

The SHOSHONE-BANNOCK TRIBES

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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is in strong support of GOAL Tribal Coalition.

The Fort Hall Business Council of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Fort Hall, Idaho oppose the federal government's proposed removal of the Yellowstone grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protections through the US Fish and Wildlife Service, recognizing that the federal government's resolve to remove the grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protection contravenes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA. PUBLIC LAW 95-341--AUG. 11, 1978).

Our Tribe is one of the few of the twenty-six federally recognized tribes which federal government openly acknowledges has an original ancestral connection to the Yellowstone National Park and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem regions. The connection between our tribe and this land has existed hundreds and thousands of years and requires the US Fish and Wildlife Service to consult with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes since the American Indian Religious Freedom Act states that laws pertaining to 'conservation and preservation of natural species and resources' were never intended to impact American Indian religious practices.

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) clearly sets forth the framework to be followed when actions taken under authority of the ESA affect tribes. With the proposed delisting of the grizzly bear, the US Fish and Wildlife Service is in contravention of this order which directs the that agency 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 Shoshone-Bannock Tribe has been afforded no such consultation throughout the US Fish and Wildlife Service's process proposing a new Rule to delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear, despite the supposed protection of religious practices of traditional tribal people by PL-95-341.

In respecting our unique cultural imperatives, and the preservation of our sovereignty, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe renounces the federal government's desire to delist the grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protections. We oppose the legislative resolve to see trophy hunting of grizzlies on reservations and the extirpation of the grizzly bear from swathes of reservation lands.

Additionally, in recognition that that the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe's Fish and Wildlife Department has a seat on the IGBC's (Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee) Yellowstone Subcommittee, this letter of support from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe countermands any previous votes cast by the Shoshone-Bannock Tribe's Fish and Wildlife Department in favor of delisting the Yellowstone grizzly bear.

Our council hereby officially strongly opposes this position in delisting the Yellowstone grizzly bear.

Respectfully,



Nathan Small, Chairman
Fort Hall Business Council