



## **Resolution 23-05**

*Resolution type: Policy Statement*

### **Resolution to Support the Governor's Recommendation to Exclude Grizzly Bear Encroachment Into Eastern Montana**

Submitted by: Valley County Conservation District

#### **1. BACKGROUND DESCRIBING ISSUE \***

*(Please clearly describe for Committee and MACD Board discussion; This will not be included in the MACD Policy Book. This is generally where background information that would be in "whereas" statements should go). This information will be kept on file at MACD. The sponsoring district should also keep a copy of the final resolution for their records.*

Whereas: Grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) were commonly encountered along the Missouri River in Montana in 1804 by the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Whereas: Grizzly bears were slowly exterminated by subsequent waves of European explorers and entrepreneurs and were mostly absent by the homesteader era of the early 20th century.

Whereas: Cowboys roped a bear in south Valley County in the 1920s which Charles M. Russell famously painted as a grizzly bear when in fact it was a black bear (*Ursus americana*). Whereas: When Grizzly bears were listed as threatened in 1975 under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 six recovery zones were identified in western Montana.

Whereas: Further research reduced the recovery zones to three; the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, the Continental Divide Ecosystem and the Cabinet-Yaak Ecosystem, all in western Montana. Whereas: Grizzly bear populations in all three recovery zones have increased markedly to the point where the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service delisted them in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in 2007 and 2017 but both times were overturned by a federal judge.

Whereas: The State of Montana and the USFWS are making a concerted effort to have the grizzly bear delisted in Montana and management returned to the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

Whereas: No federal grizzly bear zones occur in eastern Montana.

**2. SPONSOR(S) ACTIONS TO DATE \***

(What has been done to address the issue, which agencies and organizations have also addressed this?)

Governor Gianforte has petitioned the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services to remove Endangered Species Act protections from Grizzly bears in the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem. Montana FWP has shared publicly that they are able to manage grizzly bear populations and should have full control.

**3. ACTUAL POLICY STATEMENT TO BE INCLUDED IN MACD POLICY BOOK IF ADOPTED \***

(Please clearly and concisely, using active verbs, state the specific authority and action to direct MACD; Policy statements should make sense even without the background. THIS IS GENERALLY WHERE THE CONTENT OF A "THEREFORE" STATEMENT WOULD GO.)

Therefore, it be resolved: MACD supports the State of Montana and the Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks efforts to delist the grizzly bear and return its management to the state wildlife agency. Be it further resolved: MACD will also support Governor Gianforte's efforts to exclude eastern Montana from any grizzly bear recovery plans.

**4. HOW WILL YOUR DISTRICT CONTINUE TO SUPPORT AND BE INVOLVED WITH THIS POLICY STATEMENT/STANCE? \***

Valley County Conservation District will continue to support this resolution by any means necessary.

**5. ARE THERE ANY EXISTING MACD POLICIES THAT THIS WOULD IMPACT OR INTERACT WITH? \***

None that we are aware of

**6. HOW WOULD THIS POLICY IMPACT MACD? \*** (budget, staff time, political capitol, partnerships, legislative capacity, etc)

There would be no impact on MACD.

**7. WOULD THIS POLICY STATEMENT IMPACT THE STATE BUDGET? IF SO, HOW? \***

We foresee no impacts on the Montana Budget.

**8. MEETING AND DATE ADOPTED BY SPONSORING ENTITY**

Will be adopted by the VCCD Board at the September board meeting.

**AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE(S) AND TITLE(S) \***

Will have this signed by board members at the upcoming board meeting.