c I support reintroducing grizzly bears to the North Cascades and urge you to ensure that the plan to do so is strong enough to successfully reestablish a healthy grizzly population in this wild and rugged area. The lack of recent evidence of reproduction indicates that a grizzly bear population, as defined in the Bitterroot EIS (USFWS 2000), no longer exists within the North Cascades (NPS and USFWS 2017). Lyons et al. (2018) estimated the carrying capacity of the North Cascades at approximately 278 bears.

The plan that’s adopted needs to set up a swift timeline for reintroduction. It should recognize the importance of interaction, breeding, and other species’ needs while providing for future considerations related to the bears’ long-term recovery. And while species recovery must be balanced with the needs of people, I strongly oppose a rule that would allow landowners to hunt or kill bears on their property. Instead, the plan must focus on nonlethal strategies to address potential conflicts between bears and humans.

Restoring grizzlies to the North Cascades will benefit not only the bears but the entire ecosystem. Additionally, these bruins would facilitate tourism in the North Cascades; my fondest memory of visiting Glacier National Park was in viewing a grazing Grizzly Bear alongside our trail as we grouped together noisily and carefully, and continued on our way.