

Montana State Legislature

2011 Session

Exhibit 10

**This exhibit is a 3-dimensional
item. DVD entitled:**

**Buffalo Field Campaign
2010 - 2011 DVD**

**Therefore it cannot be scanned;
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Society Archives
225 N. Roberts
Helena MT 59620-1201
2011 Legislative Scanner Susie Hamilton**

EXHIBIT 10
DATE 3/22/11
SB 212

Buffalo Field Campaign

2010 - 2011 DVD

2010 VIDEOS

1. A Buffalo's Trail of Tears
2. Public Comment
3. Volunteer Perspective
4. Born Between a Fence & a Road
5. Landowner Rights in Montana
6. Turner
7. APHIS
8. On the Road
9. Grizzly Haze

VIDEO ARCHIVES

1. Protect the Wild Bison
2. 2009 Low Light Reel
3. 2006 Roadshow
4. On Thin Ice
5. Quarantine

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March 22, 2011

Dear Chairman Washburn and members of the Fish, Wildlife & Parks Committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on SB 212.

Buffalo Field Campaign is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to stop the slaughter of Yellowstone's wild buffalo herd, protect the natural habitat of wild free-roaming buffalo and native wildlife, and to work with people of all Nations to honor the sacredness of the wild buffalo.

Our members, who come from all walks of life and from places all around the world, envision a life for buffalo in which they thrive within a state of inherent wildness. We also envision a world in which buffalo and all other native wildlife are given precedence on public land, and where buffalo herds remain as a self-regulating sustainable population, and a viable genetic source for the future evolutionary potential of the wildlife species.

I am also a resident of West Yellowstone and live in the Hebgen basin where America's last wild buffalo roam.

Buffalo Field Campaign is adamantly opposed to SB 212 and all of its provisions, for many reasons.

- SB 212 would legislate the ecologically extinction of wild American bison in Montana by mandating Fish, Wildlife & Parks adopt a mandated plan for domestication of any wild buffalo released onto private or public lands in Montana.
- **Simply put, SB 212 treats wild buffalo in the public trust like domestic cattle in a private feedlot.** That's not managing wildlife in a landscape big enough for wild populations to emerge, that's mandating another game farm.
- SB 212 dictates the plan **MUST** include animal identification, tracking and containment measures - fencing and removal methods - in "designated areas" and

makes Fish, Wildlife & Parks liable for any costs incurred for damages to private property.

- **It is not socially or morally acceptable for Americans and Montanans to sanction the extinction of a valued wildlife species, and it is certainly wrong for the Montana legislature to commit such acts into law.**
- The prevalence of fenced, domesticated buffalo as livestock is widespread in North America; only one population of migratory wild buffalo remains in Montana.
- Buffalo descended from the Yellowstone population are a gift to our Nation and natural heritage. We have a duty to future generations committing ourselves to the conservation, preservation and restoration of the wild American buffalo in Montana today.
- Under SB 212, Fish, Wildlife & Parks may not release or transplant wild buffalo or bison on state or federal land in Montana if it would negatively affect any "existing multiple uses" including livestock grazing.
- **SB 212 stands the facts on their head.**
- **The prevalence of livestock grazing has precluded the multiple use of public lands in Montana by preventing the keystone species, the wild American buffalo, from fulfilling their ecological roles in keeping grasslands healthy, diverse and functioning, and watersheds clean.**
- The wild American buffalo has been missing from Montana's landscape for well over 100 years. It's time for Montanans to make a generational commitment to conserve, protect and restore wild buffalo in their native habitats for the next 100 years to come.

Thank you for taking action to protect America's last wild buffalo as a valued wildlife species freely roaming Montana by voting to defeat SB 212.

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Bison Abuse Merits Harsh Criticism

Guest editorial by Dr. Brian L. Horejsi-

Bison Abuse Merits Harsh Criticism

February 17, 2011 — Ralph Maughan's Wildlife News

<http://wolves.wordpress.com/2011/02/17/bison-abuse-merits-harsh-criticism/>

Harsh criticism is increasingly justified in today's world of National Park and public land management, a world in which regulatory retreat from principles and regulation is the new norm and "gut and grab" politics seem to be an every day threat. One such issue deserving of harsh review is the continuous persecution of bison in the Yellowstone ecosystem. What is happening on Yellowstone's borders is no less offensive than the corralling and clubbing of dolphins in Japan, the clubbing of seal pups off Canada's coast, or the indiscriminate slaughter of African elephants that eventually led to massive population declines barely a decade ago.

The institutionalized abuse of ecological and behavioral cycles that bison have responded to for over ten thousand years, making them at one time the most successful and numerous large North American grazing animal, is abhorrent to people around the world. It is moreover a dangerous indication that a mountain of ecological / scientific knowledge, gained over half a century, and presumably vested in government agencies, is being ignored and wasted. A massive accumulation of social, scientific, and management evidence is being trumped by a shrinking minority in the livestock business, blindly aided and abetted by the Montana Dept of Livestock, the federal Animal Health Inspection Service and a not so silent partner, the Park Service. Why are we investing tens of millions of dollars and spending lifetimes doing research into ecological well being?

Thousands of bison have been casualties of this retreat from reason and accountability, and 500 more are in the crosshair this week, but these helpless and trusting animals have not been the only casualties. These practices have inflicted psychological damage to a century old link between "wild" and wildlife. They have degraded National Parks as strongholds of biodiversity and ecosystem conservation; they have severely set back the long established, but obviously vulnerable principle that American citizens should set the vision and direction of National Park management; and they have gouged wounds in what has been one of the most unifying issues in America's floundering democracy – the right of people from every street and every state in the Nation to be heard when significant National Park decisions are being made.

It strikes me as severe treatment to confine "wild" bison at all (other than the rare soundly justified research project) but the fact that National Park staff are complicit with this practice and seem to turn a blind eye to plans to again destroy bison indicates a major professional retreat by senior management. This represents failure by the Park Service to serve the people of America by protecting and maintaining, or recovering, the biodiversity of the ecosystem as a top level management / conservation objective.

I confess I have a personal interest in this issue; For days, several times each year, I walk parts of Yellowstone, and one of the joys of doing so is being in (often) constant contact (visually, space wise, philosophically, emotionally, ecologically, and professionally,) with bison and their ecological footprint. But I also am part of a collective interest; millions of Americans have fought for Yellowstone to be the best it can be, and millions have visited it and enjoyed what I have, and millions more are entitled to enjoy an intact Yellowstone when they eventually get there. I admittedly resent the continued abuse of bison by a sadly outdated Montana Dept of Livestock and its political sidekicks, apparently embraced in a twisted partnership with the Park Service. I fear for these bison, for Yellowstone, and for the power gap developing between self serving local agency actors and the American people. The slaughter and perpetual harassment of Yellowstone bison may be a "time honored" practice – what on earth was that Judge thinking? – but so was the exploitation of children in coal mines, abuse of African Americans, joy killing of millions of bison from railway cars, and dumping sewage in water ways. Call it what you may, it remains a chronic, unethical and inexcusable conflict that has to move up the power ladder for resolution.

Until bison have low elevation winter range freely available, there will be no peace on the land and Yellowstone cannot lay claim to being ecologically intact. People in Washington, even Helena, legislators, citizens, activists that are not mired in the petty local politics need to step in decisively. It will cost money – literally peanuts when put in perspective – but its time for America to move beyond this festering division in favor of the greater public good as exemplified by a protected and intact Yellowstone National Park, public lands managed for all Americans, and largely free ranging bison.

Dr. Brian Horejsi is a long time user of Yellowstone and a wildlife scientist. He currently lives in Alberta