

## Washington Outdoor Alliance

Access Fund - American Alpine Club - American Whitewater - Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance -  
The Mountaineers - Washington Climbers Coalition - Washington Trails Association

March 25, 2015

North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan  
c/o Superintendent Karen Taylor-Goodrich  
North Cascades National Park Service Complex  
810 State Route 20  
Sedro-Woolley, WA 98284

Submitted by online form at <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/commentForm.cfm?documentID=64266>.

### **RE: Washington Outdoor Alliance Scoping Comments on North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan**

Dear North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide scoping comments on the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan.

The Access Fund, American Alpine Club, American Whitewater, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance, The Mountaineers, Washington Climbers Coalition and Washington Trails Association—all human-powered recreation organizations in Washington State—come together as a coalition on issues relating to recreation, access and conservation. As the group Washington Outdoor Alliance, we represent more than 34,000 members who recreate on public lands. The North Cascades are one of the most important areas in the Northwest for outdoor recreation.

Please consider the following issues to analyze for the EIS:

- **Restrictions on Use of Public Lands** – Continued access to the special places people love to visit in the North Cascades is incredibly important to hikers, climbers and other recreationists. What kind of uses will be altered for grizzly bear recovery? Please address how the following may be impacted and recreation management techniques that are likely to be utilized:
  - Access to developed and dispersed recreation sites by motor vehicle;
  - Recreation activities that utilize trailed and trailless areas such as hiking, climbing, mountaineering, mountain biking and trail running
  - Day trip party size restrictions, both minimum and maximum
  - Overnight backcountry use and party size restrictions, both minimum and maximum
  - Outfitters and guides
  - Permanent, seasonal and temporary trail and backcountry closures
- **Restrictions on New and Existing Trails** – The majority of hikers and other recreationists depend on trails to reach their favorite recreation destinations. How will the development of new trails be impacted by grizzly bear recovery? How will existing trails and the maintenance of those trails be impacted by grizzly bear recovery?

- **Human Health and Safety** –Please address how human health and safety will be impacted in each alternative, including food handling and sanitation. What are the potential risks to human safety?
- **Grizzly Bear Habitat & Adjacent Lands** – How will grizzly bears and their habitat be managed? How will lands outside of the grizzly core area be affected by grizzly bear management?
- **Designated Wilderness** – How will the project and associated tools such as aircraft affect wilderness character, visitor experience, and primitive recreation in designated wilderness areas of the North Cascades?

### ***Public Involvement and Outreach***

Given the scope of North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan and the potential impacts to high use, popular trails, recreation sites and access roads, Washington Outdoor Alliance partners recommend ongoing outreach and public involvement with the restoration plan in addition to the formal public process. In particular, we welcome a continued dialogue with hikers, climbers, trail runners, mountain bikers and others who recreate in the North Cascades and are interested in the potential impacts they may face in the years to come from the recovery of grizzly bears. We ask that the Plan team fully consider the complex array of factors that impact recovery and recreation.

### ***Conclusion***

Thank you for considering our scoping comments on the North Cascades Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Restoration Plan. We look forward to continued involvement in this project as it develops. Please let us know if you have any questions or if we can be helpful.

Sincerely,

Joe Sambataro, Northwest Regional Director, Access Fund  
Eddie Espinosa, Northwest Region Manager, American Alpine Club  
Thomas O'Keefe, Pacific Northwest Stewardship Director, American Whitewater  
Glenn Glover, Executive Director, Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance  
Martinique Grigg, Executive Director, The Mountaineers  
Matt Perkins, Washington Climbers Coalition  
Andrea Imler, Advocacy Director, Washington Trails Association