

OPENING REMARKS

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Deputy Regional Director Matt Hogan

**Congressional Staff Briefing Call
5-year Status Review of the Grizzly Bear in the Lower 48 States**

Wednesday, March 13, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. MT (est)

Note –At the beginning, you will be introduced by Alyssa Hausman.

Remarks

- Good morning everyone and good afternoon to those of you in DC.
- I want to thank you all for joining the Fish and Wildlife Service on this call today and for your interest in the conservation of grizzly bears in the American West.
- As Alyssa said, I'm Matt Hogan and I am the Deputy Regional Director for the Service's Mountain-Prairie Region, based in Colorado.
- I have had opportunity to work with a wide range of stakeholders on issues related to grizzly bear management, including sitting down with ranchers experiencing conflicts with livestock, engaging with Tribal partners on the sacred role of the bear in their cultures, and working with States and other partners as a member of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee.
- We're here to discuss the Fish and Wildlife Service's status review of the grizzly bear in the lower 48 states.
- The Endangered Species Act directs the Service to regularly review the status of listed species. This review of the grizzly bear is informed by a peer-reviewed species status assessment, which includes the best available scientific information. The assessment evaluated the species' current needs, conditions and threats, and modeled future scenarios. This process included significant involvement and contribution from scientific experts and partners at federal, state and Tribal agencies.
- Today's status review for the grizzly bear includes a recommendation of no change to the current threatened listing status of the grizzly bear in the lower 48 states.
- The ESA indicates that a status review must evaluate the status of a species as it is currently listed under the ESA. The grizzly bear is listed as threatened as a single entity in the lower 48 states. As such, the status review and recommendation are for the lower 48 population as a whole and not individual recovery zones.
- We have made tremendous progress in recovering the grizzly bear since it was first protected in 1975.
- However, considerable challenges remain to fully recovering grizzlies in the lower 48 states.
- These remaining challenges include limited habitat connectivity, motorized access management, human-caused mortality, and uncertainty surrounding future conservation efforts in some ecosystems.

- Partnerships with local, state, Tribal, and federal agencies have been integral to successful efforts to conserve grizzly bears to date. These partnerships will continue to be important in addressing challenges to fully recovering the species.
- The Fish and Wildlife Service is committed to the recovery of the grizzly bear, and to engaging with all stakeholders to find collaborative solutions to the challenges we face when managing a large predator.
- I hope to continue this conversation with you all as the Service considers any future steps related to grizzly management.
- With that, I welcome any questions you may have and will turn it back to Alyssa to help facilitate.