

**From:** [Jonkel, James](#)  
**To:** [Bell, Chad -FS](#); [Tomson, Scott -FS](#); [Fortin-Noreus, Jennifer K](#); [Cooley, Hilary](#); [Shanley, Pat- FS](#); [Carver, Quinn- FS](#); [Hampson, Eli](#); [Trimbo, Rory](#); [Harris, Rich](#)  
**Cc:** [Thompson, Michael](#); [Arnold, Randy](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Fw: SB 337 and Grizzly Bear Relocation  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:51:16 PM  
**Attachments:** [Grizzly Bear Relocation Scenarios2.docx](#)

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I think I got everyone from our various work groups on this email. Here is Ken McDonalds email on how to proceed with identifying relocation sites in R2 for Commission approval.

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**From:** McDonald, Ken <kmcdonald@mt.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 29, 2021 3:40 PM  
**To:** Annis, Kim <KAnnis@mt.gov>; Manley, Timothy <Tim.Manley@mt.gov>; Wenum, Erik <Erik.Wenum@mt.gov>; Jonkel, James <JaJonkel@mt.gov>; Trimbo, Rory <Rory.Trimbo@mt.gov>; Frey, Kevin <KFrey@mt.gov>; White, Charles <Charles.White@mt.gov>; Sarmiento, Wesley <Wesley.Sarmiento@mt.gov>; Kembel, Kylie <Kylie.Kembel@mt.gov>; FWP \*Wildlife Regional Mgrs <FWP#WLMgrs@mt.gov>  
**Cc:** FWP \*Reg Supervisors <RegSuper@mt.gov>; Costello, Cecily <cecicostello@mt.gov>; Roberts, Lori <LRoberts@mt.gov>; Harris, Rich <Richard.Harris@mt.gov>  
**Subject:** SB 337 and Grizzly Bear Relocation

Greetings Bear Specialists and Wildlife Managers,

As you know, SB 337 (<http://leg.mt.gov/bills/2021/sesslaws/ch0338.pdf>) was passed by the legislature this session and it directs that FWP may only relocate bears to Fish and Wildlife Commission approved release sites, and FWP cannot relocate a bear causing conflict if it is outside of a recovery zone. The bill has an effective date of March 1, 2022. That means we have to have relocation sites identified and approved prior to the 2022 bear season. In looking at the calendar, in order to not overlap with the biennial season setting, and to give us time to make adjustments if needed, I am proposing we have proposed release sites identified and present those to the Fish and Wildlife Commission at their October meeting, with a final adoption in December. That means we (i.e., you) will soon need to start working with your public land management agency counterparts and potentially private landowners to identify release sites we would potentially use to relocate bears. In thinking about this, and not knowing what the commission thinks, we may want to identify sites where different categories of bears might be released, such as a conflict bear from inside a recovery zone vs. a nonconflict bear vs. a livestock conflict bear inside a recovery zone. A conflict bear captured outside of a recovery zone may not be relocated by FWP.

To that end, I have assembled a table of different conflict/nonconflict scenarios and proposed responses. Once this is agreed upon (or as best we can), I will ask that you work with your public

land managers to come up with a list of proposed sites for each applicable scenario that we will take to the commission for their approval. I am thinking of a site as a portion of a drainage or area above a gated road vs. an exact lat-long. I have visited with Chris Savage from the Forest Service (regional foresters office), and he agreed that once we are ready, he will work with his folks to grease the skids to help as much as they can on their side. I know some of you already work with your forest service counterparts on an annual basis to identify sites, so it should be pretty easy, but others may not have such a formal process. May need coordination between regions as well so we don't have any blank spots.

So next steps:

- Please review and provide comments on the attached scenarios table – please have comments to me by July 14.
- I will incorporate comments into a final version, and then will provide that to the Forest Service (Chris Savage) with the request to alert his folks that we will be seeking help with identification of sites that if necessary are limited to specific scenarios.
- Regional staff work with land management colleagues to assemble list of potential release sites. Note, this also includes augmentation sites in the Cabinet-Yaak, sites for genetic exchange (e.g., NCDE to GYE), or new reintroduction sites. Need to have this list by early September.
- Proposed list presented to Fish and Wildlife Commission at their October 28 meeting. Public comment accepted from October 28-November 29.
- Final adoption by Fish and Wildlife Commission at their December 16 meeting.
- Implementation begins in spring 2022. Bears may only be relocated to sites on the approved list.

So step one is to review and provide any comments on the attached table by July 14 [Grizzly Bear Relocation Scenarios2.docx](#). Please note that this is very draft and represents what I would recommend, but still needs approval by the Director's office as well. So items like my definition of on-site release may change. But your input is helpful, so please do review.

Hopefully that all makes sense.

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