



Nez Perce

TRIBAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

P.O. BOX 305 • LAPWAI, IDAHO 83540 • (208) 843-2253

April 12, 2010

Christian Mackay
Executive Officer
Montana Department of Livestock
Department of Livestock
301 N. Roberts, Room 101
Helena MT 59620

Re: Nez Perce Tribe's Participation as an IBMP Partner

Dear Mr. Mackay:

As the lead Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) agency partner for 2009-10, the Nez Perce Tribe would like to formally confirm, through this letter, our acceptance of the IBMP partners' 2009 written invitation to participate as a full partner on the IBMP.

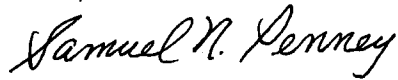
As you know, the Nez Perce Tribe is a sovereign government that, since time immemorial, has hunted bison and other culturally important species on lands now encompassing Yellowstone National Park, the Gallatin National Forest, and other lands within the State of Montana. In 1855, the Nez Perce Tribe and United States entered into a treaty securing, among other guarantees, hunting rights on open and unclaimed lands, including the Gallatin National Forest. To this day, the Tribe continues to exercise its treaty-reserved hunting rights on the Gallatin National Forest, and has successfully managed in recent years a bison hunt on those lands. Since one of the overarching goals of the IBMP is to promote free-ranging bison within the State of Montana, including the Gallatin National Forest, the Nez Perce Tribe has long advocated for recognition as a full partner on the IBMP so that its sovereign perspectives and treaty-reserved interests can be appropriately integrated into the partners' decision-making framework.

The Nez Perce Tribe was pleased, therefore, to receive the IBMP's invitation last fall to participate as a full partner on the IBMP. The letter not only invited the Nez Perce Tribe to join the IBMP partnership, but also recognized the importance of tribal perspectives on how to implement and adapt bison management practices over time. The written invitation from then-lead agency representative Suzanne Lewis, Yellowstone National Park Superintendent, did not request a written response from the Nez Perce Tribe, but the letter did ask the Tribe to identify a name and contact information for the Tribe's representative(s). Brooklyn Baptiste, Vice Chairman of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee, did verbally accept the invitation on behalf of the Tribe last fall and also identified himself as the contact representative. Mr. Baptiste has also expressed at subsequent IBMP meetings the Tribe's commitment to participation as a full partner in IBMP undertakings.

The Nez Perce Tribe has also been asked to consider developing an MOU or similar agreement that would define the Tribe's expectations, goals and objectives with respect to participation as a partner on the IBMP. The Tribe is actively considering this request, but would like to explore this matter further with the other partners at our April 14-15 meeting.

In summary, the Nez Perce Tribe appreciates and has embraced the opportunity to participate as a partner on the IBMP. The Tribe looks forward to engaging the United States, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, and the State of Montana in this important effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Samuel N. Penney".

Samuel N. Penney
Chairman