

## Grizzly Bear EIS Response

"Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan EIS North Cascades Ecosystem"

Equals

A Façade of Imprecise Generalizations Posing As Scientific Analysis

"... after careful study, naturalist [George Ord](#) formally classified the huge bears in 1815 – not for its hair, but for its character – as *Ursus horribilis*

("terrifying bear")"

.....

To: Karen Taylor-Goodrich, Superintendent, North Cascades National Park Service Complex

To: Eric Rickerson, State Supervisor, Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

The following letter is written in response to the Draft Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan EIS North Cascades Ecosystem and in support of Alternative A, the no action alternative.

Five significant yet flawed narratives are woven through the NPS grizzly Environmental Impact Statement.

- 1. Historically, grizzlies have populated the North Cascades Complex in substantial numbers.*
- 2. The impact of introducing grizzlies upon wildlife will be neutral.*
- 3. The impact of introducing grizzlies upon future visitor usage will be neutral.*
- 4. The habitat proposed for relocating grizzlies will support an eventual population of 200+ grizzlies.*

5. *Finally, that the four narratives above are based upon competent scientific investigation and reasoned analysis of data.*

Unfortunately, none of these narratives are as neutral as DEIS authors would have the reader believe. Because the grizzly DEIS suffers from vacuous analysis far too generalized to be considered scientific, the current DEIS requires significant revision. **Until more precise data is included in a revised draft, public input will lack precision envisioned when NEPA and the EIS process were conceived and, unintentionally, set grizzlies up for failure in the North Cascades.**

Responding to the grizzly DEIS requires an examination of the five generalized narratives winding their way through the document.

**#1. Historically, grizzlies have populated the North Cascades Complex in substantial numbers.**

The DEIS is clear: "***The purpose of this draft plan/EIS is to determine how to restore the grizzly bear to the NCE, a portion of its historical range.***" (Emphasis added)

Is this statement accurate or simply ambiguous language that misleads the reader concerning an extremely important issue? Did grizzlies populate this area in substantial numbers or did grizzlies primarily pass through the Cascades while infrequently define home territories within the North Cascades?

What does it mean to "...restore the grizzly bear to the NCE, a portion of its historical range"? Some might read "historical range" to mean grizzlies passed through the North Cascades on the way to habitats more conducive to survival; others might interpret this as grizzlies occupying the North Cascades in substantial numbers and as a primary habitat. What data is provided in the DEIS supporting one or the other of these points of view? Precious little.

Before considering DEIS data concerning historical grizzly populations, it's actually helpful to consider historical human habitations in the North Cascades.

The DEIS mentions indigenous people living in Washington State. We know indigenous people passed through the Cascades and down Lake Chelan for the

purpose of trade, but do we know of indigenous people establishing communities in what is known today as the North Cascades Complex (NCC); the same area proposed to import grizzlies?

Archaeological data suggests indigenous communities didn't settle in the present day NCC. If indigenous people didn't settle in the NCC, why was this? Indigenous people didn't settle in the NCC because there were too few food resources available to sustain a concentrated population. Survival is difficult in the North Cascades. Hunting and gathering cultures chose habitats where food resources existed in greater quantity.

Just as early people passed through the Cascades, grizzlies certainly "ranged" through as well. Traversing a terrain, however, does not equate to habitation in the terrain and certainly doesn't equate to grizzlies populating the North Cascades as permanent habitat especially in the 200+ population numbers proposed in the three of the DEIS alternatives?

What specific data points does the DEIS present supporting the concept that large grizzly populations inhabited the crest of the Cascades?

DEIS Chapter Three: Affected Environment pg. 42 hard copy:

Under the title, **Historical Population** the EIS states: "The NCE historically supported a substantial grizzly bear population..."

What data is offered supporting the EIS assertion of, "...a substantial grizzly bear population [existed] in the NCE?"

The DEIS offers four data points supporting this claim.

1. Records compiled by Bjorklund (1980), Sullivan (1983) and Almack et al. (1993)
2. Hudson Bay fur trade records from 1820 to 1860.

3. Writings about Native Americans, early USFS history and the archeological record.
4. Five Holocene archeological sites in eastern Washington

An examination of these four data point references is necessary if an accurate hypothesis concerning "substantial grizzly populations" is to be formed.

#1 Page 42 of the digital DEIS addresses studies on grizzlies in the North Cascades. The DEIS informs the reader that between the Bjorklund and Sullivan Reports the Sullivan Report (1983) is the most reliable. Sullivan interviewed 346 people claiming to observe grizzly bears in the NCE and estimated that the sum of these attestations amounted to approximately 100 individual human-grizzly bear encounters spanning 130 years. (pg. 42 digital DEIS) Do those numbers constitute evidence of a substantial grizzly population in the North Cascades? The DEIS would have the reader believe so.

(Another section of this response will examine the question of whether there have been any grizzlies in the North Cascades for the past several decades.)

To make a cogent evaluation of how grizzly sightings included in the Sullivan report support the claim a substantial population grizzlies inhabited areas proposed for grizzly "restoration", authors of the DEIS should have provided a map that, to the greatest degree of accuracy possible, plotted where confirmed grizzly sightings took place. Did these sightings take place in areas the DEIS proposes to release grizzlies? In relationship to the NCE where did these sightings actually take place? On the crest of the Cascade Complex? On the fringes? Reading the DEIS offers no focus or differentiation as to where grizzly sighting occurred. If this information is included in the body of the printed and digital DEIS, it was not immediately evident.

Without a map plotting grizzly sightings included in the main body of the DEIS, any public input concerning the historical presence of grizzlies in the North Cascades becomes more conjecture than a response to the collection of data points.

#2 The DEIS also uses Hudson Bay fur trade figures to support the perception that a substantial grizzly population lived in the North Cascades. Pg. 42 the DEIS states, "At the height of the fur trade from 1820 to 1860, the Hudson's Bay Company

documented 3,788 grizzly bear hides shipped from trading posts in the North Cascades region." (Emphasis added)

As with so many statements in the DEIS, the assertion that the trading posts were "...in the North Cascades region" is, whether intentional or unintentional, deceptive and misleading. If readers a map pinpointing the locations of the three Hudson Bay trading posts had been provided to those reviewing the DEIS, it would become immediately apparent these trading posts were located a great distance from the North Cascades NCC and actually much closer to the Selkirk Mountains of eastern Washington, British Columbia and Idaho where grizzlies can be found today.

A hypothesis can be made that the majority of the grizzlies brought to trading posts originated grizzly habitats closer to the Selkirk Range of British Columbia, Idaho, and eastern Washington State.

The following information can be found at: <http://www.conservationnw.org/what-we-do/columbiahighlands/grizzly-bears-of-the-selkirks>

"There are currently believed to be at least 50-60 grizzly bears in the Selkirk Recovery Zone with numbers approximately equally divided between the Canadian and U.S. portions of the ecosystems. Another 40 bears are estimated to reside in the Cabinet-Yaak Recovery Zone of northwest Montana and northeast Idaho."

Below is a map pinpointing the location of the three Hudson Bay trading posts noted in the DEIS. It is imperative that those examining the DEIS be afforded the opportunity to review this map in context with DEIS assertions of the historical presence of a substantial number of grizzlies in the North Cascades Region.

Describing Thompson's River, Fort Colville and Fort Nez Pierce as being in the North Cascades Region is a stretch. The DEIS published supposition that these trading post numbers equate to a substantial grizzly population residing in the North Cascades may well misinform and/or confuse those examining the DEIS. Far more likely the majority of grizzly hides over a forty year period originated from areas grizzlies still populate today closer to the trading posts.

#3 Writings about Native Americans, early USFS history and the archeological record – these writings will need to be reviewed to see their relation to the grizzly's habitat history in the North Cascades.

#4 Five Holocene archeological sites in eastern Washington. These sites, as well as, the trading posts sites should have been included on a map. The DEIS says these sites are in eastern Washington not the North Cascades. What is the reader supposed to glean from these vague data points?

None of the material the DEIS provides clearly establishes the DEIS's foundation for the claim that: "historically...a substantial grizzly bear population [existed] in the NCE."

**A. Action Item: A final determination on the Grizzly EIS should not occur until the DEIS includes:**

- A map that plots, to the greatest degree of accuracy possible, the location of bear sightings confirmed in the Sullivan Report that are included in the body of the DEIS.
- A map showing the locations of the three trading posts (Thompson, Colville, Walla Walla) in relation to the North Cascades is needs to be included in a DEIS revision and made available to those reviewing the Grizzly DEIS.

The second narrative promoted in the DEIS is:

**#2. *The impact of introducing grizzlies upon wildlife will be neutral.***

The NPS published and distributed a document entitled, "Key Messages, Timeline and Potential Questions Subject: North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan." Page 4 of this document poses a question concerning the impacts of grizzlies on big game populations, "If this (DEIS) moved forward, what impact would restoration have on other big game populations?"

The answer provided in the DEIS is:

“Grizzly bears are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plants and animals. In the spring, grizzly bears take advantage of vulnerable, young ungulates such as elk or deer, and winter-killed carrion; however, in similar ecosystems to the North Cascades they eat primarily vegetation, insects and carrion. Some adult big game animals probably will be taken, are not expected to be a major food source, nor would the level of predation be expected to have an influence on population performance.” (Emphasis Added)

The DEIS claims the neutral influence of predatory grizzlies on ungulate populations. How does the DEIS support this finding of neutral impact?

“The DEIS claims the following concerning ungulates Although no total ungulate population estimate for the NCE is available, based on the conservative population numbers identified in chapter 3, if the NCE contained roughly 70,000 elk, deer, and other ungulates the depredation from up to 10 grizzly bears would be between approximately 0.02% and 0.08 % of the ungulate population.”

Unfortunately, once again the DEIS does not differentiate data into more detailed subsections or provide a map of the natural ranges of ungulate populations throughout the NCE. Are ungulate populations equally distributed across the NCE? Do they spread themselves across the terrain like paint across a flat surface? No they don't.

Readers of the DEIS have little idea where ungulate populations actually exist because little discriminating data is provided. The DEIS suffers because it doesn't provide this critical information.

EIS authors may claim ungulate migrations make it difficult to gauge densities and positions of populations. While there's no doubt deer, moose, caribou and elk migrate following seasonal food resources, it is equally obvious that certain subsections of the NCE are more conducive to provide food for ungulate populations. The topography of the NCE varies dramatically.

The DEIS reaches the conclusion that grizzlies will not “influence” ungulates in the NCE. If relatively few ungulates populate the proposed release areas, grizzlies will migrate to areas where ungulates are more plentiful. Unfortunately, the DEIS offers the reader no discerning data concerning concentrations of ungulates and how that might predict the movement of grizzlies.

Are ungulates actually an important element of grizzly bear habitat and diet? What do grizzlies eat? Are they dependent on ungulate populations?

Pg. 45 digital DEIS states: "Isotope analysis showed a highly variable use of meat (8% to 97% of diet), while meat was found in many scats in some months (40% of dry matter in April and May) including fall (carrion). Overall, mammals and shrubs (berries) constituted 64% of total dry matter annually. In a diet study of grizzly bears in several western ecosystems, researchers found that **adult male grizzly bears were more carnivorous than any other age or sex class, with diets composed of around 70% meat** (Jacoby et al. 1999)." (Emphasis added)

Do ungulate populations exist in the areas proposed for releasing grizzlies or will grizzlies travel to find a suitable ungulate population?

The following NPS link describes grizzly habitat requirements. <https://www.nps.gov/noca/learn/nature/grizzly-bears.htm>

"Grizzly bears do not defend a territory but live in home ranges large enough to meet all of their needs. Home ranges of related females often overlap, and a male's home range generally overlaps those of several females. Home ranges vary depending on food availability, age, sex, breeding status and population density. The fewer the animals, the larger the home range size, as they must spread out to find each other. **Average home range size may be about 100 to 600+ square miles** (260 to 1,550 square kilometers). Bears travel wherever they need in order to find enough food, water, shelter, and space to survive. A grizzly bear's home range in the North Cascades likely includes valley bottoms for springtime feeding, high meadows for late summer berries, and steep, north facing slopes for denning. Avalanche chutes are very important for grizzly bears, as they provide a range of foods – and safe cover – through spring and summer."

**B. Action Item: The Grizzly DEIS must not be finalized until ungulate population estimates throughout the NCE are mapped and used to inform the DEIS narrative concerning the effects of grizzlies on ungulate populations.**

**C. Action Item: Maps must be created showing the territory requirements necessary to accommodate 200+ grizzlies. (The DEIS estimates female grizzly habitats include at least a ten-mile radius. How many sq. mi. of territory does a female grizzly require? (Area of a circle equals pi times**

**radius squared – 3.14 times 10 X 10 = 100 X 3.14 = 314 miles habitat territory required for a female grizzly. Male grizzlies require a larger territory.) It's understood that individual grizzly bear territory will overlap, however, they will not overlap completely. As with ungulates, grizzly distribution will not be uniform over the entire NCE.**

Another question concerning the effects of grizzlies on wildlife is, will the introduction of grizzlies into the NCE influence black bear populations?

The DEIS states: "Potential adverse impacts on black bear population dynamics following restoration of a grizzly bear population are unclear." (chapter 4, Page 103)

It is the duty of NEPA to make the potential effects of an alternative clear. Simply stating that effects are unclear and describing the degree of confusion to the reader is not the point of NEPA.

According to retired research biologist Everett Burts, "The black bears will be pushed out of their current habitats." Nothing neutral about that prediction. Why would Everett Burts reach that conclusion?

Below are two links to information concerning the impact of grizzlies on black bears.

**See Appendix #1**

[http://www.bearbiology.com/fileadmin/tpl/Downloads/URSUS/Vol\\_9/Aune\\_Vol\\_9.pdf](http://www.bearbiology.com/fileadmin/tpl/Downloads/URSUS/Vol_9/Aune_Vol_9.pdf)

Another research abstract offers more interaction data concerning grizzly and black bear populations.

**See Appendix #2** [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3872990?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3872990?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents)

Without a doubt, the importation of grizzlies into the NCE will not be neutral. Grizzlies will impact black bears in a significant manner.

**Additional Wildlife Action Item: Because it is the duty of NEPA to make the potential effects of an alternative clear, the grizzly DEIS must be required to actually make that evaluation and provide it to the public for review before the DEIS is finalized.**

**#3. *The impact of introducing grizzlies upon visitor usage will be neutral.***

The DEIS states: "As grizzly bears increase in number over time and begin to use habitat over a larger area of the NCE, the potential for humans to encounter them would exist over a greater geographical range, which could provide **benefits for those visitors hoping to experience grizzly bears in the natural environment, while dissuading some other visitors from recreating in the NCE.**"

The above statement is nothing other than an insipid bit of verbiage posing as reasoned, discerning analysis. This DEIS evaluation of the impact of grizzlies on visitor use is virtually useless.

How did the DEIS authors reach their conclusion concerning the effect of grizzlies on visitor use? Was a visitor survey developed, distributed and evaluated that would gauge the perceived impact of grizzly importation on visitor usage of the North Cascades Complex?

The answer to this question can be found in the DEIS under the heading: "Visitor Use in the North Cascades National Park Service Complex." The DEIS states, "In the past decade, no visitor surveys have been conducted for the North Cascades National Park or the Lake Chelan National Recreation Area."

While the DEIS reports no visitor surveys were conducted, an Internet article posted on the North Cascades Conservation Council site (<http://www.northcascades.org/wordpress/programs/wildlife-conservation-program>) states, "Opinion surveys have demonstrated that a strong majority of residents in and around the North Cascades [emphasis added] support grizzly bear recovery." Have these opinion surveys been referenced in the DEIS, and if so, were the opinion surveys used as a tool to gauge impacts on visitor use in the North Cascades?

The issue of grizzly importation into the North Cascades is one of vast significance and will impact North Cascade Complex visitors and gateway communities for the foreseeable future. It would seem impossible for an agency (NPS/USFS) to objectively evaluate the potential impact of grizzlies on future visitor use without surveying those currently recreating in the North Cascades Complex! Maybe, as the NCCC contends, opinion surveys have been conducted, however, in its present state the DEIS fails to inform the public about those surveys or to clearly define the potential impact upon visitor use if an eventual population of 200+ grizzlies populates the NCE.

Currently, alternatives B, C & D generally summarize visitor usage impacts as follows, "Impacts would be beneficial for those visitors who feel the presence of grizzly bears and restoration of a large native mammal that is an important part of the terrestrial food web enhances their wilderness experience. Impacts would be adverse for those visitors who do not wish to encounter grizzly bears."

Statements like this are specious lacking both clarity and supporting documentation. The DEIS presents the neutral analysis that some people will like the presence of grizzlies and others won't. Because no visitor survey concerning grizzlies has been developed, distributed and analyzed this statement is virtually worthless to those reviewing the DEIS.

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*And aside: The published DEIS is approximately three hundred pages in length. Those wishing to respond have two months to read and evaluate data, research studies, historical records, maps and compare alternative options. There simply isn't enough response time provided to do a thorough job and to minimize miscommunication between respondents and DEIS authors.*

*This letter may well contain misconceptions concerning published information. For example, if a visitor opinion survey was completed and noted within the body of the DEIS or footnote references, this reader missed it. Those evaluating comments from the public should realize an extension of time to respond to the DEIS will encourage responses exhibiting greater accuracy and clarity. If promoting opportunities for quality responses is a NEPA/DEIS goal, a minimum of a sixty-day extension for evaluation is needed.*

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**D. Action Item: The Grizzly DEIS must not be finalized until a survey of North Cascade visitors is developed that objectively evaluates visitor perceptions concerning the importation of grizzlies into the North Cascades Complex and recreational experiences.**

***#4 The habitat proposed for relocating grizzlies will support an eventual population of 200+ grizzlies.***

Evaluating the suitability of habitat for 200+ grizzlies in the North Cascades is complex work. One of the first questions concerning habitat was, is the habitat proposed for "relocation" of grizzlies congruent with the substantial number of grizzlies claimed to have inhabited the North Cascades in historically? Will this habitat support a large number of grizzlies? This question was discussed under the 1<sup>st</sup> DEIS narrative section of this letter.

Examining the current grizzly population in the NCC may assist gauging habitat qualifications that will support of a substantial number of grizzlies being located in proposed release areas.

Pg. 43 of the DEIS under the heading, **Current Bear Numbers**, offers:

"To estimate the current number of grizzly bears in the NCE, scientists have relied on statistical analyses of data obtained from a variety of field techniques. During an evaluation of the NCE from 1986–1991, Almack and others confirmed resident grizzly bears in the NCE using a combination of documented observations, live

capture surveys, and self-activated camera surveys (Almack et al. 1993). While the live capture and self-activated camera surveys yielded no grizzly bears, the documented observations that were considered to be “confirmed” or “highly reliable” **suggested that at the time of the study, the NCE harbored a small number of grizzly bears.” (Emphasis added)**

When it comes to evaluating current bear numbers, the above statement seems more like hopeful conjecture than scientific evaluation.

When considering the question, did a small number of grizzly live in the NCE at the time of the study, the following thread from the Northwest Hikers forum provides a lengthy but interesting summary of attempts to quantify the presence of ANY grizzlies in the NCE. This discussion will be presented in **Appendix #3** of this letter.

<http://www.nwhikers.net/forums/viewtopic.php?t=8016226> May 17<sup>th</sup> 2015

The thorough recap of current grizzly bear numbers provided in the Northwest Hikers post illustrates that there is no evidence of grizzlies currently residing in the North Cascades. Wide-ranging efforts have been initiated to locate grizzlies in this area. While there is no evidence of grizzlies in the North Cascades, the Selkirk Mountains of eastern Washington, northern Idaho and British Columbia does have evidence of grizzlies. Why might that be? Is there something different about the habitat? Is this question evaluated in the DEIS?

The DEIS provides documentation concerning the habit values of the North Cascades Complex for grizzlies. Pg. 43 under the title: Habitat Suitability authors state,

### **“Habitat Suitability**

The first iteration of the FWS *Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan*, published in 1982, identified the need to evaluate the NCE to determine its suitability as a grizzly bear recovery area. Almack et al. (1993) initiated the 5-year ecosystem evaluation in 1986 (FWS 1993a). Four studies have evaluated portions of the NCE for grizzly bears (Agee et al. 1989; Almack et al. 1993; Gaines et al. 1994; Lyons et al. 2016). These studies all conclude that the NCE has suitable habitat essential for the maintenance of a grizzly bear population.”

And under the heading Habitat Studies the following evaluation is offered.

“The results of these surveys were presented to a technical review team, which ultimately determined based on the available data that the NCE could support a viable grizzly bear population of 200 to 400 individuals (Servheen et al. 1991). More recent work has estimated a mean carrying capacity for grizzly bears in the NCE between 250 and 300 grizzly bears using a suite of spatially explicit, individual-based population models that integrate

information on habitat selection, human activities, and population dynamics (Lyons et al. 2016).”

Evaluating the methodology and findings of the identified studies will take far more time than the two-month period provided to respond to the grizzly DEIS. It's unrealistic to imagine citizens will be able to review studies listed in the habitat section of the DEIS in the time available. Additionally, a comparison between the habitat available in the North Cascades and the habitat offered in Selkirk Mts. would assist informing DEIS readers concerning the habitat requirements of grizzlies.

**E. Action Item – The time line for citizen response should be extended significantly in order that respondents are able to review habitat data referenced in the DEIS.**

When maps are available locating populations of ungulates and the Sullivan Report sightings are plotted on a map included in the DEIS document, then the reader will be able to better interpret habitat suitability for grizzlies.

***#5 Finally, that the four narratives above are based upon competent scientific investigation and reasoned analysis of data.*** Nothing could be further from the truth. The DEIS is incomplete offering reviewers underdeveloped, undifferentiated data and far too many vague generalizations in far too many areas of critical concern.

**Other Issues:**

One section of the DEIS is entitled: **Legislative History North Cascades Complex** – Pgs. 14-18 examine, “Statutes , Policies and Plans Governing Grizzly Bear Restoration”. This survey offers the following statutes concerning grizzlies and the North Cascade Complex.

1. Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.
2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan (1993)
3. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan North Cascades Ecosystem Chapter (1997)
4. National Park Service Management Policies 2006.

5. North Cascades National Park Service Complex General Management Plan (1988)
6. Interagency Memorandum of Understanding (1997)
7. Ross Lake National Recreation Area General Management Plan (2012)

Appendix C: Framework of Relevant Federal and State Laws, Policies, and Plans adds several other statutes, policies and plans to the legislative history stew:

1. The Wilderness Act of 1964
2. NPS Regulations for Food Storage
3. AND A WHOLE LOT OF OTHER NPS AND USFS POLICIES AND PLANS

Within this multi-page synopsis of laws, policies and plans there is a short three paragraph reference to the **North Cascades National Park's Enabling Legislation – PL 90-544**, the law creating the North Cascades National Park Complex.

Under the heading: **North Cascades National Park Enabling Legislation**, the DEIS presents a fainthearted synopsis of PL 90-544, the law President Johnson signed in October of 1968 creating the North Cascades National Park Complex. The complete reference to PL 90-544 in the DEIS is quoted below.

*“President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the enabling legislation for North Cascades National Park into law on October 2, 1968, establishing North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan NRAs (16 USC 1 § 90 – 90e-3). The enabling legislation’s statement of purpose states that the park is established to: ...preserve for the benefit, use, and inspiration of present and future generations certain majestic mountain scenery, snowfields, glaciers, alpine meadows, and other unique natural features in the North Cascade Mountains of the State of Washington and to provide for the public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment ... [and] for the conservation of the scenic, scientific, historic, and other values contributing to public enjoyment of such lands and waters...”*

*“The purposes of the two national recreation areas are to complement North Cascades National Park and conserve the scenic, natural and cultural values of the Upper Skagit River Valley, the Lower Stehekin Valley, Lake Chelan, and the surrounding wilderness for outdoor recreation and education, while respecting the remote Stehekin community and the hydroelectric reservoirs and development on Ross Lake (NPS 2012).”*

This pallid presentation of the North Cascades legislation actually becomes an obstruction if the DEIS reader desires to understand the intention of Congress when it created PL 90-544 in 1968. Congress was actually very specific. Readers reviewing the grizzly DEIS are not informed of the primary mission of the NPS and USFS in the North Cascades. This information is available below and attests to the fact that recreation use be given a priority over all other uses in the North Cascades Complex.

When considering recreation as the highest priority in the North Cascades Complex, the effects of importing grizzlies upon visitor use should have been scrupulously examined under the headings: Visitor Usage or Visitor Experience.

Legislative history accompanying PL 90-544 included House Report 1870. HR 1870 clearly defines the management mission for the North Cascades Complex: **"Although it involves federally owned lands almost exclusively, the enactment of this legislation would assure their management and utilization for outdoor recreation; whereas their continued administration by the Forest Service might not always result in recreational values being given priority over all other uses."** (emphasis added)

**See Appendix #4** for other quotes from House Report 1870 attesting to the recreational mission assigned to the NPS in the North Cascades.

Why weren't references to House Report 1870 published in the EIS especially where questions of Visitor Use and Impact were concerned? It would seem DIES authors were unaware or unresponsive to the legislative history of PL 90-544 as it applies to visitor use.

Since the recreational mission of the NPS and USFS in the North Cascades Complex is paramount, why weren't the effects of a 200+ grizzlies upon visitors and people living in the NCE sought and analyzed in more detail before the draft EIS was published?

### **Finally - Where is the "Gateway Community" of Stehekin?**

The grizzly DEIS defines Gateway Communities as follows:

**EIS Pg. 70: "Gateway Communities** - Gateway communities are those cities and towns that are geographically close to the NCE and derive some measurable economic benefit from tourism and related activities within the NCE. For the purposes of this document, these communities are generally located within approximately 20 miles of the NCE."

The definition of Gateway Communities is clear. Incredibly, a review of DEIS maps reveals a glaring omission. The community of Stehekin is not found on the DEIS maps. Let that sink in a bit. Stehekin is not listed as a Gateway Community. How is that possible?

Compounding the omission of Stehekin on DEIS maps, pg. 73 of the digital DEIS lists, "Gateway Communities." Again, Stehekin is not listed. This is equally unacceptable.

No community is more geographically "gateway" than Stehekin. Not only was Stehekin not included on maps or the gateway community list, no public meeting was planned for Stehekin until Stehekin residents petitioned for a meeting.

Again, how is this possible?!

For one reason or another, "Stehekin" never entered the consciousness of grizzly DEIS authors, those editing and reviewing the DEIS, or those with direct responsibility for NPS administration in the North Cascades Complex.

This DEIS presents the possibility of grizzlies being helicoptered into the North Cascades but doesn't acknowledge the community of Stehekin? This omission is chilling for at least two reasons.

First, coming to grips with the fact that not a single individual within the DEIS development team or Northwest Division of the National Park Service recognized that Stehekin was not on maps or list of gateway communities is impossible to understand. It doesn't register.

The second chilling realization is the fact that page sixty-four's map shows a question mark at the head of Lake Chelan where the community of Stehekin is normally ascribed. The map's legend identifies the "?" as, "Visitor Center." A similar map on pg. 124 plots the "?" with the label, "Golden West Visitor Center" at the very spot most are accustomed to seeing the word, "Stehekin." The DEIS plots Stehekin as an "NPS visitor center." That's what's chilling.

Simple mistake? An agency-wide Freudian slip-n-blip? One way or another, Stehekin disappeared in the minds of the National Park Service and DEIS authors.

In summary...

1. The community of Stehekin is not recognized on any EIS map.
2. The EIS lists twenty-six Gateway Communities. Stehekin was not included on this list.
3. When the EIS acknowledged the presence of the geographic location of Stehekin, that spot was listed as a "Golden West Visitor Center."

Three strikes your out; the cat is out of the bag.

Is the omission of Stehekin from maps and list of Gateway Communities an analogy defining the shallowness of the DEIS construction as a whole?

Where is Stehekin? Hidden behind a façade of imprecise generalizations posing as scientific analysis.

As stated on the first page of this letter, "Until more precise data is included in a revised draft, public input will lack precision envisioned when NEPA and the EIS

process were conceived and, unintentionally, set grizzlies up for failure in the North Cascades.”

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

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It is hoped the DEIS authors, NPS and USFS personnel and the Washington Fish and Wildlife Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will address the following action items in order to bring the DEIS into compliance with the intention of NEPA and the EISS process.

**Action Items:** The following are required action items to be accomplished before the grizzly DEIS remotely responsive to legally established NEPA guidelines.

**A. Action Item: A final determination on the Grizzly EIS should not occur until the DEIS includes:**

- 1. A map that plots, to the greatest degree of accuracy possible, the location of bear sightings confirmed in the Sullivan Report included in the body of the DEIS.**
- 2. A map showing the locations of the three trading posts (Thompson, Colville, Walla Walla) in relation to the North Cascades is needed to be included in a DEIS revision and made available to those reviewing the Grizzly DEIS.**

**B.1 The grizzly DEIS cannot not be finalized until ungulate population estimates throughout the NCE are mapped and used to inform the EDIS narrative concerning the effects of grizzlies on ungulate populations.**

**B.2 Action Item: Because it is the duty of NEPA to make the potential effects of an alternative clear, the grizzly DEIS must be required to**

**actually make that evaluation and provide it to the public for review before the DEIS is finalized.**

**C. Action Item: Maps must be created showing the territory requirements necessary to accommodate 200+ grizzlies. (The DEIS estimates female grizzly habitats include at least a ten-mile radius. How many sq. mi. of territory does a female grizzly require?)**

**(Area of a circle equals pi times radius squared – 3.14 times 10 X 10 = 100 X 3.14 = 314 miles habitat territory required for a female grizzly. Male grizzlies require a larger territory.)**

**It's understood that individual grizzly bear territory will overlap, however, they will not overlap completely. As with ungulates, grizzly distribution will not be uniform over the entire NCE.**

**D. Action Item: The Grizzly DEIS must not be finalized until a survey of North Cascade visitors is developed that objectively evaluates visitor perceptions concerning the importation of grizzlies into the North Cascades Complex and recreational experiences.**

**E. Action Item – The time line for citizen response should be extended significantly in order that respondents are able to review habitat data referenced in the DEIS.**

**F. Action Item: The legislative history section of the DEIS must both include relevant legislative history references attesting to the fact that the enactment of PL 90-544 ensured that in the North Cascades Complex recreational values be given priority over all other uses.**

**G. Action Item: The community of Stehekin must be represented on all DEIS maps and included with the twenty-six other gateway communities identified in the DEIS.**

**H. Action Item Because it is the duty of NEPA to make the potential effects of an alternative clear, the grizzly DEIS must actually provide impact**

**statements that are more than vague generalities of no impact upon wildlife and visitors.**

**I. Action Item: Considering the weakness of the DEIS analysis, it is highly recommend that the decision makers review the contract provisions and require the contractor to prepare a new DEIS that meets basic NEPA standards.**

**Appendix:**

**Appendix:**

**#1** "Grizzly bear predation upon black bears could have important population regulation implications and could prejudice the selection of habitats by black bears. Pdf PG4 Domestic cattle (*Bos taurus*) and deer (*Odocoileus* spp.) were the most common mammals eaten by black and grizzly bears. Other large herbivores in the scats of bears were domestic sheep (*Ovis aries*) and elk (*Cervus elaphus*). Insects and birds were present in bear diets also. The major insects eaten were ants. Bird parts were infrequently found in scats and then most often during nesting season. ***Although observations did not confirm that grizzlies killed black bears, black bear hair was found in grizzly bear scats. Grizzly bear hair was not detected in scats of black bears.*** Average home-range size for resident grizzly bears was 1,185.6 km<sup>2</sup> (N = 2, SD = 740.4) for males and 642.3 km<sup>2</sup> (N = 8, SD = 265.9) for females. Resident black bear home ranges averaged 224.8 km<sup>2</sup> (N = 5, SD = 111.9) for males and 137.3 km<sup>2</sup> (N = 2, SD = 96.2) for females. Resident grizzly bear home ranges were approximately 5 times the size of resident black bear home ranges"

**#2** As the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos*) population in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) moves toward recovery, it will expand into more areas occupied by black bears (*U. americanus*). Interactions between the species may affect resident black bear populations and also influence the ease with which grizzly bears recolonize. We monitored movement and activity patterns of 17 radio collared grizzly bears and 13 radio collared black bears on a 450 km<sup>2</sup> area in northwest Wyoming during June-October in 1995 and 1996 and tested hypotheses predicting similarity in dispersion, activity, and habitat use patterns of sympatric black and grizzly bears. The larger home ranges of grizzly bears overlapped a number of black bear home ranges, yet core use areas were less likely to overlap. **Adult male grizzly bears used open habitats more than expected ( $P \leq 0.05$ ), whereas black bears selected against them and used forested habitats more than expected ( $P \leq 0.05$ ).** Patterns of black bear habitat use were more similar to those of adult female and sub-adult grizzly bears than adult male grizzly bears. Male

grizzly bears were nocturnal, female grizzly bears were generally crepuscular, and black bears were diurnal. **Differences in distribution, habitat use, and activity patterns suggested sufficient separation to reduce interactions between black bears and adult male grizzly bears.** However, similarities between black bear and female and sub-adult grizzly bear patterns suggest that interactions between the species will become more common as adult female grizzly bears become established.

### **#3 Northwest Hiker:**

*"Every so often the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan comes up and people assert that currently there are grizzly bears in the North Cascades. I have never seen any verifiable evidence of this.*

*"In a recent thread, spamfoot suggested I review the [Grizzly Bear Recover Plan published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1997](#) to gain insight into this subject. This 64 page document was indeed worth reading and is full of interesting facts about the history of grizzly bears in the area. I did not know that the infamous General Custer shot a grizzly in the 1850's while surveying the U.S./ Canadian border and sent the skin to the Smithsonian. The Plan includes facts from several academic studies that attempted to assess the historical population of grizzlies in the area. While no estimates for total population are given it appears that it was never very high. For example, between 1827 and 1859, Hudson's Bay Company records show that 3,788 grizzly bear hides were shipped from three forts in the area (an average of 114 per year for 33 years, but the peak was much higher and occurred around 1850 probably due to more professional hunting with better rifles followed by near extinction).*

*"According to the Plan, the last grizzly killed in the North Cascades was in Fisher Creek in 1967. This appears to also be the last verified evidence of grizzly bear in the ecosystem. The Plan states that, 'The present grizzly bear population is unknown ... We estimate that the North Cascades population consists of less than 50 grizzly bears and may be as low as 10 to 20 bears [based on the characteristics of the ecosystem] ... It is clear that the population is far below the level necessary for viability and has a high probability of extirpation.'*

*"The report goes on to propose, 'The parameters taking priority for research in the recovery zone during the next five years [1998 – 2002] should be population size, distribution, home ranges and habit use.' Despite this focus on determining population size, there is no subsequent report of a researcher finding evidence of a grizzly bear.'*

*"The current Fish and Wildlife website addressing the [North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Recovery](#) states:*

*"While study of this very rugged and remote habitat indicates that this ecosystem is capable of supporting a self-sustaining population of grizzlies, only a "remnant" population remains, incapable of enduring without active recovery efforts. The*

population is estimated to be fewer than 20 animals within the 9,500 sq mi North Cascades recovery zone (limited to the U.S.) and the bears in this ecosystem are warranted for endangered status. In 1991, the Fish and Wildlife Service first issued a warranted but precluded finding to uplist the North Cascades recovery zone population to endangered status. As noted in the recently published *Annual Notice of Findings on Resubmitted Petitions*, this uplisting action continues to be precluded by higher priority listing actions (see the species assessment form for additional information on why reclassification is warranted but precluded). The Service assigned a listing priority number of 3 for this population because of very low population numbers as evidenced by continuing lack of credible sightings and little success identifying animals through hair snagging and genetic analysis.

"Additionally, it states:

"The population in adjacent British Columbia is estimated to be less than 25-30 grizzly bears. A draft British Columbia recovery plan for that area recommends habitat protection measures and population augmentation on the Canadian side of the border.

"The original Plan stated that 200 to 400 bears would be needed for a viable population for the 9,565 square mile recovery zone. For 300 bears that would be 31 square miles per bear.

"Spamfoot also kindly suggested I review a 2011 [Seattle Times story](#) about a grizzly bear photo taken in the North Cascades. From the article I learned that evidence of grizzlies in the North Cascades has been scarce.

"Our records go back to the mid-1950s, and the last official photo we have is of a dead bear that was killed in 1968," said Doug Zimmer, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife spokesman in Olympia, who monitors a hotline for grizzly-bear sightings.

"Also,

"The last officially recognized sighting was in 1996, when a biologist happened on a bear and a cub in the Glacier Peak Wilderness Area and was able to make a cast of the adult's track.

"The article also pointed out that a panel of experts had authenticated the photo. But not everyone agreed. In the thread [Rare Grizzly Bear Photographed in North Cascades](#), NWHiker ChuckM posted his own photos of a similar looking black bear that he took in the same area two days previous and stated he believes that his bear and the other bear were one and the same. For me, the simpler explanation of the extremely rare grizzly photo is that it was the same huge black bear that had a grizzly-like hump. At best the photo is inconclusive evidence as no tracks, DNA, etc. were later found to corroborate. Also, there have been no subsequent photos of any grizzly in the North Cascades.

"There was also this quixotic attempt to find evidence which disappointingly disappeared and was never heard from again: [Cascade Giants](#).

*"So are there grizzlies in the North Cascades? It's possible, but as of right now I don't see any verifiable evidence. Given all the hikers and mountaineers that traverse this terrain and the huge effort by professional biologists to find evidence, it seems unlikely that there wouldn't be more evidence if there were any bears to find.*

*"So this is the point I've come to trying to be open-minded but demanding in my standard of proof. As you can see from this long post, today I have been an armchair hiker. Please share any stories or evidence that can shed light on the topic."*

#### **#4 HOUSE REPORT 1870: page 9**

"Altogether the Federal land in this general vicinity total nearly 7 million acres — an amount equaling 16 percent of the State of Washington and over half of all federally owned lands in the State. Because Federal landownership is so extensive, **it is essential that the forest lands lying outside of the areas to be transferred to the Department of the Interior for administration continue to be administered in accordance with the principles of multiple use and sustained yield.** That is not to say, however, that their outdoor recreation potentials should be ignored. **On the contrary, one of the most persuasive arguments on behalf of this vast recreation complex is that it affords two of the principal Federal agencies with recreation responsibilities with an opportunity to develop a meaningful and coordinated outdoor recreation plan.**

**In view of the substantial acreage that will be designated as wilderness, it seems highly appropriate that the National Park Service should embark on the bold and imaginative development program which it described to the committee. This program should seek to maximize public use and enjoyment of the areas being transferred to its jurisdiction."** (Emphasis added)

On page 10 the following summary statement is made concerning Development Plans, **"Although it involves federally owned lands almost exclusively, the enactment of this legislation would assure their management and utilization for outdoor recreation; whereas their continued administration by the Forest Service might not always result in recreational values being given priority over all other uses."** (emphasis added)

Finally, on pages 12 and 13 — **"... Because of the variety of activities enjoyed by the public within this vast area, and because large areas are, or will be, preserved as wilderness, the park and recreation areas established pursuant to the enactment of this legislation should be utilized to assure public use and enjoyment to the fullest extent possible without destroying for that for which they are established."** (Emphasis added)

These statements are placed in bold type because they are bold statements! They give character and purpose to PL 90-544. These are bold statements that give

specific direction to the recreational intention of PL 90-544. Recreation values were given priority in the park and recreation areas! Congressional intention is clear!