



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator
 NS 312, University of Montana
 Missoula, Montana 59812

Post-It® brand fax transmittal memo 7571 # of pages 2

To David Westbrook
 Co Little Rock Zoo
 Dept.
 Fax # 501-666-7040

From A. Vandehay
 Co. USFWS
 Phone # 406-329-3223
 Fax # 406-329-3212

March 16, 1993

Memorandum

To: MR. DAVID WESTBROOK, LITTLE ROCK ZOO, ARKANSAS

From: ANNE VANDEHEY, WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST, USFWS

Subject: SUBADULT FEMALE GRIZZLIES, PULLMAN, WA

Thank you for inquiry concerning the two subadult female grizzly bears currently available for placement in a zoo.

Three bears were removed from the Bob Marshall Wilderness area in August of 1992. The bears were a family group consisting of a mother and two female offspring. Although still accompanying their mother, the offspring were not cubs. They were three years old and each weighed over 220 pounds. The three bears raided over 19 back-country camps, attempted to enter the tents of sleeping back-packers, and showed little inclination to leave an area when campers attempted to drive them off. The bears were never overtly aggressive towards people, but consistently acted very bold. They often entered camps to seek out food during daylight, while campers were present.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does not consider such bears to be "bad". The bears encountered back-country camps where human food and garbage was improperly stored and readily available. It was extremely unfortunate that the bears learned to associate people with food. However, in grizzly bears, learned behavior that is rewarded repeatedly with human foodstuff is difficult, if not impossible, to change. Past experience shows that such bears in the wild pose a considerable threat to human life. Therefore, the decision was made to remove the bears from the wild. Every agency employee involved in this decision regrets the necessity of having to destroy grizzly bears or remove them from the wild. Because immediate attempts to find a permanent home for the bears were fruitless, and because there were no alternatives, the adult bear was euthanized.

As an option to the destruction of the two sub-adult siblings, Dr. Charles Robbins, Washington State University, Pullman, offered to house the bears indefinitely, without compensation, until a permanent home in a zoo could be found.

The release of the two sub-adult bears to the wild is not an option. These bears have been in captivity and received food from people for 8 months. At present, there are no known, reliable techniques to condition these bears to

avoid people in the future. The release of the bears would most certainly jeopardize the safety of back-country visitors. Wildlife management agencies simply cannot take such a risk.

The bears have been well cared for and have not been used in any research. According to Dr. Robbins, the bears are extremely healthy and have adapted well to captivity. In captivity they could reach up to 500 pounds depending upon diet. More likely, they would attain weights of 300-400 pounds. The history of these bears, and the unfortunate conflicts between humans and bears, could be used to the benefit of wild grizzly populations through the educational efforts of a zoo.

Thank you once again for your inquiry. I hope to have provided some useful information and to hear from you soon. We are anxious to place the bears in a facility such as the Little Rock Zoo.

Dr. Robbins - 509-335-2172
-1119