

August 26, 2024

PRESS RELEASE

Office of Chairwoman Janet Alkire

**Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Sign Historic Document**

**Dakota Prairie National Grasslands Co-Stewardship Agreement**

On August 22, 2024 at the Pactola Visitor's Center in the Black Hills, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) signed a Co-Stewardship Agreement with the Under Secretary for Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment, Homer Wilkes and Chairwoman Janet Alkire, SRST. Accompanying Mr. Wilkes in the signing was Randy Moore, Chief of the Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service.

Securing the signing of the Co-Stewardship Agreement was an initiative Chairwoman Alkire made as a priority at the beginning of her administration with the ultimate goal to get all the National Grasslands located within the Standing Rock Reservation returned back to the Tribe. Since the early 1990's the Tribe has been seeking the return of these lands, this is the first step in making that become a reality for our future generations.

The SRST acquired the Shambo Ranch later in the 1990's consolidating a large block of previously intermingled private fee lands and tribal lands. The Shambo Ranch lies within the Rock Creek District on the Standing Rock Reservation and is part of the most isolated portion of the eight districts on the reservation.

The Rock Creek District manages the approximately 15,000-acre Shambo Ranch, where a community buffalo herd has already been established. The Rock Creek District is working towards converting the ranch to all bison. Chairwoman Alkire and her Administration are thankful for support from tribal Councilmembers with this Agreement.

The Agreement consists of a multi-faceted Co-Stewardship project on lands administered by the Dakota Prairie Grasslands Grand River Ranger District within the Shambo Allotment and tribal lands administered by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The Agreement states in part:

“The Agreement includes transitioning the Shambo allotment from a cattle allotment to a bison operation including reconstructing or new construction of critical allotment infrastructure, restoring previously cultivated lands within the allotment to native grasslands species, planting native woody species, and integrating a youth engagement component to this work.”

I want to thank the Rock Creek District for their support. For further information please contact Tim Mentz Sr. at 701-854-8500 or [timothy.mentzsr@standing.org](mailto:timothy.mentzsr@standing.org).