

**From:** [Dan Wenk](#)  
**To:** [Dave Mihalic](#)  
**Subject:** Bison habitat  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 16, 2018 1:04:19 PM

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Dave,

The information below is from a trusted colleague in the BLM giving me some good information on getting this up and running. Just got this yesterday so I haven't made any calls following up on the recommendations. This is for you and sharpening any talking points please do not share directly with the Secretary.

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Begin forwarded message:

I attached a short summary of most of what goes in to doing a determination.

Short answer to your questions -

How do we get it done? Either through an interagency agreement, financial assistance agreement with an NGO or university, or by contract.

What would it take? Cost per acre varies widely, from \$1 to \$6 per acre based on data that is several years old. I couldn't obtain better data than that in a short time frame. Based on what other data you have in hand, this estimate is for vegetation sampling, plots, etc. The more you can extrapolate based on other data, the lower end of this estimate may be closer. More detail is in the attachment, which also has some links for reference.

If requesting another agency to do the work? We currently contract NRCS for most of this kind of work, so while you could ask headquarters to put together an agreement, it might be better to go straight to the source at DOA - NRCS. BLM does not have capacity in-house to do our own, much less help another agency or unit (in my opinion). Of course, DOI can direct us to make it happen, and our WO would probably find a way with an agreement and then a contract. But it could take a year or more to put that in place. Bottom line is I don't see how you could do it this year, and it could take a couple of years depending on how much funding/labor can be thrown at it.

Contacts recommended to coordinate? Kristin Bail is the Assistant Director for our Renewable Resources Directorate in DC (SES position), and the range program is in that directorate. Or, the Deputy Directors could talk to each other first and suss out whether this is even a possibility. Mike Nedd is our Acting Deputy Director of Operations. I assume this direction would need to come from the top. We are woefully understaffed in our vegetation programs nationwide.

But you could ask Mary Jo Rugwell, the State Director in WY, and Jon Raby, the Acting SD in MT.

I hope this helps inform your next steps, and I hope I gave you enough of what you need to respond in the way you see fit.