

North Cascade grizzly bear restoration considered

By DAN WHEAT
Capital Press

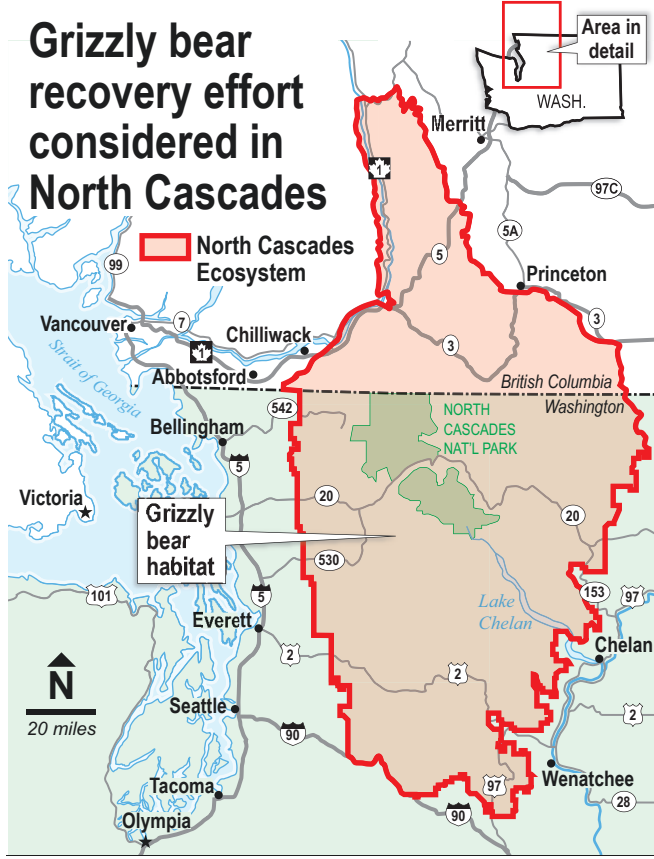
OKANOGAN, Wash. — Federal and state agencies are looking at restoring grizzly bears in the North Cascades, but Okanogan County commissioners don't like it.

The U.S. Department of the Interior announced Feb. 13 that it will hold a series of informational open houses in coming weeks to help it determine whether to take an active role in grizzly restoration.

Conservation Northwest and the National Parks Conservation Association issued a press release saying they "were thrilled" with the announcement because it's the "first formal step in recovery of an important native species on the brink of disappearing."

But Okanogan County Commissioner Jim DeTro said that other than "some warm and fuzzies in the Methow Valley," probably a majority of county residents oppose it.

Commissioners reminded the agencies, in the fall, of a state law passed a decade or more ago preventing state funds from being used for grizzly bear recovery, DeTro said. Three weeks ago, the agencies visited commissioners to inform them of their plans and "did not get a warm reception,"



Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; National Park Service Alan Kenagal/Capital Press

he said. "Every agency is so green and sensitive to bear huggers. My question is what about states' rights," he said. "This is one more thing they're trying to shove down our throats. It's one more endangered species that will ruin our lifestyle, custom, culture and economic stability."

The National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife have been pressured by environmentalists to pursue grizzly restoration, DeTro said. "We are very concerned about recovery of an additional apex predator in the North



Courtesy National Park Service

A grizzly bear is seen in this undated photo. There are believed to be about 20 grizzlies in the North Cascades of Washington with no reported interaction with ranchers or livestock.

Cascades. Ranchers would be unable to have any lethal take for protection of livestock," said Jack Field, executive vice president of the Washington Cattlemen's Association.

A grizzly "wreaked havoc" on Okanogan's cattle industry in 1948 and cattlemen fear they could again, DeTro said.

The state has created a "Jurassic Park" with its wolf policies that has led to "domestic terrorists" threatening death to ranchers in Northeastern Washington, DeTro said. Wolves have been seen eating in dumpsters in Twisp and attacking dogs on back porches on the Twisp River, he said. Residents

handle situations themselves and don't talk about it, he said.

The USFWS listed grizzlies as threatened in the lower 48 states in 1975. The species was listed as endangered by the state of Washington in 1980.

An Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee identified 9,800 square miles in the North Cascades from Cle Elum to the Canadian border and 3,800 square miles north of the border as adequate grizzly bear habitat in 1991. The committee decided, the same year, to recover grizzlies there.

Restoration could include moving grizzlies into the area from other places in the U.S. and Canada, according to the

Interior department. A few grizzlies have been sighted in the Canadian portion of the ecosystem in recent years but not on the U.S. side, the department said.

The open houses and a public comment period through March 26 is important in ensuring all issues are considered, NPS said. NPS and USFWS will hold informational open houses:

- 5 to 7:30 p.m., March 3, Red Barn upper meeting room, Winthrop.

- 5 to 7:30 p.m., March 4, Okanogan PUD meeting room, Okanogan.

- 6 to 8:30 p.m., March 5, Chelan County PUD Auditorium, Wenatchee

- 5 to 7:30 p.m., March 9, Putnam Centennial Center meeting room, Cle Elum.

- 5 to 7:30 p.m., March 10, Seattle Pacific University Bertona Classroom 1, Seattle.

- 5 to 7:30 p.m., March 11, Bellingham Central Library lecture room, Bellingham.

Additionally, the public is invited to submit written comments through March 26 at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/NCEG>. Comments also may be mailed or delivered to: Superintendent's Office, North Cascades National Park Service Complex, 810 State Route 20, Sedro Woolley, WA, 98284.

Wet March predicted in California

By TIM HEARDEN
Capital Press

SACRAMENTO — After a fierce mid-February storm system kept most areas near or above their normal seasonal rainfall totals, Northern California could be in for a wet March.

A weak system coming down from Canada this weekend could provide some mountain rain while helping to break down the high-pressure ridge over the region, setting up a possible barrage of storms from the Pacific, National Weather Service meteorologist Eric Kurth said.

"The ridge does seem to be breaking down to where we might be seeing some systems in early March," Kurth said. "The very long-range models are showing a shift to a wetter pattern in early March. ... There do seem to be some hints in that directions."

AccuWeather's long-range forecast goes as far as to predict as many as 23 days of rain in Redding in March, punctuated by some thunderstorms, with high temperatures in the 50s and low 60s.

The federal Climate Prediction Center is a little less exuberant, showing only an equal chance of above- or below-normal precipitation during the next month.

The potential for more rain comes after a series of storms Feb. 6-9 dumped nearly 3 inches in Redding and 2.7 inches in Sacramento, bringing the total seasonal rainfall in the capital city to 13.2 inches — above its normal 11.91 inches for the season, according to the National Weather Service.

The storms relieved drought conditions in northwestern California, where as many as 15 inches of rain fell in the mountains, but most of the middle of the state remains in the most severe category of drought, according to the national Drought Monitor.

The storms were too warm to deliver significant amounts of snow to the Sierra Nevada, where the snow water equivalent remains far below normal for this time of year, the state Department of Water Resources warns.

The department currently expects to deliver 15 percent of requested water allocations to State Water Project contractors, although growers have voiced concerns that the percentage could drop again because of the light snowpack.

State water officials said last month that low levels of fresh water may force them to build temporary rocky barriers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to keep saltwater out. Officials considered building the barriers last year but didn't because of early spring rains.

We help you build a better crop.

TagTeam® LCO is a *MultiAction*® inoculant with three powerful technologies that help maximize your pulse crop's performance. A specially selected *rhizobia* increases nitrogen fixation, while *Penicillium bilaii* improves phosphate availability. And LCO technology enhances nutrient capability for root and shoot growth. When you want to build a strong base for better results, ask your seed dealer or ag retailer for TagTeam LCO.

TagTeam® LCO

MONSANTO BioAg™

Monsanto BioAg and Design™, and TagTeam® LCO are trademarks of Monsanto Technology, LLC. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. © 2014 Monsanto Company. 41419 CLPR