

**Meeting Date:** November 17, 2016

**Agenda Item No. 13**

**Agenda Item:** Grizzly Bear Delisting Update

**Bureau Chief Approval:** 

**Prepared by:** Jeff Gould

**Background:**

On March 3, 2016, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) issued the proposed rule to identify the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE) grizzly bear a Distinct Population Segment and remove this population from the List of Threatened or Endangered Species. USFWS received peer review input on the draft rule.

Since publication of the proposed rule, the Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming Fish and Game Commissions/Departments have finalized a tri-state memorandum of understanding regarding the allocation of discretionary mortality for the GYE grizzly population after delisting. Each state has also adopted additional enforceable measures--through regulation, rule or proclamation--to limit the take of GYE grizzly bear.

The States, National Park Service, USGS, federal land management agencies, and USFWS are updating the 2007 Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area (CS). This interagency agreement describes the management and monitoring actions for the GYE grizzly bear population and its habitat that will apply after delisting.

It is the goal of the agencies implementing the CS to maintain a recovered GYE grizzly bear population within the area called the Demographic Monitoring Area (attached) in accordance with established population and habitat-based Recovery Criteria.

USFWS has stated it will not finalize a delisting rule until the CS is formally updated.

**Next steps:**

- The Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (YES) will meet early November to discuss and vote on the final CS update.
- Once approved by YES, the document is presented to 3 State Fish and Game Directors, 3 Regional Foresters, 3 State BLM Directors, NPS Director, Chief Biologist USGS, and 2 USFWS Regional Directors for signature. The parties hope to have the 2016 Conservation Strategy finalized and signed by November 17, 2016.
- USFWS prepares the final delisting rule with comments addressing public input received during the 2 comment periods.

**Statutory Authority and/or Policy Issues:**

After delisting, state agencies will be fully responsible for GYE grizzly bear management outside of national park lands.

**Public Involvement Process:**

Federal administrative process applies to delisting actions under the Endangered Species Act. USFWS provided an opportunity for public comment on the draft delisting rule, and provided another opportunity for public comment after completing a peer review process and circulating additional information on regulatory mechanisms from the participating States.

**Justification:**

The population is biologically recovered and threats to the population are sufficiently addressed. The agencies have developed a post-delisting monitoring and management framework.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This is an information update

**Action Requested:**

N/A

