



BUFFALO
FIELD CAMPAIGN

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Gardiner, MT - Today, at the National Park Service's trap, aka the Stephen's Creek capture facility, Yellowstone National Park captured 4 bull Buffalo. Park rangers on horseback forced the Buffalo into the trap located near the northern entrance in Gardiner, MT.

Mike Mease, BFC Campaign Coordinator, reports, "This year with a small migration of bison, Yellowstone has captured any Buffalo that gets near the trap."

Even though their target population could extend to 6,000 animals, with 5,200 of our last wild bison entering winter 2025/2026, the NPS stated they would "work with managing partners to decrease the population using all available tools with total removal dictated by migration which depends on winter severity."

"Protecting the Last Wild Bison"



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A very mild winter and very small migration, still has the National Park Service and the State of MT driving forward the Interagency Bison Management Plan that will not tolerate wild bison on public lands, our National Forests, in Montana, nor anywhere outside of Yellowstone, except the Horse Butte Peninsula near West Yellowstone, MT.

Further, the IBMP is unwilling to allow a bison population of 6,000 even though their own studies and plans would permit this number. As the National Park Service states, "The 6,000 upper limit (post-calving) is determined by the size of wintering areas outside of the park, as defined by Montana."

IBMP population targets of 3,500 to 5,200 bison in the park are a far cry from its potential carrying capacity of approximately 10,000 animals.

The deliberate suppression of the population of this keystone species threatens both the genetic diversity and long-term viability of the herd, as well as the biodiversity of the landscape in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Buffalo Field Campaign believes that managing these herds for abundance through a Tribal co-stewardship program, rather than limiting their populations to barely viable numbers, is in the best interests of the ecosystem, Indigenous and non-tribal hunters, and the Buffalo themselves. Managing for abundance should include opening up available habitat on National Forest and other public lands adjacent to the Park, not just increasing the number of Buffalo the IBMP allows within Park boundaries.

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The State of Montana with Governor Gianforte and the Livestock Industry's blessing is currently suing the US Department of the Interior (Case No. CV-24-180-BMM [2024]), claiming that the already unreasonably low bison population mandated by the IBMP is too high, and should be kept to a maximum of 3,000 animals. This legal action runs contrary to both science and the text of the Montana state constitution which requires that "the legislature shall provide adequate remedies to prevent unreasonable depletion of natural resources."

"The IBMP is the problem. Buffalo management and conservation continues to fail under this plan. It's time to try something new - Tribal Co-Management. Tribes know this species well. Tribes and Buffalo co-evolved together with Buffalo at the center of historic and traditional life ways. Tribes have a vested cultural interest in wild Buffalo in numbers commensurate with the available habitat in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem," states Dallas Gudgell, BFC Co-Director.

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