

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT REQUEST; FEE WAIVER REQUESTED

April 28, 2005

Sue Ellen Sloca  
Donna Vogt  
Office of the Secretary  
Department of Interior  
MS-1413, MIB  
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Dear Ms. Sue Ellen Sloca, and Ms. Donna Vogt,

In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 5 U.S.C. 552 we are submitting this request for agency records held by the Department of Interior.

Specifically, we are requesting a copy of the following agency records on the Royal Teton Ranch and Devil's Slide land protection agreements reached in 1999:

- 1) The time period for this request is for any record beginning January 1, 1998 to date.
- 2) This records search is inclusive of the Secretary of Interior, Deputy Secretary of the Interior, Office of the Secretary for Fish Wildlife & Parks, and any staff or assistant staff or deputy staff associated with the offices above, or any other offices that assisted the Department of Interior in the Royal Teton Ranch and Devil's Slide land protection agreements.
- 3) This records search should include at minimum the offices of former Secretary of Interior Bruce Babbitt and his successors, former Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks Donald J. Barry and his successors, former Counselor to Assistant Secretary Karen Kovacs and her successors.

4) The search for agency records are inclusive of any notes, emails, faxes, briefing papers, maps, photos, news articles and other agency records as that term is defined under the Freedom of Information Act.

To assist you in your search, the Royal Teton Ranch and Devil's Slide land protection agreements were reached in 1999 and were funded through Congressional appropriations from the Land, Water and Conservation Fund. Parties involved include the Church Universal and Triumphant, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Department of Interior, US Forest Service, and National Park Service.

To minimize copying costs, and to save the Department's resources we are including a list of records already in our possession that do not need to be provided again through this FOIA request:

- 1) Devil's Slide Purchased Conservation Easement BASELINE STUDY Royal Teton Ranch Conservation Project, January 2001;
- 2) CHURCH UNIVERSAL AND TRIUMPHANT Devil's Slide Conservation Easement Grazing Management Plan, December 10 2002;
- 3) Real Estate Purchase Option Agreement, Feb 10, 1999;
- 4) Deed of Conservation Easement, Royal Teton Ranch - Devil's Slide Area August 30, 1999;
- 5) Transcript of Press Conference, November 11, 1998, Bozeman, Montana.

To minimize paper copying, the Department may elect to provide us electronic copies of the originals in PDF format.

Our category for a fee waiver exemption is educational, for noncommercial purposes. Buffalo Field Campaign is also a news media group or source which is an integral part of our nonprofit mission to educate and involve people from all walks of life in conserving Yellowstone's wild bison and their historic and native range.

Buffalo Field Campaign is a nonprofit organization incorporated in the state of Montana in 1997 whose projects educate and involve the public in finding solutions to the Yellowstone bison slaughter. Our web site contains organized and readily available information, including information derived from agency records, about government activities within the Yellowstone bison's native range including land conservation

agreements on public lands. This information is freely available to the public on the world wide web: [www.buffalofieldcampaign.org](http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org)

Releasing the records, and granting a fee waiver will enable us to provide more information directly to the public illuminating government involvement in activities affecting Yellowstone bison's native and historic range, including the Department of Interior's role in the Royal Teton Ranch and Devil's Slide land protection agreement. A sample of the information we provide to the public at large about government operations can be found at:

<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/factsheets/bisonlanduse.html>  
<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/factsheets/bisonfactsheets.html>

We believe Buffalo Field Campaign meets the criteria for a fee waiver, as it is our intent to contribute significantly to the public's understanding of Department of Interior operations and activities. Importantly, there are a number of specific ways in which the public interest is served, and continues to be served, by Buffalo Field Campaign's demonstrated capacity to communicate information about government actions to a broad section of the American people:

1) Buffalo Field Campaign newsletter. Each year we print and distribute over 100,000 copies of our newsletter to the public in all 50 states providing information on how citizens can get involved including measures to provide habitat for Yellowstone's bison herd. Land conservation agreements are critical components of this issue, and we believe the public has limited knowledge of the government's activities. The BFC newsletter is a direct means of communication with the public, and we intend to include information on the Royal Teton Ranch and Devil's Slide land protection agreements to facilitate public education about this important government-led project.

2) Buffalo Field Campaign email list serve. Our electronic list serve reaches a broad section of the American people on a regular basis disclosing important information about public agency's operations and activities, including those of the Department of Interior, and the agency's role through the National Park Service in managing public lands for indigenous wildlife species including Yellowstone bison. Thousands of people receive our list serve postings and represent a broad section of the public including businesses, nonprofit and public

interest groups, scientists, tribal members, members of the media, educators, and students, among others.

3) Buffalo Field Campaign web site. Very little information is readily accessible to the public concerning land use and land conservation agreements impacting Yellowstone bison habitat. Information that we compile from our FOIA records request is being posted to our web site, contributing significantly to the body of information available to the public in a forum that is readily accessible, without the public and the agency having to incur the cost and time involved in making and responding to a FOIA request. In April 2005, our web site was visited by 15,000 people who freely access the information we post about land conservation and land use in Yellowstone, information we rely on from the government to shed light on its activities. We believe the number and breadth of people visiting our web site will increase as more information becomes available to us about the government's activities in Yellowstone.

The Buffalo Field Campaign is an important entity contributing significantly to the public's understanding of activities on our public lands that are impacting Yellowstone's bison herd, and their ability to migrate and occupy their native range including public lands set aside for native wildlife through land protection agreements funded by the Department of Interior. The Buffalo Field Campaign has no commercial interest in the records requested, and we request a waiver of fees, and release of the public records within the response time allowed by the Freedom of Information Act.

Sincerely,

/s/  
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