



Endangered Species Act Protections for the Grizzly Bear in Lower 48 to Remain in Place

Save the Yellowstone Grizzly vs U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Federal District Court Settlement Justifies Newly Proposed Delisting Rules for True Grizzly Bear Recovery

Public Meetings have been cancelled as 1/27/25. You can still submit your comments online. Comment deadline March 17, 2025. Details below...

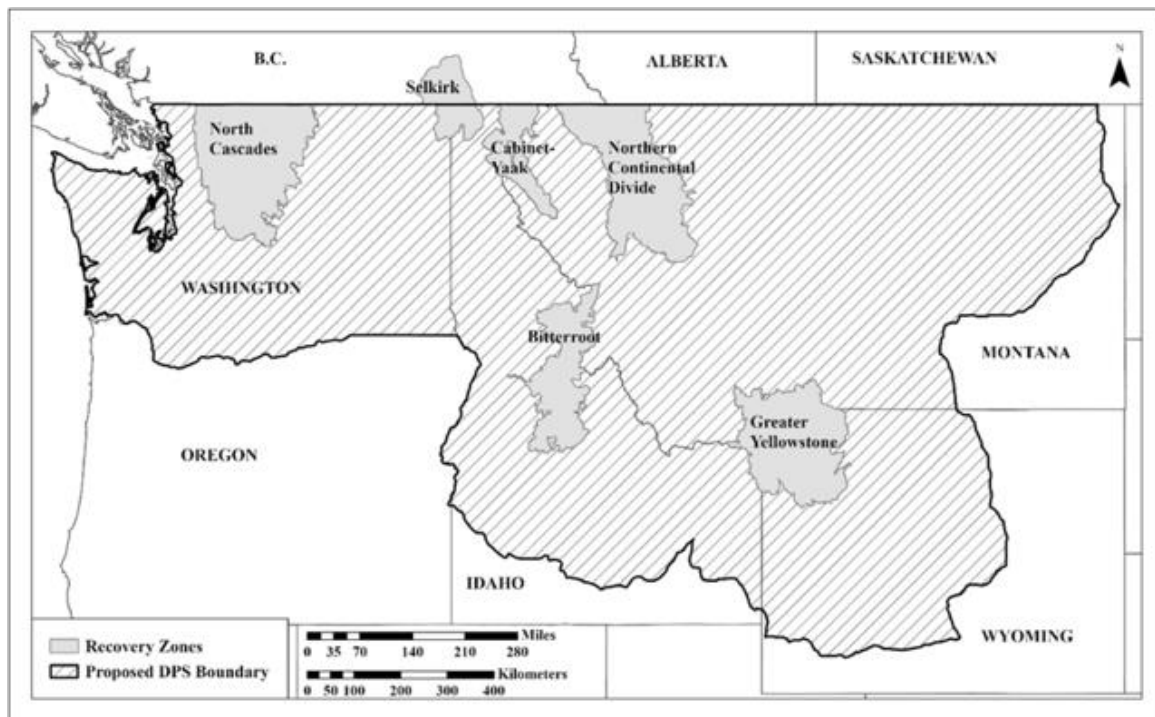
January 26, 2025

Save the Yellowstone Grizzly (STYG) applauds the recent decision by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to deny petitions from western states seeking to delist grizzly bears and permit a trophy hunting season. This decision upholds the grizzly bear's protected status under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for now, marking a significant victory influenced in part by a lawsuit settlement involving STYG.

STYG's lawsuit over the 2021 killing of three grizzly bears in Teton, Idaho, held the state of Idaho accountable under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The settlement ensures that both state and federal wildlife agencies are held responsible for the lethal removal, or "take," of grizzly bears. State-managed killings already account for the largest portion of annual grizzly bear mortalities. As part of the settlement, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) committed to relying on facts and the best available science to propose a comprehensive revision of the grizzly bear delisting rule by January 31, 2026. This settlement played a pivotal role in the recent decision to reject petitions to delist grizzly bears.

The new delisting rule keeps grizzly bears on the endangered species list and now classifies them as one Distinct Population Segment (DPS). This designation combines

all isolated grizzly bear ecosystems into a single population under the ESA. (See map below)



However, the rule introduces concerning changes regarding how "explorer bears" are managed. Instead of blanket protections for all grizzlies in the lower 48 states, protections now only apply to bears within the DPS boundary. Any bear that ventures outside this boundary loses ESA protections.

Additionally, the rule grants more authority to states and ranchers to kill grizzlies without consulting the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Livestock depredation alone would justify killing a grizzly, with no requirement to first attempt conflict resolution or relocation.

Moreover, grizzlies reintroduced to areas like North Cascades National Park or the Bitterroot Ecosystem are classified as "non-essential" and "experimental." As a result, these bears are not protected under the ESA, further limiting their chances of survival and recovery in these regions.

Grizzly bears continue to face numerous threats to achieving full recovery, with climate change being the most significant. Unfortunately, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) does not currently recognize climate change as a threat to the species. For grizzlies to thrive, it is essential to protect all critical habitats, including through legislation like the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act.

Additionally, fostering increased human tolerance through education and the establishment of bear-smart communities is vital. Connectivity between ecosystems must be prioritized, with safe wildlife crossings and ample room for grizzlies to roam freely wherever they choose to live as grizzlies. Only through these comprehensive efforts can grizzly bears have a secure and sustainable future.

Simply put, every grizzly bear in the lower 48 should have full protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), no matter where they are. What defines suitable habitat for a grizzly? Wherever a grizzly chooses to be. Grizzlies need room to roam—unrestricted and protected.

Talking Points

- Thank the USFWS for keeping the grizzly bear on the endangered species list.
- Climate change is affecting grizzly bears now and into the foreseeable future.
- No trophy hunting of grizzly bears ever
- Recreation is having a significant impact on grizzly bears as well as motorized activity. Human activity of all kinds displaces bears.
- Non-lethal methods of dealing with explorer bears instead of just issuing kill permits.
- Ongoing threats: mining, logging, loss of habitat, development
- Explorer bears are not protected enough. All grizzly bears no matter where they are should have full ESA protections.
- All historical grizzly bear range is important habitat.
- Encourage educational initiatives and bear smart communities
- Trappers should be held accountable if they trap a grizzly.
- Encourage the banning of black bear baiting in grizzly country.
- Cancel livestock allotments in the DPS area
- Protect all critical habitat like that proposed in the Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act
- Encourage education initiatives and bear smart communities in honor of 399.
- Ask them to plan ahead and manage for the return of the Salmon
- Ask for more tribal involvement. Honor their sacred relationship to the grizzly bear by acknowledging the signing of the historic Piikani Treaty. The Piikani Treaty (The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration) is a historic treaty, signed by over 130 First Nations and Tribes across North America, in October 2016, to pledge their dedication to protecting the grizzly bear.

Cancelled as of 1/26/25 - Public Meetings In-person and Virtual

Tuesday, January 28, 2025: Missoula, MT at the Hilton Garden Inn, 3720 N Reserve St, Information meeting 3pm-5pm, public hearing 6pm-8pm (Mountain Time)

Wednesday, January 29: Coeur d'Alene, ID at the Kootenai County Fairgrounds, 4056 N. Government Way, Building 19, Information meeting 3pm-5pm, public hearing 6pm-8pm (Pacific Time)

Thursday, January 30: Virtual meeting, check back for link in coming days, 6pm-8pm (Mountain Time) <https://www.fws.gov/grizzlyrulemaking>

Monday, February 10: Cody, WY at the Holiday Inn, 1701 Sheridan Ave, Information meeting 3pm-5pm, public hearing 6pm-8pm (Mountain Time)

Submit Public Comments Online

Go to <https://www.regulations.gov/docket/FWS-R6-ES-2024-0186>

Docket number: FWS-R6-ES-2024-0186

Click " Open for Comments" button

Comment deadline March 17, 2025

More Information

Grizzly Bear Lower 48 Rulemaking

<https://www.fws.gov/grizzlyrulemaking>

USFWS Proposes Update to Grizzly Bear ESA Listing & Management

<https://www.fws.gov/press-release/2025-01/usfws-proposes-update-grizzly-bear-esa-listing-management>

Grizzly Bear Listing on the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife With a Revised Section 4(d) Rule, Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ([Download the PDF](#))

Save the Yellowstone Grizzly vs United States Fish & Wildlife Service Complaint and Request for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief, August 14, 2023 ([Download the PDF](#))

Save the Yellowstone Grizzly vs United States Fish & Wildlife Service Stipulation of Dismissal & Settlement Agreement, February 22, 2024 ([Download the PDF](#))

Doug Peacock Calls Out Loss Of Mother Griz And Cubs In Idaho, Mountain Journal, December 8, 2022 <https://mountainjournal.org/doug-peacock-calls-attention-to-death-of-grizzly-bear-mother-and-cubs>

Grizzly advocacy group sues Idaho, feds over Tetonia bears' killing, Jackson Hole News & Guide, October 11, 2023
https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/grizzly-advocacy-group-sues-idaho-feds-over-tetonia-bears-killing/article_3cf33674-67be-11ee-9d38-1f3b7eb2d94c.html

End to grizzly bear lawsuit in Idaho raises questions about delisting, Boise State Public Radio, May 1, 2024
https://www.jhnewsandguide.com/news/environmental/grizzly-advocacy-group-sues-idaho-feds-over-tetonia-bears-killing/article_3cf33674-67be-11ee-9d38-1f3b7eb2d94c.html

Questions? Email Dan Sullivan at dan@savetheyellowstonegrizzly.org