Wisconsin Black Bear Management Plan

Update and New Directions

2019 WCFA Spring Meeting

Scott Walter
Large Carnivore Specialist
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

The Curren

PROGRAM GOAL

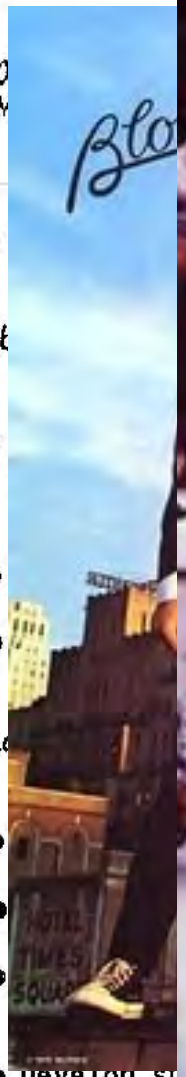
ACCOMMO
BIG GAM

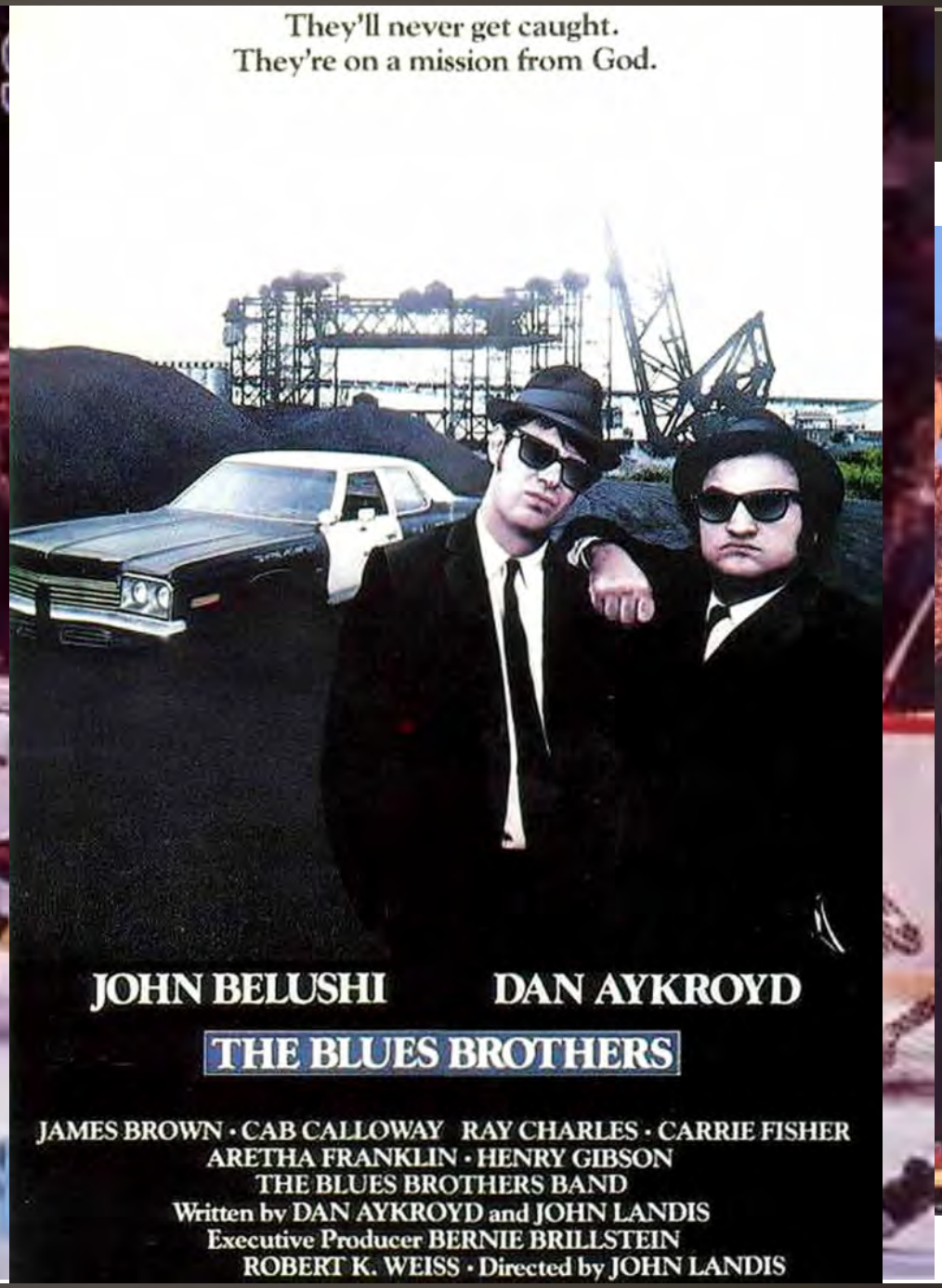
PROBLEMS AND

1. Pub

2. In

- develop st





TROPHY

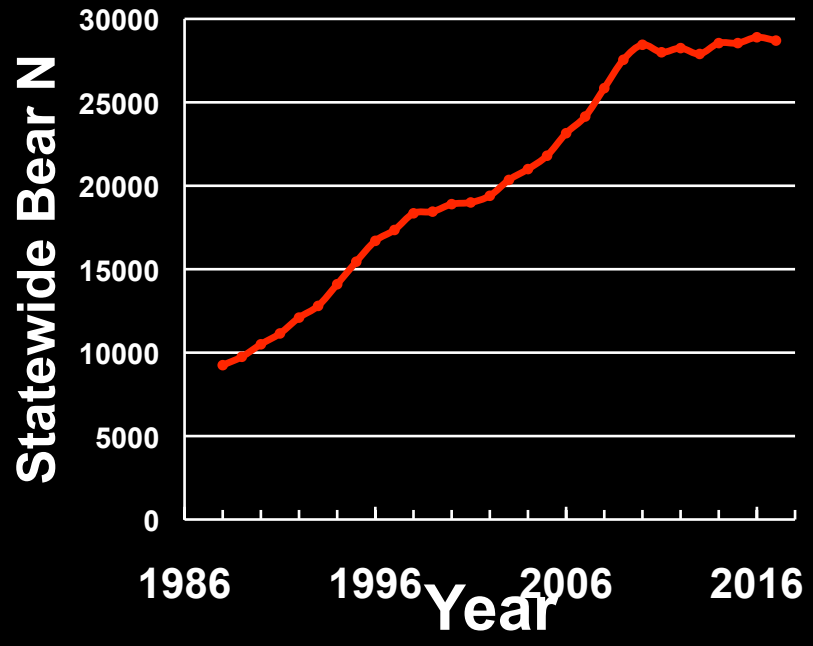
logy and
d, con-

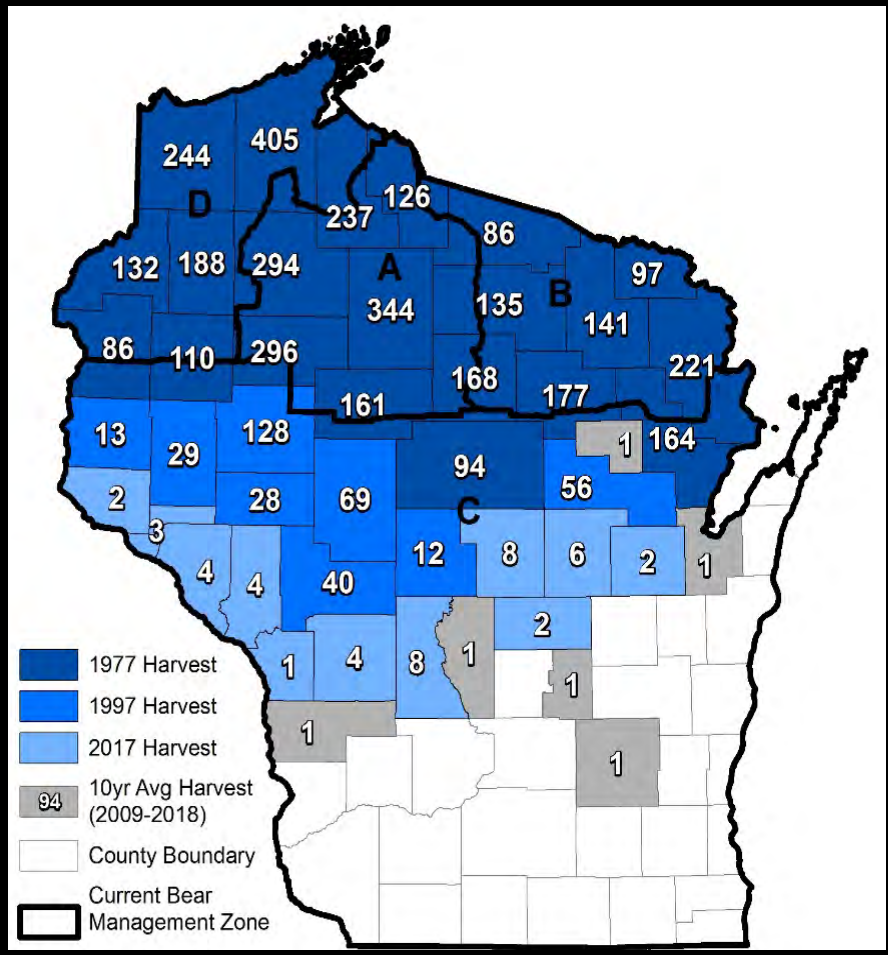
nduct.

s) to

Since 1980….

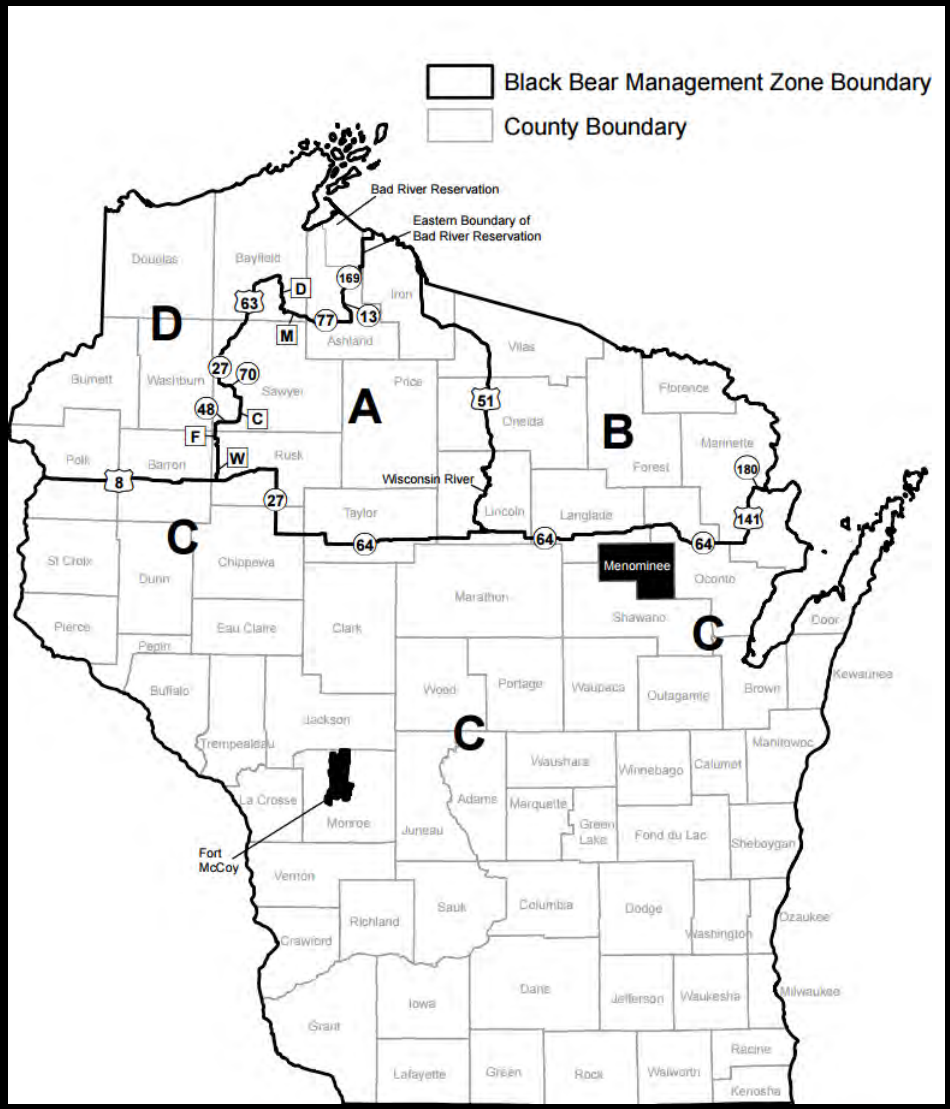
- Population Increase and Range Expansion





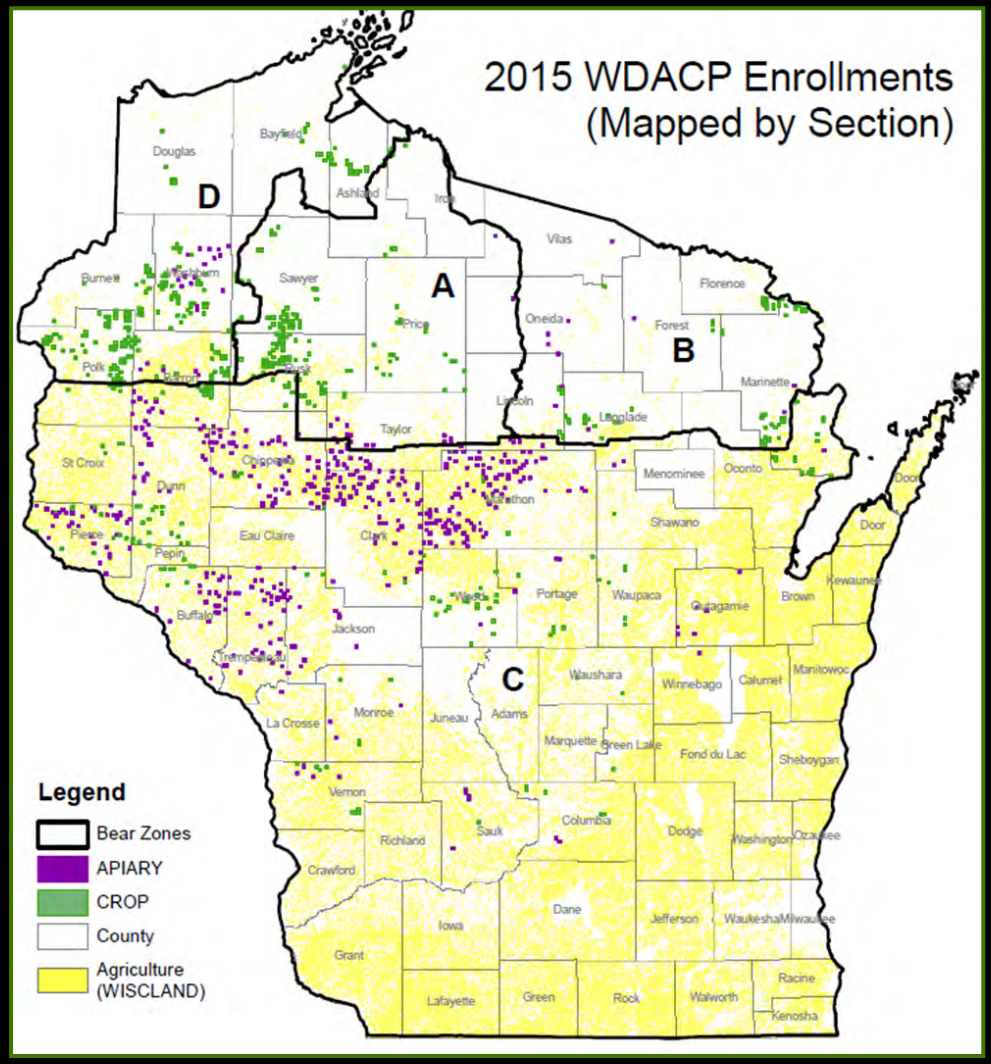
Since 1980….

- **Establishment of Bear Management Zones (1987)**



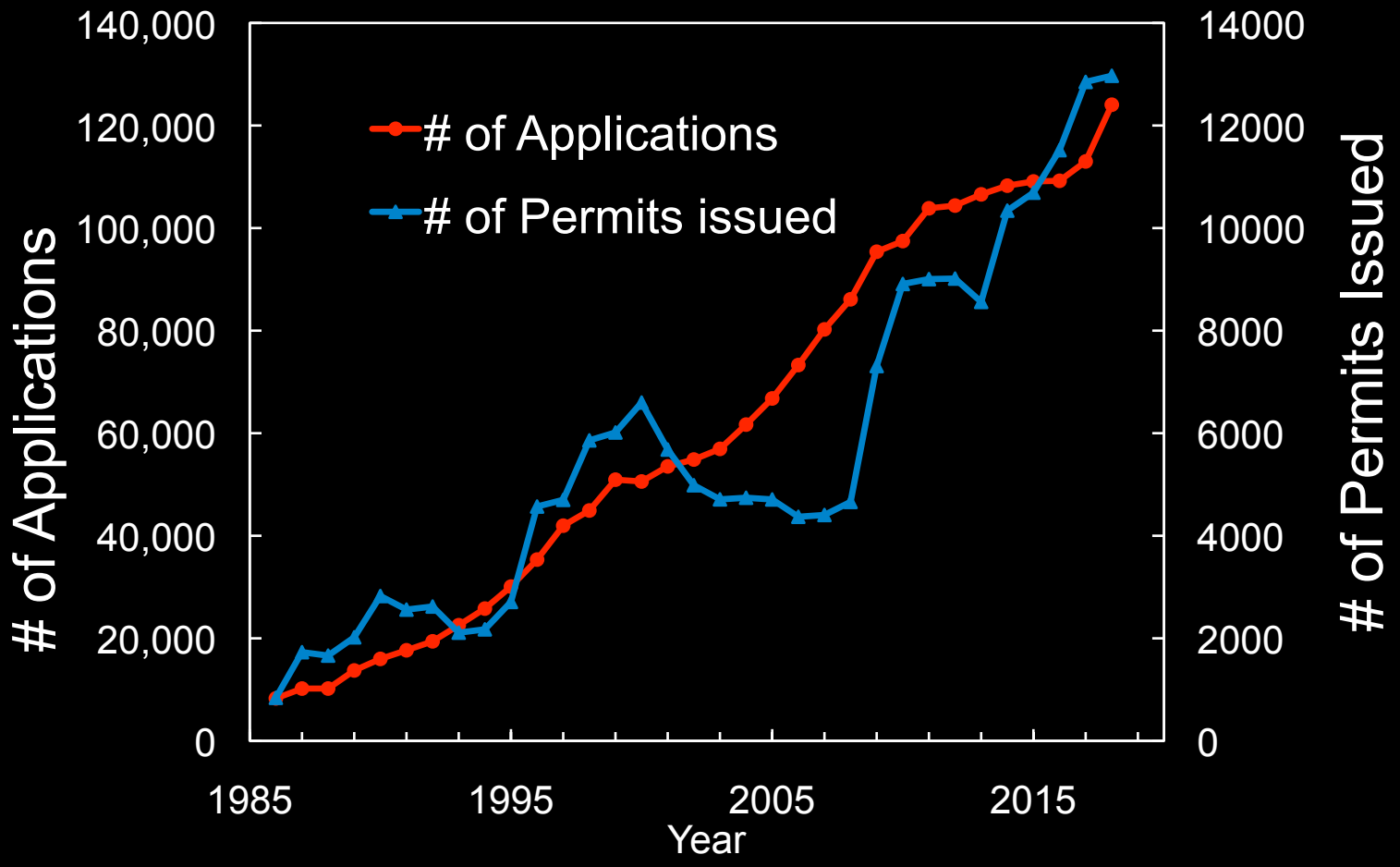
Since 1980….

- **Wildlife Damage Abatement & Claims Program**



Since 1980….

- Increase in Hunter Interest

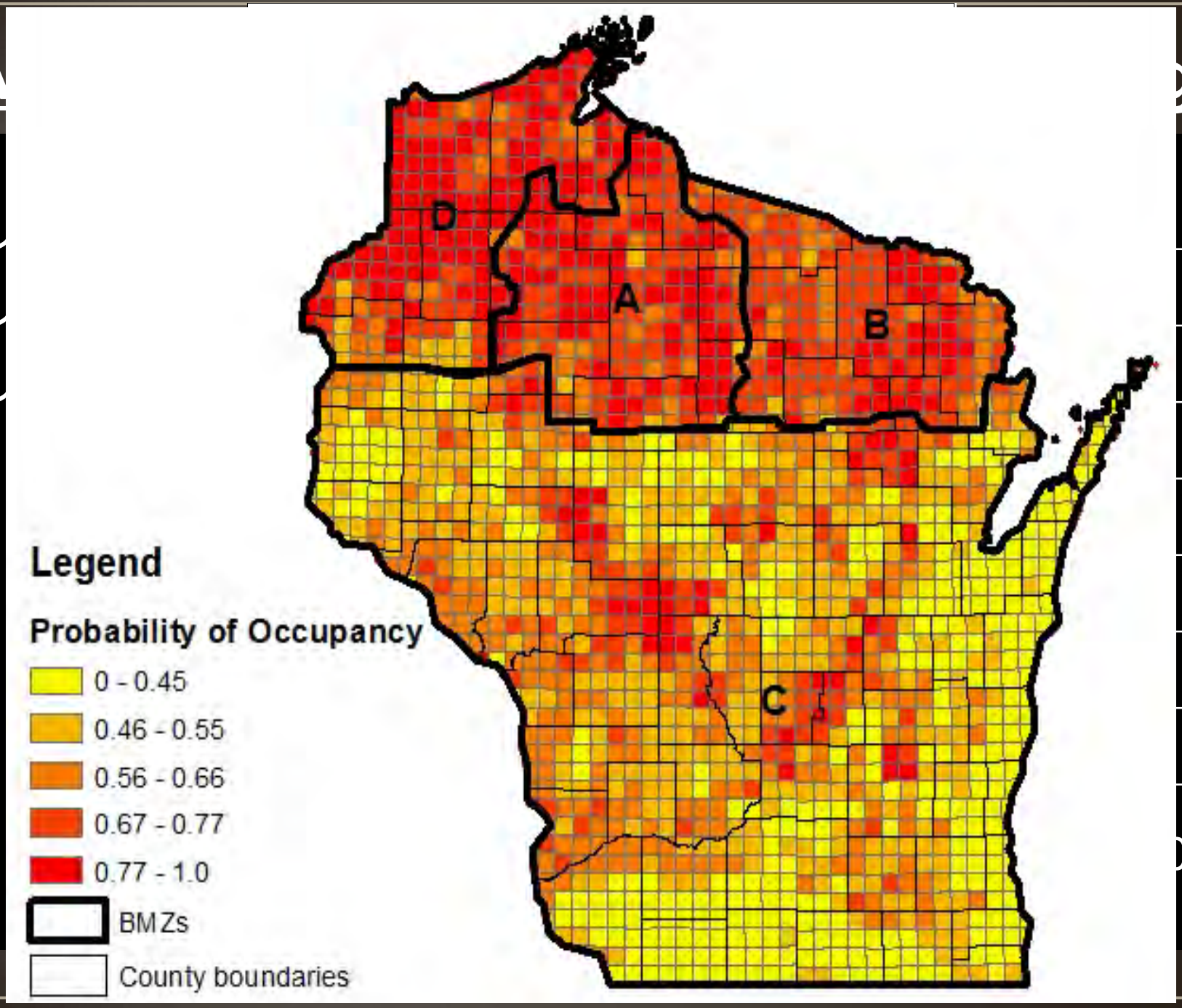


Since 1980….

- **Increased knowledge of black bear ecology/management**

What is a Species Management Plan?

- Comprehensive program review, to ensure:
  - ✓ Management is based on the best *scienc*
  - ✓ Identify and address conservation *threa*
  - ✓ Identify and respond to *social* concerns
  - ✓ Identify and maximize *public values*.

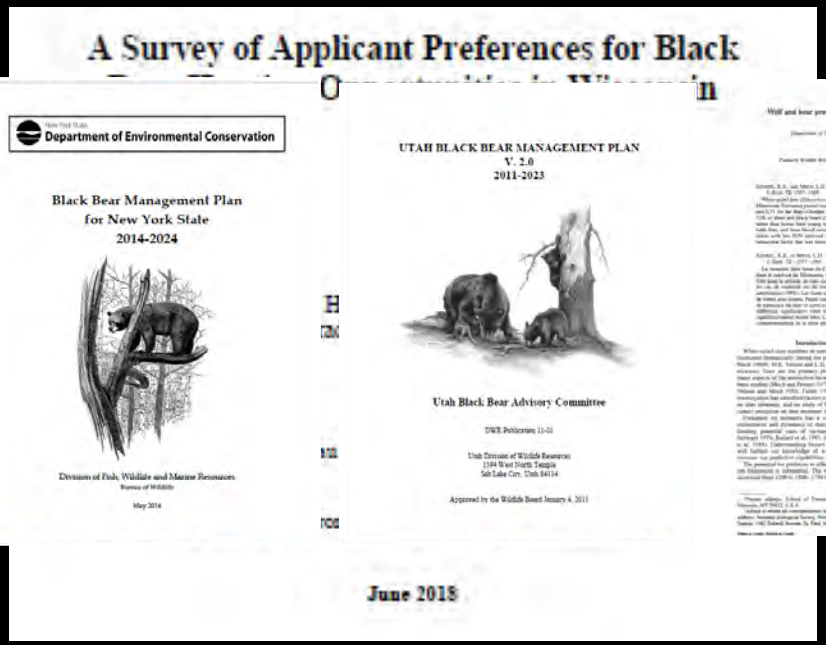

D
A
B
C
Legend
Probability of Occupancy
0 - 0.45
0.46 - 0.55
0.56 - 0.66
0.67 - 0.77
0.77 - 1.0
BMZs
County boundaries

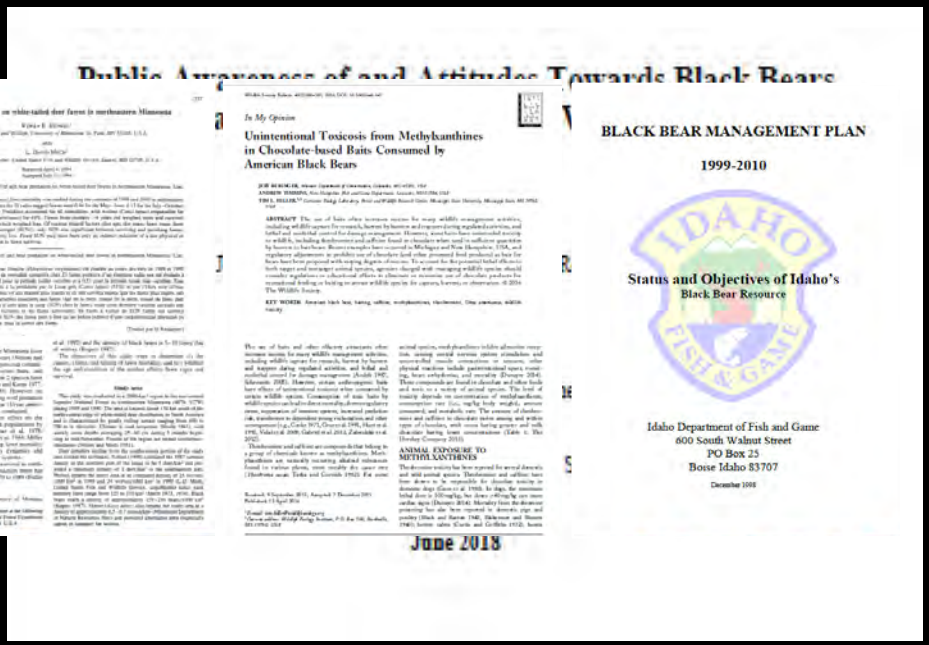
Bear Management Plan- Process

- ✓ Bear Advisory Committee (DNR Staff + 11 Partners)
  - Develop Recommendations for WLT √
    - Internal review (WLT, SO) Current
      - Public Comment 3/25 – 4/14
        - NRB Review/Approval May
          - Implementation 10 years!

History of Bear Plan revision efforts

- ✓ Numerous attempts to revise since 1980
- ✓ 2017/2018
  - BAC developed list of issues
  - Applicant/Public Surveys
  - Literature review





Bear Advisory Committee- Plan Development

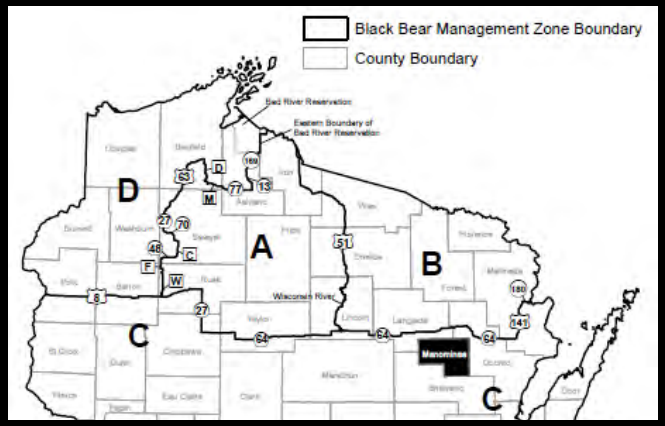
- ✓ Identify Plan Scope/Format
- ✓ Address issue sets & develop recommendations
- ✓ Draft plan document

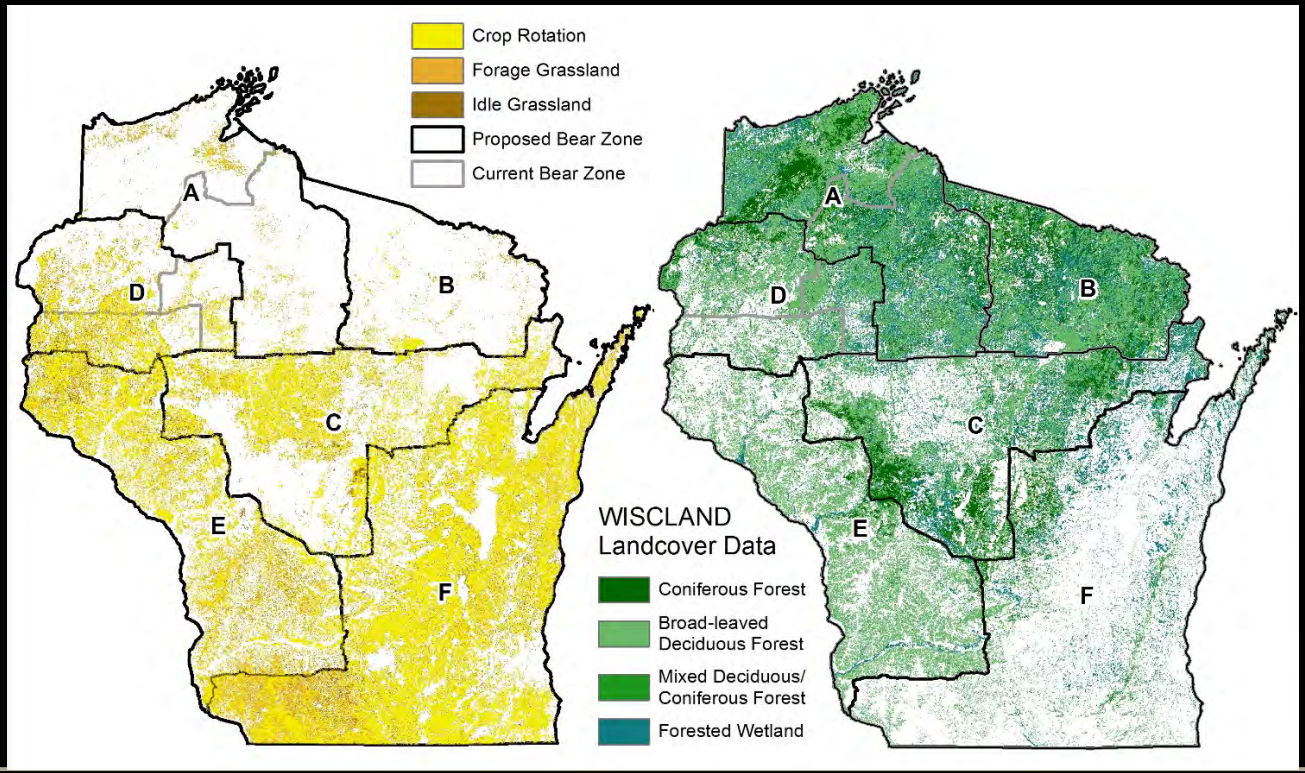
BAC Philosophy guiding Plan development:

- ✓ Strive for collaboration and transparency.
- ✓ Focus on *evaluation*, not change.
- ✓ Highlight positives, as well as address issues.
- ✓ Embrace new opportunities (technological, quantitative, communication tools)

Enough preamble… current recommendations.

1) New Zone Structure





Current Population Goals in Administrative Code:

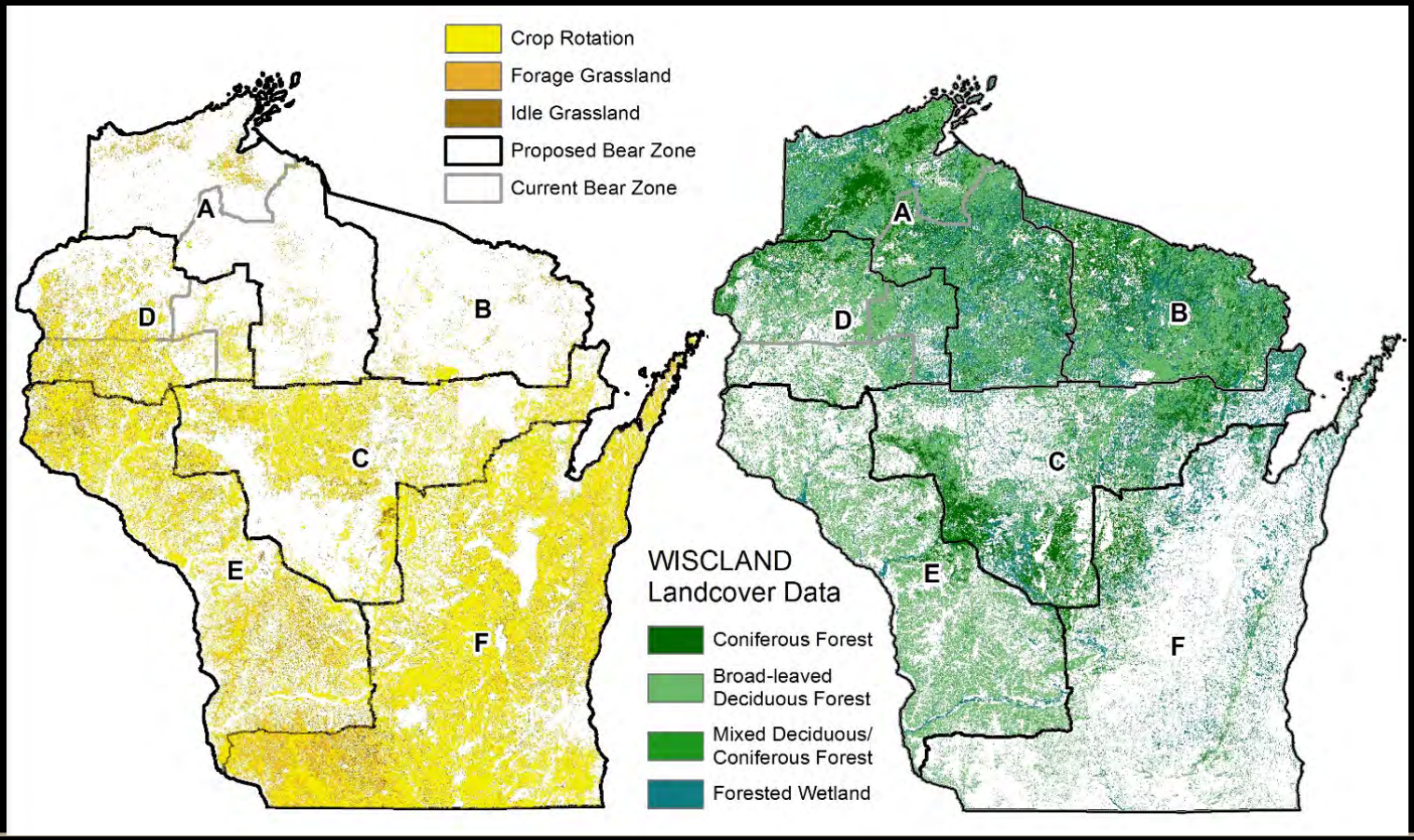
Zone	Population Goal
A	4,600
B	2,200
C	1,200
D	3,300
Statewide	11,300

2) Manage bears at CCC within zones, reflecting:

- ✓ Agricultural damage
- ✓ Nuisance complaints
- ✓ Hunter crowding, success, and satisfaction
- ✓ Bear disease/health issues
- ✓ Allowing bears to maintain their ecological role

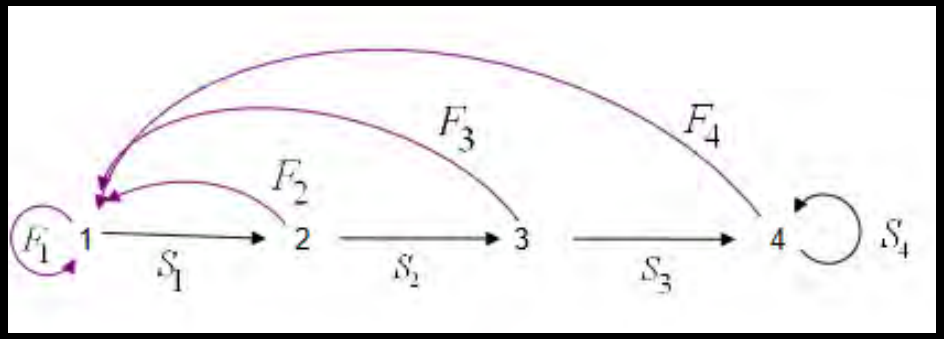
Zone-specific goals

- ✓ Manage for CCC in zones A-E
- ✓ Allow local management in zone F
- ✓ Allow hound hunting in zone C



3) Explore & utilize best population modeling techniques available.

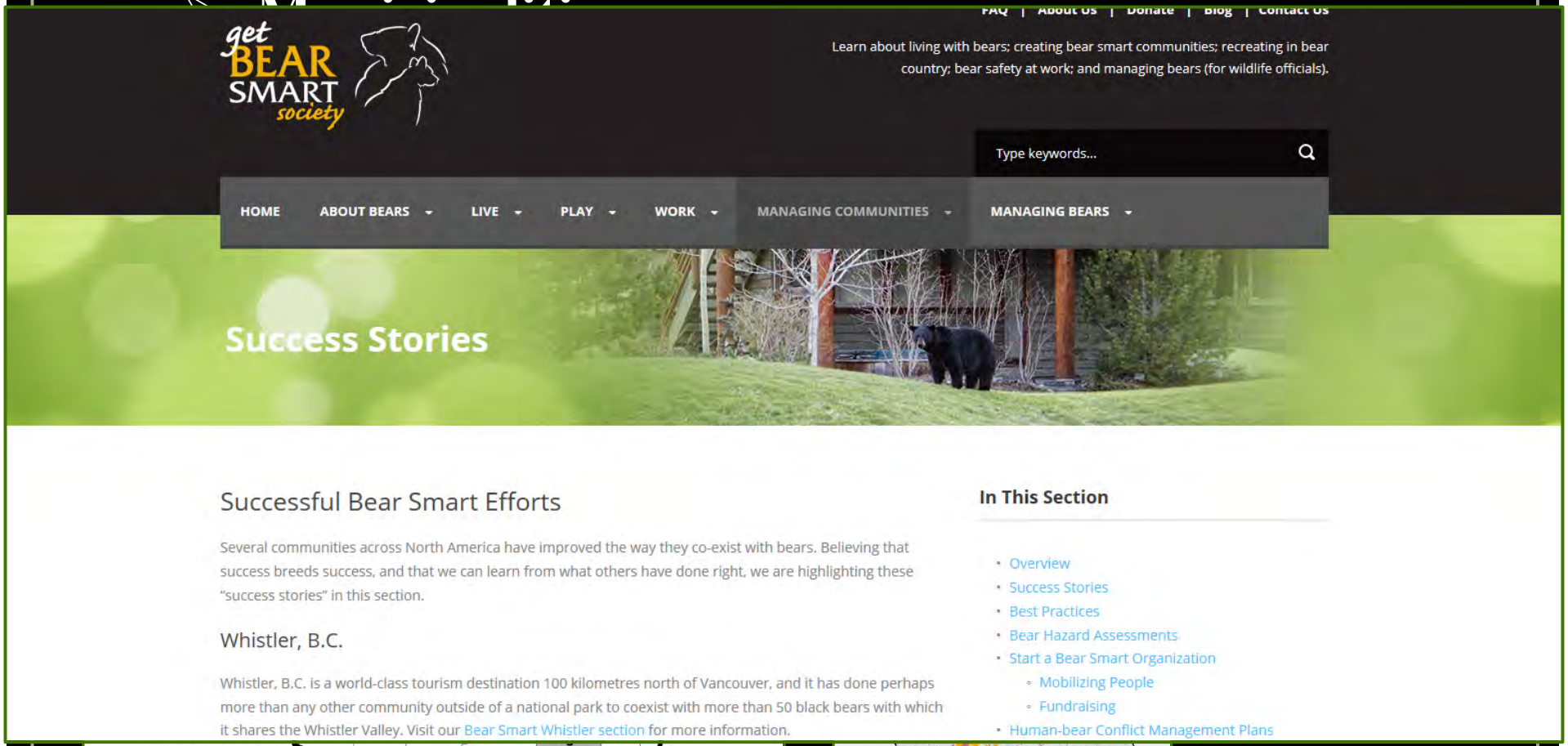
- ✓ **Model calibration via periodic estimates (N)**

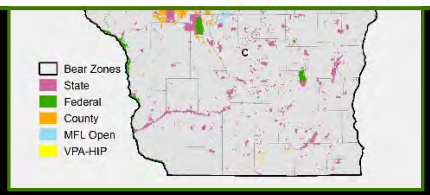


$$N = \frac{Mn}{m}$$

4) Public outreach/education

- Farmers/landowners in south
- M[illegible]





5) Research objectives

- ✓ Utilize telemetry to :
  - Develop age-specific estimates of fecundity and survival.
  - Understand movement patterns related to agricultural damage
  - Identify factors influencing demography.
- ✓ Assess effectiveness/efficiency of damage abatement techniques
- ✓ Develop index to natural food abundance

Questions?