From: Repp, Pam
To: Noreen Walsh
Subject: Re: FW: Tribal Funding Proposal for the Mountain-Prairie Region
Date: Friday, December 07, 2012 12:12:20 PM
Attachments: R6 Tribal Funding Proposal-FINAL (2).docx

Noreen, Matt is on his way out of town for a hunting trip, but he did help me put together the paragraph which we labeled "vision" right after the intro to try to provide a hard and fast this is what we would do with the money punch. What do you think?

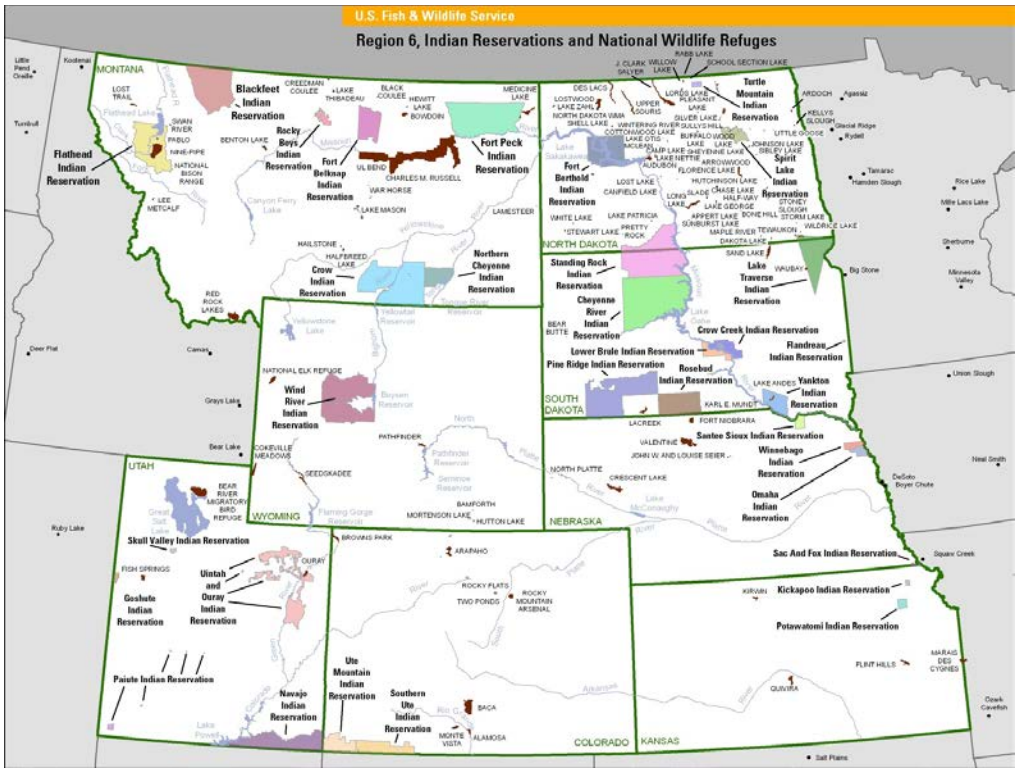
On Fri, Dec 7, 2012 at 11:07 AM, Repp, Pam <pam_repp@fws.gov> wrote:

> Noreen, I have not commented on this, but see the need for changes. I also get the feeling Marla is not interested in more changes, but I'll work on it just the same and share with her my ideas.
>
> Pam
>
> On Fri, Dec 7, 2012 at 10:59 AM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:
>
> > Pam and Marla,
> >
> > Did you guys happen to talk about this – I won't have a chance to review again but if you two are in agreement then it is good to go!
> >
> > Pam, if you still see changes we can make them before it goes into DTS. Once it is final, EA can upload in DTS.
> >
> > Thanks, very much,
> >
> > Noreen
> >
> > ---
> >
> > **From:** Marla Trollan [mailto:marla_trollan@fws.gov]
> > **Sent:** Friday, December 07, 2012 10:55 AM
> > **To:** Elizabeth Stevens; Christine Eustis
> > **Cc:** Noreen Walsh
> > **Subject:** Tribal Funding Proposal for the Mountain-Prairie Region
> >
> > Beth and Christine, I've attached the Tribal Funding Proposal for R6. We will also enter it into DTS today.

> Many thanks,
>
> -Marla

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Funding Proposal: Enhancement of Tribal Relations
~~in the Mountain-Prairie Region~~ to achieve greater conservation of species important to Tribes and the Service in the Mountain-Prairie Region

Funding Request: $200,000
Submitted by: Noreen Walsh, Regional Director
December 7, 2012



Introduction

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mountain-Prairie Region consists of 8 states in the heart of the American West and is home to some of the nation's most iconic landscapes and species. Despite

looming conservation issues resulting from energy, agricultural and water development, the Region still supports significant, intact habitat and healthy wildlife populations on a level no longer found in any other region in the contiguous United States.

The Region has the greatest number of large land-based Tribes of all Service regions, including 40 federally recognized Tribes on 40 reservations, four of which contain more than 2 million acres within their exterior boundaries, six contain more than 1 million acres, and seven have 400,000 or more acres. The combined total acreage is greater than the state of Indiana, which encompasses 36,418 square miles.

Tribes in the Region are federal treaty tribes and, as such, have the inherent power to control management of their natural resources. These lands include important habitat for many species of interest to the Service such as grizzly bear, greater and Gunnison sage-grouse, bald and golden eagles, several species of federally-protected plants, bull trout, Topeka shiner, Dakota skipper, and black-footed ferret. The Service and the Region's partners, including Tribes, are currently pursuing a process to consider several of these species for surrogate status as we work to identify and address current and emerging conservation challenges in the larger landscapes in which Tribal lands are located in the region.

Vision

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For the long-term, the following proposal would significantly assist the Service and our Tribal partners in providing cohesive, landscape-scale conservation of trust resources as well as soon to be identified surrogate species. The juxtaposition and immensity of Tribal lands (> 5 million acres) throughout our Region which supports such species as grizzly bear, sage-grouse, bald and golden eagles, black-footed ferrets, and numerous listed plant species would allow us to provide real and tangible conservation benefits for these species. Enhanced coordination and conservation on tribal lands is not only a Tribal trust responsibility, but would assist the Service in achieving our larger landscape conservation goals for these wide-ranging or endemic species in light of energy pressures, development, and climate change. It is the integration of Federal, State and Tribal lands that provides the necessary landscapes for the conservation of these trust species and their eventual recovery.

Tribal Needs

The land base controlled by the Tribes in the Mountain-Prairie Region is greater than that held by the Service (Service lands, primarily in the National Wildlife Refuge System, total approximately 5 million acres). The landscape varies significantly, ranging from alpine environments to sage-steppe to intact prairies to cultivated cropland. Recent intensive development of landscapes in the region for energy production, both conventional and renewable, has had a profound and deleterious effect on wildlife habitat in the region and, coupled with agricultural conversion (i.e., native prairie loss), has exacerbated existing disturbance trends associated with urbanization, water development, invasions, and other factors.

The development in North Dakota and eastern Montana of the Bakken formation, one of the most potentially productive oil and gas plays in the contiguous United States, has directly and adversely impacted wildlife habitat on two of the large reservations. Elsewhere throughout the region, particularly in sage-steppe environments, other Tribes are experiencing direct impacts from

development of conventional energy resources such as oil, gas and coal development. Wind energy is a newer phenomenon in the region and many Tribes are actively working with developers to site and operate new wind energy projects. This trend is of great interest to the Service since many Tribes in the region control prime lands for wind energy development. These lands are located in primary flyways for migratory birds and the potential for wind tower conflict with bald and gold eagles and bats is exceptionally high.

Tribal lands in the region have in the past decade been heavily impacted by severe drought and flooding, a trend that may continue and intensify as climate change progresses. These extreme environmental conditions have also impacted habitat for such species as the federally-listed piping plover and least tern.

On average, the Service provides approximately $600,000-$900,000 for fish and wildlife conservation work, split between four or five Tribes in our region who have successfully competed for annual Tribal Wildlife Grant program funding. By contrast, the State of Indiana (which, again, has similar acreage to our Tribal land base) receives $8.7 million for fish and wildlife work and has access to separate funding source for endangered species work. Despite this disparity in funding, Tribes in the Mountain-Prairie Region are working to conserve more than 40 different wildlife species, of which more than a dozen are federally-listed as endangered, threatened, species of concern, or otherwise a trust species.

Finally, the logistics of working with Tribes in this sprawling region, which is approximately the size of Mexico, can be challenging. The nearest reservation is seven hours from the regional office and under existing travel restrictions visits to these reservations by leadership and the Tribal Liaison have been limited. Fortunately, the region has several Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCOs) located near reservations that provide biological technical assistance. The region has increasingly relied upon these offices to assume some communication and consultation duties as well as their regular biological duties.

In summary, further investment of Tribal consultation in the Mountain-Prairie Region will enable the Service to make important gains toward the twin goals of enhancing our Tribal trust responsibilities while advancing the conservation of some of the nation's most beloved and imperiled species and the "last great places" where they reside. We have an active Tribal Relations Program that would benefit from an infusion of additional funding support and a network of field assets to deliver on-the-ground technical assistance. Most importantly, we have in our region 40 tribes who control millions of acres of high-quality wildlife habitat, providing an excellent opportunity for the Service to partner with them to achieve a positive outcome for the long-term future of wildlife conservation in the Mountain-Prairie Region.

Outcomes and Funding Allocation

OUTCOME: Deliver additional formal and informal tribal consultations throughout the region to promote strategic engagement with tribal partners on landscape-level conservation issues of mutual interest. In addition, increase overall internal and external communications capacity related to tribal affairs.

New Hire GS-9/11 Tribal Relations Specialist: $110,000

This position would be dedicated to assist with tribal relations in the region and to enhance informal consultation and communications with the tribes. The region has an increased need to enhance support of the program areas and the ARDs are in agreement that an additional Tribal Relations Specialist is essential. Although the program areas currently conduct some informal and formal consultations, they have expressed the need to have additional support and would like this support to reside in the Office of External Affairs, a central location for all programs to utilize.

The position would also enhance communications and interactions with the Tribes about Service priorities, such as recovery of federally listed endangered and threatened species, identification and monitoring of surrogate species, landscape conservation especially in consideration of energy development and climate change. Duties may include, but are not limited to, use of various communications tools (such as the Internet, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, VTS, traditional media, etc.) to reach out and engage tribes as well as inform and educate them on emerging issues. The position would also oversee the Tribal Consultation Reporting Database and serve as a resource for training and technical advice. In addition, the position would also be responsible for keeping current the contact lists of Tribal Chairs, Fish and Game Directors, Environment Directors, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) and Cultural Resource Directors, and Finance Directors and assist with the Tribal Wildlife Grant (TWG) process.

OUTCOME: Provide additional on-the-ground technical assistance to tribes through FWCOs to support key habitat and conservation goals.

Support to Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices Salary/Supplies/Travel: $30,000

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Offices (FWCO) biologists provide an invaluable service to Tribes through biological technical assistance. Two of the FWCOs (Montana and Wyoming) focus their efforts on Tribes. Three FWCOs efforts are diverted to those activities with reimbursable funding. Additional funding to these three offices (South Dakota, North Dakota and Utah) would enhance their Biologists' ability to provide Tribes in their areas with biological technical assistance. A majority of the Tribes in the Mountain-Prairie Region do not have biologists on staff; therefore, biological technical assistance by Service staff, especially with federally listed species and their habitats, will significantly contribute to achievement of the Service's goals.

The Mountain-Prairie Region has FWCOs in six of the eight states. While offices have been established to address various management needs, i.e. management of resources on military lands or management of inter-jurisdictional resources in large rivers, several offices were established specifically as management assistance for Indian reservations. All FWCOs have the capacity to provide fish and wildlife expertise and assistance to Tribes within the geographic states on an as needed and requested basis.

These FWCOs have established a relationship and trust over the years with local Tribes, which allows for cooperation and effective management of trust resources by the Tribes and the Service. The trust that has been built over time makes the FWCOs an ideal avenue for advancing issues important to the Tribes and the Service. It also facilitates effective Tribal consultations and increased communications about Service priorities. Because of their proximity to Tribes, all of the FWCOs tend to be the first line of communication and face-to-face communication with Tribes on topics of mutual concern. We believe with the priority placed on Tribes by the President and additional funding, these Biologists will directly and significantly improve our relations with the Tribes in the Mountain-Prairie Region.

OUTCOME: Promote greater service/tribal involvement in Service activities through a formal region-wide framework for communication and coordination (note – this outcome anticipates a national initiative aimed at greater Service/Tribal coordination).

Establishment of a Regional Tribal Advisory Board -- Stipends (7 members, 4 meetings): $28,000
The Region would solicit interest and establish a seven-member Tribal Advisory Board, which would meet quarterly with Regional Service leadership, concerning issues of mutual interest. This Board can be patterned after similar Boards for national parks in the area, e.g., Mesa Verde, Aztec Ruins, Chaco Canyon. The Board will help us determine the importance of Service programs to Tribes, the best ways to communicate, and advice on how to resolve potentially contentious issues. These Board members can also be of assistance in the planning and implementation of trainings and workshops and garnering Tribal partnerships for project of mutual interest, e.g., Eagle Summit, re-writing of policies and procedures, identification of processes to engage Tribes in Landscape Conservation Cooperatives and surrogate species identification, writing permit changes and energy development guidelines.

OUTCOME: Streamline administrative requirements for ongoing and emerging tribal activities including centralizing administrative duties for TWG and other associated duties.

Continuation of Administrative Support: $20,000
This person would primarily assist with administering the Tribal Wildlife Grants Program, maintaining the Tribal Relations Database, preparation of official correspondence to Tribes, and assist with the preparation for workshops for Tribes and training for Service employees.

OUTCOME: Equip key Service personnel to conduct both informal and formal consultations and outreach to tribes in support of Service conservation goals.

Regional Tribal Relations Funding for Supplies/Travel: $12,000
This funding would provide the following for the Region: both informal and formal consultation efforts with Tribes, sometimes in person, but primarily through advice to both parties; oversight of use and training on regional Consultation Reporting Database; development of annual regional plan of action for Service interface with Tribes; establishment of protocols and recommendation of tools needed for consultation and communication; and development and/or implementation of training for Service employees and workshops for Tribes.

In Conclusion

The Director's annual investment of $200,000 in the Mountain-Prairie Region could, through partnerships with the Tribes, effectively quadruple the land base for conservation of federally-listed species and habitats, accelerate the process by which we identify and focus our work to conserve surrogate species, assist in the design and protection of migratory corridors while allowing energy development, and monitor the effects of climate change—all of which are priorities for the Service and the Administration. Tribes in the region have already demonstrated a strong interest in working with species and habitats of mutual concern, as described above. Indeed, through their efforts, Tribes have proactively worked to restore and protect species such as swift fox, greater sage-grouse, and Dakota skipper, species that in recent years have become of great interest to the Service. The Service is working

hard to conserve the Tribes' homelands and wants to protect them for future generations. Support for this proposal will help the Service and our Tribal partners work together to accomplish these important, mutual goals and deliver lasting benefits for the nation's natural heritage for all Americans.