

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



Grizzly Bear Recovery Program

2024

Annual Report

About the Grizzly Bear Recovery Program

We collaborate with agencies, tribes, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and the public to advance grizzly bear conservation and recovery. As a direct link between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) and the American people, we provide information and technical assistance, to support communities in grizzly bear country reduce conflicts, enhance human safety, and advance collaborative management of bears and their habitats.

Core Functions

Endangered Species Act Implementation

- Develop and implement recovery plans (ESA Section 4)
- Draft regulations, evaluate petitions, and conduct status reviews (ESA Section 4)
- Collect scientific data on the state of recovery (ESA Section 4)
- Advise FWS leadership and present best available science
- Support federal consultations (ESA Section 7) and litigation needs
- Oversee BNSF Railroad Habitat Conservation Plan (ESA Section 10)

Human Safety & Conflict Mitigation

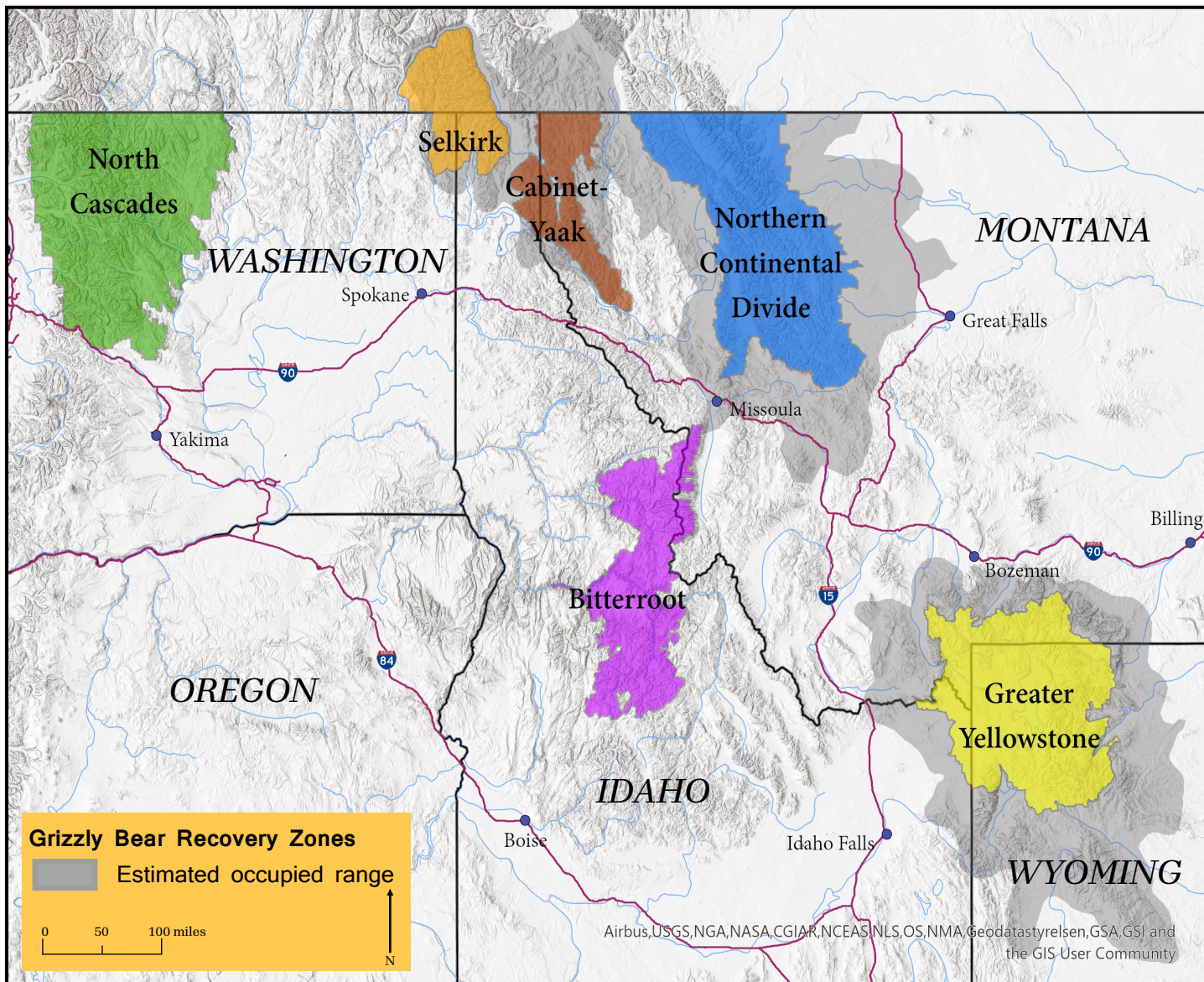
- Implement management actions to reduce conflicts and improve human safety
- Support communities, landowners and livestock producers with tools and technical assistance to prevent and manage human-bear conflicts
- Provide education on living and recreating safely in bear country
- Coordinate Bear Smart communities through the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Collaboration & Support

- Guide consistent grizzly bear management across jurisdictions (ESA Section 6)
- Cooperate with agencies and tribes on recovery and conservation
- Provide funding, outreach, and technical support to partners and communities (ESA Section 6)
- Support private lands conservation and the National Wildlife Refuge System (ESA Section 5)
- Assist the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee in recovery, delisting, and habitat conservation

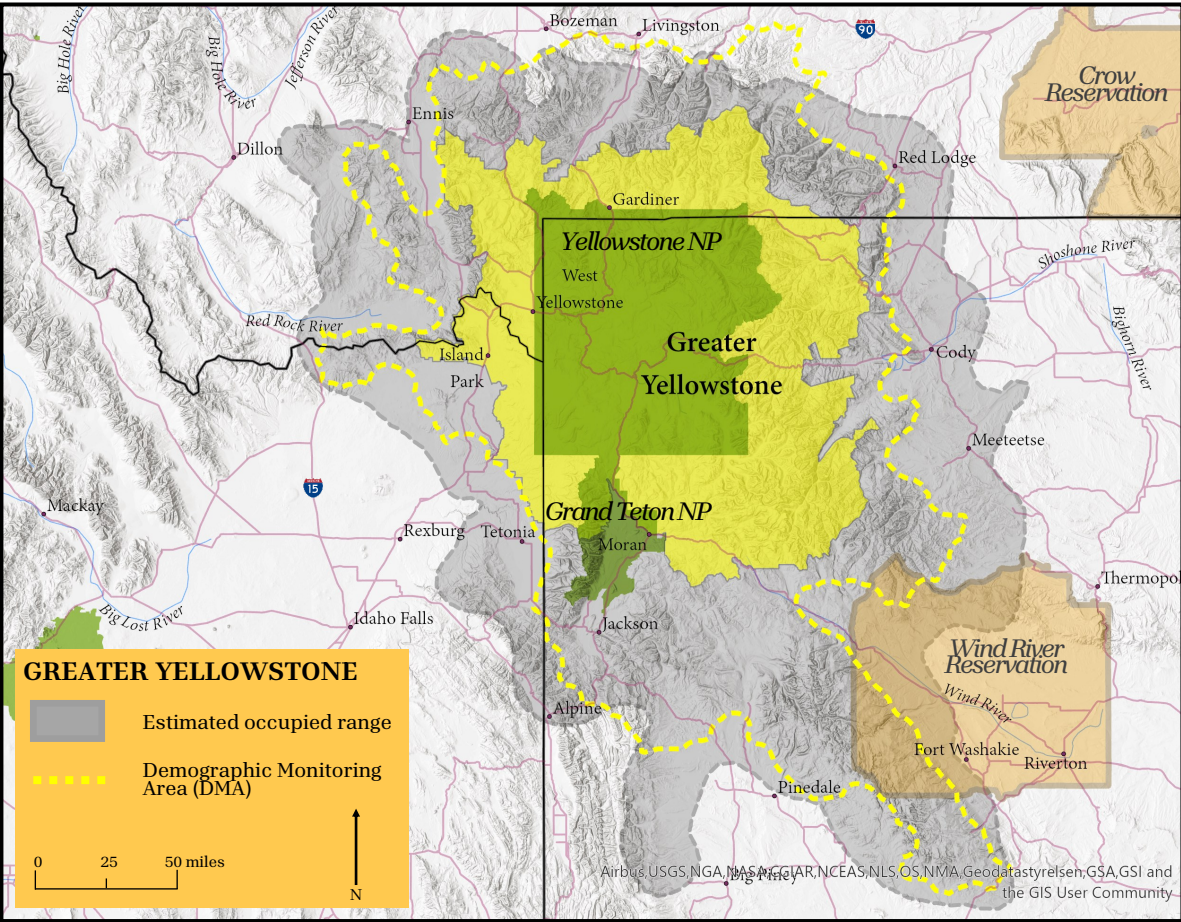
Recovering grizzly bears in the lower-48 States

Grizzly bears are listed as a threatened species in the lower-48 States under the Endangered Species Act. This annual report describes the current status of grizzly bear populations in the lower-48 States and our accomplishments during 2024.



Recovery zones and current estimated occupied range for the six ecosystems identified in the Recovery Plan¹. Estimated occupied ranges are current as of 2022 within the lower-48 States. There are currently no known populations in the North Cascades and Bitterroot. Current estimated occupied range does not include low-density peripheral locations and represents a minimum known area of occupancy, not everywhere they occur.

GREATER YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM



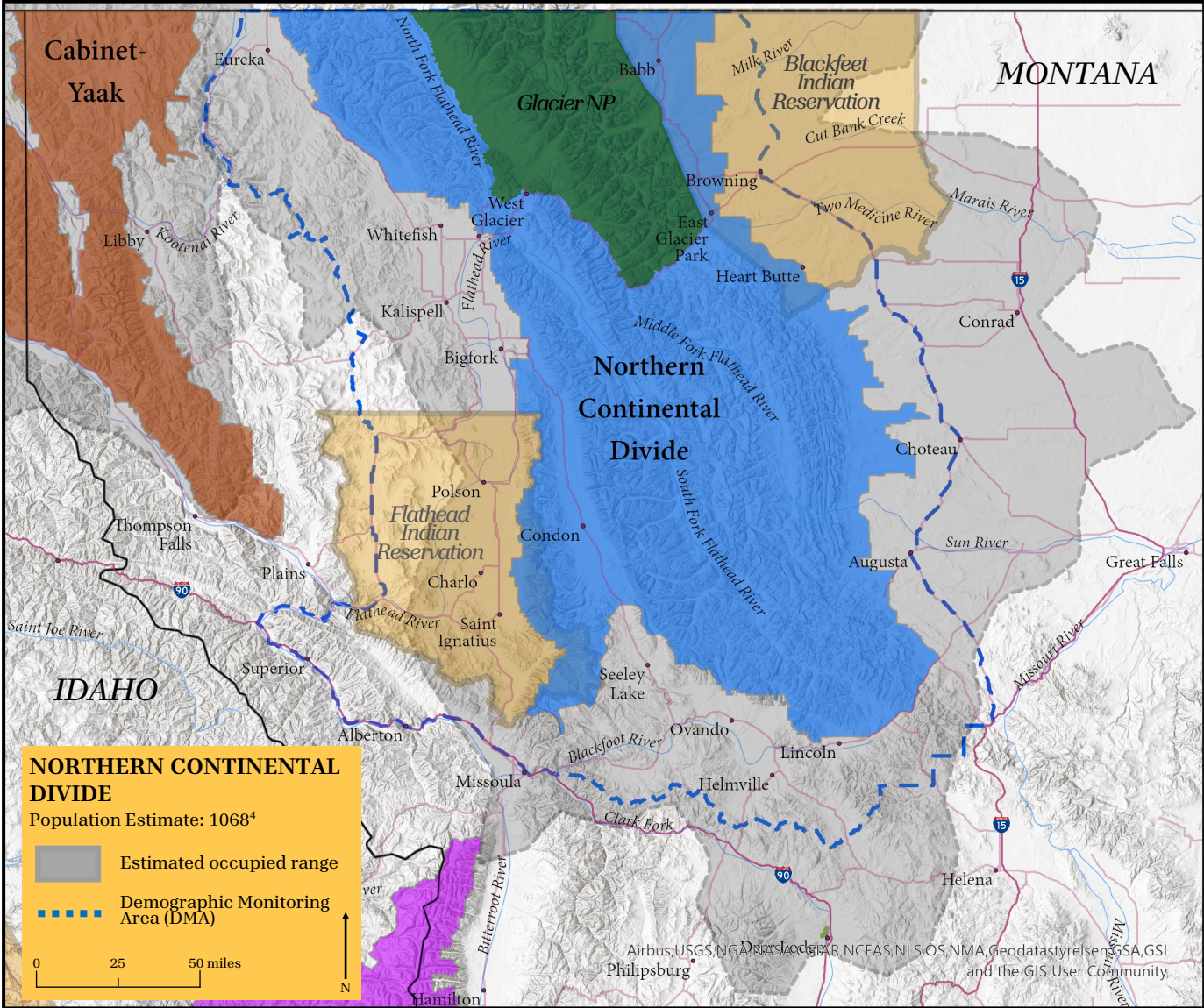
Map of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem recovery zone (RZ), demographic monitoring area (DMA), and estimated occupied range as of 2022.

Demographic Recovery Criteria³

	Criterion	Progress
1	Maintain a population within the DMA between or above 800 to 950 grizzly bears by determining and applying annual mortality thresholds for independent females and independent males (≥ 2 years old)	There were an estimated 1,050 bears in 2024. Independent female and independent male mortality rates were 4.4% and 5.5%, respectively
	Criterion	Progress
2	Sixteen of 18 Bear Management Units (BMUs) within the Recovery Zone must be occupied by females with young, with no two adjacent BMUs unoccupied, during a 6-year period	18 of 18 BMUs occupied by females with young in 2024 and during the most recent 6-year period

The Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team (IGBST) is an interdisciplinary group of State, Tribal, and Federal scientists responsible for long-term monitoring and research on grizzly bears in the GYE. Detailed monitoring information, including data summarized here, including annual reports and research results, can be found on the [IGBST website](#).

NORTHERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE ECOSYSTEM



Map of the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem recovery zone (RZ), demographic monitoring area (DMA), and estimated occupied range as of 2022.

Demographic Recovery Objectives⁵

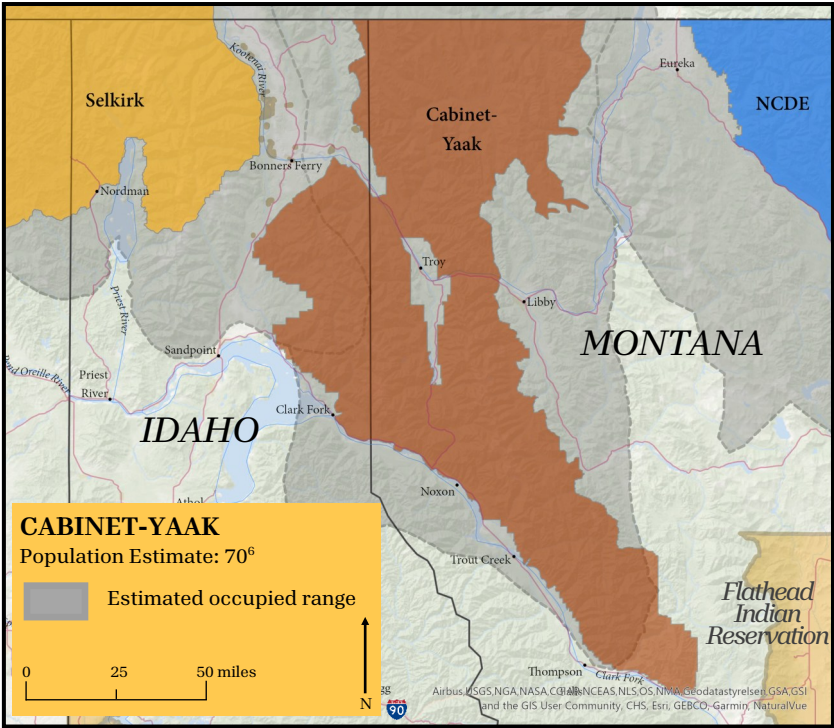
	Objective	Progress
1	Occupancy Threshold Maintain the presence of females with dependent offspring in at least 21 of 23 BMUs of the Recovery Zone and in at least 6 of 7 occupancy units of Zone 1 at least every six years	All 23 BMUs within the recovery zone and all 7 occupancy units within Zone 1 were occupied by females with young during the most recent 6-year period.

	Objective	Progress
2	Independent Female Survival Threshold Maintain estimated annual survival of independent females of at least 90% and a rate at or above the minimum level consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population will remain above 800 grizzly bears.	The estimated annual survival rate was above the threshold at 0.93
	Independent Female Mortality Threshold Limit annual estimated number of total mortalities of independent females to no more than 10% of the estimated number of independent females and below the maximum number consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population will remain above 800 grizzly bears. <i>-The 2023 mortality threshold was 26 -</i>	The 6-year mortality average was 14
	Independent Male Mortality Threshold Limit annual estimated number of total mortalities of independent males to no more than 15% of the estimated number of independent males	The 6-year mortality average was 19

	Objective	Progress
3	Monitor demographic and genetic connectivity among populations Estimate spatial distribution biennially and identify population of origin for individuals sampled inside and outside of the DMA to detect movements of individuals to and from other recovery areas	As of 2024, bears occupied 93% of the DMA and 6 bears moved from the NCDE to the CYE within the last 40 years; 3 are known to be dead and 1 instance of gene flow from an NCDE male

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP), in collaboration with Glacier NP, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), and the Blackfeet Nation are the primary agencies responsible for monitoring of the NCDE grizzly bear population. Additional details, annual reports, and select publications are available on the [MFWP website](#).

CABINET-YAAK ECOSYSTEM



Map of the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem recovery zone (RZ) and estimated occupied range as of 2022.

Demographic Recovery Targets¹

*Recovery targets in the CYE are calculated using a 6-year running average.

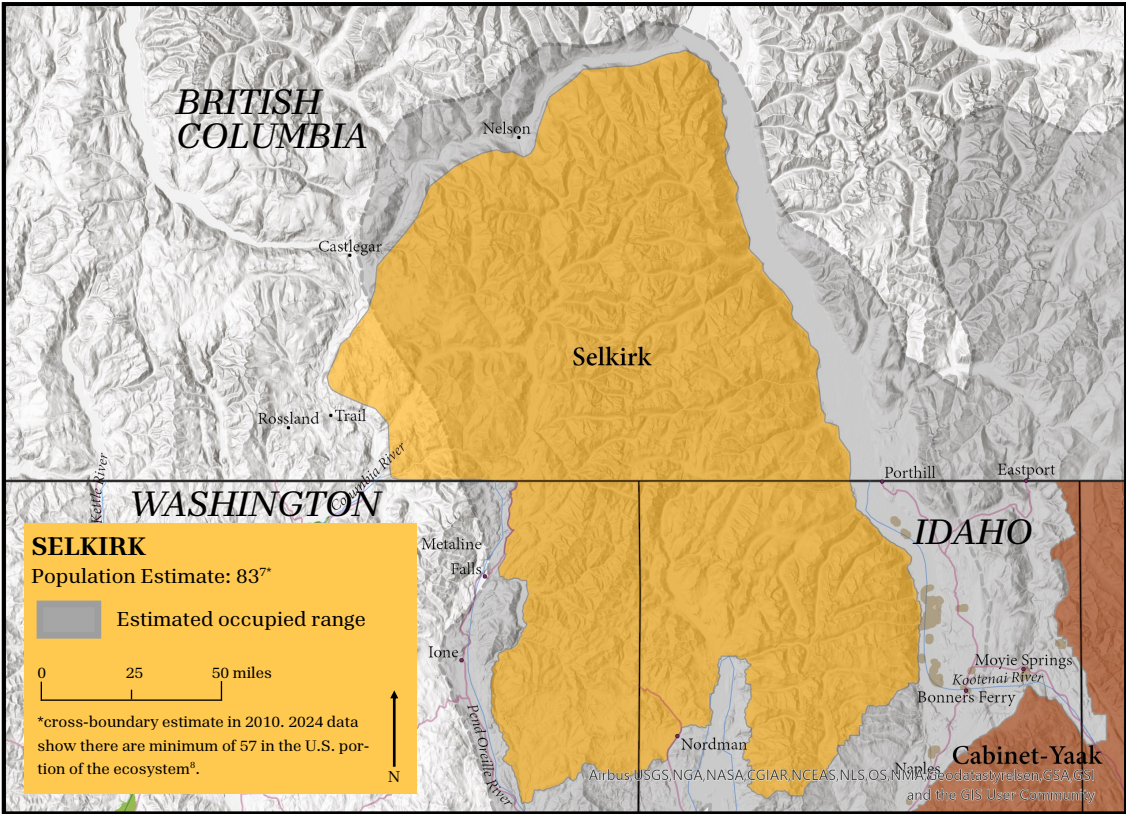
	Target	Progress
1	6 females with cubs both inside the RZ and within a 10-mile buffer	Females with cubs averaged 3.2 per year
2	18 of 22 BMUs occupied by females with young from a running 6-year sum	16 of 22 BMUs were occupied
3	Human-caused mortality shall be $\leq 4\%$ of the population estimate and $\leq 30\%$ shall be females - the mortality threshold for 2024 was 2.1 bears and 0.6 females per year -	Human-caused mortality was 4.2% (2.2/year - 1.2 female and 1.0 male, respectively)

The Service has led research and monitoring in the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem (CYE) since 1989, in collaboration with key partners including Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), MFWP, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and multiple National Forests.

From 1983 to 2024, sex- and age-specific survival and reproductive rates yielded an estimated annual population growth rate of 1.7%. Gene flow into the CYE was confirmed through reproduction by immigrants from the North Purcells and the NCDE, resulting in 30 known offspring including the first gene flow detected from the NCDE. Gene flow was also detected between the Yaak and Cabinet subpopulations. Six bears were documented moving from the NCDE to the CYE, though three are known to be dead.

To support recovery, an augmentation program began in 1990 to increase reproduction and genetic diversity in the Cabinet Mountains. Of 22 bears released through 2024, five are known to have reproduced, seven have died, and eight left the target area. Further details are available in the [2024 Cabinet-Yaak Grizzly Bear Recovery Area Research and Monitoring Progress Report](#)⁷.

SELKIRK ECOSYSTEM



Map of the Selkirk Ecosystem recovery zone (RZ) and estimated occupied range as of 2022.

Recovery Targets¹

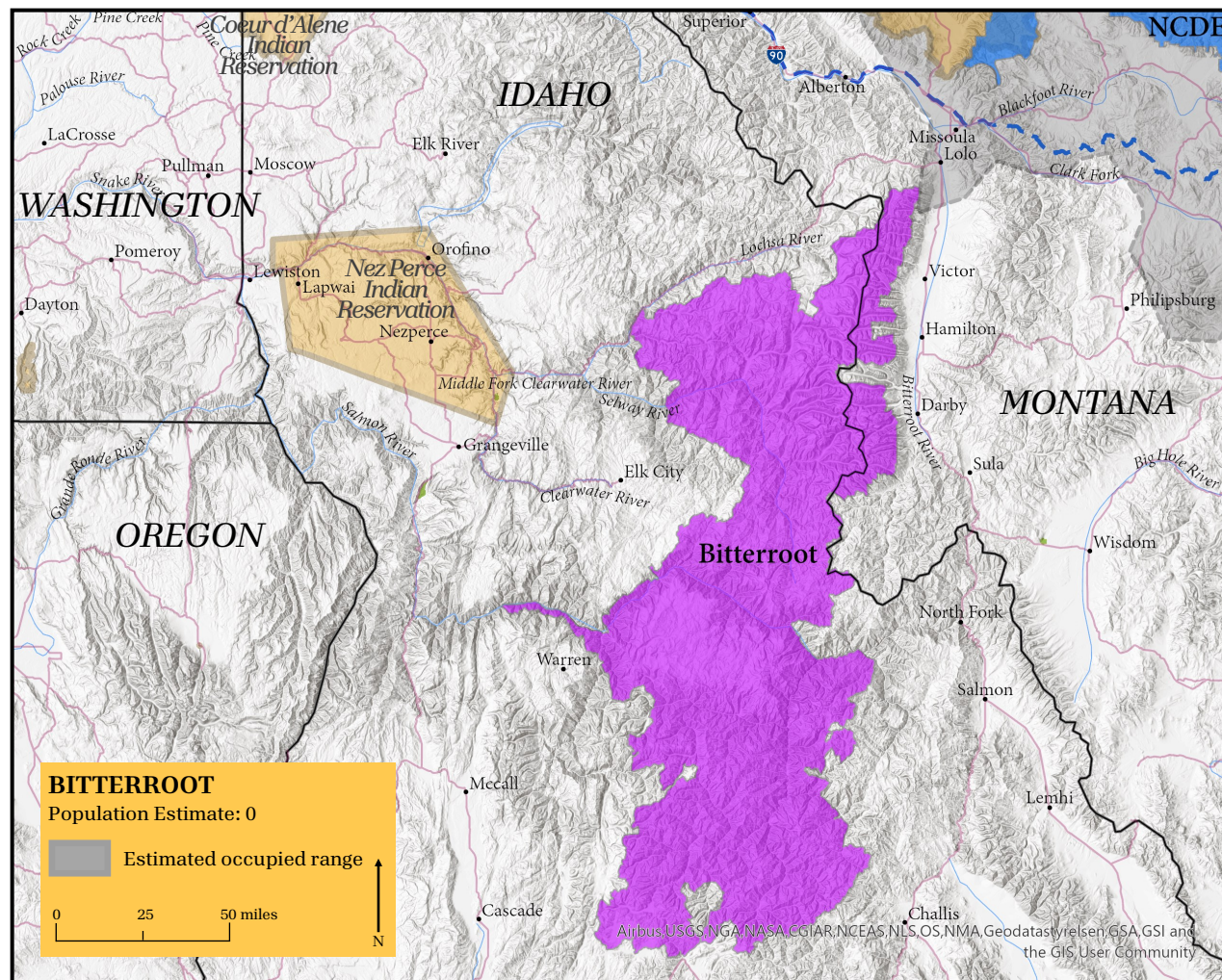
¹Recovery targets in the SE are calculated using a 6-year running average.

	Target	Progress
1	6 females with cubs both inside the RZ and within a 10-mile buffer surrounding the RZ	Females with cubs averaged 3.2 per year
2	7 of 10 BMUs occupied by females with young from a running 6-year sum	9 of 10 BMUs were occupied
3	Human-caused mortality shall be ≤ 4% of the population estimate and ≤ 30% shall be females - the mortality threshold for 2024 was 2.2 bears and 0.6 females per year -	Human-caused mortality was 3.9% (2 bears/year - 0.5 female and 1.5 male, respectively)

The Service leads grizzly bear monitoring and research in the Selkirk Ecosystem (SE), working closely with partners including IDFG, the Panhandle and Colville NF, Idaho Department of Lands, the Kalispel and Kootenai Tribes, and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW). In British Columbia, efforts were led by Dr. Michael Proctor with support from the B.C. Habitat Conservation Trust Fund and Fish and Wildlife Compensation Fund.

From 1983 to 2024, the estimated annual population growth rate was 2.9% ($\lambda = 1.029$; 95% CI = 0.962–1.085). Gene flow into the SE was confirmed through reproduction by five immigrants from the North Purcells, resulting in 28 known offspring. Additional details are available in the [2024 Selkirk Mountains Grizzly Bear Recovery Area Research and Monitoring Progress Report⁸](#).

BITTERROOT ECOSYSTEM



Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

In 2000, the Service issued a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), Record of Decision (ROD), and a final section 10(j) rule to reintroduce grizzly bears into the Bitterroot Ecosystem (BE) as a nonessential experimental population with citizen management. In 2001, the Department of the Interior proposed withdrawing the 10(j) rule and selecting the “no action” alternative, but never finalized the proposal or took further action. In 2021, the Service was sued for “unreasonable delay” in implementing required actions from the original plan. The court ordered the Service to propose a timeline for completing a supplemental EIS, and if needed, a new ROD and final rule. In April 2023, the court approved the Service’s plan to finish by October 2026. For details, visit the Service’s [Bitterroot Grizzly Bear EIS Project](#) website.

NORTH CASCADES ECOSYSTEM



Map of the North Cascades Ecosystem recovery zone.

Recovery Efforts

On April 25, 2024, the Service and National Park Service announced a Record of Decision to actively restore grizzly bears to the ecosystem. The decision is considered the conclusion of the EIS process. The Service also released a final 10(j) rule designating a nonessential experimental population. There is no set timeline for when translocation of grizzly bears to the ecosystem may begin. For more information, see the [North Cascades Grizzly Bear Restoration](#) website.

Recovery Criteria

Recovery criteria have not yet been established for the North Cascades. The population will be considered recovered when monitoring indicates: (1) that the population is large enough to offset some level of human-induced mortality and be self-sustaining despite foreseeable influences of demographic and environmental variation; and (2) reproducing bears are distributed throughout the recovery area.

BETWEEN ECOSYSTEMS

Southwest Montana DNA Study

Although there was not funding to hire technicians for the Southwest Montana DNA Project in 2024, partners from MFWP, the Beaverhead-Deerlodge NF, and the Bitterroot NF set up 48 hair corrals with digital cameras to look for the presence of grizzly bears in southwest Montana and document range expansion. These efforts confirmed one grizzly bear in the Anaconda Range of the Big Hole in 2024.

Training Events

In May 2024, the GBRP hosted a training session at the Washington State University Bear Center, where personnel from partner agencies had the opportunity to immobilize and handle anesthetized grizzly bears in a controlled environment. The GBRP also led a hybrid grizzly bear handling workshop in Missoula, MT, hosting over 100 practitioners from agencies throughout grizzly bear range.

Research

The University of Montana Partnership

The Grizzly Bear Recovery Program is proudly housed at the University of Montana, where we are deeply integrated into the W.A. Franke College of Forestry and Conservation. This partnership fosters collaboration with research faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates, enriching our work with cutting-edge science and hands-on field experience. Through joint research projects, mentoring, and educational outreach, our presence on campus strengthens both the recovery program and the University's commitment to wildlife conservation.

Recent Publications

Huckleberry habitat and its influence on two small populations of grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*). Teisberg, J. E., W. F. Kasworm, M. F. Proctor, T. G. Radandt, J. K. Fortin-Noreus, and H. S. Cooley. Ecology and Evolution. In press.

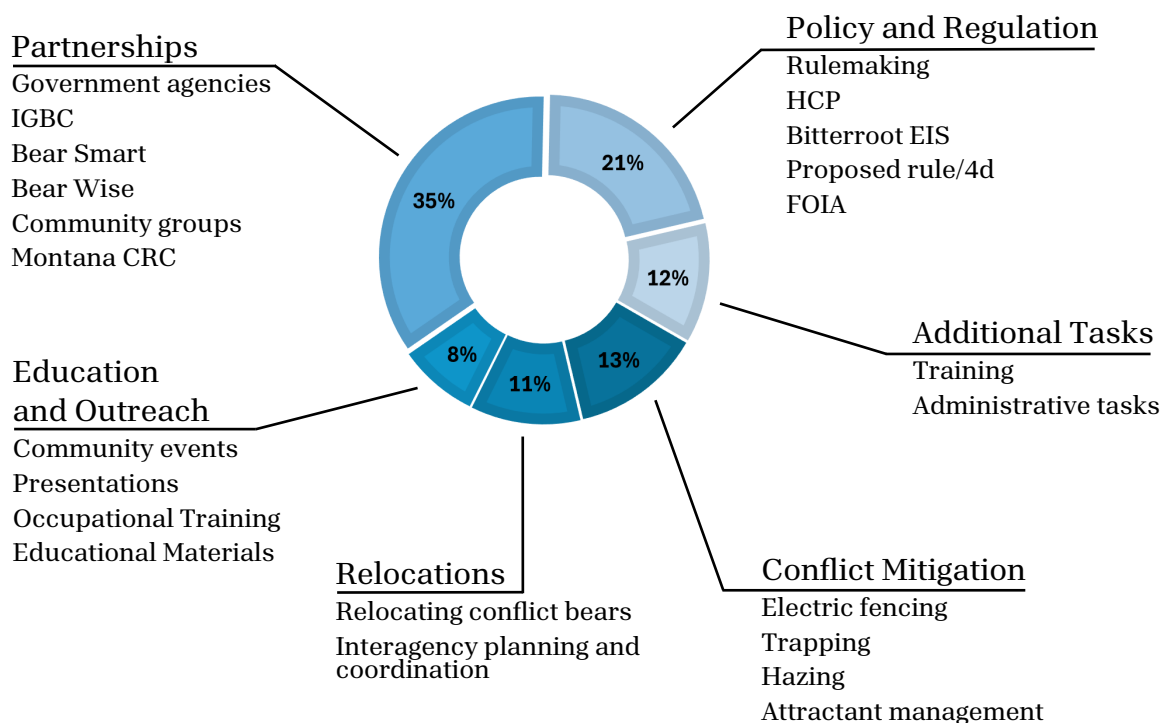
Assessing Dietary Importance of Army Cutworm Moths to Grizzly Bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Presentation at 2024 IBA Meeting. Jennifer Fortin-Noreus, Dan Tyers, Andy Pils, Justin Teisberg, Joy Erlenbach.

Genetic diversity, gene flow, and effective population size of the Selkirk and Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear populations 2024. Poster at 2024 IBA Meeting. Megan F. Turnock, Justin E. Teisberg, Wayne F. Kasworm, Matthew R. Falcy, Michael F. Proctor, Lisette P. Waits.

Female grizzly bear dispersal and range expansion in the Yaak River drainage of northwest Montana. Poster at 2024 IBA Meeting. Wayne F. Kasworm, Thomas G. Radandt, Justin E. Teisberg, Tyler J. Vent, Michael F. Proctor, Jennifer K. Fortin-Noreus, Hilary S. Cooley.

Human-Grizzly Bear Conflict

In 2022, the Service established a Conflict Program within the Grizzly Bear Recovery Program to assist Tribes, states, federal agencies, and numerous other partners to prevent and respond to grizzly bear conflict. In addition to conflict management activities, the added capacity of Conflict Program staff has contributed to the continued success of grizzly bear recovery.



Partnerships

The conflict staff builds and maintains partnerships with a range of groups and individuals involved in grizzly bear conflict reduction. This includes conflict staff assuming roles on various IGBC subcommittees, coordinating roles for the IGBC Bear Smart Communities framework and Bear Wise Jackson Hole, and providing technical expertise to many regional, state, and local community groups. The GBRP Conflict staff also collaborates with other Service offices, the Service's Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program, the U.S. Federal Highways Administration, Native American Tribes, State highway departments, State wildlife agencies, as well as NGOs and community led groups to help preserve landscape permeability and facilitate connectivity through private lands conservation, programs to reduce human-bear conflicts, and efforts to minimize vehicle and train-strike mortalities.

Expenditures

The Service supports a number of programs and projects that are critical to grizzly bear conservation and recovery. The projects and partners listed below are funded through Endangered Species Act recovery funds. The list below does not include Federal staff, administrative support, travel, vehicles, office and storage rental, or office supplies. It also does not include support for grizzly bears provided by other Service programs.

\$1,181,000 2024 Total Expenditures

\$850,500

Interagency Cooperative Agreements: Management + Monitoring

Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Wyoming Game & Fish Department
USDA APHIS Wildlife Services—Montana
USFS: Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee
USGS: Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team
NPS: Grand Teton National Park

\$40,000

NGO Support: Conflict Prevention + IEO

Blackfoot Challenge: Wildlife Coordinator support + conflict support
Defenders of Wildlife: Electric Fencing Incentive Program+ IEO
Swan Valley Connections: Prevention + IEO in the NCDE

\$58,000

USFWS: Grizzly Bear Conflict Management + IEO

Conflict Supplies & Equipment
Conflict management support
Information, Education, and Outreach Materials

\$232,500

USFWS: Research + Monitoring

CYE and SE Monitoring & Research
Southwest Montana DNA Study
Trans-Border Grizzly Bear Project
University of Montana
Washington State University Bear Center

Grizzly Bear Recovery Program

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Tyler Vent	Wildlife Biologist	tyler.vent@mso.umt.edu



Literature Cited

1. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1993. Grizzly bear recovery plan. Missoula, Montana, USA.
2. Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team. Research and monitoring summary 2024.
3. Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee. 2024. Conservation strategy for the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
4. Costello, C. M., and L. Roberts. 2022. Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem grizzly bear population monitoring annual report, 2021. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Kalispell, Montana, USA.
5. Costello, C. M., L. Roberts, and M.A. Vinks. 2025. Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem grizzly bear population monitoring annual report, 2024. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Kalispell, Montana, USA.
6. Proctor, M. F., D. Paetkau, B. N. McLellan, B. B. Stenhouse, K. C. Kendall, R. D. Mace, W. F. Kasworm, C. Servheen, C. L. Lausen, M. L. Gibeau, W. L. Wakkinen, M. A. Haroldson, G. Mowat, C. D. Apps, L. M. Ciarniello, R. M. R. Barclay, M. S. Boyce, C. C. Schwartz, and C. Strobeck. 2012. Population fragmentation and inter-ecosystem movements of grizzly bears in western Canada and the northern United States. *Wildlife Monographs* 180:1–46.
7. Kasworm, W. F., T. G. Radandt, J. E. Teisberg, T. Vent, M. Proctor, H. Cooley and J. K. Fortin-Noreus. 2025a. Cabinet-Yaak grizzly bear recovery area 2024 research and monitoring progress report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missoula, Montana.
8. Kasworm, W. F., T. G. Radandt, J. E. Teisberg, T. Vent, M. Proctor, H. Cooley, and J. K. Fortin-Noreus. 2025b. Selkirk Mountains grizzly bear recovery area 2024 research and monitoring progress report. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Missoula, Montana.

