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Div. of Policy, Perf. &
MGMT. Programs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Director Dan Ashe

1849 C. Street, NW

Washington, DC 20240

patagonia works

March 3, 2016

Dear Director Dan Ashe,

On behalf of Patagonia Inc., a global outdoor clothing and gear company, we ask for you to rescind your Proposed Rule Removing the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem Population of Grizzly Bears from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife, which would strip critical protections from grizzly bears in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Patagonia has been invested in grizzlies for over three decades and firmly believe in their full recovery and connectivity across the Western U.S. and Canada.

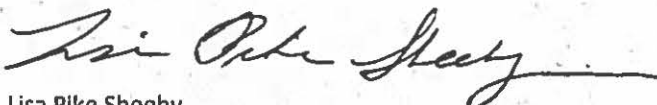
In the outdoor industry, we love the wild. It is where we spend our time, and our lives and livelihoods are enriched by places that still retain at least some of their wild character. Experiencing this wildness requires not only protection of our public lands and particular special places, but attention to the entire interconnected web of species that reside there. But, as our recognition of these facts grows stronger, we are unfortunately seeing more wild places disappear, and our wild species with them. Drastic changes have occurred in our landscape as a result of industry, development, and climate change. And we anticipate these changes to grow exponentially. Now is not the time to gamble with our landscapes and our species – we are lucky that this unique state of nature can still exist in our country, and we realize more and more the value that it brings – for the environment, ourselves, our families, and communities.

In the 40 years grizzlies were protected under the Endangered Species Act, the population rose from 136 to an estimated 720 individuals in the GYE. While this should be celebrated, it should not mean that safeguards for grizzly bears are removed and sport hunts are commenced. This past year, the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee study team reported 59 known and probable grizzly bear mortalities, 55 of which were human caused. How can our GYE grizzly bear population sustain this in addition to added mortalities as a result of state level hunts that would occur upon delisting? Our friends in the scientific community who have spent decades studying these grizzly populations answer this simply: it cannot.

Beyond pressures from hunting, there are a number of reasons why the action to remove protections is premature. There is scientific uncertainty around the effects of climate change on grizzly bears and their food sources. Connectivity remains a major problem; Yellowstone's grizzlies are isolated from their kin in Glacier, a few hundred miles to the north. Moreover, it is likely the GYE population is no longer growing and most likely declining. The GYE population, along with grizzlies to the north, only represent a mere 1-2% of the roughly 100,000 grizzly bears that once roamed the contiguous U.S. in a range that was formerly 100 times larger. To us here at Patagonia, that hardly seems a measure of ultimate success.

We are not the only ones to oppose delisting - 41 tribal nations have passed a formal resolution against your proposal to delist. If the goal of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is to truly "protect endangered and threatened species, and then pursue their recovery," we'd say your work with the GYE grizzly bear population is not yet done. We respectfully ask you to rescind the proposed rule and keep the Yellowstone Grizzlies under the protection of the Endangered Species Act.

Sincerely,



Lisa Pike Sheehy

Vice President of Environmental Activism

Patagonia, Inc.

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