



P.O. Box 4310, Whitefish, Montana 59937

Friday, July 15, 2016

Dear CSKT Bison Range Working Group:

Headwaters Montana, a non-profit conservation organization based in northwest Montana, fully supports the proposed legislation that would restore the National Bison Range property to the Tribes. This correction is long overdue and we agree entirely with the history cited in the draft legislation. We urge the Montana congressional delegation to act on this proposed legislation this year.

We attended the public meeting on July 12, 2016. The comment form that was distributed at that meeting asked four questions. We will address those four questions here.

- 1. What is most important to you about management of the Bison Range?** We think there are three main issues: 1. Restoration of Tribal ownership of the Range. 2. Restoration of the habitat as cheatgrass seems to be taking over the grasslands of the Range. 3. Designing a sustainable grazing program; it seems to us that the 8 pastures technique (if that is how the Range is currently divided) is not working.
- 2. What new opportunities do you see for the Bison Range?** Is there an opportunity to expand the range, or to move bison onto the Ferry Basin Elk Conservation Area? It seems that more area is needed to move toward a more 'free range' management for bison.
- 3. What changes would you propose for the draft legislation?** We have read the legislation and we would not change anything. We spoke to several Tribal reps at the July 12 meeting and were glad to hear that this legislation has been developed in partnership with the USFWS and in consultation with the Montana congressional delegation.
- 4. Additional comments and/or questions?** We think the proposed legislation moves bison management in the right direction and restores rightful ownership of the land to the Treaty Tribes.

We appreciate the opportunity to comments.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dave Hadden", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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Headwaters engages citizens of the Crown of the Continent in the region's critical conservation issues: water and wildlife conservation, and climate change.