

Considerations for matching the correct bear(s) with the correct facility

Are there staffing resources including staff experienced with the species and have the experience to handle the extent of the behavioral or physical support needed for the bear?

Is there veterinary support and resources available to the full extent of treatment for the lifetime of the bear(s)?

Facility design and constraints (short term and long term)

- Does the facility meet current standards of husbandry and welfare?
- Can the necessary desensitization for a bear to acclimate to a particular habitat (surrounded by visitors, train or high level of acoustic noise, other species visible from habitat, etc.) and other zoo exposures be accomplished in a formal management plan?
 - How is the bear's reactivity level to novelty, acute stress, and coping capacity through temporary holding?
 - Will the bear be overwhelmed in an overloaded environment? Acoustics, smells, zoo visitors, current construction, etc.?
 - Can accommodation to the facility for this bear be made?
 - Will the bear be able to handle the topography of exhibit and holding (age, injury, mobility)?
 - Will the bear be able to handle features of the habitat and holding space?
 - Will the bear be able to handle the climate and weather for the region?
 - Will the bear be too sensitive to the level of other physical exposure they will have: sun or snow, extreme heat or cold?
- Will the bear have to spend significant time in a holding space before they can handle the habitat?
- Will the bear have to spend significant time in a holding space while a habitat is being built?
- Can the space meet the physical developmental needs based on current health expectations (develop muscle tone, climb, run, etc.) or could it cause concerns/decreases in development or mobility (sores, pad health, teeth-mesh biting, etc.)
- The environment can affect the quality of psychological development. Is there the ability to provide enough environmental stimuli to express species/age typical behaviors based on current health and age expectations?

Bears are highly intelligent animals with complex social, cognitive, and emotional needs.

- A bear's psychological needs are very important – meeting only its physical needs is insufficient. Does the facility have the resources and skills to meet both of these needs for the rest of the bear's life?
- If < 2 years old can the bear be paired with another cub or juvenile?
- Can the psychological developmental needs be met while under intensive medical care, short term, and long term?
- How is the bear's demeanor towards people-known and novel, groups, conspecifics, heterospecifics, etc.?
- Does the facility have the staff resources and experience needed to work through known behavioral concerns as well as prevent stereotypic behaviors developing?
- What is the level of engagement with staff- informal and formal training program? Will the bear(s) bond, build trust, and be able to voluntarily participate in their care?

Considerations due to medical conditions

- What are the scopes and impacts of necessary medical treatments (in 6 months, 1 year, 5 years or longer)?
- What other medical complications are a concern (in 6 months, 1 year, 5 years or longer)?
- How invasive is the treatment? How often does it need to occur? How long is each treatment session? Does the bear have to be anesthetized for the treatment?
- Are there staff resources and experience to train the necessary treatments for voluntary participation? Can the treatment be trained through positive reinforcement or is it too invasive? Do you have the time to train the behavior before the treatments are necessary?
- Are there staff, financial, and facility resources to sustain treatments?
- Do treatments keep the bear isolated from social groups, off habitat, or limit the ability to provide enough environmental stimuli for the bear to express species/age typical behaviors based on current health and age expectations?
- What will the bear experience? Pain, itchiness, fear? Would this be continuous, severe, only for a brief time, only during treatments?
- How effective are known treatments?

- Are there health risks these bears might pose to other animals, caretakers?
- To what extent could the bear recover? What is the prognosis based on various treatment modalities?

Specific Medical or Behavioral Conditions

- Skin conditions and fur loss (generally this is permanent due to damage to the follicles)-
 - Are there impacts to the bear's ability to groom?
 - Are there grooming limitations due to treatments-access to bath (wet or dry grooming)?
 - Can the habitat provide enough shade, indoor access (not just a holding), temperature regulation, weather protection, without limiting the bear's ability to have choice and control in their entire habitat usage?
- Neurological Disorders (encephalitis)-
 - Will this keep the bear from being socially housed, or affect their ability to communicate properly with other bears?
 - Does or will the bear have tremors, seizures-to what degree?
 - Will they cause the bear to be at risk of injury when in their habitat?
 - Will there be increased aggression to others or to itself due to the bear's condition?
- Amputation of limb or digits-
 - Will the bear be cold sensitive?
 - Will the bear struggle with traction in wet environments or snow?
 - Will they be able to navigate the habitat safely?
 - Are they able to defend themselves when socially housed?
 - Can the habitat features be modified to accommodate challenges the bear may have?
- Vector Borne diseases-
 - Is there a transmission risk and social grouping impact?
 - Are there location concerns of potential transmission to collection or wild reservoir?
 - Are there concerns of transmission to caretakers?
 - Can the risk to other bears, collection animals, and humans be mitigated?
 - Is the disease responsive to known treatment(s)?
 - Will the treatment(s) or long-term prognosis affect the bear's ability to be a bear?
- Stereotypies-
 - How does the time spent in stereotypical behavior impact overall activity budget, social dynamics, habitat use?
 - Does or will the abnormal behaviors compound other conditions the bear may have?
 - Does or will abnormal behaviors cause physical self-harm?
 - Do abnormal behaviors or treatments impact how other bears respond to them?

Available spaces

- The number of non-releasable bears and the number of bears that need to be rehomed outnumber the appropriate spaces available to them under human care.
 - Will a bear that needs intensive, lifetime (physical and/or psychological) treatments or accommodations take space from another bear that would have a better quality of life in the same space?
 - Does placing this bear reduce the spaces available for non-releasable bears within the state?
 - Does placing this bear reduce the number of bears that could be housed within the same space due to physical and/ or psychological concerns that prevent the bear from safely cohabitating in a social group?