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STATE OF MONTANA

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LEGAL UNIT
FISH WILDLIFE & PARKS

MARC RACICOT
GOVERNOR

STATE CAPITOL
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0801

July 18, 1995

John Weaver, EIS Team Leader
Bitterroot Grizzly Bear EIS
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
P.O. Box 5127
Missoula MT 59806

Dear Mr. Weaver:

The purpose of this letter is to provide you my comments and suggestions regarding the current scoping process for reintroduction of the Grizzly Bear into the Bitterroot ecosystem of Montana and Idaho.

Though probably 85-90% of the proposed land base for grizzly bear reintroduction lies 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.

With that in mind, I recommend you incorporate into the current preferred alternative the proposal being submitted by the Bitterroot Grizzly Bear Reintroduction Coalition consisting of Intermountain Forest Industry Association, Idaho's Resource Organization On Timber Supply (R.O.O.T.S.), Defenders of Wildlife and the National Wildlife Federation. The special Endangered Species Act 10(j) Rule they prepared in conjunction with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks provides a superb opportunity for local citizen management of grizzly reintroduction. Without the detailed and intensive involvement of Idaho and Montana citizens their proposal envisions, the chances for success in that reintroduction would be greatly diminished.

The Coalition's 10(j) approach represents the kind of Endangered Species Act flexibility and the local partnership concepts that the Secretary of Interior has been advocating. Consequently, it should be reflected in the EIS preferred alternative.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marc Racicot".

MARC RACICOT
Governor

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