

Questions expected at the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (YES) meeting:

1. Is the FWS preparing a proposed rule to delist as stated by the FWS in the NY Daily News on October 6 (see below)?
2. When will this proposed rule come out?
3. Will there be grizzly bear hunting if the grizzly is delisted?
4. How is FWS going to respond to the tribal objections to delisting because of expected trophy hunting of grizzly bears?
5. What does government-to-government consultation with Tribes mean to FWS?
6. What is the role of the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee in a delisting proposal?
7. Will the Conservation Strategy be revised and if so, will it need to be resigned by all agencies?
8. Has YES approved changes to the Conservation Strategy and are these changes based on the best available science as required by the wording of the Strategy?
9. Does YES have a role in delisting? What happens if some YES members object to delisting?
10. Why are the tribes not signatories to the Conservation Strategy even though they are subcommittee members and manage bears and bear habitat?

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services developing a proposal to remove Yellowstone grizzlies from federal protection

BY **LUCIE COUILLARD** NEW YORK DAILY NEWS October 6, 2015

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is drafting a proposal to remove the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears from federal protection. The federal agency found that the recovery goals of grizzlies in the Wyoming part have been met and adequate regulatory methods will be in place to continue the sustainability of the bear, spokesman Ryan Moehring told the Daily News.

The proposal would only apply to the Yellowstone population of grizzly bears — with other populations of grizzlies in Montana, Idaho and Washington state remaining on the endangered species list, Moehring said.

Grizzly bears were added to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's threatened species list in 1975, when the original population was reduced to about 2%.

Since recovery efforts started in 1981, the grizzly population at Yellowstone has tripled — and the occupied area has doubled, Moehring said.

"This proposal is ultimately something we have been trying to do for 30-plus years," Moehring said.

The proposal will be ready in the next few months, Moehring said. It will then go through a series of scientific evaluations and public hearings before the agency makes a final call on removing Yellowstone population of grizzlies from the endangered species list. If the delisting is approved, the Wildlife Service plans to work closely with the states that make up the so-called Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to ensure the bears are sustainably managed, Moehring said.

"We don't just walk away," Moehring said. "We're committed in the long haul."



JIM URQUHART/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Since the start of the recovery efforts in 1981, the Yellowstone grizzly population has tripled and the occupied area has doubled.

Caroline Byrd, the executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition, said her conservation group will go through the paperwork with a fine-tooth comb when it is submitted.

"It really depends absolutely what the delisting rule looks like," Byrd said. "(We need to) look very, very closely, and very, very hard." If delisted, the management, protection and penalties associated with

the Yellowstone grizzlies would switch from federal rule to state rule, Byrd said.

Right now, the act has forced the three states that house the national park — Wyoming, Montana and Idaho — to work together to protect the bears, Byrd said.

Byrd said she fears that if the bear is delisted, the unification would cease and each state would have to cope separately.

"Whether listed or not, it needs to be managed cooperatively," Byrd said.