

# National Park Service receives 120,000 comments on grizzlies

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

SEDRO WOOLLEY, Wash. — The National Park Service has received more than 120,000 public comments on its plans to reintroduce grizzly bears in the North Cascades.

A public comment period began in early January and was to end March 14 but was extended to April 28 at the request of the public and local officials.

More than 120,000 comments were received, and it will take three to six months for NPS to process them, said Denise Shultz, spokeswoman at the North Cascades National Park Service Complex in Sedro Woolley.

An analysis of the comments won't include how many were from out of state or how many are for reintroduction, but will be more along the lines of identifying things or alternatives that NPS and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service may have missed that may need further data or study, Shultz said.

The comments focus on a draft environmental impact statement that includes a no-action alternative and three alternatives to restore a reproducing population of about 200 bears by bringing them in from other areas.

Restoring grizzlies would



Chris Morgan, Grizzly Bear Outreach Project

There are believed to be about 20 grizzly bears in the North Cascades of Washington.

“enhance the probability of longterm survival and conservation of grizzly bears in the contiguous United States, thereby contributing to overall grizzly bear recovery and greater biodiversity of the ecosystem,” the agencies have said.

Grizzlies were listed as a threatened species in the contiguous U.S. in 1975. They were listed as endangered in Washington state in 1980.

A final environmental impact statement may come late this year or early next year, with a decision a month or so

later, Shultz said.

U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse, whose district includes part of the North Cascades, sent a letter to Karen Taylor-Goodrich, superintendent of the North Cascades National Park Service Complex, March 17 expressing his “firm opposition” to the plan.

The general consensus of people attending a March 2015 forum in Okanogan on the issue was “that their concerns were not being taken seriously by federal officials,” Newhouse wrote.

He noted that the last con-

firmed sighting of a grizzly in the North Cascades was in 1996 and that the agencies’ draft environmental impact statement found it “highly unlikely that the area contains a viable grizzly bear population.”

That raises questions about the need for restoration, he wrote.

On April 27, a Newhouse aide said the congressman is “continuing conversations” on the issue with new Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, a former Montana congressman.

Okanogan County ranchers already coping with coyotes, cougars and wolves say they don’t need another apex predator killing and harassing their cattle.

“At the public meeting, it was clear there’s a predetermined outcome and that NPS doesn’t care to hear from local people who will be impacted. The whole format of the meeting was to stifle public input and indoctrinate attendees on the benefits of grizzly bear,” said Nicole Kuchenbuch, an Okanogan rancher and president of the Okanogan Farm Bureau.

“Congress needs to cut the funding. I don’t know the chances, but we do hold out hope, the way the Trump administration is rolling out executive orders, that it might save the day,” Kuchenbuch said.

# Snowpack big enough that glaciers may gain

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

MOUNT VERNON, Wash. — This could be one of those rare years when glaciers in Washington’s Cascade Range gain a little.

Statewide mountain snowpack was 140 percent of normal on May 2, up from 121 percent of normal on April 3, which was up from 112 percent of normal on March 6, according to Scott Pattee, water supply specialist of the Washington Snow Survey Office of the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Mount Vernon.

Overall snow below 4,500 feet elevation is gone but higher elevation snowpack is melting slower than normal because of cool weather and has even been gaining around Mount St. Helens and Mount Adams, Pattee said.

It’s unusual enough that glaciers that have been receding for years might actually gain a little, he said.

“Irrigation supply is going to be excellent this year and rafting on the Wenatchee River might go another several weeks beyond July,” Pattee said.

Temperatures are increasing this week but will be accompanied by rain and then temperatures will fall again, he said. With daytime high temperatures in the mountains still in the 30s, snow is staying longer, he said.

“The weather guys all say we will have a summer, but I remember summers in the near past in Western Washing-

ton when we really didn’t have much summer,” he said.

The three-month outlook, May through July, calls for slightly above normal temperatures and equal chances of above or below normal on precipitation, he said. So it doesn’t look like there will be any prolonged heat wave to accelerate high mountain snowmelt, he said.

Snow water equivalent snowpack in the Spokane basin was 113 percent of normal on May 2. The upper Columbia (Okanogan and Methow rivers) was 148 percent. The central Columbia (Chelan, Entiat and Wenatchee) was 130, the upper Yakima was 105 and the lower Yakima 129. The lower Snake near Walla Walla was 125, Walla Walla was 182, and lower Columbia was 164. South Puget Sound (from the lowlands to the Cascade crest) was 129, central Puget Sound was 133, north Puget was 117, and the Olympics 127. All of those readings were up from a month ago.

Streamflow forecasts for May 1 through September will be near the same percentages of normal as the snowpack readings, Pattee said.

The five mountain reservoirs serving 464,000 irrigated acres (mostly farmland) in the Yakima Basin were at 72 percent of their 1 million-acre-foot capacity on May 2 and are at 97.8 percent of average storage for this time of year, according to the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. Precipitation in the basin is 108 percent of average.

# Blizzard worries western Kansas wheat farmers

By MATTHEW WEAVER  
Capital Press

As Vance Ehmke woke up Monday morning, he thought his wheat crop might survive

despite the spring blizzard that buried it overnight.

But as he scouted his farm near the tiny town of Dighton in western Kansas, he measured 10 to 12 inches of heavy

snow on top of his wheat, which is five to six weeks from harvest.

“We may have a problem,” Ehmke told the Capital Press. “I’m not nearly as confident this afternoon as I was this morning.”

Ehmke and other western Kansas wheat farmers were

blindsided by a weekend blizzard that blanketed the region, said Justin Gilpin, CEO of the Kansas Wheat Commission in Manhattan, Kan.

“This is something none of us have ever seen before, snow this late on a wheat crop like this,” Gilpin said. “It started snowing Friday night and just continued all through Sunday.”

The heavy snow bent over the wheat plants.

“Where those stems are bent and broken, that wheat’s probably going not going to make it,” Gilpin said.

Kansas grows 7.5 million acres of wheat, roughly 40 percent of which is in the western third of the state, Gilpin said.

Farmers will assess the damage in the next week to 10 days. The commission is advising farmers to work with

their crop insurance adjusters.

Ehmke said he’ll have to wait several weeks to determine the extent of the damage.

“Just like everybody else here in western Kansas, we’re waiting as fast as we can to see what the hell happened to us,” he said.

Farther west, in Syracuse, Kan., Jason Ochs estimated he got 20-24 inches of snow in 12 hours on his 4,000 acres of wheat.

“I’m a very optimistic person, but I’m not feeling very optimistic at this point,” Ochs said, noting he lost seven of the 10 trees in his yard. “If it’s doing that to trees, I can’t imagine that a wheat plant’s going to hold up at all.”

“Where commodity prices are and the drought we’ve been through, I just really

hope I can survive this,” he said.

Dan Steiner, grain merchant for Morrow County Grain Growers in Boardman, Ore., said the market is trying to quantify the blizzard. He’s heard damage estimates in Kansas ranging from 50 million to 150 million bushels — up to half of the state’s crop.

The snowstorm will affect the supply of high-quality hard red winter wheat.

While cash prices increased 5 cents a bushel, wheat futures increased 25 cents a bushel.

Steiner said a farmer may want to use the price rally to market some of the 2017 wheat crop.

“I think the majority of the rally, we probably have seen it unless something further develops and the damage is going to be way more extensive than the market is thinking,” Steiner said.

Ochs, the Kansas farmer, said many farmers were looking forward to a good crop following a drought that has dried out the region.

“When they thought we were going to have a pretty decent crop, they weren’t sure they were going to survive this year,” he said. “Now this happened.”

## LEGAL

### NOTICE OF BEEF COUNCIL PUBLIC BUDGET HEARING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a public meeting will be held pursuant to ORS 577, the Oregon Beef Council Statute, by Conference Call on Thursday, May 18, 2017, at 8:00 am upon a proposed budget for the operation of the Oregon Beef Council during Fiscal Year July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018.

At this meeting, any producer of beef in Oregon has the right to be heard with respect to the proposed budget, a copy of which is available for inspection, under reasonable circumstances in the Oregon Beef Council office in Portland. Any producer of beef in Oregon may join this conference call by calling toll free 1-866-210-1669. Participant login number is 7980221.

For further information, contact the Oregon Beef Council office at 1827 NE 44th Ave., Ste 315, Portland, Oregon 97213.

The meeting location is accessible to persons with disabilities. A request for an interpreter for the hearing or for other accommodations for persons with disabilities should be made at least 48 hours before the meeting to the Oregon Beef Council at 503-274-2333.

Dated this 24th day of April, 2017

ATTESTED: Jason Chamberlain, Chairman

William N. Wise, CEO

18-1/#4



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Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 5/08/2017. The sale will be held at 10:00am by WILTSE'S TOWING 3120 CHERRY AVE. SE, SALEM, OR 2006 HARLEY DAV HERITAGE VIN = 1HD1BWB146Y074151 Amount due on lien \$800.00 Reputed owner(s) JERRY LEE RUNDGREN

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### PURSUANT TO ORS CHAPTER 819

Notice is hereby given that the following vehicle will be sold, for cash to the highest bidder, on 5/9/2017. The sale will be held at 10:00am by SKYLINE FORD 2510 COMMERCIAL ST SE, SALEM, OR 2006 FORD F350 VIN = 1FTWW31P36EA89659 Amount due on lien \$19,169.17 Reputed owner(s) TIMOTHY HAMMOND SELCO Comm CU

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