

Ecological Research Services—Press Release

For Immediate Release: November 21, 2022

Grizzly Bear Habitat Connectivity Paper Published in Science Journal

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MISSOULA— A pair of researchers announced their results have been published in the Winter issue of the scientific journal *Northwestern Naturalist*. The paper, *Grizzly Bear Denning Habitat and Demographic Connectivity in Northern Idaho and Western Montana* was authored by independent consultant Mike Bader of Missoula, Montana and geospatial analyst/wildlife biologist Paul Sieracki of Priest River, Idaho. Their research results provide timely information as grizzly bears are reoccupying historic habitats in the Northern Rockies. Publication in a peer-reviewed journal is considered the gold standard for state and federal agencies to consider the results of non-agency researchers.

"We are pleased our work was published in a respected journal with a regional focus," said Bader. "We identified denning habitats that are vital to connecting currently isolated grizzly bear populations and repopulating the Bitterroot ecosystem through natural immigration."

"I am honored to be able to contribute to the conservation of the great bear in Idaho and Montana. Our denning maps and data will be useful for commenting on the new Lolo and Bitterroot Forest Plans in Montana and also for the disastrous winter motorized over snow recreation EA on the Idaho Panhandle National Forest," said Sieracki.

The demographic approach relies on areas of secure core and denning habitats within grizzly dispersal distances that support female grizzly bears and their cubs for residential occupancy and not just as areas for males to move through. Grizzly bear populations are eventually connected maintaining genetic diversity necessary for long term survival.

In addition to identifying primary denning habitats, Bader and Sieracki found there are numerous opportunities for female grizzly bears to reside outside of and between the Grizzly Bear Recovery Areas in northwest Montana and Idaho. They suggest management standards that will protect and restore secure core habitats and they also suggest additions to the Bitterroot Recovery Area.

The information is important for grizzly bear recovery planning, assessing the impacts of Forest Plans, project level analyses and revision of long range Forest Plans.

Northwestern Naturalist is one of the oldest scientific journals in North America and is published by the Society for Northwestern Vertebrate Biology. Funding support for the research

came from the Flathead-Lolo-Bitterroot Citizen Task Force, Nimiipuu Protecting the Environment and Friends of the Clearwater. They had no involvement in the methods, results or conclusions of the research team.

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