

# ARE YOU BEAR SMART?

## Know Your Bears



## Can you tell the difference?

*Size and color are not distinguishing characteristics.*



*These are both black bears!*



*Photo Credit: Dr. Bill Gaines*

### Myth: Bears only eat meat.

Grizzly and black bears are omnivores because they eat both plants and animals. In the North Cascades, bears primarily eat plants and grasses. Only a small percentage of their diet consists of meat, which includes fish, insects and other mammals.

### Myth: People traveling or living in bear country are often attacked.

Bear attacks are extremely rare. There are thousands of human-bear encounters every year and only a few result in personal injury. Most bears will retreat before you are even aware of their presence. You can protect yourself by being prepared, alert, and knowing what to do if you see a bear.

## Grizzly Bears in the North Cascades



### Did you know Washington state is grizzly country?

With nearly 10,000 square miles stretching from I-90 north to the Canadian border and anchored by North Cascades National Park, the designated North Cascades Grizzly Bear Recovery Area is one of the largest blocks of wild federal land remaining in the lower 48 states.

A few grizzly bears have recently been sighted in the Canadian part of the North Cascades Ecosystem, but no grizzly bears sightings have been verified in the United States portion of the North Cascades for several years. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service estimates there are fewer than 20 grizzly bears in Washington's North Cascades, perhaps as few as two or three. Given the low number of existing grizzly bears, their very slow reproductive rate and dispersal rates, the North Cascades grizzly bear population is considered the most at-risk grizzly bear population in the United States today. **With so few grizzly bears left in the North Cascades, biologists believe they may soon disappear entirely from the area if recovery actions aren't taken.**



### What's being done?

Grizzly bears were listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as threatened in 1975. After a species is listed under the ESA, recovery plans are usually prepared –basically blueprints for a recovery strategy to restore the species to a point where it no longer needs the protections provided by the ESA. Government agencies, led by the National Park Service and USFWS, have now begun an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process to plan for restoring a healthy grizzly bear population to the North Cascades. The process is expected to be completed in 2017 with a Final EIS and Record of Decision that will guide grizzly bear recovery in the North Cascades.

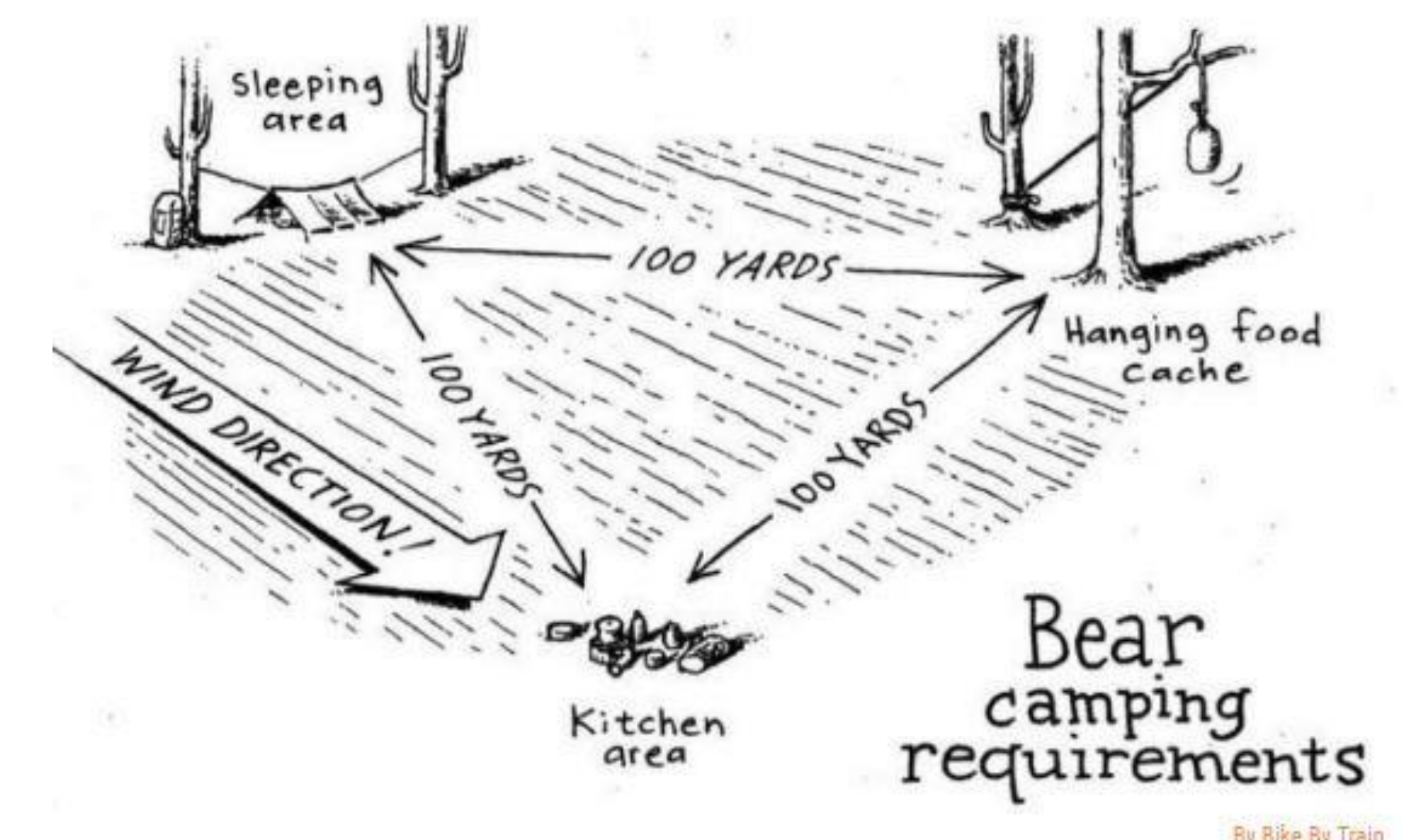
### Want to know more? How can you participate in the process?

Go to [www.northcascadesgrizzly.org](http://www.northcascadesgrizzly.org) to find out more about grizzly bears in the North Cascades and how you can weigh in on the process.

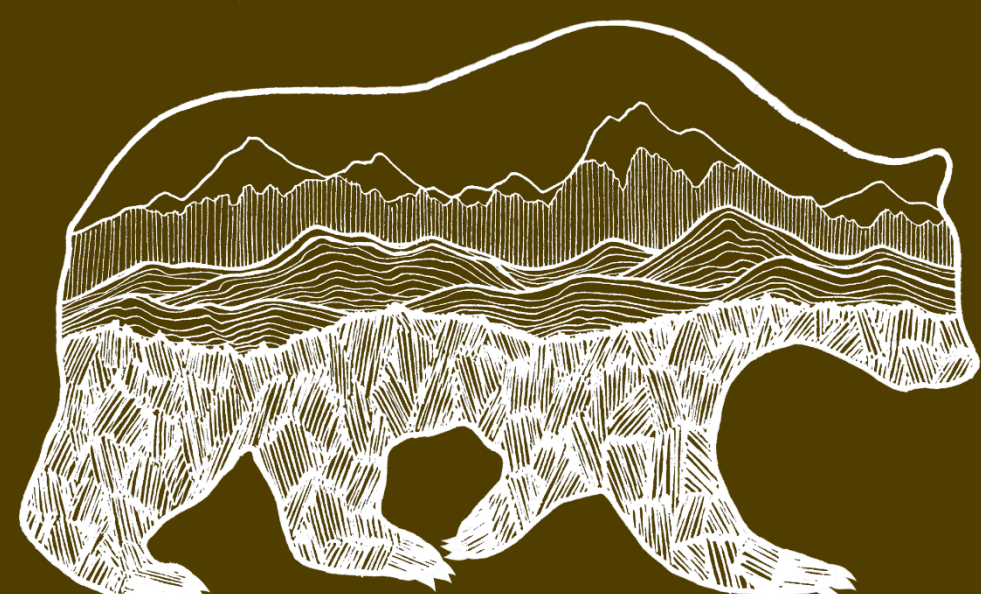
## How to Recreate Safely in Bear Country

1. **Be prepared!** Learn how and why bears behave and know how to react to an encounter or attack.
2. **Carry bear spray** and know how to use it. It works better than bullets.
3. **Stay alert** and watch for bears and bear signs.
4. **Avoid startling a bear.** If a bear hears you coming, it will usually avoid you. Your voice will help identify you as human and non-threatening. Voices carry better than bells and bells may arouse a bear's curiosity.
5. **Travel in a group** during daylight hours. Bears are less likely to approach large groups of people.
6. **Avoid animal carcasses.** If you come upon a dead animal, leave the area and inform a ranger.
7. **Keep dogs on a leash** and under control. Dogs may disturb a bear and lead them back to you.
8. **Never approach bears.** If a bear approaches, back away calmly while talking aloud.
9. **Know how to pitch a bear-safe camp.** Always store your food and garbage in a bear-proof container, and be sure to cook and hang your food least 100 yards away from your tent.
10. **Attend a free course on how to Play Safe and Be Safe in Bear Country.** Go to [www.northcascadesgrizzly.org](http://www.northcascadesgrizzly.org) to find a course near you.

*Adapted from [www.igbconline.org](http://www.igbconline.org) and [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).*



By Bike By Train



Friends of the  
NORTH CASCADES  
GRIZZLY BEAR

Learn More about North Cascades Grizzly Bears  
[www.northcascadesgrizzly.org](http://www.northcascadesgrizzly.org)