

From: [Dan Ashe](#)
To: [Kieran Suckling](#)
Cc: Gary_Frazer@fws.gov; [Noreen Walsh](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Scott Aikin](#); [Jim Kurth](#); [Stephen Guertin](#)
Subject: Re: Tribes "Disrespected" by Federal and State Officials in Grizzly Fight
Date: Monday, May 11, 2015 3:33:21 AM

Kieran, you choose your "facts" well. Your original note said, "in recent years the FWS has bent over backwards." I guess you consider 2003-2009 to be "recent" rather than 2010-2015. Happy to sit down and discuss the future for Mexican wolf, when next you are in DC.

Dan.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On May 10, 2015, at 1:52 AM, Kieran Suckling <KSuckling@biologicaldiversity.org> wrote:

Dan, my wolf question concerned the future: does the FWS intend to disband the Mexican gray wolf Science and Planning Subgroup which completed the draft delisting criteria in 2013 and create a new recovery team sans independent scientists, but with the state agencies?

Nonetheless, the Mexican gray wolf is a good example of my complaint about the past. As you say, it is a magnitude better off today than it was 6 years ago. But why? Wolf numbers rose steadily and in line with the expectation of the FWS EIS until the USFWS entered into the MOU with Arizona and New Mexico establishing the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee, and later SOP 13. Wolf recovery immediately ceased until the Service entered into a settlement agreement barring decision making under the MOU, barring implementation of SOP13 and declaring itself no longer bound by the Adaptive Management Oversight Committee. From that point forward, wolf numbers rose steadily again on virtually the same slope as prior to the MOU/AMOC.



Had the USFWS not deferred to the states, it would have met its EIS expectations and we'd have about 200 Mexican wolves today:

<image005.jpg>

Equally important for future decision-making is that opposition to Mexican wolf recovery by the states, livestock industry and the anti-federal crowd did not lessen one iota following adoption of the MOU/AMOC. To the contrary, 2004-2010 was the most intense period of opposition. That's because opponents respond to gains by increasing pressure to obtain further gains. It is only when they realize the federal mandate is not reversible that a critical mass comes to the conclusion that it has to figure out how to work with, instead of against it. We could be nearing that point now, but it will slip away if the FWS defers again to the states to discard the Science and Planning Subgroup's delisting criteria, disband the diverse recovery team, and reconstitute the team with no independent scientists but with both states. Recovery opponents will feel momentum again and crank up opposition while the environmental and scientific communities will denounce the process as biased, exclusionary and unscientific. It will be 2004 again. Green Day will still be singing [Boulevard of Broken Dreams](#) for someone.

Kieran

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From: Dan Ashe [mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov]
Sent: Saturday, May 09, 2015 6:32 PM
To: Kieran Suckling
Cc: Gary_Frazer@fws.gov; Noreen Walsh; Matt Hogan; Scott Aikin; Jim Kurth; Stephen Guertin
Subject: Re: Tribes "Disrespected" by Federal and State Officials in Grizzly Fight

Kieran, the Mexican wolf is an order of magnitude better off today than it was 6 years ago. Those facts speak for themselves. We were struggling to hold 50 wolves and most of those captive bred. Today, we are well past 100, still growing, and most of those wild born Wolves. We have listed the population as endangered, we have reduced mortality, we are building a coexistence council, we are addressing genetics within the population, and we are vastly expanding the geography of the recovery area and the 10(j) zone.

I hardly see how that represents reducing or preventing protection of endangered species. Again, I'll refer to my original Marcus Aurelius quote. And maybe you should yours.

Dan.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On May 9, 2015, at 5:21 PM, Kieran Suckling
<KSuckling@biologicaldiversity.org> wrote:

Thanks for looking into this Dan. I appreciate that.

Regarding the states, I would say with Aurelius "If any man can convince me and bring home to me that I do not think or act aright, gladly will I change." The factual record of the Fish and Wildlife Service's response to state opposition is not good the past few years. If the Mexican wolf recovery team is reconvened with the states as the only outside parties, it will be even worse.

Kieran

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From: Dan Ashe [mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov]
Sent: Saturday, May 09, 2015 12:38 PM
To: Kieran Suckling
Cc: Gary_Frazer@fws.gov; Noreen Walsh; Matt Hogan; Scott Aikin; Jim Kurth; Stephen Guertin
Subject: Re: Tribes "Disrespected" by Federal and State Officials in Grizzly Fight

Okay Kieran. I'm happy to look into this, as we take very seriously our government-to-government relationship with tribes.

Having said that, I resent, **GREATLY**, your remark about our relationship to and with our state partners. I value our relationship as

well, and have maintained an open door, and open mind, in our dealings. But kindly check that kind of rhetoric at the door. It is hurtful and wrongful to good people. It is not truthful. It does not suit you well.

As Marcus Aurelius said, "If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it."

Thank you for bringing this to my attention.

Dan.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On May 9, 2015, at 2:31 PM, Kieran Suckling
<KSuckling@biologicaldiversity.org> wrote:

Dan and Gary,

Is FWS going to respond to this? At a minimum, it should refuse to participate in all further YES and IGBC business--including meetings and votes--which exclude tribal representatives. It is particularly disturbing that the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Northern Cheyenne Nation was prevented from speaking, then had his microphone shut off during a talk entitled "Grizzly Bear Management on Tribal Lands". He wished to speak because the IGBC presenter, in a grossly misleading fashion, refused to reveal that all the tribal members of YES oppose delisting.

The FWS has bent over backwards in recent years to comply with state demands to reduce and prevent protection of endangered species. When tribes want to protect endangered species, they are not even allowed to speak.

Kieran

<image001.png>
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tribes “Disrespected” by Federal and State Officials in Grizzly Fight

CODY, WY. 05-08-2015 -- James Walks Along was forced to abandon an address to the Yellowstone Ecosystem Subcommittee (YES) of the joint federal and state Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) by Brian Nesvik, IGBC Chair and Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) Wildlife Division Chief, at the committee's meeting in Cody, Wyoming on April 30, 2015.

“This has never happened before,” said James Walks Along, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for the Northern Cheyenne Nation. “I was shocked by the disrespect I was shown.”

The YES-IGBC is a joint federal and state agency cross-jurisdictional body that takes the lead on grizzly bear management in Greater Yellowstone. In 2013 the YES-IGBC voted to delist the Yellowstone grizzly bear from the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and supports opening trophy-hunting seasons on the grizzly.

Walks Along stepped forward to make a statement on behalf of the Northern Cheyenne Nation during a presentation by Dan Thompson of WGFD entitled “Grizzly Bear Management on Tribal Lands” that emphasized collaborations between Tribal Nations and state and federal agencies. The three tribes identified by Thompson as collaborators, the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of Idaho, and the Northern Arapaho Tribe, all hold seats on the YES-IGBC.

Though members, none of the tribes were represented when the YES-IGBC voted to recommend delisting. All three tribes have since officially opposed delisting the Yellowstone grizzly bear, a fact omitted by Thompson, even though he was furnished with those resolutions prior to the meeting.

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe was the first of what is now 33 Tribal Nations to officially oppose the US Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) planned delisting of the Yellowstone grizzly bear. Walks Along hadn't finished introducing himself before Nesvik stepped forward and attempted to usher him from the stage.

“I will make a statement, and I shall not be neglected

on this statement,” Walks Along told Nesvik.

Nesvik twice laid hands on Walks Along to remove him from the stage before he instructed Tara Hodges of WGFD to cut Walks Along’s microphone.

“They literally pulled the plug on me and escorted me out,” recounts Walks Along, who described feeling threatened during the incident.

“They disrespected me and the Northern Cheyenne Nation by not allowing me to read our tribe’s official resolution in opposition to delisting and trophy hunting the grizzly bear,” asserts Walks Along. “This showed their disdain for the government-to-government process, and it was disrespectful to all tribes.”

Northern Cheyenne Tribal President, Llevando Fisher, “fully supports what James Walks Along did for his nation and the grizzly.”

“I am extremely disappointed in the disrespect that was shown to our official representative,” continues President Fisher. “I told James, ‘Don’t back down, and if you have to wait to say your piece, just wait.’ ”

Walks Along waited almost two hours to summarize the Northern Cheyenne Nation’s opposition to delisting the grizzly bears and the trophy hunts advocated by the state game and fish agencies of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, his statement being relegated to the 3-minute public comment period by YES-IGBC Chair Nesvik.

Walks Along addressed FWS coordinator Chris Servheen, long-dubbed the government’s “grizzly czar,” and requested that the formal consultation process with the affected tribes be initiated.

“I have allied with 18 tribes on the Northern Plains, including all of the Lakota tribes, and I will relay this message that I have formally asked you to consult with all 18 of us,” he advised Servheen.

Walks Along emphasized the spiritual significance of the grizzly bear to the Cheyenne.

“This Holy Mountain of ours, Bear Butte, is named because of the mightiness of the grizzly. We have a lot of history with this great animal, and many stories. Grizzlies are like humans. We respect them for being like us,” he explained.

Walks Along then asked the committee if his sons could sing a healing song for the grizzly, but was told they could not because the public comment period had closed. However, Chairman Nesvik then permitted two white ranchers to take the floor.

President Fisher is skeptical of FWS coordinator Servheen's familiarity with the consultation process.

"A tribal resolution is an official government action. This resolution opposing the potential delisting of the grizzly 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, has a trust responsibility to the tribes. We are surprised they didn't have some kind of direction for Servheen," President Fisher discloses.

GOAL Tribal Coalition Co-founder, R. Bear Stands Last, says that the irony that Walks Along's ordeal came during a presentation on "touted" tribal collaboration should not be lost on people.

"It is a very disturbing and symbolic visual. The domineering government official silencing the Indian and having him removed," he says. "Nothing says 'collaboration with tribes' like forcibly removing a Cheyenne Sun Dancer and official tribal representative from the stage."

"I would urge everybody to watch the video. If you don't see a microcosm of colonial domination you must have clicked the wrong You Tube link," Bear Stands Last asserts.

Watch the video here:

<http://www.goaltribal.org/#!press--tribes-disrespected-by-usfws--wg/cjek>

For regular email updates on this issue [click here](#)

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