

News Release



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

For Immediate Release
March 29, 2016

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to Host Public Meetings on Proposed Yellowstone Grizzly Bear Population Delisting

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LAKEWOOD, Colo. – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) will host two informational meetings and public hearings on the Yellowstone grizzly bear population proposed delisting rule on April 11-12, 2016, in Cody, Wyo. and Bozeman, Mont.

The Service is seeking ~~comments~~ scientific data and commercial information on the proposed delisting rule, a draft supplement to the 1993 Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan for the Yellowstone grizzly bear population, and a draft conservation strategy. These documents will ensure robust monitoring of Yellowstone grizzly bears, balanced management and effective conservation going forward. The Service will consider all comments, with an emphasis on all unique issues raised, prior to making any final decisions. Final documents and associated decisions will be based on the best scientific and commercial information available. Please note that submissions merely supporting or opposing a potential delisting, without supporting documentation, will not be considered in making a determination. Petition signatures are not considered substantive comments.

Comment [SLW1]: Because this is a rulemaking, APA standards apply which give opportunities for comments. We are not limited to scientific data or information. While I don't like to encourage the idea of a vote, I am not sure how much we should discourage it. In the end, people can vote if they want.

Suggested wording tries to thread the needle on this stuff.

Comment [SLW2]: We cannot say this. Every comment is "considered.". It is just considered as a duplicate comment.

Informational meetings will be held from 2-4 p.m., followed by public hearings from 5-8 p.m. both days. Brief presentations will be made by the Service at 2 p.m. and 3 p.m. during the informational meetings, followed by educational poster sessions when you can visit one-on-one with subject matter experts. A presentation will also be made at 5 p.m. during the public hearing, followed by three-minute testimonies from the audience. Note, only the public meeting portion allows for question and answer with the public. The public hearing portion is strictly intended as a forum to accept public comments. You are invited to attend either or both sessions:

April 11, 2016
Holiday Inn
1701 Sheridan Ave.
Cody, Wyoming 82414

April 12, 2016
Holiday Inn
5 E. Baxter Ln.
Bozeman, Montana 59715

The ~~restoration-recovery~~ of the grizzly bear in Montana, Wyoming and Idaho during the last three decades stands as one of America's great conservation successes—a testament to the value of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and the strong partnerships it drives. The Yellowstone grizzly bear population has rebounded from as few as 136 bears in 1975 to an estimated 700 or more today.

Population and habitat monitoring efforts undertaken by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Study Team indicate that grizzly bears have more than doubled their range since the mid-1970s. They now occupy more than 22,500 square miles of the Yellowstone ecosystem, an area larger than the states of New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined. Stable population numbers for grizzlies for more than a decade also indicate that the Yellowstone ecosystem is at or near its carrying capacity for grizzly bears.

To view the complete *Federal Register* notice that published, or learn more about the Yellowstone grizzly bear population, visit <http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie/es/grizzlyBear.php>. You may also submit comments 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. The Service will post all information received on <http://www.regulations.gov>. This may include any personal information that is provided.

Comments will also be accepted via U.S. mail or hand-delivery: 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. Comments are requested by May 10, 2016.

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/usfwsmtprairie/>.

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