

We have some advice for the folks at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service who are thinking about putting more **grizzly bears** in the North Cascades.

Don't do it.

The two agencies have studied putting more **grizzly bears** in the region since 2014. They reckon there are already 10 grizzlies in the back country but want more.

Several years ago, the agencies offered their plans to add to the grizzly population. One plan set as a goal 200 **grizzly bears** in the region.

At every public hearing and opportunity for comment, people who live in the area overwhelmingly opposed the idea.

It's not that they don't like and appreciate wildlife. They just don't like wildlife that will eat their livestock and, on occasion, scare the daylights out of people or, worse yet, attack them.

Don't forget that grizzlies are the mother of all predators. They do not fear humans, and they have on many occasions attacked people who were unlucky enough to cross their paths.

"This is a first step toward bringing balance back to the ecosystem and restoring a piece of the Pacific Northwest's natural and cultural heritage," Superintendent Don Striker of North Cascades National Park said in the news release announcing the new effort. "With the public's help we will evaluate a list of options to determine the best path forward."

Here's one option for the Park Service: Keep the grizzlies in Canada.

U.S. Rep Don Newhouse, who represents the region in Congress, was adamant in his opposition to the putting bears in the North Cascades National Park or the adjacent Ross Lake National Recreation Area.

"The introduction of **grizzly bears** into the North Cascades would directly, and negatively, impact the people and the communities I represent," Newhouse said in a statement.

The main problem with parking bears in Washington is the state's population. Most of the 7.7 million Washingtonians live within a few hours' drive of the park and recreation area. One might expect them to go camping, hiking or enjoy other outdoor activities there.

That makes the likelihood of a grizzly bear encounter more more likely than, say, in Alaska, whose population is 10% of Washington's and landmass is nine times larger.

Yet bear encounters and attacks are relatively common in Alaska. Between 2000 and 2017, 68 people were hospitalized after they were attacked by bears. That's an average of 3.8 serious attacks a year.

A further concern is that bears are likely to spread beyond the boundaries of the park and into the surrounding areas. That would endanger more people and livestock.

We were adamantly opposed to this idea when it was first proposed, and we are gobsmacked that wildlife managers who ought to know better would propose it again.

The reintroduction of wolves in Washington state has resulted in one problem after another. Adding **grizzly bears** to the mix would only add to the list of problems.