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Grizzly Recovery Plan to be Presented to Government

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Alberta's Grizzly Bear Recovery Team has been working for the last two years to produce its Grizzly Recovery Plan, and this is due to be presented to the Minister for Sustainable Resource Development in late November 2004. Although filled with lots of pleasant sentiments, the plan appears to do little to address the habitat disturbance that is the root cause of Alberta's threatened grizzly bear population. It is hoped that the plan will continue to recommend a suspension of the grizzly bear hunt until grizzly numbers are recovered.

The former Minister failed to adopt the recommendations of any of his scientists on this issue, and also failed to act upon their recommendation to upgrade the status of grizzlies to "Threatened" in the province. But with a change of Minister in the recent cabinet reshuffle, AWA is optimistic that the new incumbent may be somebody who is more inclined to listen to his scientists before making decisions.

The Grizzly Bear Alliance have been working hard to compare Alberta's flawed recovery plan with plans in other jurisdictions that have been demonstrably successful, such as the Yellowstone Grizzly Recovery Plan. AWA believes that there is a need for an alternative, scientifically defensible version of the plan, which would focus on what would be needed to actually recover grizzly bears in Alberta (as opposed to what could be done to recover grizzlies without upsetting industry or politicians).

The question remains: are Albertans prepared to pay the financial costs that will be required to keep grizzly bears on the landscape? Albertans appear to say "Yes": their political representatives appear to say ... "Maybe."

