

**From:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**To:** [kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Can you print this for the meeting we're in?  
**Date:** Monday, January 04, 2016 1:45:43 PM  
**Attachments:** [Note Taking 6.docx](#)

---

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [FW6 All Employees](#)  
**Bcc:** [Cynthia Martinez](#); [Dan Ashe](#); [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 4:12:44 PM

---

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the United States for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, a mutually-acceptable agreement has been elusive. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Anna Munoz](#); [Betsy Hildebrandt](#); [Cynthia Martinez](#); [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** Draft  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 7:21:25 AM

---

Thanks to Anna for drafting. I made a few tweaks.

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, we have not yet achieved the type of partnership with the CSKT that we desired.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, for meeting our tribal trust responsibilities, and for the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, an Annual Funding Agreement has not yet proven to be an effective tool to establish that kind of partnership. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions opinions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

**From:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** e-mail  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 7:16:44 PM

---

Drafting this was harder than I thought it would be, so I welcome any and all feedback. I know that some people are going to have questions and I wasn't sure how we can best address those questions. My gut tells me that another all-employee call may be in order. Maybe we wait and see what sort of response we get and then schedule something. Or, we can be proactive and schedule something now and include it in this e-mail. Thoughts? I'm including Will on this e-mail as I'm sure he may have some insights as well.

---

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

Earlier today I participated, via teleconference, in a meeting between Service leadership, Departmental leadership, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Confederate Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding our ongoing efforts to identify a long-term solution for management of the National Bison Refuge in Montana. As some of you may know, we have been working with the CSKT for over 20 years to successfully implement an Annual Funding Agreement (AFA) that would allow the them to manage and implement some of the key conservation activities on the refuge including the visitor services, biology, maintenance, and fire programs. This process has required an inordinate amount of time and effort on behalf of the Service and the tribes and yielded very little success in achieving our partnership goals with the CSKT.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for meeting our tribal trust responsibilities while still accomplishing the conservation goals of the National Bison Range and the Service as a whole, we are proposing to transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in to a federal trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Given that the purpose of the National Bison Range has been met and our priorities have shifted towards larger, landscape-scale conservation efforts, we believe that now is the right time to begin the process of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into a trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

The proposed land transfer would require Congressional approval and at this point, we don't know if or when this arrangement will be finalized. My greatest concern moving forward will be ensuring that the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Refuge is taken care of and that the impacts to their life and family are minimized to the greatest extent possible. To this end, Will Meeks and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we had some very open and candid conversations with staff regarding this proposal and potential next steps. In our conversations, we emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome. They will be my top priority as this process moves forward and I will do everything I can to ensure that this transition is carried out in a respectful and considerate manner that honors their work in conserving these lands and resources.

I know that many of you will have strong opinions about this proposal. This was not an easy decision to come by, or one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is the right decision for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

**From:** [Cynthia Martinez](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Will Meeks](#); [Betsy Hildebrandt](#); [Martin Kodis](#); [Chris Nolin](#); [Charisa Morris](#); [Roslyn Sellars@fws.gov](#)  
**Subject:** Final Email  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 10:40:48 AM

---

"Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began discussions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in Montana to be held in trust by the BIA for the benefit of the CSKT. While the transfer will require Congressional approval, the decision to move forward was not made lightly.

The National Bison Range was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, home of the CSKT. It was established for a defined purpose: to prevent the extinction of bison. We have been hugely successful in meeting that mission. The Bison Range's conservation legacy will live on and we have confidence that the CSKT will maintain the high conservation standards that we established at the Bison Range. It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale conservation.

I want you to know that every employee at the Bison Range will be taken care of. Employment options and opportunities are being discussed. Anyone that knows the history of the Bison Range, knows that our employees have worked and lived with uncertainty regarding the Bison Range for many years now. The process of negotiating and implementing Annual Funding Agreements has not been effective and has resulted in uncertainty for our employees.

I know that many of you will have varying thoughts, opinions and questions. This decision was not made lightly and does not represent a new direction for the Refuge System. Rather, it is a response to a specific set of circumstances in a specific location at a specific point in time.

Since 1999, the Service has established more than 40 new national wildlife refuges, marine national monuments and national conservation areas. Service employees are justifiably proud of hitting new conservation milestones year after year. And we will continue to do so. We have a vibrant and strong National Wildlife Refuge System and we will continue to conserve and manage these wild lands and wild places for wildlife and future generations to come.

The expertise, creativity and dedication of Service employees are limitless. I thank you for all you do on behalf of wildlife conservation and the American people."

**From:** [Serena Baker](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Will Meeks](#); [Mike Blenden](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 4:20:53 PM

---

Hello Noreen, Will, and Mike,

I can't even imagine the tough spot you all were in today, while fielding some difficult questions for which we may not yet have answers, and that can stir emotions even higher. What I do know about each of you, is that you will do what you absolutely believe is the right thing for everyone involved, and that the Refuge, employees, and resources involved are in the very best of hands.

Hang in there! We're behind you 100%!

Serena Baker

---

**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 05, 2016 4:13 PM  
**To:** FW6 All Employees  
**Subject:** Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the United States for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, a mutually-acceptable agreement has been elusive. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't

know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**Cc:** [Kristine Martin](#)  
**Subject:** FW: IMPORTANT: See Attached for Review and Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, January 28, 2016 2:42:18 PM  
**Attachments:** [Draft Comms Strategy NBR.torbit edits.docx](#)

---

Anna, when you have a final draft with others' comments incorporated, can you provide a hard copy to Kris for my review?

Thanks  
Noreen

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Stephen Torbit [mailto:[Stephen\\_Torbit@fws.gov](mailto:Stephen_Torbit@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 28, 2016 11:21 AM  
**To:** Anna Munoz; Noreen Walsh; Will Meeks  
**Subject:** RE: IMPORTANT: See Attached for Review and Comment

A few comments/questions from me.

Stephen C. Torbit  
Assistant Regional Director  
Science Applications  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, Colorado 80228  
303-236-4602 – Office  
720-626-7504 – Cell

**From:** Munoz, Anna [mailto:[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 26, 2016 6:41 PM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh; Will Meeks; Stephen Torbit  
**Subject:** IMPORTANT: See Attached for Review and Comment

I would like to send this to HQ no later than Thursday, so the sooner you can provide me any comments, the better. Please add any potential questions we might get asked to the list, even if you don't have answers.

Thanks,  
Anna

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542  
Fax: 303-236-3815  
[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Matt Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** FW: joint statement  
**Date:** Thursday, February 18, 2016 7:19:54 PM

---

Please don't forward tonight but I wanted you to see this.

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920

-----Original Message-----

From: Dan Ashe [[mailto:d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)]  
Sent: Thursday, February 18, 2016 7:11 PM  
To: Vernon Finley  
Cc: Brian Upton; Noreen Walsh; [cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov); Betsy Hildebrandt; [will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)  
Subject: Re: joint statement

Hello Vernon and thank you for your kind note. I am very happy to hear that the CSKT Council is supportive, and we are anxious to begin working together. Our National Wildlife Refuge System Chief, Cynthia Martinez, has been meeting with the Montana delegation staff, and as you described from your visits, she is getting supportive responses.

We met today, with our DOI team, and the DOI Solicitor (Hilary Tomkins) is ready to begin work to draft legislation. Cynthia Martinez will be our point of contact on this effort and stands ready to work with Brian Upton and Hilary. I hope we can have a good draft by the end of next week, as I'm anticipating that the delegation may ask us for assistance in drafting legislation.

We also discussed convening the "Transition Team" that we agreed would be helpful. Our lead on this effort is Will Meeks (in Denver), and by copying him with this note, I'm asking him to take steps to convene this team, working with Brian Upton, and with Cynthia Martinez. As we discussed, we will need to involve BIA, and others from DOI. If you would like others to participate, from the tribal side, please let me know.

On the issue of a joint statement, we stand ready to do that. However, my communications team is suggesting that we hold off, for now, and work on a statement to issue when we have some news, like introduction of legislation. That makes sense to me, but if you feel differently, please let me know.

Thanks again. We are proud to be working with you on this, and look forward to progress and success!

Dan.

Dan Ashe

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

> On Feb 17, 2016, at 7:34 PM, Vernon Finley <vernonf@cskt.org> wrote:

>

> Good day Dan:

>

> It was great meeting with you on our recent trip to DC. The news that you  
> shared with Brian Upton and myself concerning the Bison Range couldn't  
> have been greater appreciated by myself and the Council. I shared the  
> meeting as well as the emails that went out to FWS staff with the rest of  
> tribal council and they were all ecstatic as well. I also wanted to thank  
> you for the phone call and agreement to provide a joint statement about  
> the willingness and cooperation between the FWS and CSKT on the transfer.  
> That statement will be useful when the time is appropriate.

>

> Again thank you for your hospitality and we are looking forward to working  
> with FWS staff to pull the legislation together and presented to Congress.

>

> later,

> vernon

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Cynthia Martinez](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Request for Briefing - National Bison Range  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:08:53 AM

---

See Will's question – if you will do the briefing can we support you with a paper or anything else?

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 8:40 AM  
**To:** Anna Munoz  
**Cc:** Noreen Walsh; Matt Hogan  
**Subject:** Re: Request for Briefing - National Bison Range

Can you inquire if they need a bp prepared?

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

On Feb 9, 2016, at 8:09 AM, Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

FYI

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
[134 Union Blvd.](#)  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: [303-236-4510](tel:303-236-4510)  
Cell: [720-648-2542](tel:720-648-2542)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Mogadam, Roya" <[roya\\_mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:roya_mogadam@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 9, 2016 at 8:01:33 AM MST  
**To:** Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Request for Briefing - National Bison Range

FYI.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mogadam, Roya** <[roya\\_mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:roya_mogadam@fws.gov)>

Date: Tue, Feb 9, 2016 at 10:01 AM

Subject: Request for Briefing - National Bison Range

To: Cynthia Martinez <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)>, Shaun Sanchez <[shaun\\_sanchez@fws.gov](mailto:shaun_sanchez@fws.gov)>

Cc: Martin Kodis <[martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov)>, Angela Gustavson <[Angela\\_Gustavson@fws.gov](mailto:Angela_Gustavson@fws.gov)>

Morning Cynthia-

Congressman Zinke's (R-MT-AL) office is requesting a briefing on the National Bison Range. They would like us to come up and give them a brief history and our process for moving forward. They are also meeting with lawyers from one of the tribes this week.

Would you be available next week to meet with them? Maybe on Tuesday before the 2:00ET Hill briefing on monuments? They are in Cannon so it would be a quick walk from Cannon to the 2:00 in Longworth.

-Roya

--

Roya Mogadam  
Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

[Roya\\_Mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:Roya_Mogadam@fws.gov)  
703-358-2128

--

Roya Mogadam  
Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

[Roya\\_Mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:Roya_Mogadam@fws.gov)  
703-358-2128



**From:** [Matt Kales](#)  
**To:** [matt\\_hogan@fws.gov](mailto:matt_hogan@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 6:58:02 PM

---

Good talking with you earlier. Just read this and think it's a really well-conceived message and I credit you and Noreen and other Service leadership for seeking a path forward on this tough issue.

Beyond the item we discussed about leveraging a transfer, and some mild flashbacks from the tense time when we terminated the original AFA, my only immediate thought is the statement that the refuge was "carved out" of tribal land may prove controversial in external conversations: opponents of any relationship between the Range and the CSKT will likely be quick to point up the United States paid - 2x - for the land that is the refuge. I don't pretend to know the "truth" on that matter but it was and may still be a lightning rod aspect of the issue.

Lots to think about and I expect I'll have further thoughts to share but on its face I see this as a wise, profitable and long-overdue approach to pursue.

Best,

Matt

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 4:12:44 PM MST  
**To:** FW6 All Employees <[fw6\\_all\\_employees@fws.gov](mailto:fw6_all_employees@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the United States for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, a mutually-acceptable agreement has been elusive. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

Noreen Walsh

Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**From:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Cc:** [Matt Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: email w/chairman edits attached  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 1:23:39 PM  
**Attachments:** [Untitled attachment\\_01044.htm](#)  
[Message from Mountain Prairie Region-2.docx](#)

---

I can't see track changes, so I just want to make sure that you're good with this.

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Hildebrandt, Betsy" <[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 1:09:52 PM MST  
**To:** Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>, Noreen Walsh  
<[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** email w/chairman edits attached

--

Betsy Hildebrandt  
Assistant Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)  
202-208-5256

**From:** [Randolph, Nikki](#)  
**To:** [Megan Reed](#); [Kristine Martin](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Impasse on National Bison Range Partnership Agreement Spurs Handover Scenario  
**Date:** Monday, February 08, 2016 9:57:19 AM

---

FYI

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Sellars, Roslyn** <[roslyn\\_sellars@fws.gov](mailto:roslyn_sellars@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Mon, Feb 8, 2016 at 11:08 AM  
**Subject:** Impasse on National Bison Range Partnership Agreement Spurs Handover Scenario  
**To:** Nikki Randolph <[Nikki\\_Randolph@fws.gov](mailto:Nikki_Randolph@fws.gov)>

FYI

Roslyn

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Robert E. Rutkowski** <[r\\_e\\_rutkowski@att.net](mailto:r_e_rutkowski@att.net)>  
**Date:** Mon, Feb 8, 2016 at 11:00 AM  
**Subject:** MOVE TO CEDE CROWN JEWEL REFUGE TO TRIBE  
**To:** Paul Ryan <[connect@messages.speaker.gov](mailto:connect@messages.speaker.gov)>, Mitch McConnell <[Elizabeth\\_Strimer@mccconnell.senate.gov](mailto:Elizabeth_Strimer@mccconnell.senate.gov)>, [Dan\\_Ashe@fws.gov](mailto:Dan_Ashe@fws.gov)

Speaker Paul Ryan  
Office of the Speaker  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: (202) 225-4000  
Fax: (202) 225-5117

Senator Mitch McConnell  
Senate Majority Leader  
361-A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
Phone: (202) 224-2541  
Fax: (202) 224-2499

Dan Ashe  
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

**Re: MOVE TO CEDE CROWN JEWEL REFUGE TO TRIBE/ Impasse on National Bison Range Partnership Agreement Spurs Handover Scenario**

Dear Speaker Ryan, Senator McConnell and Director Ash:

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has announced that it is now looking to support legislation transferring Montana's National Bison Range, often called the Crown Jewel of the National Wildlife

Refuge System, to a local Indian tribe. The move comes after years of failed attempts by the agency to partner with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), and at a time when the future of federal lands in the West is under growing controversy.

Late Friday afternoon messages by both FWS Refuge Chief Cynthia Martinez and Mountain-Prairie Regional Director Noreen Walsh indicate that talks have begun about drafting “legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in Montana to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the CSKT.” Displaced federal Bison Range employees are assured that they “will be taken care of” without further explanation except that “options and opportunities are being discussed.”

The move stems from a deadlock after nearly six-years of fruitless negotiations between FWS and the CSKT, with Ms. Walsh indicating that “the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.” This signals the failure of a third try at reaching a power-sharing pact. A 2005 agreement was summarily cancelled in 2006 by FWS due to a host of performance-related issues on the part of the CSKT, as well as reported mistreatment of FWS employees by the tribal employees. A successor 2008 agreement was invalidated in 2010 by federal court order in a lawsuit brought by PEER.

Once again, the National Bison Range is a political trading card whose conservation mission is an afterthought. This latest twist extends the “uncertainty” under which affected federal “employees have worked and lived” in the words of the Martinez email. “At least they are not handing the refuge over to the Bundy family.”

Relinquishing control of Bison Range raises concerns that extend far beyond this refuge, however:

- While Ms. Martinez claims the move “does not represent a new direction for the Refuge System,” many other tribes have similar legal status covering 18 refuges in 8 states, including all of the Alaska refuges, constituting 80% of the land area of the entire National Wildlife Refuge System. Similarly, 57 National Park Service units in 19 states are similarly situated, including parks such as Redwood, Glacier, Voyageurs, Olympic and Cape Cod National Seashore;
- There is no mention of a means to prevent recurrence of past CSKT performance problems at Bison Range. In 2006, FWS cancelled the first CSKT pact citing wide-ranging failures in bison management and husbandry, biological data collection and other issues; and
- It appears that the Service is rewarding long-standing intransigence by the CSKT in reaching an agreement which would keep the Bison Range in the National Wildlife Refuge System, and in so doing will encourage other tribes to follow the same disengaging playbook.

Legislation for the CSKT could be expected to spark demands by other tribes for similar handovers of 75 other national parks and refuges. These new talks would also require analysis of impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act, where previous FWS stumbles led to the cancellation of 2008 pact. This precedent at Bison Range may have profound implications for our entire system of national parks and refuges.

Thank you for the opportunity to bring these remarks to your attention.

Yours sincerely,  
Robert E. Rutkowski

cc:

The Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
House Minority Leader  
United States Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

2527 Faxon Court  
Topeka, Kansas 66605-2086  
P/F: 1 785 379-9671  
E-mail: r\_e\_rutkowski@att.net

--

Nikki S. Randolph  
Chief, CCU  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
202-208-7535

*"It's my Life. it's now or never, I ain't gonna live forever, I just wanna live while I am  
alive....." My hero... JBJ*

**From:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Important Update from the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Management of National Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 5:50:41 PM

---

FYI

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
[134 Union Blvd.](#)  
[Lakewood, CO 80228](#)  
Office: [303-236-4510](#)  
Cell: [720-648-2542](#)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Kodis, Martin" <[martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 5:44:13 PM MST  
**To:** undisclosed-recipients;;  
**Subject:** **Important Update from the Fish and Wildlife Service on the Management of National Bison Range**

Good Evening,

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is in discussions with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the transfer of the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in federal trust for the benefit of the CSKT. This begins a new phase in a longstanding relationship between the Service and CSKT in the conservation of the land, bison, and other natural resources comprising the National Bison Range. The Service believes now is the right time to begin the transition in to trust of a refuge long ago carved out of tribal lands. This is an ongoing process that will require Congressional approval.

Please contact me or Roya Mogadam if you have any questions.

Marty

--

Martin Kodis  
Chief, Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041

703-358-2241 ph  
703-358-2245 fax

**From:** [Meeks, Will](#)  
**To:** [Amy Thornburg](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Meeting with Noreen and Will on Monday  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:09:38 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Mike Blenden** <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Wed, Jan 27, 2016 at 4:53 PM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Meeting with Noreen and Will on Monday  
**To:** [will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)

FYI

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Jeff King <[jeff\\_king@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_king@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** January 27, 2016 at 4:01:58 PM MST  
**To:** "Blenden, Mike" <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** **Re: Meeting with Noreen and Will on Monday**

Yes. I changed my flight. Arrive mid morning on Monday.

Thanks

jk

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 27, 2016, at 4:00 PM, Blenden, Mike <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)> wrote:

Jeff, Are you able to be here by 5:00 p.m. Monday assuming weather cooperates?

Mike

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Blenden, Mike** <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Tue, Jan 26, 2016 at 3:59 PM  
**Subject:** Meeting with Noreen and Will on Monday  
**To:** Jeff King <[jeff\\_king@fws.gov](mailto:jeff_king@fws.gov)>

Jeff,

Noreen would like to meet with all of us at in her conference room 5:00 p.m. next Monday, the same day you will be travelling to the project leader's meeting. She wants to talk about the upcoming meeting on February 5 in D.C. concerning NBR/AFA/CSKT/DOI that Will talked to us about a week ago.

Please plan your travel accordingly or modify your already planned travel (more likely) so we can meet with her. This seems pretty urgent. Thanks for your flexibility and let me know if this just can't work.

Mike

--

Michael Blenden  
Refuge Supervisor - Montana, Wyoming and Utah  
134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
303-236-4306

*Too often we...enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.*

John F. Kennedy

--

Michael Blenden  
Refuge Supervisor - Montana, Wyoming and Utah  
134 Union Boulevard  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
303-236-4306

*Too often we...enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.*

John F. Kennedy

--

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
ARD - R6 NWRS and PFFW  
w (303) 236-4303  
c (720) 541-0310

**From:** [Cynthia Martinez](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: National Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 5:46:08 PM

---

Cynthia

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "National Wildlife Refuge System, Chief"  
<[chief\\_national\\_wildlife\\_refuge\\_system@fws.gov](mailto:chief_national_wildlife_refuge_system@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 7:37:26 PM EST  
**To:** undisclosed-recipients;;  
**Subject:** National Bison Range

Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began discussions with Indian Affairs and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in Montana to be held in trust by the United States for the benefit of the CSKT. While the transfer will require Congressional approval, the decision to move forward was not made lightly.

The National Bison Range was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, home of the CSKT. It was established for a defined purpose: to prevent the extinction of bison. We have been hugely successful in meeting that mission. The Bison Range's conservation legacy will live on and we have confidence that the CSKT will maintain the high conservation standards that we established at the Bison Range. It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale conservation.

I want you to know that every employee at the Bison Range will be taken care of. Employment options and opportunities are being discussed. Anyone who knows the history of the Bison Range knows that our employees have worked and lived with uncertainty regarding the Bison Range for many years now.

I know that many of you will have varying thoughts, opinions and questions. This decision was not made lightly and does not represent a new direction for the Refuge System. Rather, it is a response to a specific set of circumstances in a specific location at a specific point in time.

Since 1999, the Service has established more than 40 new national wildlife refuges and national conservation areas. Service employees are justifiably proud of hitting new conservation milestones year after year. And we will continue to do so. We have a vibrant and strong National Wildlife Refuge System and we will continue to conserve and manage these wild lands and wild places for wildlife and future generations.

The expertise, creativity and dedication of Service employees are limitless. I thank you for all you do on behalf of wildlife conservation and the American people.

Cynthia Martinez

Chief

National Wildlife Refuge System

**From:** [Meeks, Will](mailto:Meeks_Will)  
**To:** [Amy Thornburg](mailto:Amy_Thornburg)  
**Subject:** Fwd: NBR appraisal  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:08:03 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Greg Langer** <[greg\\_langer@fws.gov](mailto:greg_langer@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Thu, Feb 18, 2016 at 9:30 AM  
**Subject:** RE: NBR appraisal  
**To:** Marvin Plenert <[marvplenert@yahoo.com](mailto:marvplenert@yahoo.com)>  
**Cc:** Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>, Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>

Mr. Plenert.

- 1) Date of the last appraisal/effective date of value is: October 10, 2012
- 2) Value of Appraisal is: \$12,220,000
- 3) Most recent Revenue Sharing payment is: \$21,693.00 (both Lake & Sanders Counties)
- 4). The Revenue sharing appraisal includes permanent buildings, roads and fences.

If you need anything else, please let me know.

Greg Langer  
Realty Chief, R6  
134 Union Blvd  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
303-236-8130 Office  
720-320-8943 Cell

-----Original Message-----

**From:** Marvin Plenert [mailto:[marvplenert@yahoo.com](mailto:marvplenert@yahoo.com)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 16, 2016 6:04 PM  
**To:** [greg\\_langer@fws.gov](mailto:greg_langer@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** NBR appraisal

Would you please send me the current appraised value of the NBR. Does this include total infrastructure. such as buildings roads, fences etc. or only land?

Also how many dollars were given to the County last year, in lieu of taxes?

Thanks

Marvin L Plenert

--

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
ARD - R6 NWRS and PFFW  
w (303) 236-4303  
c (720) 541-0310

**From:** [Meeks, Will](#)  
**To:** [Amy Thornburg](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: NBR Comms Materials  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:08:15 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Will Meeks** <[Will\\_Meeks@fws.gov](mailto:Will_Meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Mon, Feb 8, 2016 at 3:37 PM  
**Subject:** RE: NBR Comms Materials  
**To:** Maureen Gallagher <[maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)>

Yeah, I just forgot until now. I may have to figure out a good time for this.

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mountain Prairie Region

Assistant Regional Director

National Wildlife Refuge System

303-236-4303 (w)

720-541-0310 (c)

**From:** Gallagher, Maureen [mailto:[maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 08, 2016 3:15 PM  
**To:** Will Meeks  
**Subject:** Re: NBR Comms Materials

sorry missed this one until now. Friday was a little crazy.

Maureen Gallagher

Deputy Assistant Regional Director

Refuges and Partners for Fish and Wildlife

Mountain Prairie Region

134 Union Blvd  
Lakewood, CO  
303/236/4304  
303/236/4792 fax

On Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 7:10 PM, Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)> wrote:

See 2/8 call that I am supposed to host. When you visit with RMT, indicate to them to allow me to communicate this with refuge leadership in the region. Can you set up that call?  
Thanks.

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mountain-Prairie Region

Assistant Regional Director

National Wildlife Refuge System

303-236-4303 (w)

720-541-0310 (c)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Munoz, Anna" <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 4, 2016 at 4:19:39 PM MST  
**To:** Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>, Matt Hogan <[Matt\\_Hogan@fws.gov](mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov)>, Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>, Maureen Gallagher <[Maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:Maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)>, Cynthia Martinez <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)>, Shaun Sanchez <[shaun\\_sanchez@fws.gov](mailto:shaun_sanchez@fws.gov)>, Betsy Hildebrandt <[Betsy\\_Hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:Betsy_Hildebrandt@fws.gov)>, Martin Kodis <[Martin\\_Kodis@fws.gov](mailto:Martin_Kodis@fws.gov)>, Stephen Torbit <[stephen\\_torbit@fws.gov](mailto:stephen_torbit@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** NBR Comms Materials

Hi All,

Attached is the latest version of the comms materials for NBR. If you have any edits, comments, or questions, please let me know ASAP.

Thanks,

Anna

Anna Muñoz

Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

134 Union Blvd.

Lakewood, CO 80228

Office: 303-236-4510

Cell: 720-648-2542

Fax: 303-236-3815

[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

--

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ARD - R6 NWRS and PFFW

w (303) 236-4303

c (720) 541-0310

**From:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Fwd: NBR meetings today and Thursday  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 16, 2016 11:44:58 AM

---

FYI

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Kodis, Martin" <[martin\\_kodis@fws.gov](mailto:martin_kodis@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 16, 2016 at 10:17:45 AM MST  
**To:** Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** NBR meetings today and Thursday

Anna,

Roya set up some meetings this week for Cynthia to chat with MT member staff about NBR. She'll be there to answer questions primarily, but if there are none, she'll go over the history of NBR and how we got to the decision to start discussing the possibility of transfer.

If there is anything I should know going in please text me: 202-384-3021.

First meeting (Zinke) is today at 1pm est (45 min from now),

The other meetings (Daines and Tester) are on Thursday.

Marty

--

Martin Kodis  
Chief, Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041

703-358-2241 ph  
703-358-2245 fax

**From:** [Martin, Kristine](#)  
**To:** [Denise Sanchez](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Noreen's calendar  
**Date:** Friday, July 31, 2015 10:48:49 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Will Meeks** <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Thursday, July 30, 2015  
**Subject:** Noreen's calendar  
**To:** Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)>

Kris,

Can you get me on Noreen's calendar (30 minutes) to brief her on CSKT and the Bison Range at her earliest convenience? Thanks.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System and  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)

--

**Kristine Martin**  
**Office of the Regional Director**  
**Mountain-Prairie Region**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**303-236-7920 Phone**  
**303-236-8295 FAX**  
[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)

**From:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Noreen's e-mail to R6 employees  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 11:42:02 AM

---

Corrected e-mail so that it reads "Confederated" Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Munoz, Anna" <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 10:54:07 AM MST  
**To:** Dan Ashe <[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)>, Betsy Hildebrandt <[Betsy\\_Hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:Betsy_Hildebrandt@fws.gov)>, Roslyn Sellars <[Roslyn\\_Sellars@fws.gov](mailto:Roslyn_Sellars@fws.gov)>, Charisa Morris <[charisa\\_morris@fws.gov](mailto:charisa_morris@fws.gov)>, Cynthia Martinez <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)>, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>, Matt Hogan <[Matt\\_Hogan@fws.gov](mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov)>, Martin Kodis <[Martin\\_Kodis@fws.gov](mailto:Martin_Kodis@fws.gov)>, Chris Nolin <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Noreen's e-mail to R6 employees

See below

---

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, we have not yet achieved the type of partnership with the CSKT that we desired.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, an Annual Funding Agreement has not yet proven to be an effective tool to establish that kind of partnership. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions opinions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

**From:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Cc:** [Matt Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Org chart  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 8:39:27 AM  
**Attachments:** [Untitled attachment\\_00775.htm](#)  
[orgChart\\_FF06RNBR00.pdf](#)

---

Noreen,

Attached is the draft org chart. It has the names of the folks at the NBR "Complex." There are a few comments needed and additions.

Kevin Shinn and Beverly Skinner are stationed at Lost Trail (not sure they will be there, but will confirm). They wouldn't be directly impacted.

Mike Koole (LE) - he is the Complex LE Officer but works primarily at the NBR and has an office there.

Karen Shoemaker - she has an office there (and lives on-site) but part of the Business Team. There may be an SCA there - I wouldn't know them.

Others at the NBR (office space; but not assigned to NBR) -

Laura King (Planning)

Dean Vaughn (PFW)

Mary Danno (Visitor Services; mostly teleworks)

I think that's it.

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mountain-Prairie Region

Assistant Regional Director

National Wildlife Refuge System

303-236-4303 (w)

720-541-0310 (c)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Baaske, Kandi" <[kandi\\_baaske@fws.gov](mailto:kandi_baaske@fws.gov)>

**Date:** February 4, 2016 at 7:59:12 AM MST

**To:** Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>

**Subject: Re: Org chart**

Here you go.

Kandi Baaske  
HR/Payroll Liaison  
NWRS Region 6 RO  
134 Union Blvd. Ste. 300

Lakewood, CO 80228  
(303) 236-4385 phone  
(303) 236-4792 fax

On Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 7:44 AM, Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)> wrote:

Kandi,

Can you send me the most current (draft) org chart for National Bison Range Complex? Thanks.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

**From:** [Meeks, Will](mailto:Meeks.Will)  
**To:** [Amy Thornburg](mailto:Amy.Thornburg)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Revised Media Statement  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:08:41 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Sat, Feb 6, 2016 at 11:45 AM  
**Subject:** Fwd: Revised Media Statement  
**To:** Mike Blenden <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Maureen Gallagher <[maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)>

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Munoz, Anna" <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 6, 2016 at 10:29:59 AM MST  
**To:** Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>, Will Meeks  
<[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Revised Media Statement

Hi Noreen,

I wanted to let you know that we received the following media statement edits from Brian Upton last night (in bold and underlined). The previous version stated that "the lands comprising the NBR would be transferred into a federal trust for the benefit of CSKT." HQ is good with the changes but I wanted to make sure that you're aware. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know. Thus far, there have been no media inquiries.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has initiated discussions with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the **return of the lands comprising the National Bison Range to once again be held in federal trust** for the benefit of the CSKT. This begins a new phase in a longstanding

relationship between the Service and CSKT in the conservation of the land, bison, and other natural resources comprising the National Bison Range. The Service believes now is the right time to begin the transition into trust of a refuge long ago carved out of tribal lands. This is an ongoing process that will require Congressional approval.

Anna

--

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
ARD - R6 NWRS and PFFW  
w (303) 236-4303  
c (720) 541-0310

**From:** [Meeks, Will](#)  
**To:** [Amy Thornburg](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: update NBR staff  
**Date:** Wednesday, March 09, 2016 8:10:20 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** **Will Meeks** <[Will\\_Meeks@fws.gov](mailto:Will_Meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Tue, Nov 10, 2015 at 8:15 AM  
**Subject:** RE: update NBR staff  
**To:** Mike Blenden <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>

Sure. Just coordinate calendars.

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mountain Prairie Region

Assistant Regional Director

National Wildlife Refuge System

303-236-4303 (w)

720-541-0310 (c)

**From:** Blenden, Mike [mailto:[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 10, 2015 7:51 AM  
**To:** Will Meeks  
**Subject:** update NBR staff

Will,

Jeff asked a couple of days ago if we could get on the phone with the NBR staff and update them on the AFA. I told him I didn't know of any news but I wasn't sure either. He feels it would just be good for them to hear something from us. Are you available?

--

Michael Blenden

Refuge Supervisor - Montana, Wyoming and Utah

134 Union Boulevard

Lakewood, CO 80228

303-236-4306

*Too often we...enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.*

John F. Kennedy

--

Will Meeks

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

ARD - R6 NWRS and PFFW

w (303) 236-4303

c (720) 541-0310

**From:** [kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)  
**To:** [Will Meeks](#); [Mike Blenden](#)  
**Subject:** National Bison Range call with staff

---

**From:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**To:** [FW6 RO ARDs](#)  
**Cc:** [Kenneth Ostrand](#); [Kate Miyamoto](#)  
**Subject:** National Bison Range Internal TPs and FAQs  
**Date:** Monday, February 08, 2016 9:58:09 AM  
**Attachments:** [NBR INTERNAL COMMUNICATION.docx](#)

---

Good Morning,

I know that a number of you may be getting some questions re: our path forward re: the National Bison Range. Attached are some internal TPs and FAQs you can use with your staff. If you have any questions or they have any questions that aren't covered, please let me know.

Please note that these are for internal use only. Any and all media/external inquiries should be sent to me.

Thanks,  
Anna

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542  
Fax: 303-236-3815  
[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Kristine Martin](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Bison call with Dan  
**Date:** Thursday, January 07, 2016 1:42:28 PM

---

TWS is negotiable so go ahead and schedule at Dans convenience. Thanks

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 7, 2016, at 11:55 AM, Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)> wrote:

Dan is meeting with CSKT on 2/5 and would like to have a call with you on that day. You will be attending the CO TWS meeting that day but I would think you could step out and do a call. Is there a time you would like to shoot for? Dan is apparently very open that day. Will and Anna wanted to sit in on the call but unless they are will you will have to call in separately.

Kristine Martin  
Executive Assistant – Office of the Regional Director  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Mountain Prairie Region  
134 Union Blvd, Rm 400  
Lakewood, CO 80228

303-236-7920 Office  
303-236-8295 FAX

[Kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)

**From:** [Kristine Martin](#)  
**To:** [Megan Reed](#)  
**Cc:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Bison Range call today  
**Date:** Friday, October 09, 2015 8:28:00 AM

---

Ok, we'll keep as scheduled today and Will Meeks will take the call and brief Noreen on any specifics.

v/r  
Kris Martin

**From:** Reed, Megan [mailto:megan\_reed@fws.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, October 09, 2015 8:27 AM  
**To:** Kristine Martin  
**Subject:** Re: Bison Range call today

Hi Kristine,

Cynthia isn't in the office on Tuesday so we won't be able to move it.

Megan

On Fri, Oct 9, 2015 at 9:49 AM, Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)> wrote:  
Megan,  
Noreen is out on leave. Can we reschedule to next Tuesday, 10/13 @ 1 p.m. EST/ 3 p.m. MDT? She will be out again on leave the remainder of that week starting on the 14<sup>th</sup>, returning on the 21<sup>st</sup>.

Kristine Martin  
Executive Assistant – Office of the Regional Director  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
Mountain Prairie Region  
134 Union Blvd, Rm 400  
Lakewood, CO 80228

303-236-7920 Office  
303-236-8295 FAX

[Kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:Kristine_martin@fws.gov)

--

Megan Davis Reed,  
*Special Assistant*  
Offices of Asst. Director, External Affairs & Chief, National Wildlife Refuge System  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
1849 C Street NW, Room 3351

Washington, DC 20240

Office: 202-219-3898

**From:** [Martinez, Cynthia](#)  
**To:** [Betsy Hildebrandt](#)  
**Cc:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Anna Munoz](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Dan would like to see proposed employee emails before meeting this afternoon. Thanks.  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 9:36:55 AM

---

Below is my draft to come from the Chiefs email.

Thanks to Betsy for her review and comments.

"Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began discussions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in Montana to be held in trust by the BIA for the benefit of the CSKT. While the transfer will require Congressional approval, the decision to move forward was not made lightly.

The National Bison Range was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, home of the CSKT. It was established for a defined purpose: to prevent the extinction of bison. We have been hugely successful in meeting that mission. The Bison Range's conservation legacy will live on and we have confidence that the CSKT will maintain the high conservation standards that we established at the Bison Range. It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale bison restoration.

I want you to know that every employee at the Bison Range will be taken care of. Employment options and opportunities are being discussed. Anyone that knows the history of the Bison Range, knows that our employees have worked and lived with uncertainty regarding the Bison Range for many years now. The process of negotiating and implementing Annual Funding Agreements has not been effective and has resulted in uncertainty for our employees.

I know that many of you will have varying thoughts, opinions and questions. This decision was not made lightly and does not represent a new direction for the Refuge System. Rather, it is a response to a specific set of circumstances in a specific location at a specific point in time.

Since 1999, the Service has established more than 40 new national wildlife refuges, marine national monuments and national conservation areas. Service employees are justifiably proud of hitting new conservation milestones year after year. And we will continue to do so. We have a vibrant and strong National Wildlife Refuge System and we will continue to conserve and manage these wild lands and wild places for wildlife and future generations to come.

The expertise, creativity and dedication of Service employees are limitless. I thank you for all you do on behalf of wildlife conservation and the American people."

On Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 8:37 AM, Betsy Hildebrandt <[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)> wrote:  
| Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Hildebrandt, Betsy](#)  
**To:** [Martinez, Cynthia](#)  
**Cc:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Re: Dan would like to see proposed employee emails before meeting this afternoon. Thanks.  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 7:06:17 AM

---

Thanks and just for reference, here is the approved "if asked statement"

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is in discussions with the Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the transfer of the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in federal trust for the benefit of the CSKT. This begins a new phase in a longstanding relationship between the Service and CSKT in the conservation of the land, bison, and other natural resources comprising the National Bison Range. The Service believes now is the right time to begin the transition in to trust of a refuge long ago carved out of tribal lands. This is an ongoing process that will require Congressional approval.

On Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 9:00 AM, Martinez, Cynthia <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)> wrote:  
I am also reviewing mine. I might wait to see Noreen's to ensure consistency.

Cynthia

On Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 8:50 AM, Betsy Hildebrandt <[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)> wrote:  
Thanks. Our expectation is that it will leak so want to make sure whatever's in writing is consistent at least with the public statement.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Feb 5, 2016, at 8:46 AM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

>

> I was just working on wood Anna drafted for me. I will send it along in a bit

>

> Noreen Walsh

> Regional Director

> Mountain-Prairie Region

> U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

>

>> On Feb 5, 2016, at 6:38 AM, Betsy Hildebrandt <[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)> wrote:

>>

>> Sent from my iPhone

--

Betsy Hildebrandt  
Assistant Director - External Affairs

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service  
[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)  
202-208-5256

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Martinez, Cynthia](#)  
**Cc:** [Betsy Hildebrandt](#); [Anna Munoz](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Dan would like to see proposed employee emails before meeting this afternoon. Thanks.  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 9:56:28 AM

---

Cynthia

It's very good. One request: would you please change

"It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale bison restoration."

To

"It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale conservation"

I can explain better when we talk. Thank you!

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 5, 2016, at 9:36 AM, Martinez, Cynthia <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)> wrote:

Below is my draft to come from the Chiefs email.

Thanks to Betsy for her review and comments.

"Today the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service began discussions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range in Montana to be held in trust by the BIA for the benefit of the CSKT. While the transfer will require Congressional approval, the decision to move forward was not made lightly.

The National Bison Range was established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation, home of the CSKT. It was established for a defined purpose: to prevent the extinction of bison. We have been hugely successful in meeting that mission. The Bison Range's conservation legacy will live on and we have confidence that the CSKT will maintain the high conservation standards that we established at the Bison Range. It is time for the Service to focus our efforts on landscape-scale bison restoration.

I want you to know that every employee at the Bison Range will be taken care of. Employment options and opportunities are being discussed. Anyone that knows the history of the Bison Range, knows that our employees have worked and lived

with uncertainty regarding the Bison Range for many years now. The process of negotiating and implementing Annual Funding Agreements has not been effective and has resulted in uncertainty for our employees.

I know that many of you will have varying thoughts, opinions and questions. This decision was not made lightly and does not represent a new direction for the Refuge System. Rather, it is a response to a specific set of circumstances in a specific location at a specific point in time.

Since 1999, the Service has established more than 40 new national wildlife refuges, marine national monuments and national conservation areas. Service employees are justifiably proud of hitting new conservation milestones year after year. And we will continue to do so. We have a vibrant and strong National Wildlife Refuge System and we will continue to conserve and manage these wild lands and wild places for wildlife and future generations to come.

The expertise, creativity and dedication of Service employees are limitless. I thank you for all you do on behalf of wildlife conservation and the American people."

On Fri, Feb 5, 2016 at 8:37 AM, Betsy Hildebrandt  
<[betsy\\_hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov)> wrote:  
| Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Matt Kales](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 11:17:50 AM

---

Thanks, I appreciate the feedback. The “2x” has come up – from one person to me. I’d be glad to share the history as I know it when we have a chance to talk. It’s pretty interesting.

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Matt Kales [mailto:[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 10:03 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Fwd: Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range

Nothing super novel here but my initial reaction after reading your message.

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Matt Kales <[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 6:57:58 PM MST  
**To:** [matt\\_hogan@fws.gov](mailto:matt_hogan@fws.gov)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range

Good talking with you earlier. Just read this and think it's a really well-conceived message and I credit you and Noreen and other Service leadership for seeking a path forward on this tough issue.

Beyond the item we discussed about leveraging a transfer, and some mild flashbacks from the tense time when we terminated the original AFA, my only immediate thought is the statement that the refuge was "carved out" of tribal land may prove controversial in external conversations: opponents of any relationship between the Range and the CSKT will likely be quick to point up the United States paid - 2x - for the land that is the refuge. I don't pretend to know the "truth" on that matter but it was and may still be a lightning rod aspect of the issue.

Lots to think about and I expect I'll have further thoughts to share but on its face I see this as a wise, profitable and long-overdue approach to pursue.

Best,

Matt

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 4:12:44 PM MST  
**To:** FW6 All Employees <[fw6\\_all\\_employees@fws.gov](mailto:fw6_all_employees@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Discussion with the CSKT about the National Bison Range

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the United States for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, a mutually-acceptable agreement has been elusive. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur.

Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Feb. 5 g request: Bison Range  
**Date:** Friday, January 08, 2016 10:23:23 AM

---

Sure, I will give you a call

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 08, 2016 9:51 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Re: Feb. 5 g request: Bison Range

OK. 1:00 pm?

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

On Jan 8, 2016, at 9:27 AM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

I am tied up til about noon, but after that have a lot of flex,

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 08, 2016 9:12 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Re: Feb. 5 g request: Bison Range

Sure can. I think I know the answers. I'm on a call right now. Can you squeeze in five minutes sometime today?

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

On Jan 8, 2016, at 9:09 AM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

Will, not sure where this meeting falls in the process we anticipated  
but can you get somemore details from Cynthia?

Thanks,  
Noreen

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

**From:** Sellars, Roslyn [mailto:[roslyn\\_sellars@fws.gov](mailto:roslyn_sellars@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Friday, January 08, 2016 8:13 AM  
**To:** Morris, Charisa  
**Cc:** Thomas Irwin; Anna Munoz; Kristine Martin; Noreen Walsh; Cynthia  
Martinez  
**Subject:** Feb. 5 g request: Bison Range

FYI,

This is scheduled for 1pm EST on Feb. 5. Jim Kurth will be on  
travel.

Roslyn

On Thu, Jan 7, 2016 at 3:27 PM, Morris, Charisa  
<[charisa\\_morris@fws.gov](mailto:charisa_morris@fws.gov)> wrote:  
Good afternoon, Rosyln-

Can we put "Bison Range Follow-up Discussion" on the calendar for  
whatever time works on February 5 for the following attendees:

Dan  
Steve  
Jim  
Bob  
Cynthia  
Noreen (by phone, likely)  
Scott Aikin

Larry Roberts (BIA)  
Sarah Walters (BIA)  
Brian Upton  
Vernon Finley

We will likely need an hour. I am hoping you already have Brian and Vernon's emails in hand, but have put in a request with BIA to obtain them, just in case. I have copied Anna on this message, as I think she may have some insight into Noreen's schedule that would not be evident on her calendar.

Thank you!  
Charisa

--

[Charisa\\_Morris@fws.gov](mailto:Charisa_Morris@fws.gov) | Chief of Staff, Office of the  
Director | U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | 1849 C Street NW, Room 3348  
| Washington, DC 20240 | (202) 208-3843

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**Cc:** [Matt Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: FINAL VERSION OF ALL-EMPLOYEE E-MAIL  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 3:32:51 PM

---

Got it. Still in meeting. Will try to send as soon as we can exit.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 5, 2016, at 2:00 PM, Munoz, Anna <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi Noreen,

Please find below the FINAL version of the all-employee e-mail that incorporates the requested changes.

---

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, the parties have been unable to come to terms on a mutually-acceptable agreement.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the United States for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, a mutually-acceptable agreement has been elusive. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions or opinions about this idea. This was not an easy

decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen Walsh

**From:** [Sellars, Roslyn](#)  
**To:** [Kristine Martin](#); [Thomas Irwin](#)  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Bison Range  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 17, 2015 8:51:56 AM

---

Dan is available 2pm - 3pm on 11/20

Roslyn Sellars

**Please copy Thomas Irwin ([thomas\\_irwin@fws.gov](mailto:thomas_irwin@fws.gov)) on future emails related to scheduling.**

Executive Assistant | Office of the Director | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

1849 C Street NW | Room 3356 | Washington, DC | (202) 208-4545 | [roslyn\\_sellars@fws.gov](mailto:roslyn_sellars@fws.gov)

On Tue, Nov 17, 2015 at 10:28 AM, Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)> wrote:

Sounds good, thanks.

v/r

Kris Martin

**From:** Sellars, Roslyn [mailto:[roslyn\\_sellars@fws.gov](mailto:roslyn_sellars@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 17, 2015 8:25 AM  
**To:** Kristine Martin  
**Cc:** Thomas Irwin  
**Subject:** Re: FW: Bison Range

We may need to make changes to Dan's Friday (11/20) afternoon schedule. We will be able to let you if he's available later today.

Roslyn

On Tue, Nov 17, 2015 at 10:17 AM, Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)> wrote:

Thomas & Roslyn,

Would Dan be available this Friday afternoon after 1 p.m. MT for a bison call or would after Thanksgiving be better. If after, Noreen's best available date would be Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

v/r

Kris Martin

---

**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 17, 2015 7:53 AM  
**To:** Kristine Martin  
**Subject:** FW: Bison Range

Kris,

Can you set this up? Friday 11/20 afternoon, or after Thanksgiving. Note on Weds 12/2 I am taking AL, but could do a call early in the morning. On our end we need me, Matt H and Will. Topic: NBR.

Thanks,

Noreen

*Noreen Walsh*

*Regional Director*

*Mountain-Prairie Region*

*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

*303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Dan Ashe [mailto:[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 17, 2015 4:42 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Cc:** Cynthia Martinez; Jim Kurth; Stephen Guertin; Betsy Hildebrandt  
**Subject:** Re: Bison Range

Let's set up a call.

Dan Ashe

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Nov 16, 2015, at 10:43 PM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

Dan, how about while you are in Denver next week? You may want to stay a little longer.....we are racking up quite a list of topics to discuss. But the timing might not work out right to include folks back in DC on the phone; after the Mexican wolf meeting it will be getting late. Alternately, I can set up a call with all the folks listed here.

*Noreen Walsh*

*Regional Director*

*Mountain-Prairie Region*

*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

*303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Dan Ashe [mailto:[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Monday, November 16, 2015 8:24 PM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh; [cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)  
**Cc:** Jim Kurth; Stephen Guertin; Betsy Hildebrandt  
**Subject:** Fwd: Bison Range

We need to discuss our game plan.

Dan Ashe

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Washburn, Kevin" <[kevin.washburn@bia.gov](mailto:kevin.washburn@bia.gov)>  
**Date:** November 16, 2015 at 5:11:02 PM EST  
**To:** Dan Ashe <[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)>  
**Cc:** Lawrence Roberts <[lawrence\\_roberts@ios.doi.gov](mailto:lawrence_roberts@ios.doi.gov)>  
**Subject:** **Bison Range**

Dear Dan - let us know if/how we can help with the NBR. Larry and I would be happy to brainstorm with you and your team about how to make this work. We do think some advance conversation is a good idea to spot potential issues and have a game plan about options to address them. We also think that legislation will be necessary and would be happy to work with you and OCL on drafting it.

We don't want to be pushy here, but we are excited about this idea! Let us know how we can help.

Kevin

--

Kevin K. Washburn  
Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, MS 7329  
Washington, DC 20240  
Main number 202-208-7163  
Fax 202-208-5320  
[kevin.washburn@bia.gov](mailto:kevin.washburn@bia.gov)

**From:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Cc:** [Matt Hogan](#)  
**Subject:** Re: joint statement  
**Date:** Friday, February 19, 2016 8:07:44 AM

---

It would seem so. I'll see if I can schedule something for next week. Would you like to be on the call also?

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)

On Feb 19, 2016, at 5:24 AM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

Time to schedule a brief call, as we discussed yesterday?

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Dan Ashe <[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 18, 2016 at 7:10:39 PM MST  
**To:** Vernon Finley <[vernonf@cskt.org](mailto:vernonf@cskt.org)>  
**Cc:** Brian Upton <[brianu@cskt.org](mailto:brianu@cskt.org)>, Noreen Walsh  
<[Noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:Noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>, [cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov), Betsy  
Hildebrandt <[Betsy\\_Hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:Betsy_Hildebrandt@fws.gov)>, [will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)  
**Subject: Re: joint statement**

Hello Vernon and thank you for your kind note. I am very happy to hear that the CSKT Council is supportive, and we are anxious to begin working together. Our National Wildlife Refuge System Chief, Cynthia Martinez, has been meeting with the Montana delegation staff, and as you described from your visits, she is getting supportive responses. We met today, with our DOI team, and the DOI Solicitor (Hilary Tomkins) is ready to begin work to draft legislation. Cynthia Martinez will be our point of contact on this effort and stands ready to work with Brian Upton and Hilary. I hope we can have a good draft by the

end of next week, as I'm anticipating that the delegation may ask us for assistance in drafting legislation.

We also discussed convening the "Transition Team" that we agreed would

be helpful. Our lead on this effort is Will Meeks (in Denver), and by copying him with this note, I'm asking him to take steps to convene this team, working with Brian Upton, and with Cynthia Martinez. As we

discussed, we will need to involve BIA, and others from DOI. If you would like others to participate, from the tribal side, please let me know.

On the issue of a joint statement, we stand ready to do that. However, my communications team is suggesting that we hold off, for now, and work on a statement to issue when we have some news, like introduction

of legislation. That makes sense to me, but if you feel differently, please let me know.

Thanks again. We are proud to be working with you on this, and look forward to progress and success!

Dan.

Dan Ashe

Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Feb 17, 2016, at 7:34 PM, Vernon Finley  
<[vernonf@cskt.org](mailto:vernonf@cskt.org)> wrote:

Good day Dan:

It was great meeting with you on our recent trip to DC. The news that you shared with Brian Upton and myself concerning the Bison Range couldn't have been greater appreciated by myself and the Council. I shared the meeting as well as the emails that went out to FWS staff with the rest of tribal council and they were all ecstatic as well. I also wanted to thank you for the phone call and agreement to provide a joint statement about the willingness and cooperation between the FWS and CSKT on the transfer. That statement will be useful when the time is appropriate.

Again thank you for your hospitality and we are looking forward to working with FWS staff to pull the legislation together and presented to Congress.

later,

vernon



**From:** [Kristine Martin](#)  
**To:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** RE: meeting with Noreen?  
**Date:** Friday, January 23, 2015 7:37:00 AM

---

Will she's out all day today. I know you are out next week. Do you want to try to do a phone call next week or push it out to till the following week?

v/r  
Kris Martin

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:Will\_Meeks@fws.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 22, 2015 3:38 PM  
**To:** Kristine Martin  
**Subject:** meeting with Noreen?

Kris,

Does Noreen have 15 minutes that I can follow-up on the National Bison Range NEPA?

I can meet 8:00 – 8:30, 9-10, 11-12, 1-2

Thanks.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6  
ARD-NWRS and PFW  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)

**From:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Will Meeks](#); [Maureen Gallagher](#); [Cynthia Martinez](#); [Shaun Sanchez](#); [Betsy Hildebrandt](#); [Martin Kodis](#); [Stephen Torbit](#); [Chris Nolin](#)  
**Subject:** Re: NBR Comms Materials  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 10:58:41 AM  
**Attachments:** [Draft Comms Strategy NBR v5.docx](#)

---

Hi All,

Attached is an updated version of the comms strategy. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thanks,  
Anna

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542  
Fax: 303-236-3815  
[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

On Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 4:19 PM, Munoz, Anna <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi All,

Attached is the latest version of the comms materials for NBR. If you have any edits, comments, or questions, please let me know ASAP.

Thanks,  
Anna

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542  
Fax: 303-236-3815  
[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

**From:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**To:** [Mogadam, Roya](#)  
**Cc:** [Munoz, Anna](#); [Noreen Walsh](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Martin Kodis](#)  
**Subject:** Re: NBR revenue sharing  
**Date:** Thursday, February 11, 2016 7:08:51 AM

---

Happy to help the week I am there . . . Just let me know if I should plan on it.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)

On Feb 11, 2016, at 7:31 AM, Mogadam, Roya <[roya\\_mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:roya_mogadam@fws.gov)> wrote:

Thanks Anna for pulling this together.

We are looking at scheduling Hill meetings for next week with Cynthia with the following offices:

- Zinke
- Daines
- Tester
- House Natural Resources Minority

We have a very limited block of time next week so if we cannot get some of these scheduled we may push to Wednesday the following week when Will is in town.

-Roya

On Wed, Feb 10, 2016 at 6:58 PM, Munoz, Anna <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi All,

Please see the e-mail below for information on revenue sharing associated with NBR. If you have any follow-up questions, please let me know.

**National Bison Range is located in two counties: Lake and Sanders, MT.**

Revenue share is paid to counties on fee acres only, not easement, and is based on the total Congressional appropriation for the program nationally. In recent years, the revenue sharing program has only been funded by Congress at approximately 22-25% of its full allocation, thereby resulting in an across-the-board proportional reduction to all impacted counties (% of full entitlement).

- Lake County fee acres: 8,678
- Sanders County fee acres: 10,122

- Total NBR fee acres: 18,800 as of FY2015

<image.png>

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542

--

Roya Mogadam  
Division of Congressional and Legislative Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

[Roya\\_Mogadam@fws.gov](mailto:Roya_Mogadam@fws.gov)

703-358-2128

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** RE: next Wednesday?  
**Date:** Thursday, January 14, 2016 10:51:44 AM

---

We can do Friday – I am available. I will set it up.

If you need any input before Friday, give me a call; I am in all week.

When you have a chance today, no rush, I wouldn't mind understanding where things stand with your employees that we mentioned.

Thanks so much Will.

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2016 10:44 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Re: next Wednesday?

Only Friday

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

On Jan 14, 2016, at 10:20 AM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

Yeah.....

Cancelled. Kris is doing that.

You, me, Anna, and Steve do need a check in next week. That will come separately. Are you in the office all next week?

*Noreen Walsh*

*Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Will Meeks [mailto:[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 14, 2016 10:13 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Fwd: next Wednesday?

Very confused. I recommend Kris cancel this and not yet include Mike. Got your phone call. I'm not even included on the invite - thus the confusion.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303(w)  
720-541-0319 (c)

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mike Blenden <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** January 14, 2016 at 10:08:03 AM MST  
**To:** [Will Meeks@fws.gov](mailto:Will_Meeks@fws.gov), Maureen Gallagher  
<[maureen\\_gallagher@fws.gov](mailto:maureen_gallagher@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: next Wednesday?

Please remind me. What are we trying to accomplish at this briefing?

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** January 14, 2016 at 9:09:15 AM MST  
**To:** Mike Blenden <[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: next Wednesday?

It is really rescheduled to the 20th at 2 p.m. Noreen has a conflict at 1 p.m. now. My computer seems to be having trouble with it's sync so apologies on multiple notices on that!

v/r  
Kris Martin

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Blenden [mailto:[mike\\_blenden@fws.gov](mailto:mike_blenden@fws.gov)]

Sent: Thursday, January 14, 2016 9:07 AM

To: [kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)

Subject: next Wednesday?

Kris, I keep getting a notification of an National Bison Range AFA briefing with Maureen and Noreen at 2:00 p.m. on January 20. Is this really scheduled or is it some artifact of a briefing that was cancelled?

Thanks, Mike

Sent from my iPad

**From:** [Kristine Martin](#)  
**To:** [Denise Sanchez](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Noreen's calendar  
**Date:** Monday, August 03, 2015 9:54:00 AM

---

Thanks for all your extra effort to help out! Pretzels come from King Soopers. See you tomorrow!

v/r

Kris Martin

**From:** Sanchez, Denise [mailto:denise\_sanchez@fws.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 31, 2015 11:50 AM  
**To:** Martin, Kristine  
**Subject:** Re: Noreen's calendar

Scheduled.

See you Monday!! Oh, I won't be here..... see you Tuesday.

Things have gone fine - I think...

Hey, I need to know where you get Matt's prezels, love them - want to buy some :)

Hope you had fun - have a safe trip home.

On Fri, Jul 31, 2015 at 10:48 AM, Martin, Kristine <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)> wrote:

----- Forwarded message -----

**From:** Will Meeks <[will\\_meeks@fws.gov](mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** Thursday, July 30, 2015  
**Subject:** Noreen's calendar  
**To:** Kristine Martin <[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)>

Kris,

Can you get me on Noreen's calendar (30 minutes) to brief her on CSKT and the Bison Range at her earliest convenience? Thanks.

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System and  
Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)

--

**Kristine Martin**  
**Office of the Regional Director**  
**Mountain-Prairie Region**  
**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**  
**303-236-7920 Phone**  
**303-236-8295 FAX**  
[kristine\\_martin@fws.gov](mailto:kristine_martin@fws.gov)

--

**Denise Sanchez | Administrative Assistant**  
USFWS Mountain-Prairie Region External Affairs  
134 Union Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80228  
[denise\\_sanchez@fws.gov](mailto:denise_sanchez@fws.gov) | 303-236-2985

<http://www.fws.gov/mountain-prairie>



Flickr - Photos linked in this email.

**From:** [Cynthia Martinez](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Cc:** [Anna Munoz](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Noreen's e-mail to R6 employees  
**Date:** Friday, February 05, 2016 12:21:08 PM

---

There are some technical changes from BIA.

Also Brian is going to review now and let us know if they have any requested changes.

Cynthia

On Feb 5, 2016, at 2:19 PM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

IF there are no other changes to this email that came about because of the convo (we could not hear it all) then I will send it when I finish the discussion with the staff here. Estimated time: 1.5 hours from now. I will alert Cynthia when I am ready to send so she can do the same.

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Feb 5, 2016, at 11:42 AM, Anna Munoz <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

Corrected e-mail so that it reads "Confederated" Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Munoz, Anna" <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)>  
**Date:** February 5, 2016 at 10:54:07 AM MST  
**To:** Dan Ashe <[d\\_m\\_ashe@fws.gov](mailto:d_m_ashe@fws.gov)>, Betsy Hildebrandt <[Betsy\\_Hildebrandt@fws.gov](mailto:Betsy_Hildebrandt@fws.gov)>, Roslyn Sellars <[Roslyn\\_Sellars@fws.gov](mailto:Roslyn_Sellars@fws.gov)>, Charisa Morris <[charisa\\_morris@fws.gov](mailto:charisa_morris@fws.gov)>, Cynthia Martinez <[cynthia\\_martinez@fws.gov](mailto:cynthia_martinez@fws.gov)>, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)>, Matt Hogan <[Matt\\_Hogan@fws.gov](mailto:Matt_Hogan@fws.gov)>, Martin Kodis <[Martin\\_Kodis@fws.gov](mailto:Martin_Kodis@fws.gov)>, Chris Nolin <[chris\\_nolin@fws.gov](mailto:chris_nolin@fws.gov)>  
**Subject:** Noreen's e-mail to R6 employees

See below

---

Dear Mountain-Prairie Region,

I want to inform you of a discussion the Service started today with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the National Bison Range. Many of you know that we have been working with the CSKT for about 20 years on the idea of a partnership at the National Bison Range that would be outlined in an Annual Funding Agreement which would allow them to manage and implement some of the activities on the refuge. This process has required much time and effort on the part of many, and despite valiant efforts all around, we have not yet achieved the type of partnership with the CSKT that we desired.

In an effort to achieve the best, long-term solution for our many conservation priorities, the specific conservation goals of the National Bison Range, and to support the principles of Indian self-determination there was a discussion today with the CSKT about the potential for the Service to support legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range to be held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the CSKT.

I wanted you all to know why we entered into these discussions. The National Bison Range was established in 1908 within the boundaries of the Flathead Reservation, home of the CSKT, for the express purpose of conserving the American bison during a time when the species was on the verge of extinction. Since then, the Service as well as our federal, state, and tribal partners have made great strides in conserving bison and re-establishing herds throughout their historic range. Also, while we have desired a meaningful partnership with CSKT at the National Bison Range, an Annual Funding Agreement has not yet proven to be an effective tool to establish that kind of partnership. Given that we are today in a much better place regarding the future of bison, that we have much work to do on landscape-scale conservation efforts, and that we want to strengthen our partnership with the CSKT, we believe

that now is the right time to investigate the possibility of transferring the refuge, which was long ago carved out of tribal lands, into trust for the benefit of the CSKT.

Such a proposal would require Congressional approval and therefore, at this point, we don't know if or when such a transfer would occur. Today was our first discussion with the CSKT about the idea. As we go forward, my pledge is to ensure that wherever the discussion leads us, the talented and committed staff of the National Bison Range are taken care of. To this end, Will Meeks, Mike Blenden, and I spent the afternoon at the Refuge where we talked about the ideas under discussion. In our conversations, I emphasized that they will all remain valued employees of the Service, regardless of the outcome of these discussions.

I know that many of you will have thoughts and questions opinions about this idea. This was not an easy decision to come by, nor one that was taken lightly, but in the end, I believe that this is a good path for the Service, the CSKT, and for the conservation of our fish and wildlife resources.

As always, I value your feedback and questions.

Noreen

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Matt Kales](#)  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:58:26 AM

---

Sure, that would be helpful. Thank you

*Noreen Walsh*  
*Regional Director*  
*Mountain-Prairie Region*  
*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*  
*303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Matt Kales [mailto:[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:58 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

It definitely is, and if I was a smarter man I would have taken an alternate route to work this morning.

I am heading to a meeting with Clint in a moment, but for now I'll offer I have heard very little about the NBR issue you wrote on last Friday, both internally and in external arenas. At the same time, I've been immersed in sage the last few days (years) so my antennae don't always turn 360 degrees so I may simply may not be picking up stuff on this.

If it helpful, I am happy to forward what I wrote to Matt Hogan after I read your original message.

---

**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:51 AM  
**To:** Matt Kales  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

I don't know! I didn't know the parade was today. Sorry for your trouble, but isn't it worth it for a SUPERBOWL WIN?? 😊

Hey, can you tell me any feedback? I wonder how Friday's email about that MT issue is playing in Peoria.....what are you hearing?

*Noreen Walsh*  
*Regional Director*  
*Mountain-Prairie Region*  
*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

303 236 7920

---

**From:** Matt Kales [mailto:[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:45 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

No, we hadn't. I fear CLA pulled the trigger too soon but didn't want to throw them under the bus in front of a larger audience. Either way, we'll make it right.

---

**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:44 AM  
**To:** Matt Kales  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

It wasn't clear to me if you guys already had Gary's feedback when I saw his note this morning

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
303 236 7920*

---

**From:** Matt Kales [mailto:[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:37 AM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

Great; thanks. Hopefully, the reference to the Amodei item provided some context on the larger chain to which I just responded.

---

**From:** Noreen Walsh [mailto:[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 09, 2016 9:35 AM  
**To:** Matt Kales  
**Subject:** RE: Quick updates

This one? Yes ☺  
Most helpful

*Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

---

**From:** Matt Kales [mailto:[matt\\_kales@fws.gov](mailto:matt_kales@fws.gov)]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 08, 2016 3:39 PM  
**To:** Noreen Walsh  
**Subject:** Quick updates

Hi. Hope your travels today went smoothly. Please see below some items FYSA that may be useful in sagebrush conversations this week. Thanks.

- A revised federal implementation plan framework is pending per your comments on the draft.
- Hill visits the last week of April are moving forward per the earlier chain from HQ I forwarded. Also, I saw the chain you forwarded from Gary; Nicole, Mary and I are helping CLA refine related briefing materials on the issues Mr. Amodei raised.
- Nicole, Mary and I are meeting with Shauna later this week to get her expert feedback on specific needs re: the mitigation coordination item we flagged for you and the RDs earlier.
- Anna M. and I met today to brainstorm an approach for the 2/17 call with Audubon. We will speak with Brian R. this week to get some more intel/perspective and adjust our approach as necessary before our pre-call meeting with you on 2/16.
- I am meeting with Clint tomorrow to try and get some more information about MB work in sagebrush (which will in turn inform what tasks we offer to Will's detailee).
- I spoke with Scott Aikin last week and he agreed to facilitate a conversation with the ARDs-EA, their tribal liaisons, and Steve T. to line out next steps re: tribal engagement in the sage.
- Lief reports things are moving forward with CED 2.0. Please let me know if at any point you want/need a more detailed status report on same.
- Lindy reports the action plan team coming out of the WIWS is convening in early March and she is currently working with that group to identify agenda items and desired outcomes.

Matt Kales, Senior Adviser for Sagebrush Ecosystem Conservation  
Office of the Regional Director  
US Fish and Wildlife Service, Mountain-Prairie Region  
Office: (303) 236-4576  
Mobile: (720) 234-0257

**From:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**Cc:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Revised Media Statement  
**Date:** Saturday, February 06, 2016 11:03:37 AM

---

Thank you Anna. I've seen no media pop up yet either.

Noreen Walsh  
Regional Director  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Feb 6, 2016, at 10:30 AM, Munoz, Anna <[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)> wrote:

Hi Noreen,

I wanted to let you know that we received the following media statement edits from Brian Upton last night (in bold and underlined). The previous version stated that "the lands comprising the NBR would be transferred into a federal trust for the benefit of CSKT." HQ is good with the changes but I wanted to make sure that you're aware. If you have any questions or comments, please let me know. Thus far, there have been no media inquiries.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has initiated discussions with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) regarding the **return of the lands comprising the National Bison Range to once again be held in federal trust** for the benefit of the CSKT. This begins a new phase in a longstanding relationship between the Service and CSKT in the conservation of the land, bison, and other natural resources comprising the National Bison Range. The Service believes now is the right time to begin the transition into trust of a refuge long ago carved out of tribal lands. This is an ongoing process that will require Congressional approval.

Anna

**From:** [Munoz, Anna](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Re:  
**Date:** Thursday, February 04, 2016 12:28:20 PM

---

I will get you a draft this afternoon and will then tweak it, as needed, after tomorrow's call and your meeting with folks at NBR. I'm also working on an African American History month e-mail for you to send out sometime next week.

Anna

Anna Muñoz  
Assistant Regional Director - External Affairs  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
134 Union Blvd.  
Lakewood, CO 80228  
Office: 303-236-4510  
Cell: 720-648-2542  
Fax: 303-236-3815  
[anna\\_munoz@fws.gov](mailto:anna_munoz@fws.gov)

On Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 12:25 PM, Noreen Walsh <[noreen\\_walsh@fws.gov](mailto:noreen_walsh@fws.gov)> wrote:

Anna, the other thing we forgot to talk about is my all employee email for tomorrow...

*Noreen Walsh*

*Regional Director*

*Mountain-Prairie Region*

*U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service*

*303 236 7920*

**From:** [Will Meeks](#)  
**To:** [Noreen Walsh](#)  
**Subject:** Wednesday  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 23, 2016 7:34:15 AM

---

Noreen,

I will be having a call with NBR staff tomorrow at 11:00 am MST.  
Please join the call if you can.

866-745-8880  
9716357#

Will Meeks  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Mountain-Prairie Region  
Assistant Regional Director  
National Wildlife Refuge System  
303-236-4303 (w)  
720-541-0310 (c)