

**Remarks – Yellowstone, Sept. 16.**

The Piikani Nation has had a government-to-government relationship with the United States since the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty, which was reinforced by the 1855 Lane Bull Treaty. We share these treaties and rights with our sister nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy. We do not recognize the border – to us, that is just an arbitrary line intended to divide us. We cherish and defend these treaty rights today.

As our delegation traveled here, we crossed much of the land that our ancestors did when they made their pilgrimages to this sacred area now called Yellowstone. Our ancestors knew this area intimately. We used to collect our red and black paints here. We collected medicines here. Like our Cheyenne brothers, we were taught curing ways by the sacred grizzly in this area – not just herbs, but some of the boiling mud. We held vision quests here. We revered the creative powers of our Mother, the Earth here. So well did we know this area, that some of the names our people used for features of this land are still used today, like the Beartooth Mountains, and Heart Mountain near Cody. And today, we are here because of very different names: Mount Doane and Hayden Valley.

Let us be clear – Tribal Nations have been calling for these names to be changed for years, and this was formalized by resolution of the Rocky Mountain Tribal Leaders Council in 2014. That resolution was supported by the Great Plains Tribal Chairmen’s Association. Here today, there are representatives from both of those organizations – which are comprised of every Tribal Nation in Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Nebraska, and the province of Alberta. We speak with one voice on this issue, and all of us are recognized by the Department of the Interior as “Associated Tribes of Yellowstone.”

**Mount Doane** – Lieutenant G. C. Doane was a war criminal. We have elders here and descendants of survivors of the Marias River Massacre that Doane led, and so I defer to those men, and with respect to them, I will just repeat Doane’s own words from his letter of application to be Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park: “I was the first and last man in [the] Piikani camp January 23, 1870. Greatest slaughter of Indians ever made by U.S. Troops.” As our elders will tell you, many more of our people were murdered under Doane’s command than the government’s record of 173 victims. The authorities admitted that only 15 were men of fighting age, the rest were elders, women and children, “None older than twelve years and many of them in their mother’s arms,” reported Indian Agent W.A. Pease. Doane subsequently ordered several of the Piikani he took prisoner to be executed with axes.

We propose that Mount Doane be renamed ‘First People’s Mountain,’ not only to honor the memories of the Piikani victims of the Marias Massacre, but also in remembrance of those who suffered the same barbarity at the hands of those like Doane. The Cheyenne and Arapaho at Sand Creek. The Shoshone-Bannock at Bear River. The Lakota at Wounded Knee. ‘First People’s Mountain’ also recognizes the 10,000-year plus connection Native peoples have to this sacred place. Yes, that was 10,000-years.

**Hayden Valley** - Dr. Ferdinand V. Hayden advocated the “extermination” of tribal people in an official government document published in 1872, the year Grant signed into law the act that established Yellowstone National Park. “Unless they are localized and made to enter upon agricultural and pastoral pursuits they must

ultimately be exterminated. If extermination is the result of non-compliance, then compulsion is an act of mercy,” Hayden wrote. That is advocacy for genocide with no plausible deniability. That Hayden was a white supremacist cannot be denied either, he stated it himself in his book, *North America*: “Equally incontestable is the pre-eminence, both intellectual and moral, of the white race, which thus forms a natural aristocracy in the truest sense of the word,” Hayden stated.

Eighteen-years after General Robert E. Lee surrendered and the Civil War ended, Hayden defended slave-holding Confederate plantation owners as “chivalrous and hospitable,” and insisted, “The treatment of the negro was not barbarous, and many seemingly cruel laws were greatly needed as measures of self-protection on the part of the whites.” These are his words, from that same book, *North America*. I saw in the local press that one authority implied that Hayden’s name should remain because, quote, “Hayden never went beyond words.” Words are what incites genocide. Even recent history teaches us that. The individuals who advocated genocide over the airwaves in Rwanda were found guilty by the UN International Tribunal of conspiracy to commit genocide; genocide; direct and public incitement to commit genocide; and complicity in genocide; which resulted in crimes against humanity. What more needs to be explained? You have a major area of Yellowstone National Park named after an individual who advocated genocide. Period. And this is the world’s first national park, not a city park with a statue. And further, this was our land.

We call for Hayden Valley to be renamed Buffalo Nations Valley in honor of all Tribal Nations that have treaty rights and interests to Greater Yellowstone, and an ancestral connection to this sacred landscape and our relatives, the Buffalo Nation.

We ask Yellowstone National Park to work with all the Associated Tribes of Yellowstone to produce interpretative signage and roadside exhibits that can be placed in the pull-outs throughout that valley, so the four-million visitors a year that go through there can learn about the Native connection to this landscape, and so that Yellowstone will no longer be “Indian-free” as Superintendent Norris intended it to be. Further, we encourage Yellowstone National Park to open a dialogue with us on creating a vocational training program for our people, so that during the summer months the Associated Tribes of Yellowstone will have cultural interpreters in the valley to interact with visitors, and share accurate cultural information compiled and approved by the respective Tribal Nations.

By changing these names, healing, unity, and cultural understanding will triumph over division. By changing these names, what Dr. Martin Luther King described as “revolutionary love” will overcome hate. What “benefit and enjoyment” can “the people” derive from retaining these names and what they represent?

Thank you.