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WMI Outdoor News Bulletin

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New report reveals problems with Bison Range agreement:

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) has released its evaluation of efforts in 2005 to implement the controversial agreement with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) to conduct 149 different management actions on Montana's National Bison Range Complex, reports the Wildlife Management Institute. Under the Indian Self-Determination Act Amendments of 1994, the Bison Range Annual Funding Agreement turned over from the Service to the CSKT approximately half of the budget and staff positions at this complex of national wildlife refuge lands.

Of the 149 management actions required under the Bison Range agreement in 2005, the Service deferred 22 percent until 2006, to minimize CSKT workload in the first year of the agreement. The Service's evaluation of the remaining activities conducted by CSKT found that 53 percent were entirely successful, 30 percent needed improvement, and 17 percent were unsuccessful. Of the biology activities that were required to be carried out in 2005, such as waterfowl pair and

brood counts, fully 35 percent were unsuccessful. Another 23 percent of the biology activities, such as vegetation surveys, were found to need improvement. Each of these categories included activities not initiated in a timely manner, performed by unqualified personnel resulting in significant errors, and data entry and consistency errors that prevented accurate summary and analysis. Similar performance was documented with respect to the visitor services and fire programs, with 65 percent and 57 percent, respectively, of the activities in these categories identified as unsuccessful or in need of improvement. In the maintenance program, a third of the required activities was determined to be unsuccessful or in need of improvement.

The CSKT agreement for the Bison Range, which includes the performance of many daily operational activities across the major programs of the refuge complex, is the first of its kind to be implemented on a national wildlife refuge. Because it was negotiated and implemented without the benefit of national Service policy, and because no policy exists today, the Bison Range has had no blueprints or established procedures to follow. Communication and training under the agreement consumed significant Service resources. More than 1,000 pages of detailed written protocols and support information had to be prepared by the Service, and more than 325 Service staff hours were devoted to training and orientation for CSKT.

The Service report includes a response to its findings by the CSKT, which states that tribal representatives "were disappointed by the subjective nature" of the report. The response details dozens of disagreements with the Service about the report's characterizations and the manner in which the Service is implementing the Bison Range agreement.

Conservation groups point to the problems documented in the report by the Service and CSKT as evidence that the agreement is a fundamentally unworkable way to manage a national wildlife refuge. They have maintained, since the agreement was first proposed, that many of its provisions hamstringing the ability of the Service to fulfill its duty and public trust obligation to manage the refuges, and that the shift of management responsibility to CSKT was at least inappropriate. In comments to the Service in 2004, the groups concluded, "It is not consistent with National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act to place the Refuge Manager and the [Service] in the position of having to negotiate on how staff will implement key programs to manage refuge resources."

At present, the Service and the CSKT intend to implement the agreement for the Bison Range Complex for the remainder of fiscal year 2006. They also intend to continue ongoing negotiations on a new agreement for fiscal year 2007. Conservationists await an opportunity to review and comment on any new agreement before it is finalized. (rpd)

WMI's Distinguished Service Award gets distinguished namesake:

The Wildlife Management Institute's highest individual honor—its Distinguished Service Award—will henceforth be known as the George Bird Grinnell Memorial Award for Distinguished Service in Natural Resource Conservation. With the permission and enthusiastic approval of George Bird Grinnell's relatives, the award now carries the name of the gentleman many consider the "father of conservation."

Grinnell—author, publisher, sportsman, ethnographer—was a powerful force behind the emergence of natural resource conservation as a public notion, political responsibility and professional

discipline. He was advisor/mentor for Theodore Roosevelt and catalyst for many others who were to contribute the early principles, spirit and momentum of conservation in North America.

"We are very pleased that our Distinguished Service Award now carries George Bird Grinnell's name and legacy," stated Steve Williams, President of WMI. "This award recognizes persons who have selflessly and very effectively dedicated their careers to conservation, without thought of personal gain or glory. It is entirely fitting that this award recognizes individuals of foresight, determination and accomplishment—hallmarks of Grinnell's extraordinary life. This award will pay tribute to its recipients' careers and to the memory of its venerated namesake." The Distinguished Service Award was established in 1999 and first conferred in 2000. The past honorees, who now will be recognized retroactively as recipients of the George Bird Grinnell Memorial Award for Distinguished Service in Natural Resource Conservation are:

- 2000—Bill Stevens, Federal Cartridge Company
- 2001—Dick Lattimer, Archery Manufacturers and Merchants Organization
- 2002—Perry and Lee Bass, Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission
- 2003—Daniel A. Poole, Wildlife Management Institute (retired)
- 2004—Wayne F. MacCallum, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
- 2005—James Earl Kennamer, National Wild Turkey Federation
- 2006—Duane L. Shroufe, Arizona Game and Fish Department

Wyoming and feds still growling over wolf management:

The long-standing feud between the state of Wyoming and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) over wolf management and the process to remove gray wolves in the northern Rocky Mountains from the endangered species list has taken another downturn, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

On July 24, the Service denied Wyoming's plan to manage wolves in the state, following a year-long review of the plan. As a result of that decision, it appears that Wyoming will sue the Service, as evidenced by the fact that the state had already filed a 60-day notice of intent to sue before the Service announced its decision. Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal issued a statement saying the Service's decision actually makes it easier for the state to proceed with litigation. He indicated that the main purpose of the lawsuit will be to get a judicial review of the scientific adequacy of Wyoming's regulatory proposals as passed by the legislature.

These actions will undoubtedly cause further delays in the delisting process. The Service has already approved management plans by Montana and Idaho. Acceptable plans by all three states are required before wolves can be removed from the endangered species list.

The proposed lawsuit follows a long legal path on this issue. Wyoming filed a previous lawsuit in 2003 that sought to compel the federal government to approve its wolf plan. That lawsuit was dismissed in March 2005 and that decision was later upheld by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled that Wyoming was premature in its suit because the Service had yet to make a final decision on the plan.

The key concern of the Service is Wyoming's plan to classify wolves as a predator species outside the Greater Yellowstone Area. Predators in Wyoming can be killed on sight, and the Service is concerned the classification would make it difficult to maintain a healthy population of wolves outside of the Area.

In fact, the Service wants and has requested that regulatory authority for wolf management, including regulated hunting, rest with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. However, the Wyoming legislatures' approved regulations place management of wolves outside of the Greater Yellowstone Area in the hands of the state livestock agency, which the Service will not accept.

The minimum recovery goal for wolves in the northern Rockies is 30 breeding pairs and at least 300 wolves, with each of the three states maintaining at least 10 breeding pairs and 100 wolves for at least three consecutive years. This goal was met in 2002 and, at the end of 2005, an estimated 1,020 wolves and 71 breeding pairs occupied the northern Rockies.

Reintroduction of wolves to the northern Rockies has never been a smooth and contention-free process. The recent actions tell that the final chapter in this saga is not imminent. (lhc)

New twist in reauthorization of Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act:

On July 11, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed S. 2430, its reauthorization version of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act of 2006. S. 2430 seeks to put more dollars into Great Lakes basin restoration and more priority on terrestrial wildlife than were part of the original Act of 1990 and its subsequent reauthorization in 1998. A companion bill has been introduced in the House of Representatives, where it faces a stiffer test. If it passes there, it won't get the President's OK and signature unless the recommended funding-level dollars are available. However, bipartisan passage of the Senate version is a strong signal that the restoration plan and price tag are reasonable, desirable and urgent, reports the Wildlife Management Institute.

S. 2430, introduced by Senators Mike DeWine (OH) and Carl Levin (MI), would increase funding from \$4.5 million to \$11.4 million annually and place greater emphasis on projects that address wildlife restoration. An additional \$6 million would be allocated for regional fish and wildlife restoration initiatives to be implemented by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service). No funding for such regional projects was authorized in the first two versions of the legislation.

That the 2006 Act would put more emphasis on wildlife is evident in language that outlines the goals of the legislation. The first stated goal is to restore and maintain self-sustaining fish and wildlife resources. In the 1990 Act and 1998 reauthorization, wildlife was not noted in the goal statements. Also, the current bill shifts responsibility for coordinating selection of grant proposals from the Council of Lake Committees (comprised of fisheries heads of state wildlife agencies that border the Great Lakes and representatives from the tribal groups that have management authority via treaties) to the Service, and it specifies that at least one of the members of the new grant selection committee must have wildlife expertise. The Service intends to call on a subset of the Council and others (most likely wildlife specialists) recommended by state agency directors to help in the selection of proposals for funding. This portends a better balance of project funding between terrestrial and aquatic resource recovery investments.

Passage and subsequent funding of the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act would trigger implementation of some of the priority recommendations of a Great Lakes regional restoration and protection strategy (www.glrc.us) released by the Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Partners last December. The Great Lakes Regional Collaboration Partnership is comprised of representatives of federal, state and local governments, tribes and other stakeholders with an interest in the Great Lakes. Many of these recommendations also are contained in an even more comprehensive bill—the \$20 billion Great Lakes Collaboration Implementation Act of 2006 (<http://www.glc.org/announce/06/04tippingpoint.html>). Service personnel see the Great Lakes Restoration Act as a delivery mechanism for some of the initiatives in the Collaboration Act.

For additional information on the Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act reauthorization and the Great Lakes restoration and protection strategy, contact Jane West, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3, at mailto:jane_west@fws.gov. (pmr)

Worth reading

Marley & Me (2005) is about a hunting dog that wasn't. Marley is a male yellow Labrador retriever. Me is John Grogan, a professional and talented scribe...talented enough, that is, to take a standard issue self-indulgent, tragicomical family pet story and turn it into a *New York Times* bestseller.

Back in an earlier millennium, I wrote a magazine article entitled "Dear Mr. Van Hauen: I Have a Complaint About the Dog You Sold Me." Same theme, but my male yellow Labrador retriever was a hunter and, for the record, the only very best dog that ever roamed and fertilized the planet. *The New York Times* never batted an eye. So I began my perusal of *Marley & Me* with a modicum of resentment.

It has all my ingredients—adorable puppy, zany canine antics, habits ranging from naughty to bawdy to borderline felony, unrequited loyalty, yaddada yaddada. Go figure, "loopy" Marley chewed things, dug holes in furniture, dined on garbage and urchin-flung food, and he preferred toilet water to tap water. What a scamp.

As the book progressed and house pet Marley (named after Rastafarian, wisdomweed disciple and reggae king Bob Marley because it is not against the law for people who own nonhunting hunting dogs to name them any dopey thing they want to) exceeded American Kennel Club standards for size and obedience class standards for attendance (he was banished after two sessions), my resentment ratcheted up a notch. Marley's seldom and barely restrained rambunctiousness cost Me and Mrs. Me a small fortune in vet bills, furniture and house repairs. As I read, I was compelled to scribble marginal notes that amounted to handling advice and admonitions: "Don't talk to the dog in sentences." "Be firm!" "Use a pinch collar!!" "PUT DOWN THE TOILET SEAT IF IT BOTHERS YOU THAT MUCH!!!" By page 130, my invectives were marked literally by increasingly dense and deeply incised exclamation points.

Nothing much is told in this best seller that hasn't happened with the countless bazillion other pet dogs that are adopted by naïve and adoring families. For the first two thirds or so of this 292-page book, reading about young Marley's adventures had a Disney quality to it, despite Me's disingenuous, droll grousing about his "chewer of couches, slasher of screens, slinger of drool, tipper of trash cans."

Rather than causing urban and household pandemonium, Marley, a lummoX of a sporting dog, ought to have been casting over hill and dale and sniffing out surplus game birds or paddling through rough waters to retrieve drifting wigeon or performing other heroic dog stuff. But no. Instead, Me took this perfectly usual, undisciplined Labrador and, by some sneaky, secret journalist thing, drew me into his "life and love with the world's worst dog." I was fully placated by the time Marley was nine and Me reported that his dog "had earned his place in our family. Like a quirky but beloved uncle, he was what he was. He would never be Lassie or Benji or Old Yeller; he would never reach Westminster or even the county fair. We knew that now. We accepted him for the dog he was, and loved him all the more for it."

The last third of the book is entirely predictable. It relates that adoption of and by a gassy, uncouth, unwaveringly cheerful, always forgiving, furry comedian comes with a price tag...it's called dog years. But this part is so superbly written that I forgave Me for not turning Marley into a Master Hunter. And I nearly forgave *The New York Times'* arbiters of best sellers for their earlier millennium oversight.

Published by William Morrow, an imprint of HarperCollins, *Marley & Me* retails for \$21.95. It is easy to find and a wonderful read.

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