

## Statement of Quannah Parker's great-granddaughter, Ardith Parker

"If the grizzly bear is removed from Endangered Species Act protection both the grizzly and tribal peoples will suffer as a consequence. The impact upon both will be devastating, just as it was when war was waged upon the buffalo to starve our people physically and spiritually into submission. The enormity of the loss of the buffalo cannot be adequately expressed in words; it is something that can only fully be understood in feelings and emotions. It will be that way for tribes that have retained their ancient sacred relationship with the grizzly, if once again the bear like the buffalo is reduced to a trophy for hunters. It was not sport when they slaughtered the buffalo and it will not be sport if they start to slaughter the grizzly.

Many historical parallels can be drawn between the government's intent to leave the grizzly bear at the mercy of guns. Those with the grizzly in their gun-sights know nothing about the spiritual ways of tribal people and their relationships with their ancestral homelands and the grizzly. The impact upon our Indian people today will be similar to what happened to our ancestors in the period between our last days of living our true, traditional lifestyle and being forced upon reservations. Our people had a beautiful way of life, one of balance and reciprocity with the land and all living things before we were consigned to existing on reservations.

The federal government now recognizes that the Comanche are one of the twenty-six tribal nations that have an ancestral connection to Yellowstone. I feel for our Shoshone and Shoshone-Bannock relatives on Wind River and at Fort Hall who through living in proximity to the grizzly have retained that spiritual connection with them. I know how sad my great-grandfather, Quannah Parker, would be if he was here to see the loss of the grizzly and the pain other tribal people will feel if the grizzly is taken from them."

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