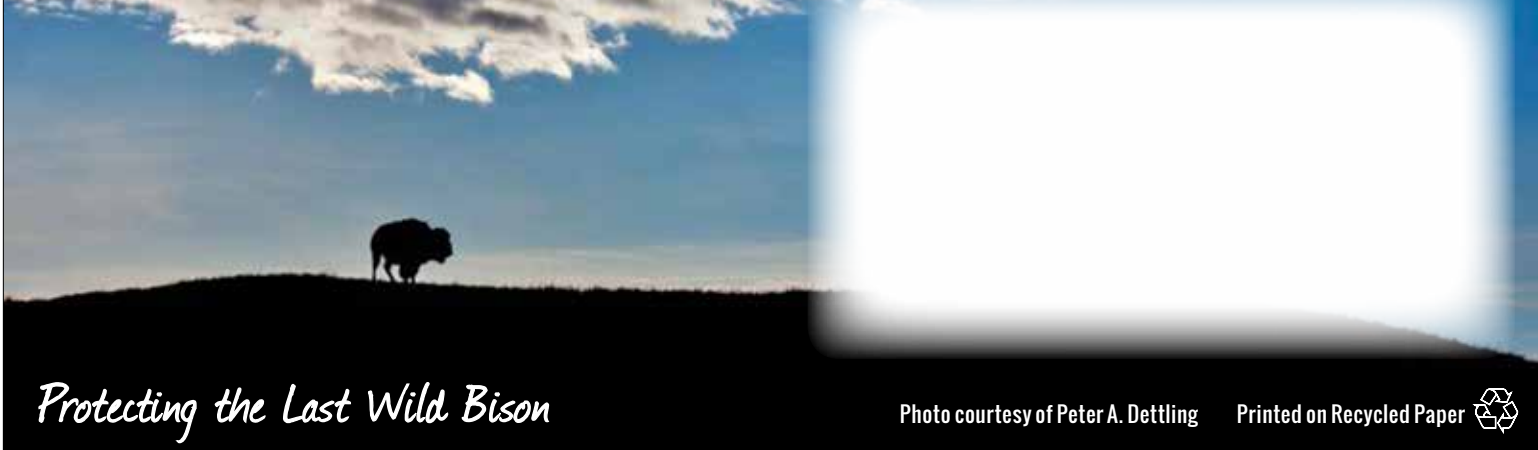




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Protecting the Last Wild Bison

Photo courtesy of Peter A. Dettling Printed on Recycled Paper



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2018-2019

Buffalo in Yellowstone Struggle to Survive: The Issue in Brief

Wild buffalo, or bison, once migrated freely across North America and numbered in the tens of millions. Nineteenth century hunters nearly wiped the species out by 1902, when only twenty-three wild buffalo survived by taking refuge in Yellowstone. Their descendants survive to this day and comprise the only genetically intact, migratory population to continuously occupy their native habitat. Unfenced and uncontaminated with cattle genes, the buffalo in Yellowstone are a keystone species essential to the restoration of native grasslands, sagebrush steppes, and prairie ecosystems – some of the most endangered habitats in the world.

Struggle to Survive, *continued inside*



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC



Take Action

Be a Voice for Wild Buffalo!

Force Yellowstone to Protect Wild Buffalo and Pull Out of the IBMP!

As a lead participant in the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) Yellowstone National Park is responsible for the slaughter of thousands of the last wild buffalo, and for a cruel quarantine program to capture, domesticate, and commercialize this sacred species. The park is bowing to the Montana livestock industry and endangering bison through their participation in the IBMP.

While the park superintendent claims his hands are tied, this is simply not true. The IBMP states, "any agency could terminate the agreement by providing a 30-day notice to the other parties that the agency would withdraw from the agreement."

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke is the boss of the National Park Service. He has the authority to pull



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

Come volunteer and stand with wild buffalo!

Yellowstone out of the IBMP.

TAKE ACTION! Call Secretary Zinke and tell him pull Yellowstone out of the Interagency Bison Management Plan. Yellowstone needs to stop the slaughter and quarantine program, and refuse to serve Montana livestock interests over the interests of wild buffalo.

Phone calls are best, but you can back your phone call up with an email. Call (202) 208-7351 and email exsec@ios.doi.gov.

Support BFC!

Individuals like you contribute the majority of Buffalo Field Campaign's frugal budget. All donations are tax deductible. Make a secure online contribution at BuffaloFieldCampaign.org or use the enclosed envelope to donate by mail.

Get Involved & Volunteer!

Contact BFC to learn about volunteering on the front lines, hosting video showings, distributing newsletters, and other ways you can spread the word to save the herds! Call (406) 646-0070 or email info@buffalofieldcampaign.org.

Stay Active & Engaged!

Visit BuffaloFieldCampaign.org for our complete Take Action page and to sign up for Updates from the Field.

[facebook.com/buffalowild](https://www.facebook.com/buffalowild)

[youtube.com/bfcmedia](https://www.youtube.com/bfcmedia)



In the Field

The Story of S3: a Matriarch of the Imperiled Central Herd

She was a powerful leader from the imperiled Central herd who followed the winter migrations unique to her kind: trailing the Firehole to Madison rivers into Hebgen Basin, trekking the Madison to Gibbon to Yellowstone rivers into Gardiner Basin.

She was a descendant of twenty-three buffalo who survived an onslaught of market hunters and a United States government-led extermination campaign just over a century ago when millions roamed free across North America.

She gained immense wisdom from her mother and grandmother, as they in turn learned from their mother and grandmother. Like the old matriarchs before her, she taught the young ones where to find the best water, where to give birth, where to find the best grasses and sedges, how to escape the deepest snow, how to stick together to stay safe from predators, and, indeed, how to flee to the thick forests to escape government agents flying helicopters and riding horses and ATVs during hazing season.

Years ago, she was captured and violated by Yellowstone biologists, who placed a thick leather radio collar around her neck to keep track of her movements. They labeled her "S3." Our field patrols knew her for many years. In migrating to Hebgen Basin and making the trek to Gardiner Basin too, she and her family were doubly threatened by hunting, hazing, and capture for slaughter—actions orchestrated by the state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park under the infamous Interagency Bison Management Plan. After patrols saw her numerous times this winter, she met her end when a hunter's rifle took her life.

Her story illustrates what the remaining sacred buffalo endure.



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

The older matriarchs carry the wisdom of the herd.

Matriarch of the Central Herd, *continued inside*



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

Hunters killed two female buffalo who wore the collars of government mis-management. The collars clearly show, though, just how far ranging these matriarchs were.

Matriarch of the Central Herd, continued from front

For crossing the “boundary line beyond which bison will not be tolerated,” this winter the state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park eliminated the matriarch with the S3 collar and nearly 1,200 more of the last wild buffalo for the sole purpose of appeasing Montana’s cattle lobbies who still hold our national lands and wildlife hostage. Over 660 buffalo were captured inside the park and shipped to slaughter, and 130 are still being held at the trap for the newly approved quarantine program.

The government’s ill works were met with fierce resistance. Yellowstone’s trap was attacked four times. Twice, unknown entities cut fences to release captive buffalo. Did the collared matriarch smell the terror of her fellow buffalo held in captivity in Yellowstone’s trap? Did she spy the unknown actors who liberated them? Our field patrols spotted her with several of the liberated bulls. Did she witness the people who risked their freedom by locking themselves to Yellowstone’s trap, halting government slaughter and drawing attention to the park’s injustices? Yellowstone has been put on notice that their capture facility and slaughter operations are in the spotlight and that buffalo advocates aim to shut them down.

In a profound statement against this taxpayer funded atrocity, the InterTribal Buffalo Council terminated their ship-to-slaughter contract with Yellowstone this spring.

Voices are rising up against these vicious government schemes that occur outside the windows of the passing millions who come to visit Yellowstone each summer.

As the matriarch approached Yellowstone’s boundaries in Gardiner Basin, did she also see the gut piles of buffalo, entire family groups gunned down by hunters? Did she wonder, will the firing line ever go away? Did she foresee that one day, her ancestors will make it alive to the winter ranges they seek? But not this year, not for her or over 360 others who were killed in the long hunt season.

Spring now brings some peace and tranquility for the buffalo. Central herd buffalo migrating into Hebgen Basin, towards Horse Butte, are now—thanks to local supporters—largely left alone. Those migrating south of the Madison River, closer to land used by the all-powerful cattle, are still subject to hazing, or forced removal from their chosen

ground. But gaining year-round habitat on Horse Butte has allowed most buffalo in the Hebgen Basin to be able to live their lives, give birth, raise their calves, and move across the landscape as they choose. For several springs, this is where the S3 collared matriarch came to give birth to and raise her calves. Horse Butte remembers her.

In two decades of frontlines activism, Buffalo Field Campaign has made incredible headway. BFC’s petition to list buffalo as endangered cleared its first hurdle in court. Calving grounds on Horse Butte are protected. Additional National Forest lands are open for wild buffalo to roam. But the slaughter continues and must be stopped. The ominous fifty-year quarantine plan by the park to domesticate and commercialize wild buffalo must be fought. While the walls erected to block buffalo from restoring themselves on their native lands are crumbling, they need to come down for good.

While the walls still stand, while the slaughter still happens, while domestication is still seen as a solution, we need you to stand with us, with the matriarch with the S3 collar, and with the last wild ones who roam their native habitat, as we continue to hammer away towards freedom and respect for the sacred buffalo. 🗣️



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

The last wild buffalo unceremoniously shipped to slaughter.

Struggle to Survive, continued from front

Thousands of buffalo have been shot, slaughtered, or removed from their native ecosystem as they migrate toward or across Yellowstone National Park’s boundaries. Thousands more have been aggressively chased from their National Forest habitat. The state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park conduct these actions under the guise that wild buffalo may transmit the livestock disease brucellosis to cattle, something that has never happened in the wild. Brucellosis is present in many species, including elk. Elk far outnumber buffalo and have transmitted brucellosis to cattle, yet elk freely roam between the park and Montana while buffalo are persecuted. As of spring 2018, less than 3,600 buffalo remain in the wild.

Every winter and spring buffalo migrate from Yellowstone to habitat in Montana. Buffalo Field Campaign patrols monitor and document herd migrations and work to stop government actions against the buffalo. Patrols provide volunteers with a direct connection to the buffalo, informing and inspiring a variety of coordinated efforts to protect the buffalo and their habitat. We share information gathered on patrols with our grassroots network of supporters whose donations fund our programs and whose actions pressure decision-makers to stop the slaughter and respect the buffalo’s freedom to roam. 🗣️



Support

Buffalo Field Campaign Needs You!



Yellowstone Country Wild Bison 2019

Connect with the buffalo and support BFC! Our 2019 calendar combines beautiful photos, artwork, and fun facts to convey the spirit of wild buffalo. Other items include t-shirts, books, stickers, and more. Visit BuffaloFieldCampaign.org/merch

Buffalo Field Campaign works in the field and on the policy front to stop the slaughter and harassment of native bison. Donations keep our patrols in the field and the pressure on the government to abandon the failed Interagency Bison Management Plan in favor of a vision that recognizes and protects the United States’ only continuously wild population of bison. BFC relies on our grassroots network of supporters to take action and contribute to our work. **Please use the enclosed envelope or visit BFC’s website to make a tax-deductible contribution or merchandise purchase. We cannot help the buffalo without you. Thank you! 🗣️**

Wild Buffalo Step Closer to Endangered Species Recognition

Buffalo Field Campaign and Western Watersheds Project’s petition to list the buffalo in Yellowstone as endangered cleared its first legal hurdle in Washington D.C.

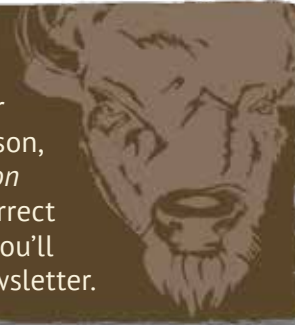
On January 31, 2018, U.S. District Court Judge Christopher R. Cooper ruled the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service violated the law in finding that the imperiled population did not warrant Endangered Species Act protection. Judge Cooper found the wildlife agency unlawfully discounted science in our petition finding that bison were at risk under the Interagency Bison Management Plan.

Natalie Halbert and other scientists say genetic diversity is being lost because managers are not considering that bison form two distinct subpopulations or herds. Yellowstone National Park biologists contend any distinction is a man-made artifact. The judge wrote, “where there is disagreement among reasonable scientists, the Service should make the ‘may be warranted’ finding.”

The wildlife agency has appealed their loss to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Our attorneys at Friends of Animals stand ready to defend our victory. Stay tuned for the outcome of the next round in our long-term campaign to gain Endangered Species Act protection for the buffalo that roam Yellowstone. 🗣️

Buffalo or Bison?

BOTH! Buffalo is the popular name for North American Bison, whose scientific name is *Bison bison*. So, both names are correct and in common usage, and you’ll see both throughout our newsletter.



Politics & Courtrooms

Why We Fight for Buffalo on National Forests

Millions of acres of National Forest lands surround Yellowstone National Park. These public lands are largely within the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Access to these habitats is critical to the survival of migratory bison.

The Custer Gallatin is revising its forest plan to guide decisions for the next thirty years. Under the forest’s proposed action, bison are restricted to 73,725 acres and excluded from hundreds of thousands of acres of National Forest habitat.

Concurrent with the plan revision, Regional Forester Leanne Marten is evaluating Species of Conservation Concern whose long-term viability is not secure. BFC submitted an evidence-based report asking that bison be added to the list. Without National Forest habitat, bison face an increased risk of extinction.

BFC’s report called on the Custer Gallatin to evaluate our proposed action for the forest to manage for native bison populations, migration corridors, connectivity to habitat, and access to their home ranges.

Report signatories included the Piikani Nation and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, twenty-three businesses, fifty-nine non-profit organizations, and 2,221 individuals.

The public will have another opportunity to help wild buffalo on the National Forest in Fall 2018. Sign up for BFC’s Updates to stay informed on how to take action on these coming decisions. 🗣️



Photo by Jaedin Medicine Elk, BFC

Rambunctious bulls need wide-ranging National Forest land habitat.



Photo by Leo Leckie, Yellowstone Wolf Tracker