

Wyoming Grizzly Bear LTE Guide

Brief Background

Though grizzly bears in the Yellowstone region have made a remarkable comeback over the past several decades, they remain vulnerable. Changing food sources, isolation from other grizzly populations, increasing human development, and entrenched anti-carnivore sentiment from state wildlife management agencies all threaten grizzly bears in both the short and long term. Additionally, significant questions exist about the current status and trend of the Yellowstone grizzly population; the growth rate of the population has flattened and may even be in decline.

Despite these threats, we expect the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to propose removing Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections for Yellowstone grizzly bears this year. Federal agencies have been effective in promoting their narrative that bears are fine, they are recovered, and it's time to hand management over to the states.

Given the serious questions about the current status and trend of the Yellowstone grizzly population and implications of state management in a post-delisting world, it is critical to foster a broad public debate about the wisdom of removing federal protections at this time for such an iconic, keystone species, and whether true recovery has in fact been attained.

Your letters-to-the-editor will be crucial in engaging the community in the delisting dialogue.

Objective

Over the next few months, we want to elevate our message in the media and public eye. While we want to react to news articles and broaden the public dialogue around grizzly delisting, **we also want to be proactive** and discuss concerns about delisting and what real grizzly bear recovery looks like.

Primary Messages

We want to focus on four primary messages:

- **Grizzly bears are an essential piece of the American West, a wildlife icon that has been integral to the culture and ecology of the Yellowstone region for centuries.**
 - There is no more beautiful or powerful symbol of our wild heritage than the grizzly bear.
 - Because grizzlies need large swaths of wild land to survive, protecting habitat for them also means protecting habitat for many other species. And since they are at the top of the food chain, they keep the whole natural system in balance.
 - Each year visitors spend millions of dollars for the chance to see a grizzly in the wild
- **Thanks to the ESA , grizzly bears are making a remarkable comeback but are still vulnerable**

- After two centuries of decline, grizzly bears are just now beginning to rebound in the northern Rocky Mountains and around Yellowstone, occupying less than 2% of their historic range.
- Grizzly bears reproduce much more slowly than most mammals, which means their populations grow very slowly. Grizzlies have young only every 3 years, usually just 1-2 cubs, and studies show an increasing number are not surviving to adulthood.
- The growth rate of the Yellowstone grizzly population has flattened, and may even be declining
- Yellowstone bears have lost two of their four traditional high-protein foods: whitebark pine seeds and cutthroat trout. As a result, they are turning more to meat such as elk, bison and livestock, which leads to increased conflicts with ranchers and hunters.
- Yellowstone grizzly bears remain geographically isolated from other grizzly populations
- **Grizzly bears must make a full recovery so they don't slide back into extinction**
 - Isolated populations must be connected so that bears can move freely back and forth to find food and mates. States need to commit to a stable to increasing grizzly population, and shift away from the current anti-carnivore bias
 - True recovery requires positive trends in population over time, not just an estimate of how many bears exist in the ecosystem now
- **People and bears can coexist**
 - Bear spray, proper storage of human foods, carcasses and other attractants, and education about bear behavior can reduce human-bear conflicts
 - Range riders, electric fencing, guard dogs, carcass management and other methods can reduce conflicts between livestock and bears

Additionally, many see grizzly bears in a spiritual way. The most compelling LTEs also emphasize a personal connection to this magnificent animal, to promote positive grizzly bear messaging.

Tips on Writing

- Keep your letter clear and concise. It must be under the word count required by the paper to be considered for publication.
- Keep the letter focused on one angle.
- Briefly provide context to the issue.
- Your LTE should be personal, so that you can connect with the reader. Additionally, this will allow for the LTEs to sound unique and compelling.

Submitting your LTE

Submit your LTE to your local newspaper. Please keep within the word limit, as editors may cut and edit your submission to make it fit or reject it altogether if it is too long.

- Jackson Hole News and Guide—400 words. Submit [here](#). Call (307) 733-2047.
- Casper Star Tribune—350 words. Submit [here](#), email letters@trib.com, or mail to Casper Star-Tribune, Letters Editor, 170 Star Lane, Casper WY, 82604
- Cody Enterprise

- Wyoming Tribune Eagle (Cheyenne)—Submit [here](#). Call 307-634-3361.
- Laramie Boomerang—350 words. Submit [here](#) or email news@laramieboomerang.com. Call (307) 742-2176.
- The Ranger (Fremont County)—
- Lovell Chronicle—
- Powell Tribune—Email tom@powelltribune.com. Call (307) 754-2221.
- Sheridan Press—400 words. Submit [here](#). Call (307) 672-2431.

You should hear back from the newspaper about your submission; if after a few days you don't hear anything, give the paper a call and check in on the status of your submission.