

From: [Betsy Hildebrandt](#)
To: [Dan Ashe](#)
Subject: Re: National Bison Range
Date: Friday, February 12, 2016 6:17:49 PM

(b)5 Deliberative

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 12, 2016, at 5:49 PM, Dan Ashe <d_m_ashe@fws.gov> wrote:

(b)5 Deliberative

Let's talk Monday.

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 12, 2016, at 5:34 PM, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsy_hildebrandt@fws.gov> wrote:

(b)5 Deliberative

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Ryan C. Rusche" <ryan.cskt@gmail.com>
Date: February 12, 2016 at 2:34:37 PM EST
To: Betsy Hildebrandt <Betsy_Hildebrandt@fws.gov>
Cc: Betsy Hildebrandt <Betsy_Hildebrandt@ios.doi.gov>, Betsy Hildebrandt <betsyhildebrandt@gmail.com>, Brian Upton <brianu@cskt.org>, Ryan Rusche <ryan.rusche@cskt.org>
Subject: National Bison Range

Ms. Hildebrandt:

Yesterday Director Ashe contacted Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Chairman Vernon Finley and discussed the possibility of issuing a joint statement on USFWS's recent proposal on the National Bison Range. We were very encouraged by this news and look forward to working with the Service on this. On Director Ashe's recommendation, Chairman Finley asked my colleague, Brian Upton, and I to contact you about facilitating such a statement. In the interest of moving this along, Mr. Upton drafted the following

proposed statement for your consideration. We are not sure exactly what you or Director Ashe had in mind, but thought this might be a good starting point. Of course, we are open to any and all thoughts you may have.

If you would like to discuss this by telephone, please feel free to call me at (406) 890-8450. Mr. Upton is traveling today, but I should be able to patch him in on the road. The proposed statement is as follows:

"Last week, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service proposed that the United States restore the National Bison Range lands to federal trust status for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. The federal government would continue to own the property in trust for the Tribes, with a requirement that the land continue to be managed for bison conservation purposes. These discussions were initiated because of the highly unique facts underlying the situation at the National Bison Range, which is located in the center of the Flathead Indian Reservation. Both parties have been actively involved in bison management at the Range, and both parties recognize the Tribes' role in stewarding the nation's last remaining bison at a time when they were literally on the brink of extinction. We look forward to jointly continuing our discussions, and ensuring continued bison conservation management and public access at the Bison Range."

Best,

Ryan C. Rusche and Brian Upton
Attorneys
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead
Reservation