

Summary of Proposed Action

- * We (US Fish & Wildlife Service) are proposing to delist the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears.
- * We made this decision ~~only~~ after we were satisfied that the future of this population will be secure based on a thorough and comprehensive review of past, present, and future threats to the population.
- * Upon delisting, the population will be managed under a comprehensive management plan called the Yellowstone Conservation Strategy by a joint committee including the states of Wyoming, Montana, and Idaho, the Forest Service, ~~and~~ the National Park Service, and the Wind River reservation Tribes.

Why delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear?

- * The purpose of the Endangered Species Act (ACT) is to get listed species to the point at which protection under the ACT is no longer required.
- * Recovery goals for the Yellowstone Ecosystem have been met since 1996^[CS1]
- * A healthy ~~Robust~~ population ~~growth~~
- * State and Federal cooperation to manage mortality, maintain secure habitat, and to continue intensive monitoring
- * Widespread public support for grizzly bear recovery
- * Adequate regulatory mechanisms that ensure sufficient habitat and population numbers into the future
- * Careful management of mortality limits into the future

The above factors have brought the Yellowstone grizzly bear population to the point where a change in status is appropriate.

Will the Yellowstone grizzly bear still be protected?

Yes. There will still be strict limits on mortality, state laws against illegal killing, and strong habitat protections in the 9,200 sq. mi. primary conservation area where 86-90%^[CS2] of the bears live.

Management decisions will be guided by regulatory mechanisms including:

- * The Conservation Strategy
- * National Park Service Management Plans
- * US Forest Service Management Plan Amendments
- * State grizzly bear management plans
- * Over 70 state and federal laws, statutes, and regulations

What habitat protections will there be
INSIDE the primary conservation area?

Within the 9,200 square mile primary conservation area where more than 86-90% of the bears live, there will be:

- * No new livestock allotments
- * No reductions in secure habitat
- * No permanent increases in road densities
- * No new site developments

What habitat protections will be in place *OUTSIDE* of the primary conservation area and inside the DMA?

- * The Forest Service will manage the vast majority of suitable grizzly bear habitat outside the PCA (4 million acres).
- * 3 million of these acres (75%) are currently secure habitat.
- * 2.1 million acres of this secure habitat is considered long-term secure (no new road construction is likely).
- * Food storage regulations are being extended to include most suitable habitat in the Greater Yellowstone Area.
- * The Forest Service is considering including guidance for minimizing grizzly bear/human and grizzly bear/livestock

conflicts and maintaining key grizzly bear foods both inside the PCA and in suitable habitats outside the PCA.

What habitat issues will be monitored after delisting?

- 1) The amount of secure habitat & road densities
- 2) The number and type of developed sites
- 3) The number and capacity of livestock allotments
- ~~4) Habitat effectiveness values~~
- 5) 4) The abundance of winter-killed ungulates
- 6) 5) The abundance of cutthroat trout and lake trout
- 7) 6) Whitebark pine cone production
- 8) 7) Amount of whitepine blister rust fungus infection
- 9) 8) Amount of trees impacted by mountain pine beetles
- 10) 9) Presence of mature whitebark pines that may be genetically resistant to blister rust

~~11)~~10) Grizzly bear use of army cutworm moths

How will the new 2005 Forest Planning Regulations affect the habitat standards being implemented by the GYA national forests?

- * FWS has received written assurance from the Forest Service that any new forest plan revisions under the new planning regulations will not change the habitat standards adopted in the Forest Plan Amendments for Grizzly Bear Conservation.
- * The Forest Service maintains that if earlier Forest Plans' management direction remains relevant and effective, it may [CS5] be retained under the new planning regulations.

Will there be oil & gas development *INSIDE* the PCA?

- * 97% of the National Forest Lands inside the PCA are *not* available for oil and gas leasing or do not allow surface occupancy.
- * The remaining 3% would be subject to the habitat standards outlined in the Conservation Strategy.
- * This means any oil & gas development would be mitigated by eliminating other developed sites and/or roads within the same management subunit.
- * Since existing developed sites are almost all recreation (campgrounds or trailheads) or management related (ranger stations), such removal of existing facilities is unlikely.

What is the YGCC?

- * The Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Coordinating Committee (YGCC) is the management committee that will replace the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee upon delisting.
- * The YGCC will continue in place to implement the details of the Conservation Strategy in perpetuity since grizzly bears are a conservation reliant species and will require careful coordinated management to remain recovered.
- * The YGCC is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Conservation Strategy, which includes:
 - ensuring that population and habitat data are collected and

evaluated annually to assess the status of the population

- identifying management, research, and financial needs
- coordinating information and education efforts

* The YGCC is composed of representatives from federal, state, local, and tribal agencies.