



**GOAL**

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April 27, 2018.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT – WYOMING GAME AND FISH COMMISSION**

### **CHAPTER 68, GRIZZLY BEAR HUNTING SEASONS**

GOAL Tribal Coalition denounces the State of Wyoming's planned grizzly trophy hunt. GOAL Tribal Coalition is "one of the largest tribal organizations in North America" (*Native News Online*, 6-31-2016), and is comprised of over fifty federally recognized Indian tribes. Should you be unfamiliar with GOAL Tribal Coalition, the US Fish and Wildlife Service – Mountain/Prairie Region dedicated a section of its website to attempt to mitigate its failings in the GYE delisting process, therefore from USFW's efforts, you can glean what the organization stands for and is capable of.

Previously, GOAL submitted comment on Wyoming's Chapter 67 Grizzly Bear Management Regulation, and I refer you to that document which provides a factual analysis to debunk the specious claims made by Wyoming Game and Fish Department spokesmen that this Chapter 68 Grizzly Bear Hunting Season proposition is "cautious and careful," and adheres to "the best available science." There is no credible evidence to support; in fact, quite the contrary. Over the last decade, peer reviewed and published studies from experts in brown and grizzly bear biology expose the fallacies and inadequacies of Wyoming's approach to grizzly bear management, which, as GOAL predicted prior to delisting, would oriented around gunsight policies. As we also predicted, but both Commissioners and WGFDD officials attempted to mislead and obfuscate from, as soon as the grizzly was delisted in the GYE, Wyoming would fast-track a trophy hunt.

In the push to delist, GOAL warned that Wyoming would institute a trophy hunt in the DMA, which was met with denials, and that outside the DMA Wyoming would aggressively pursue the eradication of grizzlies from areas it deems "socially unacceptable." That is precisely what this Chapter 68 Grizzly Bear Hunting Season realizes. This policy is a public acknowledgement that Wyoming intends to manage the grizzly bear at the minimum population level, and essentially reduce the grizzly to the confines of Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, which will act as nurseries for trophy hunters. Wyoming is intent on grizzly population reduction. This hunt does not even reflect the criteria set forth in the MOA, so excessive is it. Possibly the best analysis of Wyoming's proposed hunt has been authored by Dr. David Mattson, former IGBST member and world-renowned grizzly bear

biologist. Granted, it does not contain trite and discredited myths about trophy hunting increasing tolerance of grizzlies (like it did wolves?), that dead grizzlies somehow teach other grizzlies to fear humans, that hunters license fees have funded grizzly recovery, and so on and so forth, but it does reflect the “best available science.” Though Wyoming is evidently not interested in the “best available science,” I share Dr. Mattson’s work in the spirit of cross-cultural understanding:

<https://www.grizzlytimes.org/single-post/2018/03/14/Wyoming-Plans-to-Slaughter-Grizzly-Bears>

Wyoming Game and Fish Department and its water-carriers generated the atmosphere that resulted in the US Fish and Wildlife Service being sued by myriad tribal nations and tribal entities in *Crow Tribe et al v. Zinke*. The claims filed summarize the tribal position on delisting and trophy hunting and are a matter of public record the Commission can access. Added to that litany, are flagrant breaches of National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). If Wyoming believes it is going to undertake this trophy hunt on those BLM and US Forest Service lands – which comprise most of Hunt Units 1-6 – without the requisite processes and policies defined by NEPA and NHPA being undertaken, it is sadly mistaken.

GOAL Tribal Coalition is a signatory of “The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration.” Central to treaty are the grizzly reintroduction articles. Instead of trophy hunting the grizzly, tribal nations advocate relocating grizzlies from the GYE to sovereign tribal lands in the grizzly’s historic range where biologically suitable habitat exists. The same quota of grizzlies that would be hunted per season could easily be trapped and relocated, removing any possible rationalization for reinstating trophy hunts. This program will provide cultural, economic and environmental revitalization for tribal nations, although Wyoming has displayed scant concern for tribes or tribal rights during this process.

A matter Governor Mead, Director Talbott, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission have studiously avoided and failed to address is the hostility generated toward tribal members during this process, resultant from the disturbing cultural insensitivity displayed by WGFD officers, and overt racism propagated by WGFD’s supporters and allies. For example, Wyoming Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife has consistently promoted your grizzly delisting and trophy hunting talking points; to the degree that they financed billboards in the area carrying WGFD’s messaging. Upon learning of tribal opposition to grizzly delisting and trophy hunting, WFSW’s principal spokesperson proceed to call reservations “cesspools” on social media, and used the *Cody Enterprise* to attack tribal leaders opposing delisting as “delusional,” and insulted all Native people by describing traditional spiritual beliefs and ceremonies as “ramblings,” before celebrating “Manifest Destiny” with the following pronouncement in the context of his pro-delisting anti-Native diatribe: “For Manifest Destiny to reach its goals, four entities had to be taken off the very land where your home sits: 1. Indians 2. Grizzly 3. Buffalo 4. Wolves. Never can any regain their ground. Never, ever.”

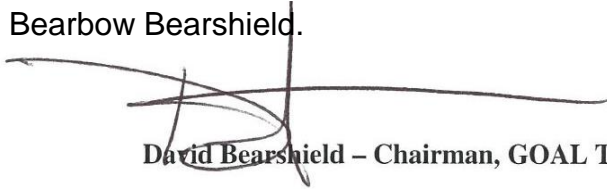
GOAL Tribal Coalition wrote to Director Talbott about this, and he declined to denounce it. We did the same when Park County Commissioner Lee Livingston announced at a WGFD grizzly meeting in Cody (4/16), “If we aren’t going to control these bears we may as well give the land back to the Indians and sail back across the ocean.” WGFD’s Brian Nesvik and Dan Thompson laughed along with the audience, leaving a KULR8 TV reporter to state on the record that she was “surprised” and that the crowd “laughed and clapped.” These are two of a roster of incidents I would be happy to furnish testimony for.

Let me close with this thought: our ancestors were hunting mammoths in this area while your antecedents were learning how to domesticate bovines in Sub-Saharan Africa. We are this continent’s original hunters. Our founder, Northern Cheyenne Spiritual Leader, Don Shoulderblade, articulates this succinctly: “This is not a hunting issue, it is a killing issue. We come from a subsistence culture,

where there is ceremony and great respect accorded those beings you ask to offer their lives so that you might live. That is what you call a hunting tradition, not a killing tradition.” Wyoming’s Chapter 68 Grizzly Bear Hunting Season is a continuation of that killing tradition. Ultimately, it will cost Wyoming millions of dollars in lost tourism revenues and litigation costs, and the state will be perceived as a bastion of regressive 19<sup>th</sup> Century attitudes that have no place in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Make no mistake, if you start trophy hunting the sacred grizzly bear on our sacred lands, we will ensure that the world will be watching as the international media will descend upon Greater Yellowstone.

Nea’ese,

Dr. David Bearbow Bearshield.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bearshield', with a long horizontal line extending to the left.

**David Bearshield – Chairman, GOAL Tribal Coalition.**