

April 16, 2020

Governor's Grizzly Bear Advisory Council,

Thank you for the opportunity for the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) to comment on the use of hunting as a valuable management tool to ensure the long-term viability of grizzly populations in the tristate area of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming.

With over three decades in the policy arena, the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation (CSF) works with different levels of government to advance and protect our outdoor sporting heritage and traditions. Rooted in the Congressional Sportsmen's Caucus, the largest, most active bipartisan caucus on Capitol Hill with nearly 250 Members of Congress, CSF has extended this legislative network from Washington, DC to states across the country, establishing the bipartisan National Assembly of Sportsmen's Caucuses (NASC) and the Governors Sportsmen's Caucus (GSC). Presently, NASC is comprised of 49 state legislative caucuses with over 2,500 legislators (including the Idaho Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus), while the GSC includes more than half the governors from throughout the country. Together, CSF and this collective force of bipartisan elected officials work to protect and advance hunting, angling, recreational shooting and trapping for the nearly 40 million sportsmen and women who spend over \$90 billion annually on outdoor pursuits.

Grizzly populations in the tristate area of Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have recovered, thus in accordance with the Endangered Species Act, all management authority should be transferred back to state wildlife agencies. State management will bring into play a number of strategies—including the use of limited, regulated hunting to ensure the long-term viability of grizzly populations, as well as address human-wildlife conflict and public safety concerns.

CSF supports state grizzly bear management with hunting for these reasons: (1) grizzly bear recovery goals for the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem population have been met; (2) the Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem population of 1,029 bears has greatly expanded beyond the initial designated recovery zone into habitats with human and livestock presence—causing significant human-wildlife conflicts and public safety concerns; (3) studies have determined grizzlies are adaptable to changes in habitat; (4) delisting the grizzly bear and transferring management to state wildlife agencies ensures continued conservation of the species while also increasing funding for habitat conservation through the sale of licenses for limited hunting opportunities and 5) population control is inevitable, as there is a finite amount of biologically and socially suitable habitat in which grizzly bears can exist with minimal human conflict.

State wildlife agencies in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have collectively spent millions of dollars over the last four decades on programs to study grizzlies, monitor populations and conserve their habitat. The hunters and anglers of these states who purchase hunting and fishing licenses, generating millions of dollars for programs to benefit grizzly bears and other wildlife, made these efforts possible. This revenue stream will continue to be available for grizzly bear conservation under state management—and will be significantly enhanced, if states are able to sell limited license opportunities for grizzly bear hunting. Being that population control and problem bear removal is unavoidable, grizzly bear population management can either cost tax payers money by paying state fish and wildlife agency personnel to reduce populations to current biologically and socially suitable habitat carrying capacity or increase state

revenue by allowing hunters to pay for the privilege of harvesting a predetermined number of grizzly bears, based on the best available science at the state fish and wildlife agencies' disposal.

Regulated hunting of grizzlies should follow these parameters:

- Establish that either sex grizzly bears may be taken, except adults accompanied by young, and young accompanied by adults.
- Establish that immediately after harvest of a grizzly bear, the tag must be validated and securely attached to the hide.
- Add grizzly bear to the list of species for which evidence of sex must be left naturally attached to the hide until mandatory check requirement has been fulfilled.
- Establish requirement that any hunter who kills a grizzly bear must report harvest within 24 hours by calling a toll-free grizzly reporting number.
- Establish a mandatory check requirement for grizzly bears whereby any harvested grizzly bear skull and hide must be presented to a state wildlife agency regional office for checking within 5 days of harvest.
- Establish targeted grizzly bear hunts in areas with significant human/livestock conflicts.
- Prohibit grizzly bear hunting within 200 yards of any designated dump ground or landfill.
- Establish a rule to limit harvest of a grizzly bear to once per lifetime.
- Protect the identity of individuals who draw grizzly bear hunting licenses and those who legally harvest grizzly bears.

Once again, thank you for this opportunity to comment on the importance of hunting to the long-term and sustainable management of grizzly bears in the tristate area.

Sincerely,

Ellary TuckerWilliams

Inter-Mountain Western States Coordinator
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation