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Cc: [Gregg Losinski \(glosinski@idfg.idaho.gov\)](#)
Subject: FW: Jackson Hole News & Guide 9/16/15
Date: Friday, September 18, 2015 9:43:19 AM
Attachments: [image002.png](#)
[image003.png](#)
[image004.png](#)
[image005.png](#)
[Harmony Szarek Masters Thesis 3.pdf](#)

Hi all, see email from Gregg below and attached Masters Thesis by student Harmony Szarek. The Thesis documents that grizzly bear management experts were contacted to take a survey. We are very interested to know who was contacted.

If you were contacted, please let us know how and by whom you were contacted. Also, please feel free to forward this on to any other folks we might want to hear from. Thanks so much. Ellen



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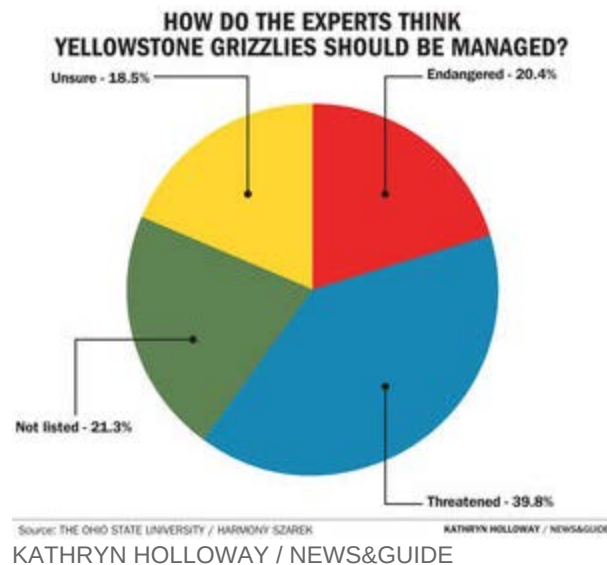
Caring for the land and serving people

From: Losinski, Gregg [<mailto:gregg.losinski@idfg.idaho.gov>]
Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2015 2:38 PM
To: Davis, Ellen -FS
Subject: FW: Jackson Hole News & Guide 9/16/15

Ellen- FYI -How many members are there in IGBC?

Survey: Experts favor federal griz protection

Perceived threats are far-ranging, master's student candidate finds.



POSTED: WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2015 4:30 AM

By Mike Koshmrl | [0 comments](#)

As the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service eyes the end of federal protection for the ecosystem's grizzly bears, an academic study finds that bear experts would prefer that the protections stay in place.

An Ohio State University master's student, Harmony Szarek, found in her thesis that nearly two in three grizzly bear experts familiar with the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem's population recommend that the region's bears either maintain their current "threatened" status or be elevated to a more protected "endangered" level under the Endangered Species Act.

"Of those experts who felt qualified to respond to the item about the appropriate Endangered Species Act listing status for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly," Szarek wrote, "a clear majority indicated that bears should remain listed under the Endangered Species Act."

"Currently, there appears to be political pressure to delist this population segment," she wrote. "However, responses here indicate that a majority of experts believe delisting would be an incorrect decision, or at the least a violation of the precautionary principle."

The grizzly experts' views on the bears' Endangered Species Act status came as a "shock," Ohio State University social science professor Jeremy Bruskotter said.

"We weren't anticipating that at all," said Bruskotter, Szarek's advisor and the study's lead investigator. "We anticipated that at the most it would be a 50-50 split."

"Initially when we saw the data, we thought, 'This can be explained,'" Bruskotter said. "We thought that's probably the people who are least familiar with the situation."

But that wasn't the case. There was "really no variation" in listing views between those who worked closely with Greater Yellowstone grizzlies and those unfamiliar with the population, Bruskotter said.

"The listing status judgment was the same whether or not they had specific knowledge ... or whether they really had no knowledge at all that was specific to that population," he said. Szarek, a student in Ohio State's graduate program in environment and natural resources, also sought to determine how heuristics — decision-making shortcuts — influenced experts'

recommendations for the ecosystem's grizzlies.

Professor Eric Toman also contributed to and advised on the research.

The title of the thesis, which Szarek defended in April, is a mouthful: "Subjectivity in expert decision making: Risk assessment, acceptability, and cognitive heuristics affecting Endangered Species Act listing judgments for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem grizzly bear."

To gather all the opinions, Szarek first pooled names of researchers who had co-authored or authored academic articles about grizzlies or brown bears over a recent 10-year period. She added 90 members of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee and came up with a total of 1,430 "grizzly bear experts."

Those whose email address could be found were contacted, and nearly 600 of the messages sent out were opened. Two hundred and thirty-four people took the survey, providing the data for the analysis.

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