

United States Department of the Interior



U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY
INTERAGENCY GRIZZLY BEAR STUDY TEAM
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9 September 2013

Andrew T. Knight, Ph.D.
Editor in Chief
Conservation Letters

Dear Dr. Knight,

Please consider the enclosed manuscript titled "*Re-evaluation of Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Population Dynamics Provides Flawed Insights: Response to Doak & Cutler*" for exclusive publication in *Conservation Letters*. In our ms. we demonstrate that in their recent paper in *Conservation Letters* Doak & Cutler used unreasonable assumptions about the sampling process, made mathematical errors, failed to perform appropriate statistical analyses, and used incorrect and inappropriate survival and reproductive senescence functions to support their conclusions, resulting in erroneous interpretations. Consequently, Doak & Cutler's article results in substantial misinformation to the scientific and management communities who depend on this information to make management decisions. Our rebuttal is critical not only to the scientific process but also to ensure the best science is used to inform policy regarding management and conservation of grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Whereas we welcome rigorous scientific review, we also have a professional obligation to rectify incorrect interpretations based on flawed analyses. Therefore, we believe our rebuttal would provide readers of *Conservation Letters* and the broader audience of policy makers and the public with very timely and pertinent information.

We prepared this submission as a *Correspondence* article because we are responding directly to an article that appeared in *Conservation Letters* within the last 6 months. We have used Supplemental Information to document the scientific basis for our rebuttal. However, given the importance of this rebuttal to current policy issues and decision making (as outlined in more detail in my pre-submission inquiry on Sep 4, 2013), I request your consideration to waive the 500-word limit and allow our response as a full-length article. The reason for this request is that Doak and Cutler's paper is:

- 1) being cited as factual and correct by opponents of recent proposed revisions to the demographic recovery criteria for grizzly bears in the Yellowstone ecosystem; and
- 2) being cited as factual and correct to cast doubt on the science behind the grizzly bear conservation effort in Yellowstone.

On behalf of my co-authors, I request that Dr. Dave Mattson (U.S. Geological Survey) not be asked to review our submission. Dr. Mattson's spouse worked for the Natural Resources Defense Council when they funded the work of Doak and Cutler and Dr. Doak actually referred reporters to Dr. Mattson for press quotes on their article. Prior to online availability of the article, Dr. Mattson was quoted by a reporter as saying that current population estimation methods of the IGBST are "essentially worthless." Therefore, we have strong reasons to believe he would not provide an unbiased review.

We suggest as potential reviewers: Mark Boyce (boyce@ualberta.ca), Phil McLoughlin (philip.mcloughlin@usask.ca), or Martyn Obbard (martyn.obbard@ontario.ca).

All persons directly involved with the preparation of this ms. are included in the authorship and approve of its submission, as do their institutions. All authors have reviewed and agreed on the ms. as submitted here. The information in this manuscript has not been published, accepted for publication, or currently under consideration for publication in another journal. Thank you for your careful consideration of this manuscript. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. T. van Manen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Frank T. van Manen, Ph.D.
Supervisory Research Wildlife Biologist