



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

SEP 06 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Department of the Interior (Department or DOI) Bison Working Group (BWG) invites you to consult on the development of a Bison Shared Stewardship Strategy (Stewardship Strategy) toward the establishment of new, large, and wild bison herds.

Directed by [Secretary's Order 3410](#), entitled "Restoration of American Bison and the Prairie Grasslands," and as Action 2 of the [DOI Bison Conservation Initiative 2020](#), the envisioned Stewardship Strategy seeks to establish a comprehensive framework for American bison restoration, including strengthening long-term bison conservation partnerships. The Stewardship Strategy will include a description of the Department's engagement with States, Tribes, landowners, and nongovernmental conservation partners. It will also identify specific opportunities for the Department to lead or support the establishment of additional wide-ranging, healthy, and brucellosis-free bison herds on Federal and Tribal lands.

Toward that goal, and in the spirit of the 2022 co-stewardship policies of the Department, we propose co-production of the Stewardship Strategy by a team of co-authors that is comprised of Tribe-selected individuals, InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC)-selected members, and Federal employees. We are seeking input from Tribes and ITBC regarding the scope of the Stewardship Strategy for bison restoration. As part of the consultation, we are seeking the following: (1) Tribal members' nominations for five Tribal member co-authors and (2) ITBC members' nominations for one ITBC member co-author. These Tribe-selected and ITBC-selected co-authors will work on the Stewardship Strategy with the Federal representatives from each of the Federal bureaus involved in the BWG—National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and U.S. Geological Survey.

About the Bison Shared Stewardship Strategy Project

Nominations for Bison Shared Stewardship Strategy Co-authors:

- Co-author nominations must include the following:
 - An official letter of support from the designated leader of a federally recognized Tribe.
 - A statement of interest from the nominee, which outlines the interest in, experience relevant to, and commitment to the duration of, the cooperative effort. This statement of interest will also be used as a writing sample.

- We envision an author panel that is comprised of 11 co-authors, who will cooperatively draft the Stewardship Strategy. The panel will include five Federal representatives named by the BWG Leadership Team; five Tribal members nominated by Tribes; and one ITBC member nominated by the ITBC.
- In the event of a greater number of nominations than available co-author positions, the review and selection process will be managed by the Native American Liaison offices of the National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Scope of Bison Shared Stewardship Strategy Project:

- We request a 12- to 18-month commitment, which will include 3 in-person meetings (location to be determined by the co-author panel).
- The BWG will pay for travel and provide honoraria in consideration of time commitments.
- The BWG will host several virtual information sessions on this project.

Anticipated Project Timeline Milestones (changes will be reflected on website):

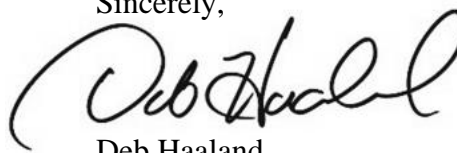
- October 2023 – First rounds of Tribal virtual consultations are held.
(<https://umontana.zoom.us/j/95347283640>, Meeting ID: 953 4728 3640)
 - Wednesday, October 18, 2023, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. MT
 - Wednesday, October 25, 2023, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. MT
- December 2023 – First in-person meeting for co-author panel is held.
- January 2024 – Second in-person meeting for co-author panel is held.
- February 2024 – First draft of Stewardship Strategy is released for DOI bureau, Tribe, and State review.
- March 2024 – Second round of Tribal consultations takes place regarding the first draft.
- April/May 2024 – Third and final in-person meeting takes place for co-author panel.
- Summer 2024 – Final Stewardship Strategy is released.

We intend for this co-produced Stewardship Strategy to provide direct, active opportunities for Tribes to shape directions for cooperative, large-scale, and durable bison conservation accomplishments into the future. We look forward to hearing from you. Please join us at one of the two virtual consultations in October.

Formal co-author nominations for the Stewardship Strategy should be sent on Tribal letterhead to bison_shared_stewardship@nps.gov within 2 weeks after initial consultation dates.

For additional information, you can visit the [NPS Bison Page](#). Thank you for making the time to consider this opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Deb Haaland". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Deb" being more prominent and the last name "Haaland" following in a similar style.

Deb Haaland