

# Grizzly Bear Outreach Project

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## SKAGIT AND WHATCOM COUNTY RESIDENTS RESPOND TO GRIZZLY BEAR SURVEY

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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A survey of rural residents from Skagit and Whatcom Counties has revealed widespread support for grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades. A majority of respondents (52%) reported strong support for recovery and 24% reported moderate support for recovery. Very few (11%) said that they strongly oppose grizzly bear recovery and only 5% said that they moderately oppose recovery. Support for grizzly bear recovery was about the same in Skagit and Whatcom Counties.

The telephone survey was sponsored by the Grizzly Bear Outreach Project (GBOP) and funded by the Skagit Wildlife Research Grant Program managed by Seattle City Light. The survey was conducted by Responsive Management, a nationally recognized survey firm based in Virginia.

All participants in the survey lived east of Highway 9 in Skagit and Whatcom Counties. Adults were selected at random from the area to participate in the survey. Survey telephone calls were conducted during September and October this past fall.

A total of 508 adults age eighteen and older completed the survey. The results are accurate to within plus or minus 4%. “The large number of people completing the survey gives us confidence that the results accurately represent the opinions of rural residents in Skagit and Whatcom Counties,” said Jim Davis, GBOP Co-Director.

Wildlife agencies have not determined whether grizzly bears will need to be added to the North Cascades to recover the population. Adding bears can be controversial. However, 33% of the respondents in the survey reported that they would be more supportive of grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades if 5-10 bears had to be added, while only 15% said they would be less supportive.

“The survey showed that Skagit and Whatcom County residents need more information on grizzly bears,” said Nan Laney, GBOP Education Coordinator. Few people knew that meat and fish comprise only 10% of the grizzly bear’s diet in the North Cascades. Very few realize that full recovery of the grizzly bear population in the North Cascades will take around 100 years. Fortunately, nearly everyone knew that it is legal to kill a grizzly bear in self-defense or defense of other people. However, almost a third did not know that it is illegal to kill a grizzly bear if it were to attack livestock.

The survey looked at local attitudes toward grizzly bear interactions with people. Almost everyone (91%) agreed that residents and visitors to the North Cascades could prevent almost all problems with grizzly bears by taking a few simple precautions and avoiding areas where grizzly bears are known to be present.

“Most rural residents of Skagit and Whatcom Counties think grizzly bears should be preserved in the North Cascades for future generations,” said Chris Morgan, GBOP Co-Director. More than two-thirds of the people participating in the survey believed that local citizens in and near the North Cascades would be willing to work with wildlife agencies to determine the best way to recover grizzly bears.

For more information, please visit the GBOP website at [www.bearinfo.org](http://www.bearinfo.org) or see the GBOP brochure at local outlets. The GBOP is a community-based education project providing accurate information on grizzly bears, the grizzly bear recovery process, and ways to make our homes and communities bear safe.