



## Buffalo Field Campaign

PO Box 957 West Yellowstone, MT 59758

(406) 646-0070 phone (406) 646-0071 fax

[bfc-media@wildrockies.org](mailto:bfc-media@wildrockies.org) \* [www.buffalofieldcampaign.org](http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org)

\* PRESS ADVISORY \*

### RELEASING OF THE BUFFALO SPIRITS CEREMONY

Prayer Ceremony Held Today inside Yellowstone National Park

Led by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19<sup>th</sup> Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - April 15, 2008

Press Contacts:

Rosalie Little Thunder, Seventh Generation Fund's Tatanka Oyate Project, 605-719-3012 (work), [wakinyela@yahoo.com](mailto:wakinyela@yahoo.com)

Mike Mease, Buffalo Field Campaign, 406-646-0070, [mease@wildrockies.org](mailto:mease@wildrockies.org)

Stephany Seay, Buffalo Field Campaign, 406-646-0070, [bfc-media@wildrockies.org](mailto:bfc-media@wildrockies.org)

(GARDINER, MT) – Today, at 12:00 noon (MST), Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19<sup>th</sup> Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe will lead a Releasing of the Buffalo Spirits Ceremony. The ceremony will take place in Yellowstone National Park and is open to everyone. A community meal will follow the event. Seventh Generation Fund's Tatanka Oyate Project and Buffalo Field Campaign are honored to share this announcement. Chief Arvol Looking Horse last performed the Spirit Releasing ceremony in 1997 when 1,084 wild buffalo were slaughtered that winter.

So far this winter Yellowstone National Park and the Montana Department of Livestock have trapped and killed 1,550 wild buffalo migrating from the Yellowstone plateau to winter range in the Gardiner Basin and upper Madison Valley. Hundreds more buffalo remain in Yellowstone National Park's Stephens Creek trap, while 99 bison calves have been separated from their family groups and placed in a quarantine research project at Corwin Springs, Montana.

Lakota elder Rosalie Little Thunder, of the Seventh Generation Fund, and co-founder of Buffalo Field Campaign had this to say about the current buffalo slaughter: *"Just as the Dust Bowl was the beginning consequence to the 1800's massacre of the great buffalo herds, the recent slaughter will just be a continuity of those dire consequences. We have yet to see the full scale of their absence from the plains ecosystem. From the time our ancestors could see the buffaloes' role as the caretaker of Un-ci Ma-ka, they've been held sacred. Can we stretch our memories and our vision to comprehend its ultimate significance to our survival? This herd in Yellowstone is but a remnant of the earlier herds, but it is a very precious gene pool. Why can't we see that? This ceremony is not an empty ritual. It is an act of responsibility to the spirits of our relatives and an act of humility that they do not abandon us. Hopefully, it can also bring some measure of healing to those that do care."*

Following is an excerpt from Chief Arvol Looking Horse's press statement, which is available in its entirety on the following page of this press release. *"Let it be known that Yellowstone territory; the habitat of the last wild Buffalo Nation - is sacred ground, it has been a SACRED SITE for the First Nation's people, and for all humanity who hold deep respect for all Creation. The Buffalo Nation has confirmed this fact; by where they have ended up, continuing to survive in their natural migration, struggling to live in a peaceful manner. These Buffalo that lost their lives in Yellowstone did not die by Natural Law, nor were their spirits honored with ceremony. This is why we must go there to perform a ceremony of honor for those that lost their lives by the misunderstanding of human-kind and pray to Wakan Tanka (Great Spirit) for pity of how gifts were unappreciated. We must pray with all those who grieve and be grateful for them. We must pray for the healing of the human Spirit, to understand the connection to all living beings on Un-ci Ma-ka."*

**Releasing of the Buffalo Spirits Ceremony Tuesday, April 15, 12:00 noon (MST)**

**GATHERING** – 12:00 pm, 4/15/08; Stephens Creek Road and Old Yellowstone Trail, west of the Yellowstone River, 2 1/2 miles north of Gardiner, Montana. **DIRECTIONS** - From the Arches landmark, located near the Gardiner, Montana Fee Entrance to Yellowstone National Park, head north past the football field/local school along the Old Yellowstone Trail County Road for 2 1/2 miles to Stephens Creek Road, that leads to the bison trap. Please note that Yellowstone National Park has a closure in effect from near the Fee Entrance to Stephens Creek west of the Old Yellowstone Trail. Please do not park off-road or block traffic. Extra parking at the Arches landmark along the gated fence.

**RECORDINGS** – Actual ceremony is not to be documented in any way. Media/journalists register with media coordinator.

**LODGING** - Accommodations in surrounding area can be found online: <http://www.gardinerchamber.com/directory.asp?cat=1>

**TRAVEL ADVISORY - DUE TO CLOSED ROADS IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK**, it is advised that you take the route from Interstate 90 through Livingston, Montana to Highway 89 south to Gardiner, Montana.

**COMMUNITY MEAL FOLLOWING CEREMONY** - Eagles Hall Gardiner Community Center on 206 Main Street

-  
-30-

**FULL PRESS STATEMENT BY CHIEF ARVOL LOOKING HORSE:**

Mi-ta-ku-ye (my relatives),

I have been called upon to perform the Spirit Releasing ceremony for the thousands of buffalo that have lost their lives in the last decade, in the mountains of the Yellowstone River country.

Many, many generations ago, our relatives, the Pte O-ya-te (Buffalo People) came up from Wind Cave in the Black Hills; the heart of Un-ci Ma-ka (Grandmother Earth) and prepared the way for our existence. From that time forward, they gave of themselves for our survival, as long as we respected their gift. They taught us how to live in an honorable and respectful way by example and through the teachings of the White Buffalo Calf Woman. She brought the Sacred Canupa (Pipe) to remind us of our responsibilities and also provided us with the knowledge of the sacred rites that are necessary to discipline ourselves.

From the Buffalo Nation, our ancestors learned to have an honorable relationship of being connected with Un-ci Ma-ka; this “way of life” that identifies us of who we are as an O-ya-te (a People), with all it’s sacred teachings. They understood the gifts from Un-ci and carefully lived in harmony with her wellbeing. For that reason, we hold them to be sacred. We co-existed in a good way until we were nearly destroyed. Ob un-ka-so-ta-pi tka. The sacred Buffalo Nation in these mountains are the survivors of that natural way of life. We are culturally and spiritually indebted to them and we still need their guidance, to remind us how to be at peace and harmony with Un-ci Ma-ka.

Let it be known that Yellowstone territory; the habitat of the last wild Buffalo Nation - is sacred ground, it has been a SACRED SITE for the First Nation’s people, and for all humanity who hold deep respect for all Creation. The Buffalo Nation has confirmed this fact; by where they have ended up, continuing to survive in their natural migration, struggling to live in a peaceful manner. Our ancestors also gave us this message by fasting in this area long ago, as they recognized this place of sacredness. This understanding is how we maintain the balance upon Un-ci Ma-ka, to protect these places, especially for the survival of our future generations to come.

These Buffalo that lost their lives in Yellowstone did not die by Natural Law, nor were their spirits honored with ceremony. This is why we must go there to perform a ceremony of honor for those that lost their lives by the misunderstanding of human-kind and pray to Wakan Tanka (Great Spirit) for pity of how gifts were unappreciated. We must pray with all those who grieve and be grateful for them.

Many of the people who are deeply concerned of what has happened in the manner of which their lives were taken; we see this as an un- necessary massacre. We have known that this particular herd is the last original Buffalo Nation that still follows their migration pattern, the little that is left in tact; they are the sign of our connection to our wellbeing of living in harmony. I humbly ask for all People to make prayers on April 15th, at high noon; for a healing of humanity - for the decisions that are being made with no regard for the sacredness of life, for the massacred Buffalo’s spiritual journey and to protect what is left - in understanding of what our journey in this life represents in being responsible! We must pray for the healing of the human Spirit, to understand the connection to all living beings on Un-ci Ma-ka.

In a Sacred Hoop of Life, where there is no ending and no beginning! Can-te Mi-ta-wa I-ta-han (from my heart)  
~ Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe