

Duration of the Conservation Strategy

Section 4(g) of the Act explicitly requires the Service to implement a post-delisting monitoring plan, in cooperation with the States, to monitor for no fewer than 5 years the status of all species that have recovered and removed from the List of the Threatened and Endangered Wildlife and Plants (50 CFR 17.11, 17.12). The purpose of the Conservation Strategy, the post-delisting monitoring plan, is to verify that the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear remains secure from risk of extinction after it has been removed from the protections of the Act. We intend to monitor the status of the GYE grizzly bear, in cooperation with the States, the NPS, the FS, and USGS-NRSC, through annual reports for a period of 28 years. At the end of the monitoring period, we will assess if monitoring should be continued for any reason and the Conservation Strategy be modified as appropriate.

The post-delisting monitoring period of 28 years was selected ~~as it represents~~ two times the most recent estimate for generation intervals time (the time it takes a female grizzly bear to replace herself in the population) of 14 years for grizzly bears in the GYE based on the most recent estimate for generation length of 14 years in the 2000s (Kamath et al. 2015). Given the longevity of grizzly bears, demographic responses to management or habitat changes may not immediately manifest themselves or be detectable. Two generation intervals represents a time period during which a complete turnover of the population would have occurred from the time of delisting; any adverse changes in the status of the population under post-delisting management would be evident. Therefore, if the Yellowstone grizzly bear population remains secure for two generations under post-delisting management, it would provide assurance of the effectiveness of the Conservation Strategy.