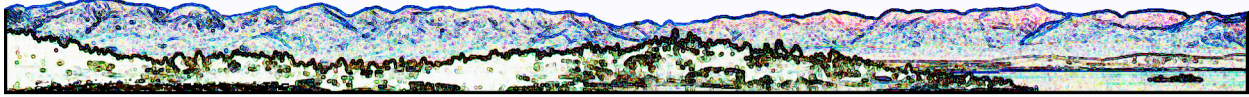


Swan View Coalition *Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path*



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September 18, 2018

Dear Editor;

Don't fall for the "divide and conquer" strategy being used to remove Endangered Species Act protections from grizzly bears one sub-ecosystem at a time in the lower 48 States. These bears were listed as threatened because they had been reduced to only 2% of their former numbers and driven off all but 2% of their range.

State and federal agencies want to declare grizzly bears "recovered" in the Yellowstone and Glacier sub-ecosystems even though the bears are still confined to about 2% of their former numbers and range. Yellowstone remains genetically isolated. Computer models have failed 20,000 times to get a bear from Glacier to Yellowstone in a single season, meaning bears need to set up home ranges in between to maintain genetic diversity.

Rather than working to unite these two sub-ecosystems, agencies are instead working to designate each a "distinct population segment." Research, however, shows that 5,000 bears are necessary to maintain genetic viability, requiring that these sub-ecosystems be reunited.

Managing for 800 bears in the Glacier area and even fewer in the Yellowstone area, while killing off "excess" bears via sport trophy hunting, will not reconnect these areas. It will not recover bears to significantly more than the 2% of their former habitat, let alone reconnect with the Bitterroot, Cabinet-Yaak, Selkirk, and North Cascades sub-ecosystems.

There are now some 400,000 people in the twelve counties surrounding Glacier. Flathead County is growing at 3% annually. It is not time to remove ESA protection from the 800-plus bears thought to be growing there at only 2% annually and to begin hunting them to keep them from expanding further. It is time to show some compassion, adjust how we live and work in bear habitat, and to recover and reconnect the lower 48 ecosystem before removing ESA protections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith". The letters are cursive and somewhat stylized, with a prominent 'K' and 'h'.

Keith J. Hammer
Chair

(297 words, confirm at 406-755-1379)