



## RESOLUTION 7

As amended and accepted by contact groups on the 29th and 30th August 2024

### **Making Space to Protect White Animals, Messengers of Peace**

#### **PREAMBLE**

White buffalo are exceedingly rare. Distinct from albino buffalo (with red eyes and pink noses, versus white buffalo which possess black eyes, nose, and hooves), only 1 in 10 to 20 million buffalo are born white. These unique individuals also play an important role in the prophecies of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota Oyate.

This resolution is requested by Chief Arvol Looking Horse, the 19th Keeper of the Sacred White Buffalo Calf Pipe, and was catalyzed by the birth of a true white buffalo in Yellowstone National Park in June of 2024, two months prior to the 12th World Wilderness Congress. Lakota prophecy holds that the white buffalo calf will be born in difficult times of cataclysmic change. It portends the end of a cycle, and draws attention to the need for the restoration of balance and peace.

In 2023, Chief Looking Horse also had a vision, in which the world would gather in the Black Hills, people from all walks of life, who would work to heal Ocim Maka, Mother Earth. His vision coinciding with the birth of the white buffalo calf and the 12th World Wilderness Congress, is the impetus behind this resolution. While this may challenge those delegates steeped in more material epistemologies, those who seek to create transformational change believe traditional ways of knowing play an important role in the world we seek to create.

#### **WHEREAS**

White animals play an irreplaceable role in the cultural practices of traditional peoples. These animals, which are often viewed as “messengers of peace” help to restore pride and relevancy in ancient lifeways while simultaneously heightening interest in traditional ways of knowing. In many cultures, when people learn of the birth or appearance of a white animal, such as the recent birth of the exceedingly rare white buffalo in Yellowstone National Park, they are reminded of the prophecies of their ancestors and are often inspired to come closer to the practices through which such prophecies were derived. Thus, white animals can play a role in slowing assimilation’s corrosive poison of forgetfulness.

The sudden, unexpected appearance of a white animal - within a community's awareness or an individual's line of sight - fills many with a sense of hope and a connection to a purer, more expansive, and more subtle reality, be that the intangible principles of goodness and peace or a stronger recognition of the collective unconscious and the Otherworld. They guide the

attention of native and non-native peoples alike toward the sacred and a recognition that existence is more than just physical bodies moving through physical space. They remind us of the omnipresence of spirit. They remind us that Earth is sacred.

White animals have a track record of uniting us, across cultures, in worthwhile endeavors. It was the protection of the Southern White Rhino, which in the 1950s was on the brink of extinction, that brought the founders of the World Wilderness Congress together (a white South African game ranger and his Zulu mentor) during the violent racism of Apartheid to unify their efforts for the protection of this species. It is the June 2024 birth of the white buffalo in Yellowstone that precedes the cross-cultural communion of the 12<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress (WILD12) that will convene in the *Hé Sapa*, the Black Hills, in August of the same year.

Like all lifeforms, white animals need a space to live, grow, and nourish themselves. While their appearance is oftentimes rare, these appearances will become even more scarce if we continue to degrade the lands, waters, and seas upon which they depend. This weakens our connection to the sacred. When we make space for life, we make space for white animals. When we make space for white animals, we make space for the sacred. In the view of many Indigenous Peoples, the logic is self-evident.

Recent governmental calls to protect 30% of Earth's lands, waters, and seas by 2030 (30x30), while important, do not go far enough for Indigenous Peoples who view all of Earth as sacred and who recognize that intact places that many call "wild" help to increase the likelihood that we might encounter and be inspired by white animals and that they might aid us in drawing closer to Spirit. Western scientists have called to protect a minimum of Half of Earth's lands, waters, and seas – while this is still not enough (all of Earth is sacred, not just Half), it is a step closer to what is needed.

## **THEREFORE**

Due to the fact that Western science and conservation does not fully recognize or understand white animals for what they are, Indigenous leadership and stewardship of the lands, waters, and seas must play a prominent role in the global endeavor to ensure that nature has sufficient space to thrive. The 30x30/Half objective must include the restoration of Indigenous territories to Indigenous Peoples who will unite Western science and traditional knowledge and wisdom to protect the physical spaces that help manifest white animals into the world and who will in turn heighten the sacred significance of our lives.

## **RESOLVED**

- A. Call upon conservation non-governmental organizations, national and provincial land management agencies, and Indigenous leaders to publicly recognize the sacredness of all of Earth, including and especially white animals.
- B. Increase awareness about the role of white animals in reminding us of the importance of and our connection to intangible and spiritual dimensions.

- C. Increase the amount of lands, waters, and seas that are wild, healthy, and intact to at least Half of the surface of the Earth, and in doing so requiring the free, prior, and informed consent of all Indigenous Peoples and local communities who occupy those areas, and including in this objective the return and restoration of territory to Indigenous communities for the purpose of stewarding Earth in accordance with traditional knowledge and wisdom.
  
- D. Encourage further public dialogue on the sacred and the role white animals play as messengers of peace.

**PROPOSERS**

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