



Meeteetse Conservation District

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May 10th, 2016

Public Comments Processing

Attn: Docket No. FWS-R6-ES-2016-0042
U.S. Fish and Wildlife
MS: BPHC
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

RE: Removing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Population of Grizzly Bears From the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife

To Whom it May Concern,

Elected by the people of the District at general elections by popular vote, the Meeteetse Conservation District (MCD) is a local government and a governmental subdivision of the state as defined and established by the Wyoming Statutes. The MCD Supervisors are the only locally elected board charged specifically with the responsibility of representing local people of the District on natural resource issues, and the wildlife within the jurisdiction of the District is rightfully considered a natural resource.

The MCD appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the USFW proposed delisting rule for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear Distinct Population Segment (DPS). We hereby incorporate by reference as our own, the comments of the Wyoming Department of Agriculture, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the Park County Board of County Commissioners. In addition, we offer the following general comments.

The jurisdiction of the MCD includes key Grizzly Bear habitat including Primary Conservation Area and crucial army cutworm moth feeding sites. Being located on the periphery of these prime grizzly bear areas means that our constituents interact with the grizzly more and more regularly as they continue to recover and disperse further outside of suitable habitat. Sometimes these interactions involve livestock or hunter conflict, both industries on which our local community and economy heavily rely upon. Sometimes these interactions are positive and pleasant viewing opportunities which also bring visitors to our small town. Whatever the cause or result of the interaction, the fact remains that we have observed an upward trend of grizzly bears in areas where they should not be frequenting. It is obvious and clear, not only through anecdotal observations but also through stringent long term population monitoring efforts by State Wildlife Management agencies that the GYE grizzly DPS has fully and successfully recovered and we very strongly support the removal of the grizzly bear from endangered and threatened status. We also very strongly support the Tri-state grizzly bear management plan as proposed by Wyoming, Idaho and Montana and assert that this plan provides more than adequate measures to ensure that the grizzly population will remain within the agreed upon management

objective and given the track-record of these agencies will most likely not warrant relisting anytime in the near future. We support the delisting of the grizzly, but not the perpetual involvement of the USFW in management of the species beyond the authorizations provided under the Endangered Species Act. It is frequently implied in the proposed rule that USFW will have management authority post delisting and this is not the intent of the ESA. The MCD asserts that the USFW should make the edits suggested outlined in the comments provided by the Wyoming Game and Fish department and allow the state agencies to manage the population from this point forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Steffen C. Cornell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Steffen" and last name "Cornell" clearly distinguishable.

Steffen Cornell
District Manager
Meeteetse Conservation District