

News Release



**U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Mountain-Prairie Region
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, Colorado 80228**

For Immediate Release
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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Reopens Comment Period on Proposed Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Delisting Rule

Contact: Serena Baker, (303) 236-4588, serena_baker@fws.gov

LAKEWOOD, Colo. – As part of its continued efforts to seek collaboration, transparency, and public participation around the proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear population, today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) announced that it is reopening the public comment period for the Yellowstone grizzly delisting proposal.

This decision comes after two new developments since the original comment period closed.

First, an extensive scientific peer review of the proposal was undertaken by a panel of third-party, independent bear experts. Second, the states of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming have approved responsible protective measures for management of grizzly bears after delisting.

“We are pleased that a majority of the independent experts on the panel agree that the Yellowstone grizzly bear population is biologically recovered and are supportive of the Service’s proposed delisting rule,” said Matt Hogan, Deputy Regional Director of the Service’s Mountain-Prairie Region. “Further, the states have demonstrated their commitment to being responsible stewards of Yellowstone grizzlies by approving a Memorandum of Agreement and by finalizing protective measures to manage human-caused mortality of the bears. We are now encouraging the public to provide their feedback in light of these new developments.”

Today’s announcement opens a 30-day comment period, which ends on **September 24, 2016.**

Comments may be sent electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>. In the Search box, enter Docket Number FWS–R6–ES–2016–0042, and then click on the “Comment Now!” button.

Comments will also be accepted via U.S. mail or hand-delivery to the following address:
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.

Please note that submissions merely supporting or opposing a potential delisting, without supporting documentation, will not be considered in making a determination. Please do not resubmit remarks made during the initial delisting rule comment period, as those original comments will be considered in the determination process.

The Service will post all information received on <http://www.regulations.gov>. Please note that this generally means that we will post any personal information that is provided.

Last month, the Service posted the five peer reviews on the Yellowstone grizzly bear proposed delisting rule. The peer reviewers were selected based on their scientific expertise by an outside, third-party contractor. A majority of these reviewers agreed that the 2016 Draft Conservation Strategy, which is the post-delisting management plan, is sufficient to maintain a recovered grizzly population in the Yellowstone area. These peer reviews and the documents illustrating Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming's post-delisting approach to Yellowstone grizzly bear management are available online at: <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/grizzlybear.php>.

The Yellowstone grizzly bear population has rebounded from as few as 136 bears in 1975 to an estimated 700 or more today. Grizzly bears have more than doubled their range since the mid-1970s and now occupy more than 22,500 square miles of the Yellowstone ecosystem. Stable population numbers for grizzlies for more than a decade also indicate that the Yellowstone ecosystem is at or near its carrying capacity for the bears.

The ESA is an essential tool for conserving the nation's most at-risk wildlife, as well as the land and water on which they depend for habitat. The ESA has saved more than 99 percent of the species listed from the brink of extinction and has served as the critical safety net for wildlife that Congress intended when it passed the law 40 years ago. The Obama Administration has delisted more species due to recovery than any prior administration, including the Oregon chub, Virginia northern flying squirrel and brown pelican.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals, and commitment to public service.

For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/>. Connect with our Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/USFWSMountainPrairie>, follow our tweets at <http://twitter.com/USFWSMtnPrairie>, watch our YouTube Channel at <http://www.youtube.com/usfws> and download photos from our Flickr page at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsmtnpairie/>.