase and remain secure.”

“I would like there to be enough of them to hunt some day, for those who would pursue that sport.”

“There are innumerable good reasons to reintroduce bears into this region, ranging from aesthetic reasons to irrefutable ecological and scientific issues.”

One person disagreed with people who say that the grizzly heightens their wilderness experience.

“I think they confuse the adrenalin thrill of surviving danger with the true wilderness experience of happiness and contemplation [without the grizzly bear].”

603 - COST OF PROGRAM TO TAXPAYER

This issue was of concern to many of the respondents. Many felt that grizzly bear reintroduction is a waste of the taxpayer's money. Several stated that they would like the money spent on other programs while others said that the money should be used for the national deficit. Questions were raised about the validity of actual costs of grizzly bear reintroduction; some felt that the cost would be higher than predicted.

“At a time when this nation faces astronomical debt problems it is the height of financial irresponsibility to fund a project as frivolous as grizzly bear reintroduction.”

“We have plenty of bears on the East Front...You would be doing both the bears and the public a favor if you

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used some of these bears instead of spending time and money going to Canada.”

“I oppose the reintroduction when we live in a country with humans not having adequate housing and lack of food.”

“The cost of reintroduction is out of line at a time when the Congress and the American people are looking for ways to reduce unnecessary expenditures.”

“When everyone is cutting budgets and reducing benefits to the poor, how can million dollar bears be justified.”

“...this is just another Federal project to consume taxpayers dollars while we are struggling to keep our schools open.”

There were only a few that stated that reintroducing grizzly bears was a wise use of their tax dollar.

“I have no problems seeing my tax dollars going for such purposes.”

“...The benefit--the survival of a threatened species; to halt or reverse the destructive trends of a century--far outweigh the minimal costs.”

604 - EFFECTS ON LOCAL ECONOMY

This issue reflects the economic concerns of the local people in communities near the grizzly recovery area. Several commented on this issue.

Negative Economic Impacts

“...Remember that forestry is a part of the agricultural industry, and mining provides a tax base for a state that tries hard not to be manipulated by eastern interests.”

“Property value is reduced where bears tear up cabins looking for food.”

“Tourism, ranching, and logging could be placed in jeopardy.”

“...Livestock producers top the list of those most affected.”

“I believe it would jeopardize the lives of humans and also the loss of jobs.”

Positive Economic Impacts

“...The economy of the Bitterroot Valley, where I live, is being accelerated and enhanced by people coming to the area in search of the “wild” experience.”

“Some people would jump at the opportunity to see a grizzly, it might actually bring tourists to the area for the chance to see a bear.”

“...the potential for loss of jobs and tourist industry revenues should outweigh the benefits of new bear populations in our area.”

“Artistic materials should be sold in the area as well as other grizzly bear recovery zones and historic habitat to generate more local and tourist interest in preserving the grizzly bear as well as help the local economy.”

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605 - VISITOR USE

This issue reflects the effects grizzlies will have on visitor use. There were very few comments received that concerned this issue.

“I feel it is imperative to leave the Bitterroots free from the danger of grizzlies. We need one mountain top we can enjoy.”

“Judging from the impact of grizzly bear programs in national forests will mean further reductions in forest access for residents and visitors with the loss of recreational and commercial values? The reintroduction of a species that will most assuredly endanger Idaho residents, and the tourists that visit our beautiful wilderness areas, is unacceptable to the state of Idaho.”

700 - MISCELLANEOUS

A few people felt that there should be fines for anyone recreating in the recovery area who are found guilty of improper procedures in grizzly country. Several people commented on the political influence regarding reintroduction of the grizzly bear.

“Members of the Idaho Congressional delegation have publicly expressed their concern, if not opposition, to reintroducing grizzlies to the Selway. Their concerns arise from a lack of knowledge on the part of their constituents who themselves are most likely to be personally affected by the reintroduction.”

“...the final design should simultaneously address rationality and democracy. Rationality can be understood as making good choices for sound cognitive reasons. Democracy can be understood as the collective construction and application of political authority...Build political consensus based on trust and credibility.”

701 - EDUCATION

This issue addresses education needs for sanitation practices; common sense hiking & camping practices; identification of bears in the field, etc. Several people commented on the importance of having an education program on how people and grizzlies can coexist. There is need to educate people on proper disposal of garbage and how to handle food. People also need to learn safe hiking procedures in grizzly bear country.

“Educate the people who utilize these areas by providing signage on roads and trails to explain the proper methods in recreating among grizzly bear habitat areas.”

“If the population is concerned with bear-human confrontation they should be more educated on the facts.”

“Public education efforts on peaceful coexistence, human safety, and how to behave in grizzly country should be studied and implemented.”

“Most everyone I know wear bear bells, keep pepper spray and hike and camp smarter. People need more knowledge about bears.”

“Education efforts in the Bitterroot area are the back bone of the grizzly bear recovery project success. Educate black bear hunters how to identify grizzlies.”

“A few people that were against grizzly reintroduction commented that education wouldn't help.”

“I am totally against grizzly bear reintroduction, and no amount of education would quell my fears about hiking alone where there are grizzlies.”

“You go out of your way to state and make a point that the bears are not dangerous if the forest users are

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properly educated. Why then does the Federal government require its own survey and work crews to carry shotguns and high powered rifles when they are working in grizzly bear areas in Alaska. It would seem to me that this would be unnecessary if the government crews are properly educated.”

702 - POLITICAL INFLUENCE

Several people commented on how they feel political influence affects the reintroduction of grizzly bears. Many respondents at both ends of the spectrum conveyed their exasperation with the political system and the role it plays in determining the outcome of the proposed reintroduction. Some disparage having politics instead of science be the guiding force in reintroduction efforts.

Many respondents against reintroduction reiterated their view that the political process has not worked to their advantage. Some see a “hidden agenda” by pro-grizzly advocates to “lock up the land.” Many respondents also resent people or groups outside the local community or State as having undue influence on reintroduction efforts into the area in which they live. Some also say they think the Endangered Species Act is being misinterpreted for political means.

“Being aware of the environmental-shun in Congress I hardly hold my breath at the future of the Endangered Species Act. I doubt this will bounce upon the shoulders of our mighty cattlemen/rancher controlled Congressmen any more lightly than the status of the ESA.”

“Once the EIS is completed, the decision for a course of recovery action will encounter delays primarily from political sources at local and state levels.”

“If it weren't for so many political, social and economic factors, bears, wolves, etc., wouldn't be endangered...I understand that the FWS is under pressure to serve the timber and mining industries, ranchers, etc. These are public lands and the wildlife on these lands deserve to be protected and not serve the needs of those who wish to make money off public lands.”

“It concerns me that the three Ravalli County Commissioners had such a “say” as to whether they approve the grizzly bear plan.”

“Creates political misuse of valuable funds.”

“Don't let the congressmen and the livestock industry try and stop you because they lack the commitment to future generations and can only think short term and of themselves.”

“I hope that grizzly recovery can go without the nonsensical political idiocy as seen in the wolf recovery program.”

“More and more decisions about wildlands, wildlife, biology and science are being influenced by U.S. Senators and House Rep.”

“I am disturbed by proposed options which would grant special interests and political appointees by the governors of Idaho and Montana to have disproportionate influence on the grizzlies' fate.”

“This needs to go forward regardless of the pressure against it and short-sighted special interest groups.”

APPENDIX 20. EXCERPTS FROM THE REPORT: “SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY IN THE BITTERROOT ECOSYSTEM” -- USFWS, APRIL 1998

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes public responses on the following two draft documents issued by the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS):

- A. Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on Grizzly Bear Recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem; and
- B. Endangered Species Act, Proposed Special Rule 10(j), Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Grizzly Bears in the Bitterroot Area of Idaho and Montana (published in the Federal Register July 1, 1997, and included as Appendix 13 in the DEIS.)

The Draft EIS and Proposed Special Rule 10(j) were released for public review and comment on July 1, 1997. Comments were to be received through September 30. The comment period was extended to November 1 based on numerous requests for more time to prepare responses. The comment period was extended a second time to December 1, 1997 following a request from a member of the Idaho Congressional delegation.

Comments on the two draft documents were received from over 24,000 individuals, organizations, and government agencies. These comments arrived in over 2,660 letters, DEIS summary forms, resolutions, and hearing testimonies. Ten petitions were received with over 21,000 signatures. Fifteen form letters were identified (see Demographic Summary for specific figures). This degree of interest from the public indicates the strong feelings people have in the possibility of grizzly bear recovery into the Bitterroot Ecosystem (BE).

This analysis of the public's responses describes what people have said as completely and directly as possible without assigning weights or serving as a vote-count. The system used to analyze comments was objective, reliable and traceable. All responses to the two draft documents have been considered in the production of the summary, including petitions, hearing testimonies, resolutions, and DEIS summary forms along with letters and form letters.

It is important to note that this analysis is not based on vote-counting. The public involvement efforts of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) are intended to gather information and ideas from the public on proposed actions and alternatives to the proposed action to provide a clear basis for choice among options by the decision-maker and the public. An analysis of this public comment will help the decision-maker make better decisions, not to simply count pro-s and con's. It is tempting for a proponent or opponent of a particular alternative to “stuff the ballot box” in support of a particular view. But while quantitative information is gathered and is important in assessing attitudes and concerns relating to particular issues, that is only part of the information analyzed. The reasons for people's concerns, preferences and criticisms are sought in this process. Therefore one will find little mention of total numbers outside of those provided in this Introduction, but rather more qualitative information indicating trends of public opinion.

NOTE: The chapters on Alternatives and Issues fully describe and analyze public response. These chapters are not included in this Appendix, but detailed information on the Issues raised in public comments is included in Chapter 5 of the FEIS. An analysis of form letters and petitions is provided at the end of this chapter.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Solicitation of Public Comment on the DEIS and Proposed Rule:

The public comment process for an Environmental Impact Statement began in January 1995 and took the following path to the present:

- ! January 1995 - A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS was published in the Federal Register. An Interagency team representing the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. Forest Service, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, the Idaho Fish & Game Department, and the Nez Perce Tribe was formed to prepare the Draft EIS.
- ! May 1995 - A Scoping of Issues and Alternatives information brochure was mailed to 1,100 people.
- ! June 1995 - Formal scoping for issues and alternatives began with Federal Register Notice for a 45-day comment period.
- ! July 1995 - The public comment period was extended by 30 days until August 21.
- ! August 1995 - The comment period ended, analysis of public comment began. Over 3,300 written comments were received and analyzed.
- ! September 1995 - The scoping results were summarized in the document, "Summary of public comments on the scoping of issues and alternatives for grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem" and document was distributed.
- ! August 1996 - April 1997 - Draft EIS written and reviewed by Interagency team (Idaho Fish and Game declined opportunity to review and comment on January 14, 1997).
- ! June 1997 - Congressional members and staffs, administration and agency personnel, states, counties, tribes, advisory committees/councils, and key individuals and organizations briefed on the Proposed Special Rule and DEIS preferred alternative before Federal Register publication and DEIS release to the public.
- ! July 1997 - DEIS released to public. Public comment period begins July 11 and ran through December 1, 1997 (following two extensions).
- ! July 1997 - Endangered Species Act, Proposed Rule 10(j) for Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Grizzly Bears in the Bitterroot Area of Idaho and Montana published in the Federal Register on July 2. Comment period begins July 11 and runs through December 1.
- ! October 1997 - Public hearings/open houses to gather public comments on the DEIS and Proposed Special Rule held in seven communities on the perimeter of the Bitterroot area. Approximately 1400 people attended these hearings and 293 individuals testified. The Salmon and Hamilton hearings both had more people signed up to speak than time allowed to testify. The dates and locations for the public hearings were as follows:
 - Wednesday, October 1, 1997: Challis, Idaho and Hamilton, Montana
 - Thursday, October 2, 1997: Missoula, Montana and Lewiston, Idaho
 - Friday, October 3, 1997: Boise, Idaho and Helena, Montana
 - Wednesday, October 8, 1997: Salmon, Idaho
- ! December 1 - Public Comment period ended.

In addition, the USFWS held meetings with local community, state leaders, and interest groups in communities around the perimeter of the proposed recovery area.

The Draft EIS, the Summary, and the Special Rule were all published on the USFWS web site at: <http://www.r6/fws/gov/endspp/grizzly>.

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Alternatives Analyzed in the DEIS:

Four alternatives representing different approaches to grizzly bear recovery and management were developed for evaluation in the DEIS because they encompassed public concerns raised during scoping and to reflect a full range of alternatives. Two alternatives (Alternatives 2 and 3) do not necessarily meet the purpose of and need for action, but were included in the DEIS to be responsive to public comments, to provide a full range of alternatives for consideration, and to meet the requirements of NEPA. All four alternatives reflect public comments and suggestions identified through issue and alternative scoping. Alternative 1 was identified as the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service preferred alternative. The alternatives considered in the DEIS and analyzed in this report are:

Alternative 1. Reintroduction of a Non-essential Experimental Population Alternative (Proposed Action):

The goal is to accomplish grizzly bear recovery by reintroducing grizzly bears designated as a non-essential experimental population to central Idaho and by implementing provisions within Section 10(j) of the ESA, conduct grizzly bear management to address local concerns. A Citizen Management Committee (CMC), created under a special rule to be published in the federal register, would be tasked with management of this grizzly bear population. This alternative has been identified as the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service preferred alternative.

Alternative 2. The No Action Alternative - Natural Recovery:

The goal is to allow grizzly bears to expand from their current range in north Idaho and northwestern Montana southward into central Idaho and western Montana, and to recolonize the BE. The ultimate goal is natural recovery of grizzly bears in the BE.

Alternative 3. The No Grizzly Bear Alternative:

This alternative would prevent grizzly bear recovery in the BE.

Alternative 4. Reintroduction of a Threatened Population with Full Protection of the ESA Alternative:

The goal is to achieve recovery through reintroduction and extensive habitat protection and enhancement to promote natural recovery. The grizzly bear would have full status as a threatened species under the provisions of the ESA.

THE PUBLIC COMMENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

The analysis method used for this project provides a means of categorizing each person's comments into separate subjects, then grouping like subjects together so that the public's comments can be more thoroughly examined. It accurately displays public concerns and reasoning about particular issues and alternatives since each person's own words and phrases are captured. It provides a traceable, visible system for displaying public comments without injecting interpretation or judgment.

Responses were received in the form of letters or postcards, form letters, petitions, hearing transcripts, DEIS summary forms, and resolutions. Each letter, hearing transcript, petition, etc. was first given a unique identification number. A coding system was developed to assign demographic information to each respondent and to record their opinions on issues and alternatives. Demographic information coded included identifying who the respondent represents, the medium used for responding, the respondent's overall preference for or against grizzly bear recovery, and where the respondent is from.

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Respondents were classified into one of the following categories, referred to in the coding system as "Organization Types":

- Individual Citizens, Individual Landowners (if identified), Schools/Universities, Youth, Professional Scientific Organizations
- Federal Agencies, State Government/Agencies, County Government, City/municipal/local government, Indian Tribal Government, Congressional/Legislative officials, Coalitions, Political Groups
- Business, Ranching, Environmental, and Recreation Organizations and Interests.

The codes that were used to identify the demographic information, issues and alternatives can be found in Appendix A; a demographic summary of respondents is displayed in this chapter.

Next, substantive comments related to a particular alternative were coded, along with particular reasons (issues) for support of, or opposition to, that alternative. In many instances, a particular alternative was not identified, but issues were identified that generally supported or opposed grizzly bear recovery. Many people asked for modification to an alternative, wanted parts of alternatives combined, or offered a completely different alternative. These were captured as well. Also, if a comment specifically referred to the Proposed Special Rule 10(j), this was coded as such. All substantive comments, accompanied by the appropriate coding for alternatives and issues, as well as demographic information, were then entered into a computer database for easier sorting and retrieval.

At all times, objectivity and fairness were stressed in this public comment analysis. All respondents' values, perceptions and opinions were captured, including those based on misinformation. The exact words of each respondent were used rather than summaries of the person's words to insure accuracy and objectivity. All letters were read at least three times by more than one member of the "coding team". A coder first read the entire response to gain an overall understanding of the respondent's viewpoint, then re-read the response, highlighting and coding substantive comments. To maintain accuracy and consistency, a coding supervisor or another coder would then check the coded response. If questions arose, they would discuss the response and come to agreement on the appropriate coding.

Form letters were grouped to insure that identical coding was used on each letter. Form letters and petition comments were entered into the database only once; however, the total number of signatures associated with the form or petition was recorded to reflect the number of respondents either submitting the form letter or signing the petition.

Although comments in technical or complex letters were coded and included in the database, they were also "red-flagged" because of their length and detail. Copies of these letters have been provided separately to the FWS interdisciplinary team for in-depth review. Letters from all government entities have also been provided to the interdisciplinary team for incorporation into the final Environmental Impact Statement.

Many chose to inform the FWS of their opinion more than once. Some spoke at one of the hearings, then sent a letter or signed a petition as well. Through alphabetical sorting of names, identical letters were identified, then combined under one letter number and entered into the database only once. If multiple letters received from one individual or organization were different, the letters were treated separately.

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DEMOGRAPHIC SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS

This section presents demographic information of the responses received. Information displayed includes *who* responded (individuals, organizations, agencies, etc.), *how* they responded (letter, petition, resolution, etc.), and *where* they generally responded from.

WHO RESPONDED

ORGANIZATION TYPE	NUMBER OF SIGNATURES
Business Owners/Interests	25
County Government/Representative	35
Environmental Interest	14,902
Federal Agencies	7
Individual Citizens	8,998
Congressional/Legislative Representatives	13
City/municipal/local government	10
Industry interest (ranching, timber, etc.)	49
Landowner within recovery area (if identified)	50
Professional scientific organization	7
Recreation Interest	7
State Government/Agencies	29
Tribal Government	3
Schools, universities	29
Coalition	30
Youth	53
Political Groups	4
TOTAL	24,251

HOW THEY RESPONDED

Response Type	Number of Signatures
Letter or Post Card	1,856
DEIS Summary Form	520
Hearing Transcript	294
Form Letter	217
Petition	21,362
Resolution	2
TOTAL	24,251

WHERE RESPONDENTS ARE FROM

	Number of Signatures
Idaho	978
Montana	806
California	149
Oregon	27
Utah	129
Washington	86
Wyoming	15
Other States combined	505
Outside the United States	2
TOTAL	2,697*

* This figure doesn't account for names on petitions, nor for the many respondents who did not provide an address.

FORM LETTERS AND PETITIONS

FORM LETTERS

As letters were received, noticeable trends and similarities among them became apparent. Fifteen different form letters were detected totaling 217 signatures of which 76 percent are in general support of grizzly bear recovery and 24 percent opposed. Eight of the fifteen form letters are generally supportive of reintroduction of grizzly bears; seven are opposed.

Two of the form letters (totaling 9 signatures) do not specifically address any of the DEIS alternatives; however, they are strongly against grizzly bears and include the wording "Just Say NO! to Grizzlies" and "the People of Idaho do not want grizzlies". This exact wording is also found in several petitions, but because these individuals wrote a letter, the input was analyzed as a form letter.

Only one of the form letters (totaling 14 signatures) is supportive of the Proposed Alternative 1. These individuals are particularly supportive of aspects of a Citizen Management Committee. Another form letter (totaling 9 signatures) is critical of Alternative 1 and does not say which of the other alternatives they prefer, if any. Their criticisms of the Proposed Action are:

! "Remaining security habitat, especially roadless areas on public lands in grizzly habitat, should be maintained as roadless."

! "On roaded public lands in grizzly bear habitat, road densities should be maintained below one mile per square mile."

! "Key food source areas should be protected from human disturbance during bear use and from habitat destruction."

! "Isolated island grizzly bear ecosystems in the lower 48 should be reconnected."

Two form letters (totaling 10 signatures) support Natural Recovery and "No Action" as outlined in

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Alternative 2, and also are against grizzlies. These respondents do not believe grizzly bears are "endangered in vast wilderness areas in the world"; that the grizzly bear would negatively impact the small communities around the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness; and that "grizzly bears would decrease the quality of my wilderness experience".

Three form letters (totaling 32 signatures) support Alternative 3 and are adamant about preventing grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. They make the comment they want to "leave the grizzlies where they are".

Six form letters (totaling 143 signatures) support Alternative 4, Reintroduction of a Threatened Population with Full Protection of the ESA. In addition, they compare Alternative 4 with Alternative 1 along the following common themes:

Support Alternative 4 because:

! "...it maintains full legal protection for all grizzly bears as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act."

! "...it covers the entire Greater Salmon-Selway Bitterroot Ecosystem."

Oppose Alternative 1 because:

! "Alternative 1 removes grizzlies' legal protection under the ESA, including protection of habitat. It would remove the requirement for formal consultation with FWS on any development within grizzly habitat."

! "Alternative 1 removes female grizzlies currently designated as "threatened" from Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems and downgrades them to "experimental" status which removes their protection under the ESA."

PETITIONS

Ten petitions were received containing 21,362 signatures. Of the total signatures approximately 76.6 percent favored grizzly bear reintroduction and 23.4 percent were strongly opposed.

Six of the ten petitions were adamantly against reintroduction. These were overwhelmingly generated and signed by "local" signators from the States of Montana and Idaho totaling 5,002 people. Of those petitions against reintroduction, only one mentions the alternatives. This one generated by Citizens Against Grizzlies, and totaling 2,866 signatures, states they are "opposed to reintroduction of Grizzly Bears into the Bitterroot Selway Wilderness, therefore; ...(we are)...opposed to the 4 alternatives, as stated, in the draft...EIS submitted to the public for review."

Three petitions were initiated or obtained from signature campaigns by the Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation in support of Alternative 1, the proposed action. The total for the Defenders of Wildlife petition was 4,430 and the two NWF petitions totaled 10,364.

The Alliance for the Wild Rockies initiated a petition in support of Alternative 4 which garnered 1,566 signatures.

Due to the volume, signatures were counted and recorded in the database, along with the coding and substantive comments, but the individuals' names and addresses were not entered into the mailing list.

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Petitions in Support of Grizzly Bear Recovery

All of the petitions in favor of grizzly recovery address specific issues and alternatives. The Defenders of Wildlife and National Wildlife Federation's petitions spoke to the following issues in support of Alternative 1:

! ?I strongly support the "citizens management" alternative plan developed by Defenders of Wildlife and others that will allow local people and scientific experts to share in decisions on how bears will be restored and managed, and I urge you to proceed with final approval for grizzly reintroduction as soon as possible."

! ?The plan is timely and cost-effective. Because it includes oversight by a Citizen Management Committee, it is acceptable to local residents. This tested approach to threatened species to an area specifically set aside by our government for the protection of wild lands and wild species has the full cooperation of coalitions from the timber industry."

! ?The NWF proposal has widespread support - from the timber industry, from local citizens who will have input, and from conservationists who eagerly desire to see the grizzly returned to its rightful home..."

The petition generated by the Alliance for Wild Rockies in support of Alternative 4 raised the following points:

! ?...it represents the most scientifically viable way to restore grizzly bears to their rightful home in the Bitterroots."

! ?I want all grizzly bears to receive full legal protection as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act...if grizzly bears are to survive, they need protection of roadless areas and they must be connected with other...populations with corridors."

! ?Alt. 4 is a common-sense, habitat-based approach and is the only alternative that satisfies my concerns. However, I am deeply opposed to taking any bears from threatened populations for reintroduction into Idaho and insist that Alternative 4 be amended to remove that possibility."

! ?I am strongly opposed to...Alternative 1, which promises to weaken already threatened grizzly populations, fails to ensure the survival of a Bitterroot population, and does nothing to increase the chances of grizzly bears overall. It is also a bad idea, as well as a dangerous precedent, for a group of politically-appointed special interests to manage grizzly bears."

Petitions in Opposition to Grizzly Bear Recovery

Twenty three percent of the petition signatures oppose grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. Although only one of these six petitions mentions alternatives (as outlined above), the remainder are loud and clear on how they feel about reintroduction specifically and grizzly bears, in general. The issues most often addressed in these petitions include:

! ?The undersigned citizens are opposed....because of the threat to life and property, and restrictive use of this area."

! ?We urge the Idaho State Governor to exercise the rights of this state according to the 10th amendment of the Constitution...The federal government agencies need to impose their plans and alternatives upon a different people and a different area than the people of this Great State..."

! ?The purpose of this petition is to display...our opposition to said Introduction, and further to request that (the receiver) honor and respect our wishes on this subject, and pray that we don't become prey of the Grizzly Bear or the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's plans."

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A petition signed by thirty members of a family in Idaho express the following concerns:

! ? Aside from the threat it would be to the livelihood of Idahoans--mining, lumber, livestock, recreation and tourism, we, as a family would be personally affected. Some members kayak and white water raft in the Salmon River area. Some trailride, horseback in the high country, and have been doing that for about forty years. We love our high country, and do not want our trips there spoiled by threats of grizzly bear attacks. PLEASE DO NOT CONTINUE WITH THIS PROJECT.”

HEARING TESTIMONIES

Seven hearings were held in Montana and Idaho attended by approximately 1400 people with 294 people testifying. The Salmon and Hamilton hearings both had more people attend the hearings and register to speak than there was time allowed. The dates and locations for the public hearings were:

Wednesday, October 1, 1997: Challis, Idaho and Hamilton, Montana

Thursday, October 2, 1997: Missoula, Montana and Lewiston, Idaho

Friday, October 3, 1997: Boise, Idaho and Helena, Montana

Wednesday, October 8, 1997: Salmon, Idaho

Strong feelings were voiced by those providing testimony on the proposal to reintroduce grizzly bears as well as vocal support or opposition to grizzly bears in general. A summary of the pro's and con's is provided here to display the general flavor of those testifying at the hearings. Individuals registered to speak who did not get their name drawn could choose to provide written comments for the record. These comments are also analyzed in this report along with others in the Alternatives and Issues chapters.

HEARING SUMMARY

Location of Hearing	Attendance	Total Testified	Number pro/con/ and unknown*
Challis, Idaho	155	29	6/20/3
Hamilton, Montana	200	50	22/23/5
Missoula, Montana	258	56	49/1/6
Lewiston, Idaho	127	45	27/16/2
Boise, Idaho	148	47	28/15/4
Helena, Montana	37	18	14/3/1
Salmon, Idaho	442	49	11/25/13
TOTAL	1,367	294	157/103/34

*Unknown is for those people who did not express support or opposition to reintroduction of grizzly bears in general, or to any of the four alternatives.