

**STATE OF MONTANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
EXECUTIVE ORDER No. 9-2019**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER CREATING THE
GRIZZLY BEAR CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL**

WHEREAS, grizzly bears are valued by people and cultures across Montana and around the world;

WHEREAS, grizzly bears are also feared and can affect people's livelihoods and safety;

WHEREAS, grizzly bear numbers in Montana continue to increase, and have expanded into areas where they have not been for decades, including places key to connecting their populations;

WHEREAS, despite this success, long-term coexistence of people and grizzly bears across the landscape will remain a challenge;

WHEREAS, existing management plans did not fully anticipate grizzly bear distribution across the landscape and as Montana's human population continues to grow, we can expect conflicts between bears and people to increase in frequency and complexity;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in cooperation with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP), the U.S. Forest Service, the National Parks Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Blackfoot Tribe, and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, currently manage grizzly bears in Montana as "threatened" under authority of the Endangered Species Act;

WHEREAS, four of the six recovery areas identified by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan occur in whole or in part within Montana;

WHEREAS, recent litigation has created uncertainty about delisting of grizzly bears from the Endangered Species Act;

WHEREAS, it is timely that Montanans work together to determine how the state and its partners will collectively manage and conserve grizzly bears;

WHEREAS, it is important to recognize existing grizzly bear management objectives and existing intra-agency and interagency commitments already in place, including conservation strategies, monitoring protocols, recovery plan criteria, and forest plans;

WHEREAS, the future of grizzly bear management in Montana must maintain scientific integrity, and balance diverse interests and values;

WHEREAS, Montana remains committed to maintaining the long-term viability of grizzly bears and balancing their needs with those of people;

WHEREAS, it is important for the public to have ownership and confidence in grizzly bear management in Montana;

WHEREAS, to ensure its citizens have a voice in the future of grizzly bears, Montana must provide meaningful opportunities for people to engage in a public discussion around grizzly bear management, recovery and conservation; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interests of all Montanans to bring stakeholders and experts together to recommend statewide strategies for conserving and managing grizzly bears for today and the future;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, STEVE BULLOCK, Governor of the State of Montana, pursuant to the authority vested in me under the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, Title 2, Chapter 15, MCA, do hereby create the Governor’s Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Advisory Council (Council).

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Council is to develop recommendations for fundamental guidance and direction on key issues and challenges related to the conservation and management of grizzly bears in Montana, particularly those issues on which there is significant social disagreement.

DUTIES

1. The Council shall produce a Final Report with discrete, actionable recommendations that provides clear and meaningful guidance to the Governor’s Office, FWP, the Fish and Wildlife Commission, and other entities with responsibility for grizzly bear management and conservation in Montana.
2. The Council shall recognize grizzly bear management objectives and existing intra-agency and interagency commitments already in place, including conservation strategies, monitoring protocols, commission policies, recovery plan criteria, and forest plans.
3. The Council shall utilize a transparent process that maximizes engagement among people with diverse values and interests. The Council shall consider public input on its recommendations.
4. The Council’s recommendations shall identify strategies that achieve the following broad, strategic objectives:
 - a) Maintain and enhance human safety;
 - b) Ensure a healthy and sustainable grizzly bear population;
 - c) Improve timely and effective response to conflicts involving grizzly bears;
 - d) Engage all partners in grizzly-related outreach and conflict prevention; and
 - e) Improve intergovernmental, interagency, and tribal coordination.

5. The Council shall have the discretion to examine grizzly bear-related issues that it deems to be important, including at a minimum the following topics critical to its objectives:
 - a) Grizzly bear distribution within Montana (including outside of established recovery zones);
 - b) Connectivity between ecosystems;
 - c) Conflict prevention;
 - d) Response protocols to grizzly conflict in different parts of the state;
 - e) Transplant protocols;
 - f) Role of hunting; and
 - g) Resources for long-term sustainability of grizzly bear conservation.

COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

1. The Council members shall be solicited through an application process and appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
2. The Council members shall be a cross-section of Montanans representative of different geographic areas and interest categories involved in or affected by grizzly bear conservation and management, including livestock producers, wildlife enthusiasts, conservation groups, hunters, community leaders, tribal members, and outdoor industry professionals.
3. The Governor shall appoint a council member as chairperson.
4. Council members shall serve in an individual capacity.
5. The Office of the Governor, with support from FWP, will engage to further the objectives of this Council. The Council will be attached to FWP for administrative purposes.
6. FWP shall convene an interdisciplinary, interagency technical advisory committee to serve the Council and provide biological, legal, and policy information.
7. The Council may establish procedural bylaws to aid in the performance of its duties.
8. The Council may establish subcommittees comprised of members of the Council to aid in the performance of its duties.

FWP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. FWP shall provide staff to assist the Council in completing its work.
2. FWP shall make available experts who can support the Council with technical, scientific, social, policy, and legal matters.
3. As the Council begins its work, specific decisions for implementation of management strategies will continue to be the responsibility of FWP.

OTHER

1. The Council may request consultation, information, and technical expertise from directors or their designees of state and federal agencies, the university system, the public, and other entities related to grizzly bear management and conservation.
2. The Council is not a regulatory body; its recommendations are advisory only.

COMPENSATION

All Council members shall be reimbursed for travel, meals, and lodging related to Council duties pursuant to Section 2-15-122, MCA.

DURATION

The Council shall complete its Final Report and provide its recommendations to the Governor by August 31, 2020. The Council shall then disband unless continued by subsequent executive order.

This Order is effective immediately.




GIVEN under my hand and the GREAT SEAL of the State of Montana this 24th day of July 2019.



STEVE BULLOCK, Governor

ATTEST:



COREY STAPLETON, Secretary of State *deputy*