



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Washington, D.C. 20240



In Response Reply to:
FWS/AES/PM0052

SEP 25 2015

Mr. Virgil Moore, Director
Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game
P.O. Box 25
Boise, Idaho 83707

Mr. Jeff Hagener, Director
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
P.O. Box 200701
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Mr. Scott Talbot, Director
Wyoming Game and Fish Dept.
5400 Bishop Boulevard
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82006

Dear Directors:

Thank you for your letter dated August 28th regarding our on-going discussions on the potential delisting of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear population.

As you know, since the date of your letter, we have had two additional meetings on this topic. The first occurred between our respective staff as well as staff from the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) on September 9 and 10. The second was the meeting that the four of us had, along with both NPS and USFS, at the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) annual meeting on September 14. Based on those two meetings, I believe we have a mutually understood process that will allow the Service to proceed with a proposed delisting proposal as follows:

- We have agreed to manage to at least within the confidence intervals associated with the long term average grizzly bear population within the GYE. The long term average population is calculated from 2002 to 2014¹.
- We have agreed that Chao2 represents the best available science for determining allowable mortality in order to manage for the long-term average population.
- We have agreed to a revised Demographic Monitoring Area (DMA) of 19,279 square miles. This will be the area in which mortality will be managed. Outside of the DMA, mortalities will not be applied to mortality levels outlined below.

¹ The model averaged Chao2 estimate from 2002 to 2014 is 674 bears with a 95% confidence interval of 600 to 747.

- We have agreed to a revised Demographic Monitoring Area (DMA) of 19,279 square miles. This will be the area in which mortality will be managed. Outside of the DMA, mortalities will not be applied to mortality levels outlined below.
- We have agreed to the following mortality limits for females and males based on the annual results of the model-averaged Chao2 population estimate:
 - Below 600: no discretionary mortality would be allowed unless necessary to address human safety issues
 - Between 600-673: mortality limits will be less than 7.6% for adult females and 15% for adult males
 - At 674: mortality limits will be 7.6% for adult females and 15% for adult males
 - Between 675-747: mortality limits will not exceed 9% for adult females and 20% for adult males
 - Greater than 747: mortality limits will not exceed 10% for adult females and 22% for adult males
- We have established a timeline and associated action items (to include review and agreement by all parties) to both the Recovery Criteria and the Conservation Strategy that we believe will allow us to publish a proposed delisting rule prior to the end of 2015.
- States have agreed to consider additional regulatory mechanisms that will be part of individual state management plans/regulations and referenced in the rule that will implement the Conservation Strategy. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.
- States have agreed to meet annually with the federal land management agencies to discuss managed mortality in and around federal lands.

Like you, we believe that the recovery of the GYE grizzly bear population represents a tremendous conservation success story based on more than 30 years of collaboration between state and federal partners. We look forward to continuing to work with you on this great achievement.

Sincerely,



DIRECTOR