



United States Department of the Interior
FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE



**GRIZZLY BEAR RECOVERY COORDINATOR
UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
UNIVERSITY HALL, ROOM 309
MISSOULA, MT 59812
PHONE (406) 243-4903, FAX (406) 329-3212**

April 24, 2014

Honorable Darwin St. Clair, Jr.
Chairman, Eastern Shoshone
PO Box 538
Fort Washakie, WY 82514

Dear Chairman St. Clair Jr.,

Based on your Tribe's status as a sovereign nation and in keeping with our trust responsibility, please accept this letter as advance notice of our intent to review the status of the grizzly bear (*Ursus arctos horribilis*) in the Greater Yellowstone Area and solicit your participation in the review on a government-to-government basis. We will be conducting this review in response to a recommendation by the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee) to delist the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area from the Federal List of Threatened and Endangered Wildlife. At your request, my staff and I are available to meet with you to learn how your Tribe may be affected by this possible change in status; share information we have about this species and the status review and listing process; and discuss how Tribal information, comments, and expertise may be incorporated into the process.

In accordance with Secretarial Order 3206 (Order) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Native American Policy, we consult with Indian tribes when actions taken under authority of the Act may affect Indian lands, tribal trust resources, or the exercise of American Indian tribal rights, as defined in the Order. We recognize your inherent powers to make and enforce laws and to manage and control your natural resources. It is our goal to support this authority and maintain good working relationships with all Native American Tribes.

In order to encourage meaningful participation during the status review, please accept this letter as our request for information (including traditional ecological knowledge), comments, and any Tribal management plans or regulatory documents pertinent to grizzly bears. We have already invited Tribal representatives to attend an upcoming meeting scheduled with the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team in Bozeman on May 5-6 to discuss mortality management and how it relates to hunting. Your participation would be greatly valued. In keeping with our trust responsibility, we shall protect Tribal information disclosed to or collected by us, to the maximum extent practicable. However, according to the Administrative Procedure Act, information you submit for use in our decision-making process

will be part of our Administrative Record, available for public review and subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

We believe that tribal knowledge is an important consideration when we evaluate the status of a species under the Act. Long-standing tribal stewardship of natural resources gives tribes deep and unique perspectives on information important in status reviews, such as species distribution, ecology and potential threats to the continued existence of a species. We believe that tribal management is an important consideration in the delisting process under the Act.

We recognize the contributions that tribal governments have made to the conservation of the grizzly bear since it was federally listed in the 1975 and the important role those contributions have played. We view active tribal government participation as integral to conserving the grizzly bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area.

If you are aware of others who should also receive this request, either within your Tribe or with another tribe, please forward this letter and/or advise us whom we should contact.

Please call me directly at (406) 243-4903 if you have any questions, or feel free to ask your staff to contact me. I look forward to continuing to work with you on a government-to-government basis to promote the conservation of grizzly bears while ensuring the protection of Tribal lands, trust resources, rights and cultural values.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Servheen', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Chris Servheen
Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator