



ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE

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Cyril Scott, President
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Glen Yellow Eagle, Sergeant-at-Arms

December 9, 2014

For the attention of:

Dan Ashe, Director – US Fish and Wildlife Service;
Chris Servheen, Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator – US Fish and Wildlife Service;
Other Parties Concerned:

The Rosebud 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 Rosebud 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.

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 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.

The specter of trophy hunters killing grizzly bears on our sacred lands is painful for the Lakota people. The most famous image of the 1874 Black Hills Expedition that contravened the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty – and resulted in the theft of the Black Hills – is the photograph of Custer with the grizzly he killed for a “trophy.” We cannot allow a repeat 140-years later on lands our ancestors fought so hard to defend when they opposed the construction of the Northern Pacific

Railroad along the Yellowstone in 1872/73, which was itself a violation of the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe (along with the other 25 affected Tribal Nations) is also 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 Rosebud 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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cyril Scott', written in a cursive style.

President Cyril Scott
Rosebud Sioux Tribe