

Synopsis of Wyoming Chapter and National Sierra Club work to save grizzly bears

As the first phase of the public comment period on Yellowstone grizzly delisting comes to a close this week, this brief update summarizes the high points of all our Sierra Club activities and outreach, at all levels of the Club. As a result of our work collectively, literally hundreds of thousands of people nationwide have spoken up for true recovery of Yellowstone's iconic grizzly bears.

Throughout 2015, the campaign successfully used **LTEs, reporter memos, op-eds and events** to promote an alternative narrative focused on the value of bears and the steps needed for true recovery, to lay the groundwork for our opposition and position the Sierra Club as a thought leader on the issue. When delisting first surfaced many of the conservation organizations in the region were leaning towards supporting the USFWS, but as the process has pushed on, with the Sierra Club holding the line on supporting the bears, the drumbeat opposed to delisting steadily grew.

In May National Geographic took the unprecedented step of dedicating an [entire issue](#) to the greater Yellowstone region demonstrating the power of this landscape, along with its human and wild residents, to capture America's attention.

Starting last fall, we partnered with internationally-acclaimed photographer Thomas Mangelsen and award-winning author Todd Wilkinson to spread the message both inside and outside the region through press around their recently-released "Grizzlies of Pilgrim Creek" book. We organized seven **events** with Tom and Todd in MT, UT and CA; more than 1,500 people attended. (Montana coverage: the [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#), the [Helena Independent Record](#), and the [Billings Gazette](#)). **Tabling** at these and other events including a Wild and Scenic Film Festival in Bozeman MT yielded over 600 postcards to the FWS. Several **petition captains** brought in another 100 postcards. From these events, we also launched a "**Grizzly Guardians**" **listserv** to keep more than 100 key activists informed and moving up the engagement ladder; with the help of our **Grizzly LTE Guide**, our Guardians placed several dozen [LTEs](#) in local outlets and helped to begin shifting the public debate around delisting. We also organized a **radio tour** with grizzly scientist Dr. David Mattson that reached 225,000 people.

When the delisting proposal came from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) in early March, our alternative narrative became the base for our messaging to show how the proposal falls short. We issued a press statement in response to the delisting proposal and sent broll to local TV

stations; the Sierra Club was featured in more than 40 news stories on the proposal, including [USA Today](#), [McClatchy](#), [Christian Science Monitor](#), [AP Newsbreak](#), and Montana This Morning, the CBS morning show. A [Public News Service](#) story on the development was picked up by 162 stations, reaching an audience of more than 700,000.

After that we ramped up our organizing and communication work even more during the 60-day comment period, and took advantage of every opportunity to present our concerns-- sending press statements around public hearings on Wyoming's management plan, FWS public hearings and other agency meetings on the delisting issue.

We organized several additional events and worked hard to turn people out for the FWS and state hearings on the delisting proposal:

- April- Dr. David Mattson gave a presentation in Bozeman to **200 people**, a few days prior to the federal hearing.
 - [MPR](#) covered the event
- April- **Over 100 people** attended the USFWS public hearing in **Bozeman, MT**. The vast majority of the more than **50 people** who testified spoke in favor of true grizzly recovery and opposed the delisting proposal. Campaign Leadership Team member Mark Hufstetler spoke on behalf of the Sierra Club.
 - The [Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#) and [KBZK](#) TV included the Sierra Club's position in their coverage
- April- Campaign Leadership Team member Leslie Patten testified as a landowner in grizzly country who wants bears on the landscape, and Senior Campaign Representative Bonnie Rice spoke for the Sierra Club at the USFWS public hearing in **Cody, WY**.
 - [Cody Enterprise](#)
- April- **60 people** in the **Paradise Valley** gathered for a presentation with Dr. Mattson, journalist Todd Wilkinson, and activist Doug Peacock that the campaign organized with our partner the Park County Environmental Council.
- April- With the help of our Federal Policy Team, the campaign co-sponsored a successful congressional briefing in DC, *Vital Ground: Grizzlies, Wolves and the Endangered Species Act*. Congressional champions and others spoke to the crowd of

more than 70 people, supporting continued protections for grizzly bears, co-existence measures for wolves, and a strong defense of the Endangered Species Act.

- May- **7 people** gathered in the small gateway community of **Red Lodge** for a discussion on the potential removal of endangered species act protections and learned how to get involved.

Our **Grizzly Addup campaign** really took off during the comment period, garnering over 90,000 signatures on our letter to FWS; a mention in the Insider the week before the comment period closed pushed us over the 100,000 mark and we ended with 120,000 signatures! Seventeen targeted or national social posts reached approximately 967,000 people since November of last year.

In the last week of the public comment period, the campaign also ramped up pressure on the Obama administration to shift course on the proposed grizzly delisting by helping to deliver a **letter** (organized by Doug Peacock) to key Administration staffers from a group of esteemed scientists, writers and actors (including E.O. Wilson, Jane Goodall, Jeff Bridges, Ted Turner, Patagonia founder Yvon Chouinard, and former Yellowstone National Park Superintendent Michael Finley, among others) raising concerns about the delisting proposal. [Read the letter.](#) We sent out a press advisory and helped generate stories on the letter, including on [Montana Public Radio](#) and through [Dan Chu's blog](#).

We pitched major newspaper **editorial boards** and rounded out the comment period with a **press teleconference** this week which was covered by the [Bozeman Chronicle](#), [Cody Enterprise](#) and [Montana On The Ground](#), among others. The story aired on [WY and MT public radio](#) and reached 300,000 people.

We've garnered significant earned media throughout the campaign, here are a few more in addition to what's listed above:

[Powell Tribune](#)
[Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)
[Wyofile](#)
[Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)
[Christian Science Monitor](#).
[Wyofile](#)
[Cody Enterprise](#)
[Daily Beast](#)
[Jackson Hole News and Guide](#)
[Powell Tribune](#),
[Public News Service](#)
[KULR-TV](#)
[Bozeman Daily Chronicle](#)
[Reuters](#)

And as a little icing on the cake High Country News put the issue on their cover this week.

Norm Bishop
Billings Gazette, [April 24, 2015](#)

Pat Simmons
Bozeman Chronicle, [May 5, 2015](#)

Clint Nagel
Billings Gazette, [April 16, 2015](#)
Bozeman Chronicle, [November 8, 2015](#)

Sara Johnson
Bozeman Chronicle, [May 22, 2015](#)
Bozeman Chronicle, [December 18, 2015](#)

Kristine Ellingsen
Bozeman Chronicle, [December 23, 2015](#)

Nina Baker
Bozeman Chronicle, [December 16, 2015](#)
Missoulian, [December 14, 2015](#)

Leslie Patten
Billings Gazette, [March 29, 2015](#)

Jim Laybourn
Jackson Hole News and Guide, [July 29, 2015](#)
Billings Gazette, [August 2, 2015](#)
Cody Enterprise, [August 6, 2015](#)

Virginia Halloran
Jackson Hole News and Guide, [September 16, 2015](#)

Franz Camenzind
Jackson Hole News and Guide, [April 8, 2015](#)
Casper Star Tribune, [April 7, 2015](#)
Billings Gazette, [April 10, 2015](#)

Tim Wenthe
Bozeman Chronicle, [January 3, 2015](#)

Gina Conklin
The Helena Independent Record, [March 15, 2016](#)

[Link to Wyoming Game and Fish Department draft Grizzly Bear Management Plan](#)

Other important articles regarding grizzly bear delisting:

[Wyoming Prepares for Grizzly Bear Delisting: Wyoming News Service Article, 2016-04-06](#)

[Griz Plan Review: Not Enough Facts - Jackson Hole News and Guide Article, 2016-04-06](#)

[March 1, 2016 Wyofile article: On the Cusp of Delisting, Grizzly Hunting a Worry](#)

[SCWC Conservation Director, Lloyd Dorsey's comments during the Jackson WGFD Grizzly Management Plan Public Meetings](#)