

Office of the Governor

May 24, 2012

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Salazar:

Thank you again for your work on the wolf and sage-grouse. These are issues important to both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and to Wyoming. We have continuing opportunities to work together and to illustrate the success of cooperative coordination on many important topics.

Grizzly bears present a unique slate of circumstances and considerations. The gravity of this topic cannot be overemphasized. The situation is severe and costly. There were four human deaths over the past two years in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Damage to private and public property was disturbing and costly. Wyoming's investment in recovery over the past 28 years exceeds \$35 million. The average annual cost to Wyoming for grizzly management approaches \$2 million. This is paid by Wyoming hunting license revenue, not United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) grants and Wyoming does not have jurisdiction for the bears—the USFWS does.

Many knowledgeable people, including grizzly bear scientists within the Department of Interior, believe the species is unquestionably recovered within the Yellowstone Ecosystem. The court ordered relisting of grizzly bears is a public safety concern and a source of frustration. The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee directed a team to evaluate existing data and to address concerns of the 9th Circuit on white bark pine as it relates to grizzly bear populations. This evaluation could take two years. Two years is too long and the cost is too great.

The continued listing of a recovered population of grizzly bears is a threat to people especially recreationalists, hunters, and property owners and it is costly to manage. I would like to work with you to expedite the analysis of this situation. I look forward to hearing from you and working again with you and your Department toward a productive resolution of this important matter.

Sincerely,


Matthew H. Mead
Governor

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