

Official Statement of Northern Cheyenne Tribal President Llevando Fisher on the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee YES-IGBC) meeting, April 30-May 1, 2015.

I am extremely disappointed at the disrespect that was shown to James Walks Along, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Historic Preservation Officer, at the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee meeting, April 30-May 1, 2015. James was the Northern Cheyenne Tribe's official representative at the meeting, and I told him, "Don't back down. If you have to wait to say your piece, just wait."

When a tribal government takes action and issues a resolution, as we did in opposition to the seemingly imminent federal delisting rule to remove the Yellowstone grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protections, we initiate and request formal consultation with the respective federal agency. That action is what moves the issue into the government-to-government consultation arena.

Any tribal resolution is an official government action. Northern Cheyenne Tribal Resolution No. DOI-027 (2015) opposes the federal government's intent to remove the Yellowstone grizzly bear from Endangered Species Act protection. This resolution was fully supported by the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Council in a unanimous vote. The US Fish and Wildlife Service, like all federal agencies when dealing with Indian Tribes, holds a trust responsibility to the tribes.

I am surprised that the Service did not provide an appropriate form of direction for its coordinator, Chris Servheen, prior to the recent Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee meeting in Cody, Wyoming. As a sovereign nation, we have had run-ins with the State of Wyoming before, so the attitude exhibited toward James Walks Along by Wyoming Game and Fish wardens and administrators at the meeting was less surprising. Wyoming continues to be very pro-energy development, and anti anything that has the potential to hinder that – including the Endangered Species Act, and large carnivores such as the grizzly bear that require ESA status.

I was proud that young Cheyenne warriors made the journey to Cody, Wyoming to sing a healing song on behalf of the grizzlies, but was saddened to learn that YES-IGBC Chairman, Brian Nesvik of Wyoming Game and Fish, would not permit them the time to sing it during the meeting. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe fully supports James Walks Along and what he did for his nation and the sacred grizzly bear at the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee of the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee meeting in Cody, Wyoming.