



# United States Department of the Interior

## FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region



IN REPLY REFER TO:  
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Virgil Moore, Director  
Idaho Department of Fish and Game  
P O Box 25  
Boise, ID 83707

Dear Director Moore:

Thank you for your letter of August 28, 2015, concerning the possibility of delisting the grizzly bear from the U.S. Endangered Species Act (ESA). The grizzly bear is currently listed as a threatened species under the ESA. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is in the early stages of reconsidering the status of the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) grizzly bear population under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). At this time, there has been no decision to propose to delist any grizzly bear population in the United States.

As you know, the grizzly bear came under the protection of the ESA in the lower 48 States in 1975 when it was listed as a threatened species. Recovery efforts began in 1981, and since that time, the Yellowstone grizzly bear population has nearly tripled in number and currently occupies approximately twice the geographic area that it did at the time of listing. The scientific data, population surveys, and on-the-ground monitoring show us that Yellowstone grizzly bears are now a healthy, self-sustaining population that has almost completely occupied the suitable habitat available for them in the GYA.

At this time, we have made no decision to move forward with a delisting proposal for GYA grizzly bears. Should such a proposal eventually be considered, all other grizzly bear populations would remain listed under the ESA. Before any such decision is made there will be careful consideration of all aspects of this issue, assurance that careful management will be in place to assure the future health of grizzly populations, and assurance that careful management will be in place for the habitat necessary to maintain healthy populations. If delisting is proposed, our overall goal is to ensure the GYA grizzly bear population is sustainably managed so protection under the ESA would not be necessary.

We believe that close coordination with our fellow federal agencies, State wildlife management agencies, conservation organizations, and the public is important to the success of Yellowstone grizzly bear conservation. Thank you for your interest in the grizzly bear in the Yellowstone ecosystem. If you have questions about the grizzly or its status, please contact Chris Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator at 406-243-4903.

Sincerely,

Director

