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BOISE, Idaho - Officials operating a federal sheep research station in eastern Idaho say they intend to halt grazing activities in areas deemed vital grizzly bear habitat in the Greater Yellowstone region.

The new grazing restriction announced by the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station is a byproduct of a lawsuit filed in 2007 by species conservation groups.

One provision of a 2008 settlement deal required federal researchers to analyze the impacts of sheep grazing across 100,000 acres of public land in eastern Idaho and southwestern Montana.

Conservationists are cheering the agency's decision to curtail grazing on certain tracts known to support grizzly bears.

Center for Biological Diversity spokesman Marc Fink says more grazing restrictions are necessary, but the new restrictions are a sign of progress.

- The Associated Press