

Dan Ashe, Director
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C. Street, NW, ROOM 3331
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Director Ashe,

I am writing to urge you to postpone delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population. The proposal to remove Yellowstone grizzly bears from the endangered species list fails to preserve the progress made toward bear recovery. In fact, it will reverse it.

The Greater Yellowstone grizzly bear is one of the United States' most iconic species. Held sacred by native communities for thousands of years in the west, the majestic grizzly has become a treasured symbol of our wild heritage. . Visitors spend millions of dollars in the region every year, a vital part of many local economies, to visit Yellowstone National Park in the hopes of spotting a magnificent grizzly. The loss of the grizzly would be a loss for the entire region, and a disservice to the wildlife professionals, dedicated conservationists and wildlife advocates who have fought to save them.

While grizzlies have made a comeback, their recovery is still a delicate and uncertain effort. Grizzly bears occupy less than 2% of their historic range in the lower 48 and reproduce very slowly, at a rate of only 1-3 cubs every few years. In the Yellowstone region, the growth of the population has stalled since the early 2000s, and there was a 6% decline last year.

The proposed rule leaves Greater Yellowstone grizzlies in the crosshairs, as states have made clear their plans to significantly reduce the population, including through trophy hunts. Management of grizzly bears outside of the national parks would be left completely up to the states, which have historically been hostile to bears and other large carnivores. The current proposal would allow states to exceed maximum bear deaths for years before any review, allowing for potentially irreversible damage, and would allow eradication of bears in some areas. The loss of female grizzlies to a trophy hunters who will not be able to tell the difference between a male and female bear could cause a steep, quick decline before emergency action can be taken. Additionally, the Yellowstone grizzly population is isolated; further limiting their range and numbers could prevent them from ever connecting to other grizzly populations.

People and bears can coexist. We should not let bears slide back towards extinction because of misplaced political hostility towards these magnificent and beloved creatures. Please protect Yellowstone grizzlies until there are adequate plans in place at the state level to and ensure, not endanger their true recovery.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned