Transboundary cultural resources: Sacred wildlife, Indigenous emotions, and conservation decision-making

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Abstract

For many Indigenous communities in North America, the grizzly bear is a symbol associated with tribal medicine, spirituality, history, and knowledge. Despite its cultural importance to Indigenous communities and also federal trust responsibilities, Indigenous Peoples are rarely consulted in conservation decision-making concerning grizzly bears, and the emotional outcomes of these decisions are poorly understood. In 2017 grizzly bears were removed from protection under the Endangered Species Act in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Drawing from emotional political ecology and emotional geography, we use the concepts of cultural resources and 'networked space' to investigates how conservation decisions about transboundary cultural resources affect the emotions of Indigenous Peoples inside and outside of policy-targeted areas such as Yellowstone. The bears are non-subsistence resources that also carry cultural meanings for people who live beyond their current range. We find that conservation decisions affecting transboundary cultural resources transcend time and space and can have strong emotional consequences for our research participants who live outside of the policy-targeted area. In connection with the psychological dimension of emotional political ecologies, we also find that our participant's emotional responses to the delisting were animated by the historical traumas imposed by living in a colonial state.

Keywords: Conservation, Indigenous, transboundary cultural resources, emotions, wildlife

Résumé

Pour de nombreuses communautés indigènes d'Amérique du Nord, le grizzli est un symbole associé à la médecine, à la spiritualité, à l'histoire et aux connaissances tribales. Malgré son importance culturelle pour les communautés indigènes et les responsabilités fiduciaires du gouvernement fédéral, les peuples indigènes sont rarement consultés dans les décisions de conservation concernant les grizzlis, et les conséquences émotionnelles de ces décisions sont mal comprises. En 2017, les grizzlis ont été retirés de la protection prévue par la Endangered Species Act dans l'écosystème du Grand Yellowstone. S'inspirant de l'écologie politique émotionnelle et de la géographie émotionnelle, nous utilisons les concepts de ressources culturelles et d'"espace

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en réseau" pour étudier comment les décisions de conservation concernant les ressources culturelles transfrontalières affectent les émotions des peuples autochtones à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des zones ciblées par les politiques, telles que Yellowstone. Les ours sont des ressources de non-subsistance qui portent également des significations culturelles pour les personnes qui vivent au-delà de leur aire de répartition actuelle. Nous constatons que les décisions de conservation concernant les ressources culturelles transfrontalières transcendent le temps et l'espace et peuvent avoir de fortes conséquences émotionnelles pour les participants à nos recherches qui vivent en dehors de la zone ciblée par la politique. En lien avec la dimension psychologique des écologies politiques émotionnelles, nous constatons également que les réactions émotionnelles de nos participants au retrait de la liste étaient animées par les traumatismes historiques imposés par le fait de vivre dans un État colonial.

Mots-clés: Conservation, autochtones, ressources culturelles transfrontalières, émotions, faune et flore sauvages

Resumen

Para muchas comunidades indígenas, el oso grizzly es un símbolo asociado con medicina tribal, espiritualidad, historia y conocimiento. A pesar de su importancia cultural para las comunidades indígenas y las competencias de fondos federales, los pueblos indígenas son rara vez consultados para tomar decisiones respecto a la conservación del oso grizzly, además de que las consecuencias emocionales son poco entendidas. Utilizando como caso de estudio la remoción de los osos grizzly del ecosistema de Greater Yellowstone del acta de especies amenazadas, y partiendo de ecología política emocional y geografía emocional, aquí se utilizan conceptos de recursos culturales y espacio interconectado para investigar cómo las decisiones de conservación sobre recursos culturales transfronterizos, o recursos de no subsistencia que conllevan significados culturales para gente que vive más allá de su rango actual, impacta las emociones de personas indígenas dentro y fuera de las áreas en las que se enfocan las políticas. En articulación con la dimensión psicológica de las ecologías políticas emocionales, también encontramos que las respuestas emocionales que nuestros participantes tienen a la exclusión, se encuentran estimuladas por traumas históricos impuestos por vivir en un estado colonial.

Palabras clave: Conservación, indígena, recursos culturales transfronterizos, emociones, vida silvestre.

1. Introduction

> I'm sure there's many right now that are upset and probably trying to do something right now, you know? The thing is that you know they're going to do this [delist] regardless, and it's already been shown in Standing Rock that those governing the laws and determining the numbers and the list and the conservation and all this, you know that even though it upsets us, you know at the end of the day they couldn't give two shits about our opinion anyway. (Oneida Bear Clan member, interview 2018)

In 2017, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the U.S. Department of the Interior (USDOI) removed federal protections under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for grizzly bears (Ursus arctos horribilis) in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE), sparking frustration and dismay from Indigenous communities across the U.S. The decision transferred jurisdiction over the GYE grizzly population from the federal government to state agencies in Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming, and hunting was expected to be a component of each state's grizzly management plan. Although the decision has since been reversed by a federal judge, official statements from local Indigenous communities criticized the delisting, because it would have allowed hunting of grizzlies for the first time in forty years. Statements from Indigenous communities in both the current and historic range of the grizzly described the bear as a sacred cultural, religious, and spiritual resource, and claimed the delisting was a threat to the long-term recovery of the species and the survival of Indigenous cultures (Breuer 2017; Piikani Nation 2016). In response to the delisting decision, nine Native American tribes and three Native spiritual societies filed suit against the USFWS and the USDOI, citing violations to their religious freedoms under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and to the Administrative Procedure Act, and arguing

they were not properly consulted before the decision was made (Breuer 2017). This was the third time since 2007 that a decision was made to delist the grizzly that was later overturned, each resulting in similar outrage (Richardson 2016).

Indigenous underrepresentation in conservation decision-making is well-documented (Braun 2002; Ford *et al.* 2016), though little research has included perspectives from Indigenous Peoples living outside the places these decisions affect. Social research on conservation decision-making has historically limited the scope of investigation to those who live inside policy-targeted areas (Igoe and Brockington 2007), and typically focuses on *in-situ* resources and subsistence-livelihood dynamics. This ignores the dynamic emotional and spiritual relationships built between Indigenous Peoples and mobile cultural resources, such as wildlife, and their ability of to shape the history, knowledge, spirituality, and cultures of people at broader spatial scales (Cristancho and Vining 2004; Eichler and Baumeister 2018; Wilson 2015). While many political ecologists and emotional geographers have studied the emotional tolls of conservation decisions and ecological change (e.g., du Bray *et al*. 2017; Sultana 2011, 2015), they have paid less attention to the roles of scale, space, and access to non-subsistence wildlife in emotive connections to places, cultures, and lifeways (Wilson 2015). However, the cultural importance of resources such as wildlife transcend the spatial limitations imposed by their current ranges to influence people in many different places and at different scales (Coté 2010). Because many resources are mobile or have been extirpated from their original habitats, and because many Indigenous cultures experienced dispossession, emotions stemming from cultural relationships with transboundary cultural resources (TCRs), which refers to mobile, non-subsistence resources that are culturally significant to people beyond the current range of those resources, may transcend time and space and produce emotional outcomes that should be investigated to fully understand the emotional effects of environmental conflict and change.

To develop a conceptual lens to better theorize the links between the emotional effects of struggles over conservation decision-making for people connected to but not living in policy-targeted places, we draw on the literature on emotional political ecology, cultural resources, and networked space to develop the concept of *transboundary cultural resources*. Official documents concerning the grizzly delisting suggest that tribes situated in both current and historic grizzly habitat remain culturally and spiritually connected to the animal, and that those outside the bear's current habitat have a vested interest in its return to their lands (Breuer 2017; Piikani Nation 2016). Even tribes east of the Mississippi River, a region grizzly bears have never occupied, have taken an official stance against the delisting (Piikani Nation 2016). In response to the delisting announcement, Stan Grier, Chief of the Piikani Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy, publicly referred to the grizzly bear as "a sacred being that protects our lands," and added with urgency, "this is a struggle for the very spirit of the land – a struggle for the soul of all we have ever been, or will ever become" (Montero 2017). These feelings were echoed by Shoshone-Bannock Tribes Councilman Lee Juan Tyler, who expressed his opposition to the decision at a 2017 public tribal meeting in Rapid City, SD: "It's sacred; our brother, our sister! It [hunting] would be like going out there and murdering" (Lundquist 2017). These emotionally-charged statements demonstrate the enduring importance of the bear to many Indigenous cultures and provide evidence of possible negative impacts on the mental health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples concerned with the delisting.

Emotions play a critical role in the development of both societies and individual lives and are inseparable from the human experience (Williams 2001). The externalization and subsequent documentation of emotions from those suffering through resource conflicts provides insight as to how these hardships personally affect the actors embedded in them. Emotions do not only arise from the outcomes of resource conflicts; they are also enmeshed with the lands where these conflicts happen (Low and Altman 1992; Stedman *et al*. 2011; Sultana 2018) and the underlying historical context of the conflict, including ongoing settler-colonialism (Bacon 2019; Middleton 2010; Wirihana and Smith 2014). According to Smith and Anderson (2001: 7), "[a]t particular times and in particular places, there are moments where lives are so explicitly lived through pain, bereavement, elation, anger, love, and so on, that the power of emotional relations cannot be ignored." Drawing from emotional political ecology and emotional geography literature, this article operates on the premise that the GYE grizzly delisting provides one such moment for affected Indigenous Peoples. Focusing on the emotionally heightened spaces like the GYE can prove useful in exploring the ways that affective relations with the environment and the emotional effects of resource conflicts transcend time and space, which is critical in the creation of equitable, representative, and inclusive cultural resources policy.

The importance of the grizzly bear to many Indigenous Peoples, and the emotional and urgent language used by many to express how they were affected by the delisting decision, makes it an excellent case to investigate the emotional political ecology of conflicts over TCRs on tribal populations across the spatial and temporal boundaries of a policy targeted area. Though the grizzly bear is not a subsistence resource, we use the delisting of the species in the GYE to articulate the position that conflicts over non-subsistence natural resources are also linked to the emotional and wellbeing of our interviewees who prescribe a sacred cultural or religious status to the animal. To do this, we ask the following research questions:

1. How do the Native Americans interviewed in this study feel their cultural and spiritual values were included or not included in the decision to delist the GYE grizzly, and what are the emotional effects of their perceived inclusion or exclusion from the decision-making process?
2. What are the emotional effects of the delisting decision on the Native American's interviewed in this study inside and outside policy-targeted areas?

In the next section, we summarize the established literature demonstrating how state-mandated conservation policies affect Indigenous communities, followed by an explanation of how these issues and conflicts can be interpreted through the theoretical frameworks of emotional geography and emotional political ecology. Next, we provide a brief overview of cultural and transboundary resources and how they relate to Indigenous cultures, and we explain how and why the grizzly bear is a transboundary cultural resource (TCR). We then develop our TCR concept to provide a conceptual lens for investigating the scalar dimensions of affective relationships with wildlife and other cultural resources and the emotional outcomes of struggles over resource decision-making, followed by our results and discussion.

2. Emotional political ecology of transboundary cultural resources

State conservation decisions and injustice

State-led conservation decisions often fail to incorporate inclusive and representative policymaking processes, and frequently have negative impacts on racially or economically marginalized populations (Feldpausch-Parker *et al*. 2017; McCorquodale 1997). Indigenous communities have historically been excluded from state-led conservation and decision-making processes, resulting in numerous negative impacts, including limited access to the critical natural resources they rely on for physical, spiritual, and cultural sustenance (Braun 2002; Eichler and Baumeister 2018; Harris 2017; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Ojeda 2012; Stevens and De Lacy 1997; Thornton 2010; Wilson 2019). In addition to detrimental material and physical effects, including dispossession and malnutrition, the outcomes of these decisions and the attendant struggles of underrepresented communities to obtain or access natural resources have been linked to significant negative emotional consequences (Dallman *et al*. 2013; Norgaard and Reed 2017; Sultana 2011, 2015). These outcomes disproportionately impact Indigenous Peoples compared to those who are adequately represented in the decision-making processes of settler-colonial cultures (Braun 2002; Eichler and Baumeister 2018; Norgaard and Reed 2017; Stoffle and Evans 1990; Suagee 1982). In part, this is because natural resource policy tends not to distinguish between Indigenous Peoples and the resource-rich spaces in which they reside. Indigenous Peoples who live in the typically remote or rural landscapes targeted by these policies are simply subsumed within nature itself and their voices are erased from decision-making processes, creating both physical and emotional hardships for those affected (Braun 2002; Perreault 2001; Yazzie 2018). This erasure is wholesale; with the dismissal of Indigenous Peoples from the broader political discourse of a state, Indigenous epistemologies, built upon centuries of intimate experiences with their lands and management of their resources, become isolated from national environmental discourses (Bacon 2019; Robbins 2004; Stapp and Longnecker 1998).

Similar to other Indigenous Peoples around the world, Native Americans often contend that their voices and cultural values are not represented in many U.S. conservation decisions (Breuer 2017; Richardson 2016). At the core of Crow Indian Tribe v. United States – the 2017 tribal-led lawsuit against the GYE grizzly delisting – is the claim that tribes were not consulted prior to the decision to delist the grizzly, and, as such, its impacts on their cultural resources and values could not have been considered during the process (Breuer 2017). As described by Fraser (1997), underrepresentation is a cultural and institutional process of disrespect, insult, and stigmatization that devalues certain people in comparison to the settler-colonial class. Thus, the decision not to consult tribes prior to the delisting is a continuation of historical, political, and systematic tactics to insult, disrespect, and erase Indigenous Peoples and their values while simultaneously upholding the values of the settler-colonial culture (Bixler 2013). The decision to exclude tribal communities from conservation practices eliminates the integration of tribal origin stories that include the grizzly bear into policy development. These stories create a religious significance around the treatment of the animal and impact how tribal members think, talk, and interact with and about grizzly bears.

Although religion has not always been considered a weighty component of conservation practice and policy, there is an argument to be made for more consideration to be given to religious beliefs, cosmologies, and cultural origin stories when crafting conservation policies that influence animals of religious significance. Deep ecologists have long argued that an over-reliance on science in conservation practices has contributed to an overall degradation of respect for nature and reduced human well-being (Milton 2002). Conservation models that incorporate religious belief systems allow for the idea that all life on earth serves a sacred purpose (Milton 2002), thus emphasizing the importance of including indigenous voices in decision making processes and allowing space for these cosmological beliefs about grizzly bears to receive consideration.

Considering the significance of the grizzly and other wildlife species to Indigenous cultures, as well as how these species shape and influence Indigenous cultures, it is likely that negative psychological or emotional effects may present themselves when it is perceived that these species are being harmed and Indigenous Peoples are excluded from decision-making processes (Cristancho and Vining 2004; Norgaard and Reed 2017). Because political decisions that affect how people interact with and have access to cultural resources can have emotional consequences for those affected (Norgaard and Reed 2017; Askland and Bunn 2018), an analytical lens that encompasses both politics and emotion is needed to fully understand how they affect the everyday lives of the people they impact.

Emotional political ecology and emotional geography

Environmental and resource struggles are tethered to emotion and can elicit visceral responses from those in both the center and periphery of these conflicts (Arboleda 2015). Considering environmental resources are universally linked to both physical and cultural survival, people living through struggles over land, water, and environment are bound to be highly emotional, and many watching conflicts from a distance empathize with those embedded in them. Emotions are an integral part of power relationships and environmental values; thus, resource struggles are experienced and negotiated through the emotional relationships built among and between the people involved (Sultana 2011). Experientially, emotions vary depending on the social position of a person and myriad intersecting factors, such as race, class, gender, and religious affiliation (du Bray *et al*. 2017; Sultana 2011; Wutich and Ragsdale 2008). Environmental values are often influenced by these factors, as well (Biersack and Greenberg 2006; Hidalgo 2017; Peet *et al*. 2010). While emotions are important for understanding how individuals and communities are affected by conservation decisions and conflicts, they are also important for understanding how individuals and communities wish to move forward. Because emotions are key components of how individual lives and societies are constructed and experienced, analyses of social or political issues that lack an emotional component produce an incomplete understanding of the workings of the world (Neu 2000; Pugmire 1998; Smith and Anderson 2001; Williams 2001).

The dynamic struggles among different actors to achieve control over or access to natural resources, and the nature of the relationships between these actors and resources, is the major focus of investigation in political ecology. In uncovering the roles of culture, power, history, and nature in the numerous discourses used to justify or to limit access to resources or that lead to environmental conflict, political ecology becomes a mechanism

for defining and explaining the motivations, interests, and actions of actors embedded in these conflicts at multiple scales (Biersack and Greenberg 2006; Bixler *et al*. 2015). Recently, feminist political ecologists and geographers led a successful push to center the roles of subjectivities like emotion in shaping conservation, natural resource policy, and related conflicts (du Bray *et al*. 2017; González-Hidalgo 2017; Sultana 2011, 2015; Wutich and Ragsdale 2008). This push led to the development of emotional political ecology, a field that draws attention to the "hidden ways that natural resources come to affect everyday life" (Sultana 2011: 163), and which arises from the intersection of emotional geography, political ecology, and resource management (Sultana 2015). Accordingly, Sultana (2011, 2015) and other political ecologists have begun to explore the ways emotions provide meaning and context in understanding the power dynamics at play and the personal toll of peoples' struggles to access resources (Dallman *et al*. 2013; González-Hidalgo and Zografos 2020; Norgaard and Reed 2017). The context in which emotions are felt is important as well; since conservation decisions are highly political, the emotional responses of actors involved are deeply embedded in politics, and claims to resources are always embedded in perceptions of power and control (Hidalgo 2017). The places these decisions affect are critical to both emotions and politics, as well (Sultana 2011). Sultana (2011, 2015) contends that attending to space and emotions is critical when investigating resource access struggles because emotions are localized and embodied by actors, and focusing on emotion helps to reveal the intimate day-to-day dynamics of relations between resources and society. For example, Dallman *et al*. (2013) demonstrate how connections to place influence emotions, identity, and tribal spirituality, and how these factors mediate social relationships during environmental conflicts.

In a recent review, Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zofragos (2020) expand on the emotional political ecology concept to describe a multidimensional framework called emotional political ecologies (EmPEs) that identifies five dimensions researchers should consider when analyzing the relationship between power, conflict, and emotions: *psychological*, *more-than-human*, *collective*, *personal-political, and geographical*. The psychological dimension relates emotional stress to power asymmetries in environmental conflicts, including how trauma, such as the intergenerational trauma of colonization, determine human-environmental relations. The more-than-human dimension emphasizes inter-subjective communication among humans and socio-natures, including the interconnections of human bodies with animal, cultural, ideological, and technological bodies. Through this lens, emotional political ecologists can better understand the role of affect in environmental conflict by acknowledging and exploring how subjectivities are constructed through fluid emotional relationships with the more-than-human. The collective dimension acknowledges emotions as a source of motivation for social movements and collective action on environmental issues, which may in turn contribute to the construction of activist subjectivities. The personal-political dimension highlights the role of emotions in everyday practice while drawing attention to how power, inequality, and social relations are made and remade through everyday interactions with the environment. Finally, the geographical dimension centers on understanding socio-spatial aspects of emotions in environmental conflict, with emphasis on linkages between psyches, communities, and attachment to place. Within the geographical dimension, we suggest that more work is needed to understand how power asymmetries shape the different ways groups engage with spaces of conflict. In part, this is because despite concentrating on the roles of emotion in environmental conflict, emotional political ecology research has primarily focused on in-situ resources, suggesting a need to understand the emotional dimensions of transboundary resource conflicts. To help us theorize these links, we develop the concept of transboundary cultural resources below.

Emotional political ecology of transboundary cultural resources

In this section, we describe the concept of a transboundary cultural resource and highlight how combining the concept with emotional political ecology enables a theoretical focus on how affective relations between people and cultural resources, such as wildlife, transcend in-situ interactions. Cultural resources are commonly defined as remnants of human history, such as a burial site, structure, landscape, or artifact, that is culturally significant to and closely associated with a specific living group of people (Knudson 1999), but this definition can be extended to include the plants and animals currently and historically important to, and associated with, a culture or group (Cristancho and Vining 2004). Many subsistence resources – those wild-harvested for customary and traditional uses – embody deep cultural meanings for Indigenous Peoples in North

America (Berkes 2017; Chan *et al*. 2011; McCorquodale 1997; Starkey 2016), and some, such as various species of plants, fish, and game animals, are so critical in providing sustenance and physical stability that they are ascribed sacred religious or spiritual status (Coté 2010; Cristancho and Vining 2004; Garibaldi and Turner 2004; LaDuke 1999). Similarly, many non-subsistence components of the environment, both living and non-living, are considered equally sacred and important to the survival and/or identity of a people (Preston and Harcourt 2009; Schultes *et al*. 2001; Unger *et al*. 2006). Certain non-subsistence animals – those which are not typically harvested – may be sacred for various reasons, including the physical appearance of the animal in and the symbolism attached to them through traditional folklore and medicinal practices (Cristancho and Vining 2004; Pavlik 1997). While definitions vary, for the purposes of this article we define cultural resources as all living and non-living components of the environment that significantly contribute to cultural identity and well-being.

The spatiality of these resources can determine who is able to access and use them at a given time and how, as well as just live near them, and allocations often fluctuate. Further, the significance and importance of a resource to a culture may persist long after it ceases to have a physical presence in proximity to a particular space or group of people (Preston and Harcourt 2009). Whether or not Indigenous Peoples have access to cultural resources affects their ability to connect with their ancestors and effectively pass down knowledge to future generations (Stapp and Longnecker 1998), thus access limitations can dramatically alter Indigenous lifeways (Dressler and Roth 2011; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Ojeda 2012). While Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. have control over cultural resources within reservations, their decision-making power diminishes significantly for those located off-reservation, and is further limited for tribal nations without federal recognition or with little or no formal land base (Greaves 2018; McGregor 2018; Stoffle and Evans 1990; Whyte 2018a). This becomes particularly problematic when considering that many tribes were forcibly removed from their traditional homelands, and in many cases, important or sacred cultural resources are located beyond their sovereign political boundaries.

While geographers have long recognized the contingency of spatial boundaries (Nightingale 2013) and others have demonstrated that relational interactions in specific places with bears and other animals are fundamental to the formation of one's identity, subjectivity, and emotional experiences (Myers and Russell 2003; Nightingale 2013), little work has explored the affective relations people have with cultural resources or the emotional tolls of struggles over conservation policy of those who live outside directly impacted areas. Thus, much emotional political ecology research has not fully explored the affective relationships built through intergenerational processes, such as ceremony, spirituality, other cultural processes, that people dispossessed or otherwise disconnected from particular places and landscapes have with them. We build on previous emotional political ecology work to explore these relationships through our transboundary cultural resources concept and do so by using a conceptualization of space that accords with Law and Mol's (2001) concept of 'networked space' (See also Bear and Eden 2008). In their view, networked spaces are constituted through relationships and processes and a person's distance from a given place is determined by their relations to the elements that produce that space, such as bears, rather than the cartographic boundaries that shape environmental management practices (Law and Mol 2001). Thus, conceptualizing transboundary cultural resources as part of networked spaces draws attention to how the distant is made close through relational topologies of cultural practice, such as worshipping bears, and allows us to investigate the emotional political ecology of conservation policy that affects TCRCs.

Given the historic range of the grizzly bear, it is likely that many tribes in the American West, though separated by vast distances and diverse terrain, lived alongside the grizzly bear before its extirpation from all but a few small pockets of its historic range. Historically, some of these tribal cultures attached significant cultural values to the animal (Austin *et al*. 2004; Kellert *et al*. 1996; Pavlik 1997; Preston and Harcourt, 2009). The grizzly bear commands respect and importance among Indigenous communities throughout North America (see Black 1998; Kellert *et al*. 1996; Miller 1982; Pavlik 1997; Rockwell 1991). According to anthropologist Lydia Black (1998), bears have been a symbol of ritual to humans living in North America since Paleolithic times, and have been considered a doorway to the spiritual realm by North American Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial. The Blackfeet prescribe a god-like status to grizzlies, and have forbidden eating or hunting them (Rockwell 1991). The Flathead Tribe believe grizzly bears bestow powers to their medicine-men and grant them the knowledge they need to practice healing rituals (Kellert *et al*. 1996). The Navajo and Hopi believe the

bear is a powerful holy being with mystical powers, and that they protect them from dark forces (Pavlik 1997). Navajo, along with many other tribes, believe the bears are directly related to humans and liken consuming them to cannibalism (Pavlik 1997). Moreover, Indigenous ontologies include a responsibility to care for the natural world (Norgaard and Reed 2017; Wilson 2008), thus the decline of grizzly bears and the inability to steward them has important repercussions for tribal cultural identity and well-being.

Tribal nations involved in the 2017 delisting lawsuit, including the Crow, Standing Rock Sioux, Arapaho, Piikani Nation, and Crow Creek Sioux, point to the grizzly bear as a critical component of their cultural, spiritual, and religious beliefs, and contend that their ability to practice their spiritual and medicinal ceremonies would be impeded by the lifting of the ESA hunting ban (Breuer 2017; Eichler and Baumeister 2018; Richardson 2016). While most of the tribes represented in the lawsuit live in or near the GYE, others are headquartered as far away as the Dakotas and Arizona, in the former ranges of the grizzly. These tribal nations believe that grizzly bears must be allowed to repopulate their ancestral lands, and that any attempt to limit or diminish the animal's numbers will result in emotional and spiritual hardships for those who rely on the bears for protection and medicine (Breuer 2017). Additionally, the over 170 Indigenous Nations that signed *The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration* – an international treaty designed to create Indigenous solidarity in the protection of grizzly bears and Indigenous culture – believe the existence and proliferation of the grizzly bear is essential to securing a future for Native American and First Nations cultures (Piikani Nation 2016).

The transboundary characteristics of the grizzly are especially important in the case of the GYE because Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming would have regulated the bear separately after delisting, and grizzly habitat connectivity is a key concern for Native Americans in the long-term recovery of the species (Eichler and Baumeister 2018; Piikani Nation 2016). Defining the grizzly as a TCR is central to the notion that the importance of the animal is not limited to the places the species currently inhabits; the symbolic, ceremonial, and cultural value of the grizzly extends well beyond these areas and is embedded in the cultures of Native Americans with ancestral territories overlapping its historic range (Breuer 2017; Piikani Nation 2016). Because the grizzly has been extirpated from large swathes of the North American landscape through hunting and development, largely by European settler colonialists, the bear itself has been dispossessed from the ancestral lands of many Indigenous Nations. Despite its isolation from these previously inhabited lands, the grizzly holds symbolic value in these places and many hope that the grizzly may one day return. As such, the delisting affected multiple Indigenous Nations at multiple scales and across multiple spaces, which lends credence to the idea that conservation decisions made within a particular region or space can produce networked consequences for groups that reside outside the political borders of those spaces (Brown and Purcell 2005; Silvern 1999; Walker 2009), especially when those decisions involve TCRs.

3. Methods

Our research used a qualitative approach. The results presented here come from ten semi-structured, open-ended interviews with tribal members and tribal representatives from five tribal nations (Table 1). To identify potential study participants, we used a purposive, convenience sampling approach, including approaching potential participants at tribal sovereignty workshops and web-searches of tribal government, tribal activism, tribal business and recreation websites, and tribal Facebook groups. We also identified potential participants who expressed interest in the grizzly delisting in legal documents and inter-tribal treaties. All interviewees were enrolled tribal members or tribal representatives that were given tribal authorization to speak on the issue. In total, we sent 36 email invitations to people found on Tribal government and other websites throughout the U.S, and we sent five invitations to people identified on Facebook. We identified eight of our participants through these emails and Facebook invites. One of our other participants was a personal contact, and we met the other at a Tribal sovereignty workshop. While we did reach saturation, which is to be expected in studies that include people with fairly homogenous interests in grizzly bear conservation (Guest *et al*. 2006), we recognize that our findings do not represent the full-suite of tribal perspectives on the GYE delisting.

Location	Tribal Affiliation	Official stance on delisting	Grizzly bear presence
Fort Washakie, Wyoming	Eastern Shoshone	Against	Current range
Plummer, Idaho	Coeur d'Alene	Against	Occasional
Fort Hall, Idaho	Shoshone-Bannock	Against GYE delisting (Lundquist 2017)	Former range
Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona	Hopi, Bear Clan	Against	Former range
Dover, New Hampshire	Pennacook-Abenaki, Koasek Traditional Band	No official statement	Outside range

Table 1: Interviewee tribal affiliations.

Interview questions were designed to explore how participants have been emotionally affected by the delisting, the reasons for the emotions they experienced, and to uncover their general feelings towards the grizzly bear, the environment, conservation and conservation decision-making, and the importance or unimportance of these topics to their respective tribal cultures. Given the diverse positions, roles, and interests of interviewees, a semi-structured approach allowed for flexibility in the focus of questions asked in each interview and ensured that interviewees could cover a wide-range of topics related to the GYE delisting. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed following the three-step coding process outlined by Friese (2014). In particular, we began to conceptualize the data through inductive coding, which consists of analyzing the transcribed text line by line in search of emergent patterns or themes. We used extensive memoing and causal matrices to move from simple descriptions of the types of emotions interviewees experienced to a narrative that helped describe relationships between the emergent themes and the emotional dimensions of our interviewee's response to the delisting. Prior to submitting this article, our final product was sent to all interviewees to ensure that our analysis accurately captured and represented their experiences. All interviewees gave final approval to submit the article. Each was offered authorship, but they declined because authorship held no personal or professional value for them.

Lastly, there are limitations that prevent us from generalizing the results of our study to a more general population of Indigenous Peoples who live in the United States or elsewhere. All of our participants had an interest in the GYE grizzly delisting specifically or conservation in general. Further, all participants were either employed by their respective tribes or were involved in Indigenous activist and education groups. Participants were also all college educated and employed or retired. Within this sample, we see clear patterns in respondents' thought processes and experiences. However, this article in no way reflects all the diverse and dynamic opinions of Indigenous Americans at-large on this issue or any other. Future research on the effects of conservation decisions concerning transboundary cultural resources would benefit from cross-sectional sampling that accounts for more diverse demographics and human-environment relationships.

4. Results and discussion

Interviewees described a common set of themes linking emotions, networked scales, cosmologies and environmental conflict in the context of ongoing settler-colonialism. Participants shared their feelings about grizzly bears, the delisting, the bear's role in their lives, and potential outcomes of the decision. They also described what they believe are the underlying sources of conflicts with the state and specifically how government consultation processes with tribal members sidestep Indigenous voices and values. For them, the lack of meaningful consultation exemplified ongoing settler-colonialism through the attempted erasure of

Indigenous cosmologies. In addition, our interviewees provided first-hand accounts that positioned the grizzly bear as a TCR integral to the well-being of people beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries where it currently resides.

The role of the grizzly bear in Indigenous lifeways, spirituality, and identity

> Well, we see the bear as a leader in our culture, as a leader to Bear Clan members. You just, you use that healer, you use that medicine man. And so, when we do assemble, we acknowledge and pray to his existence, and acknowledge all wildlife and plant life, the rains, and so on. The bear is the strong one. He's the healer and a protector. (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018)

Participants celebrated or lamented wildlife through prayer, which they described as an emotional and introspective method of communication between themselves, their lands, and their Creator. Many reported praying for the continued viability of their natural resources, citing their importance to the traditions, cultures, and well-being of their communities. Some prayed for the grizzly specifically. One Hopi participant, for example, prayed for the grizzly's return to his reservation, while others, such as the Eastern Shoshone tribal member who was interviewed in this study, prayed for the grizzly's continued presence on their lands. Participants that were members of Bear Clans – a kinship group within a tribe or nation that is represented and guided by the bear spirit – directly called to the grizzly for strength, protection, and healing through prayer. As explained by one Bear Clan member below, the grizzly bear can be called forth to heal sickness through prayer rituals and ceremonies that several interviewees have participated in:

> When I think about grizzly bears, I, you know, I think that, just how important of a role that they play for me specifically. I just, in my culture and ways they're looked at as the highest form of medicine for healing. They represent our ancestors, they represent strength. You know, the grizzly bear represents many things, many great qualities. When I think of grizzly bears, I think of me, you know, me as a part of things, in that same sense and way that I use them in my medicine. It's universal in all tribes, calling on that bear medicine either through songs or medicine men that carry that same vibrational quality of the grizzly bear to summon him forth, and they use it in healing practices. (Oneida Bear Clan Member, interview 2018).

According to the Bear Clan members interviewed, the grizzly is the highest form of healing and protection medicine for them, and it is typically prescribed a god-like status. Bear Clan interviewees felt honored to exist simultaneously with their religious icon, and explained that grizzlies had become even more prominent in their prayers since the delisting. All reported feeling sad about the decision and believed the time they had spent worrying about the grizzly was affecting their mental health in a negative way, citing increased feelings of sorrow and grief during prayers. One participant reported an increase in prayer for the bear's safety and said it had become painful for him to dwell and pray on the outcomes of conservation decisions. Bear Clan interviewees frequently participated in bear dances and other bear-centered ceremonies, and they believed the continued existence of the bear on the physical plane was necessary to communicate with the grizzly in the spiritual plane. This speaks directly to the importance of incorporating religious or cosmological ideologies into conservation practices to account for how networked cultural processes link people to animals and the environment across cartographic scales (Milton 2002). For many research participants, the grizzly bear is not merely a species to be managed, but is instead an integral member of their community. Coexistence with the grizzly bear is requisite for their spiritual practices, thus impacting the spiritual connectedness of the tribal community to each other and the environment. Importantly, Bear Clan members were not the only interviewees to describe a deep spiritual and historical connection to the grizzly.

Many participants spoke to the cultural significance of the bear through its place in traditional tribal stories. For example, Grizzly is a character that appears several times in the sacred stories of the Coeur d'Alene

Tribe. One Coeur d'Alene participant enjoyed recounting a story about Coyote and Grizzly. The story narrated how Coyote had to face an animal-eating monster that had enslaved Grizzly and was using his strength and power as protection. Coyote had to outwit Grizzly in order to face the monster, and the subsequent triumph of Coyote over the monster would eventually lead to the creation of multiple tribes in their area, making Grizzly an important component of their creation story. The participant explained that the story was meant to provide listeners with a lesson: when facing a much stronger opponent, use your wits. The grizzly is used in this example to symbolize knowledge, and this symbology has been woven into the fabric of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's history through their sacred stories. This integration of the grizzly into cultural practices is similar for many of the other tribal nations represented in this article, making the existence of the bear important to the survival of those cultures (Dressler and Roth 2011; Igoe and Brockington 2007; Ojeda 2012). With wildlife and other natural resources maintaining a sacred and central role in our participants' lives, many felt a responsibility to care for their environment (Whyte 2018b), reflecting how their identities are shaped through cultural and emotional relationships with the more-than-human, as described by the interviewee quoted below:

> We recognize it's a major part of what distinguishes us from everybody else. There's nobody else around here that can say 'that's where my ancestors did this for thousands of years.' And so, and we want to make sure that we continue to have that emotional connection. So it is an emotional connection, and it's, it's more than just like, 'hey it's beautiful,' you know? That's what we always hear about this area is 'oh it's so beautiful,' and 'it's why we live here.' And you're like, 'well, that's not why we live here. We're here, and the reason why we're here is because the creator put us here,' and you just have that strong sense of responsibility to take care of it. (Coeur d'Alene Tribe Member, interview 2018)

It is apparent how this interviewee's identity has formed through relational interactions with bears via traditional tribal stories, demonstrating how the boundaries between the environment and self are fluid (see Nightingale 2013). However, this participant's identity and self has not been constituted through direct interactions with bears but rather through the intergenerational transmission of stories about bears that connect him to the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Through the delisting, our respondent's affective relations with bears through stories were disrupted, leading to a negative emotional response. Thus, much like the boundaries between the environment and self are blurry (Nightingale 2013), our interviewees' emotional responses to the delisting decision are connected across networked space. This is via cultural processes that link them to bears in ways that are hazy, in terms of the lines of cartographic space that delineate how environmental management decisions are made, as well as who we conceptualize as being affected by them.

Further, much as traditional stories and spiritual practices connected to bears shaped our interviewees' identities, healthy wildlife populations were seen as connected to our participants' personal health. The link demonstrates how selves and health are entangled in relational processes of becoming with the environment. For some, just knowing that certain species of wildlife still existed was a comfort that allowed them to see themselves, and thus the environment, as healthy. Additionally, threats to wildlife populations were perceived as threats to tribal health and to the ability of the tribe to experience their lands in traditional ways:

> Animals in general, especially when you look at the creation of life, they have important meanings. You know, the Native Americans, our people, see them as representatives of nature, of our own well-being, you know? They have innate value in our culture and ways. (Shoshone-Bannock Tribe Member, interview 2018)

Emotions associated with grizzlies and the delisting

All interviewees expressed strong emotional associations with grizzly bears. Words like "healer," "caring," "strong," "protector," "brother," and "mother" were used to describe the grizzly. Participants who are Members of Bear Clans, both Hopi and Oneida, spoke of the grizzly as a god, and referred to him as a "leader," a "healer," "the strong one," and "our religious icon." When asked to describe how they felt about the grizzly,

participants responded using words such as "reverence," "respect," and "love." Though most interviewees had no desire to encounter a grizzly, all participants associated the grizzly with positive feelings; indeed, not a single interviewee uttered a negative word about the animal. When asked to describe how they felt upon hearing about the delisting, many used words like "dismayed," "sad," "appalled," and "frustrated." Importantly, many explained they felt positive about the opportunity the delisting gave them to raise awareness of the issue. Respondents said they felt more motivated to protect the grizzly after learning of the delisting. For instance, as a result of the 2017 decision, one participant had become heavily involved with tribal legal efforts and inter-tribal solidarity initiatives meant to strengthen tribal opposition to conservation decisions at odds with their values. This demonstrates that emotions felt during resource struggles can act as rallying cries to push back against a perceived negative decision or future decisions (Jasper 2011; Moore 2005), and provides an example of the collective dimension of EmPEs (Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zofragos 2020) with emotions serving as a trigger for protest and resistance. However, for those living in areas where the grizzly was already extirpated, the delisting represented a roadblock to any hopes they had about the grizzly reclaiming its former territory and living alongside them once again.

Many participants believed they would be happier if they were able to see a grizzly from a distance, or if they simply knew they were "out there," signifying the importance of access for emotional well-being (Sultana 2011, 2015) and further demonstrating how our interviewees identities, health, and selves are entangled with bears across networked space. The importance of conceptualizing grizzlies as a transboundary cultural resource emerges, here, in the context of land dispossession and the forced removal of Indigenous People from ancestral homelands by calling attention to how the identities and health of our participants are linked through it to distant landscapes. The grizzly delisting acts to sever these connections and generates emotional responses to grizzlies in ways that suggest the importance of meaningful consultation about grizzly conservation decisions with Native Americans who live outside policy targeted areas. This is needed because of the bear's status as a TCR, and not to undermine cultural practices linked to grizzlies. This was especially salient for some living in areas where bears once roamed, including our Bear Clan participants who reported that despite never having lived alongside the grizzly, it felt like "something was missing" from their lives and landscapes because they knew their ancestors had coexisted with the bears. This again highlights the impacts of conservation efforts not only on grizzly bear populations and people who live in policy targeted areas but also on the overall well-being of Bear Clan members across networked space:

> I live out in the country and it's evident that, you know, we have occurrences with bears, cougars, bobcats – different wildlife. It's comforting, you know, because those are our people. Those are our people, too. And so, it's just comforting to know that they're still in existence, that our prayers are being answered, that they're still there, you know? (Coeur d'Alene Tribe Member, interview 2018)

Further, the emotional impacts of the delisting were felt by tribal members across spatial and cultural boundaries through empathic connection with other tribes who lived within the range of grizzly bears. This demonstrates how affective relations with bears and the emotions our participants felt because of the conflict over the grizzly delisting helped shape a collective identity (Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zofragos 2020). Though the grizzly was more relevant culturally to some respondents, all felt disrespected by the delisting decision, and many expressed solidarity with Indigenous Peoples more reliant on the bear for spiritual or medicinal fulfillment. For example, one interviewee who lives in New Hampshire expressed sadness and outrage on behalf of tribes for whom the grizzly was very important. When asked how she felt upon hearing about the delisting, she responded "appalled." Here, even though a TCR is not explicitly important to a particular tribal nation or individual, the resource can carry emotional sentiments, such as empathy and solidarity, through networked space that linked interviewees through common experiences of land dispossession and other settler colonial practices. Anger, frustration, and worry over certain delisting outcomes, especially the decision of individual states within the GYE to open grizzly hunts, were universal feelings among our participants, as well. Since the

delisting would allow individual states to manage the grizzly, and hunting was to be part of each state's management plan, all participants feared the prospect of the grizzly being opened to trophy or sport hunting.

Sport hunting and trophy taking

All interviewees described themselves as opposed to the trophy hunting of the grizzly, and most reported being opposed to sport or trophy hunting in general. The theme of stewardship emerged once again when participants spoke of hunting. All who commented believed hunting required a certain set of ethics, and that animals should be hunted to satisfy only base needs. Participants believed the only purpose of hunting grizzlies would be to take trophies, to clear obstacles for industry, and to remove threats from ranching and livestock operations. These perspectives reflect a historical narrative that natural resource policy decision-makers are more concerned with the interests of the settler-colonial class (Braun 2002; Stoffle and Evans 1990; Suagee 1982) and mirrors the historical experience in which the hunting of culturally significant animals served the larger project of Indigenous genocide and land dispossession (LaDuke 1999). According to a representative of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe, who live in the current range of the grizzly, the delisting, along with the potential for hunting, was an urgent matter because it represented yet another threat to their sovereignty, to their right to coexist with grizzlies and enjoy their lands as they are, and to their right to freely practice their spirituality. As this quote suggests, many expressed anger when discussing the potential for a grizzly hunt to be opened:

> Well, that's the reason why I got involved with that effort to fight the [Trump] administration on the delisting because we all have, we all have our prayers. When we pray, we remember those species, and we also remember the shrines where our people have lived, and they're still living and we want them to be there because we acknowledge the value of being they have. If the bear was exterminated – decimated, I should say – by trophy hunting, the loss of their wildlife, who's going to be there to fight for the bear? And I think that's why we stepped up to do that. Because our religion, our culture, our beliefs have sustained us for thousands of years, you know, and we need to continue to look up to them for our mission, for the future," (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018).

For our interviewees the historical traumas imposed by living in a colonial state animate our interviewee's day-to-day lives and understandings of and emotional responses to bear conservation policy. In this way, their affective relations with bears do not only arise through relations with the animal itself, but also through how revised policies cause changes in the ways they access and relate to bears. These experiences are entangled with intergenerational trauma and related emotional experiences. Here we see an example of the psychological EmPE (Gonazalez- Hidalgo and Zofragos 2020), and our results suggest a need for understanding how the emotional dimensions of environmental conflict are shaped and exacerbated by the emotional distress people experience in other parts of their lives. Further, for our interviewees, the affective relations and emotional outcomes of living with bears and the delisting crossed not only spatial boundaries but also temporal ones, suggesting emotional political ecologists should pay attention to how the relational topologies of cultural practice create networked space through intergenerational rituals that connect people across the lines on a map that shape how the environment is managed and determine who we conceptualize as impacted by conservation decisions.

Representation and the state

For our participants, the delisting also reanimated emotions related to past resource conflicts in the context of ongoing settler-colonialism. Though all study participants disagreed with the delisting, many explained the decision itself was not their greatest concern, but that it was representative of the larger problem of Native American underrepresentation in virtually all federal conservation decision-making. Participants expressed anger that they are not adequately consulted by federal and state governments about decisions that affect their sacred sites, plants, and animals. In particular, they relayed anger that their values, cultures, and spiritualities were routinely ignored in conservation decisions that affect their cultural resources.

Much like these broader state and federal resource management decision-making processes, no interviewees felt represented by the decision to delist, and most saw the non-consultation of Native Americans in the case of the GYE grizzly as "business as usual" from the federal government. The emotions elicited by Native Americans through the delisting encompass lifetimes of experiential underrepresentation and marginalization, suggesting that emotional responses to environmental conflict are distinct to a person's social position in a society (Sultana 2011, 2015) and that emotional responses to environment conflict must acknowledge the role of intergenerational trauma (Gonzalez-Hidalgo and Zofragos 2020). Further participant's emotional responses to the delisting were also linked with ongoing and historical settler-colonialism within environmental management (Bacon 2019). It is established that indigenous non-inclusion in decision-making can result in a loss of access to resources (Braun 2002; Perreault 2001), and our research shows that this can lead to emotional distress and frustration, feelings that are compounded by the chronic injustices associated with repeated exclusion:

> The thing is that you know they're going to do this [delist] regardless, and it's already been shown in Standing Rock that, you know, those governing the laws and determining the numbers and the list and the conservation and all this, you know that even though it upsets us, you know at the end of the day they couldn't give two shits about our opinion anyway. (Oneida Bear Clan member, interview 2018).

Despite the Administrative Procedure Act's emphasis on consultation, only one participant had been directly consulted about the grizzly delisting. This participant traveled to a meeting in Washington, D.C. focused on the delisting issue to speak about the importance of the grizzly to himself, his tribe, and his clan. However, after making the trek from Arizona to D.C., he found that the "meaningful consultation" the USDOI promised him and others in attendance was actually just a series of webinars aimed at disseminating information to tribal people about the research and actions the USDOI had already initiated or completed. According to him, everyone who participated in the meeting was disappointed by it. As he explained,

> I think that, yeah, I mean this is typical. The typical federal government. They have already predetermined what they want to do, what their plans are, what their motives are. They just go through the motions. In fact, they did not consult with us. We asked specifically for full and meaningful consultation. They said, you know, 'okay we'll do it,' then they don't do it, right? You know, that Zinke is lying, blatantly lying that he consulted with the tribes, and that's reflective of what he did with the Bears Ears National Monument, and I was involved in that one, too. But they just, they only just set their motives and then they say 'we've got to check that box there that says the tribes were consulted,' and they say 'yes, we did it.' You know, one thing about that is, they say 'okay, we're going to consult with you,' and I remember that, that meeting in DC with them, and their solution to consultation was a series of webinars, and we said, 'that is not consultation, this is one-way communication.' We needed them to come to the table with a blank sheet of paper and say 'okay, let's start.' Instead they come in with volumes of things that they've already done without consulting with us. And I still think, you know, managing the species, managing our natural resources along with the federal government as co-managers is probably a better way to do things than just, you know, because then we would realize that there's a, whatever the numbers are, that there's a better way to manage things than what they want to do. Just tear up the land, that's what they want to do…. They don't, they don't listen. (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018).

Other participants familiar with the federal government's tribal consultation practices described it as "checking a box," explaining that the federal government's definition of meaningful consultation was entirely different from their own. According to several participants, the consultation process usually involves a letter being sent to notify them that a change will be occurring or that a decision has been made regarding an issue.

They explained there is no real avenue for Indigenous input and no opportunity for a mutually informative conversation in response to a decision. No one involved in this project believed their personal values were represented in the delisting decision, and many stated that they did not believe the values of their family, friends, communities, or tribes at-large were represented. Most indicated they did not believe the federal government cared about them or their values, culture, or spiritual beliefs. Instead, many pointed to how their tribes have had to fight many environmental decisions made by the federal government in court, seeking reprieve for their tribes and their natural resources.

Our participants also interpreted grizzly bear conservation policy and resource decision-making more broadly in the context of capitalism and the elevating of commercial interests above Indigenous Peoples' health and cultural survival. Here, participants generally believed the federal government was more interested in appeasing powerful ranching groups and protecting the interests of capital than working with them to protect natural resources.

> It's greed. And the underlying reason, I think, for using the increasing numbers, is so they can get into their [grizzly bears'] environment and start drilling, start mining, get to the water, things like that so that corporations can profit from it. And that's the underlying reason. Their sole intent is to destroy the habitat by mining, extraction, you know, grazing, but that's their, that's their motive, right? They try to mask it by other things like saying 'the population has grown sufficiently, let's go ahead and start destroying their ecosystem.' What happens, what's going to happen when that remaining, whatever the number they said it was supposed to be, when they reduce the population to that, to that size? What's going to be the future of that population? They're probably going to diminish and eventually die away because it affected the land that they live on. (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018)

Though participants believed the grizzly was removed from the ESA due to its increasing numbers in the GYE, they also opined that money or greed were the actual motives behind delisting, especially since the GYE population was the only one affected by the decision. Some believed that politicians would benefit by appeasing powerful ranching lobbies. Though empathy was expressed for ranchers or livestock farmers who lived alongside predators, interviewees believed that they were aware of the threat from predators when they chose to set up their operations in predator country, so any losses suffered could not be blamed on wildlife. Further, the delisting was seen as an attempt by politicians to remove protections from GYE grizzly habitat so that extractive industries would have access to once off-limit resources such as oil, gas, minerals, timber, and water. These beliefs align with conclusions from past research positing that a state will favor economic and market concerns over the environment or those who directly depend on the environment for physical, spiritual, and cultural nourishment (Jackson and Langton 2012; London 2016; McCarthy 2009; Robbins 2004). According to most participants, wildlife had a right to exist wherever they were, especially because they were undoubtedly there first.

Several participants noted that the grizzly delisting was justified by the government through the use of numbers and measures, a strategy that omitted how TCRs like the grizzly were essential facets of tribal cultures and identities. In the USFWS' decision to remove the GYE grizzly from the ESA, grizzly bears are written into the plan as numbers. Measurable characteristics of its population, including population density, potential for establishing connectivity between isolated populations, food requirements, and likelihood of human-bear conflict are used to justify actions or changes to the management of the animal (Fish and Wildlife Service 2017). While this is representative of US wildlife conservation policy more broadly, the grizzly bear represents much more than statistics to many. Like most other wildlife, grizzlies have both material and semiotic importance and are embedded in a broad range of cultural practices that lead to our participants' affective relations with the animals, as detailed in this article. According to participants (and past research), conservation policy often fails to capture the affective relations they hold with grizzlies and the emotions that accompany these relations, thus failing to represent wildlife as anything more than data (Wilson 2015) and eliding the networked spatial processes that make them TCRs:

> I think that [delisting grizzly bears again] would be a very sad day. I mean, I would personally be very sad. My family would be very sad. Our clan would be very sad. Because it's just, they [the federal government] just keep coming and keep coming and it never stops. (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018)

For the majority of those interviewed, the goal of species conservation, grizzly or otherwise, was not to recover one area or another, but for the total reoccupation of a species. Most believed a species can be considered recovered once it is at or close-to pre-European contact levels and can regulate itself, making the grizzly recovery goals set by the USFWS inconsistent with their own beliefs and partially explaining how participants see their values are underrepresented. As one interviewee questioned, why would any effort be made to expand the population if they were delisted and considered recovered? For all participants in the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, this was especially relevant, as they said there were occasionally reports of grizzlies wandering through the nearby Bitterroot Mountains. They felt the delisting was sure to diminish their chance to have them back, a thought attended by feelings of sadness and grief for some of them. Further, many believed the delisting would lead to the eradication of the grizzly in the United States altogether.

> I'm sure that what went into it are the ranchers' concerns and stuff. Nothing much more than that. No idea and concept of, hey, let's listen to those people that want them to reach the Bitterroots. (Coeur d'Alene Tribe Member, interview 2018)
>
> They think they [grizzlies] belong only in a museum. Put them in a museum so people can come look at them, and stuff them up and put them in a museum so they can say 'this is what it used to be like. This is what our religious icon used to be like,' but he's not breathing, he's not reproducing, he's not contributing to ecology. And then it just becomes kind of artificial. We're all supposed to try: our population, mankind, plants, animals, wildlife, we're all supposed to increase. That's what, this is what we pray for in our prayer songs. So, it would be very devastating if they do delist them [again]. (Hopi Bear Clan Member, interview 2018)

That representatives from multiple tribes traveled to Washington, D.C. for the consultation meeting described above signals their willingness to work with the federal government to protect what is important to them. The desire to work with the federal government on environmental issues was a common theme throughout the interviews. Several participants believed that working together would yield immense and positive changes for wildlife and the environment. Though only a few participants mentioned it, there was also a sentiment that because the tribes occupied the land well before Europeans, and because their spiritual practices and cultures were so heavily centered around the ecosystems in which they lived, they have an inalienable right to be involved in decision-making processes like the grizzly delisting. In this way, they again linked their affective relations with bears to a networked form of space, calling attention to the importance of conceptualizing grizzly bears as transboundary cultural resources to fully understand the emotional political ecology of the delisting decision.

5. Conclusion

Our study enriches the literature on emotional political ecology by using the concepts of cultural resources and networked space to examine how affective relations with mobile resources transcend time and space. We also show how environmental conflict over their management produces an emotional toll for those living outside policy targeted areas. To do this, we developed the concept of transboundary cultural resources, which drew attention to how these relationships are built through intergenerational processes, such as ceremony and spirituality, that transcend the spatial and temporal boundaries imposed by maps and environmental policy. Conceptualizing cultural resources as transboundary in nature draws attention to how their scalar boundaries of influence are networked rather than regional, and how they influence and are influenced by multi-scalar and complex associations of people and politics and wildlife (Bear and Eden 2008; Nightingale 2013). To demonstrate this, we provide an account of the emotional responses of our interviewees to the delisting of the

GYE grizzly from the ESA, a species many of our participants no longer lived beside – but maintain cultural and emotive connections to. Our analysis revealed three primary findings. *First*, the importance of certain cultural resources transcends the boundaries in which conservation decisions are implemented. *Second*, the emotional effects of decisions concerning these resources are much broader spatially than the decision itself. *Third*, the exclusionary and colonial nature of these conservation decisions reveals the emotional and historical trauma participants felt as a result of the delisting.

More specifically, our research demonstrates how the grizzly was important to all Indigenous Peoples who participated in our study regardless of their location, tribal affiliation, or experience with the species. Though long extirpated from much of its historic habitat, the bear's cultural, spiritual, and historical or ancestral connection to participants outside the GYE remained. Through hope for the grizzly's return to their lands, the delisting issue was as important to these participants as those currently living alongside grizzlies in the GYE. Participants in this study who lived in areas that no longer had or never had a grizzly bear population were also emotionally invested in the decision through the values, beliefs, and historical traumas they shared with participants in the GYE. Just as the cultural significance of the bear transcended spatial and temporal boundaries, so did the emotional impacts of its delisting. Participants were universally opposed to the decision regardless of where they lived, and they were especially angry that states in the GYE were set to allow hunting of their shared cultural resource. The anger expressed by participants over hunting illuminated the explicit transboundary effects of the decision: those in the GYE were afraid access to their grizzly population would diminish along with its dwindling numbers, and those in the former ranges of the bear feared that disruption to the GYE population would prevent the bear's return to its ancestral homelands where only a few isolated populations remain.

Finally, participants described their underrepresentation in the delisting decision as an ongoing form of colonial dispossession and alienation from a cherished and sacred cultural resource. Despite the grizzly's importance to participants and their communities, none of them were consulted prior to the delisting in any meaningful way. Instead, participants believed decision-makers and the decision itself supported the economic interests of dominant colonial culture by appeasing ranching advocates and removing habitat protections that would allow extractive industries to plunder protected areas, providing more evidence that Indigenous underrepresentation in these types of decisions is purposeful, racist, and disrespectful (Braun 2002; Bixler 2013; Fraser 1997; LaDuke 1999; Stoffle and Evans 1990; Suagee 1982). Overall, our analysis demonstrates the importance of considering socio-spatial dimensions of emotions in environmental conflict, as suggested by González-Hidalgo and Zografos (2020), especially as humans migrate to different places through multiple forms of displacement, such as those migrating because of climate change.

From a policy perspective, the intensity of these emotions highlights the need for including considerations of human well-being, including emotional and mental health, when making management decisions impacting TCRs and other cultural resources. Understanding this intimate relationship between the grizzly bear delisting and the ensuing human emotions illustrates how a deeper understanding of the spiritual, historical, and lived connections between people and TCRs can be leveraged to inform more holistic conservation decision making models. Integrating this knowledge into the social and political institutions that influence decision making may result in decreased conflict around resource management in the American West by engaging with indigenous cosmologies and de-emphasizing colonial-settler politics.

Policymakers should broaden their understanding of the spatiality of their resource management decisions and the broad array of impacts that these decisions have on human emotional well-being to understand how these decisions create environmental conflict across multiple scales and networked affective relations. Recognizing and analyzing these affective relations across space and how they influence emotional reactions to environmental conflict is especially important given the multitude of displacements happening across the globe, ranging from climate migration and environmental refugees to amenity migrants moving to rural areas of the American West, driving out the working class. Future research should focus on how displacements beyond colonization interact with environmental conflicts through networked affective relations of space as policy decisions about TCRs engender environmental conflict.

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