

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

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FOREST PLAN AMENDMENT FOR GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT CONSERVATION FOR THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA NATIONAL FORESTS

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

BEAVERHEAD-DEERLODGE NATIONAL FOREST
BRIDGER-TETON NATIONAL FOREST
CARIBOU-TARGHEE NATIONAL FOREST
CUSTER NATIONAL FOREST
GALLATIN NATIONAL FOREST
SHOSHONE NATIONAL FOREST

COUNTIES IN IDAHO

BEAR LAKE, BONNEVILLE, CARIBOU, CLARK, FRANKLIN, FREMONT, MADISON, AND TETON

COUNTIES IN MONTANA

BEAVERHEAD, CARBON, GALLATIN, MADISON, PARK, STILLWATER, AND SWEET GRASS

COUNTIES IN WYOMING

FREMONT, HOT SPRINGS, LINCOLN, PARK, SUBLETTE, AND TETON



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Abstract: The Forest Service proposes to amend six forest plans on six Greater Yellowstone Area national forests (Beaverhead-Deerlodge, Bridger-Teton, Caribou-Targhee, Custer, Gallatin, and Shoshone National Forests) to incorporate the habitat standards and other relevant provisions in the Final Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Greater Yellowstone Area. Forest plans proposed to be amended are the 1986 Beaverhead Forest Plan, the 1990 Bridger-Teton National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, the 1997 Revised Forest Plan—Targhee National Forest, the 1987 Custer National Forest and Grasslands Land and Resource Management Plan, the 1987 Gallatin National Forest Plan, and the 1986 Shoshone National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan. The purpose and need is to ensure conservation of habitat to sustain the recovered grizzly bear population, update the management and monitoring of grizzly bear habitat, provide consistency among Greater Yellowstone Area national forests in managing grizzly bear habitat, and ensure the adequacy of regulatory mechanisms for grizzly bear habitat protection upon delisting as identified in the Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan. Five alternatives and their environmental effects are presented: Alternative 1 is the no action alternative (the IGBC Guidelines and current forest plans would continue to guide management of grizzly bear habitat in the recovery zone or Primary Conservation Area [PCA]); Alternative 2 is the proposed action (habitat standards and other relevant provisions in the Conservation Strategy would guide management of grizzly bear habitat in the PCA); Alternative 3 (more strict standards would guide management of grizzly bear habitat in the PCA); and Alternative 4 (same as Alternative 3 inside the PCA and increases the size of the area beyond the PCA where management direction would favor grizzly bears with more restrictive standards). Alternative 2-Modified was developed between the draft and final environmental impact statements in response to public comments and is the preferred alternative. Alternative 2-Modified adds additional direction and guidance for management of grizzly bear habitat inside and outside the PCA. The selected alternative, which will be described in a Record of Decision, would go into effect when all partner agencies have signed the Conservation Strategy, the Final Rule delisting the Yellowstone grizzly bear population has been published in the Federal Register, and the Record of Decision has been signed for the Forest Plan Amendment for Grizzly Bear Habitat Conservation for the Greater Yellowstone National Forests. If the grizzly bear is not delisted, existing forest plan direction for grizzly bears would remain in place.

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