

**Re: Pink house****Bascomb, Bonnie L** <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>

Wed 3/1/2023 12:20 PM

To: Hillman, Matthew D &lt;matthew\_hillman@fws.gov&gt;; Taylor, Graham &lt;graham\_taylor@fws.gov&gt;; Maghini, Mark &lt;mark\_maghini@fws.gov&gt;; Porter, Bill &lt;bill\_porter@fws.gov&gt;

Matt, thank you for these notes. I have added a copy to the Pink House tract file.

**Bonnie MacCracken Bascomb** (*she/her*)

Realty Specialist, Division of Realty

U. S. Fish &amp; Wildlife Service

North Atlantic - Appalachian Region

300 Westgate Center Drive

Hadley, MA 01035

Desk: 413-253-8522

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bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov

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**From:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 12:12 PM**To:** Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>; Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>**Subject:** Re: Pink house

The call went as well as can be expected and everyone was supportive and understanding. Attached are the notes -- please ensure I got this all right (esp. the piece about evaluating the appraisal).

**Matthew D. Hillman**

Project Leader

Parker River NWR Complex

Newburyport, MA

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C: 774-303-9090

<https://www.fws.gov/refuge/parker-river>[matthew\\_hillman@fws.gov](mailto:matthew_hillman@fws.gov)**NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE  
REFUGE SYSTEM**

**From:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 10:32 AM  
**To:** Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>; Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Copy -- then my call today will instead focus on the facts -- and the many challenges we are facing to make an exchange occur, incl. everything we have tried to date. I will mention there are currently NO properties in the works suitable for the exchange. This should put the writing on the wall.

Matthew D. Hillman

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**From:** Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 10:24 AM  
**To:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Matt,

Before we broach demolishing the house, which seems to be more likely. I will need to brief up because that step will likely result in calls to the Chief, RD, etc., and want to make sure they are aware of the situation.

Thanks,

Graham

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**From:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 9:27 AM

**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

A parcel valued at more than twice our outgoing parcel would not be appropriate. Equalization payments are intended to "close the gap" between properties that are somewhat similarly valued.

My biggest message is that this isn't a good candidate for an exchange as envisioned in policy. We pursued it under the misinterpretation of policy that the other party could apply the value toward some portion of a parcel we were intending to acquire - essentially offsetting a portion of our cost of acquiring some desired property we were already pursuing. We learned in early fall that this approach is not allowed. If we'd understood that two - three years instead, it has to be a "land for land" exchange - and the Pink House group has no land to offer. I'm not in favor of a new appraisal for the reasons mentioned earlier - putting the burden on us to "find" an exchange parcel seems unreasonable - we've tried and the odds aren't in our favor.

It was new information that we may be able to pay the appraiser for his re-evaluation via convenience check. That's one step we can take to then at least know if the current appraisal's conclusion is valid.

Mark Maghini  
Chief, Division of Realty  
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**From:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, March 1, 2023 8:15 AM  
**To:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Thanks for these data Mark, they are very helpful. But so I'm clear, we would theoretically be able to make an equalization payment if the incoming property was even much higher than the Pink House, right? Using those data, >20% of properties FWS purchased were greater than the Pink House's value. Meaning, even if we found a property say, for Great Thicket, that was \$1M, couldn't we make an equalization payment of \$575k? I need to cover all my bases as I know I'll be asked.

**Graham:** if instead my conversation today turns toward moving forward with demolishing the house, I need to make sure we're on the same page that continuing to pursue exchange options is no longer feasible.

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**From:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 4:12 PM  
**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

All: Two things -

Bill: I in discussing with Laurie, learned we can consider the appraiser a new vendor (because he's not in our FBMS system) and pay via convenience check up to \$2500 for an answer to whether the valuation remains valid.

Matt: Despite the time and money already spent on this, I don't know that I'd advocate the expense and time of a new appraisal because as we've seen, the property we're seeking is fairly rare. This is supported by data. The value we're trying to match is likely in the neighborhood of \$425k - and our acquisition history shows relatively few (<10% of our acquisitions falling in this range). I'm attaching a 5-year history of our purchases - you'll see how rarely this price range occurs. I'd also note, policy calls for an "equal value exchange" and I'd add that it's desirable for FWS to make an equalization payment to the other party, so the preference is for the incoming property to be valued slightly higher than the outgoing parcel.

This is unfortunately a "square-peg/round-hole" scenario whereby the other party has no land to offer - that adds greatly to the difficulty.

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**From:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 3:28 PM  
**To:** Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>; Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Thanks for the quick reply, Bill, but unfortunately not the news I was hoping to hear! So both of the potential projects we were looking in to are dead on arrival (glad I did not meet with congressionals or

Pink House yet to get anyone's hopes up...).

I don't think this really counts as our "last ditch effort" because we never even started and I did not have the chance to prep congressionals about it before-hand. So I will let them know that the Pink House is getting a new appraisal (6-9 months out) and in the intervening time we will continue to seek an exchange parcel for one last go-round. If THAT falls through, we will not devote any additional resources to an exchange.

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**From:** Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 3:19 PM  
**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Matt,

I just learned Orenda is not interested in working with us unless we want to talk about restricting hunting, and maybe not even then.

Bill

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**From:** Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 2:21 PM  
**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Bascomb, Bonnie L <bonnie\_bascomb@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Matt,

At this point it looks like the Maine property is off the table. Regarding the Pink House appraisal, we requested a consultation and AVSO reached out to the appraiser. His SAMS registration has expired and he is unwilling to update it so that approach is a dead end. Next step would be an new appraisal, however, we will need to include the exchange parcel as part of that request. Bonnie has been in touch with Orenda about a potential exchange parcel but nothing concrete yet.

Bill

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**From:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 28, 2023 1:55 PM  
**To:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: Pink house

Hi All,

My meeting with the offices of Sen Markey, Congr. Moulton and State Sen. Tarr is tomorrow at 11:00 and I plan to update them on the points we talked about last week -- including our intention of this Maine property being our last ditch effort. If you have any updates or timelines since we last spoke -- such as the status of the 2-yr old appraisal (Bill) and whether HQ potentially approved of the transaction details (Mark) -- I would appreciate it.

Thank you,

Matt

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**From:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, February 17, 2023 8:09 AM  
**To:** Hillman, Matthew D <matthew\_hillman@fws.gov>; Taylor, Graham <graham\_taylor@fws.gov>; Porter, Bill <bill\_porter@fws.gov>  
**Cc:** Maghini, Mark <mark\_maghini@fws.gov>  
**Subject:** Pink house

Thought these points might be useful

- We are evaluating an Exchange
- Exchanges involve swapping parcels of land - typically engaging with an entity who owns land of interest to FWS
- Properties should be of roughly equal monetary value and the tract coming into FWS stewardship must be of greater ecological value
- Proposed outgoing FWS parcel is appraised at \$425,000

- Parcels should be as close as possible in monetary value; any difference in value will be addressed via payment to the other party; desirable for parcel coming to FWS to be of higher value (i.e., FWS will make equalization payment)
- We have identified one potential parcel and are investigating a second
- Potential parcel - solicit NGO partner to pre-acquire the property and Friends of Pink House (FOPH) will use this as exchange parcel with FWS
- Additionally, we are querying a land trust for appropriate parcels under their stewardship that could be appropriate for an exchange; if suitable property is available, FOPH will provide funds to land trust and land trust will then complete conveyance to FWS (preferred option)
- Administrative costs - FWS will cover appraisal, title, survey costs
- We will know whether either scenario is feasible within two weeks
- If infeasible...

Does FOPH have access to \$425,000 - or potentially more?

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