

Department Recommended Changes
(corrected April 15, 2022)

12.9.1403 GRIZZLY BEAR DEMOGRAPHIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE NORTHERN CONTINENTAL DIVIDE ECOSYSTEM (1) Upon delisting from the Endangered Species Act, management of the grizzly bear and its habitat in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) will be guided by the Conservation Strategy for Grizzly Bears in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE Conservation Strategy). The department and federal land management agencies will endorse and commit themselves to the NCDE Conservation Strategy by entering into a memorandum of understanding detailing their agreement to implement it. The department will be a signatory to the implementation memorandum.

(2) The department and the commission shall, within their lawful authority to do so, maintain the recovered status of the grizzly bear in the NCDE by implementing interagency cooperation, population and habitat management and monitoring, and other provisions of the NCDE Conservation Strategy in accordance with the responsibilities described therein.

(3) As described in the NCDE Conservation Strategy, the commission adopts the following demographic objectives. The department shall:

(a) maintain a well-distributed grizzly bear population within the demographic monitoring area as described in the NCDE Conservation Strategy and maintain the documented presence of females with offspring in at least 21 of 23 bear management units of the primary conservation area and in at least six of seven occupancy units of Zone 1 at least every six years. Adherence to this objective will be evaluated by monitoring the presence of females with offspring (cubs, yearlings, or 2-year-olds) within defined geographic units of the NCDE;

(b) manage mortalities from all sources to support an estimated probability of at least 90% that the grizzly bear population within the demographic monitoring area remains above 800 bears, considering the uncertainty associated with all of the demographic parameter and further manage mortality against a 6-year running average within the following threshold objectives:

(i) maintain estimated annual survival rate of independent females within the demographic monitoring area of at least 90% and a rate at or above the minimum level consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population within the demographic monitoring area will remain above 800 bears based on population modeling;

(ii) limit annual estimated number of total reported and unreported mortalities of independent females within the demographic monitoring area to a number that is no more than 10% of the number of independent females estimated within the demographic monitoring area based on population modeling and a number that is at or below the maximum level consistent with a projected probability of at least 90% that the population within the demographic monitoring area will remain above 800 bears based on population modeling; and

(iii) limit annual estimated number of total reported and unreported mortalities of independent males within the demographic monitoring area to a number that is no more

than 15% of the number of independent males estimated within the demographic monitoring area based on population modeling.

(c) monitor demographic and genetic connectivity among populations by the following means:

(i) estimating spatial distribution of the NCDE grizzly bear population biennially;
and

(ii) identifying the population of origin for individuals sampled inside and outside of the demographic monitoring area to detect movements of individuals to and from other populations or recovery areas.

(4) Hunting would cease if the probability that the grizzly bear population remains above 800 within the demographic monitoring area falls below 90% and would not resume until the probability is 90% or greater that the population of bears remains above 800.

(5) Hunting will not be allowed in a year if mortality thresholds as described in (3)(b)(ii) **and or** (iii) were exceeded in the previous year.