



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY ALASKA CHAPTER

2627 Ingra Street
Anchorage, AK 99508

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society is a professional society founded in 1971. With over 200 members, the Alaska Chapter is one of the largest chapters of The Wildlife Society, an international organization representing wildlife biologists and managers employed by state, federal, and borough resource agencies, academic institutions, non-governmental conservation organizations, and private industry. Our mission is to enhance the ability of wildlife professionals to conserve biological diversity, sustain productivity, and ensure responsible use of wildlife resources in Alaska for the benefit of society.

1 March 2013

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society has reviewed “Proposed Establishment of a Nonessential Experimental Population of Wood Bison in Alaska”. We believe the proposed rule is thorough and provides a basis for establishment of a nonessential, experimental population of wood bison in Interior Alaska.

The proposed rule is consistent with recommendations in a technical review of wood bison reintroduction that was previously conducted by our organization (http://joomla.wildlife.org/alaska/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=165&Itemid=165). Specifically, that wood bison were likely extirpated in Alaska within the past 500 years, and that their reintroduction would serve to restore an indigenous grazing animal to boreal forest ecosystems in Alaska. Also, that reintroduction of wood bison would enhance the long-term conservation of the species.

We believe that establishment of a nonessential wood bison population will not pose an unreasonable obstacle to resource development. Also, we believe the rule provides an appropriate framework through which state and federal wildlife agencies will work cooperatively on the project, but in which the Alaska Department of Fish and Game will be the lead agency that oversees reintroduction and management of the population. We support the goal of restoration of a wood bison population to a level where it can support subsistence and sport harvest.

We believe this is an important contribution to wildlife conservation in Alaska and fully support wood bison restoration as stated in the proposed rule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jerry Hupp".

Jerry Hupp, Ph.D.
President, Alaska Chapter of The Wildlife Society