

The grizzly bear is an **icon of North American wildness**. Historically, an estimated 50,000 roamed from Alaska to Mexico, California to Ohio, utilizing a variety of habitats like dense forests, subalpine meadows, open plains, and arctic tundra. But due to hunting and habitat loss, this bastion of North American landscapes has been largely restricted to Canada and Alaska. In the lower 48, only an estimated 1,500 grizzly bears remain in 5-6 distinct populations.



Credit: Scott McKinley

Grizzly bears need room to roam – they don't follow human boundaries, and often, our parks are simply too small for this wide-ranging species. When they venture outside of protected areas, they are hunted, hit by cars, or come into conflict with people. But just like how people need highways to get from one place to another safely, grizzly bears, and other species, need wildlife corridors to move from protected area to protected area in search of food and mates. The **National Wildlife Corridors Bill** would provide these essential paths, protect grizzlies and drivers from dangerous highway collisions, and help to reduce conflicts with people by giving grizzlies a safer route around cities and towns.



Credit: Miller & Waits 2003



Credit: Center for Large Landscape Conservation
<http://largelandscapes.org/library/>

A Glacier-Great Bear Corridor

Through this bill, critical wildlife corridors could be designated for grizzly bears. For example, the Glacier-Great Bear Corridor, if protected, would reconnect the Glacier-Watertown Lakes National Park Complex to the north with the Great Bear- Bob Marshall-Scapegoat Wilderness Complex to the south. This corridor is 33,100 acres – just 2% of the otherwise contiguous protected areas surrounding it – and is comprised mostly of National Forest. Most importantly, a corridor would provide safe passage across Highway 2 and the Northern Burlington-Sante Fe railroad, which currently blocks grizzly bear movement, as well as other important Rocky Mountain species like wolverine and lynx.

Now is the time to support a National Wildlife Corridors Bill to protect and reconnect our national heritage. For more information, contact Susan Holmes, Policy Director at susan@wildlandsnetwork.org.

