

This is among the most baffling issues for me. Not because I don't understand it, but simply because the solution is so eminently reasonable and the Tribe has been so willing to enact that solution and the county so seemingly unwilling.

If the good people of Benewah County want to cast their lot with the likes of Dick Harwood and Larry Spencer, they are free to do so and theoretically I do wish them the best. But I know that decision won't end well for them. It never does.

I, for one, will continue to engage with and work with the people of the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, who have after generations of abuse and scorn, pulled themselves up by their bootstraps and built a real future in a tough and unforgiving terrain.

My kids are being raised with a respect and appreciation for the legacy of hundreds of years of history of North Idaho. History of their grandparents who raised a family as loggers and history of the Coeur d'Alenes who were the original owners of all of this land we love so much.

I hope my teenagers (and there will be a lot of them before we are through) always do the right thing and never get in trouble with the law. But if they disregard my advice, and act like teenagers and do dopey things and screw up, I want them to know I will still love them and support them however I can. But I won't shield them from the consequences of their actions, just as my parents let me fall on my face and figure it out.

My kids will also now know that if they decide to screw up and be stupid, and by chance they happen to screw up somewhere south of Worley and north of Moscow, they should expect more severe punishments, more lasting effects, and more profound consequences because they are going to be facing federal charges now and not simply a kindly local sheriff's deputy who might be willing to work with their parents in a constructive way to teach them a lesson.

And unfortunately that's how it should be. The Tribe has bent over backwards to do the right thing here, and Benewah County has unfortunately refused to meet even partway.

My family will be taught to respect the Coeur d'Alene Tribe and the hundreds of years of iron-clad contractual agreements they have with the US Federal Government. It's really a pretty simple thing to understand.