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CAMPAIGN FOR YELLOWSTONE'S BEARS
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January 26, 1984

Mr. William Clark
Secretary of Interior
U.S. Department of Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Mr. Clark:

The plight of the grizzly bear in Yellowstone and elsewhere is of great concern to Americans. Only through a comprehensive conservation effort designed to remedy the root causes of the grizzly's decline can we be certain that this magnificent species will survive and prosper in a few wild areas in the American West.

In view of this concern, I respectfully submit the enclosed Citizens' Proposal To Save The Yellowstone Grizzly Bear. This document is the result of extensive study and deliberation by a group of biologists and conservationists thoroughly familiar with the current predicament of the Yellowstone grizzly. In addition to myself, those involved in the final preparation of the proposal include: Dr. Frank C. Craighead Jr., Director of the Craighead Environmental Research Institute; Dr. John J. Craighead, Director of the Wildlife-Wildlands Institute; Lyn dePagter, President of the Boulder Audubon Society; Clifton R. Merritt, Executive Director of the American Wilderness Alliance; Walter R. Merschat, President of the Murie Audubon Society; and Dr. Oliver K. Scott of the Murie Audubon Society.

I am confident that the U.S. Department of Interior and other public agencies responsible for our wildlife will carefully consider the merits of the proposal. The grizzly provides a wholeness to Yellowstone and offers people visions and moods of wilderness common to few places on Earth. Now, as its numbers wane, it stands as a special symbol of America's commitment to its wildlife. The bear must be saved.

Sincerely,

Anthony J. Povilitis

Dr. Anthony J. Povilitis
Campaign Coordinator

Enclosure

c.c. R. Jantzen, Director, U.S.F.W.S.
G. Buterbaugh, Chair, I.G.B.C.
J. Crowell, U.S.D.A.

A CITIZENS' PROPOSAL TO SAVE THE YELLOWSTONE GRIZZLY BEAR

The grizzly bear population of Yellowstone, officially estimated at 183-207 animals (1), has suffered a serious decline since the 1960s. A decrease in grizzly bear numbers, reproduction, longevity, and nutritional level appears evident, while man-caused deaths well exceed the limit for population recovery. Regrettably, bear management by public agencies has thus far failed to conserve the grizzly. Unless the situation for the grizzly bear improves significantly, this species is likely to be lost from the Yellowstone area.

The survival of the grizzly depends on the availability of adequate habitat and on the degree to which bears can utilize it without human interference. Given their large size and natural curiosity, as well as their need to acquire a variety of foods, denning sites, and other essential resources, grizzly bears range throughout much of the Yellowstone ecosystem. Hence, the current Yellowstone population, and certainly the recovery goal population of over 300 bears (2), cannot be expected to prosper with less space.

Recognizing

that the Yellowstone ecosystem is not only the most southern but also one of the final refuges for the grizzly bear in the American West;

that Yellowstone National Park, as the geographic center of this ecosystem and America's first and among its most precious national parks, is a major biosphere reserve of international repute; and,

that the grizzly bear holds a wide range of ecological, scientific, cultural, historic, aesthetic, recreational, and educational values for Americans,

we, the undersigned, strongly urge that the following comprehensive plan be adopted by the responsible public agencies in order to bring about full grizzly bear recovery. Four major policies with appropriate management actions follow.

I. END DESTRUCTION AND DEGRADATION OF GRIZZLY BEAR HABITAT IN THE GREATER YELLOWSTONE AREA.

1. Under the Endangered Species Act, establish critical bear habitat as determined biologically (3), or expand Situation 1 Management Areas (4) to encompass all such critical habitat (see Appendix A).

2. Within critical habitat, disallow all developments and activities that may adversely affect the grizzly bear.

3. Permit developments in critical grizzly bear habitat only after thorough public review, as, for example, through the EIS process, to ensure that they will not hinder grizzly bear recovery.

4. Phase-out existing developments in areas heavily used by the grizzly and in those which contain the richest habitat (such as the Fishing Bridge recreational facility in Yellowstone National Park).

5. Support closure of prime habitat areas and those of high grizzly bear use during appropriate seasons and until population recovery is assured.

6. Manage all non-critical habitat in the Yellowstone ecosystem as currently recommended for Situation 2 Management Areas (4), i.e., grizzly bear conservation is to be accomodated with other land use activities, but not to their exclusion.

II. GREATLY REDUCE MAN-CAUSED MORTALITY.

7. Support law enforcement activities in the Yellowstone area adequate to eliminate poaching, unauthorized control actions, and the sale of grizzly bear parts acquired illegally.

8. Request that U.S. attorneys and federal judges handle cases of poaching on a priority basis and seek full prosecution of poachers under the Endangered Species Act.

9. Encourage full prosecution of poachers who are tried in state courts and support stiffer and uniform penalties for persons convicted of illegally killing bears or selling bear parts.

10. Phase-out livestock allotments on public lands located within critical habitat until conclusive evidence of grizzly bear recovery becomes available.

11. End the hunting of black bear within critical habitat until conclusive evidence of grizzly bear recovery becomes available.

12. Enforce strict handling and disposal of garbage on public lands in ways that will not attract bears, and encourage municipalities and counties to require the same for the private sector.

13. Support a vigorous information/education campaign in the Yellowstone area stressing grizzly bear protection, camp sanitation and other visitor precautionary measures, and the grizzly's value to all Americans.

III. IMPROVE THE OVERALL HEALTH AND SECURITY OF THE GRIZZLY POPULATION.

14. List the Yellowstone grizzly bear as "endangered" under the Endangered Species Act until definite progress towards its recovery becomes evident.

15. If man-caused mortality of bears cannot be largely eliminated soon, attempt to re-establish an ecocenter (5) by providing a dependable food source for the grizzly near the geographic center of the ecosystem (6).

16. Accelerate the process of designating roadless areas in the Yellowstone area as "wilderness" under the Wilderness Act (see Appendix B).

17. Support the idea of the Yellowstone ecosystem as an area of national priority for wildlife and, as part of this, provide legal mechanisms for better achieving grizzly bear recovery.

18. Solicit citizen views and participation in grizzly bear conservation matters.

IV. PROMOTE RESEARCH THAT WILL EXPEDITE POPULATION RECOVERY AND PROVIDE AN IMPROVED BASIS FOR GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT.

19. Develop the means for determining trends in the grizzly bear population without recourse to methods that may further stress it.

20. Evaluate, describe, and map grizzly bear habitat types and rate areas within the ecosystem according to their ecological value to the bear.

21. Document the "state of knowledge" regarding ways of improving grizzly bear habitat through vegetation management and encourage further research where needed.

22. Document the "state of knowledge" regarding the impact of various human activities on the grizzly bear and determine how and where further data may be obtained.

23. Consider the use of advanced technology (7) for comparing the Yellowstone area with other large wilderness ecosystems for purposes of determining optimal population and broad management policies for the grizzly bear throughout the American West.

24. Encourage research on the Yellowstone grizzly bear and its habitat by non-governmental biologists.

25. Encourage professionals from the private sector to participate in reviewing research proposals and results.

26. Require independent investigations of grizzly bear incidents involving human injury and death.

References:

(1) "Ad Hoc Committee for Population Analysis." Unpubl. Report to the Yellowstone Interagency Grizzly Bear Steering Committee. January 1983 (errata sheet 10/83).

(2) "Grizzly Bear Recovery Plan." U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1982.

(3) "A Proposed Delineation of Critical Grizzly Bear Habitat in the Yellowstone Region." Bear Biology Assoc. Monogr. No. 1. J.J. Craighead. 1980.

(4) "Guidelines for Management Involving Grizzly Bears in the Greater Yellowstone Area." National Forests and National Parks. December 1979.

(5) "The Grizzly Bear." Chap. 25 in Wild Mammals of North America. Edited by J.A. Chapman and G.A. Feldhamer. The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London. J.J. Craighead and J.A. Mitchell. 1982.

(6) Track of the Grizzly. Appendix: "Management of the Yellowstone Grizzly." Sierra Club Press, San Francisco. F.C. Craighead Jr. 1979.

(7) "A Definitive System for Analysis of Grizzly Bear Habitat and Other Wilderness Resources." Wildlife-Wildland Institute Monogr. No. 1. J.J. Craighead, J.S. Sumner, and G.B. Scaggs. 1982.

Signed,

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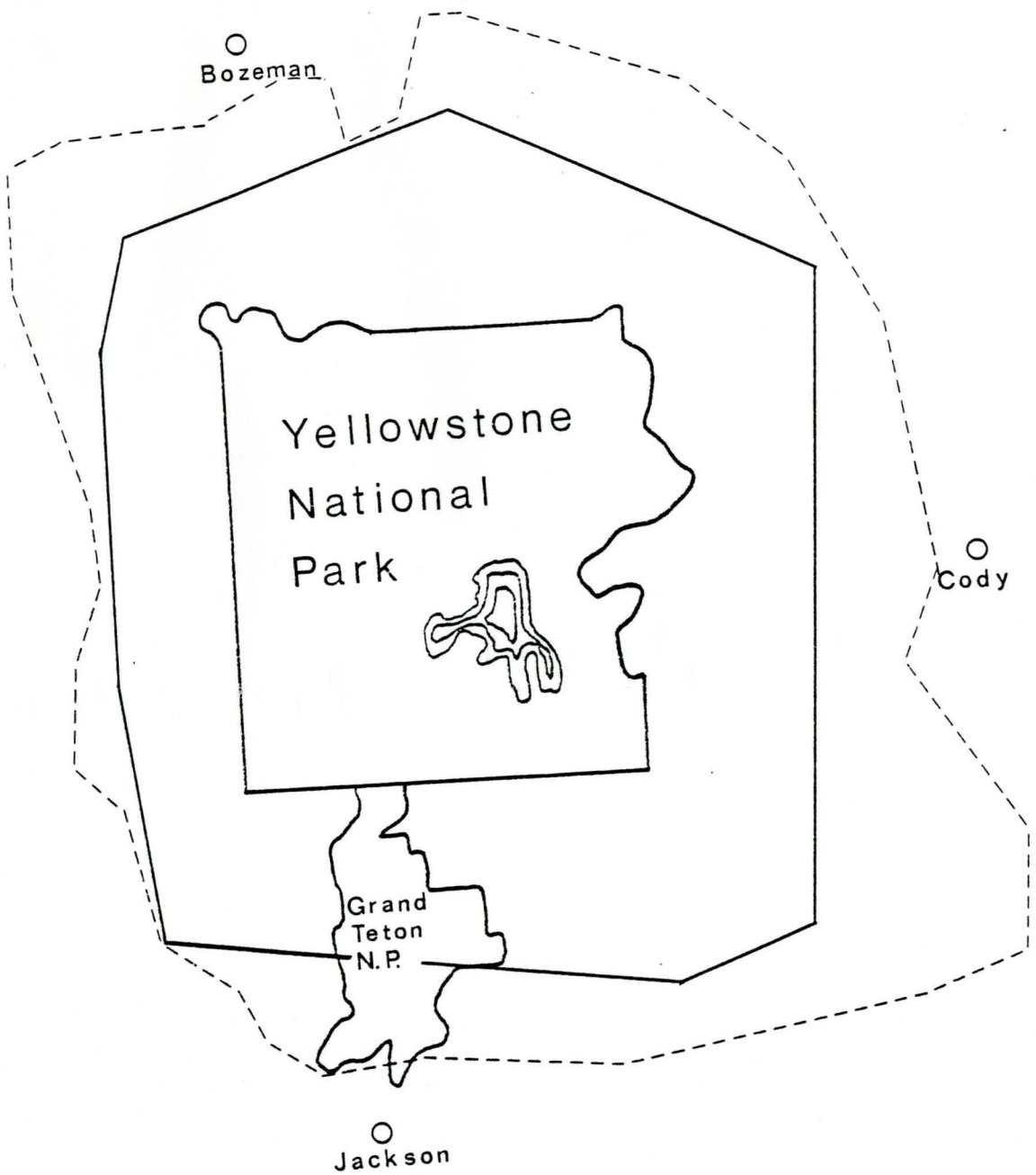
January 1984

APPENDIX A

YELLOWSTONE ECOSYSTEM



APPENDIX B

Areas Recommended For Wilderness Designation Within the Yellowstone Ecosystem Include:

In Montana

Hyalite-Porcupine-Buffalo Horn (Gallatin Range)
Lionhead (also in Idaho)
Lime Creek Plateau (adjacent to Wyoming's Deep Lake area)

In Idaho

Two Top

In Wyoming

Wyoming High Lakes (Addition to Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness in Montana)
Deep Lake
North Absaroka Wilderness Additions
Washakie Wilderness Additions
Teton Corridor (Teton Wilderness Addition)
Teton West Slope
Winegar Hole
Jackass