

Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council

175 North 27th St., Suite 1008 Billings, MT 59101 Ph: (406) 252-2550 Fax (406) 254-6355
Website: www.mtwytlc.org Email: belcourt@mtwytlc.com

RESOLUTION-01May2012-01

A RESOLUTION URGING THE PROTECTION OF THE WILD BUFFALO CURRENTLY IN OR NEAR YELLOWSTONE PARK AND TO CEASE HAZING, ALLOW MIGRATORY BUFFALO TO RETURN TO SUMMER RANGES, AND RECOGNIZE THE TRUST AND TREATY OBLIGATIONS TO AMERICAN INDIAN NATIONS FOR VIABLE POPULATIONS OF MIGRATORY BUFFALO IN THEIR NATIVE HABITAT

WHEREAS, the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council (MT-WY TLC) has been created for the express purpose of providing the Indian Tribes of Montana and Wyoming with a unified voice and a collective organization to address issues of concern to the Tribes and Indian people; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Directors of the MT-WY Tribal Leaders Council consists of duly elected Tribal Chairs, Presidents and Council Members who are fully authorized to represent their respective Tribes; and

WHEREAS, the approximately 3,700 wild buffalo that live primarily in Yellowstone National Park and seasonally migrate into portions of southwestern Montana are the only direct living link to the tens of millions of buffalo that once migrated freely throughout most of what is now the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Interagency Bison Management Plan adopted in 2000 by the National Park Service, the U.S. Forest Service, USDA's APHIS, the Montana Department of Livestock and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, is directly responsible for the death of nearly 5,000 wild bison at a cost to American taxpayers of over \$30,000,000. This great loss is uniquely felt by indigenous buffalo cultures and Nations with Treaty Rights and cultural ties to buffalo inhabiting public trust lands; and

WHEREAS, for too long, politics has been used to trump Tribal Treaty Rights, cultural survival, Tribal sovereignty and trust responsibility; and

WHEREAS, by severely limiting wild buffalo abundance and distribution on public trust lands, the state of Montana has abdicated its trust responsibility to ensure populations of indigenous species persist for future generations in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, Americans and American Indian Nations support protecting our revered buffalo, a sacred species, and care deeply about creating places for wild populations to freely roam North America; and

WHEREAS, there has been no documented case of migratory buffalo infecting cattle with brucellosis in Montana, Idaho or Wyoming since brucellosis was first detected in buffalo in 1917; and

WHEREAS, Brucellosis was introduced to Yellowstone's migratory buffalo and elk populations by cattle; and

WHEREAS, all recent outbreaks of brucellosis in cattle in Montana, Idaho and Wyoming have been traced back to migratory elk, not buffalo; and

WHEREAS, approximately 650 to 750 buffalo from the genetically distinct Central Interior subpopulation currently inhabit Hebgen basin with females calving on their chosen grounds including the Gallatin National Forest, Yellowstone National Park and on private lands on Hofse Butte where local residents welcome buffalo.

WHEREAS, there are no cattle grazing in the entire Hebgen basin and approximately 600 to 700 cattle will be trucked into Hebgen basin beginning in June; and

WHEREAS, local residents, and the Montana Dept. of Livestock and Fish, Wildlife & Parks have observed the presence of threatened grizzly bears in Hebgen basin since March 2012; and

WHEREAS, the IBMP specifically states: "Currently, hazing operations would cease if there was evidence of grizzlies being active in the area;" and

WHEREAS, since April 11, 2012, the state of Montana in cooperation with the Interagency Bison Management Plan agencies have repeatedly hazed or harassed buffalo from the South Fork of the Madison River, the south side of the Madison Arm of Hebgen Lake, Red Canyon, and Gallatin National Forest; and

WHEREAS, the stated intention of Montana's state veterinarian is to forcefully remove all buffalo from Hebgen basin to Yellowstone National Park by May 15 to impose a 30-day separation of buffalo and cattle.

WHEREAS, Buffalo calving season is April-May. Calving season for the resident elk population in the Firehole-Madison river drainages including Hebgen basin begins around June 1.

WHEREAS, in state-owned Wildlife Management Areas, Montana has closures in effect until May 15 to protect "crucial winter range for nongame wildlife" and

WHEREAS, Montana's assertion of jurisdiction over migratory buffalo creates a reciprocal responsibility to American Indian Nations to preserve the wild species and preservation of wild migratory buffalo ensures indigenous cultural survival and Treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather native foods for future generations in perpetuity, and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the MT WY Tribal Leaders Council does hereby request the state of Montana immediately cease hazing or the harassment of buffalo off habitat needed for their survival, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that migratory buffalo be allowed to return to summer ranges on their own as is allowed for migratory elk, and

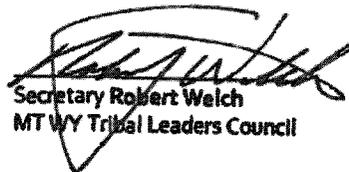
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the State of Montana should recognize the trust responsibility and Treaty obligations to American Indian Nations in providing for viable populations of migratory buffalo in their native habitat.

CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, as the Chair and the Secretary of the Tribal Leaders Council, do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly presented and approved unanimously at an official Board Meeting of the Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council, which was held on the 1st Day of May in Riverton, Wyoming with 6 member Tribes present to constitute a full Quorum.



Chairman Jay St. Goddard
MT WY Tribal Leaders Council



Secretary Robert Welch
MT WY Tribal Leaders Council