

Defenders of Wildlife * Greater Yellowstone Coalition * Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
Natural Resources Defense Council * Sierra Club * Wyoming Outdoor Council

Director Dan Ashe
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

November 15, 2011

VIA EMAIL

Dear Director Ashe:

On behalf of over two million members and supporters of our organizations in the Greater Yellowstone region and across the country, we are writing to urge you to hold additional public hearings on your agency's proposed rule to remove the gray wolf in the state of Wyoming from protection under the Endangered Species Act.

As you know, this is an issue that the American public, and citizens across the Interior West, care deeply about. We feel strongly that one public hearing in the entire state of Wyoming is inadequate to gather a true representation of public sentiment on this important and controversial issue. Additional hearings would further the purposes of the Endangered Species Act in allowing broader public participation in decisions directly affecting the long-term survival and management of wolves in Wyoming.

Because Wyoming is such a large state, many residents will not be able to travel long distances to participate in the one public hearing planned for Riverton on November 15. Therefore, we request that your agency hold additional meetings in Jackson and Cheyenne. These additional hearings will allow residents in other parts of the state to learn firsthand what this proposed rule means for the future of wolves, and to have the opportunity to provide feedback directly to USFWS representatives.

Additionally, a hearing should be held in Jackson because Teton County will be directly affected by the proposed 'flex zone,' and because Teton County commissioners and the Superintendent of Grand Teton National Park have expressed serious concerns about the proposed plan to split the county between 'trophy game' and 'predator' zones.

A hearing should also be held in Cheyenne because it is the nexus of agency and political decision makers, and because it would facilitate participation from people in Casper and Laramie, which along with Cheyenne comprise the three largest population centers in the state.

As you know, this is a controversial and complicated issue. It is critical that U.S. Fish and Wildlife and the State of Wyoming get this right, and a key part of that means providing meaningful opportunities for public input.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. A reply can be directed to Bonnie Rice at bonnie.rice@sierraclub.org/406-582-8365.

Sincerely,

Susannah Woodruff, Rocky Mountain Region Associate
Defenders of Wildlife

Chris Colligan, Wildlife Advocate
Greater Yellowstone Coalition

Louise Lasley, Program Director
Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance

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Bonnie Rice, Senior Representative, Greater Yellowstone Ecoregion
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Sophie Osborn, Wildlife Program Director
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