

Opinion

WEDNESDAY, JULY 5, 1995

MISSOULIAN EDITORIAL

A better road to recovery

If there's anything we've learned from the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone National Park and central Idaho this past winter, it's how *not* to go about restoring an endangered species.

Now that they're here, the transplanted wolves are doing well. It's already possible to envision, with some luck, a not-too-distant day when wolves can be removed from the endangered species list, their population in the northern Rockies secure.

But people burned too much time, too much money and too many brain cells getting to this point. Nearly two decades were spent with proponents and opponents of wolves locked in fruitless, polarized debate before deciding to proceed. There's got to be a better way of resolving such issues.

In fact, there is. A far better approach to endangered species protection appears to be emerging in the next big, high-profile recovery effort — restoration of grizzly bears to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness.

The Selway-Bitterroot is tailor-made for grizzlies. It's a large region of wilderness that was historically home to grizzlies, until they were shot and tramped out more than half a century ago.

SUMMARY: Interest groups deserve praise for pursuing a better, more cooperative way of tackling thorny endangered species issues.

establishing grizzlies there could do much to make the future more secure for the great bears. In time, the Selway-Bitterroot could become a third major population center for grizzlies — logically located between the established populations in Yellowstone and Northern Continental Divide ecosystems. Having more bears in more (appropriate) places can do much to make populations overall less vulnerable.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will hold hearings in Missoula and Hamilton Thursday on plans to transplant grizzly bears from Canada to the Selway-Bitterroot. The proposal is in its early stages. Thursday's hearings are intended to help officials identify which issues and management alternatives to address in an environmental impact statement.

Already, though, there are hopeful signs. At a similar point in the Yellowstone wolf restoration

effort, it had already come to blows.

Conservationists, stockmen and other interest groups were doing their best to polarize the issue, and the results were years of expensive, redundant hearings, studies and reports. Remarkably — and commendably — a coalition of interest groups has been constructively working for months to resolve potential problems with Bitterroot bear restoration. Loggers, timberland managers and environmentalists are among the traditional adversaries who are ironing out details for a grizzly-restoration proposal of their own — one that emphasizes local involvement and responsibility for the success of the project.

It's possible, of course, that others not involved in the cooperative effort to restore grizzlies to the Selway-Bitterroot will seek to disrupt the project. There always seems to be a politician or two willing to play the role of obstructionist. Not every participant in these matters has the best interests of the public or wildlife at heart.

But for now, there appears to be great interest in working more cooperatively, learning from the

Racicot OKs Bitterroot grizzly plan

By SHERRY DEVLIN
of the Missoulian

Gov. Marc Racicot has endorsed a grizzly bear reintroduction plan for the Bitterroot Mountains, as proposed by a coalition of timber companies and conservation groups.

In a letter to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the governor labeled as "superb" the coalition's proposal for a citizen committee to set policy and oversee day-to-day management of the bears (with help from state and federal wildlife agencies).

"Without the detailed and intensive involvement of Idaho and Montana citizens the proposal envisions, the chances for success in that reintroduction would be greatly diminished," Racicot said.

He noted that while 85 to 90 percent of the land base proposed for grizzly bear reintroduction is in Idaho, "it is probable

the majority of problems between grizzlies and humans are likely to occur in Montana."

"Therefore, special attention needs to be given to involvement of Montana citizens, the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and my office in formulation of a management plan."

Racicot asked that the coalition proposal become the "preferred alternative" in the grizzly bear environmental impact statement now being prepared by the Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposal was written by a coalition including the Intermountain Forest Industry Association, National Wildlife Federation, Defenders of Wildlife and Resource Organization on Timber Supply.

Tom France, an attorney for the wildlife federation, commended the governor for "showing some strong conservation leadership" in his

endorsement. "We are very pleased," France said. "We need this kind of political support to succeed."

Under the coalition plan, grizzly bears would be transplanted to the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return wildernesses. Management would be emphasized in areas with the least potential for bear-human conflict.

The unusual citizen management committee would include seven members from Idaho and four from Montana, with one member of each state delegation coming from the state fish and game agency.

The secretary of Interior would appoint the membership, on the recommendation of governors. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Forest Service would each have one representative on the committee, for a total of 13 members.

▲ **You've got an extra 30 days** to comment on the proposed reintroduction of grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains of western Montana and central Idaho.

John Weaver, team leader of the reintroduction effort, said the extension is needed because of the "varied opinions, complexity of the topic and the desire for full citizen participation in the process of identifying issues and proposed alternatives."

Many interests asked for the extension, Weaver said. Comments will now be taken through Aug. 21.

To comment or to receive a copy of the scoping document for Bitterroot grizzlies, write John Weaver, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bitterroot Grizzly Bear Environmental Impact Statement, P.O. Box 5127, Missoula, Mont. 59806. Or telephone 329-3254.

— Sherry Devlin, Missoulian

MISSOULIAN, PAGE 1, JULY 27 1995

Grizzlies belong, residents tell survey

By SHERRY DEVLIN
of the Missoulian

Grizzly bears belong in the Bitterroot Mountains and should be toled back to the wilderness by man.

That was the overwhelming message from more than 900 people contacted during a survey of public attitudes toward the proposed reintroduction of grizzlies to the Bitterroots of western Montana and central Idaho.

Conducted at the behest of Idaho Fish and Game, the survey took separate samplings from three groups: local residents (Missoula, Mineral and Ravalli counties in Montana and Idaho, Clearwater, Lewis, Nez Perce and Shoshone counties in Idaho), regional residents (Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, Utah and Nevada), and the nation.

In each group, reintroduction supporters outnumbered opponents:

— Sixty-two percent of the local residents supported reintroducing grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains. Thirty-three percent said they "strongly supported" the proposal, 29 percent "moderately supported" reintroduction.

Twenty-six percent of the 311 local residents surveyed were opposed to reintroduction (18 percent strongly opposed, 8 percent moderately opposed). Eight percent neither supported nor opposed the plan, 4 percent did not know.

— Regionally, 73 percent of the 306 people contacted were in support of returning grizzlies to the Bitterroots. Ten percent were opposed. Another 10 percent neither supported nor opposed the plan, and 7 percent did not know.

— Seventy-seven percent of the 302 national respondents supported reintroduction, 42 percent of them "strongly." Just 8 percent of that sample said they opposed reintroduction, while 10 percent neither supported nor opposed the proposal and 4 percent did not know.

People were contacted by telephone June 9-24, while the U.S.

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A-14 - Missoulian, Sunday, August 27, 1995

FROM PAGE A-1

Grizzlies

Continued

Fish and Wildlife Service was conducting public scoping sessions for a planned environmental impact statement on the reintroduction plan.

reintroduction if any of these steps were taken: costs were minimized, locals had management input, bears were released in wilderness only, aggressive bears were removed and a wildlife manager were present in the area.

■ Eighty-six percent of local respondents, 95 percent of regional residents and 93 percent of the national sample said they would be willing to keep their food and garbage in fear-resistant containers while camping in bear country.

■ Twenty-eight percent of locals, 40 percent of regional residents and 44

The survey was conducted by Responsive Management, a Harrisonburg, Va., firm. Authors Mark Damian Duda and Kira Young reported a 95 percent confidence interval with a sampling error of plus or minus 6 percent. That means if the survey were given 100 times to different samples in the same manner, 95 of the surveys would fall within plus or minus 6 percent of each other.

John Weaver, team leader for the grizzly bear reintroduction EIS, said the sampling

percent of the national sample said they would be willing to place a portable electric fence around their food and garbage when camping in bear country. Sixty percent of locals, 48 percent of regionals and 46 percent of the national sample said "no" to the portable electric fence.

■ Sixty-seven percent of local residents were very or somewhat familiar with the proposed bear reintroduction, compared to 36 percent of regional residents and 26 percent of the national sample.

is yet another attempt to gauge public sentiment toward the proposal. The government also hosted open houses in seven communities earlier this summer and took written public comment for several months.

Other findings in the survey included:

■ Twenty-six percent of the local respondents who opposed reintroduction said their primary objection was the danger posed by bears.

■ A majority of respondents in each group (local, regional and national) said they would be more supportive of

HERE'S WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING:

Grizzly bears in the Bitterroots?

Of the people who got their say in the recent survey, here are some of the reasons given for supporting the proposed reintroduction:

▲ "Without the bear, there is no wilderness."

▲ "They increase the wilderness experience."

▲ "I support it because I can't think of any reason not to."

▲ "We owe it to them."

▲ "The Bitterroots are one of the few places that it could work."

▲ "They have always been exploited, and it is the fault of man. The bear is magnificent."

▲ "So we can hunt them again."

▲ "I support all wildlife."

▲ "Bears are harmless."

▲ "I am a wildlife freak."

▲ "The bears belong in the mountains."

Then, from those who said they oppose grizzly bear recovery in the Bitterroots, came these reasons:

▲ "There's not enough space in the Bitterroot Mountain area considering the human population."

▲ "They'll do away with the game, and the hunters do a good enough job of that already."

▲ "They are not native to that area."

▲ "Bears will not stay in one area. They will roam."

▲ "We need to leave Mother Nature alone."

▲ "Leave the animals alone."

▲ "Since they're not there now, then it's not meant to be."

▲ "It is not practical."

▲ "Unnecessary when they're in Alaska."

▲ "The government needs to stay out of these matters. Man has done enough damage."

— Sherry Devlin, Missoulian

APPENDIX A

Summary of Some of the Questions and Public Responses

Questions		Local	Regional	National
1. Opinion of reintroducing grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains?	Support	62%	73%	77%
	Opposition	26%	10%	8%
2. What is your main reason for supporting grizzly bear recovery?	Save from extinction	34%	28%	41%
	Bears were part of ecosystem	33%	37%	24%
	Bears were here before us	17%	18%	17%
3. What is your main reason for opposing grizzly bear recovery?	Dangerous to humans	48%		
	No need for grizzly bears in Bitterroot Mountains	16%		
4. Opinion of reintroduction if costs were tightly-controlled & minimized?	Less supportive	8%	4%	6%
	No change	26%	20%	17%
	More supportive	64%	72%	73%
5. Opinion of reintroduction if bears were released only in wilderness areas.	Less supportive	9%	5%	5%
	No change	19%	16%	13%
	More supportive	68%	78%	79%
6. Opinion of reintroduction if a wildlife manager was stationed in area.	Less supportive	15%	6%	5%
	No change	19%	11%	10%
	More supportive	64%	81%	83%
7. Opinion of reintroduction if no land use accommodations were made.	Less supportive	27%	26%	32%
	No change	27%	26%	26%
	More supportive	40%	43%	33%
8. If grizzlies were put in area next year, would it change the number of future trips you would take?	Would take more	2%	4%	7%
	No change	81%	85%	84%
	Would take fewer	15%	7%	6%

Refreshingly open minds

Reintroducing grizzlies becomes a priority for normally angry foes

Montanans did a double take recently over news accounts of a plan to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Idaho. Nothing all that newsy about plans to reintroduce a threatened species to its historic range. What snapped heads is who's backing the plan — a coalition of conservation groups and timber industry organizations.

The timber industry is backing a grizzly reintroduction plan that also has the blessing of conservation groups?

Hellooo. Does "spotted owl" mean anything to you timber guys?

Industry groups usually regard endangered and threatened species, whether already there or proposed for reintroduction, as anathema. Their presence opens endless doors to challenges to timber sales and has hamstrung the industry at every turn in the road.

A closer look at this coupling of traditional foes, however, reveals one of the most forward-thinking developments on the threatened species front recently. What happened was a refreshingly open-minded group of industry representatives and environmentalists realized that unless they put their heads together on this, both sides were going to be losers.

The history of species reintroduction has been one of acrimony. Witness the wolves of Yellowstone and central Idaho: The wolves are back, but only after years of bitter controversy and hard feelings that will persist long into the future. Testament to the level of rancor surrounding the wolf reintroduc-

tion lies in the fact that two of the animals already have been shot.

The grizzly reintroduction plan differs dramatically in that management decisions will be made by ordinary citizens who live in the affected area. It's not rocket science that a lot of the resentment for threatened and endangered species reintroduction plans stems from the fact that they are crammed down the throats of locals by huge bureaucracies that seem totally unresponsive to real

human fears and needs. By empowering those that have the most to lose by grizzly reintroduction, unexpected support for the plan has been won.

Management decisions (i.e., should bear reintroduction be a primary consideration in some areas while it will be of little to no

importance in other areas where timber harvest takes preeminence) will be made by a panel of 11 people. The area in question lies primarily in Idaho but edges over the Montana border near Hamilton. Seven of the panel's members will come from Idaho and four from Montana with one member of each state's delegation coming from that state's fish and game agency.

This plan is a long way from universal acceptance. Some environmental groups are withholding support. Agriculture concerns have yet to sign off on the deal. And, ultimately, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will have to sign off on the plan.

But this is an idea that's worth getting behind. If it can win the support of groups as diverse as the Intermountain Forestry Association, the National Wildlife Federation, the Resource Organization on Timber Supply, and the Defenders of Wildlife, it's worth looking at.

This much is certain: The old way needs some improvements.

The timber industry is backing a grizzly reintroduction plan that also has the blessing of conservation groups?

Bozeman
Daily
Chronicle

7/25/95

Wednesday, July 26, 1995

The Spokesman-Review
Spokane, Wash./Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

Our View

A group of environmentalists and timber industry representatives prove they can work together.

Bear compromise shows there's hope

A compromise proposal involving the timber industry and two major environmental groups offers the best hope for reintroducing grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains.

The plan, aired last week, calls for local control of the program and reintroduction of the bears as an "experimental" population. That means the grizzlies wouldn't have the full protection of the Endangered Species Act if they move outside their ecosystem.

Both points are critical for local acceptance of the bears, easily the most glamorous of all endangered species. Too often, uncompromising environmentalists have used an endangered species as a weapon to close forests to mining, grazing and logging.

Grizzly bears, a powerful symbol of the Old West, have a place in the Bitterroots — and not just at the top of the food chain. Said bear recovery expert Chris Servheen: "The fact that there are still places out there that such a magnificent, wild, large animal could live on its own is often astounding to people. Maybe the grizzly gives them some hope for the earth."

The joint plan has die-hard critics on both sides, which makes it more appealing. Conservative firebrand U.S. Rep. Helen Chenoweth, R-Idaho, compared grizzly recovery to "introducing sharks at the beach." Meanwhile, some environmental groups aren't happy that Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation have signed off on the plan.

Actually, the two national conservation groups were wise in searching for common ground with industry representatives. In this era of belt tightening and Republican control, the grizzly transplant program would be dead on arrival without broad-based support.

This plan separates wildlife conservationists — those who truly have the bears' best interest at heart — from the pack of professional litigants and appellants who use animals to achieve organizational agendas.

Predictably, federal agencies are squeamish about involving local citizens in endangered species management. The joint plan calls for a 13-member board, all but two appointed by the governors of Idaho and Montana, that would oversee the program. The board would have the authority to order problem bears removed or killed.

The experiment is worth the risk. Possibly, the cooperation between industry and conservationists will establish a model for 1990s environmentalism.

D.F. Oliveria/For the editorial board

OPINION

Grizzlies get what owls, salmon did not: consensus

That consensus among animal huggers and chainsaw enthusiasts over how to reintroduce grizzly bears to the Bitterroot Mountains is the exception that should become the rule in resolving such issues in the natural resource-rich West.

The joint proposal from the National Wildlife Federation, the Intermountain Forest Industry Association, Defenders of Wildlife and the Resource Organization on Timber Supply seems so balanced and so fair it makes you wonder what these disparate outfits could have come up with if the jobs of saving northern spotted owls and Snake River salmon had been theirs from the start.

Each of the organizations involved deserves more than congratulations for sitting down with the others and outlining a mutually accepted process to follow in returning the

grizzly to its former stomping grounds. The communities that will be neighbors to the bears should also thank the involved parties for yanking the flammable issue away from those trying to ignite it for political gain.

The best thing government can do in the presence of such a consensus is to adopt it and see how it works.

Under terms of the so-called ROOTS alternative, between 200 and 300 grizzlies would be given a new home in the neighboring Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church-River of No Return wildernesses. Although the bears would be permitted to roam freely, they would be designated as a "non-essential, experimental" component of the region. That relatively unrestrictive designation would allow an appointed 13-member oversight committee the flexibility to deal with poten-

tial problems as they appear on the ground. The committee would represent the same range of interests as the coalition that drafted the proposal.

That means this proposal represents real compromise. Unlike Idaho Sen. Larry Craig's purported mining law reform legislation, which satisfies only the mining industry that helps finance Craig's campaign, it meets nearly everyone at least halfway.

That doesn't mean it won't have its critics, however. Interests on both sides unused to settling for half a loaf of anything will cry sellout. Politicians like Rep. Helen Chenoweth of Idaho's 1st District will probably continue to reject substantial evidence that grizzlies once roamed the region in question, and oppose any reintroduction

plan. And some government bureaucrats could try to derail a process that dealt them out while dealing affected community interests in.

That will be all the more reason for the community at large to stand behind the ROOTS alternative, however. That community has already seen what happens in the absence of such consensus with both the spotted owl and salmon controversies: A sluggish government belatedly recognizes a growing crisis and finds itself unable to chart a coherent course between snipers on all sides.

In the case of grizzlies, it appears the consensus builders got there before the snipers, or most of them at any rate. The least they should get is a chance to show whether their course reaches the destination. — J.R.

Unlikely Alliance Finds Common Ground for Grizzlies

By Tom Kenworthy
Washington Post Staff Writer

SELWAY-BITTERROOT WILDERNESS, Idaho—Among the untamed rivers and trackless valleys of central Idaho's forest wilderness, timber workers and environmentalists have, for once, chosen not to do battle over an endangered species. Instead, they have joined forces in the hope of saving the grizzly bear—and the fragile idea that there is room in the woods for both wildlife and men who make their living with chain saws.

In a unique joint venture that began two years ago with a casual conversation in a Denver bar, conservationists and lumbermen are working to restore grizzlies to central Idaho's huge Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and part of the even larger Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness to the south.

Their proposal, which could be endorsed later this year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, would give local residents unprecedented authority to manage any bears that move beyond the wilderness recovery zone to adjacent national forest lands open to logging and other commercial uses.

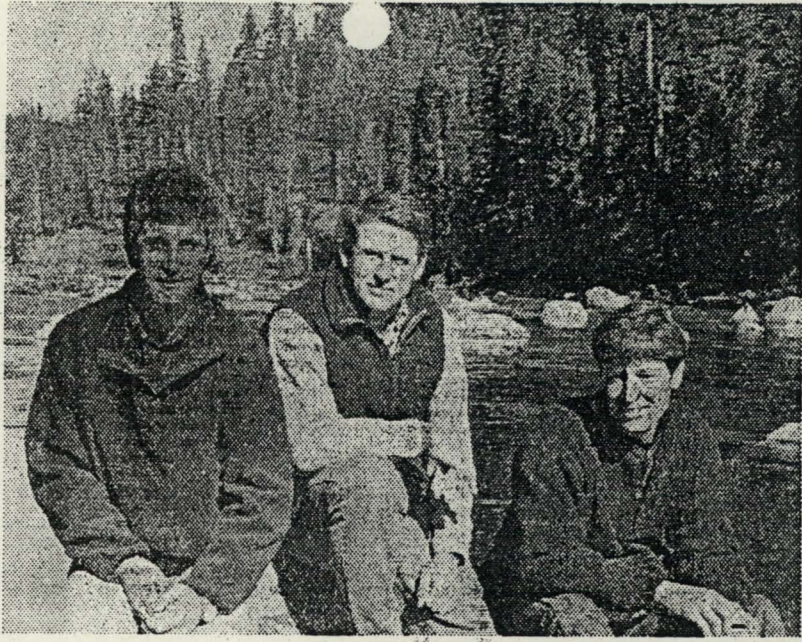
If the project succeeds—and in this marriage of convenience that is still a big if—it could have a profound impact on the resolution of other conflicts over endangered species and on the federal government's approach to managing imperiled wildlife.

"There is enough common ground out there that we don't need to be fighting," said Seth Diamond, manager of wildlife programs for the Intermountain Forest Industry Association (IFIA), a timber group that on other issues frequently goes to the mat with environmentalists.

"We see the opportunity to create a new model for endangered species conflicts throughout the country."

An overly ambitious goal? Considering it is the grizzly, perhaps not. Except for the gray wolf—whose reintroduction last year in central Idaho and Yellowstone National Park came only after a decade of intense conflict—few species ignite more intense emotions, or involve more complex land use decisions, than grizzlies.

Even wolves, for all their mythical ferocity, do not eat people. Grizzlies sometimes do—and their fearsome reputation explains why so many people in Idaho and Montana do not



BY TOM KENWORTHY—THE WASHINGTON POST

Discussing grizzly reintroduction along Selway River in Idaho are, from left, Seth Diamond of Intermountain Forest Industry Association, Hank Fischer of the Defenders of Wildlife, and Dan Johnson of the Resource Organization on Timber Supply. Their plan for local authority could get federal endorsement.

want to cede more of their prime hunting and camping lands to *Ursus arctos horribilis*.

The Selway-Bitterroot, more than a million acres of roadless forest, is the heart of a larger, 5,500 square-mile "grizzly introduction evaluation area" stretching from the Salmon River to the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

This remote area of Idaho, encompassing wilderness areas closed to motorized access and other national forest lands open to "multiple use" management, may be pivotal to grizzly survival in the continental United States.

Once numbering 50,000 individuals and ranging from California to the Great Plains and from Canada to Mexico, grizzly bears have been listed as threatened in the United States (except in Alaska) since 1975. Between 800 and 1,000 grizzlies remain in the Lower 48 states, most concentrated in two big blocks of wild habitat: Yellowstone and surrounding national forest land; and Glacier National Park and the nearby Bob Marshall Wilderness in Montana.

Historically, grizzlies were common in the Bitterroot Mountains that divide central Idaho from western Montana.

The Lewis and Clark expedition killed a half-dozen on its way through, and even at the turn of the century 25 to 40 grizzlies were trapped and killed there every year.

But the last grizzly disappeared from this region almost 50 years ago.

Biologists believe the Selway-Bitterroot could provide rich habitat for a new population. Its salmon runs are depleted, but grizzlies are opportunistic omnivores and survive well in other areas without relying on fish.

The area has one major plus: It is big and isolated, with plenty of room for an animal that often has a home range of 100 square miles or more, and with relatively little opportunity for bear-human conflict.

Scientists think the Selway-Bitterroot could support as many as 200 to 300 grizzlies, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife official recovery plan anticipates introducing bears captured from Canada. That could increase the grizzly population in the Lower 48 states by as much as 30 percent and greatly improve the bear's long-term chances of survival.

But how will the introduced population of grizzlies in the Selway-Bitterroot be managed? Would bears be allowed to roam beyond the wilderness areas into national forest lands that are key to the region's timber economy?

Would the introduced bears have the full protection of the Endangered Species Act, or would they come under special rules governing experimental populations that allow more management flexibility?

Such questions were raised during a 1993 meeting of the federal-state Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee

Timbermen find common ground for grizzlies A-3



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PHOTO

in Denver by Dan Johnson, a staff member of an Idaho timber industry labor-management group called Resource Organization on Timber Supply, or ROOTS.

"We don't want the damn bear," Johnson recalls saying at that meeting, but if the bear is coming to central Idaho anyway, the timber industry would like a say in how it is managed.

Later that night, Johnson was sipping a beer in a hotel lounge when he was approached by Hank Fischer, northern Rockies representative for the environmental group Defenders of Wildlife. "I can live with that," Fischer told Johnson, and handed him his business card.

So began an unlikely alliance.

On the environmental side, Fischer found an ally in Tom France, the National Wildlife Federation's representative for the northern Rockies. After a debilitating 10-year battle with the ranching and agricultural communities over getting the wolf back, they are looking for another way.

Without some support from the timber industry and local people, France said, getting bears established in the Selway-Bitterroot might never happen.

"Industry in Idaho is absolutely key to politics," he said, and having the support of timber workers and companies has meant state legislators and most members of the Idaho congressional delegation have at least been willing to listen.

Johnson has been joined on the timber side by industrial giants and independents alike. From their point of view, the bear is coming to Idaho one way or the other, and if they do not get involved at the beginning they risk losing their future timber supply.

"We've seen what the spotted owl can do," said Phil Hughes, a Potlatch Corp. mill worker in Lewiston, Idaho.

Timber industry officials said they fear that, once the bears arrive, protecting them under the Endangered Species Act could provide the government with a rationale for keeping loggers out of the Clearwater National Forest and other areas critical to the industry.

The plan developed by the coalition of environmentalists and timber industry representatives calls for establishment of an "experimental, non-essential" population of bears in the Selway-Bitterroot and part of the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness.

Under 1982 amendments to the Endangered Species Act, experimental populations can be managed with greater flexibility than naturally occurring populations of threatened wildlife. Ranchers may even kill them if their livestock is threatened.

Using flexible management rules is hardly a new concept: It is being employed with the gray wolves introduced in the northern Rockies last year.

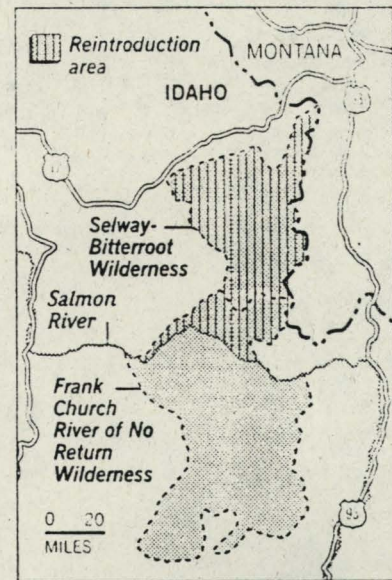
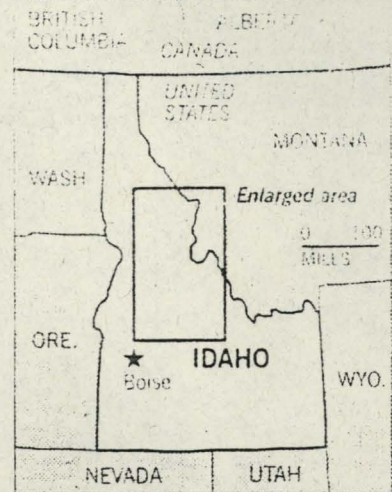
But the alliance of conservationists and loggers would go a step farther by allowing Idaho and Montana residents, rather than federal agencies, to make critical decisions on management of bears that leave the wilderness areas.

The coalition has proposed a 13-member citizen management committee that would set management policy for the Selway-Bitterroot bears.

The panel would be instructed to ensure grizzly recovery while minimizing social and economic disruption, but beyond that would have considerable autonomy. Its authority could be ended only if the secretary of interior finds it is not moving toward the goal of recovery.

The idea is straightforward: Give local people a stake in grizzly recovery, and some control over its economic consequences, and they will be less likely, in the local vernacular, to shoot, shovel and shut up.

"It becomes a locally owned issue rather than something brought in by



BY LARRY FOGEL—THE WASHINGTON POST

the federal government," said Chris Servheen, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's coordinator of grizzly recovery.

Other federal land managers, wary of ceding authority, are less enthusiastic.

Also critical are some other environmental groups, including the Wilderness Society and the National Audubon Society. And almost 3,000 local residents of the Bitterroot Valley in Montana—a rapidly growing area that problem grizzlies might migrate into—have signed a petition opposing the reintroduction program.

But the strange bedfellows of the Selway-Bitterroot are making progress. Some politicians who might be expected to oppose the program, such as Montana's Republican Gov. Marc Racicot, have enthusiastically embraced it. Even some local officials are getting on board.

"I started out as a total adversary," said Chuck Cuddy, a conservative state legislator from central Idaho. "But under current law, we're going to have 'em. And if we're going to have 'em, we have to have local people involved."

The Washington Post 10/24/85 A3

OUR VIEW

Thursday, Sept. 14, 1995

Members of the Post Register editorial board are Jerry M. Brady, publisher; Gene Fadness, J. Robb Brady and Mei-Mei Chan.

A new day for species management?

Guess the source of this quote in the debate over whether grizzly bears should be reintroduced in the Bitterroot Mountain area of Montana and Idaho:

"There's no reason why you can't have them (grizzly bears) in rural communities without bringing the resource industries to a halt." And, from the same man: "It (grizzly reintroduction) doesn't have to be this contentious, polarized situation. Grizzly bears and people and resource industries can coexist."

So what tree-hugging, granola-crunching, wacko environmentalist said that? Seth Diamond of the Intermountain Forest Industry, the industry that would be most impacted should the grizzly be returned to its habitat in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness of Montana and the Frank Church-River of No Return Wilderness in Idaho.

Diamond isn't alone in his positive assessment. Resource industry representatives and members of the National Wildlife Federation and the Defenders of Wildlife have formed the Resource Coalition on Timber Supply (ROOTS) and proposed its own plan for grizzly reintroduction.

The plan assigns management of the bears to a 13-member Citizens Oversight Committee, all but two appointed by the governors of Idaho and Montana. If accepted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it will be the first time in the history of the Endangered Species Act that citizens have been trusted to manage a protected species to benefit the species as well as humans. Says Hank Fischer of Defenders of Wildlife: "My guess is, given all the facts, local people will make the right decisions." We agree.

Fish and Wildlife will make the final decision by next June and, naturally, extremists at both ends of the political spectrum are fighting the ROOTS proposal.

Rep. Helen Chenoweth opposes even her friends in the timber industry. In a quote almost as ridiculous as her now famous declaration that Idahoans can still

Although the official comment period closed recently, the Idaho office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is still accepting questions or suggestions regarding grizzly recovery. You can write to 4696 Overland Road, Room 576, Boise, ID, 83705.

find endangered salmon at Albertson's grocery store, the congresswoman says reintroducing grizzlies is like "introducing sharks to the beach."

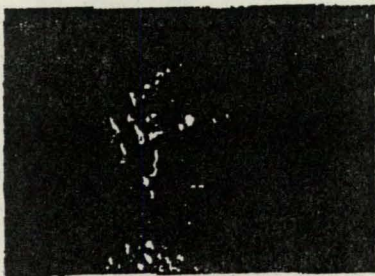
At the other end of the extreme are a number of environmental groups that think citizens groups can't be trusted to manage the bear. They also don't like the fact that, like the wolf, the bears will be designated "experimental, non-essential." That means they are not protected under the ESA if they leave the wilderness.

When Lewis and Clark explored the West in the early 1800s there were as many as 100,000 grizzlies in the Northwest. Today, grizzlies in the lower 48 states are nearly extinct.

The Idaho Department of Fish and Game surveyed more than 900 people and found that returning the grizzly has the overwhelming support of people locally, regionally and nationally. Of those who live in the two-state area impacted the most, 62 percent favored reintroduction with 26 percent opposed. In the Northwest states, 73 percent are in favor and 10 percent opposed. Nationally, 77 percent favor reintroduction and 8 percent are opposed.

The involvement of resource industry representatives, citizens and environmental groups in this plan is exciting. It could set a new trend for the next couple decades in working out environmental problems and managing the Endangered Species Act for the benefit of all. Imagine the results if we could have had the same cooperation on the spotted owl, the salmon and the wolf.

Gene Fadness



Dan Popkey

Which Chicago bears?

Rep. Helen Chenoweth can't stand it.

She's so riled that environmentalists and the timber industry are compromising on grizzly bear reintroduction that she's making up stories.

In a column in The Washington Times last week, Chenoweth attacked folks who are more interested in Idaho solutions than fiery rhetoric.

She falsely asserted grizzlies lived in Chicago, though they never made it past Minnesota.

She also said reintroduction might bar people from 5,500 square miles in Idaho and Montana.

"To minimize conflict between man and the grizzly, vehicle travel, camping, hiking, hunting, fishing or any other kind of human activity will likely be restricted, if not eliminated," she wrote.

"That is completely false," said Ted Koch of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "All you need to recover grizzly bears is not to kill them.

Aiming at Idahoans

Now, Chenoweth has never let facts get in the way of fervor. What's unique about her marred vision this time is it's aimed at Idahoans trying to make democracy work.

Chenoweth is all lathered up about Resource Organization on Timber Supply, or ROOTS, a Nez Perce non-profit group representing timber workers and their employers.

What's turned Chenoweth against ROOTS is the company they keep. They're working -- horrors! -- with Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation.

In her essay, Chenoweth likens these timber workers to prey that seems to "cooperate with the predator in order to make its final moments as painless as possible."

The folks in the forests don't see it that way.

"Things are going along nicely," said Dick Willhite, a ROOTS member and manager of Shearer Lumber in Elk City. "They're working to recover the bear and not restrict the extractive industries."

Weyerhaeuser's man, Bill Mulligan, said, "We weren't exactly paralyzed prey, but we recognized we had a serious problem. We said, 'Let's find a way to do this that the majority can live with.'"

The result is a reintroduction proposal for the Selway-Bitterroot and Frank Church wilderness areas. It hinges on control by a citizen management committee and classifying the new bears as a non-essential, experimental population.

Fish and Wildlife is writing a plan likely to return the grizzly to Central Idaho in 1997. Koch salutes ROOTS' efforts: "This is something to celebrate, not deride."

Ignoring reality

Sen. Laird Noh, R-Kimberly, is a sheepman with no love for grizzlies and a member of the Idaho Legislature's oversight panel on grizzly recovery.

Noh said Chenoweth's extreme view ignores reality.

"That's fine rhetoric, and it expresses what Helen's constituents would like to hear, but it does a disservice, too, because people then think they have a chance to stop reintroduction," Noh said.

Just who does Chenoweth represent? Not industry. Not workers. Not moderate conservationists.

"If we can pull it off, it would be a win-win situation for everyone," said Jim Peek, a wildlife biologist at the University of Idaho.

Everyone but Chenoweth, who is in this for herself. She'll sabotage any effort by timberbeasts and treehuggers to find common ground.

Because if they do, she's one political animal who'll have one less fear to prey upon.

Dan Popkey's column runs Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Ideas: 377-6415 or 76424.3366@compuserve.com