

**Interagency Bison Management Plan
Montana Department of Livestock**

Yellowstone Bison Operation Winter 2003 - Spring 2004

The Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) was developed to reduce the risk of transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle; preserve a viable wild population of Yellowstone bison; protect private property; and maintain Montana's brucellosis Class Free status. The plan was signed in December 2000 and is implemented by five state and federal agencies including the National Park Service, US Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and Montana Department of Livestock. The agencies meet regularly to discuss operations and address issues.

In the IBMP, the National Park Service has determined that 3,000 bison can be managed within Yellowstone National Park. In 2003-2004, the Yellowstone bison population was greater than 4,250. In fact, the bison population has exceeded 3,000 since November 2001.

In 2003-2004 from the west boundary (West Yellowstone), the DOL and other agencies successfully moved 1,434 bison that had entered Montana back into the Park. Twenty bison were captured from the west boundary. Of those, 12 tested positive for brucellosis and were transported to slaughter facilities, and 8 tested negative and were released back onto public land. One bison that could not be moved back into the Park or captured was removed by lethal means. When bison are removed from the herd, by Montana statute the meat, head and hide are donated to tribal organizations or charities such as food banks.

The National Park Service is the lead agency for the Stephens Creek Facility, located with YNP. During 2003-2004, NPS captured 464 bison at the Stephens Creek facility. A total of 198 bison tested seronegative and remained at the Stephens Creek holding facility until they were released back into the Park in the spring. One adult bull bison tested seronegative and was released after testing. A total of 264 bison were transported to slaughter facilities, including 207 bison that tested positive for brucellosis, and 57 that were not tested prior to being taken to slaughter. One bison died while awaiting transport to slaughter; and one adult bull bison was lethally removed.

For 2003-2004, approximately 149,750 pounds of bison meat, the heads and hides, were donated to 18 tribal organizations and six food banks.

Fiscally, the Department received federal funding for bison operations and for participation in the Greater Yellowstone Interagency Committee (GYIBC) from USDA/APHIS. The actual grant awards were \$660,000 for bison operations and \$237,503 for GYIBC. These grants were allocated on a federal fiscal year that runs from October 1, 2003 through September 30, 2004. Reported expenditures on the state fiscal

year indicate that \$619,349 was expended for bison operations and \$136,457 was expended for GYIBC. It is anticipated that the same level of funding will be reauthorized in federal fiscal year 2005.

Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee

The GYIBC is a multi-state and federal interagency effort to collectively identify and implement equitable solutions about brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) while moving towards the elimination of the disease that is not native to wildlife.

Since its inception, the GYIBC has been committed to protecting and sustaining the existing free-ranging elk and bison populations in the GYA and protecting the public interests and economic viability of the livestock industry in the States of Wyoming, Idaho and Montana.

The GYIBC has provided a forum for communication, cooperation, and collaboration among the public and diverse state and federal agencies responsible for managing animal diseases, wildlife, and wildlife habitat in the GYA. Understanding of brucellosis and related issues in the GYA has been improved among agency representatives and diverse constituents and advocacy groups. GYIBC has been very successful at building an elevated level of trust among member agencies and a strong commitment to collectively resolve the GYA brucellosis problem.

Exhibit Number: 8

The following exhibit is a booklet that exceeds the 5-page limit therefore it cannot be scanned. The booklets' cover has been scanned to help you when requesting information. The exhibit is on file at the Montana Historical Society and can be viewed there.

Interagency Bison Management Plan

for

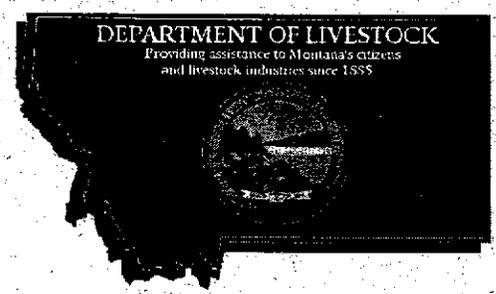
The State of Montana

and

Yellowstone National park

Record of Decision

December 22, 2000



DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK



MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

PO BOX 202001

STATE OF MONTANA

BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIV. 406-444-2045
ANIMAL HEALTH DIV. 406-444-2043
BOARD OF LIVESTOCK - CENTRALIZED SERVICES 406-444-2023
MEAT, MILK & EGG INSPECTION DIV. 406-444-5202

HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2001

December 22, 2000

Dear Interested Party:

The State of Montana hereby announces its intention to implement the Interagency Bison Management Plan. This Record of Decision is the culmination of a process that began with a Notice of Intent to prepare a cooperative bison management plan and environmental impact statement which was published in the July 1990 Federal Register. The process continued with a public review of a draft EIS that began on June 12, 1998 and ended on November 3, 1998. The draft EIS was jointly prepared by U.S.D.I. National Park Service (Yellowstone National Park), U.S.D.A. Forest Service (Gallatin National Forest), and Animal Plant Health Inspection Service and the State of Montana. The federal agencies subsequently released a final EIS in August 2000. The Montana Department of Livestock (DoL) and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) developed a modified preferred alternative for analysis in their final EIS, which was released on November 15, 2000. The Record of Decision is based on the analyses contained in the draft EIS, the FEIS that was prepared by the federal agencies and released in August 2000, the federal responses to comments on the Federal FEIS, the analysis contained in Montana's FEIS, and the court ordered mediation. This document satisfies DoL's and FWP's responsibility to prepare a concise public record of decision concerning a proposed action for which an EIS is required, pursuant to the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).

Thank you for your interest in bison management.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Marc Bridges in black ink.

Marc Bridges
Executive Officer, Montana Department of Livestock

Handwritten signature of Patrick J. Graham in black ink.

Patrick J. Graham
Director, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

