

Attitudes of Montanans Regarding Grizzly Bears and Their Management

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In 2019-20, a collaborative study was conducted by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) and the University of Montana to better understand Montanans thoughts about grizzly bears and grizzly bear management in Montana. Survey findings revealed generally positive attitudes towards grizzly bears. Despite a high level of support for the presence of grizzly bears in Montana, results from this survey demonstrate that acceptance of bears declined relative to human occupancy and agricultural-ranching use of the landscape. Montanans' views were mixed regarding whether grizzly bears should be allowed to live anywhere they become established on their own. Most Montanans agreed grizzly bears numbers are expanding in Montana. However, a large percentage of Montanans reported knowing little about grizzly bear numbers across different geographic areas of the state, and the remainder expressed views across a spectrum from "much too low" to "much too high". There was generally wide support for hunting this species, with half of Montanans reporting they support enough hunting to manage their population size. About 17 percent of Montanans believe grizzly bears should never be hunted. Montanans reported diverse beliefs regarding the success of grizzly bear management and their satisfaction with that management in Montana. However, trust in FWP to manage grizzly bears was relatively high. The results from this important study will be used by FWP as part of ongoing efforts to include public input in grizzly bear management decision-making processes going forward.