

## **EX-OFFICIO MEMBER'S ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE**

March 6-8, 2023 Virtual Meeting

### **MEMBER'S NAME**

Laurel L James

### **REPRESENTATIVE ORGANIZATION**

Native American Fish & Wildlife Society

### **CONTACT E-MAIL / ORGANIZATION URL**

LJames@nafws.org/<https://www.nafws.org/>

### **ORGANIZATION DESCRIPTION**

The Native American Fish & Wildlife Society is a national Native American non-profit organization that serves as an informative communication network between tribal, federal, and state fish and wildlife management entities. As a non-profit organization, the Society's mission is to assist Native American and Alaska Native Tribes with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of their fish and wildlife resources.

### **PRIORITIES / ACTIVITIES FOR FY2023**

#### Species:

Wild Horses (*Equus caballus*) - Overpopulation results in competition with other foraging species such as deer and elk, and cumulatively reduces the foods and medicines that are gathered as dietary staples, from the same landscape, by Native American communities. This presents the need for a delicate balance when implementing mitigative measures to remove part of the horse population; as, any action will touch upon culturally sensitive issues, on both sides of the issue

Northern Pike (*Esox lucius*) - An invasive fish species that has the potential to greatly harm any progress made in decades of salmon restoration efforts in the Pacific Northwest (PNW) where billions of dollars (Harrison, John, 2018) have been invested.

#### Wild Horses (*Equus caballus*)

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), charged with management of this species in the Wild-Free Roaming Horses and Burros Act (Public Law 92-195) estimates 64,604 wild horses and 17,780 burrows on BLM-managed lands in 2022 (BLM, 2022). The combined total of 82,384 does not account for the number of wild horses on tribal lands, as most of those numbers are not shared (if known) due to a Tribe's sovereign nation status.

Despite the lack of a centralized population census of tribal horse management data to reference, individual Tribes continue to address local wild horse populations and must contend with balancing the needs of the wild horses with the needs of their tribal people. Beyond the historical use of wild horses by some tribal members where the wild horses are considered an extension of their personal cattle or livestock, the wild horses population impacts the subsistence needs of other tribal members. Thus, the needs of the cattlemen vs. the needs of a tribal food gatherer, hunter, or fisherman are in conflict when considering management of tribal herds.

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### **PRIORITIES / ACTIVITIES FOR FY2023** *(continued)*

cumulatively reduces the foods and medicines that are gathered from the same landscape. This requires a delicate balance in implementing mitigative measures to remove part of the horse population; as, any action will affect culturally sensitive issues on both sides of the cause. The hunter-gatherers in the PNW Tribes such as the Warm Springs, Yakama, Umatilla, Colville, and Shoshone Bannock Tribes, share these concerns (Radio, 2019). Adding to the gathering concerns is the associated impacts of overgrazing, overpopulation and their impacts on water quality and water quantity issues for Salmon (*Oncorhynchus*), yet another important dietary staple of PNW Tribes. These cumulative impacts are not realized by the average Americans that do not depend upon the landscape, like our ‘hunter-gather’ Tribal communities. This issue must be considered when taking into account any measures needed for the removal of wild horse populations in the United States.

The Northern pike (*Esox-lucius*) is an invasive fish species that has the potential to greatly harm any progress made in decades of Salmon restoration efforts in the Pacific Northwest in which billions of dollars (Harrison, John, 2018) have been invested. Tribes and Tribal organizations are trying and address this issue and a report, authored by eleven independent scientists, warns of the devastating impacts where it could take up to 20 years to “show progress” (Harrison, John, 2019) in any removal efforts. Additionally, the report stated that ‘eradication’ was considered unlikely. Tribes have been at the forefront of Salmon restoration efforts due to the significance as a culturally important species and is a staple in the diets of Tribes in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Alaska.

#### Works Cited

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