



FOR RELEASE  
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## Draft grizzly bear conservation plan released

Today the Government of Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board released the draft of a conservation plan for grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) in Yukon. This is the first territory-wide comprehensive plan for grizzly bears in Yukon.

The draft plan was developed after public engagement in 2014 led the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to recommend a plan be developed for grizzly bears in the territory.

The draft plan presents a 25-year vision for grizzly bears in Yukon, which sees healthy and viable grizzly bear populations remain throughout their natural range in Yukon, for future generations of people and bears. This plan will help inform and guide future management decisions and issues related to grizzly bears, which could include local regulation changes.

The draft plan is being released today to allow the Yukon public time to review and discuss the plan prior to a public comment period. A formal public engagement period led by the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board will occur this fall and will provide opportunities for comment and discussion on the draft plan. The Government of Yukon will be conducting government-to-government consultations on the draft plan.

Along with the draft conservation plan, a final report of the results of the 2017 public survey about grizzly bears and their management is also being released. This survey was one source of information used to inform the development of the draft plan.

### Quotes

It is important we develop management plans for Yukon wildlife to make sure we can share them with future generations of Yukoners. Engaging First Nations and Inuvialuit, boards and councils and other interest groups in the development of these plans helps to ensure all available knowledge is included. I would like to thank everyone who made their voices heard throughout the planning process of this draft plan and encourage all Yukoners to review it.

### Minister of Environment Pauline Frost

This planning process was built on the knowledge that First Nations and Renewable Resource Councils are the primary instrument of fish and wildlife management in their traditional territories. The draft plan began with a blank slate – we asked RRCs, First Nations and Yukoners for their input on what should be in a plan. Ultimately, nothing in the draft plan should create a barrier for local conservation or

management of grizzly bears. We hope people across Yukon find that this draft plan reflects their knowledge and values of grizzly bears, in order to conserve them for future generations.

## Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board vice chair Frank Thomas

### Quick facts

- The Yukon Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plan Working Group was formed to address the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board's recommendation that the government support development of a territory-wide management plan for grizzly bears
- The working group comprises 3 members from the Government of Yukon and 3 members from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.
- The Yukon Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plan Working Group was formed 2.5 years ago and has spent that time gathering knowledge and perspectives on grizzly bears in Yukon, using this information to develop the draft plan.
- The public survey conducted in 2017 was one of the many sources of valuable information and perspective from Yukoners that the working group considered when drafting the plan.
- Grizzly bears are sensitive to human disturbance. In developed areas where conflicts are common and roads create access, grizzly bear populations are more likely to decline. Once populations drop, they are slow to recover.
- Section 16.7.12.2 of the Umbrella Final Agreements states that the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board has a responsibility to "make recommendations to the Minister on the need for and the content and timing of all Yukon Fish and Wildlife management plans for species included in international agreements, threatened species or populations, species or populations declared by the Minister as being of a territorial, national or international interest, and Transplanted Populations and Exotic Species."

### Learn more

- A conservation plan for grizzly bears (*ursus arctos*) in Yukon [Hyperlinked to the draft plan on EngageYukon.ca/grizzlybearmanagement]
- Full results of a public survey about grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) and their management in Yukon, Canada" [Hyperlinked to the technical report on EngageYukon.ca/grizzlybearmanagement]
- Summary of the Yukon grizzly bear survey: shedding light on grizzly bear conservation [Hyperlinked to infographic on EngageYukon.ca/grizzlybearmanagement]

### Backgrounder

A conservation plan for grizzly bears ( *Ursus arctos*) in Yukon

The draft plan was developed after public engagement in 2014 led the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board to recommend a plan be developed for grizzly bears in the territory.

Seven goals have been identified in order to achieve a 25-year vision for grizzly bears in Yukon, where healthy and viable grizzly bear populations remain throughout their natural range in Yukon, for future generations of people and bears. They are:

- Foster a cultural connection to, and increased respect for, grizzly bears;
  - Take care of the land that grizzly bears require;
  - Minimize human-grizzly bear conflicts;
  - Ensure grizzly bear harvest is sustainable and respectful;
  - Foster respectful grizzly bear viewing;
  - Improve decision-making by acquiring better knowledge about grizzly bears; and
  - Better understand human dimensions of grizzly bear conservation.
- To achieve these seven goals, the draft plan identifies 33 actions. The implementation of these actions will be flexible and adaptive to the values, needs, and resources of each community in Yukon, and further discussion regarding these actions will occur at the Traditional Territory level.
  - The draft plan identifies strategies for all governments and organizations involved in grizzly bear management in Yukon to work together to implement these actions, and recommends a review schedule for the plan.
  - The 2017 public survey was one of the many sources of valuable information and perspectives from Yukoners that the working group considered when putting together the draft plan. The results of this survey are available as a technical report, "**Results of a public survey about grizzly bears (*Ursus arctos*) and their management in Yukon, Canada**" (Report MR-18-01), and a summary, at [EngageYukon.ca/en/2017/grizzly-bear-management](http://EngageYukon.ca/en/2017/grizzly-bear-management)

### The process for developing the draft plan

- In late 2015, the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board and the Government of Yukon were directed to jointly develop a grizzly bear plan following a recommendation by the Board to the Minister of Environment regarding the need for a Yukon-wide perspective on grizzly bear conservation and management.
- The Board initiated this process to fulfill their responsibility established in the Umbrella Final Agreement (16.7.12.2) to "make recommendations to the Minister on the need for and the content and timing of all Yukon Fish and Wildlife management plans for species included in international agreements, threatened species or populations, species or populations declared by the Minister as being of a territorial, national or international interest, and Transplanted Populations and Exotic Species".
- A Yukon Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plan Working Group was developed consisting of 3 members from Yukon government, and 3 members from the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

- The working group developed the draft plan through a process of information gathering and reflection about grizzly bears with First Nations and Inuvialuit in Yukon and in transboundary regions, Renewable Resources Councils, various organizations, wildlife management boards and councils, and the public across the territory.
- Before writing the draft plan, the working group conducted a series of eight regional workshops in communities across Yukon (and one in Fort McPherson, NWT) with First Nations, Inuvialuit, and relevant mandated boards and councils to explore and understand their interests and concerns regarding grizzly bears.
- The working group held a “what we heard” workshop with First Nations, Inuvialuit, and relevant mandated boards and councils in July 2017, prior to beginning to draft the plan.
- In spring 2017, the working group undertook a public survey to solicit the beliefs, perceptions, and support for potential management actions. Close to 1,400 Yukoners and transboundary community members completed the public survey.
- The working group developed the draft plan using multiple sources of available information including scientific, traditional and local knowledge.

### **Grizzly bear facts**

- Globally, grizzly bear populations have declined dramatically in the last 150 or so years, and they now occupy about half their historical range.
- In Canada, they have become extinct in the prairies and are endangered in Alberta.
- Grizzly bears are listed as a species of Special Concern in the (federal) Species at Risk Act.
- Grizzly bears are sensitive to human disturbance. In developed areas where conflicts are common and roads create access, grizzly bear populations are more likely to decline. Once populations drop, they are slow to recover.
- For the most part, grizzly bear populations in Yukon are considered to stable and secure (unlike much of the rest of Canada); however, there are areas in Yukon where conservation concerns exist.

### **The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board**

The Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board is an advisory body that functions as “the primary instrument of Fish and Wildlife management in the territory” (UFA, 16.7.1). With a mandate to address issues that affect all of Yukon, the Board focuses on policies and legislation for sustainable fish, wildlife, and habitat management. The Board consolidates the best available scientific, traditional, and local knowledge through public participation, to make recommendations on management decisions to First Nations, territorial, and federal governments.

## Government of Yukon, Department of Environment

The Government of Yukon's Department of Environment fosters informed, inclusive decision-making, generates and shares knowledge, and guides others to act responsibly and respectfully in their interactions with the environment. We strive to safeguard Yukon's ecosystems. Department of Environment is a recognized leader and a trusted partner in environmental stewardship. Our actions support a healthy sustainable and prosperous Yukon now and into the future.

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### Article teaser

The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board release a draft of the first territory-wide conservation plan for grizzly bears in Yukon .

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The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board release the draft grizzly bear conservation plan for public review @ENV\_Yukon@YFWMB #Yukon #YukonBears #Grizzlybear #Yukonwild

### Facebook

The Government of Yukon and the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board have released a draft conservation plan for grizzly bears in Yukon. This is the first territory-wide comprehensive plan for grizzly bears in Yukon. The public can review this plan at the Board's website or EngageYukon.ca. In addition to the draft plan, the results of the public survey on grizzly bears held in 2017 are also available online. The

public will have the opportunity to provide comment and discussion on the draft plan later this year.

@YukonConservationOfficerServices @YukonWildlifeViewing

@YukonFishandWildlifeManagementBoard #Yukon #YukonBears #Grizzlybear #Yukonwild

**Photo credit and caption**

YG - Grizzly bear in Yukon