



# *Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma*

P. O. Box 470 \* Pawnee, OK 74058 \* Phone: (918) 762-3621

## **The Pawnee Nation makes a stand for the imperiled grizzly and calls for historic Yellowstone recognition**

### For Immediate Release

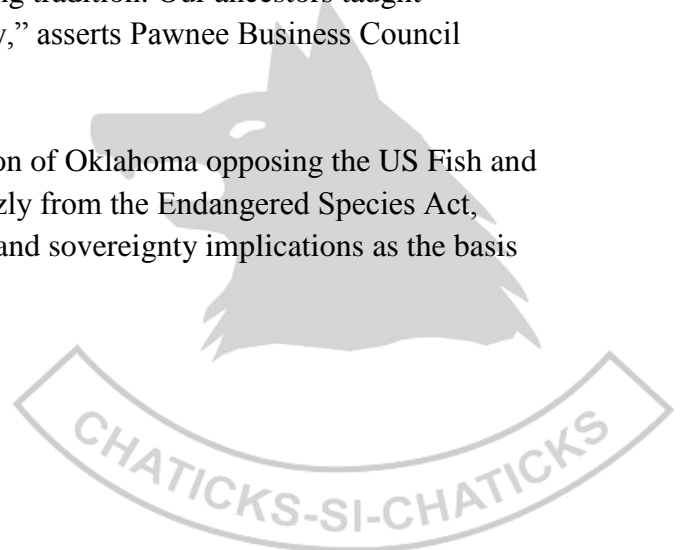
“Tell them the Pawnee Nation means business,” Councilman Adrian Spottedhorsechief told GOAL Tribal Coalition after an initial meeting between GOAL and Pawnee Nation representatives, including Vice President W. Bruce Pratt, and the councilman.

The “business” was the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma’s commitment to joining the effort of Tribal Nations to protect and preserve the sacred Yellowstone grizzly bear that the US Fish and Wildlife Service intends to remove from the Endangered Species Act this year.

If the grizzly is shorn of Endangered Species Act protections it will fall victim to the gun sight wildlife management practices of the states of Wyoming, Montana and Idaho, all of which intend to open extravagant trophy hunting seasons for the wealthy on this being held sacred by a multitude of tribal nations.

“Trophy hunting sentient beings only appeals to a tiny minority of a particular demographic within the US population, and it is antithetical to the traditional cultures and subsistence practices of tribal people. The Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, like the other impacted Tribal Nations, comes from a subsistence tradition, not a killing tradition. Our ancestors taught ceremony, responsibility, and reciprocity in our lifeway,” asserts Pawnee Business Council President, Marshall R. Gover.

In a compelling declaration issued by the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma opposing the US Fish and Wildlife Service’s intent to delist the Yellowstone grizzly from the Endangered Species Act, President, Marshall R. Gover details spiritual, cultural and sovereignty implications as the basis of the Pawnee Nation’s opposition to delisting.





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“The spiritual rights of traditional Pawnee people are currently being violated through a direct attack on the sovereignty and spiritual rights of 26 other Tribal Nations,” declares President Gover.

“Like the ‘Associated Tribes of Yellowstone,’ historically the Pawnee people shared a deep cultural relationship with the grizzly bear and the land we both walked upon. Traditionally, the most powerful healers and medicine men among the Pawnee were Grizzly Bear Medicine Men, who when doctoring were transformed and imbued by the spirit of the grizzly.”

President Gover and the Pawnee Business Council use several significant traditional and historic references to emphasize the Pawnee Nation’s position.

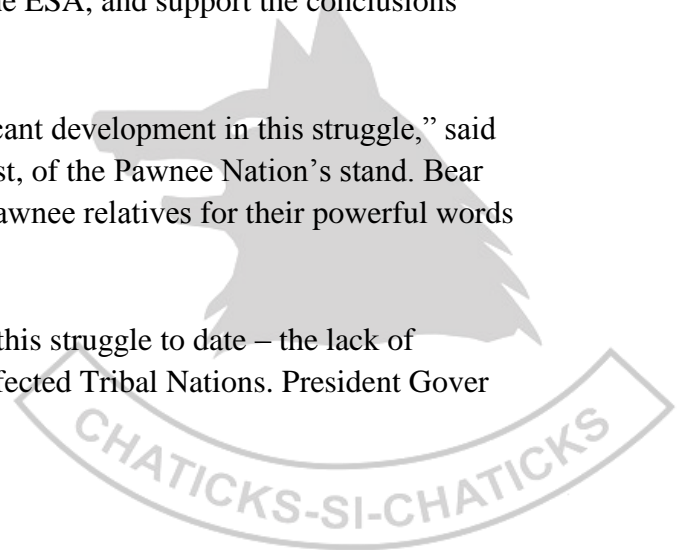
“None should forget that the Pawnee were among those who demonstrated the greatest respect toward the grizzly and initiated the first acts of conservation toward the Great Bear before the term ‘conservation’ existed in the English lexicon; recognizing that the Great Plains grizzly’s population was dwindling, the Pawnee and others began the tradition of carving elk antler to make replica grizzly claws and began using those for grizzly claw necklaces instead of actual grizzly claws,” President Gover writes.

Grizzly claw necklaces were worn by only the bravest and most esteemed Pawnee veterans. The necklaces symbolized the power, strength and courage of the grizzly.

“The Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma supports the efforts of GOAL (Guardians of Our Ancestors’ Legacy) Tribal Coalition to preserve the Yellowstone grizzly bear, so that it does not suffer the same fate as the Great Plains grizzly that was wiped out by immigrants in the charge of Manifest Destiny. We stand in solidarity with the Tribal Nations that have already issued declarations and resolutions opposing the removal of the grizzly from the ESA, and support the conclusions articulated therein,” affirms President Gover.

“It is a proud day for me personally, and a very significant development in this struggle,” said GOAL Tribal Coalition co-founder, R. Bear Stands Last, of the Pawnee Nation’s stand. Bear Stands Last’s heritage includes Pawnee. “I thank my Pawnee relatives for their powerful words and determination,” he said.

The Pawnee Nation addresses one of the key points in this struggle to date – the lack of consultation undertaken by the government with the affected Tribal Nations. President Gover





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“calls upon the federal government to honor the consultation process with the affected tribes,” and catalogs Executive Orders issued by President Clinton and President Obama, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the June 5, 1997 US Departments of Interior and Commerce order, that all mandate the consultation obligations required of the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

“This consultation process must be comprehensive and exhaustive, and solicit input from elected tribal leaders, traditional spiritual leaders, elders, and respective Tribal Historic Preservation Offices where they exist,” insists the Pawnee declaration.

The Pawnee people have a connection to the Greater Yellowstone Area that is rooted in antiquity, but is generally overlooked by ethnographers.

“Our ancestors had names for the physical features that today define Yellowstone National Park, knowledge that is retained by some of our tribal members. Given the vital nature of our language to our culture, this alone should be enough for the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma to be added to the existing 26 “Associated Tribes of Yellowstone,” President Gover submits.

GOAL Tribal Coalition is committed to working with the Pawnee Nation to secure that recognition for the Pawnee people from Yellowstone National Park.

