

NOTE TO REVIEWERS

Senator Jon Tester Request for Technical Drafting Assistance National Bison Range

- Senator Jon Tester (D-MT) requested the Department provide technical drafting assistance for legislative language that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, to be held in trust by the Secretary of the Interior for the benefit of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT).
- The language attached has been reviewed by the Solicitor's Office and would:
 - Transfer the lands from the Refuge System by the Secretary of the Interior to be held in trust for the benefit of the Tribes and shall be part of the Flathead Indian Reservation.
 - Transfer other property (buildings, structures, etc.)
 - Lays out management responsibilities to include: care and maintenance of bison, conservation of natural resources on the lands, and maintenance of a visitor's center for provide for public visitation and education.
- Please review and surname as soon as possible. The surname route is as follows:
 - R6 (16-Surname through DTS)
 - AEA-CLA (16-Surname through DTS)
 - ANRS (16-Surname through DTS)
 - AEA-DAEA (16-Surname through DTS)
 - AEA (16-Surname through DTS)
 - D (16-Surname through DTS)
 - FW (16-Surname through DTS)
 - CLA (2-Appropriate Action)
- Once the internal review process is complete, CLA will share the approved draft text with the Department's Office of Congressional and Legislative Affairs (OCL) to finish the review process through DOI, OMB, etc. OCL will then transmit the cleared language to Senator Tester's office.
- Any questions or concerns should be directed to Roya Mogadam in Congressional and Legislative Affairs at 703-358-2128.

From: [Dan Ashe](#)
To: [Black, Michael](#)
Cc: [Robert Dreher](#)
Subject: Re: National Bison Range
Date: Wednesday, February 10, 2016 10:03:13 PM

Sorry I missed you Mike. I'll call in the morning.

Dan.

Sent from my iPhone

> On Feb 10, 2016, at 2:38 PM, Black, Michael <mike.black@bia.gov> wrote:

>

> Dan and Bob,

>

> Wanting to touch base with you guys regarding a call I received this morning and a follow up meeting I have this afternoon at 3:30 with the Tribe. Apparently there has been some issues related to our discussions last week and the anti-compact/anti-tribal groups.

>

> Anyways, if you could give me a call when you get a chance we can talk thru it.

>

> 202-513-7631 or 406-855-8396.

>

> Thanks, Mike

OFFICE OF THE LAKE COUNTY ATTORNEY

LAKE COUNTY COURTHOUSE

106 Fourth Avenue East
Polson, Montana 59860-2183
Phone (406) 883-7245
Fax (800) 878-9735

STEVEN N. ESCHENBACHER
COUNTY ATTORNEY

CHIEF CRIMINAL DEPUTY COUNTY ATTORNEY
JAMES LAPOTKA

CIVIL DEPUTY COUNTY ATTORNEY
WALTER E. CONGDON

DEPUTY COUNTY ATTORNEY
BENJAMIN R. ANCLAUX
MOLLY OWEN

Feb. 22, 2016

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Mountain-Prairie Region Office
134 Union Blvd
Lakewood, CO 80228

**SUBJECT: NATIONAL BISON RANGE RECORD OF DECISION (ROD)
PROTEST OF DECISION**

Dear Sir or Madam:

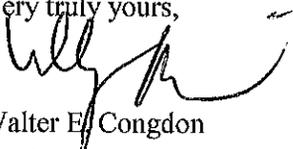
The Dept. of Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife service indicated in early February, 2016 that a transfer of the National Bison Range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes was a plan or proposal that U.S.F.W.S. was submitting to the local Tribal government for consideration.

Lake County received no notice of this action until the press release and also has had no opportunity to comment upon this action. To our knowledge no consistency review of this action or plan has occurred regarding local land use plans. This protest is based upon 42 USC 4332 which provides for creation of a NEPA document on proposals for actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and consideration of alternatives.

We are also concerned that a Record of Decision may have been entered without considering the inventory and planning requirements of 43 USC 1701 and 1712. These concerns include recreational opportunity, socio-economic impacts, tax base, wildlife, environment, and mitigation options.

If a R.O.D. or NEPA process has not been completed or commenced, consider this letter our request for copies of the work done thus far and a statement of our desire to cooperate in completing consideration of various options for this facility. We desire to fully explore alternatives and mitigation activities.

Very truly yours,



Walter E. Congdon
Civil Deputy Lake County Attorney

cc: Lake County Commissioners
Sanders County Commissioners

From: [George Waters](mailto:George.Waters@fws.gov)
To: d.m.ashe@fws.gov; stephen.guertin@fws.gov; robert.dreher@fws.gov
Cc: cynthia.martinez@fws.gov; [Brian Upton](mailto:Brian.Upton@fws.gov); roslyn.sellars@fws.gov
Subject: meeting request
Date: Friday, March 11, 2016 11:11:45 AM

Director Ashe, Deputy Director Guertin, Associate Director Dreher – As you may know, I represent the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, here in DC. I am so sorry to have missed the meeting you all had with Tribal Chairman Vernon Finley and attorney Brian Upton on February 5 regarding the National Bison Range. Unfortunately, I was out of the country at the time. I understand it was a very positive meeting.

Dan Ashe directed us (CSKT) to follow up with Cynthia Martinez and Brian Upton has been in contact with her as well as with Hilary Thomkins, Barry Roth and others and we have met with members of the Montana Congressional delegation.

Next Thursday and Friday, March 17 and 18, a large delegation from the Tribal Council (6 members including the Chairman) are coming to Washington, DC to make the rounds on the Hill with staff of the MT delegation and staff to the committees of jurisdiction. We had also hoped to meet with Chief Martinez. As I understand it, she is at Midway Island in the Pacific this week and is attending a national conference next week. Her staff won't be able to speak with her until Monday but believe she is out of pocket on Thursday and unlikely to be available on Friday either. We do have a meeting at DOI next Friday at 10:00am. Might your schedules allow for a meeting after that? We could also meet later on Friday. We want to make sure we are coordinated at the policy level and our elected officials would very much like to meet you all. Thank you.

*George Waters, President
George Waters Consulting Service
505 Capitol Court, NE, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 544-3044
(202) 544-3044 Fax
(202) 316-7851 Cell*

From: [Dan Ashe](#)
To: [George Waters](#)
Cc: stephen_guertin@fws.gov; robert_dreher@fws.gov; cynthia_martinez@fws.gov; [Brian Upton](#); roslyn_sellars@fws.gov
Subject: Re: meeting request
Date: Friday, March 11, 2016 11:22:22 AM

Hello George. It is possible that I will be available to meet on Friday afternoon. I've copied Roslyn Sellars who can work with you to see what may be possible.

Thanks.

Dan.

Dan Ashe
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

On Mar 11, 2016, at 11:11 AM, George Waters <george@georgewaters.com> wrote:

Director Ashe, Deputy Director Guertin, Associate Director Dreher – As you may know, I represent the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, here in DC. I am so sorry to have missed the meeting you all had with Tribal Chairman Vernon Finley and attorney Brian Upton on February 5 regarding the National Bison Range. Unfortunately, I was out of the country at the time. I understand it was a very positive meeting.

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Washington, DC 20002*

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Conversation Contents

DCN: 062597 - National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance

Attachments:

/28. DCN: 062597 - National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance/1.1 BisonRange.draft.revised.02262016 - PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT (1) (1).docx
/28. DCN: 062597 - National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance/1.2 Note to Reviewers.doc

Betsy_Matten@fws.gov

From: Betsy_Matten@fws.gov
Sent: Mon Mar 14 2016 08:27:00 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Maureen_Gallagher@fws.gov, Mike_Blenden@fws.gov, Will_Meeks@fws.gov
Subject: DCN: 062597 - National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance
Attachments: BisonRange.draft.revised.02262016 - PRE-DECISIONAL DRAFT (1) (1).docx Note to Reviewers.doc

Please review the Note to Reviewer and the document and then let me know if there are changes that need to be made or if I can surname this for Will.

Betsy

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region



IN REPLY REFER TO:

FWS/R6/062487

Mail Stop 60130

MAILING ADDRESS:

Post Office Box 25486

Denver Federal Center

Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

STREET LOCATION:

134 Union Boulevard

Lakewood, Colorado 80228-1807

Walter E. Congdon, Civil Deputy Lake County Attorney
Office of the Lake County Attorney
106 Fourth Avenue East
Polson, Montana 59860-2183

APR 7 2016

Dear Mr. Congdon:

We have received your letter dated February 22, 2016, regarding the future of the National Bison Range and associated properties administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) in Lake County, Montana. You have styled your letter as a protest pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) based on your apparent conclusion that a decision has been made. At the outset, I want to clarify that there has been no final decision, and no proposal for action. The only activities that have occurred thus far have been discussions with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) about the future of the National Bison Range, which could include a legislative solution.

The Service had a discussion on February 5, 2016, and has had subsequent conversations with the CSKT since then about the possibility of the Service supporting legislation that would transfer the lands comprising the National Bison Range. This discussion was limited to the National Bison Range; there was no discussion of transferring the management of Pablo, Nine-Pipe or any other properties under Service administration in Lake County, Montana. Moreover, because legislation would be required to accomplish any transfer of the National Bison Range, there is no certainty as to when, or even if, any action would occur. If legislation is proposed directing transfer of the National Bison Range the Service will comply with applicable laws as directed by Congress.

Your letter also requests "copies of the work done thus far" and a request to be involved as a cooperating agency. We are interpreting this as a request for a copy of the environmental assessment that was begun in 2010. The following is a link to the *Draft Environmental Assessment for a Draft Annual Funding Agreement*: <http://www.fws.gov/bisonrange/AFA-2014/index.html>.

I appreciate your interest in the National Bison Range. If you need further information, please contact me at (303) 236-7920 or the Assistant Regional Director for the National Wildlife Refuge System in the Mountain-Prairie Region, Will Meeks, at (303) 236-4303.

Sincerely,

Deputy Regional Director

cc: Jeff King

Conversation Contents

Response to Lake County Attorney on NBR

Attachments:

/16. Response to Lake County Attorney on NBR/1.1 062487_Response to Lake County Attorney_NBR.pdf

"Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

From: "Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>
Sent: Fri Apr 08 2016 07:54:22 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Mike Blenden <mike_blenden@fws.gov>, Jeff King <Jeff_King@fws.gov>
Subject: Response to Lake County Attorney on NBR
Attachments: 062487_Response to Lake County Attorney_NBR.pdf

Mike and Jeff,
Matt signed the response to Lake County yesterday and the letter will go out in today's mail. A copy of the response is attached.
Betsy

--

Betsy M. Matten, Administrative Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
National Wildlife Refuge System
134 Union Blvd.
Lakewood, CO 80228
303-236-4307
Betsy_Matten@fws.gov



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Mountain-Prairie Region



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Mail Stop 60130

MAILING ADDRESS:

Post Office Box 25486

Denver Federal Center

Denver, Colorado 80225-0486

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Sincerely,

Deputy Regional Director

cc: Jeff King

From: [Jeff King](#)
To: [Mike Blenden](#); [Will Meeks](#)
Subject: CSKT meeting with Lake County commissioner
Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2016 8:32:50 AM

Just a heads up that I heard last night that the Lake County commissioners are meeting with the CSKT tribal council today. One of the items on the agenda is NBR.

If I hear anything I will let you know.

Thanks,

jk
Sent from my iPad

From: [Blenden, Mike](#)
To: [Jeff King](#)
Subject: Lake County letter
Date: Monday, May 16, 2016 1:21:54 PM

Jeff,

Did you get a letter dated April 11, 2016 from Walter Congdon, Civil Deputy Lake County Attorney?

We just received one from him saying we didn't respond to his April 11 letter. We don't have one here and I'm just checking bases to see if you may have it. I was just going to call him unless you have a better idea.

Thanks,

Mike

--

Michael Blenden
Refuge Supervisor - Montana, Wyoming and Utah
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, CO 80228
303-236-4306
303-710-7934 cell

Too often we...enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.
John F. Kennedy

From: [Noreen Walsh](#)
To: [Will Meeks](#); [Anna Munoz](#); [Stephen Torbit \(Stephen Torbit/R6/FWS/DOI\)](#)
Cc: [Matt Hogan](#); [Stephanie Potter](#)
Subject: NBR
Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 5:36:34 PM

I'd like to do an all around update on NBR issues (e.g., current bison assessment, transition, legislation, public meeting and working group, comms) sometime as soon as you can be prepared. Can you work with Stephanie to schedule an hour?

Thanks,

Noreen

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

From: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Noreen Walsh](#)
Cc: [Anna Munoz](#); [Stephen Torbit \(Stephen Torbit/R6/FWS/DOI\)](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Stephanie Potter](#)
Subject: Re: NBR
Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 5:42:03 PM

Sure thing. Prior to Thursday's meeting or post?

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 Jun 14, 2016, at 5:36 PM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

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Thanks,

Noreen

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

From: [Stephen Torbit](#)
To: [Noreen Walsh](#)
Cc: [Will Meeks](#); [Anna Munoz](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Stephanie Potter](#)
Subject: Re: NBR
Date: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 7:32:06 PM

I could do Thursday at any time.

Sent from my iPhone

On Jun 14, 2016, at 5:36 PM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

I'd like to do an all around update on NBR issues (e.g., current bison assessment, transition, legislation, public meeting and working group, comms) sometime as soon as you can be prepared. Can you work with Stephanie to schedule an hour?

Thanks,

Noreen

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

From: [Anna Munoz](#)
To: [Will Meeks](#)
Subject: Re: NBR
Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2016 6:35:58 AM

I would say after. I don't know much about the public meeting or working group (other than what I've seen in the media) and with most of the key CSKT folks in DC this week, not sure I'll be able to get all the details today.

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](#)

On Jun 14, 2016, at 5:42 PM, Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov> wrote:

Sure thing. Prior to Thursday's meeting or post?

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 Jun 14, 2016, at 5:36 PM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

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Thanks,

Noreen

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

From: [Noreen Walsh](#)
To: [Will Meeks](#)
Cc: [Anna Munoz](#); [Stephen Torbit](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Stephanie Potter](#)
Subject: RE: NBR
Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2016 7:46:38 AM

How about the half hour before the 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]
Sent: Tuesday, June 14, 2016 5:42 PM
To: Noreen Walsh
Cc: Anna Munoz; Stephen Torbit (Stephen Torbit/R6/FWS/DOI); Matt Hogan; Stephanie Potter
Subject: Re: NBR

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mountain-Prairie Region
Assistant Regional Director
National Wildlife Refuge System
303-236-4303(w)
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Thanks,

Noreen

Noreen Walsh
Regional Director
Mountain-Prairie Region

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
303 236 7920

From: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Anna Munoz](#)
Subject: Fwd: NBR
Date: Wednesday, June 15, 2016 7:56:47 AM

Do you want to provide the suggestion that you sent me earlier?

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: Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov>
Date: June 15, 2016 at 7:46:53 AM MDT
To: Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov>
Cc: Anna Munoz <anna_munoz@fws.gov>, Stephen Torbit
<stephen_torbit@fws.gov>, Matt Hogan <matt_hogan@fws.gov>, Stephanie
Potter <stephanie_potter@fws.gov>
Subject: RE: NBR

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Mountain-Prairie Region
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303 236 7920*

From: Will Meeks [mailto:will_meeks@fws.gov]
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To: Noreen Walsh
Cc: Anna Munoz; Stephen Torbit (Stephen Torbit/R6/FWS/DOI); Matt Hogan; Stephanie
Potter
Subject: Re: NBR

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U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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Thanks,

Noreen

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

From: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Jeff King](#)
Cc: [Mike Blenden](#)
Subject: NBR Bison
Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016 11:28:39 AM

Jeff,

Due to potential/pending legislation please do not make any commitments on bison transfers from the herd for this year. We need to have a strategy in place and should have that conversation soon.

Thanks.

P.S. I understand we "were served" in the PEER lawsuit. More on that next week when I learn more.

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: [Jeff King](#)
To: [Amy Lisk](#); [Laura King](#)
Subject: Fwd: NBR Bison
Date: Tuesday, June 21, 2016 1:41:09 PM

Thanks

jk

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov>
Date: June 21, 2016 at 11:28:33 AM MDT
To: Jeff King <jeff_king@fws.gov>
Cc: Mike Blenden <mike_blenden@fws.gov>
Subject: NBR Bison

Jeff,

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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: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Blenden, Mike](#)
Cc: [Jeff King](#)
Subject: Re: NBR Bison
Date: Friday, June 24, 2016 8:43:15 PM

That is true. Need to consider some genetic stuff likely too.

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 Jun 24, 2016, at 7:59 AM, Blenden, Mike <mike_blenden@fws.gov> wrote:

Will,

Just to clarify, Jeff shouldn't make commitments on transfer of surplus bison but I think he should continue to make preparations for the annual roundup/sale/donation for this fall. There is a lot of advance preparation. Agreed?

Mike

On Tue, Jun 21, 2016 at 11:28 AM, Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov> wrote:

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--

Michael Blenden
Refuge Supervisor - Montana, Wyoming and Utah
134 Union Boulevard
Lakewood, CO 80228
303-236-4306
303-710-7934 cell

Too often we...enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought.
John F. Kennedy

From: [Sanchez, Denise](#)
To: [Anna Munoz](#); [Barbara Boyle](#); [Bruce Decker](#); [casey_stemler](#); [Clint Riley](#); [Doug Fruge](#); [Gavin Shire](#); [Kathleen Dennis](#); [Larry Gamble](#); [Matt Hogan](#); [Matt Kales](#); [Matthew Trott](#); [Michael Thabault](#); [Noreen Walsh](#); [Robert Segin](#); [Ryan Moehring](#); [Stephen Torbit](#); [Tom Chart](#); [Will Meeks](#); [Maureen Gallagher](#); [Gregory Gerlich](#); [Nicole Alt](#); [Connie YoungD](#); [Amy Thornburg](#); [Serena baker](#); [Charisa Morris](#); [Chris Tollefson](#); [Marjorie Nelson](#)
Subject: Headquarters Report 7.15.2016
Date: Friday, July 15, 2016 4:00:46 PM
Attachments: [WO Report Final 07.15.16 doc2 \(1\).docx](#)

Thanks much.

--

Denise Sanchez | Public Affairs Assistant
USFWS Mountain-Prairie Region External Affairs
134 Union Blvd, Lakewood, CO 80228
denise_sanchez@fws.gov | 303-236-2985

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



Flickr - Photos linked in this email.



WEEKLY REPORT
REGION 6, FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
July 21 – August 3

Executive Summary and Implementation Update

Nothing to report

10 Calendar Days Ahead

Nothing to report

TBD

Nothing to report

30-60 Day Look Ahead

Repeat: The Wyoming Game and Fish Department and the FWS continue to plan for a reintroduction of the endangered black-footed ferret on July 26, 2016 (at the conclusion of the Western Fish and Wildlife Association Meeting). This reintroduction will take place near Meeteetse, Wyoming, at the site where the last 18 animals were captured in 1981. These animals founded a long term captive rearing and reintroduction program across twelve states, Mexico, and Canada. This location will be the 27th reintroduction site established since 1991 in cooperation with many partners. Two private ranches will be the focus of limited invitation activities, although several public activities are planned in the town itself. FWS Director Dan Ashe is scheduled to attend.

Items of note

New: On July 9, 2016 the Bratten Coulee Fire burned 353 acres on Charles M. Russell NWR and adjacent private land. Staff from Sand Creek, Jordan, and Ft. Peck NWR stations responded. The fire, which was mostly on private land, was contained on July 10 with assistance from 1.25-1.75 inches of rain received over the weekend.

Refuge fire staff has been assisting on a number of wildfires in the region including Observation Pass fire in Montana, Cold Springs and Hayden Pass fires in Colorado. A crew from North Dakota is on a severity detail in Nevada due to the extreme fire potential there. The Governor of South Dakota has issued an emergency fire declaration for 13 counties so that state resources can be used as necessary.

New: The Baca NWR has detected a potential for sylvatic plague in the prairie dog colony on the refuge. In the nearby Great Sand Dunes National park several prairie dogs were located that have apparently died from the plague. One dead prairie dog was located on the Baca refuge while dusting of the burrows was being conducted by Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Testing of

this deceased prairie dog is being conducted to determine if it was in fact plague that caused the mortality.

As a precaution to visitors and staff, warnings have been given to avoid the prairie dog town and steps have been taken to protect any nearby facilities from this potential threat. As we get more information we will pass along.

Update: The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes held a public information meeting in Pablo, Montana on the evening of July 12, 2016. Approximately 90 people attended. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Montana Congressional delegation public feedback on the proposal to transfer management of the National Bison Range to the tribes.

Repeat: The proposed Power Company of Wyoming's (PCW) Chokecherry-Sierra Madre Wind Energy Project (CCSM) encompasses approximately 250,000 acres southwest of Rawlins in Carbon County, Wyoming. On April 29, 2016, the FWS opened a 60-day public comment period for a Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS) for the potential issuance of eagle take permits for Phase I of that project. Unfortunately, some outreach materials contained an error in the email address provided for public comments. The error was corrected June 9, 2016, by enabling both email addresses to accept comments. To ensure all public comments are received, the FWS will be reopening the public comment period for two weeks, and asking that any comments sent to that incorrect email address before June 9, 2016 be resubmitted.

From: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Noreen Walsh](#)
Cc: [Matt Hogan](#)
Bcc: will_meeks@fws.gov
Subject: Call with NBR
Date: Thursday, July 21, 2016 9:22:02 AM

Noreen, for the call tomorrow with NBR, I offer a few ideas to consider. These are offered from Mike Blenden and Jeff may provide a couple more??

Do you have others in mind? How would you like the flow of the call to go?

1. What happens if legislation isn't introduced this month?
2. Status check in accommodating NBR employees in case of transfer?
3. How does the regional Refuge realignment efforts relate to staff and or a future of the NBR (in the event of no legislation)?

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: [Noreen Walsh](#)
To: [Will Meeks](#)
Cc: [Matt Hogan](#)
Subject: Re: Call with NBR
Date: Friday, July 22, 2016 6:55:57 AM

Sure thing

On Jul 22, 2016, at 6:54 AM, Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov> wrote:

Bad choice of words on my part. We have a bunch of questions and I have some ideas. (I think that's better).

May I call you on your cell phone upon completion of the MBCF call?

Matt, would you like to be included? If so, I can send out a Conf line number.

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)

On Jul 21, 2016, at 8:26 PM, Noreen Walsh <noreen_walsh@fws.gov> wrote:

Just saw this.

They aren't ideas so much as questions! I'm guessing you have some recommendations. Look forward to talking in the morning.

Thanks 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]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 9:22 AM
To: Noreen Walsh
Cc: Matt Hogan

Subject: Call with NBR

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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: [Will Meeks](#)
To: [Matt Hogan](#)
Subject: Re: Call with NBR
Date: Friday, July 22, 2016 6:58:05 AM

There are two calls.

The first one is just between Noreen and me (you?) to discuss a strategy.

We will then decide if we need to call Jeff directly. The planned call with his staff is scheduled for 9 am Mountain.

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 Jul 22, 2016, at 6:56 AM, Matt Hogan <matt_hogan@fws.gov> wrote:

What time is the call?

On Jul 22, 2016, at 6:54 AM, Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov> wrote:

Bad choice of words on my part. We have a bunch of questions and I have some ideas. (I think that's better).

May I call you on your cell phone upon completion of the MBCF call?

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

From: Will Meeks [mailto:Will.Meeks@fws.gov]
Sent: Thursday, July 21, 2016 9:22 AM
To: Noreen Walsh
Cc: Matt Hogan
Subject: Call with NBR

Noreen, for the call tomorrow with NBR, I offer a few ideas to consider. These are offered from Mike Blenden and Jeff may provide a couple more??

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Will Meeks
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Mountain Prairie Region
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303-236-4303 (w)
720-541-0310 (c)

Conversation Contents

Fwd: DTS 062597 NBR

"Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

From: "Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>
Sent: Mon Mar 14 2016 09:46:12 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: Maureen Gallagher <maureen_gallagher@fws.gov>, Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov>, Mike Blenden <mike_blenden@fws.gov>
Subject: Fwd: DTS 062597 NBR

FYI on the National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance I sent out this morning.....

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

From: **Kristine Martin** <kristine_martin@fws.gov>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 9:33 AM
Subject: DTS 062597 NBR
To: Betsy Matten <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

Anna asked for Noreen to Surname via email, which she has done so nothing for NWRS to do. I've closed it for you.

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

--

Betsy M. Matten, Administrative Officer
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6
National Wildlife Refuge System
134 Union Blvd.
Lakewood, CO 80228
303-236-4307
Betsy_Matten@fws.gov

"Gallagher, Maureen" <maureen_gallagher@fws.gov>

From: "Gallagher, Maureen" <maureen_gallagher@fws.gov>
Sent: Tue Mar 15 2016 11:38:47 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: "Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>
CC: Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov>, Mike Blenden <mike_blenden@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: DTS 062597 NBR

If I understood Will correctly yesterday, Noreen has already commented which leaves us off the hook.

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 Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 9:46 AM, Matten, Betsy <betsy_matten@fws.gov> wrote:
FYI on the National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance I sent out this morning.....

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

From: **Kristine Martin** <kristine_martin@fws.gov>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 9:33 AM

Subject: DTS 062597 NBR

To: Betsy Matten <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

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Kristine Martin

Executive Assistant – Office of the Regional Director

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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Kristine_martin@fws.gov

--

Betsy M. Matten, Administrative Officer

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6

National Wildlife Refuge System

134 Union Blvd.

Lakewood, CO 80228

303-236-4307

Betsy_Matten@fws.gov

"Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

From:

"Matten, Betsy" <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

Sent: Tue Mar 15 2016 14:25:49 GMT-0600 (MDT)
To: "Gallagher, Maureen" <maureen_gallagher@fws.gov>
CC: Will Meeks <will_meeks@fws.gov>, Mike Blenden <mike_blenden@fws.gov>
Subject: Re: DTS 062597 NBR

Yes, Noreen surnamed the DTS and made these comments.....

b(5) Deliberative process



So, Kris closed the DTS--nothing more for us to do.
Betsy

On Tue, Mar 15, 2016 at 11:38 AM, Gallagher, Maureen <maureen_gallagher@fws.gov> wrote:

If I understood Will correctly yesterday, Noreen has already commented which leaves us off the hook.

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 Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 9:46 AM, Matten, Betsy <betsy_matten@fws.gov> wrote:
FYI on the National Bison Range Request for Technical Drafting Assistance I sent out this morning.....

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

From: **Kristine Martin** <kristine_martin@fws.gov>
Date: Mon, Mar 14, 2016 at 9:33 AM
Subject: DTS 062597 NBR
To: Betsy Matten <betsy_matten@fws.gov>

Anna asked for Noreen to Surname via email, which she has done so nothing for NWRS to do. I've closed it for you.

Kristine Martin

Executive Assistant – Office of the Regional Director

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

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303-236-7920 Office

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Kristine_martin@fws.gov

--

Betsy M. Matten, Administrative Officer

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6

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134 Union Blvd.

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Betsy_Matten@fws.gov

--

Betsy M. Matten, Administrative Officer

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 6

National Wildlife Refuge System

134 Union Blvd.

Lakewood, CO 80228

303-236-4307

Betsy_Matten@fws.gov

From: [Stephen Torbit](#)
To: [Will Meeks](#)
Subject: FW: NBR bison
Date: Thursday, April 21, 2016 3:33:00 PM

Here is the updated assessment from Lee on NBR genetic management. Pretty good summary I think.

b(5) deliberative process

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: Jones, Lee [mailto:lee_c_jones@fws.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, April 05, 2016 11:32 PM
To: Stephen Torbit
Subject: NBR bison

Hi Steve,

Although this is a preliminary estimate, it looks like we have conserved about 92-95% of the known alleles at NBR in the RMA, NSM or SHNGP herds. Given the small size of these satellite herds, this number is higher than I expected, but it is possible that the Wind Cave and Wichita Mountains animals at RMA contribute to this apparent large amount of overlap. Although the actual microsatellite alleles may be the same between the Wichita and NBR bison, we cannot assume that the foundation or origin (or surrounding genetic material) is the same, and should therefore exclude those animals from the analysis. When I get back to the office, I will exclude those individuals to get a better estimate, but I suspect it will still be in the 87-90% ballpark.

I recommend that we essentially combine the 2 proposals I made in the earlier email to you and Will. Based on random sampling, it takes about 125 NBR bison to capture about 95% of measureable diversity. We did some selection in establishing the satellite populations, but we did also select about 30 at random. First, I suggest that we ensure conservation of each NBR private allele, plus we select a few animals that contain any genetics that have not yet been captured in the satellite herds. I also suggest that we select as many additional animals at random from the NBR herd as we think we can handle, including some adults, in an effort to capture diversity that we cannot measure with the microsatellites. If we could get even 50 or 60 bison from NBR moved to a new location, we would have a decent chance of conserving the majority of the total diversity in the herd.

Although I haven't seen the data, Elk Island bison may have significant genetic overlap with NBR bison since they also came from the Pablo-Allard herd. If for some reason it becomes

problematic to get NBR bison translocated to another Refuge, we could consider Elk Island as a possible alternative source of this genetic foundation.

I'll touch base with you when I return on the 18th, but hopefully this information is helpful in the meantime. I think 50 or 60 bison sounds like a perfect new low density, low intensity bison herd....Thanks, Lee

Lee C. Jones
USFWS-Wildlife Health office
10 E. Babcock, Rm 105
Bozeman, MT 59715
Office: 406.587.2169
Cell: 406.600.8405
Fax: 406.587.9098
lee_c_jones@fws.gov

From: [Scott Aikin](#)
To: cynthia_martinez@fws.gov
Cc: d_m_ashe@fws.gov; jim_kurth@fws.gov
Subject: Bison Range update
Date: Friday, April 29, 2016 8:12:47 AM

Just wanted to follow up on yesterday's discussion I had with you. I spoke with Brian Upton, CSKT tribal attorney yesterday afternoon and he indicated that Chairman Finley may be coming to town next week to visit the MT delegation. If this occurs, they will likely coordinate a meeting with us connected to this visit. I'll keep you up to date as to this possibility.

b(5) deliberative process



On a completely side note, I heard on the news this morning that Congress approved the Bison as the national mammal awaiting President's approval. Interesting synergy and ironic in this instance.

I'm flying home this morning but will be in Rapid City SD next week for grizzly bear tribal consultations. If the Tribe does come into town next week, I'll work to be available via conference call should they meet with us.

Thanks and have a great weekend,

Scott Aikin, U.S.Fish & Wildlife Service
National Native American Programs Coord.
(C) 202-285-3411
(O) 360-604-2531

From: [Meeks, Will](#)
To: [FW6 Refuge Employees](#)
Subject: Inadvertent Omission
Date: Friday, June 17, 2016 8:05:32 AM

All,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the realignment plan with you yesterday. I hope it clarified where we are in the process and the timeline.

I want to bring attention to an important omission on my part. Inadvertently I failed to mention the National Bison Range status and potential future. Recently the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) prepared draft legislation and released it to the public. The legislation would transfer the National Bison Range to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to be held in trust for CSKT. They are also hosting public meetings. **b(5) deliberative process**

b(5) deliberative process

Thanks for understanding, and I'm sorry to have not brought it up yesterday.

Have a good weekend.

--

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