

This is a public Hearing regarding the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Grizzly Bear Delisting. Please begin to take your seats. We are now on the record.

Good evening and welcome to this public hearing. My name is Lesley Travers and I will be your hearing officer tonight. My role is to conduct this hearing in order that we receive your comments accurately into the record and to allow as many of you as possible any opportunity to comment on the proposed delisting rule for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear. I represent no point of view about grizzly bears or their recovery/delisting. I am not affiliated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and I don't represent them. My purpose here tonight is to help things run smoothly and to allow as many of you as possible an opportunity to comment on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's proposal to remove the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

If you have already signed in, or if you any questions you will find a registration table just outside this room with Fish and Wildlife Service staff to assist you and answer your questions. This is a public hearing under Section 4(b)(5)(E) of the Federal Endangered Species Act, as amended. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Federal Register on March 11, 2016, in volume 81 of the Federal Register, on pages 13174–13227. The comment period ends at the close-of-business on May 10, 2016. After review and consideration of your comments and all other information gathered during this comment period, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service expects to make a final determination on the proposal in 2016.

The purpose of the hearing is to receive your comments on the proposal. Comments on all aspects of the proposal are very important and will be carefully considered. Because of the importance of your comments, it is necessary that we follow certain procedures this evening. If you want to present comments at this hearing, please register at the table outside this room. When you register, indicate any organization that you are representing in your comments today. I will call speakers in the order they are register. Your comments tonight will be recorded and transcribed by a court recorder. Both the transcript and all written comments will be reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in considering its final decision to remove the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife.

A website and mailing address is also available at the information table for the additional wolf information and comments.

Members of the public be given 3 minute slots for the duration of the public hearing. I will check with the court reporter periodically to see if she needs a short break to recover.

Smoking is not permitted in the Holiday Inn. If the crowds are large, we must abide by the Fire Marshall's recommendation for room capacity.

I will call speakers in the order which they are provided to me by the registration desk. When you are called to present your comments, please come forward to the microphone in front. Please begin your presentation by stating your full name, spell it for the record, and indicate if you represent an organization. If you are reading your comments, please take care to read them slowly enough for the court reporter to understand. Also, if possible, please provide the court reporter a written copy of the comments you read. Your comments are being recorded by the reporter to preserve them for the record. Please keep in mind that the reporter will not record any statements from the audience or statements which are made to the audience. Comments must be made directly into the microphone, facing the front of the room.

Instead of presenting oral comments here tonight, or in addition to oral comments, you may submit comments in writing. There are no limits on the length of written comments. Written comments may be submitted to the staff at the registration table, or they may be submitted by one of the following methods:

- (1) Electronically: Go to the Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter FWS–R6–ES–2016–0042, which is the docket number for this rulemaking. Then click on the “Comment Now!” button.
- (2) By hard copy: Submit by U.S. mail or hand-delivery to: Public Comments Processing, Attn: Docket No. FWS–R6–ES–2016–0042, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, MS: BPHC, 5275 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041-3803.

This information is available at the registration table just outside the room.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife will not accept email or faxes and will post all comments on <http://www.regulations.gov>. We appreciate everyone’s cooperation in minimizing distractions. As this is a formal public hearing and testimony only, we cannot allow questions, comments, applause, jeers or demonstrations. The hearing is scheduled to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.

Earlier today at the Holiday Inn, an open house provided an opportunity for the public to ask questions and obtain additional information on the Service’s proposals. This hearing provides you with an opportunity to provide testimony on this same subject. Written comments submitted tonight or by regular mail or electronic mail will receive the same review by Service officials.

I would like to introduce

- Matt Hogan, Deputy Regional Director in the Mountain-Prairie Region; and
- Chris Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator

They are here to just listen to your testimony and are not here to answer questions. They will take a few minutes to briefly summarize the proposed rule. After their rule presentation, I will go over the instructions for tonight's public hearing and ask for testimonies to begin. The hearing will adjourn at 8:30 tonight.

Matt will briefly discuss the proposed rule.

Matt: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, are proposing to remove the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem from the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife. The best scientific and commercial data available indicate that grizzly bears in the GYE are recovered and no longer meet the definition of endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The GYE grizzly bear population is stable, threats are addressed, and a post-delisting monitoring and management framework has been developed. However, additional changes to laws and regulations in the States of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming are necessary for implementation. We expect the States of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming to adopt the necessary statutory and regulatory changes within the next several months. If this proposal is finalized, the grizzly bear would be delisted in the GYE and future management for this species, except in National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges, would be conducted by the appropriate State or Tribal wildlife agencies. We seek information, data, and comments from the public about this proposal including the post-delisting monitoring and management framework.

Are there any questions related to the procedures or ground rules before we begin? If not, we will get started. The first speaker is..... please come to the microphone, state your name and spell it for the record, identify who you represent and begin your comments.

Conditional Statements:

(At any time necessary) At this time we will take a XXX minute break. We are off the record. We will reconvene the hearing now. We are on the record.

We have called all the names of registered speakers. If there is anyone else who would like to speak this evening, please register at the registration table and we will call you to the microphone in a few minutes. We have no additional speakers; however, the hearing will remain open until 8:00 p.m. We will take a recess until we register additional speakers. Please take advantage of this opportunity to visit with the Wildlife staff and managers. We are off the record.

Closing the Hearing: It is now 8:00 p.m. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we appreciate the time and effort you took this evening to present your comments. They been very informative and will be fully considered in coming to a final decision. The hearing is closed. We are off the record.