

Buffalo Field Campaign



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Campaign 2004

-Frank Consentino photo

Defending Yellowstone Buffalo

It's all about the Wild

The police showed up early in the morning. They were all standing around their cars talking to each other at the base of the trap. They'd look up at me and then back to each other. After about five minutes, nearly fifty buffalo came stampeding out of the woods. It actually looked like some of them were dancing; others were butting heads. They surrounded the trap in celebration, running right past the cops and then past 20 cheering BFC volunteers. I'd never seen buffalo act like that before, like they were actually celebrating.

I became so excited and instantly knew exactly why I was there, why I was sitting on a platform suspended 30 feet up a pole in the Horse Butte trap. I was a voice for the wilderness, for the wild that doesn't speak in English or in lines on maps.

I don't know how many folks heard us, but we were speaking up for the buffalo. To shut down the trap and let them come out to their calving grounds in peace. Let these that we share the earth with give birth and eat grass on this little strip of land called Horse Butte. But as I sat there day after day, I realized this is not just about the buffalo, it's not just about the wolves or the eagles or the clear-cut forests, it's about the Wild.

What's inside the world is inside us, and what's in us is seen in the world. We are controlling the land, farming it, defining it, closing it off and managing it. We are afraid to let go, to flow with life. We must plan everything, establish security in our own lives and in the world around us. I see this in everything from a cornfield to a handshake to a polite conversation.

Where is the Wild?! Who will walk through a roadless forest at night? Who will dance until they are drenched in sweat? Who will scream? And which ones will build barbwire fences the length of Montana, and heavy handily manage every species in and out of the Park? I see antelope, elk, and buffalo walking with radio collars. I see a line cut through the land to the horizon telling me where Yellowstone Park exists. I see a bison trap directly next to an eagle sanctuary. And I see great thunderhead clouds explode with lightning and rain, sunrises of blood red sky and a black wolf eating a fresh killed elk. I see choice. -Akiva Silver



A frightened young buffalo captured by the NPS at the Stephen's Creek trap is held in a "squeeze shoot" for testing and vaccination. -NPS photo



-Chris Rota photo

The Buffalo Field Campaign is the only group working in the field every day to protect the Yellowstone buffalo, America's only continuously wild herd.

BFC volunteers defend the buffalo and their habitat, and document every move made against them.



-Let the Buffalo Roam, courtesy of the artist, ©Marian Osher 2004

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

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The Buffalo Field Campaign

The last seven years of my life have been blessed by beautiful buffalo, thousands of caring people drawn to defend them, and the lush wildness of the Yellowstone ecosystem. The struggle grows more difficult by the day but the beauty keeps me strong. Park rangers and livestock agents killed 278 buffalo this winter, making it the bloodiest season in BFC's seven-year history. Prior to our founding, the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) killed an average of 700 buffalo a year, but since we have been here things have changed. Eleven buffalo were killed in 1998, 96 in 1999, none in 2000, six in 2001, 202 in 2002, 246 in 2003, and 278 in 2004. Any buffalo killed under this irrational policy dictated by Montana's powerful livestock industry is too many, yet I find solace in the fact that the 1997 slaughter of 1,084 buffalo has never been repeated. With BFC volunteers always in the field, the agencies know their every move against the buffalo has the potential to be broadcast to the world.

The Park Service has taken a more active roll in the last two years. Of the 246 buffalo killed last year, the Park slaughtered 231. Of the 278 killed this winter, the Park is responsible for 266. For more than five weeks this winter, I witnessed what happens when buffalo approach the Park border near Gardiner, Montana. Park Rangers wearing buffalo on their badges harassed them nearly every day. I suggested they replace the buffalo insignia with a cow. 198 buffalo captured in the Park were caged for up to two months. Yellowstone is becoming a reservation for buffalo, the **only** species confined to the Park.

According to a press release issued by the Park to justify the slaughter, the killing is necessary to keep buffalo "away from cattle grazing adjacent to the park." The cattle were grazing on land owned by the Church Universal and Triumphant (CUT), which received more than 13 million tax dollars in 1998 in a deal intended to provide winter range for buffalo and other native wildlife. Despite the public subsidy, the Church refuses to give up cattle, and has no tolerance for buffalo on its lands. If people are so opposed to buffalo, I wish they'd move anywhere else in the world and avoid this conflict.

Another thing I'll never understand is why buffalo are allowed to mingle with cattle on the north side of the Park when on the west side they are not allowed to step foot on national forest land where no cattle are present. The very agencies that disingenuously claim buffalo pose such a grave risk to livestock allow the two species to co-mingle in the Eagle Creek Special Management Area near Gardiner. Yet on the west side, national forest lands are kept off-limits to buffalo, though there are never cattle present during the months when buffalo would be there.

Although there used to be grazing allotments on this section of the Gallatin National Forest, they were cancelled two years ago. Buffalo are hazed, shot, and captured from lands *never* grazed by cattle. A bull buffalo was shot in November, despite the fact that no livestock would be anywhere near the area for seven months. In February we watched DOL agents haze a herd of 18 buffalo grazing near the Park boundary more than five miles away from the park to the Horse Butte buffalo trap on the Gallatin National Forest. While the trap was only used once this season, it was plowed and maintained from February 4 to May 10 at the taxpayers' expense.

After years of expressing our futile concerns to Montana politicians, we have begun to focus on the national level. Two separate trips to Washington, DC helped educate Senators and Representatives on the importance of preserving America's wild buffalo. The Yellowstone Buffalo Preservation Act (HR 3446), a bill with more than 100 cosponsors, is currently making its way through the House. Companion legislation should be introduced in the Senate this summer. The more your congressional representatives hear about the buffalo, the sooner the buffalo will be protected, so please write or call them today.

Please read on for detailed information on the current plight of the buffalo and the ways we are working towards their true protection. As our seventh season comes to a close, I would like to thank each and every person who has dedicated time and energy to protecting the buffalo. I am humbled to be a part of this vision. We are making a difference – one person at a time. The world seems to be in a very confused state and things everywhere are in disarray. The buffalo are still being buffalo and trying to show the world the way. We will be here learning from them until humans can change our ways.

*With the Buffalo,
Mike Mease, Campaign Coordinator*



*Buffalo Field Campaign headquarters by
Hebgen Lake near West Yellowstone, Montana.*

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

The best way to stay informed about Yellowstone bison is to subscribe to BFC's electronic newsletter. Each update features a "News from the Field" section, where we report on recent actions taking place with Yellowstone's wild bison. You will also find short poems, information on the natural history of bison, and the most current information on legal, legislative, and management decisions affecting bison. You'll receive an update every week from November to June (the times buffalo are out of the Park) and two per month during the quieter summer months. Your privacy is respected and we never share email addresses with anyone.

*Don't depend on the agencies to keep you advised on what's happening. Hear it from the **only** group in the field 365 days a years with the buffalo!*

Email us at:
bfc-media@wildrockies.org and we'll add you to the list.
The future of the Yellowstone bison herd depends on you. Stay Informed!



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The Wild Yellowstone Buffalo Herd

The Yellowstone herd is unique, and is descended from 23 individuals who survived the 19th century near-extinction by taking refuge in the Park's remote backcountry. Unfortunately, America's only truly wild, genetically pure buffalo find themselves at the center of a violent conflict that can result in the yearly slaughter of hundreds or thousands of buffalo.

Yellowstone does not provide sufficient winter range for the resident herds of wildlife due to the deep snows of its high elevation plateaus, and buffalo are not protected on all of their year-round habitat. Animals leave the Park to forage on lower elevation grasses necessary for winter survival. When buffalo follow their instinctual migration routes to lower elevations, as they traditionally have done, they unwittingly enter a conflict zone where their survival is undermined by Montana politics.

Montana's powerful livestock industry demands that buffalo exiting the Park must be slaughtered to prevent the spread of brucellosis, a European livestock disease introduced by cows and first detected in Yellowstone buffalo in 1917. The livestock industry continuously complains about the threat of brucellosis, but the facts tell another story. There has never been a single documented case of wild buffalo transmitting brucellosis to livestock. Even if such a transmission were biologically possible, the absence of cattle from lands where buffalo forage in winter months make it physically impossible. Yellowstone elk and other wildlife, also known to carry brucellosis, are allowed to freely exit the park without coming under fire as the buffalo do, mocking the fact that brucellosis poses any threat.

During the winter of 1996-'97, nearly 1100 buffalo were slaughtered when they crossed the arbitrary Park boundary and entered Montana. These killings, combined with deaths from the unusually severe winter, resulted in a loss of more than half of the Yellowstone herd in a matter of months.

Since that wicked winter, Buffalo Field Campaign volunteers have been patrolling the Yellowstone boundary, monitoring buffalo movements, and documenting the MT Department of Livestock (DOL) and National Park Service (NPS) actions against the buffalo. While buffalo continue to be killed every year, the presence of our volunteers and our success at focusing media attention on the slaughter have prevented a repeat of the '96-'97 slaughter, the worst single year for American buffalo since the 19th century.



-BFC file photo

The Myth of the Old West

The Montana cowboy myth is stronger than the reality. Old West images of cowboys herding stock across Montana's open range misrepresents the fact that public lands ranching in Montana contributes less than one quarter of one percent to total U.S. beef production. Private lands in Maryland produce as much beef as Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service lands combined in Montana. Ranchers, struggling to make ends meet in the arid West, have long fallen to the temptation of stocking the public range with more cattle than it can sustain. Millions of acres of publicly owned land are overgrazed and denuded to the point where they can no longer support native flora or fauna.

Taxpayers bear the burden of public lands ranching. 307 million acres of public land in the 16 western states are leased to ranchers at a fraction of its market value. Taxpayers pay ten times as much to support the grazing program through taxes as ranchers do through grazing fees.

The Yellowstone boundary, a straight line arbitrarily drawn across the landscape, is the livestock industry's line in the sand. While the 19th century buffalo slaughter was driven by fears of the pre-cattle West, the current slaughter is driven by fears of a post-cattle West. Not wanting buffalo to re-inhabit their former range outside the Park, the industry insists that they be killed when they cross the line and enter Montana.

Wild buffalo in the 1870s were seen as an obstacle to overcome and an impediment to progress. They did not always respect barbed wire or allow themselves to be domesticated. As the Yellowstone herd threatened to re-establish itself on public lands surrounding the Park, lands officially designated as "wildlife habitat," the livestock industry became alarmed. Conditioned to believe that grass grows for the sole purpose of fattening cattle, the industry considered it unacceptable and backward for buffalo to reclaim any of their former range. Buffalo are the ultimate symbol of the truly wild nature of our continent's past and the rich potential for its future. It is precisely this potential, and the fear it inspires in the livestock industry, that fuels the senseless Yellowstone slaughter. *-by Dan Brister*

Letters to the Editor – This is the Place to Make a Change!

Why does the media seem so reluctant to thoroughly cover the inhumane treatment and slaughter of America's last wild buffalo? Why doesn't their plight get the attention from the press it deserves? Where's the ground-breaking story that will get the attention of millions, and help put an end to the buffalo slaughter once and for all?

BFC's media coordinators do a stellar job in getting the buffalo's story to the press. This year alone we've helped generate dozens of stories in papers across the country. Yet, it is still not enough. Sending a press release is "part one." Part two lies with you; your power is to show newspapers that the public is interested in this issue and wants it covered.

One sure-fire way to combat the "media buffalo-apathy" is to write Letters to the Editor of local and national newspapers. *The editorial section is the most widely read section of the newspaper*, and even smaller, local papers can reach thousands of readers. This is the place where decision-makers go to read the pulse of the people's concerns and opinions; this is where dialogue happens within a community, and across the nation; it is a place that allows the reader to address and influence the way the buffalo issue is (or isn't) covered by the media; this is the place where you can really help get the buffalo's story out to a diverse audience. The best part is that it's both easy and free!

Please write to the press about what is happening to the buffalo, and urge them to cover the issue more thoroughly so more attention is drawn to the needless suffering of these unique and majestic animals. The more people who know about what's happening to the buffalo (and there are a lot of folks who still don't know), the more people there will be coming to their defense!

Listed on our web site (<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/>) are tips on writing your letter to the editor, as well as contact information for many key newspapers. Don't stop with our list, though! Your local paper, or any publication that you read or subscribe to should hear from you about this issue. **REMEMBER: Campaigns have been won using this medium - no better time than today to send your Letter to the Editor!**

Legislative News

Buffalo Hunting Montana Style: Again?



Montana State Proposes Bison Hunt in 2004

The 2003 Montana Legislature passed a bill re-establishing "sport hunting" of Yellowstone buffalo. The Bill directs the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP) to develop a plan for hunting buffalo. The Department of Livestock (DOL) will maintain authority over the hunt and management of buffalo in general and must approve FWP's plan. The bill was strongly opposed by Montana's major hunting associations including the Gallatin Wildlife Association and the Montana Wildlife Federation.

The proposed hunt's purpose is to alleviate pressure on the DOL by contracting "hunters" to do their dirty work. The legislation did not designate buffalo as wildlife in Montana nor did it provide any habitat outside the Park for buffalo. It did propose a cap of 225 buffalo to be hunted in one alternative. Hazing, capture and slaughter operations by the DOL will continue with the hunt. According to FWP's draft Environmental Assessment (EA), the favored Modified Preferred Alternative will establish a single three-month hunting season from November 15 to February 15. The first year, one to 25 permits will be issued to allow shooting either a bull or cow (possibly pregnant) buffalo.

The hunting area will be on both the north and west boundary areas of Yellowstone Park including the Eagle Creek Special Management Area. Eagle Creek is currently the only habitat for wild buffalo in Montana. FWP's proposal will guarantee that no wild buffalo live freely in Montana. On the west side of the Park, the hunting area will be approximately 10,000 acres within zone 2 of the current Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP). Step 2 of the IBMP allows 100 brucellosis test-negative, vaccinated, marked buffalo in zone 2 during the winter. "Hunters" near the Park boundary will then gun down the buffalo that have already been captured, tested, vaccinated, tagged and released.

FWP's draft EA includes a timeline for beginning the buffalo "hunt" in the fall of 2004 assuming that the agencies' Modified Preferred Alternative is accepted. However, under Montana and Federal law, it is clear that this issue requires a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). A crucial point to make here is that **the IBMP's Management prescription is a "No Hunt" plan**. Changes to the current plan must follow the process outlined in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and be agreed to by all of the participating agencies.

FWP set a thirty-day comment period for the draft EA that ends July 9, 2004. However, comments after that point will still be considered, so don't hold back. Please check our web site and weekly updates from the field for news on this abominable plan. We will keep you posted on information for submitting comments and let you know about any public hearing dates that will be taking place.

TAKE ACTION! Call or write Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks today to express your outrage. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, P.O. BOX 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701; Phone: (406) 444-2535; Fax: (406) 444-4952; E-mail: fwpgen@state.mt.us. Let them know that a buffalo "hunt" as proposed will give Montana a huge black-eye causing further damage to the state's already heavily tarnished reputation. Check our website for updates: <http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/Legislative/bisonhuntingbill.html>. -by Josh Osher



This photo was taken during the buffalo hunts enacted by the Montana State Legislature in the 1980's. This hunt was later rescinded in 1991 after a national public outcry. Buffalo hunting is neither a fair chase hunt, nor is it ethical. The MTFWP is gearing up for another hunt in 2004.
— BAP File photo.

HR 3446 – The Yellowstone Buffalo Preservation Act

The Yellowstone Buffalo Preservation Act (H.R. 3446) is the first step towards a future of truly wild and free buffalo herds once again roaming their native habitat. Reps. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) and Charles Bass (R-NH) introduced the bipartisan bill in the U.S. House of Representatives on November 5, 2003, demonstrating that buffalo protection transcends party politics. The Act calls for:

- * A three-year "time out" on the hazing, capturing and slaughtering of Yellowstone buffalo both within the Park and on adjacent federal public lands so that common sense solutions can be worked out.
- * Dismantle the Stephen's Creek trap located inside Yellowstone National Park.
- * Allows buffalo to freely roam the Park and adjacent public lands.
- * Authorizes and directs agencies to secure habitat for buffalo both on private and other public lands including settling the current conflict with the Church Universal and Triumphant.
- * Returns sole jurisdiction to the National Park Service to manage buffalo within the Park without pressure from the USDA or Montana Livestock industry.

During March and May 2004, BFC made two trips to Washington, D.C. to educate members of Congress and gain support for the buffalo. Many remarked on how critical it is that they hear from constituents – that's you! As of this writing, H.R. 3446 has over 100 co-sponsors, and a corresponding Senate bill likely will be introduced in the summer of 2004.

TAKE ACTION! You can check to see if your representative is a co-sponsor of H.R. 3446 by clicking here: <http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/legislative/buffpreservation.html>. If they are, please thank them for helping the buffalo. If they aren't, let them know how you feel about the Yellowstone buffalo. We also strongly suggest writing a letter to the editor of your local paper in support of the buffalo. See the "Letters to the Editor" and the "What You Can Do" sections in this newsletter for key contact information and writing tips.

Congress Seeks to Cut NPS funds for Bison Killing

On June 17, 2004 U.S. Representatives Maurice Hinchey (D) and Charles Bass (R) introduced a bipartisan amendment to the 2005 Department of Interior Appropriations Bill aimed at protecting the Yellowstone buffalo. The amendment to "prohibit the use of funds to kill bison, or assist in the killing of bison, in the Yellowstone National Park herd" failed to pass by an incredibly close 202-215 margin. Had it passed, the amendment would have forced the National Park Service to find alternatives to slaughtering buffalo that approach the Park's northern boundary near Gardiner and prohibited the agency from assisting the Montana Department of Livestock in capturing buffalo outside the park on the west side.

In the past two years, the National Park Service has killed 498 buffalo. Yet this is the agency who proudly displays a peacefully grazing buffalo on its insignia and whose mandate is "to protect the resources unimpaired for present and future generations."

It was the second straight year that an amendment to prohibit the park from slaughtering buffalo was offered. Representative Nick Rahall (D) introduced a similar measure in 2003 that failed by a 199-220 margin. The very close votes and the fact that this year's effort garnered more support than last year's show that the buffalo have a significant level of support in Congress and that momentum is building for a Congressional solution to the unjust slaughter of the Yellowstone buffalo.

Check our new web site <http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/05amendvote.html> to find out how your representative voted and contact them to either thank them for their support or to ask them to explain their vote. To read the entire 50-minute debate on the House floor sparked by this year's amendment, check our website at:

<http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/05amenddebate.html>

Helena Gathering for the Buffalo

On Saturday, May 8th, buffalo allies gathered on the lawn of Montana's State Capitol, across the street from the Department of Livestock offices. We were there to mourn the loss of 278 of America's last wild buffalo needlessly killed this year by state and federal agencies. We were also there in protest of Montana's zero-tolerance buffalo policy, the driving force behind the harassment and slaughter.

The plush, spring-green velvet of the capitol lawn was haunting. On the grass were rows and rows of headstones representing each of the buffalo killed this year. Every marker contained a small silhouette image of a buffalo, and some held pictures of their cruel treatment inside the trap and press releases detailing these heart-wrenching events, gruesome reminders of the crimes committed against the buffalo. Strange was the task of making the headstones; destruction and creativity intertwined, making powerfully evident the reality of what we were doing and why. Seeing them placed on the lawn to form a cemetery drove it all the way home.

Special thanks to Colin, Dave, and Nancy of the Humane Society of the United States and Patti and Devanie for helping to make the event such a success. And thanks to everyone who came to the vigil and all of you who supported our Week of Action for the Buffalo in your own communities. You can view some pictures from the event at: www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/media/photogallery.html.



The GYIBC in Bozeman

The Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee (GYIBC) held one of three annual meetings in Bozeman, Montana, this past January. The GYIBC is comprised of representative from all federal and state agencies in the Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA) that have some role in managing livestock, wildlife, or land use. The committee has set a goal of eradicating brucellosis from the GYA by the year 2010. BFC volunteers along with other supporters gathered in downtown Bozeman to advocate for the future of wildlife in the GYA. Our message was plain and simple: The risk of brucellosis transmission is a myth. Kill the myth, not the wildlife.

-Colin Berry photo





—A Winter Count, by the De La Salle Blackfeet school

Let the Buffalo Roam!



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Seattle School Alternative #1
Schubert & Associates
Smiling Cow Pottery
WestWind Designs
Paula Wilson-Cazier, artiste'

We apologize to anyone we may have overlooked.

I Have Stood with the Buffalo

*I have stood with the buffalo.
I have felt their spirit
Move through me like the wind.
Their presence I can feel
Every willow,
Every track,
In my soul.
I have looked deep into their eyes
And felt their power
Run through me like
The river from which banks they have fed off,
And I too have been nurtured.
And in my hand, I have held their hair
Plucked from the side of a tree.
And I can see that it is no different from mine,
And I know that we are brothers.*

*I have seen the meaning of non-violent resistance,
In the face of hatred and ignorance,
In the face of oppression
I have been moved to tears
By the beauty of their gentle nature,
Their resilience - their determination.
And I am learning from them the meaning of patience,
Of love and of living the way they know is rightfully theirs,
Even if it means Death -
And I know I am only beginning to understand.*

—Román Sanchez, BFC volunteer

Patrols are Empowering

My two experiences as a volunteer at the BFC in West Yellowstone were enlightening, empowering and moving. Spending time with the buffalo, learning about how they relate to each other as a family, and even meeting curly, have strengthened my conviction that we must do all we can to ensure the future of the Yellowstone buffalo. These magnificent animals, with their gentle expressive eyes, can teach us much about family devotion, and co-existing peacefully with other species on our living planet, the Earth.

In addition to strengthening my love and respect for the Yellowstone buffalo, I would like to share that volunteering in the campaign has been an empowering and moving experience. As a parent of two young adults, it was empowering to learn that I could participate in patrols, even in January and help make a difference. I volunteered both in October and in January, so I had two very different experiences. In October I went on hiking and in-car patrols, and helped with the in-camp preparations for the coming influx of volunteers. In January I went on in-car patrols and hiked in 3 feet of snow on snow shoes to patrol on Fir Ridge. I learned that I could keep warm on patrol and actually chose to sleep in a teepee. I also enjoyed helping out in the cabin with clean-up and kitchen prep. I wrote letters, addressed newsletters, and served on radio patrol. The camaraderie with the 30 other volunteers made every task and patrol a bonding experience. The food and the music were wonderful. I made new friends and felt very accepted even though many of the other volunteers were in their twenties or thirties. Age is no barrier. One volunteer was a hearty 82 years old.. Like a buffalo family, each volunteer is a valuable member of the tribe, regardless of race, age or national origin. I look forward to returning as a volunteer at the camp and plan to continue with activist work for the buffalo where I live in the Washington DC area. We can make a difference. Long live the Yellowstone Buffalo - Wild and Free!

—Marian Osher

A Different History Lesson

—by Emily Magner

My knowledge of history was typical of most young people growing up in the U.S. History textbooks recounted the stories of this country's forefathers; the very men who wrote history. I studied in detail the "discovery" of this continent, the founding of Jamestown, manifest destiny, and the construction of railroads. I experienced history through the eyes of Columbus, Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. Seldom did my history book mention buffalo and those who depended on them.

It is impossible to come to Yellowstone and escape a lesson in history. The stories of this country are written on the land—a land of change and permanence, fragility and perseverance. Ancient geological formations and vast spreads of forest attract many tourists. Abandoned homesteads slowly crumble as new developments spring up around them. In the background rises the majestic Madison mountain range to shadow the last remaining herd of wild bison, a symbol of this land. We are reminded once again of another side of history too often left untold. Bison have been slaughtered for over 500 years by the many hands of history: for their wildness; their relationship to Native peoples; for livestock, railroads, and greed. Once over 30 million strong, by the 1900's the American buffalo population was only 23 survivors within Yellowstone, where their descendants remain today.

BFC volunteers recently received an enlightening history lesson when a group of seventh graders paid us a visit. Seventeen students from De La Salle Blackfeet school, studying the complexity of the bison issue, presented to us their "winter count," a history of the Blackfeet. The students' winter count was recorded on a piece of plywood cut into the shape of buffalo hide, the traditional canvas of a count. Each student contributed a painted image that told its own story. Beginning with a creation story, the count spiraled from the center and spilled out into the future; the hopes and visions of the students. Their winter count was both inspiring and sobering as it walked us through thousands of years of history. Woven throughout the spiral were images of buffalo, animals and plants important to the Blackfeet for food and medicine. It retraced the tragedies of smallpox, rations, the sale of Glacier National Park, and the creation of the reservation. It offered hope for the future, the Blackfeet, the buffalo, and the world. The presentation, thoughtfully created by this bright group of young people, was a much-needed lesson in history as well as a highlight of the season for the BFC volunteers.

Will history repeat itself again as Yellowstone's bison are captured, hazed and slaughtered by the government? This year over 300 volunteers came to the Buffalo Field Campaign to add their voice to the struggle and advocate for the protection of wild bison. We are always in need of volunteers. Help us change history and see the last wild bison protected for the future by volunteering a week, a month, or a season of your time.



—BFC File Photo

Buffalo Resistance in Yellowstone

—By Yote Risa

The slaughter of the last wild buffalo in America continues in Montana. Abdicating their responsibility to conserve the wildlife of Yellowstone National Park while caving in to the economic interests of the livestock industry, the Park Service this winter has systematically harassed, captured, vaccinated, confined, slaughtered, and shot members of the Yellowstone buffalo herd.

The buffalo remind us of the past, of America's history of taming the West by force. Buffalo are sacred animals for many native peoples. The buffalo gave of themselves so that the people could survive. The buffalo is part of creation and it is told that our futures are intertwined. Indeed the fate of the buffalo seems to be an indicator of our struggle. Will we leave any wild places inhabited by wild animals? If we cannot defend the buffalo, an American icon, is there any hope for the myriad of other struggles?

Buffalo are a living example of resistance. Year after year they sacrifice themselves when they follow traditional migration paths that lead them into the Montana killing fields. Every time we bear witness to their slaughter, we also are inspired by their persistence. Usually a new group of buffalo leave the Park after their family has been slaughtered; as if they are taking their place, reminding us that wild buffalo are indeed wild; forcing us to confront the blood of an age old slaughter. The buffalo is a symbol of America that remains caught in the crossfire of the battle to control public land.

In November, I got caught in the crossfire of another battle for control. I traveled to Miami to confront the corporate free trade agenda—to speak truth to power. Unfortunately power has a huge fence, a paramilitary force armed with the latest "non-lethal" arsenal, and a standing order to attack anything that resembles dissent. As I was herded through the empty downtown, shot at with pepper spray, tear gas, and rubber bullets, I was overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness and frustration. Perhaps I got a sense of what it is like to be a buffalo in Yellowstone...

A buffalo in Yellowstone... chased by snowmobiles, ATV's, rangers on horseback, with the deafening roar of helicopters overhead, cracker rounds exploding nearby, running to escape, surrounded, pushed through barbed wire fences, forced into a trap. The buffalo pay for their resistance with their lives, packed into trailers to be shipped to the slaughter house – at least I wasn't.

Every spring, hundreds of wild buffalo follow the Madison River west to their traditional calving grounds on the national forests of Horse Butte. In the midst of the sagebrush and early spring grass, there is a buffalo trap waiting for them. The Horse Butte trap is a large metal scar on the land, a holding cell for prisoners of the buffalo wars, a deportation center for native wildlife stripped of their right to roam free.

We share the same fate as the buffalo. We can be herded and controlled by those that use force to maintain their power. Or we can choose to follow the example of the wild buffalo, we can choose to be free by resisting the control of public space and public land.

The choice is ours.

Horse Butte Neighbors (HOBNOB) Praise the Work of the Buffalo Field Campaign

It's Sunday, the 2nd day of May, 2004. I'm writing this as I sit on the crest of a bluff that overlooks the Madison River, watching a moose enjoy his meal in its waters. The ripples caused by the touch of his mouth to its surface captivate me.

I find myself reflecting back to memories of buffalo roaming in, and around, my neighborhood.

Words cannot do justice to the emotions that erupt deep in my soul when the buffalo grace me with their presence. Sparks of excitement ran through me when I saw the first one in the neighborhood this spring wandering past my window. He went for the greener grass across the way. I can't believe the amount of time it takes some buffalo to find just the right spot to hunker down for a nap on a full stomach. To watch them rock back and forth, each time pushing a little harder, just to get back up on their feet is thoroughly captivating and reminds me of how truly blessed I am to live here. As my gaze turns to the horizon, I recognize that if it weren't for every single tree, there would be no forest.

The same can be said for the Buffalo Field Campaign and the people who support them. If it were not for every single one of you who have ever donated financially and/or volunteered your time to help this noble cause, there would be no Buffalo Field Campaign. There would be no buffalo for me, my family, or my friends and neighbors to enjoy watching from the comforts of home. How can I ever begin to express my gratitude to so many? I will start by never forgetting the dreadful price the buffalo have had to pay. And I will always remember the struggle you have undertaken on their behalf. Thank you.

An organization is only as strong as those who stand behind it. You are the most important element in its foundation. Thank you for your dedication, perseverance, energy and, most importantly, your compassion. Every day I reap the rewards of your efforts. I and future generations will forever be in your debt. I so admire the courage and conviction it took to initiate such an overwhelming campaign. I am in awe and have been humbled by your example. Thank you.

I could go on, but with the honk of a sandhill crane nearby, my musings have come to an end. I get his hint. I see the moose has left the water and is headed my way. Should I stay or should I go? Within 100 feet he stops to stare at me. I guess I'm staying. To lighten my unsure moment I tell him he has a nose like mine. As a horse would do, he lifts his top lip as if to laugh because he knows I'm right, then he just walks away. Life here is so fun! Thank you all for being a part of it!

—Sincerely, Karrie Taggart, HOBNOB

HOBNOB is a group of more than 60 Horse Butte residents working to protect the buffalo's right to roam.

The protection of Yellowstone buffalo is important to me because we have a stewardship responsibility to protect wildlife, especially animals that humans nearly hunted to extinction. I'm outraged that the U.S. government is going to such extremes for the benefit of a handful of wealthy Montana ranchers. Although our current leaders routinely preach about the virtues of free markets, corporate welfare for ranchers doesn't seem to bother them. Buffalo are native to North America; cattle are indigenous to SE Asia. Thanks. —Kevin Crupi

The Last Buffalo Hunt

"If you know about the buffalo hunts, you perhaps know that the one I describe now, many generations passed; was one of the last. During that hunt, the rest of the herd did not bolt away, but behaved afterward in a chilling fashion. The surviving buffalo milled at the outskirts of the carnage, not grazing but watching with an insane intensity as one by one, swiftly and painstakingly, each carcass was dismantled. Even through the night the buffalo stayed and were seen by the uneasy hunters and their families the next dawn to have remained standing quietly, as though mourning, the relatives that lay before them skinned. At noon, the flies descended. The buzzing was horrendous. The sky went black. It was then that the sun's zenith, the light shredded by scarves of moving insects, that the buffalo began to make a sound. It was a sound never heard before. No buffalo had ever made this sound. No one knew what the sound meant, except that one old, toughened hunter sucked his breath in when he heard it, and as the sound increased, he attempted not to cry out. Tears ran over his cheeks and down his throat anyway, wetting his shoulders, for the sound gathered power until everyone was lost in the immensity. The sound was heard once, and never to be heard again. That sound made the body ache; the mind pinch shut. An unmistakable and violent grief, it was as though the earth itself was sobbing. The buffalo were taking leave of the earth, and all they loved, so the old chiefs and hunters after years had passed and they could tell what split their hearts."

—Louis Erdrich, *The Last Report on the Miracles at Little No Horse*

Thanks to Marilyn Jasper for sharing this powerful story with us

For the Lakota People, Tatanka; the buffalo were much more than just a source of sustenance. In another time, in dim history, the Lakota evolved from buffalo and there was a compact made between them; that Tatanka would sustain them, but they must not forget to honor this obligation to Tatanka.

Through the eyes of many generations, Lakota people saw how Tatanka made its offerings to Mother Earth. Tatanka carried the seeds of plants in its belly and its long wool and scattered the seeds to other places, assuring the distribution and diversity of the rooted ones. Tatanka prepared the Earth for plant proliferation by loosening the soil with thousands of sharp hooves and by offering nutrients. The trembling energy of Tatanka's massive movement stimulated the underground water levels and attracted the thunder beings, bringing necessary rain upon Mother Earth. Tatanka contributed significantly to the existence of other species. The Lakota moved with and learned from Tatanka how to live gently upon Mother Earth, not to destroy her, but to contribute to her well being, not to disrupt other beings but to respect them in passing, not to tremble in fear of the unknown, but to find comfort in Natural Law.

Mitakuye Oyas'in, We Are All Related – Rosalie Little Thunder

—Excerpt from a presentation to The United Nations Economic & Social Council Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Third Session in New York USA, May 10-21, 2004



BFC supporters were in Gardiner in August when Yellowstone celebrated the centennial of the Roosevelt Arch at the northern entrance to the park. When the arch was built one hundred years ago, wild buffalo were on the verge of extinction with just 23 animals surviving in Yellowstone's remote backcountry. Now history is repeating itself and BFC was there to remind the Park of their responsibility to conserve the wildlife of our first national park.

—Greg Gordon photo



—BFC file photo

A Volunteer's Experience

—Stephany Seay

It was the Winter of 1996-97 that I learned what was happening to the buffalo, and about the incredible group of people who dedicate their lives to defending them. For seven years I sat on the informational sidelines, and felt the strong pull to be in the field, where the hard work was being done.

When I came to BFC, I had no idea what to expect. What would the people be like? What would I witness in the field? What challenges would I face with the buffalo and those who torment them? Nothing can prepare you – nothing in the videos, nothing you hear, nothing you read, nothing you thought you understood – nothing prepares you for what you experience in the field. The beauty is overwhelming. The cruelty to the buffalo is maddening. It is hard to write about... to put into words. So many of the experiences here have been beautiful; days upon days of peace and tranquility in an awesome landscape, standing with the equally awesome buffalo. Keeping company with ravens, elk, moose, eagles, chickadees, otters, porcupines, and countless other incredible critters leaves nothing in life to complain about. Then there are the days too painful to explain, like the day in late February, when ten of the first buffalo I ever got to know were sent to slaughter.

It can be really hard sometimes – I mean *really* hard – to spend such sacred, inspirational time with beautiful creatures in a beautiful place, everything right with the world; knowing that at any minute the cowboys could arrive to disrupt everything – change the day and the face of the landscape entirely. When they come, light turns dark and you document it. It was hard filming buffalo as they were aggressively chased by ATVs, and mercilessly run through a barbed-wire fence; hard watching a noble bull buffalo run off his lonely, snowy spot in the willows again and again. It was hard witnessing five yearlings—their mothers stolen and sent to slaughter by the DOL—as they were “released,” tagged and spray-painted, into an uncertain future. It was hard knowing that the first baby buffalo I ever saw had to hide in the woods with his mother, terrified in the first delicate days of life. It is damn hard to watch buffalo being treated cruelly, and it is salt in the wound knowing the cowboys have a good time with it. I have watched my friends suffer and change from what they have witnessed. I have sat with one who had enough of watching and put his freedom on the line to free the wild. Being here is an empowering awakening. The people and the buffalo inspire me with their courage, determination, and endurance. Giving up, giving in is never an option.

The time spent with these buffalo—the magical times, and the painful times—have to be communicated to the rest of the world. They are our last truly wild buffalo! It is difficult, but it is *crucial* that we are here. We know that if we weren't, the DOL and their puppets would do even more harm. If we weren't watching their every move, the buffalo-killers would take liberties with their prejudices against the buffalo. So we are here, and the buffalo's story gets told. Knowledge is power.

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Contributions to BFC are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law and support our aggressive, front lines, grassroots volunteer work. We put the wild buffalo first! BFC is the only group working 365 days a year in the Yellowstone ecosystem to protect the last wild, free-roaming buffalo.

On the Legal Front -by Josh Osher

Civil Suit

The Buffalo Field Campaign and its volunteers, through seven years of existence, have been subject to repeated harassment and attempts to restrict our constitutional right to document the government sponsored slaughter of America's last wild buffalo. BFC volunteers have been physically assaulted, falsely arrested and imprisoned, and endangered by various government agents.

State and federal agencies and their agents have systematically prevented us from documenting buffalo hazing and capture operations. The agents regularly "close" areas of the National Forest supposedly to ensure "public safety." Many times these closures of public land encompass several miles and are designed so that no view of their operations is possible without "trespassing," for which they gladly make an arrest. When an arrest is made or the agents claim to be "investigating a crime," they confiscate our videotapes in the field. Montana law clearly states that the public has a right to media confidentiality. Even after a court case affirmed this view in 2000, agents still continue to confiscate our media.

Perhaps the most insidious practice by the government is the heavy surveillance and maintenance of "spy files" on BFC volunteers. A high level of scrutiny and outright harassment of people who associate with the BFC includes the illegal practice of keeping files on law-abiding citizens. The government, even as they terrorize the ecosystem in their daily operations, regularly refers to BFC volunteers as "eco-terrorists." This activity recently has accelerated with the passage of the Patriot Act.

In order to protect our volunteers and defend our constitutional right to document the ongoing buffalo slaughter, BFC and several volunteers filed a civil rights lawsuit in Montana's Federal District Court. The suit, filed at the end of February 2004, names multiple government agents both in their personal and official capacities. We are eagerly looking forward to the government's response and our eventual victory in court. Please check our website for the latest info on BFC's efforts to defend its rights to defend the buffalo.



-BFC File Photo

Helicopter Hazing Lawsuit Appeal

BFC joined forces with The Ecology Center, Inc. and Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers, filing a lawsuit in 2000 charging the U.S. Forest Service with violations of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. After our claims were denied by District Court Judge Charles Lovell in Helena in November 2003, we appealed the decision to the 9th Circuit Court, where we await a decision.

The lawsuit charges, among other things, that heli-hazing operations along the Madison River were never analyzed for their impact on threatened bald eagles and trumpeter swans. The lawsuit further contends that the Forest Service acted "arbitrarily and capriciously" by not investigating violations of the Montana Department of Livestock's Special Use Permit for operation of the Horse Butte buffalo trap.

Our appeal was heard this winter in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in Seattle, Washington. A ruling in the case is expected in the coming months. Please check our web site for updated information.



-BFC File Photo

"The so-called random shooting at the Montana borders is actually eliminating or depleting entire maternal lineages, therefore this action will cause an irreversible crippling of the gene pool. Continued removal of genetic lineages will change the genetic makeup of the herd, thus it will not represent the animal of 1910 or earlier. It would be a travesty to have people look back and say we were 'idiots' for not understanding the gene pool." -Dr. Joe Templeton, Texas A&M University, Dept. of Veterinary Pathobiology, to the GYIBC on May 21, 1998.

The Brucellosis Myth Exposed

What is Brucellosis? Brucellosis (*Brucella abortus*) is a bacterial disease that can cause infected animals to abort their first pregnancy. Cases of brucellosis in humans, often called undulant fever, are extremely rare. The Center for Disease Control does not consider brucellosis a major public health threat nor does it require cases be reported.

How is Brucellosis Transmitted? The primary method of brucellosis transmission is through consumption of infected birthing materials. For cattle to get brucellosis from bison, they would have to find and eat a significant portion of viable brucellosis from an aborted bison calf or afterbirth. Brucellosis bacteria quickly dies with exposure to direct sunlight or warm temperatures and is quickly consumed by a wide variety predators and scavengers in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Furthermore, if cattle are not present during the bison calving season, there is no possibility of transmission. **There has never been a documented case of brucellosis transmission from wild bison to domestic cattle.**

Brucellosis and Yellowstone Bison: Brucellosis was first detected in the Yellowstone bison herd in 1917. The bison likely contracted the disease while in confinement with infected dairy cattle at the old bison ranch in Yellowstone's Lamar Valley. Over the years, Yellowstone's herd has developed an effective immune response to brucellosis. Once exposed, the bison create antibodies and no longer have the potential to transmit brucellosis. Some Yellowstone bison carry a gene called SLC11A1 that gives them a genetic immunity. It is important to note that many other species in the GYE also show signs of exposure to brucellosis including elk, bear, moose, big horn sheep, coyote, wolf, muskrat, mice, etc.

Are Yellowstone Bison Actually Infected with Brucellosis? The field tests currently used to determine which bison are sent to slaughter and which may live (often times the agencies kill bison without even testing for brucellosis) only detects the presence of long-term antibodies for brucellosis. These tests only determine if the bison have been exposed to brucellosis at some time. Approximately half of the Yellowstone bison herd tests positive for exposure to brucellosis. The only way to know if bison are infected with the brucellosis bacteria is to culture tissue samples from dead animals and try to grow live bacteria in a lab. Comparisons between field and culture test results conducted by the National Park Service indicate that only about 20 percent of the bison that test positive for exposure were actually infected with brucellosis bacteria. This means that only about 10 percent of Yellowstone's bison herd are actually infected with brucellosis at any given time. The average age of culture positive bison was 2.34 years. This implies that bison are usually exposed to brucellosis bacteria at an early age and then develop a long-term immune response.

Is Eradication Possible? Eradication of brucellosis in the Yellowstone bison herd is not possible without wiping out the entire herd. Test and slaughter based on the presence of brucellosis antibodies, even in combination with vaccination, will never result in a brucellosis free Yellowstone bison herd. Using these techniques to eradicate brucellosis from Yellowstone bison is like trying to eradicate chicken pox by killing every person that has ever had it. Even if it were possible to eradicate brucellosis from Yellowstone bison, there is no way to eradicate the disease from the entire GYE nor is it possible to prevent bison from becoming re-exposed.

-NPS photo



Vaccinate Cattle, not Wild Buffalo!

The Interagency Bison Management Plan calls for the vaccination of all Yellowstone buffalo for brucellosis when a **safe and effective vaccine is available**. The Park Service has taken the "lead" on vaccination this year by inoculating 114 sero-negative calf and yearling buffalo captured at the Stephen's Creek trap. The buffalo were injected with RB51 vaccine, eartagged and released more than a month later. RB51 is a live bacteria vaccine developed for domestic cattle to replace Strain 19, which causes false-positive results in serology tests. Around the world, **there is substantial controversy over the efficacy of RB51 in cattle and the vaccine is not approved for use in domestic bison**. The Park Service initiated their vaccination program without public input, even though there is significant evidence suggesting that RB51 is not effective in buffalo.

Multiple studies on the safety and efficacy of RB51 in bison have been conducted in recent years. Don Davis and Phil Elzer, two preeminent researchers on brucellosis in wildlife, "determined that RB51 did not confer significant protection in vaccinated animals. In terms of abortions and infections, the RB51 bison vaccinated with three injections did not differ significantly from the non-vaccinated bison." In a 2002 peer-reviewed paper on wildlife vaccination for brucellosis, Davis and Elzer conclude, "...the efficacy of RB51 is nil in adult bison and has not been determined in a statistically number of bison calves." Recent studies conducted by US Government Services scientist Steve Olsen show mixed results as to the efficacy of RB51 in calf and yearling buffalo. Using small sample sizes, Olsen concludes that roughly 50 percent of vaccinated buffalo will still abort when given an infectious dose of brucellosis as compared to around 80 percent in the non-vaccinates. However, nearly 80% of the vaccinated buffalo still remained infected with brucellosis.

The vaccination of buffalo captured at Stephen's Creek this year is only the beginning of a large-scale vaccination program for Yellowstone buffalo by both the Park Service and the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL). Both agencies began the process of environmental analysis and public comment in June 2004 (check our web site for updates!). The Park Service began scoping for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in early June on remote delivery of RB51 vaccine for all calf and yearling buffalo in Yellowstone. Their plan is to shoot all calf and yearling buffalo they can find with a "bio-bullet" packed with RB51 vaccine. They intend to release a final EIS in fall 2005 and begin the vaccination program in the winter of 2005.

Not to be outdone, the DOL announced that they will also initiate the process to vaccinate buffalo outside the Park. The DOL plans to vaccinate all calf and yearling buffalo captured at the Duck Creek and Horse Butte traps by injection and oral delivery. The DOL will also likely include remote delivery vaccination similar to the Park Service program in their plan. A scoping notice for an environmental assessment was released in June 2004.

Vaccination of wild Yellowstone buffalo with RB51 is an ill-conceived idea designed to convince the public that the agencies are doing something about brucellosis other than capture and slaughter. Based on the scientific studies, it is clear that RB51 will do little if anything to reduce the rate of brucellosis exposure in the Yellowstone herd. Both the Park Service and the DOL vaccination plans will cost federal taxpayers millions of dollars. Vaccination will be a perpetual operation and buffalo that are subsequently captured will still test positive for exposure to brucellosis!

TAKE ACTION! Please take the time to send comments to the Park Service and the DOL urging them not to go forward with this ineffective, feel-good vaccination program. See our "What You Can Do" section for contact information. Check our website for updated information on public comment periods, public meetings, and more detailed analysis of the vaccination plans.

Cool Buffalo Facts for Kids:

-What is the difference between a buffalo and a bison? Answer: Nothing! Bison is the scientific name for the animal that now is called buffalo. They're the same.

-Can you guess how cave men living 13,000 years ago in France let us know that there was a type of buffalo living at that time? Answer: Cavemen recorded their surroundings through pictures. They made charcoal by burning the ends of sticks and animal bones to draw buffalo and other animals on cave walls. This is one way we know that the buffalo or bison that live today are different from their ancestors.

-Do you think large mammals such as the woolly mammoth, saber-toothed tigers, and giant beavers once lived in North America? Answer: Yes. All kinds of strange sounding mammals lived here. Ten thousand years ago in the United States, by the end of the last ice age, over 300 species of large mammals went extinct. But ancestors of today's buffalo survived. Wow, looking at a buffalo is like looking back through history!

-The buffalo is an American icon. Many of America's original inhabitants, the Native American tribes, relied upon buffalo for nearly every aspect of their existence. Buffalo provided food, shelter, and clothing and made life possible. The buffalo is a symbol of the American West and can even be found on old American nickels. (Don't forget to keep it if you find one.) Where else can you find the American buffalo symbol? Answer: The buffalo is a symbol of the National Park Service and can be spotted on the badge of every National Park Ranger.

TRUE OR FALSE? Guess the correct answer.

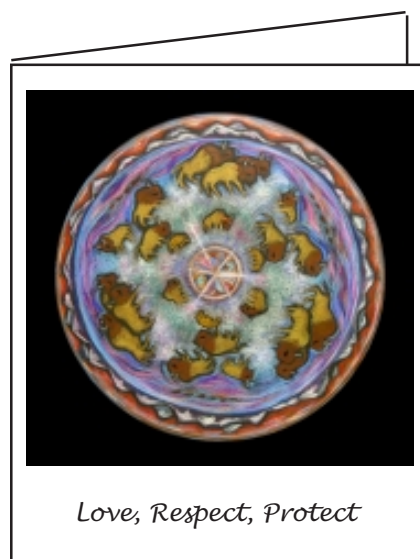
- 30 million buffalo once roamed North America. True False
- Adult male buffalo can weigh more than 2,000 pounds. (That's pretty heavy.) Before you answer, think about how much you weigh.) True False
- Buffalo have a very good sense of smell and can smell you a mile away. True False
- An adult buffalo can easily hop a six-foot fence and run 30 miles an hour. True False
- The noise a buffalo makes is similar to a barking dog. True False
- Buffalo are able to survive temperatures of 50 degrees below zero. True False
- By the late 1800's there were only about 23 wild buffalo left in the United States. True False
- Buffalo leave circular hoof prints on the ground. True False
- Buffalo eat anything they can reach including porcupines and skunks. True False
- Since the buffalo is not on the endangered species list we don't need to be concerned about their future. True False

ANSWERS

- True. More than 30 million buffalo roamed wild and free from the mountains of Virginia to the in this country long before European settlers arrived.
- True. A bull buffalo can weigh more than 2,000 pounds and stand more than six feet tall at his shoulders.
- True. Buffalo have an awesome sense of smell. In addition, buffalo have excellent hearing but they use their sense of smell to detect danger.
- True. They don't even need a running start! Buffalo can leap a six-foot fence from a standing position and run 30-miles an hour. How fast can you run and how high can you jump?
- False. Buffalo make a variety of unusual loud noises including sneezes, snorts, and grunts. They don't, however, bark like dogs.
- True. Buffalo have lots of fat and very thick coats to help them survive extremely cold weather. During snowstorms buffalo huddle together to stay warm. In the spring they lose their heavy coats when they molt and the new hair they grow is short.
- True. Less than 100 years ago buffalo were hunted almost to extinction in the United States. Although private, ranched herds were established before it was too late, most herds today are not allowed to roam wild and free.
- True. Buffalo tracks are circular, making it easy to tell the difference from elk or other animals in the area.
- False. Buffalo would never eat such things! They are vegetarians and only eat grasses, hay, or other grains. Imagine how much they have to eat each day to maintain their size!
- False. Sometimes today's buffalo are not treated kindly. Imagine buffalo Moms and their little calves being chased by a snowmobile! It is the job of all of us to protect the buffalo. They are being killed by park rangers who wear a buffalo image on their badge. Be a friend of the buffalo, speak up for them because they are a unique herd and need your help!

ACTIVITY

13,000 years ago, when the prehistoric people of France drew pictures of buffalo on their cave walls, they had to draw from memory. They couldn't let the buffalo in the cave to model for them and they didn't have photographs of buffalo to study. The cave people couldn't make sketches to take back to the cave because they didn't have sketchbooks and pencils. They had to remember what buffalo looked like and draw them from memory. Put this newsletter away and on a separate piece of paper draw a buffalo from memory. Compare your finished drawing with a photograph of a real buffalo. How many details did you remember? Draw another buffalo adding details you didn't remember.



"Love, Protect, Respect" courtesy of the artist, ©Marian Osher 2004

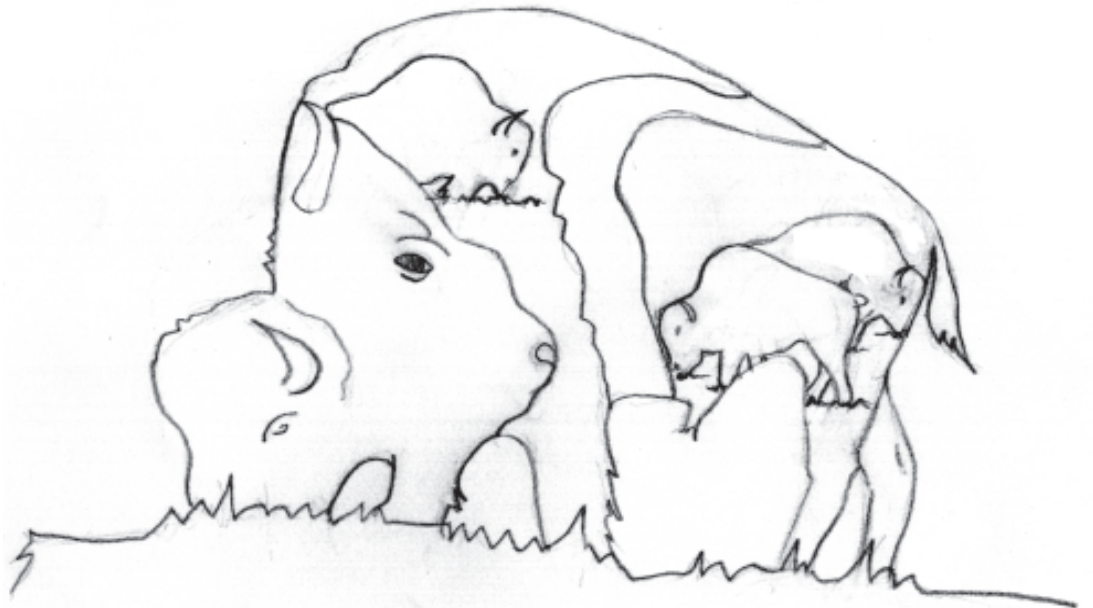
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Set of 10 cards (blank inside) & envelopes. Only \$15 earth friendly 100% recycled paper

Order yours today (coupon on reverse side) please... ask about retail discounts

Let the Buffalo Roam!



- drawing by Marlene Bergman

*You stare at me.
It breaks my heart to see you suffer,
You don't just suffer your pain,
you suffer the pain of those who care.
I want to save you, I love you.
You are my inspiration, my whole life,
my number one animal.
My heart and soul will stay with you forever,
until you run free among us, among the world.*

*We feel your suffering,
your eyes tell stories of the ancestors
and how they ran free,
then experienced your suffering.
You make everything more beautiful.
You are unique,
your spirit makes everything grow,
every time you take a step.
All of Nature depends on you,
your spirit keeps it all alive,
then you stare into my eyes.
You make everything seem alright with your beauty.
The power in your spirit touches the world.
You are the last forever free-ranging bison in the world.
May my heart and soul stay with you.*

Heather, Seattle Washington
Age 10, grade 4

BFC was honored with visits from various school groups from around the West over the course of the past year. Special thanks to the students and teachers from the Soujourner School, Denver's PS1 School, Wyoming Indian High School, and the De La Salle Blackfeet School. Your visits, and your dedication to the buffalo, are inspirational. If you would like to organize a trip to Yellowstone for your class to study firsthand the Yellowstone herd, please contact us.

*Why are certain people catching bison and slaughtering them? I want to know why Yellowstone National Park is not a safe place for them any more. I don't think it is fair to have bison being slaughtered like that. I don't think it's OK for bison to almost be extinct. I hurt inside. I think that bison should have a safe place to live. I think that we should do something about it. Thank you.
-Kelly, age 8, Bozeman*

Kids:

Send us your artwork or poetry about wild buffalo, their home and/or friends and we'll enter you in a contest for a t-shirt and maybe print your work!

Bucks for Buffalo

BFC is an volunteer organization, and our existence depends solely on contributions. Help us stay financially strong so we can be in the field with the buffalo! Find 3 stores in your town that will host a "Bucks for Buffalo" donation jar in your community. We will set you up with all the materials, just check the box on the coupon on the back cover to get more information drop us a line: buffalo@wildrockies.org or 406-646-0070. — Jar labels by Roger Parchen, Art & Image Creative Resources. Frank Consentino photo.



Support Our Frontlines Work to Defend the Buffalo and look great in a new Buffalo Field Campaign Earth friendly Organic Cotton T-shirt!



Cosmic Buffalo on the front
Buffalo Bill of Rights
on the back

4 Sizes: S, M, L, XL (XL's are BIG!)
Please specify size when ordering.
Color: natural

Only \$20 (includes shipping and handling)

In fall 2004 we will be offering a new t-shirt design - it will probably be the wonderful art from Marian Osher displayed on our notecards. Please check our website or email us to find out more about this great new t-shirt option! (& as always it will be on 100% organic t-shirts!). Contact buffalo@wildrockies.org for one. -Graphics by Rick Sherman

With the Buffalo



www.buffalofieldcampaign.org

What's it worth to have wild free roaming buffalo for future generations?

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

We are a grassroots campaign and it will take the collective efforts of all of us to win strong & lasting protection for the buffalo. Some of us donate time from our busy lives to stand in the field and bear witness for the buffalo. Some do the numerous other projects detailed in this newsletter, like writing letters, hosting video showings, or putting on benefits. Others work on our legal, legislative and research fronts. The fact is, we also need a foundation to make our work happen and it costs money to maintain our patrols and share the bison's stories with the world. We need your contribution to reach our goals of a truly wild and free Yellowstone buffalo herd.

BFC is frugal and we stretch each dollar further than you can imagine. We buy food in bulk and cut costs in all ways. In this day and age it is rare to see a group getting so much done with so little. We have no high paid staff or fancy offices; just strong passion for the earth and its creatures. Our grassroots community grows stronger and the voice of justice speaks louder with every new supporter. I'd be happy to provide you with any information that will help with your giving decisions and offer my assistance should you choose to plan a benefit or host a special event in your community.

So - **what are future generations of wild free roaming buffalo worth?** Can you scrape up a donation or easily contribute a substantial one? Can you recycle computer printer cartridges in your community or put out Bucks for Buffalo jars? Only you know the answer but I can tell you that we can not be here without you and that 60 percent of our campaign monies come from individuals just like you! Every dollar helps!

To all of you who have supported us for so long - we are indeed blessed and respectfully thank you! I look forward to the day when the buffalo are truly protected and we can all celebrate victory around a campfire.

Until that important day - please support our work with a contribution.

With awe and respect and For all that's wild,
su gregerson

Program Development Coordinator
bfc-programs@wildrockies.org

"Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul"
- Ed Abbey

What You Can Do:

While BFC is in the field, we need you to help us spread the word and keep the pressure on! Only together will we be able to stop the atrocities. There are many things you can do right in your own community that will help stop the slaughter of America's last wild herd. Here are a few simple suggestions - but please use your own talents and imagination to the fullest! Be sure to visit <http://www.buffalofieldcampaign.org>, or email buffalo@wildrockies.org for more information on these specific buffalo actions. Grassroots works!

Volunteer - Come Stand with the Buffalo!

BFC's campaign headquarters, located in beautiful West Yellowstone, Montana is awaiting your arrival. We run daily patrols so you can get first-hand experience with the buffalo and the agents who harass them. Volunteers are needed year-round, but winter and especially spring, are when field volunteers are most needed. Every spring hundreds of bison leave the Park and newborn calves take their first steps while running from Montana's Department of Livestock (DOL). Visit our website to get the details on volunteering, then call or email us to let us know you're coming!

Contact your Members of Congress!

Your U.S. House and Senate members must hear from you! Please call, write, email, fax, and visit them to let them know you want the slaughter to stop and the buffalo to roam free. Urge them to support legislation that protects buffalo and their habitat. Use the articles in this newsletter to build your letter, or visit our website for info about specific measures that your members of Congress should support.

The Honorable _____
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515
House Email: <http://www.house.gov/writerep>

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510
Senate Email: http://www.senate.gov/general/contact_information/senators_cfm.cfm
Call the Capitol Switch: 202-224-3121 / 800-839-5276

Write Letters to the Responsible Folks!

Here is a list of decision-makers who need to hear from all of us, all the time. If each of us took a minute to contact these government officials, they couldn't ignore us. Please contact the following agencies, and write personalized letters that speak from your heart!

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
1400 S. 19th Ave.
Bozeman, MT, 59718
fwpbison@state.mt.us
* No hunt!

Montana Department of Livestock
Marc Bridges, Director
Box 202201, Helena, MT 59620
#800-523-3162, ext. 3 / #406/444-2043
kcooper@state.mt.us
* Manage cattle, not wild buffalo!

Governor Judy Martz (or current Governor)
State Capitol, Helena, MT 59620
#800-332-2272 / Out of state #406-444-3111
jdjelger@state.mt.us

Gail Norton, Secretary of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240
202-208-7351 / exsec@ios.doi.gov
* Protect, don't slaughter, this American icon!

Suzanne Lewis, Superintendent
Yellowstone National Park
P.O. Box 168
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190-0168
suzanne_lewis@nps.gov
* You are charged with protecting wildlife, NOT livestock interests!

Dale Bosworth
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
201 14th St., SW, WDC, 20024
202-205-1661
dale.Bosworth/wo@fs.fed.us
* Forest lands were set aside to allow buffalo to roam!

Anne Veneman, Sec. Of Agriculture
200A Whitten Bldg
400 Indp. Ave SW, Washington, DC 20246
202-720-3631
* Vaccinate cattle - leave wild buffalo alone!

Help Activate Folks Advocate for the buffalo

- * Residents of Montana, please contact your reps!
- * Write Letters to the Editor of your local newspapers (Please refer to page 2)
- * Urge TV Stations to run BFC footage: (footage from the field is available by writing to bfc-media@wildrockies.org or by calling 406-646-0070.)
- * Circulate a Buffalo Protection Petition
- * Schedule a Video Showing
- * Organize a Buffalo Action Committee
- * Organize a demonstration for the buffalo
- * Host letter writing parties in your home, school or office
- * Stay Informed! Get BFC's Weekly Updates from the Field: Send us your email address and we'll keep you informed, inspired, and empowered! Ask your friends to subscribe too! Send your email addresses to bfc-media@wildrockies.org.

Contact us for grassroots feedback and support.

Join us on the E-Lines!

BFC has a new web site: www.buffalofieldcampaign.org. Our new site has even more tools to help you keep informed about the plight of the Yellowstone bison and take action to stop the slaughter. You can find action items, updates, press releases, news stories, watch videos, browse our photo gallery, contact key decision-makers, get background information on the buffalo, and find other ways to support the buffalo-all online at www.buffalofieldcampaign.org.

We Need Your Support to Protect the Last Free Roaming Buffalo!

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! \$38 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:

\$380 ___ \$250 ___ \$100 ___ \$50 ___ \$38 ___

Other ___ All the cash (& lint) in my pocket ___

Also:

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

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

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 confidential email list
- I want to recycle printer cartridges - it's easy, and online!
- Tell me about Bucks for Buffalo Jars!
- Let me know about stock gifts or bequests (confidential)
- Send ___ copies of this newsletter for me to redistribute
- Contact me re: gear/food/car/in-kind donations
- I'll be a part of the International Buffalo Network!
- I'd like to host a benefit/video showing for the buffalo