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Newsletter and Blog

Featuring updates on grizzly bear conservation activities,
and the latest *Grizzly Times* Blog
from *Louisa Willcox*
Executive Director of *Grizzly Times*.
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Hello Friends of Grizzly Bears,

THE LATEST BLOG (attached below):

“Brandy” Brandborg: Keeper of the Flame for Wilderness

“Brandy” Brandborg is the last living architect of the 1964 Wilderness Act. He is an amazing, courageous man who has inspired many environmental advocates, including yours truly. <https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2018/01/11/Brandy-Brandborg-Keeper-of-the-Flame-for-Wilderness>

TAKE ACTION: Tell Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) that Draft Habitat-Based Recovery Criteria (HBRC) are Inadequate to Protect Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (NCDE) Grizzlies.

In December, FWS released a draft plan to protect NCDE grizzly bears when Endangered Species protections are removed, perhaps later this year. These “Habitat-Based Recovery Criteria” fall far short of what is needed to sustain this population, which drives the recovery of all threatened grizzlies in the Northern Rockies. Please send a comment letter to FWS by Jan 26 (midnight), and urge them to redouble protection for a population that has been called “Heart of the Grizzly Nation.”

Address: <https://www.regulations.gov/searchResults?rpp=25&po=0&s=FWS-R6-ES-2017-0057&fp=true&ns=true>

Some points you can raise:

- The Habitat-Based Recovery Criteria (HBRC) apply to less than 50% of the area where grizzly bears live.
- As the largest remaining population in the lower-48 states, NCDE grizzlies provide the best source for connecting grizzlies elsewhere in the lower-48 states; but the HBRC fail to protect lands that are critical to ensuring connections between the NCDE and Cabinet Yaak, Yellowstone and Selway Bitterroot grizzlies.
- HBRC do not reflect current habitat conditions and do not account for mounting human population and development, especially in the Flathead Valley.
- The HBRC drops the tried-and-true roads standards, called “Amendment 19,” in favor of weaker -- and scientifically unfounded -- standards that allow more roading and development.
- The HBRC fail to take into account the very real consequences of a rapidly changing climate, which is likely to harm key berries that NCDE grizzlies rely on.

IN THE NEWS

Greater Yellowstone delisting litigation. Last Monday, the last day of the comment period on Yellowstone grizzly bears, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and four conservation groups, represented by Earthjustice,

requested summary judgment from the U.S. District Court in Missoula, in their lawsuit over the removal of Endangered Species Act protections from the Yellowstone grizzly bears.

https://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/groups-ask-court-to-invalidate-yellowstone-grizzly-delisting/article_9678dcea-e2a7-58c4-a7a8-9351165c3af0.html

Successful Underpasses. This week, the Great Falls Tribune ran a nice piece on the use by wildlife, including grizzlies, of underpasses on Highway 200 near Lincoln. The pictures, taken by remote cameras, vividly depict this successful effort to reconnect habitat:

<http://www.greatfallstribune.com/story/news/2018/01/11/bighorn-sheep-grizzly-bears-cameras-capture-wildlife-using-underpasses-andhill-cranes-wildlife-highw/1024603001/>

Roads Kill Griz. North of the 49th, University of Alberta scientist Clayton Lamb and other coauthors published an article on the impact of roads on grizzly bears, in a study done in BC. Although the story has gotten a lot of traction, there is really nothing new here: the harm of roads on grizzly bears has been well documented.

Attached is a summary by David Mattson on the science on roads/grizzly relationships about 25 years ago, same stuff: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/risk-of-bear-mortality-study-finds-people-not-roads-bug-grizzlies-the-most>

Politics Meddle in Interior. Finally, in a troubling turn of events, DOI Secretary Ryan Zinke recently announced that the department is limiting funding to research that is in lockstep with the Trump agenda: <https://www.dailykos.com/stories/2018/1/10/1731167/-The-Interior-Department-clamps-down-on-science-only-projects-that-fit-Trump-s-priorities-allowed>

And just to make matters worse, last week Zinke also announced he is setting up a Hunting and Shooting Sports Conservation Council, that will ensure that NRA and Safari Club types have even greater influence on the agency's decisions. So much for protecting the broader public trust:

<https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/secretary-zinke-creates-new-council-hunting-and-shooting-sports-conservation>

For the bears,

Louisa