

United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Montana Area Office
P.O. Box 30137
Billings, Montana 59107-0137



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Montana Ecological Services Office
585 Shephard Way, Suite 1
Helena, Montana 59601-6287

November 22, 2019

Ms. Rebecca K. Smith
Public Interest Defense Center, P.C.
P.O. Box 7584
Missoula, MT 59807
Subject: Response to 60-day Notice of Intent to Sue under the Endangered Species Act, St. Mary Unit, Milk River Project, Montana

Dear Ms. Smith:

The Bureau of Reclamation and the Fish and Wildlife Service acknowledge the receipt of your September 26, 2019, Notice of Intent (NOI) to sue under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) for unpermitted take and failure to consult on bull trout/bull trout critical habitat at Reclamation's St. Mary Unit, Milk River Project.

Please see the enclosed letter, dated November 18, 2019, by which Reclamation requested the initiation of consultation with the Service. In consultation with the Service, Montana Ecological Services, Reclamation will prepare a Biological Assessment to determine the effects of the St Mary Unit on bull trout.

We will be the main points of contact for anything related to the NOI and Reclamation's ESA consultation with the Service. You can reach Mr. Steve Davies at (406) 247-7298 or sdavies@usbr.gov, or Ms. Jodi Bush at (406) 449-5225 or jodi_bush@fws.gov. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Steve Davies, Montana Area Manager
Bureau of Reclamation

Jodi L. Bush, Office Supervisor
USFWS Montana Ecological
Services Office

Enclosure