



GUARD THE GRIZZLY BEAR

campaign



Delisting the Yellowstone Grizzly

For 30 years the Endangered Species Act has worked to bring the Yellowstone grizzly bear back from the brink of extinction and has been the key in conserving this vital part of America's natural heritage. Unfortunately, the Bush administration has proposed removing federal protections for the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Removing these protections will put the last remnants of wild places grizzlies need to fully recover and raise their young, at risk from irresponsible oil drilling, unsustainable logging and sprawling development. These are the same wild places Americans love to camp, hike, hunt and fish.

CONSIDER THESE FACTS:

As a result of past development, grizzly bear habitat in Greater Yellowstone is in worse shape now than in 1975 when the grizzly was first listed. Trends for the future are not much better:

Sprawl

- Private lands comprising important bear habitat are being developed at a run-away pace. Much of what appears to be open space today has already been subdivided and approved for development in the future. This trend severely limits the ability of grizzlies to access key food sources, further isolates Yellowstone bears from other bear populations, and increases the potential for grizzly-human conflicts.

Logging and Road-building

- Logging and the roads associated with this activity, displaces grizzlies from areas that could provide key habitat and food sources. What was once secure habitat is transformed into a network of roads bringing people and bears into closer contact, often resulting in conflict for which bears are killed.

Motorized Recreation

- Escalating use of public lands by all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), combined with federal agencies' failure to enforce road closures, continue to reduce the habitat available for this wilderness-dependent species.

Oil and Gas

- Pipelines, excessive road networks, and well-pad



Photo courtesy of NPS

construction destroy grizzly bear habitat, create air and water pollution and forever compromise the wild character of the landscape.

Lack of Funding

- Managing the Yellowstone grizzly after delisting will cost the Forest Service, Wyoming, Montana and Idaho an estimated \$3.4 million dollars per year - that's over a million dollars per year **more** than current funding levels. In this time of fiscal uncertainty, no dedicated source of funding for grizzly bear management by state and federal agencies has been established.

While Yellowstone grizzly bears have slowly begun to increase in numbers and reoccupy lands where they had been historically abundant, the real question is whether there is an adequate amount of protected habitat and will people allow them to expand beyond the Parks borders. As bears move out of the small island within Yellowstone they are bumping into people, roads, homes, gardens, pets, livestock and garbage – all of which provide an opportunity for conflicts with people. This is a concern for conservation groups, wildlife managers and residents living in these areas. How people choose to respond to this expansion will greatly dictate the future success of grizzly bear recovery.

To compound the problem, the four key foods that comprise over 80% of the Yellowstone grizzlies diet, are threatened by exotic species, disease and climate change. These



Photo courtesy of NPS

four foods are: Whitebark Pine Seeds, Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, Ungulates (hooved animals like bison) and Army Cutworm moths.

If any one of these foods disappears from the Yellowstone area, where bears will be able to survive and find alternative native foods is unknown and unprotected. For instance, when whitebark pine seed are not available to grizzlies due to drought or loss of stands from disease, bears search out alternative foods. They are often drawn into residential areas outside the park where almost all conflicts and grizzly bear deaths occur.

By reducing the number of grizzly bears that die because of conflicts with people, bears are given a better chance of long-term survival. But without the wildlands bears need to support a viable population, bears will continue to move into human areas as their habitat and the foods they rely on are destroyed.

Restoring grizzly bear numbers to their current levels has taken 30 years and tremendous public investment. Removing federal protections for the bear right now is far too risky. We are just beginning to see a return on our investment. We should not gamble with the progress America has made in restoring the Yellowstone grizzly bear.

Given the hard work the American people have invested in restoring the grizzly, there must be an insurance plan to make sure the success we've begun to see endures. Specific steps to achieve true recovery are:

- Establish a stable source of funding for grizzly bear management and habitat conservation.
- Expand efforts to reduce bear-human conflicts
- Improve important but degraded grizzly bear habitat
- Protect remaining wild lands
- Protect lands that connect Yellowstone grizzlies to other grizzly populations further north

We need to be humble about the uncertainties involved in recovering the grizzly bear in Yellowstone. Removing the grizzly from the Endangered Species List would be a huge gamble on such a unique species.

The Sierra Club's Campaign to Guard the Grizzly is aimed at protecting the threatened species and its habitat in the lower 48 United States and Canada. The Sierra Club, which was founded more than a century ago by John Muir, is America's oldest, largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization.