

Buffalo Field Campaign



PO Box 957, West Yellowstone, MT 59758. ph: 406-646-0070; fax: 406-646-0071; buffalo@wildrockies.org; http://www.wildrockies.org/buffalo/



Photo by Frank Consentino

Buffalo Field Campaign is the only group working in the field every day to stop the slaughter of Yellowstone's wild buffalo.

BFC Volunteers defend the buffalo's traditional winter habitat and advocate for their protection. Our patrols stand with the buffalo on their native habitat, and document every move made against the buffalo.



Montana Department of Livestock hazing bison off national forest land towards Yellowstone National Park. Jay Ericson photo

"We are here to protect the buffalo and other precious animals of the Yellowstone ecosystem, and behold the majesty of this land, a land that our ancestors walked and prayed upon, a land that the mighty buffalo have roamed upon, and unfortunately, a land that man has developed and continues to trample upon. The buffalo of this land embody the creative spirit present here that overwhelms my soul each time I am near them." — BFC Volunteer Jayna L. Jenson



Jay Ericson photo

Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers is the fiscal sponsor for Buffalo Field Campaign.

CMCR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1990 to promote awareness and citizen involvement in environmental and human rights issues.

CMCR
Box 7941
Missoula, MT 59807



Buffalo Field Campaign
PO Box 957
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

Nonprofit org.
US Postage Paid
Missoula, MT
Permit no. 514

Return Service Requested

If you have a 2, 3, or 4 in the lower right hand corner of your mailing label, it means this will be your last mailing unless you send us notice that you want to continue receiving them. You can use the form on the back page.

The Buffalo Field Campaign

The morning's cold air starts to chill my bones after skiing one and a half miles into an area called Horse Butte. So I start a fire and await sunrise on the Horse Butte Peninsula, national forest lands that are home to buffalo, wolves, grizzlies, elk, moose, trumpeter swans, sandhill cranes and all the wildlife that was here before white settlement. By the warmth of my fire, as the sun burns off the morning mist, I count 147 buffalo between Hebgen Lake and the top of Horse Butte. The land looks primitive and natural, covered with the mighty buffalo.

This makes me wonder why the Gallatin National Forest does not allow them here, on lands initially designated as a wildlife buffer zone. On this joyous day the buffalo start heading towards me in the direction of their safe zone, Yellowstone National Park. I realize as they approach that I have built my fire about 10 feet from the bluff overlooking the lake. In single file, all 147 buffalo pass within three to five feet of my fire. None of the buffalo show signs of discomfort or annoyance by my presence. One by one they pass me on their way to the park. I can not help but smile as I realize that none of these buffalo will be killed this winter.

After having their every move documented by BFC over the past four winters, the DOL is starting to change its tactics. Aware that the slaughter brings bad press to Montana, the agency has begun to aggressively and repeatedly haze buffalo out of the state. Many people know that in the winter of 1996-97, 1,083 buffalo were killed, but the State of Montana killed over 500 buffalo a year on average prior to the creation of the Buffalo Field Campaign. In the last four years the death count was: 11 dead in 1998; 96 in 1999; none in 2000; and five in 2001. Letting the world see what is happening has changed the situation for the better.

I remember a conversation I had with MDOL's Executive Officer, Marc Bridges, before BFC was founded. Out in the field killing buffalo, Bridges said, "You will never video tape me shooting buffalo." This let me know that he was ashamed of what he was doing, and made me realize that if we could document the bison slaughter, we could make a difference. Four years later the buffalo issue, once hidden in Montana's closet, is an international issue.

I would like to personally thank the 950 dedicated volunteers who have come here to stand with the buffalo. Meeting them has touched my heart and made me a better person; thanks to their actions, the herd stands strong today. Without the support of the Missoula crew there would be no BFC. They keep the world informed through our web page and email alerts. They diligently pursue the lawsuits and conduct the research, building a strong case against the wanton bison slaughter. Seeds of Peace has worked to keep us well fed and connected to the network of struggles for justice happening across the country. Their sacrifices and work are invaluable. All of the Native Americans offering ceremonies, prayers, donations and front lines presence; our prayers are also with you. Many businesses and foundations have contributed resources to make BFC a reality. The letters, emails, donations and moral support keep us strong. It takes all of us to make this happen and everyone's contribution is part of the picture. We are making a difference!

This year, more than any other year, we have had the buffalo thank us in person. Everyday we are with the buffalo, in a non-intrusive way. We watch over them from a distance, leaving them undisturbed to survive winter. On days when the MDOL comes out to kill or harass buffalo, we sometimes shepherd them into the thick woods where the DOL can't reach them. This year, after we moved 14 bull buffalo, and the MDOL failed at their hazing attempt, the buffalo, as always, quickly returned to the same spot. After MDOL left the area, 11 bull buffalo walked 10 feet from our camp and each one came up to us and nodded, letting us know they approved of our help. The next morning, as we huddled around our fire, the three missing bulls returned with two moms and three yearlings. The first big bull walked up to us about three feet away. He stood guard as the family walked by on the trail. After they had all safely passed he nodded, grunted and followed his family.

The buffalo have much to teach humanity. They live in harmony with each other and place community well-being first. They take turns breaking trail through heavy, deep winter snows. We witnessed buffalo helping a bull that had been injured by MDOL being picked up and escorted to the safety of the willows, where MDOL couldn't go with their snowmobiles. We also have seen a circle of live buffalo perform a ceremonial prayer for a winter-killed family member.

Buffalo hooves are shaped so that as they move and feed they till the soil and plant and fertilize the earth. As the buffalo return time and time again to traditional grounds, no matter how many times MDOL hazes them, they teach us determination. The buffalo have brought many people together to fight for their honor. These people come from all different backgrounds and most have never met before. We all stand united for the buffalo. When we save the buffalo, we save ourselves.

I watched last week as three day old baby buffalo were hazed seven miles back into Yellowstone, and it has made my commitment stronger than ever. Until the buffalo have the same rights as all other wildlife and their population increases and spreads across our country, I will be here in the face of the buffalo killers. Please continue to support the BFC and know that everyone's efforts, no matter how big or small, keep our last wild buffalo alive.

With the Buffalo,
Michael S. Mease, BFC Field Coordinator



A helicopter furiously hazes a lone, tired bison across Highway 191 near Duck Creek. Jay Ericson photo

Notes from the Field

By Summer Nelson and Pete Leusch, BFC Coordinators

BFC's daily patrols began in October, monitoring bison movements. Things were relatively quiet until early January, when the DOL moved to set up its bison capture facility at Horse Butte. BFC responded with a roadblock on Forest Road 610.

A 30-foot tripod was erected, with one volunteer occupying a platform below its apex. Another volunteer locked down to a "dragon" – a cement filled barrel – which was buried in front of the tripod. Stating that the construction of the Horse Butte capture facility was illegal, these volunteers vowed to remain until forcibly removed.

The next day the DOL, with help from the Forest Service, Gallatin County Sheriff, MT. Fish, Wildlife and Parks, and the National Park Service, moved in. By sunset, the road was cleared and three protesters were arrested. BFC continued its resistance the next day when a volunteer locked down to the trailer hauling the capture facility and halted the convoy.

We enjoyed relative peace and quiet until Valentine's Day, when the DOL used its helicopter to haze 14 bulls along the Madison River. Although the bulls were in an area where cattle are never present, they still were hazed back across the Park's invisible boundaries. The helicopter hazed the bulls, and six others that had been inside the Park all winter, back into Yellowstone. Within a week, all of the bulls had returned to the areas they were grazing in before the hazing operation.

On March 14th, the DOL conducted its first haze and capture operation in two years. With its helicopter, and many agents on snowmobiles and ATVs, the DOL attempted to capture 15 bulls in the Horse Butte facility. BFC volunteers disrupted the operation, and kept eight bulls out of the facility, but seven were captured. Seven volunteers were arrested and charged with obstruction of a government operation.

Of the seven captured bison, two were sent to slaughter, and five were released when they tested negative for exposure to brucellosis. Three of these magnificent bulls received injuries during capture, holding and testing.

BFC continued to call for an end to this madness with a week of action in defense of wild bison held March 19 – 25. A rally at the Forest Service district office brought out numerous folks in wildlife costumes, prepared to file complaints on behalf of each species threatened and disturbed by DOL actions. People from Missoula, MT; Reno, NV; Seattle, WA and Oregon joined BFC for the rally, workshops, and a prayer ceremony with Scott Frazier overlooking the Madison River.

Spring brought herds of 10 to 200 animals migrating towards the fresh forage and calving grounds on Horse Butte. The DOL responded with endless hazing efforts, and surprisingly, early removal of the Horse Butte capture facility. While the extraction of the facility brought a sigh of relief from BFC, volunteers and buffalo were left to deal with the ever-present DOL ATVs, horses, and helicopter.

On April 25, one day in a string of major hazes, about 225 buffalo were moved from Horse Butte and the Madison River. During the operation, one of the many pregnant females gave birth as she was chased along the river. Earlier in the day a trash fire burned out of control in a field at Horse Butte near homes of BFC neighbors. Responding to a call for help in containing the flames, BFC volunteers rushed to the scene after being delayed by officials who refused to allow them to pass their horses in order to get to the fire.

While DOL agents repeatedly entered an area of Yellowstone that is closed to protect grizzly bears, they shot cracker rounds, and started a small fire. One BFC volunteer was detained and ticketed when he stepped across an unmarked line to document the operation.

Volunteers witnessed approximately 300 trumpeter swans — considered a species of concern protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service — being flushed into a three to five mile flight away from their resting place on the Madison River. The Rocky Mountain population of trumpeter swans is limited to a few thousand, and many of them winter in or migrate through the West Yellowstone area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service fears that a harsh winter could wipe out the population and they closely monitor them.

Hazing continued into June and many young calves and pregnant cows were subjected to harassment. Accompanying the adults, an increasing number of newborn calves fumbled and learned to use their long legs, chasing one another and calling to their mothers with their rumbling grunts.

April and May also brought the first few arrested activists to trial. Record numbers of law enforcement and interagency personnel have enhanced the DOL's ability to restrict citizens from witnessing and documenting their hazing and capturing operations, and given them power to arrest activists on a whim. Video cameras and tapes have been confiscated and areas closed when no hazing operations were occurring. Already suffering the loss of their video evidence, two volunteers were denied their right to representation by a public defender because the prosecution would not seek jail time. Both were found guilty and given excessive fines. Many others still await trial, with some cases challenging first and fourth amendment rights violations. Two people that were arrested while trying to document a hazing operation, and were convicted in federal court, are appealing their cases. A third volunteer was found not guilty of his charges.

It was a successful winter for the Field Campaign. Although five magnificent bulls were sent to slaughter, many others were kept from the capture facilities.

Join the "Stop-the-Slaughter" Email Update list



Email Updates

The email update is sent out one to three times each month providing timely information on the Yellowstone buffalo & updates from the field.

All names are kept confidential and the list is not shared. Your privacy is respected.

Know what is happening to our national heritage... the last wild buffalo... and how you can make your concerns known.

To subscribe to the list, send an email to: Stop-the-Slaughter-on@vortex.wildrockies.org

Please pass this address on to your friends.

This publication and all contents within are copyrighted by the Buffalo Field Campaign, or by the photographer, as noted.

Printed on recycled paper.

Bison Management Plan Threatens Genetic Integrity of Yellowstone's Wild Bison

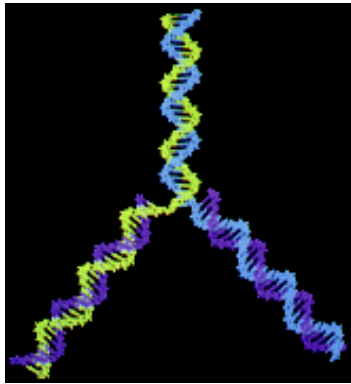
By Flo Gardipee

In August of 2000, the federal government and Montana released the Bison Management Plan for the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park. This Plan contradicts the scientific research and studies listed in the Final Environmental Impact Statement's (FEIS) bibliography (at the NPS website: <http://www.nps.gov/planning/yell/bisonfinal/main2.htm>). The Plan proposes to cap the Yellowstone bison population at 3,000 animals, based solely on political pressure to control the herd, not on any of the scientific data or principles.

We must look at the history of bison in this country to gain a full understanding of the Plan's potential impact. When Euro-Americans arrived in the west there were an estimated 65 to 80 million bison roaming across the plains. By the 1890's those once thundering herds were reduced to less than 800 animals. This created a huge genetic bottleneck in the bison population and an insurmountable reduction in genetic variation.

Most present day bison herds have been established with eight to 50 individuals, which places them at risk for a condition known as the "founder effect." The founder effect is a state in which a founding animal population is established from such a small number of individuals that genetic variation cannot be guaranteed. Populations established in this manner are subject to the effects of inbreeding and genetic drift and eventual loss of fitness. The Yellowstone bison herd, descended from less than 30 individuals, is one such herd.

The Yellowstone buffalo herd exhibits other factors, besides the founder effect, which can contribute to a loss of genetic variation in populations: isolation; no migration (or gene flow); and heavy selection pressures. There is no migration of other bison into Yellowstone, so there is no introduction of new genetic material into this herd. They are subject to an artificial selection pressure when government agencies cull the bison herd of individuals that are seropositive for brucellosis.



Why is it important to preserve the wild Yellowstone bison?

A 1993 study revealed that of 14 public bison herds, two had completely lost heterozygosity (a measure of variability) through the effects of genetic drift and seven others were well on their way. Over half of the public herds are on the verge of inbreeding depression due to a variety of factors. The founder effect, intensive culling of these herds, isolation, and the absence of migration have contributed heavily to this situation. The greatest threat is the application of livestock (i.e. cattle) management techniques to wild bison herds which further threaten their genetic viability. Such forms of management serve only to increase the possibility of bison losing their long term evolutionary potential.

Of the 300,000 bison in the U.S. and Canada, less than 20,000 reside in state and national parks, and only about 3,000 remain in the last truly wild bison herd. The Bison Management Plan can allow that number to drop to 1,700. Bison in private stock are selected and bred according to a set of preferred standards established by the economic demands of the bison industry. Physical attributes such as shape, size and proportion, coat color, docile vs. "wild" behavior, and conversion of feed to flesh are important considerations in determining herd composition. Breeding for specific characteristics eventually leads to fixation

and loss of genetic variation. Due to the large genetic bottleneck bison suffered in the past, they are especially susceptible to this condition. Captive bison herds which are bred to satisfy these demands are at risk of being domesticated. Further compounding this risk are the skewed sex ratios (smaller proportion of males to females) applied to these herds for the purpose of increasing the production rate for economic gain.

If bison are going to survive as a genetically intact species, it is imperative that wild, free ranging bison herds are allowed to grow and perpetuate themselves in a natural environment. The unique genetic nature of the Yellowstone herd makes it the most logical candidate for this role.

The Yellowstone bison herd is in jeopardy of losing its unique genetic integrity

Government agencies insist on needless slaughtering of the Yellowstone bison in spite of scientific evidence that they carry a gene called the NRAMP 1 gene (Natural Resistance Associated Macrophage Protein 1), which enables bison to develop immunity to not only brucellosis, but for tuberculosis and salmonellosis as well. This explains why most Yellowstone bison test positive for antibodies (seropositive) to brucellosis but remain culture negative (no organisms present).

If the government continues to cull seropositive buffalo from Yellowstone, they could remove the unique superior genetic quality from this herd which has enabled them to survive a holocaust and come back from the brink of extinction. This is a direct threat to the very survival and fitness of this magnificent herd.

The FEIS states that genetic variation can be maintained in the Yellowstone bison in a herd numbering less than 600. There is no scientific evidence or study cited in the bibliography of the FEIS which confirms such a statement. In fact, all of the studies listed in that bibliography provide evidence to the contrary. The idea of maintaining such a small genetically isolated population which is already threatened by other factors such as the founder effect, no migration, and heavy selection pressures violates every principle of conservation genetics.

It is time for the bureaucrats, who apparently possess little or no scientific knowledge, to remove themselves from wildlife management and allow those with the proper credentials and education to do the job the public hired them for—protection of wildlife!

Due to the impact of their historical origin, the Yellowstone bison are a genetically unique herd deserving of protection and preservation. Efforts must be made to conserve this population in order to ensure their continued survival and health. The government's Plan will cause irreparable harm to the genetic variability necessary to insure their future survival.

When politics and economics dictate the management of a wild species, such as bison, the outcome is always detrimental to their long term survival. The key to the future evolutionary success of bison as a species, is in protecting and promoting the Yellowstone buffalo as a wild, free ranging herd.

— Flo Gardipee raises buffalo, and is studying bison genetics at the University of Montana. She is a member of the BFC Board.



A wild buffalo being tested in a DOL capture facility. BFC File Photo

What is Brucellosis?

- * Brucellosis is a disease caused by a gram negative bacteria, characterized by an undulating body temperature. It was unknown in this country before the introduction of European cattle. Although debilitating, it is rarely fatal. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) does not consider it to be a major public health threat, nor requires reporting of it, and current statistics reveal a low incidence in human beings.
- * Brucellosis can be transmitted to wildlife and domestic livestock through contact with aborted fetuses and birth materials infected with the organism. Infection may occur during breeding. Human beings may contract brucellosis by contact with infected tissues, through open wounds or cuts, ingestion of unpasteurized milk, or through accidental inoculation with the vaccine. Only two cases have been reported in Montana in the last ten years, contracted as a result of gutting infected elk. **There are no documented cases of buffalo transmitting brucellosis to humans or livestock in Montana.**

The CARD Test vs. Culture Techniques.

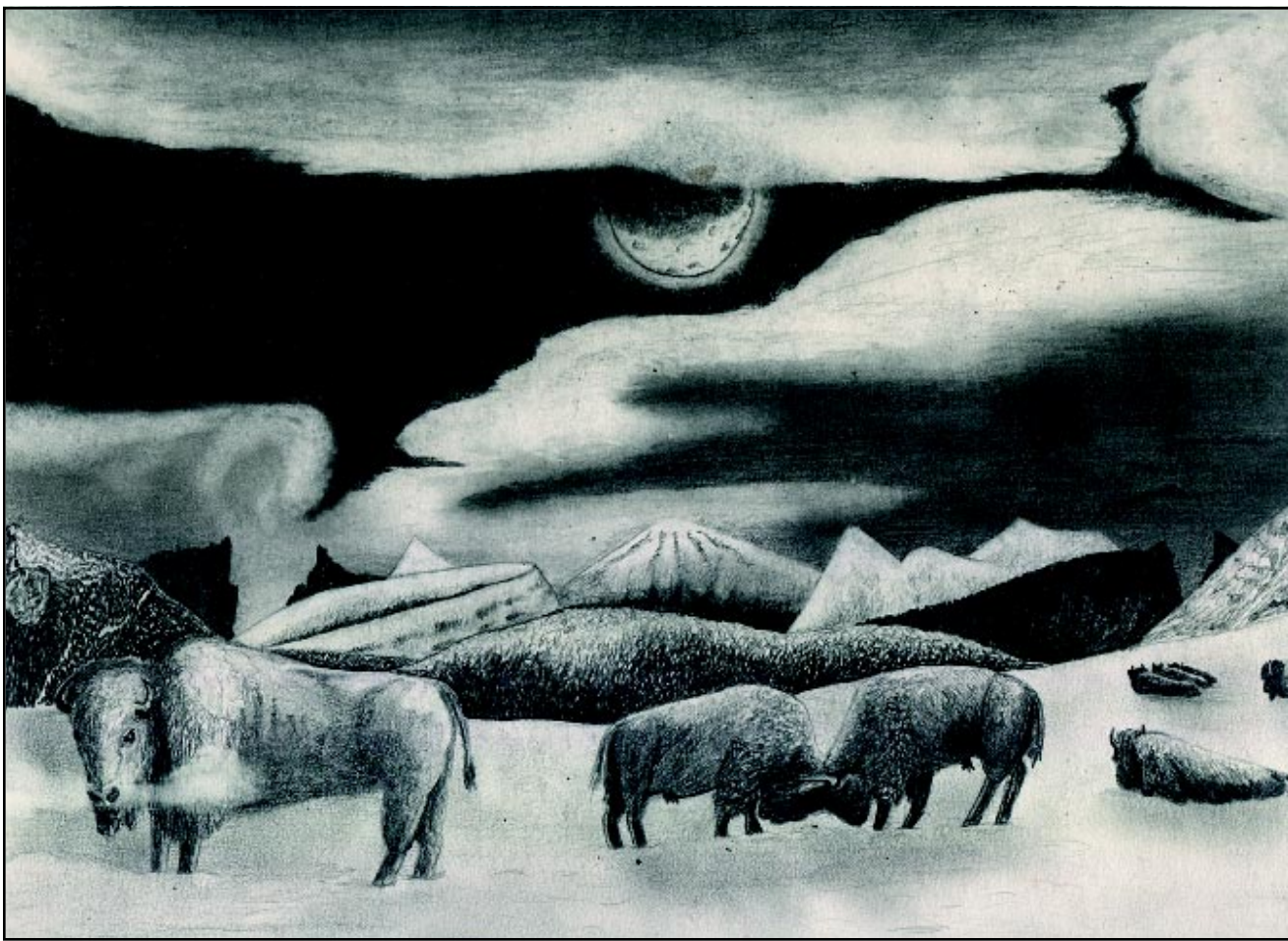
- * The CARD test is used in the field to determine if a buffalo is seropositive for brucellosis. This test only detects antibodies to the brucellosis organism, not the presence of the organism itself! Antibodies are formed in the host in response to exposure to a potentially infectious agent. These antibodies are made up of proteins referred to as immunoglobulins or Ig for short.
- * There are three main immunoglobulins that are considered significant. IgM and IgG are primarily involved in responding to infectious agents, and IgE usually only responds in allergic reactions. IgM antibodies are the first to be formed in response to contact with any new infectious agent. IgM production usually continues as long as the organisms remain in the host, ceases when the organism is cleared from the body, and falls off rapidly after the onset of IgG antibody synthesis. Persistent IgM production suggests that the infectious agent is still present. IgG antibody production begins rather late in the immune response and continues at high levels well after the infectious agents have been eliminated. IgG levels eventually drop off to low levels and may persist for the host's lifetime. IgG antibodies also are formed in response to vaccinations and enable them to maintain immunity to certain infections. Maternal IgG antibodies are small enough to cross the placenta and can pass on immunities to the fetus.
- * The CARD test shows a positive result only in the presence of IgG antibodies, detecting only the animal's immune response to exposure to brucella organisms. The test is limited to this purpose alone! It cannot determine if infection is present. This can only be proven by actually culturing out the organism itself. Specimens for culture are not obtained on all seropositive buffalo, and of those that are cultured only a small percent actually grow out brucella organisms. What could be the reason?

What is the NRAMP 1 Gene?

- * Current research has discovered that some buffalo possess a gene called the NRAMP 1 (Natural Resistance Associated Macrophage Protein 1) enabling them to develop an immunity to brucellosis, that allows them to clear the organism from their bodies. Brucellosis is transmitted usually during breeding. Most bison do not begin breeding until about 2 years of age. If they get exposed to brucellosis at that time, the NRAMP 1 gene "switches" on and the bison make antibodies and develop long term immunity.
- * In a study performed on 144 bison, 117 were seropositive. Of those 117, only 23 were culture positive. The mean age of the bison that were culture positive and seropositive was 2.34 years of age! The level of culture positives drops off sharply by age three. This means that when a buffalo is exposed to brucellosis during their first breeding season, they are developing immunity and clearing that organism from their bodies. Most of the seropositive buffalo have merely developed long term immunity to brucellosis.
- * Other factors can affect the accuracy of the CARD test and culture techniques. The CARD test is only qualitative—macroscopically read as a positive or negative result. It cannot be correlated to a level of IgG antibody. The test should be run at a room temperature of no less than 50 degrees F, in a slightly humid environment. The samples should be spun only in a properly calibrated centrifuge designed specifically for the CARD test. The CARD test should be rotated for exactly four minutes. Any further manipulation can result in gel-like substances which can be read as false positive. This test detects only long term immunity in the form of IgG antibodies. Yet, the DOL relies on these results alone to determine if a buffalo is slaughtered.
- * As for the few cultures that are taken, failure to obtain positive results from a suspect host usually is due to non presence of the infection, or inappropriate sampling techniques including failure to use a sufficient sample. False positive cultures can occur with cross contamination of specimens. Considering all of the variables which can alter the quality and accuracy of these testing methods, in conjunction with the random nature of the population sampling, it's clear that there is no real evidence to support the claim that there is widespread brucellosis infection in Yellowstone buffalo.

What about the Elk?

- * It is interesting to note that the same tests also have shown that as many as 50% of the 120,000 elk in the Yellowstone ecosystem are seropositive for brucellosis as well. It has been further noted that there is about a 12% abortion rate among native elk due to brucellosis. Yet, they are allowed to migrate freely and are more likely to co-mingle with cattle than buffalo. In fact, I have observed that buffalo will avoid most contact with cattle. I question why the elk have been left alone. But we know quite well that it is their popularity with hunters and the money they generate that protects them from the DOL.



Artwork by Nick Cook

Let the Buffalo Roam!

"I've watched bison being hazed by Sheriff's Jeeps and Highway Patrol cars chasing them with blaring sirens, DOL agents on ATVs shouting and honking, wantonly shooting cracker rounds directly at bison, and Park Service agents charging blindly through the woods on horseback. Yet often, no more than thirty minutes after the hazing efforts leave the bison behind the Park boundary — and local wildlife in disarray — the bison are right back where they were before, grazing and making their way to Horse Butte."
 — Pete Thorson, BFC volunteer



BFC volunteer watching bison.
 Jay Ericson photo

Jackson Hole Bison Herd Update

by Pete Leusch, BFC Media Coordinator

In 1968, 15 bison escaped from a fenced 'wildlife park' inside of Grand Teton National Park in Wyoming. They roamed free, mixing with migrants from Yellowstone National Park and have grown to a herd of 600 animals. The Jackson Hole bison herd summers in Grand Teton, and since 1975, has moved south onto the National Elk Refuge to take advantage of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife winter feeding program.

This small herd has been targeted as a threat to the Elk Refuge and Wyoming's lucrative elk hunting industry, and a new plan is in the works to limit the bison's population by instituting a bison hunt on the National Elk Refuge. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has held small hunts on national forest land adjacent to the park, but has limited its desire to check the growth of this herd without a hunt on the Refuge.

The Elk Refuge and the winter feeding program were started by local ranchers after a harsh winter killed thousands of elk. The program dispenses bentonite bound alfalfa pellets to over 10,000 elk and 600 bison throughout the winter. The feed keeps the elk herd at an unnaturally high level, providing a plethora of trophy kills for unethical hunters that descend on the area in the fall, and has helped the bison herd to grow at an accelerated rate. Bison that would normally calve in May are calving as early as December on the Refuge. The most dangerous side effect of the feeding program is the increased spread of disease, due to the unnatural clustering of the herds.

Elk Refuge managers acknowledge the need to end the feeding program, but claim public pressure makes it nearly impossible. Local ranchers and hunting outfitters came to a recent pre-scoping meeting with buttons that said, "Just Say No To Buffalo on the Elk Refuge" claiming that bison are dangerous and destructive in a valley that is ravaged by subdivisions, ranchettes, and trophy homes.

With a new planning process underway for the Jackson bison and elk herds, the time is ripe to end the feeding program. Bison have inhabited Jackson Hole for thousands of years. Canceling the feeding program would result in healthier, more naturally distributed herds. Removal of cattle grazing inside Grand Teton Park would provide more forage for wildlife. Preservation of migration corridors to the south and east would allow the animals to migrate to lower elevations that were historically used as winter range.

The new Plan is still in the scoping phase, with alternatives for a Draft Environmental Impact Statement to come. Planning meetings have been limited to Jackson and Cody, WY. This is a national issue, and meetings should be held in other regions.

Please write the Jackson Bison/Elk Planning Team, PO Box 510, Jackson, WY 83001 email: elk/bison_planning@fws.gov, requesting public meetings in other places, an end to the feeding program, and equal treatment of the bison and elk on the Refuge. For more info, contact us.

Special Thanks to these Foundations and Individuals:

- Acorn Foundation
- Anderlik Compassion for Animals Fund
- Avocado Productions
- Joan Baez
- S. Bloom
- Common Counsel Foundation
- the Couperuses
- Cris Mulvey
- Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young
- D. Crosby
- Direct Action Fund
- Doug Honnold
- Earth Friends
- Foundation for Deep Ecology
- Scott & Marsha Frazier
- Fund for Wild Nature
- Guacamole Fund
- S. Handleman
- Honor the Earth
- Humane Society of the U.S.
- Ron Hunter
- Jen
- Ed Juneau
- Indigenous
- The Indigo Girls
- Winona LaDuke
- Rosalie Little Thunder
- J. Mars
- Lemmon Foundation
- G. & S. Nash
- Norcross Wildlife Foundation
- Patagonia Environmental Programs
- Doug Peacock
- Pegasus Foundation
- John Potter
- Bonnie Raitt
- Seeds of Peace
- the Senders
- T. Smith
- Wiancko Family Donor
- Advised Fund of the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole
- Louisa Wilcox
- Dar Williams
- Y2Y Conservation Initiative
- ZZYX Foundation



Awareness of the plight of the Yellowstone bison reached new dimensions in October 2000 when we tabled at concerts by Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young. We were featured by Honor the Earth's "Save the Yellowstone Buffalo-Get out the Indian Vote" concert tour with Bonnie Raitt, the Indigo Girls, Joan Baez, Dar Williams, Ed Juneau and Indigenous.
 — Photo by Linda Thompson/Avocado Productions

"Powerful livestock interests are robbing our treasury with one hand while they slaughter America's last wild herd of buffalo with the other."
 — Dan Brister

BFC activists erected a tripod to protest the building of the Horse Butte capture facility.
 Jay Ericson photo.

As long as the grass grows and the rivers flow. As long as the buffalo are plenty, we will survive. Amok-Kiyiyo, Spotted Bear





Photo by Greg Raisman

Tomorrow

by Scott Frazier

I've been asked many times why the buffalo are so important. I have always seen them as the life that is holy.

The buffalo has always been the life force of this land. They gave themselves in many ways so that others could learn, live, and be religiously fulfilled. Peoples of the plains could have not found the strength to exist without the buffalo. There is a power unknown to humans that the buffalo answers. We as people sometimes come close to that understanding, but very seldom do we ever live what lessons we learn for any length of time. I have always learned through thinking out loud so let me share this.

History has given us the reality that there were great gifts given to us to relate to the Creator. We were given gifts like the Grail, or the Ark of the Covenant. People look at the Holy Scriptures as gifts from the Creator. Native People held objects given by the Creator as medicine objects. I have always marveled at when an object becomes holy. Does the word start as holy or is the ink for the pen of the prophet from a holy source? The point I am trying to make has to revolve around potential. Life has the potential to transmit the words of the creation, because of the relationship of being. The buffalo are trying to awaken us to understand the potential of all relationships to the creation.

There are those who walk with the buffalo. They come here to stand in the light of the moment. There is a great relationship happening here, between the holy and the human. It has always been my belief that the buffalo are studying us and relating their findings to the Creator. We are under the microscope of the cosmos in a time when we as humans consider ourselves a higher life form.

However, in this time we grow old and change is slow. Many humans do not understand their relationship within the balance and continue to treat the animals poorly. Some humans forget their potential to change and become holy. The buffalo are here to help awaken those people to change. They don't realize that the buffalo are watching. — Ehnamani 2001. Scott Frazier is on the Board of the Buffalo Field Campaign.

A History of the Yellowstone Buffalo

Pre 1800 65 million wild buffalo in North America.
 1850-1880 80 million buffalo shot and left to rot.
 1872 Yellowstone National Park established.
 1895 800 buffalo left in the United States, most in captivity.
 1896 23 buffalo left in Yellowstone; wild buffalo on the brink of extinction.
 1902 Buffalo reintroduced to Yellowstone from herds in Montana and Texas.
 1907 Bison Ranch built in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley.
 1917 Brucellosis discovered in Yellowstone buffalo.
 1952 Bison Ranch ceases operations.
 1954 1,500 buffalo in the park; park officials decide Yellowstone can only support 400 buffalo, start shooting buffalo inside the park.
 1966 397 buffalo left in Yellowstone; park implements policy of natural population regulation; shooting stops.
 1985 Montana legislature enacts buffalo hunt.
 1988 2,750 buffalo in Yellowstone.
 1989 Buffalo hunt stopped due to public opposition.
 1991-95 Montana Fish & Game shoot buffalo leaving Park.
 1995 3,500 buffalo in Yellowstone; Montana legislature gives control to the Montana DOL.
 1996-1997 During a harsh winter DOL and Park Service kill 1,083 buffalo; another estimated 1,800 die from the winter; herd reduced by two-thirds.
 1997-1998 Buffalo Nations (later the BFC) formed — volunteers protect all buffalo leaving the park; Ehnamani Sun Dance Church holds Sundance in Yellowstone; DOL kills 11 buffalo; 1,700 wild buffalo left.
 1998-1999 DOL slaughters 96 buffalo; 22 BFC volunteers arrested while protesting capture and slaughter operations; "Tatanka Oyate Mani"—"They Walk for the Buffalo", a 500 mile native walk from South Dakota to Yellowstone. Tribal Consultation held in spring.
 1999-2000 For the first winter since 1983-1984, no Yellowstone buffalo slaughtered by Montana.
 1997-2001 National Days of Prayer held.
 2000-2001 Montana implements the new Joint Bison Management Plan. 5 bulls captured and slaughtered. 3,000 buffalo in Yellowstone. 21 volunteers arrested.

Does History Repeat itself?

By Peter Leusch, BFC Media Coordinator

Does history repeat itself? If you look through the eyes of the American Bison, the answer is definitely yes. Once animal king of North America, over 65 million bison roamed wild and free. After centuries of exploitation and the genocidal killings of the late 1800's that left the Native American peoples shattered, only 23 wild bison remained. This small group of survivors found shelter in the cold highlands of Yellowstone National Park. These bison flourished inside the protection of Yellowstone, and have recently attempted to regain a small part of their former range outside the Park. Unfortunately, they now encounter the same fear and ignorance that fueled the massive slaughter of the past.

After a planning process that lasted nearly ten years, the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) signed a new Yellowstone Bison Management Plan. While the agencies padded their budgets with over 40 million dollars, they left America's last wild bison to eat bullets. After years of slaughter and harassment under an interim plan that has needlessly killed over 2,500 animals, the new Plan offers more of the same and worse.

Under a smokescreen of disease management, the U.S. and Montana State governments continue to harass, capture, and slaughter a great American icon. Brucellosis is a bacterial infection in livestock that the cattle industry has been fighting for decades. Yellowstone bison might carry brucellosis, but there has never been a case of transmission from bison to cattle in a natural setting. When bison are captured, those that test positive for exposure to brucellosis are sent to the slaughterhouse. During the highly stressful time in the capture pens and stock trailers, many are injured and some die from the trauma. Animals that elude hazing or capture can be shot on site. And to further degrade them, scientists plan to insert vaginal telemetry devices into pregnant females, quarantine animals for years and inoculate bison with cattle vaccines.

The new Plan will disrupt critical migration routes. Hazing operations, especially when helicopters, snowmobiles and explosive rounds are used, are highly disruptive and life threatening to all wildlife in the area. Elk, moose, bears, wolves, trumpeter swans, bald eagles, white pelicans, and a myriad of waterfowl and birds of prey rely on the same habitat.

Rather than focusing on proactive strategies such as conservation easements and buying out grazing allotments to establish a real winter range, the new Plan only offers a modern version of the historic slaughter.

While agency officials continue to blame diseased bison, the slaughter reaches far into the heart of American culture. Hatred, genocide, and the denial of our bloody past all play a role. If we can continue to keep bison controlled in small areas, we can continue to sweep the real issues under the rug.

As long as bison are needlessly slaughtered, activists and volunteers will be there to get in the way and document this travesty. We are in for a long fight against a new Management Plan that perpetuates the ignorance and fear that has fueled the slaughter since the 1800's. We will stand strong with the buffalo, until they are given the justice they deserve.

Of the 63,000 public comments on the draft of the new Plan, most called for an end to the slaughter. Native American input during the planning process was virtually ignored.

The Buffalo Field Campaign will stand strong with America's last wild buffalo until they have the protection they deserve. Under the nightmare of the new Management Plan, it will be a very long and busy winter in Montana (the season could go to early June). The nights are cold and crisp and the days are filled with beauty and power. Volunteers are always welcome at our lodge outside of West Yellowstone, MT.



Photo by Frank Consentino

"Montana continues to capture and kill these animals because they have no tolerance for bison in the state. The real reason for the slaughter is rooted in a bureaucratic power struggle for control of public lands. The only losers are wildlife, the American public, and the local economy."
 — Pete Leusch, Media Coordinator

Let the Buffalo Roam!

These businesses supported us. Please support them.

Big Sky, Montana
 The Board Room
 C & P Deli

Bozeman, Montana
 Barrel Mountaineering
 Bozeman Bake Shop
 Ehnamani Sun Dance Church
 The Great Harvest
 Greg Keeler
 Lewis and Clark Motel
 Joe Mann
 Montana Harvest
 On the Rise
 TreeCycle Recycled Products
 Steve Kelly

Butte, Montana
 Trapline Lodges

Cooke City, Montana
 Bike Shack
 General Store

Gardiner, Montana
 A Naturalist's World
 Two Bit Saloon

Jackson, Wyoming
 Mark Ames
 Barlows
 Beads Unlimited
 Betty Rock Cafe
 The Body Sage
 Elk Horn Designs
 Harvest
 Dr. Bruce M. Hayse
 Dodi Jordan
 Jordan Metalworks
 Mountain Camera Supply
 Mountunes
 Shades Cafe
 Skinny Skis
 Tobacco Row
 Dave Titcomb
 Trapper Inn
 Wilson Backcountry Sports
 Wyoming Wear

Missoula, Montana
 Arbor Vitae Organics
 The Bike Doctor
 Black Dog Cafe
 Bernice's Bakery
 Butterfly Herbs
 Downtown Bakery
 Dinosaur Cafe
 Good Food Store
 Kent Brothers
 Msla. Valley Landscaping
 PictureTomorrow
 Rich Wachs
 Rockin Rudy's
 Solar Plexus
 Tom Webster
 Wild Rockies Infonet

West Yellowstone, Montana
 Bar "N" Ranch
 Buffalo Exchange
 Buffalo Trading Post
 Butch and Sylvia
 Nottingham
 Econo Mart
 Erik Nelson's Wildlife Photography
 Hilgard Log Builders
 Indian Creek Grafix, Inc.
 Joanne and Jesse Stovall
 Mika Products, Inc.
 New Poineer
 Out West
 Pathfinder
 Virginia Roberts
 Wild West Pizzeria
 Yellowstone Apothecary

Helena, Montana
 Rick Sherwood and Brenda Hall — Reynolds, Motl & Sherwood, PLLP

Across the Nation
 ASM, Inc.
 Arkahoma Outdoors Host
 Atlas Snowshoes
 Australian Health
 The Backpackers Shop
 Badgerworks of Whitefish
 Brian Flaig
 Cabelas
 Cascade Designs
 Circle Cg Farm
 Crazy Creek
 Deep Spirit
 Doctor Bronners
 Dream Catcher Films, Inc.
 Mountain Products, Inc.
 Nomadic Tipi Makers
 Patagonia stores in:
 Dillon, MT,
 Seattle, WA,
 San Francisco CA
 Santa Cruz, CA
 Reno NV,
 Ventura, CA
 Paul's Music
 Paradise Farm Organics
 Petzel
 Project Lighthawk
 Schubert & Associates
 Traditional Medicinals
 Tribal Wear
 Tubbs Snowshoes
 WCB Landscaping

We apologize to anyone we may have forgotten.

Lawsuit Filed to Protect Yellowstone Wildlife

by Darrell Geist, CMCR Executive Director

One cannot talk about Horse Butte without talking about Yellowstone's wild, free-ranging buffalo herd. Seventeen years of being shot, hazed, captured, fitted with radio tracking devices, and shipped to slaughterhouses has not deterred the buffalo from returning to winter on Horse Butte and in the spring, giving birth to the herd's newborn calves.

Horse Butte, a 10,000-acre peninsula encompassed by Hebgen Lake on the Gallatin National Forest is a critical link in the life of the Yellowstone ecosystem providing habitat for gray wolf, bald eagle, sandhill crane, trumpeter swan, goldeneye, white pelican, grizzly bear, wolverine, moose, coyote, red fox, and black bear.

On May 10, 2001 Buffalo Field Campaign, the Ecology Center Inc. and Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers filed suit in Federal District Court in Helena, Montana charging that the government's buffalo Management Plan is illegally harming threatened, and sensitive species.

The 21-page Complaint is a damning indictment of the failure of the agencies entrusted to protect habitat for native wildlife in the Yellowstone ecosystem. The Complaint alleges:

- The Montana Department of Livestock is failing to follow bald eagle monitoring requirements on Horse Butte; illegally operating helicopters and all terrain vehicles to haze bison in protected bald eagle closure areas; and failing to follow bison hazing requirements and bald eagle conservation measures set by the U.S. Forest Service in the Special Use Permit to operate the Horse Butte Capture facility.
- The U.S. Forest Service is charged with failing to analyze cumulative effects of hazing bison in habitat occupied by threatened, endangered and sensitive species; illegally authorizing helicopter hazing in areas where they are strictly prohibited; and failing to enforce bison hazing requirements and bald eagle conservation measures set by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in its Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement for the Horse Butte Capture facility.
- The National Park Service is charged with illegally operating aircraft over bald eagle closure areas, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service is charged with failing to enforce the terms and conditions of their Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement to protect threatened bald eagle nesting territories.
- The State of Montana and the U.S. government has exceeded the incidental take of bald eagles and is failing to minimize human-caused disturbances to threatened, endangered and sensitive species. The agency's acts and omissions surrounding the operation of the Horse Butte Capture facility are arbitrary and capricious.

"We have repeatedly warned the Montana Department of Livestock and the Gallatin National Forest that they are illegally impacting threatened bald eagles and their habitat," said Darrell Geist of Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers the lead plaintiff in the lawsuit. "There is not one biological opinion, environmental analysis, or permit that they are in compliance with, and they've misrepresented themselves in court," said Geist.



Horse Butte Capture Facility. Project Lighthawk, BFC Photo

Mease. "Trumpeter swans and migrating waterfowl have been displaced. Bald eagle nests are failing to produce young. Why? So a few more taxpayer subsidized cattle can range on public lands – land the buffalo is wrongfully denied."

According to the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Yellowstone Bison Management Plan, since 1984 3,182 buffalo have been shot or shipped to slaughter by the State of Montana with the cooperation of several federal agencies.

The activist groups are represented by Brenda Lindlieff Hall of the law firm Reynolds, Motl and Sherwood who said, on filing the lawsuit: "The Montana Department of Livestock has consistently and systematically violated the terms and conditions established by the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for operating the buffalo capture facility and hazing buffalo on public lands."

"Further, all of the Federal Defendants have actively assisted the Montana Department of Livestock in its illegal activities. This lawsuit seeks to uphold the laws that protect native wildlife and the ecosystems that are part of the American people's heritage."

Recently, the U.S. Forest Service released its bald eagle ecology and management plan for Hebgen and Earthquake Lakes, a plan required by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to analyze the impact of the Horse Butte Capture facility. No analysis is presented assessing impacts to established bald eagle nesting territories stemming from the government's bison management operations during the winter of 1996-1997 through 1999-2000.

"The bald eagle and the wild buffalo are the great symbols of freedom and wildness in this land," said Jim Coefield of The Ecology Center, Inc. "The U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are allowing the Montana Department of Livestock to run amok and do what it pleases at any cost. The vast majority of people do not support the agencies' actions, and we trust the Court to use reason and end this disgrace."



Montana DOL helicopters were illegally deployed to haze and capture Yellowstone's native buffalo, disturbing habitat of threatened bald eagles and sensitive wildlife. Photo by Jay Ericson.

At a hearing before Federal District Court Judge Charles C. Lovell in May, 2000, to consider a Temporary Restraining Order petitioned for by the trio of groups, the Montana Department of Livestock and U.S. Forest Service "represent[ed] to the Court that there is no intention for future helicopter hazing in Horse Butte Area." (U.S. District Court Judge Charles C. Lovell May 15, 2000 Court Order).

In fact, during the winter and spring of 2000-2001 the Montana Department of Livestock repeatedly used helicopters over the Horse Butte area to haze and capture buffalo.

"All this illegal activity impacting threatened bald eagles and the Yellowstone ecosystem is done to protect cattle that don't winter here," said Mike Mease of Buffalo Field Campaign. BFC volunteers have been diligently documenting every move the agencies make, and have compiled written and video affidavits supporting the lawsuit. "Five buffalo bulls have been shipped to slaughter," said



A lone buffalo grazes along the Madison Arm of Hebgen Lake. Horse Butte is in the background, with the capture facility located near its base. Photo by Chuck Pezeshki

COUNT ONE – ESA

- The Defendants in this case have violated the ESA by failing to protect threatened bald eagles and their habitat. Further, Defendants failed to adequately analyze the cumulative effects of the project, and wholly failed to analyze the use of helicopters for hazing bison. They have also failed to establish an annual environmental baseline for bald eagle nesting and habitat in the Horse Butte Area, and specifically for the Horse Butte Nest. Such failure violates the ESA §§ 7 and 9, 16 U.S.C. §§ 1536, 1538 and implementing regulations.
- Defendants have further violated the ESA by consistently failing to adhere to the non-discretionary terms of the Incidental Take Statement contained in the Biological Opinion, and by not analyzing the effects of the use of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft on threatened, endangered and sensitive species and their habitat.
- Defendants have consistently and systematically violated the Special Use Permit terms and conditions and changed the terms of the Annual Operation Plan in violation of the Special Use Permit and the Biological Opinion nondiscretionary terms and conditions. Defendants have consistently and systematically used helicopters to haze bison in areas where they are specifically prohibited by the terms of the Biological Opinion and Incidental Take Statement.
- Defendants have attempted to circumvent the helicopter hazing proscriptions by redefining the "no-fly" zone for helicopters in the 2000-2001 Annual Operation Plan. Through post-hoc letters and communications, the Defendants have attempted to redefine the Horse Butte Area, although the definitions in the EA and BO consistently define the area analyzed for the project's direct and cumulative effects, and consistently define the "Horse Butte Area." Such actions therefore constitute violations of the ESA.
- To the best of Plaintiffs' knowledge and belief, Defendants failed to consult on the threatened Canada Lynx, which was listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act in 2000.

COUNT TWO – NEPA

- The Federal Defendants failed to take the requisite hard look at impacts on threatened species as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. § 4332 (20)(E); *See also Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 350, 109 S.Ct. 1835, 1843 (1989); *see also Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. United States Forest Serv.*, 177 F.3d 800, 814 (9th Cir. 1999). The environmental analysis in this case is fundamentally flawed, because it fails to address all of the impacts associated with the operation of the Horse Butte Bison Capture facility, including the direct and cumulative impacts of this project that is authorized for ten (10) years. The use of helicopters or other aircraft for hazing was never addressed in the EA, and the current extent and use of snowmobiles in the eagle closure areas was not adequately analyzed. Further, there has been no analysis for Canada lynx, which have since been listed as threatened pursuant to the ESA.

COUNT THREE – MBTA

- The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), 16 U.S.C. §§ 703 *et seq.* and 50 C.F.R. § 10.12-13, prohibits the "taking" of migratory birds. The trumpeter swan is a migratory bird protected by the MBTA pursuant to 50 C.F.R. § 10.13. Defendants actions, particularly the use of helicopters, have negatively impacted trumpeter swans and their habitat and resulted in the "take" of trumpeter swans.
- The actions of all of the Defendants therefore violate the MBTA and its implementing regulations.

COUNT FOUR – APA

- All of the Counts alleged herein are reviewable pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) codified at 5 U.S.C. §§ 701-706. In addition to, and in conjunction with, the statutory violations of the ESA, the actions of the Montana Department of Livestock, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service as alleged herein are arbitrary, capricious and an abuse of discretion and, therefore, violate the APA.
- Despite the Defendants' statements that they had no intentions for future helicopter hazing in the Horse Butte Area, and have systematically, consistently, and intentionally hazed bison with helicopters in the Horse Butte Area and in the eagle closure areas.
- The MDOL Annual Operation Plan approved by the Gallatin National Forest on November 27, 2000 clearly contemplates helicopter hazing, and allows helicopter hazing in the Horse Butte Area where it is prohibited by the terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion and where the Defendants represented to the Court that they would not haze in the future.

COUNT FIVE –

SPECIAL USE PERMIT VIOLATIONS

- The Gallatin NF issued a ten-year Special Use Permit for the operation and maintenance of the Horse Butte Bison Capture Facility and hazing activities.
- The Special Use Permit was issued by the Gallatin NF with the authority of the Fish and Wildlife Service on the condition that the nondiscretionary terms and conditions of the Biological Opinion be strictly adhered to.
- The Defendants have continuously, systematically, and purposefully violated the terms and conditions of the Special Use Permit.

For a look at the complaint go to:

www.wildrockies.org/buffalo/

Your support is greatly needed.
Please make a stand with the buffalo at Horse Butte.
Your contributions will help to protect wildlife habitat in Yellowstone.

Find the Species of Horse Butte

Help the Buffalo get to their traditional grazing grounds...

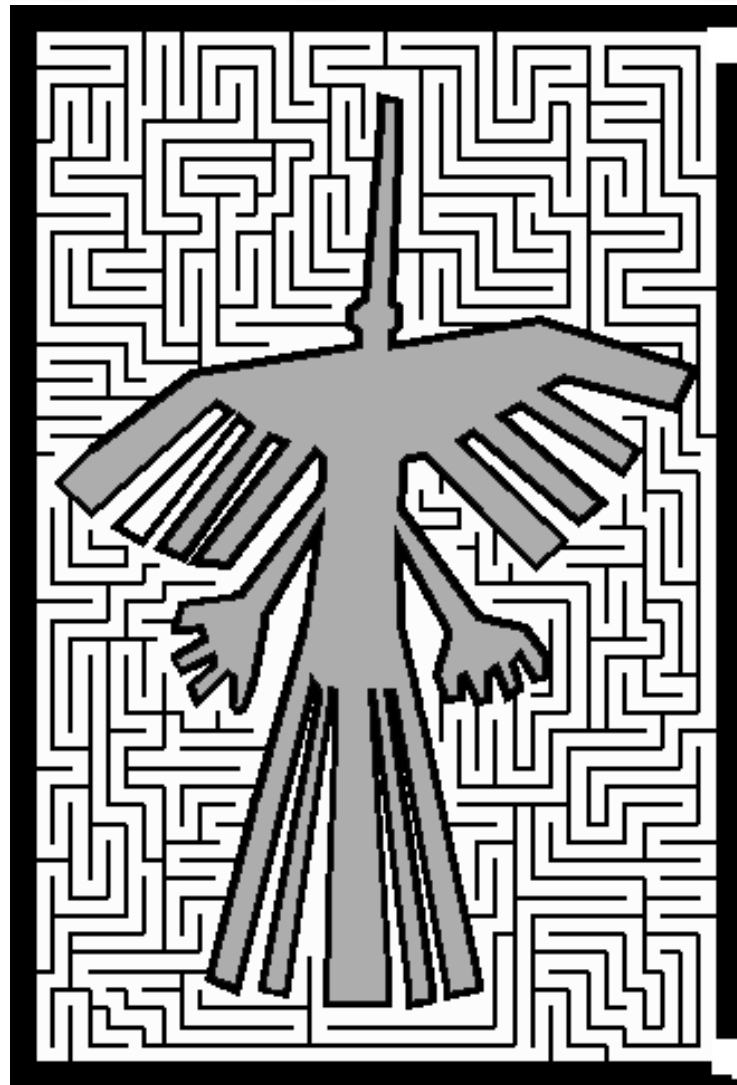
F M A F T L G Q F M A R M O T T F L
 X G O R M L R P E T Q X A N A C D F
 N X R N O C L A F E N I R G E R E P
 L R N I B D E R B N X Y P N R R P L
 A T M R Z R M B O R E A L O W L F P
 F V Q V T Z B W Q R M L T R V T Q N
 L P T B T V L E T O Y O C F J B T K
 O O F I Z W Q Y F E L L G H K J E E
 W L R S R P O X B E M E C H I F I J
 S A M O T L A A N E D R L I E D N G
 R F N N R I L I I Y A B E A V E R M
 M F Q P E D R A P F L R E E X U G N
 P U F N E E D P H C O W D N D A H F
 P B T A V N A W S R E T E P M U R T
 L L G L C A D U R W A F R M K T V D
 T L O L K V K B G J Z S S Z U W O Z
 E W M M R Y L Q J T B M Y Q C X S G
 W Q R P P B V X Q A L O T I L N P O



Words to find

- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| Buffalo | Grizzly Bear |
| Peregrine | Wolverine |
| Falcon | Lynx |
| Boreal Owl | Elk |
| Coyote | Deer |
| Marmot | Fox |
| Beaver | Trumpeter Swan |
| Bald Eagle | Bison |
| Wolf | |

Let the Buffalo Roam!



Yellowstone National Park



Horse Butte Peninsula
 "our federal lands"

International Buffalo Petition Drive Update

During the past two years over 90,000 people joined together and signed a citizens petition requesting the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior put the interests of wildlife first on our public lands.

The petition represented a common sense grassroots solution to a complex problem. It requested a simple action: turn 4 federal grazing allotments over to buffalo and wildlife as intended when the Gallatin National Forest was created as a buffer zone. This would save millions of taxpayer dollars as well as the lives of buffalo.

What was the public officials response? Simple - ignore the will of the people.

They reissued the grazing permit without any NEPA analysis and didn't even bother to acknowledge the petition. Why? That's a good question...

Federal agencies and officials have continually failed to prepare legally sufficient environmental documentation analyzing all environmental impacts of buffalo management, and to prevent impacts on imperiled species. Forest Service lands should be used for wildlife as intended by law. Current grazing allotments on public lands on Horse Butte should be designated as buffalo habitat.

Now there's a new President, a new Secretary of the Interior and a new Forest Service Chief. The new Chief, Dale Bosworth, was the Region One Forester that received the petitions and sent them to the Chief's Office in Washington DC in the fall of 2000. He also was the direct supervisor of the Gallatin NF employee that reissued the permit. So he is very familiar with the Yellowstone buffalo. All three can cancel this allotment with the stroke of a pen and they need to hear from the American public.

It is necessary to stop wasting taxpayers dollars. It is time that public servants take personal responsibility and serve their public and address these issues and protect a national heritage - the Yellowstone bison.

Please take a moment and send an email from <http://www.wildrockies.org/Bufferalopolitico00/sendmail.html> or write a letter to the folks listed in the "Speak out for the Buffalo" section of this newsletter and voice your concerns. Every letter and phone call makes a difference.

Join us on the Front Lines! Support us from Afar!

We are on patrol all day, everyday, defending the buffalo on their critical habitat outside Yellowstone National Park and documenting every action taken against them. We have immediate openings for field volunteers. All volunteers are provided room and board in a log house on Hebgen Lake, near West Yellowstone, Montana. If you can't visit in person, your tax-deductible contribution will make our patrols possible. Please contact us for volunteer information or with questions.
 email: buffalo@wildrockies.org



Public Service Announcements Hit Montana's Airwaves

Online at: www.wildbison.org

New Yellowstone Buffalo Video

Online at: www.wildrockies.org/buffalo/video.html

Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers has updated its compilation video on native wildlife including five videos on Yellowstone's wild buffalo herd.

Buffalo Bull is a documentary combining video footage shot in the field over the past ten years with interviews of local residents, politicians, activists, spiritual leaders, and government officials. (50:05 VHS)

Where the Buffalo Roam profiles Buffalo Field Campaign's efforts to protect Yellowstone's buffalo from the Montana Department of Livestock. (8:07 VHS)

Plan B, the Buffalo's Alternative is a scientific, biologically-based plan to allow buffalo to roam free in the Yellowstone ecosystem. (6:30 VHS)

Our Buffalo, Our Choice is a pilot video on the 1996-1997 slaughter of Yellowstone's buffalo. (17:20)

ROAM is a children's video created by Buffalo Field Campaign volunteers. (11:45)

Bonus videos: **A Future for the Grizzly?** (21:00 VHS) and **The Big Bad Wolf** (10:30 VHS).

If you would like a copy of this compilation video contact: Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers PO Box 7941 Missoula MT 59807 406-728-0867 cmcr@wildrockies.org



Nathan Phillips of Native Youth Alliance presents petitions in Washington DC. Photo by Holly Statler Dream Catcher Films, Inc.

New Gift this Year!

"Whatever becomes of the buffalo, becomes of us..."

Set of 10 cards & envelopes

Only \$15

earth friendly greeting cards
 100% recycled paper
 Order yours today
 (coupon on reverse side)

Design by Flo Gardipee



Support Our Work to Defend the Buffalo and look great in a new Tee Shirt, too!



Buffalo Head

2 Designs
 4 Sizes: S, M, L, XL
 Specify style and size when ordering

Only \$20
 Proceeds support our front-lines work to protect Yellowstone's native, wild buffalo herd!

earth friendly tees
 Peroxide bleached, organic cotton



Woodcut

check out the designs online at <http://www.wildrockies.org/buffalo/teez.html>
 Just send us a check or money order or use the coupon on the reverse side.

Program Development Update

Su Gregerson; BFC Program Development Coordinator

Buffalo Field Campaign is the only group working in the field 365 days a year with the last free roaming, wild bison. The Campaign also is much more than that. It encompasses everyone that cares for the buffalo and demands their protection for future generations. It includes those who cherish the beauty and wildness of the greater Yellowstone ecosystem and realize this habitat is critical for the buffalo and all the species that live there. The Campaign is the totality of all of our efforts – including the tens of thousands of folks who support our strategies, but have never set foot in Montana or Yellowstone. Thanks for allowing us to be on the frontlines and for your letters of support and donations – we couldn't do it without all of you!

Accomplishments:

- * More than 300 volunteers, from across the country and around the world, came to West Yellowstone to join us on our daily patrols. This infusion of public support made it possible to maintain our constant vigil on the Park's western boundary from October through June. Volunteers were in the field from before dawn to after dusk in harsh winter conditions. Each patrol was equipped with video cameras, radios and maps and trained in media advocacy, non-violence and backcountry skills. This brings the total number of volunteers that have been to camp to over 900!
- * An ESA lawsuit was filed (see article on page 6)
- * A citizen's petition, demanding that buffalo be given precedence over cattle on public lands designated as "wildlife habitat" garnered more than 90,000 signatures. We delivered the petition to the President, Interior Secretary, and Forest Service Chief.
- * We produced and printed over 100,000 educational newsletters and distributed them worldwide. We provided valuable video footage to international, national and local media to raise public awareness.
- * The 'Stop-the-Slaughter' listserve kept tens of thousands of people up-to-date with timely information and provided subscribers with effective actions to take to protect the Yellowstone buffalo and other wildlife and their habitat.
- * We cultivated working relationships with key organizations on a regional and national level, and extended our local support in the West Yellowstone community.
- * BFC's Public Education and Outreach Program worked throughout the year to deliver accurate information to citizens with the goal of holding public agencies accountable through public pressure.

This is some of what we accomplished on a frugal, grassroots budget. I'd love for the buffalo to be truly protected and be "put out of business" but with the current management policies and political climate, that doesn't seem likely for a while. It is critical that BFC volunteers continue to be the eyes and the ears for the American public and advocate for the last free roaming wild buffalo and their habitat.

Please take a moment and reflect on the value of the wild Yellowstone buffalo to you and to future generations. Sixty percent of our income is from concerned individuals like you. Please - send your support, now. Each donation is critical to our success. I would be happy to provide you with any additional information you need to begin to or increase your support for this important work.

It is an honor to work for the majestic buffalo. I hope you join in this work and commit to make annual donations until we know that the buffalo are truly protected. Together we can make a difference!

For all that are wild and free, Su. bfc-programs@wildrockies.org



BFC volunteers tabling in Yellowstone National Park. BFC file photo

Solutions to the Problem:

- * Designate and protect National Forest lands surrounding Yellowstone Park as habitat for native wildlife.
- * Conserve the genetic diversity of Yellowstone's wild bison herd.
- * Apply scientific expertise and fully engage public involvement to protect Yellowstone's unique ecosystem.
- * Protect and promote the Yellowstone buffalo as a wild, free-ranging herd.
- * During planning processes, take into consideration the cultural and spiritual relationship between the buffalo and Native Americans.
- * Although Montana claims the threat of brucellosis is great, ranchers in affected counties are not required to vaccinate against the disease. Vaccination would protect livestock far more effectively and economically than the current wars against the buffalo.
- * Agencies should follow the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and protect all wildlife in the ecosystem.
- * The Department of Livestock is the wrong agency to control the fate of the wild, free-roaming Yellowstone buffalo. DOL agents are not trained wildlife managers.
- * Buffalo are not cattle. They deserve all the protections that other wild species receive.
- * Debunk the brucellosis myth.



These buffalo have shown me something I'll never forget. They have shared their wisdom and strength and changed my life forever.
— Meghan Fishback



The Buffalo Field Campaign Headquarters on Hebgen Lake near West Yellowstone, Montana. — Chuck Irestone photo.

Speak Out for the Buffalo!

Use your pen, phone, or computer to urge our public officials to stop the slaughter and implement common sense solutions to the problem. Letters to the editor of your local paper are a great way to let people know about this atrocity. Check out our website for more info and speak out for the buffalo! It just takes a moment and does make a difference!

Dale Bosworth, Chief, Forest Service, Auditor's Bldg
201 14th Street, S.W. at Independ. Ave., S.W. Washington, DC 20024
Phone: (202) 205-1661

Ann Veneman, Secretary of Agriculture
200A Whitten Bldg
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20246
Phone: (202) 720-3631; Fax: (202) 720-2166

Let them know how important wild buffalo are. Do they even know what's happening?

President George Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.
Washington, D.C. 20500
Phone: (202) 456-1414; Fax: (202) 456-2461
email: president@whitehouse.gov

Gale Norton, Secretary of Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington, DC 20240
Phone: (202) 208-7351
email: exsec@ios.doi.gov

Fran Maniella; Director nominee (6-4-01)
National Park Service
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
(202) 208-6843
email: dir@nps.gov

Marc Bridges; Director
Montana Department of Livestock
Box 202201
Helena, MT 59620
The DOL's acting director is Marc Bridges.
Phone from MT at (800) 523-3162; ext. 3
or from out of state (406) 444-2043

Governor Judy Martz
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620
within Montana: (800) 332-2272
Out of state: Phone: (406) 444-3111
fax: (406) 444-4151

Will you spend your money in a State with such a backwards Bison Management Plan?

Montana Tourism Development & Promotion Division; Travel Bureau of MT
Matthew Cohn, Director
Box 200533
Helena, MT 59620-0533
email: mcohn@state.mt.us
(800) 847-4868

Please make a tax deductible donation to the Buffalo Field Campaign

Your donation feeds, clothes, equips and houses volunteers, supports our public education and outreach efforts, and helps us protect Yellowstone's native wild buffalo!
\$36 supports one activist in the field for one week.

Thank you!

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

email _____

Send a newsletter to:

I can help defend the buffalo with my contribution:

\$360 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$36 ___ Other ___

Also:

Send me ___ Notecards @ \$15/package of 10

Send me ___ T-shirts @ \$20 Sizes: Design:

Please send contributions and requests to:

Buffalo Field Campaign; PO Box 957, West Yellowstone, MT. 59758

Yes! I'd like to help support the Buffalo Field Campaign

Please send a tax deductible receipt

I commit to support the buffalo again next year, also - send me a reminder

Put me on your email list

Let me know about stock gifts or bequests (confidential)

Send _____ copies of this newsletter to redistribute

Contact me re: gear/food/car/in-kind donations

I'll help the Legal Offense Fund