

# CITY OF SALMON

1784

200 MAIN STREET / SALMON, IDAHO 83467 / (208) 756-3214

August 21, 1997

RECEIVED BY U.S. FISH  
AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY  
COORDINATORS OFFICE.

AUG 26 1997

Bitterroot Grizzly Bear EIS  
P.O. Box 5127  
Missoula, Montana 59806

The City Council of the City of Salmon, Idaho has voted unanimously to support Alternative 2 as written in the Bitterroot Grizzly Bear Draft EIS. The information provided for the preferred Alternative 1 is incorrect, unsupported by fact and obviously slanted to provide support for the preferred course of action. The Final EIS should address the following areas and correct the inaccuracies contained in the draft document.

- 1
- 1) Alternative 1 states that the risk to human safety is less than one per year and less than 1 mortality every few decades. The information to make this statement is taken from information gathered in and around Glacier and Yellowstone National Parks. The information provided also gives the impression that encounters with the bears was the individual's fault and the bears were responding to being shot by hunters. The Draft EIS does not provide information as to all events occurring during this incident, such as if the bears were shot in response to an attack by the bear. We know that the Fish & Wildlife Service is promoting their agenda of relocating grizzly bears, but they should remove the emotionalism from this document and limit the EIS to factual information.

Before it is determined that the incidence of injuries and mortalities are acceptable to the Fish & Wildlife Service, (but probably not acceptable to the general public) a study should be made of Grizzly Bear/Human encounters in Alaska, where the bears are in a natural environment and have not been conditioned by government agencies to be familiar with human encounters.

- 2
- 2) The Draft EIS states that no land use is expected to be altered, "solely for grizzly bears, under Alternative 1". But if that statement happens to be wrong the changes will be determined by the Citizen Management Committee. Unless the Fish & Wildlife Service has suddenly changed its attitude toward management and consideration of humans, this statement is ludicrous. There is an endless list of areas where public and private land uses have been changed to accommodate a listed species. Past practices have shown that when there is a conflict with a listed species and humans, the listed species takes priority over

2 the human. The draft EIS should be changed to state that in all alternatives, under present laws, there will be alterations in land use when conflicts with bears arise. Truthfulness should be an essential ingredient to any EIS.

3 3) The cost implementation for all alternatives is completely erroneous. The cost for the wolf reintroduction program was well over four million dollars. The estimate of less than two million dollars for alternative 1 is unrealistic. The draft EIS should include a complete and detailed budget of all costs involved in this program. This should include the positions and pay scale for involved persons, rates for equipment and estimated usage for the equipment, detailed lists of equipment costs and all relevant expenses involved so that an honest determination of the expense of the program can be evaluated.

4 4) The idea of a Citizen Management Committee (CMC) managing the program sounds like an effective manner of responding to the public needs. However the committee is appointed by the Secretary of Interior, who also approves the work plan and retains authority. If the Secretary of Interior decides that the CMC is not doing what he wants he has the power to remove them from the plan. The committee is made up of one member of the Idaho Fish and Game Department, of which agency has gone on record as opposing the grizzly bear plan, and one member of the Nez Perce tribe, who have no standing to manage any aspect of the plan. All government agencies are represented on this "Citizen's" committee. The draft EIS should state the fact that the program will be administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service with an advisory group appointed by the Secretary.

5 5) If alternative 1 were chosen, the draft EIS states that the annual net social benefit would be \$40,449,030 to \$60,639,180. Wow! That is a wonderful benefit to the area. Well, the authors of this EIS do state that 1 percent of the local population was surveyed, and .01% of the regional population was surveyed to see if they would increase visitations to the area. But only 3.5 percent of the regional respondents said they would visit more often as a result of grizzly bear introduction, but 6.2 percent stated they would visit less often. Okay, the EIS says they conducted a telephone study and found that people were willing to pay to a fund for grizzly bear recovery. That is very generous. But the EIS doesn't state who collects the 40 to 50 millions dollars each year. Or who receives the benefits of this money. Does it increase business? Will we have an increase in timber sales? Will outfitters have more tourists? None of these questions are addressed in the draft EIS.

6 6) The draft EIS is not specific in providing the plan for placing grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. Where, specifically will the bears be collected? Where will the bears be released? How will the bears be transported? What alternative plans are prepared if the original release plan is not feasible, as in the case of the wolf release? These items should be reviewed in the draft EIS.

These are just a few of the issues we have with the introduction of grizzly bears in the Bitterroot Ecosystem. Any person with any amount of common sense knows that there will be impacts on the use of public and private land, however the fish & Wildlife Service attempts to cloud this

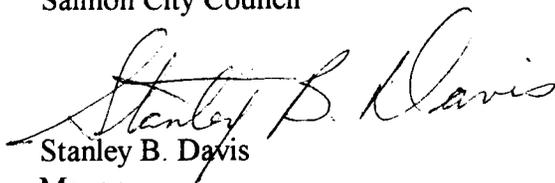
issue. We know that the cost will be higher than shown in the EIS and we know that in any conflict between man and bear - the bear will be the winner.

The introduction of grizzly bears into the Bitterroot Ecosystem is not beneficial to anyone except the people whose jobs are involved in the process, and this includes the bears. The grizzly bears will be removed from an area in which they are now successfully living. The Fish & Wildlife Service admits that there will be bear mortality. The people in the region will lose use of public and private lands, ranchers, farmers, loggers and miners livelihood will be negatively impacted. The economy will suffer, just as it has done because of numerous other species of plants and animals, and people will lose their livelihood. It is easy to prepare a document that says this will not happen, but the residents of Lemhi County have had this happen time and time again.

The City of Salmon also is extremely displeased with the Fish & Wildlife's decision to remove Salmon from the list of sites for a public hearing. This action once again shows that the Fish & Wildlife Service does not want to listen to the people that will be impacted most by their decision, but will make every effort to avail themselves to that faction that is in agreement with their agenda. This is the typical attitude by the Fish & Wildlife Service towards the people of our area and we would hope that at some point a person with minimal people skills will come to learn that this arrogance is making their work more difficult in this area. The people in Lemhi County deserve to be treated with respect and courtesy, and will respond in like fashion.

We view this comment on the draft EIS as an exercise in futility, because we have not seen one federal government predisposed action change as a result of public comments. It is our desire, however, to go on record as protesting any plan that calls for the relocating of grizzly bears into the Bitterroot Ecosystem.

Salmon City Council

  
Stanley B. Davis  
Mayor