

CHAIRMAN
Harold C. Frazier

SECRETARY
EvAnn White Feather

TREASURER
Benita Clark

VICE-CHAIRMAN
Ryman LeBeau



P.O. Box 590
Eagle Butte, South Dakota 57625
Phone: (605) 964-4155
Fax: (605) 964-4151

TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS

DISTRICT 1

Bernita In The Woods
Johnilyn Garrett

DISTRICT 2

Theodore Knife, Jr.

DISTRICT 3

Edward Widow
Ben Elk Eagle

DISTRICT 4

Wayne L. Ducheneaux II
Kevin Keckler
Merrie Miller
Vacant

DISTRICT 5

Ryman LeBeau
Raymond Uses The Knife
Robert Chasing Hawk
Derek Bartlett

DISTRICT 6

Tuffy Thompson
Richard Rousseau

December 09, 2014

Attn: Director Dan Ashe,
US Fish and Wildlife Service.

All Parties Concerned.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe is one of the twenty-six Tribal Nations recognized by the federal government as having an ancestral connection to Yellowstone ("Associated Tribe of Yellowstone" – *Resources & Issues*, NPS, 2010). Therefore, under the federal government's own criteria, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe should be consulted by the federal departments and agencies presently engaged in attempting to remove of the sacred grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections.

Executive Order 13175 (Nov. 6, 2000) "Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments" signed by President Clinton, and the Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (Nov. 5, 2009) issued by President Obama, requiring a "complete and consistent implementation of Executive Order 13175," have yet to be followed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) during this process.

Executive Order 13647 (June 2013) states, "Greater engagement and meaningful consultation with tribes is of paramount importance in developing any policies affecting tribal nations." The proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear affects the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people of the Oceti Sakowin (Great Sioux Nation).

This issue extends beyond delisting the grizzly bear, and threatens potentially detrimental consequences for tribal sovereignty and our religious and spiritual rights as defined by the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (PL 95-341-1978/PL 103-344 -1994).

Laws and policies related to "conservation and preservation of natural species" cannot, as had been the norm prior to the Act, be "passed without consideration of their effect on traditional American

The blue represents the thunderclouds above the world where live the thunder birds who control the four winds. The rainbow is for the Cheyenne River Sioux people who are keepers of the Most Sacred Calf Pipe, a gift from the White Buffalo Calf Maiden. The eagle feathers at the edges of the rim of the world represent the spotted eagle who is the protector of all Lakota. The two pipes fused together are for unity. One pipe is for the Lakota, the other for all the other Indian Nations. The yellow hoops represent the Sacred Hoop, which shall not be broken. The Sacred Calf Pipe Bundle in red represents Wakan Tanka – The Great Mystery. All the colors of the Lakota are visible. The red, yellow, black and white represent the four major races. The blue is for heaven and the green for Mother Earth.

Indian religions.” However, in its attempts to delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear without regard to the religious practices of tribal people, the FWS is doing precisely that.

In his statement of November 2014, Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe of the Oceti Sakowin, detailed the spiritual and ceremonial significance of the grizzly bear in Lakota, Dakota and Nakota culture.

The Lakota cultural and geographic landscape demonstrates the cultural importance of the grizzly bear. Many physical features and sacred sites are known by names inspired by the grizzly bear. Our people still carry names that reflect the significance of the grizzly. Throughout our history, numerous great leaders have borne grizzly bear names.

Opposing the removal of ESA protections from the Yellowstone grizzly bear, and the proposed trophy hunting of the grizzly, is consistent with CRST Ordinance 57, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe’s Cultural Resources Protection Act, which affirms: “The spiritual and physical well-being of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe and its members is directly related to the preservation of the historical traditions and cultural heritage of the Lakota people.”

In this process to date, FWS is yet to abide by the Secretarial Order issued by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce pursuant to the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531), which established the protocols to be followed when actions taken under authority of the ESA have tribal implications.

The Order directs the FWS to “solicit traditional knowledge, and comments from, and utilize the expertise of, affected Indian tribes” during the consultation process, and “cooperate with affected tribes to develop and implement Recovery Plans in a manner that minimizes” social and cultural impacts on tribal people.

The thought of trophy hunters killing grizzly bears on our sacred lands is painful for the Lakota people. The image that came to represent the 1874 Black Hills Expedition that contravened the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty is the photograph of Custer with the grizzly he killed for a “trophy.” That violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty resulted in the annexation of the Black Hills. We cannot allow a repeat 140-years later on lands our ancestors fought so hard to protect when they opposed the construction of the Northern Pacific Railroad along the Yellowstone in 1872 and 1873, which was also a violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty. Some of the principal leaders in that resistance were from the Lakota bands that comprise the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Through the aforementioned Acts and Orders, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (along with the other 25 affected Tribal Nations) is entitled to review the raw data the FWS is basing all of its conclusions upon relative to delisting the grizzly bear. Several tribes have already called upon the FWS to release that data not only to the affected Tribal Nations, but also to independent scientists for analysis and review so that questions of credibility might be answered.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe joins the other affected Tribal Nations that have issued resolutions, declarations and statements in opposition to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's proposed delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear. We support the positions expressed by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, and the efforts of GOAL Tribal Coalition to protect the grizzly bear and defend our sovereignty and spiritual rights.

If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 605-964-4155.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Harold C. Frazier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "H" and "C".

Harold C. Frazier,
CRST Chairman

CC: File