

# Summary Report from Interagency Bison Management Plan Meeting November 30/December 1, 2011

Presented 18 January 2012 by meeting facilitator Scott Bischke

The following summary report reflects activities at the November 30/December 1, 2011 meeting of the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) Partners, held at Chico Hot Springs in Pray MT. This report comes from the notes and flip chart records of facilitator Scott Bischke<sup>1</sup>. The report contains a Facilitator's Draft watermark indicating that while these notes were available for IBMP Partner review and modification before publication, no formal signoff procedure was undertaken. Thus, some Partners may not fully accept the facilitator's recollection/interpretation of events. The eight Partner attendees were McCoy Oatman (NP), Mary Erickson (GNF), Pat Flowers (MFWP), Christian Mackay (MBOL), Ryan Clarke (APHIS), Tom McDonald (CSKT), Jim Stone (ITBC), Dave Hallac/Dan Wenk (Nov30/Dec1; YNP). In addition to those at the deliberative table, ~20 staff members from across IBMP organizations and ~60 members of the public were present. Scanned attendance sheets are available from the facilitator.

<b>Action items identified</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Partner Operating Procedures</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Citizen Working Group Recommendations</b> .....	<b>3</b>
Risk reduction .....	4
Population management .....	5
Habitat effectiveness/habitat expansion .....	6
Education <i>(presented by Victoria Drummond)</i> .....	8
Where do we go from here with CWG Recommendations? .....	10
<b>Planned Signing of IBMP Documents</b> .....	<b>11</b>
2010/11 IBMP Annual Report.....	11
2011 Adaptive Management Changes Document and NEPA/MEPA Sufficiency Report.....	12
<b>Winter Operations Plan for Yellowstone bison</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Subcommittee Reporting on AM recommendations</b> .....	<b>14</b>
Bison restoration to other locations in the country (Karen Loveless & Julie Cunningham) .....	14
Increasing habitat (Jodie Canfield) .....	16
<b>Partner Briefings and Updates</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Future Meeting Planning</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Parked Item List (Potential Agenda Items or Future Meetings) .....	18
<b>Public Comment</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>22</b>



<sup>1</sup> MountainWorks Inc.; scott@eMountainWorks.com

## Action items identified

**Table 1.—Action items identified during this meeting**

#	Who	What	By when
1	Brian M (lead) with Mike L, Tom M, Jim S, Pat F	<p>Brian will lead the Operating Procedures group and come to the next meeting with a presentation on options that were discussed, potentially leading to a draft version of <i>Partner</i> Operating Procedures.</p> <p>Notes and directions for this effort can be found in this report under section titled “Process, Procedure, and Next Steps for Adaptive Management”. Also, (a) note that a review of IBMP notes since 2008 that pulls out past discussions of Partner process and decision making is complete and available from the facilitator; (b) note that one member of the public during public comment period called out several questions relative to meeting process—see May 17 public comments #s 18-24; (c) Mike L mentioned using the Clearwater Basin Collaborative Operating Protocols and Agreements as a good working reference (see <a href="http://www.clearwaterbasincollaborative.org/?page_id=156">www.clearwaterbasincollaborative.org/?page_id=156</a>). Further discussion of and Partner thoughts on this item can be found in the notes for the May 2010 meeting at IBMP.info.</p> <p>The Partners also asked this group to look at the strawman process for accepting adaptive management changes (see that section in these notes) to further refine/revamp those mechanics.</p>	<p>(carried over from Aug IBMP meeting)</p> <p>For next IBMP meeting</p>
2	CWG	Provide Partners a listing of 1) the experts who came to present to the CWG and, 2) CWG members.	Jan 15
3	CWG and Technical Committee	Activities associated with preparing for CWG/Partner follow-up meeting scheduled for Feb 24 <sup>th</sup> in Bozeman. Please see Table 2 for the action items agreed to at the Nov 30 / Dec 1 Chico IBMP meeting.	
4	Partners / staff; SB & ME	Complete 2010/11 Annual report per timeline described in this report under section titled, “2010/11 IBMP Annual Report”.	Dec 31
5	PF on behalf of all Partners (SB for website posting)	Regarding IBMP document signing. Pending the outcome of the State of MT EA, the 2010 Adaptive Management Plan will be modified and signed or signed as is, then posted to ibmp.info. See specifics under section of this report titled, “Planned Signing of IBMP Documents”.	On or before Feb 24 at CWG meeting
6	PF, SB to circulate MO, BM, MZ	Final signatures on NEPA/MEPA Sufficiency Report. KL noted that the NP need to take the signature decision to Tribal council for approval.	By Jan 10
7	PF on behalf of all Partners MO, TM, EC on behalf of NP, CSKT, ITBC	<p>If by mid-Feb the EA ...</p> <p>a) ...is not complete or finds against implementation of the North Side adaptive management changes, then remove North Side aspects from the proposed 2011/12 Operations Plan, sign, and begin operating under this plan.</p> <p>b) ... finds for the North Side adaptive management changes, then sign the 2011/12 Operations Plan and begin operating under this plan.</p> <p>In either case, document signing to be carried out by mail or, pending timing outcome, at the Feb24 CWG meeting in Bozeman. Tribal entities noted the need for ~3 weeks lead time to procure proper signatures.</p>	By mid-Feb

## Partner Operating Procedures

---

Lead for this effort, Brian McCluskey of APHIS, was unable to attend the meeting. Thus the Partners decided to forgo this discussion until their next meeting (\*\* action item 1).

## Citizen Working Group Recommendations

---

Members of the Citizens' Working Group (CWG) presented their recommendations report to the Partners, with four presenters handling each of four subsets of the report: risk reduction, population management, habitat effectiveness/habitat expansion, and education. The presenters each made a few opening remarks on behalf of the CWG, plus some global comments arose during the presentations. A subset of those comments follows:

- Interest-based interactions are tough.
- To achieve compromise, we had to learn to change our mindset from "Do you love this idea?" to "Can you live with this idea?"
- The best part of the process for the CWG was creating relationships. Even knowing that you won't always agree with other members of the CWG, you can learn to respect each other.
- Ginny Tribe was an incredible asset to the work.
- Some discussions that the group undertook did not help, many of those being philosophical (e.g., defining "wild", "commercial", or similar).
- The CWG chose to focus much of its efforts on answering the question, "Where is the risk?" They felt that the risk is to the cow, thus cows should be, for example, vaccinated.
- The CWG had lots of problems completely separating the four areas into which it was segmented. These four areas are intertwined. Similarly, it was not able in the time allotted, to prioritize its full list of recommendations for the Partners.
- The CWG recognized two major players, while invited, were not present for its discussions: Tribal representatives and members of the Park County Stockgrowers. The CWG tried as best it could to create/imagine the interests of these groups.
- The CWG hopes that the Partners will be empowered to act by the group's consensus on a number of items.
- CWG deliberations were driven by applying reason and logic and were not about absolutes.
- Many of the questions asked by Partners and staff are about the details of CWG deliberations. The CWG needed more time to delve into details and would like to continue doing so.
- In an interest based process the numbers of people representing each interest don't matter; each interest is given equal value. The goal is not to seek dilution or compromise, but instead agreement.

The Partners asked if the CWG had a list of its participants. Ginny Tribe, who facilitated all the CWG meetings as well as this presentation, presented the Partners a hardcopy of all CWG meeting notes. CWG meeting notes from May 9, 2011 provide the following listing of CWG members:

<i>Mark Albrecht</i>	<i>John Crumley - Ennis</i>	<i>Rod Jude – Gallatin Valley</i>
<i>Tina Altamura – Bozeman,</i>	<i>Victoria Drummond -</i>	<i>Whitney Leonard -</i>
<i>Emigrant</i>	<i>Bozeman</i>	<i>Bozeman</i>
<i>Roselae Babcock –</i>	<i>Lorents Grosfield – Big</i>	<i>Jennifer Madgic</i>
<i>Bozeman, Miles City</i>	<i>Timber</i>	<i>Sean McCormack -</i>
<i>Don Bachman - Bozeman</i>	<i>Joe Gutkoski</i>	<i>Bozeman</i>
<i>Jim Bailey - Belgrade</i>	<i>Jim Hagenbarth - Dillon</i>	<i>Sandee Mills</i>
<i>Norman Bishop - Bozeman</i>	<i>Glenn Hockett - Bozeman</i>	<i>Glenn Monahan</i>
<i>April Buonamici</i>	<i>Robin Hompesch -</i>	<i>John Mundingar</i>
<i>Gary Clark - Ennis</i>	<i>Bozeman</i>	<i>George Nell - Gardiner</i>

Joe Newman  
Jen Nitz – West  
Yellowstone  
Bill O’Connell - Bozeman  
Ward Olson - Belgrade  
Ariel Overstreet - Helena  
Julia Page - Gardiner  
Mark Pearson  
Gary Porter  
Jonathan Proctor -  
Missoula  
Gail Richardson

Nancy Schultz - Bozeman  
Robert Spannring -  
Emigrant  
Alan Shaw – Corwin  
Springs  
Matt Skoglund - Bozeman  
Frank Smith - Bozeman  
Suzy Sterling  
Sabina Strauss - Gardiner  
Stephen Sweeney – West  
Yellowstone

Karrie Taggart – West  
Yellowstone  
Watty Taylor - Kirby  
Becky Weed - Belgrade  
William “Bill” Wise -  
Bozeman  
Jim Wisman  
Don Woerner - Laurel  
Virginia Tribe (Facilitator)  
Pat Flowers (Partners  
liaison)

The full 13-page CWG Recommendations report can be found at [ibmp.info/Library/20111130/20111130.php](http://ibmp.info/Library/20111130/20111130.php) and will not be reproduced here. Instead, this meeting summary focuses on the questions to the CWG from the Partners and their staff following CWG presentations of each report subset. In some cases members of the CWG responded to the questions, in other cases questions from Partners and staff were left for future deliberation.

## **RISK REDUCTION**

*(presented by Jim Hagenbarth)*

1. *Partner/staff question:* How does the Stephens Creek facility fit into the CWG recommendations? Your recommendations did not say eliminate Stephens Creek—thus can we still look to it as a tool in the Partners’ toolbox?
  - *CWG response:* CWG was more focused on managing population than sero-prevalence. We need to better determine if an animal is truly infectious, which is hard to know today. Thus we can spend huge amounts of money and go nowhere. Instead we should redirect those funds to developing and disseminating a cattle vaccine.
  - *Partner/staff:* We already have tests for bison sero-prevalence where we can get it right 70% of the time. But, we need the Stephens Creek facility for testing.
2. *Partner/staff question:* Can you provide more specifics on your recommendation #1? Do you have specific protocol improvements you are recommending?
  - *CWG response:* Livestock producers will bear the brunt of costs. Thus, we need to use every tool we have available to keep them on the land, including livestock vaccination. We need to boost the ability of our own livestock to co-mingle with wildlife, especially on public lands, plus our ability to track their vaccination status. We are encouraged by potential of RB-51 improvements. One goal is give other states confidence in our programs for controlling brucellosis in livestock.
3. *Partner/staff question:* Under the CWG recommendations here, how will vaccine efficacy for livestock increase?
  - *CWG response:* We don’t know. We simply believe that is where the financial emphasis should be placed.
4. *Partner/staff question:* Do you have a strategy for CWG recommendation #3 regarding lobbying Homeland Security to modify the Select Agent List?
  - *CWG response:* No, but it is important. We need to find the right people who can make this happen.
5. *Partner/staff question:* Why does the CWG recommend (#8) de-emphasizing remote vaccination of bison?
  - *CWG response:* Wildlife vaccination using current technology does not work that well, not as well as cattle vaccination. Also, inside YELL vaccination of bison will have big impact on

animals and on tourists witnessing the vaccinations. Paul Cross (USGS) reported to CWG that vaccination inside YELL could be futile. We don't think that it is a good place to put \$s if it is only 38% effective following a delivery that is only ~30% effective. We think that remote vaccination can be kept as a tool but should be greatly downplayed.

6. *Partner/staff question:* Did the CWG prioritize its recommendations? If so, where does risk reduction fit in the prioritization list?
  - *CWG response:* CWG did not prioritize. But one of our underlying guides was to address the question, "Where is the risk?" The risk has to do with the cattle, thus we think the emphasis should be on vaccinating cattle.
  - *Partner/staff:* Could you prioritize your list?

## POPULATION MANAGEMENT

(presented by Ariel Overstreet)

1. *Partner/staff question:* Some items here overlap with the risk reduction CWG recommendations. Can the CWG provide a more integrated plan that shows which of its recommendations are interdependent?
  - *CWG response:* CWG recognizes the overlap in some of its recommendations. The recommendations were in development until very late in the process and thus there was no time to try to integrate the four sections.
7. *Partner/staff question:* NPS/Partners often work with an upper population limit of 3500. Did the CWG express any thought regarding that level?
  - *CWG response:* CWG did not define a specific desired target level. What we did agree on was that there needs to be an agreed upon set of numbers once and for all as the current situation is confusing to us all. The number can be fixed and adjusted from there if Partners are moving in concert, but currently there seems no set agreement of any kind. The idea of setting a target number was not agreed to by all, as some said that genetics should drive this decision and we are still learning to understand the genetics.
8. *Partner/staff question:* Under this section CWG recommendation #7, to what does "other means" refer?
  - *CWG response:* For example, the CWG discussed that Turner already has ~180 bison producing brucellosis-free bison, and similarly there are ~80 more doing the same while in quarantine. Using these bison to produce brucellosis-free bison could be more economical than running operational quarantine for population control, plus save the public from paying for operational quarantine.
9. *Partner/staff question:* Under this section CWG recommendation #16, to be clear we are not talking about bison that migrate from the Park, correct? And this was a consensus, correct?
  - *CWG response:* Correct and correct.
  - *Partner/staff question:* How do you define "suitable area"?
  - *CWG response:* See next section on habitat.
10. *Partner/staff question:* The CWG recommendations refer to the "FWP management plan". Does that mean the State Plan?
  - *CWG response:* Yes.
11. *Partner/staff question:* We already do CWG recommendation #12. Is there something more?
  - *CWG response:* The CWG is concerned with what we do when there is a mass migration out of the Park. We are concerned that the Partners don't do a good job of handling this situation, especially ahead of the season even when the mass migration is expected.
12. *Partner/staff question:* CWG recommendation #6 does not include slaughter. What was the CWG discussion around this area? Do you think the Partners should still consider slaughter a tool?

- *CWG response:* CWG found this issue to be contentious. That is why our recommendation #6 is a prioritized list.
  - *Partner/staff question:* Is slaughter the lowest priority even if it means by not using slaughter we will not decrease the sero-prevalence of brucellosis in bison?
  - *CWG response:* We did not discuss this question. We did, however, pick the term “lethal removal” to keep the door open, without defining explicitly what that meant.
13. *Partner/staff question:* Many of the CWG recommendations are good in an ideal situation. But it is still unclear: Is the decrease in disease sero-prevalence in bison a priority? If so, can we infer it is the lowest priority? If decreasing sero-prevalence is not a priority, it will change what the Partners do.
- *CWG response:* CWG struggled with the question *what does sero positive mean?* Currently we kill sero+ animals but don’t actually know that is the best approach because of such issues as herd resistance, and whether sero+ animals are infectious. The CWG wants to get away from the idea that sero+ is bad. ... Also, CWG did not reach a consensus on what “wild” means which could impact whether we can or should tolerate sero+ bison. ... The CWG recognizes that we have slaughtered many bison without material impact on the level of sero-prevalence in bison.
  - *Partner/staff question:* We use the tools we have now and know how to decrease sero-prevalence with the tools we have now—should we not use those tools if they are the best we have?
  - *CWG response:* The CWG put our emphasis elsewhere. We think that good wildlife management = good disease control = decreased sero-prevalence. As such, we believe, for example, that wildlife should not be crowded together.
14. *Partner/staff question:* For CWG recommendation #1, was there a discussion of how to distinguish between the zones?
- *CWG response:* Yes, CWG talked about the likelihood of including bison within a specific geographic area increasing the risk of brucellosis transmission to wildlife. We want to minimize conflict. Thus we advocate for early warning and wonder, is there a way to do that?
15. *Partner/staff question:* With respect to CWG recommendations surrounding the bison hunt, what was the CWG discussion around hunting state, Tribal, and total hunting quotas?
- *CWG response:* CWG believes that we need to increase the partnership between the state and the Tribes to better align the goals of the groups. Also, we need to better document the harvest and other aspects of the hunting season.

## **HABITAT EFFECTIVENESS/HABITAT EXPANSION**

*(presented by Glenn Monahan)*

16. *Partner/staff question:* The timetables expressed under this set of CWG recommendations are aggressive. How does the CWG recommend the Partners meet them as balanced with the need for adequate public process (e.g., review and comment periods)?
- *CWG response:* CWG recognizes the need in some instances for NEPA/MEPA or similar reviews. Difficult to reach consensus on timelines as some thought that Partners already have the power to undertake many of the CWG recommendations without further analysis. That said, many on the CWG expressed concern about the low level of public process for last year’s increase in habitat in the Gardiner Basin. ... All of this speaks to the social acceptability of change. This question is part of why the CWG sees the Montana Statewide Bison Plan as critical. We don’t think that one can separate YELL bison as a single entity without at the same time talking about impacts to the entire state. A statewide plan would help set expectations. ... The concept of social acceptability dovetails with educational efforts—we need an ongoing dialogue with people around the state to better inform them of the truth about bison, habitat, risk, sero-prevalence, and so on.
17. *Partner/staff question:* Parts of this CWG set of recommendations speak to need to “amend” federal

management plans to allow bison. Yet nothing needs to be amended or changed to allow bison on national forest lands. Is there a perception that national forest lands are not available?

- *CWG response:* CWG is not clear about the legal aspects. We found this a very confusing issue to discuss and understand. For example 1) zone designations in the IBMP; 2) the fact that the CMR Wildlife Refuge has stated it will not accept bison until the State of MT declares bison to be wildlife; 3) for GNF, what are the ramifications of grazing allotments on bison tolerance? 4) Why aren't bison in the Taylor Fork already, if it is already allowable? ... Also, we fought with the idea that even if something is available legally, it might not be socially acceptable. We talked about the idea of having ambassadors go out to see producers to answer questions and tell them what was happening.
18. *Partner/staff question:* Is there some alignment that the CWG recommends between the DSA and the areas of habitat available?
- *CWG response:* The CWG believes that all public lands should be available for bison.
19. *Partner/staff question:* There is interplay between habitat and population. We need to manage distribution, which might include hazing. How do population and distribution fit with CWG recommendations?
- *CWG response:* The CWG sees population control and hazing as tools, but tools of last resort.
20. *Partner/staff question:* Are there conflicts within the CWG recommendations?
- *CWG response:* We did not do any integration or comparison of recommendations between the four groups. We did not have time but that could be what the CWG does next. ... CWG believes that the key is dialogue—we must talk with all involved. We are not sure if GNF understands its jurisdiction if bison are managed as wildlife. ... For bison placed outside the DSA, the CWG believes the MT Statewide Bison Plan will be the one to define issues of habitat, population, distribution, and so on.
21. *Partner/staff question:* Staff subcommittees have talked about year round versus part year habitation of certain areas by bison as noted under CWG recommendations. For example, the upper Gallatin has no winter habitat. Yes, we can do adaptive management to expand bison habitat but we must consider 1) bison competition with other wildlife, and 2) need for viable *winter* habitat. Did the CWG consider these factors in its discussions?
- *CWG response:* The CWG tried to get habitat maps but was unsuccessful. ... Also, the CWG recognized many issues *within* the GYA, but also that we need a statewide plan so that we can talk about moving bison *away from* the GYA. ... Thousands of bison should be able to move into the Gardiner Basin. In the Hebgen Basin, we need to quit killing bison as they cross the basin so that they can migrate up Cabin Creek to the Taylor Fork, all free of cattle.
22. *Partner/staff question:* Here are some of the questions that I expect to get from the Montana Board of Livestock when the CWG recommendations are presented there: How much is enough? Is this a start or an end?
- *CWG response:* This is not a start or an end, but an evolution. It is a place where we agree, a place where no conflict exists or if one does exist it can be successfully ameliorated to all parties' satisfaction. ... The CWG was acutely aware that the livestock community was underrepresented in our deliberations. Is it a beginning or end? Yes, it is a very important question. We could not answer that but kept instead coming back to the need for a statewide bison management plan that draws from the lessons learned elsewhere.
  - *Partner/staff question:* Perhaps the "end" is tied to the CWG recommendation that says, "...restore wild bison to additional biologically suitable, socially acceptable areas."
23. *Partner/staff question:* Under the first two sections of CWG recommendations, it appeared easier to measure success of achieving desired results. In this habitat section, how do you propose we measure results?

- *CWG response:* [No direct answer was provided by the CWG for this question.] For the CWG, the whole habitat issue is closely tied to the question: *How do you move from the current bison management paradigm to one where you manage bison as wildlife?*
24. *Partner/staff question:* CWG recommendations mention “adequate fencing”. We have done fencing but it gives wildlife agencies heartburn with respect to unintended consequences to other wildlife. Did the CWG discuss this concern?
- *CWG response:* Don’t recall having this discussion in the CWG.
25. *Partner/staff question:* There is substantial financial impact to the CWG recommendations, particularly in the last section. We recognize we are in a climate of diminishing funding for APHIS, state and federal governments, everyone. Given that reality, who does the CWG think will fund the work it is recommending? Can the CWG and its related organizations/contacts help with budget commitment?
- *CWG response:* One avenue we discussed was redirecting funds put to remote vaccination and hazing programs toward other goals.
26. *Partner/staff question:* With regard to translocation of bison to Tribes, where is the CWG looking—just within the GYA or more broadly?
- *CWG response:* The CWG mostly talked about MT Tribes who have applied for bison but surely could be beyond MT. The CWG did not talk about beyond MT much because of a lack of understanding about treaty rights.
  - *Partner/staff:* Note that the CSKT would come to future CWG meetings if invited.
27. *Partner/staff question:* The Partners said that if the CWG created consensus, we would be very open to your recommendations. Did you have any discussion with other (non-Partner) agencies?
- *CWG response:* The CWG had some general discussions about the CMR Wildlife Refuge, but none with the BLM or others.
  - *Partner/staff question:* Could we have a listing of the experts who came to present to the CWG? Also, could we have a list of the CWG members? (\*\* action item 2)

**EDUCATION (PRESENTED BY VICTORIA DRUMMOND)**

This section did not have Partner/CWG Q&A session. Instead the CWG presented its thoughts, as captured on the education matrix seen on the following page. The CWG said that it was willing to continue on and be part of the education program (alone or in conjunction with Partner education efforts was not established). Other comments from the CWG included:

- To accomplish change, we need education. The groups who are impacted need to be informed. There are many fears, some true, but many are simply the result of misinformation or misconception.
- Two examples of successful education programs in the face of societal change: 1) bear aware education efforts; and 2) education coming with regard to change coming via the new 11<sup>th</sup> and College roundabout in Bozeman.



*CWG presentations.*



Yellowstone Bison Citizen's Working Group - Education Matrix

Education Topic	Associated Recommendations	Target Audience	Method & Measurements	Implementation Schedule	Program Providers		
<b>Understanding Bison</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Facts and Myths</li> <li>● Herd Dynamics and Roles (bulls, cows, etc.)</li> <li>● Ecological Impact and Contribution</li> <li>● Habitat (needs, management, seasonal, etc.)</li> <li>● History and Culture of the Animal</li> <li>● Unique / Last Wild Herd</li> </ul>	I.9	II.2 II.5.d II.6 II.11 II.15	General Population Tourists Conservation Communities Residents Tribal Interests Livestock and AG Community	MAR: Property Owner Brochure Hunting Tag Info Info with NPS Entrance Fee Children's Video	Immediately and develop over time with sponsored programs.	Sponsored and Educational Marketing (expand current programs): FWP MT University System	
<b>Living with Bison: The Public's Perspective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Human Interaction (Safe Reactions and Expectations)</li> <li>● Valued Resource</li> <li>● Benefits (Economic, Intrinsic, Cultural, Wildlife)</li> <li>● Risks (Property Damage, Property Rights, Public and Bison Safety)</li> <li>● Who to contact with safety / property issues</li> </ul>	I.5 I.8 I.10	II.1 II.3 II.5.c II.5.e II.16	Residents / Property Owners General Population Tourists Hunters / Outfitters Wildlife Advocates	Presentations Town Hall Meetings Brochures / Printed Materials Web / Video	Immediately	Sponsored and Educational Programs: FWP MT University System	
<b>Living with Bison: The Livestock Industry Perspective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Select aspects of Successful Models</li> <li>● Management Practices (current and proposed)</li> <li>● Herd Interactions</li> <li>● Vaccination protocols and effectiveness</li> <li>● Resources: Problem Resolution or Information</li> </ul>	I.1 I.2 I.3 I.4	II.1 II.5.a LL.8 II.12 II.16	Stockgrowers / AG Veterinarians Bison Ranchers Tribal Interests	Whitepapers Presentations Testimonials Association Meetings	Start Immediately and refine over time	Livestock Growers Associations Bison Ranchers Tribal MT DOL	
<b>Bruceella Abortus: Current Reality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Science vs. Fiction. Historical vs. Current Data</li> <li>● Vaccination Protocols and Testing</li> <li>● Consequences of Transmission / Infection</li> <li>● Elk Reality</li> <li>● Support Ongoing Research</li> </ul>	I.1 I.2 I.3 I.4	II.7 II.9 II.10 II.13 II.14	Stockgrowers Veterinarians Residents / Property Owners Tribal Interests Hunters	Whitepapers Presentations Testimonials Association Meetings	Start Immediately and continue to refine research and experiences.	FWP USGS Veterinarians (MT) APHIS YNP MT DOL	
<b>Existing Bison Wildlife Programs as Models</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Successes and Challenges</li> <li>● Applicable to Bison and Region</li> <li>● Models (SK, UT, AZ, WY - others)</li> <li>● Design Solutions based on Models and Management Approaches</li> </ul>	I.6 I.7	II.3	General Population Property Owners / Residents MUS and Extension Programs FWP (All IBMP Partners) Legislators / Regulators MT DOL	Site Visits Presentations Whitepapers Economic / Ecologic Studies FWP Document Beta Site with Existing Ranch	Immediately	FWP MSU / MUS Grand Teton Park Tribal Interests Public Commercial	
<b>Bison Wildlife Management: Current and Proposed Plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Population Management (dynamic and site specific)</li> <li>● Methods and effectiveness of Case Studies and Model Programs</li> <li>● Factors (habitat, weather, seasonal episodes, recovery strategies)</li> <li>● Population Targets and Gender Goals</li> <li>● Hunting as a Management Tool</li> <li>● Research / Modeling</li> <li>● Year Round Needs to Manage as Wildlife</li> </ul>	I.2 I.5 I.6 I.7 I.10	II.1 II.2 II.3 II.4 II.5.f	III.1 II.2 III.3.a III.3.b III.3.c III.3.d III.3.e	General Population Tourists Residents / Property Owners Hunters Stockgrowers Conservation Communities Tribal Interests	Whitepapers Presentations Brochures & Printed Materials Web Sites Town Hall Meetings	Start Immediately and refine with research and experiences.	FWP Property Owners YNP / NPS Tribal Interests

The three issues: I: Brucellosis Risk Reduction II: Bison Population Management III: Bison Habitat

30-Nov-11

## WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE WITH CWG RECOMMENDATIONS?

Through the course of the CWG recommendations presentation, as well as during the Q&A period, Partners repeatedly noted their appreciation for the work done by the citizens, many of whom were working as volunteers. Among many accolades, one Partner described the report as being “professional and comprehensive”. Multiple statements were made that one of the, if not the, most important thing about the set of recommendations was that they represented *consensus* from the many interests represented by the CWG.

At the close of the CWG presentation, the discussion turned to the question: What’s next? Lead Partner PF noted that he was hopeful that the Partners could get the point described in the concluding words of the CWG Recommendations: “...this document does provide a foundation for shifting our region’s bison management from reflexive conflict to respectful, informed change.” PF noted that he has seen citizen frustration is hopeful that the Partners can build on what the CWG has done. He asked the CWG to recognize that there are many details to come in implementing some or all of their recommendations. PF explicitly asked the CWG to remember the spirit of cooperation they displayed today as those details were worked out. He also stated agreement with a prediction of a CWG member early in their process: “We will all be changed by this process.” I believe you have been changed, PF noted.

With respect to *what’s next*, PF noted that consensus products are fragile and thus the Partners need to move fast. He suggested a follow up meeting between the Partners and the CWG within the next two months. The meeting was quickly agreed upon and open discussion ensued between Partners, staff, and the CWG to determine how to best structure an upcoming Partner/CWG meeting. That discussion resulted in a timeline of activities driven by a) the Christmas holidays and difficulty of getting groups together during that time, and b) meetings of the Montana Stockgrowers Association (Dec 2011) and Montana Board of Livestock (Jan 2012). The Partners recognized the desire to hear feedback from the latter two meetings before reconvening with the CWG, as reflected in the timeline shown in Table 2 (\*\* **action item 3**).

(Ginny Tribe, the CWG facilitator, made a couple of closing statements to the Partners. She stated that she thought the CWG had plenty of leaders and could continue its efforts without facilitation. She suggested that the Partners provide the CWG 1) a set of simple questions regarding clarification of CWG recommendations, and 2) a list of top three things that the CWG could do next.)

Following is a narrative summary of the activities detailed in Table 2:

- The IBMP Subcommittees associated with each of the topic areas addressed by the CWG (i.e. Brucellosis Risk Reduction, Bison Population Management, and Bison Habitat) will review the CWG recommendations and develop up to 10 clarifying questions for each of the three topic areas. Partners that do not have a member on a subcommittee but would like to comment should send their input to the subcommittee chair. Each subcommittee should send their list of questions to Andrea Jones (MT FWP) by January 20, 2012. She will fine tune the questions and compile them in a comprehensive list that she will forward to Matt Skoglund of the CWG the following week.
- The CWG is committed to responding to the clarifying questions by February 15, 2012. The subcommittees will consider the CWG’s responses to the clarifying questions and develop a proposed Partner’s response to each CWG recommendation. The format of the Partner’s response is summarized in Table 2, item 3. The Subcommittees will send their completed tables to Andrea Jones by February 17, 2012. She will combine and e-mail results to the Partners by the morning of February 21st. A Partners telecon will be held (tentatively Feb 22) to see if the Partner’s have any concerns about the tabular summary of our response to the CWG recommendations and, if so, to resolve them.
- Guidance is given that Subcommittees should only focus on the CWG’s recommendations at this point, not debate guiding principles the CWG used as the basis for their recommendations. Also, the Subcommittees should focus on the clarifying questions to the CWG first, responses to the recommendations later.

**Table 2.—Timeline for continuing work on CWG Recommendations**

#	Who	What	When																
1	Sub-committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review each CWG recommendation and create a set of clarifying questions for the CWG regarding their recommendations (note some questions are already detailed in the draft report from Chico sent out earlier this week)</li> <li>Send results to Andrea Jones for compilation. She will provide the set resulting questions to the CWG during the following week.</li> </ul>	Send results of deliberations to Andrea Jones by Jan 20																
2	CWG	(a) Respond to clarifying questions asked by the Subcommittees under item #1; and (b) provide a more streamlined final set of recommendations (i.e., remove redundancies).	CWG plans to meet Feb 13 and have responses to the clarifying questions back to the Partners by Feb 15																
3	Sub-committees	<p>After considering CWG responses (#2) to clarifying questions, the Subcommittees review the streamlines final set of recommendations and categorizes all into the table below.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>CWG Rec#</th> <th>Sub-comm priority for implementation</th> <th>If accepted</th> <th>If rejected</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> already in progress  <input type="checkbox"/> to be implemented ___                 </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/> not possible now due to ___  <input type="checkbox"/> potential date and conditions for revisiting ___                 </td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td></td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/> </td> <td> <input type="checkbox"/>  <input type="checkbox"/> </td> </tr> <tr> <td>etc</td> <td></td> <td>etc</td> <td>etc</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	CWG Rec#	Sub-comm priority for implementation	If accepted	If rejected	1		<input type="checkbox"/> already in progress <input type="checkbox"/> to be implemented ___	<input type="checkbox"/> not possible now due to ___ <input type="checkbox"/> potential date and conditions for revisiting ___	2		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	etc		etc	etc	By close of business Feb 17 send this document to Andrea Jones who will distribute to Partners & staff by Feb 21st
CWG Rec#	Sub-comm priority for implementation	If accepted	If rejected																
1		<input type="checkbox"/> already in progress <input type="checkbox"/> to be implemented ___	<input type="checkbox"/> not possible now due to ___ <input type="checkbox"/> potential date and conditions for revisiting ___																
2		<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>																
etc		etc	etc																
4	CWG, Partners / staff	Partners meet via telecon to review subcommittee recommendations 1-by-1 table (#3). Hopefully resolve any conflicts and determine method of presentation of Partner response to CWG on at Feb 24 meeting.	Telecon date proposed for Feb 22 / time TBD																
5	CWG, Partners / staff	Partners and CWG meet and review CWG recommendations 1-by-1 with the Partner response characterized in the above table (#3).	Feb 24 full day meeting in Bozeman at C'Mon Inn																

## Planned Signing of IBMP Documents

### 2010/11 IBMP ANNUAL REPORT

A progress report on the annual report was provided by ME, lead partner for 2010/11. Partners set the following timeline for completion of the report (\*\* action item 4):

- By 12/5 SB to send to Partners/staff the working annual report for final edits.
- By 12/16 Partners/staff make final edits on sections only they are lead or co-lead. Partners retain responsibility for their section but agreed to make good faith efforts to respond to comments

provided by other agencies or Tribes. Where Partners are co-leads of a section they will work with other co-leads to sort out any discrepancies.

- By 12/16 Partners/staff return final edits to SB. ME, as lead Partner, will have final say on any outstanding issues in the Annual Report.
- By 12/31 SB and ME will have completed document and posted to [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info). The Partners agreed that no signature loop will be needed for this Annual Report.

## 2011 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CHANGES DOCUMENT AND NEPA/MEPA SUFFICIENCY REPORT

Both of these documents were discussed at the Aug2011 IBMP Partner meeting, then modified in the intervening months to address all Partner concerns with a goal of signing at this meeting. PF and CM noted that the State of MT is currently undertaking an environmental assessment (EA) of the Gardiner Basin adaptive management changes that they agreed to in principle in the spring of 2011 (see IBMP meeting summary from May and August 2011). Until the EA is complete, neither MFWP nor MDOL is at liberty to sign the *2011 IBMP Management Plan*, which includes the new adaptive management changes.

In response to a statement that the State had *already signed off* on the Spring 2011 adaptive management changes, PF noted that a) the changes themselves had not been carried out on the ground, and that b) the State had signed off “in principle”, pending the potential need for an EA on the changes, which indeed was later requested.

EA completion is currently expected by mid-January 2012. If the EA rules to affirm the adaptive management changes, then the actions agreed upon at the Aug2010 IBMP meeting—modified per the current situation—will be carried out (\*\* action item 5):

- add the agreed upon adaptive management changes into the 2008 Adaptive Management Plan;
- that Plan will now be called the “2011 IBMP Management Plan” will be signed off by all Partners at the Feb 24 CWG meeting;
- the document will be posted to [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info).

Upon discussion Partners agreed that the NEPA/MEPA Sufficiency Report did not include sections dealing with the Gardiner Basin adaptive management changes and thus was not impacted by the pending State EA decision. Thus this document was circulated for signatures which were received from CSKT, GNF, ITBC, MDOL, MFWP, NPS, APHIS, NP, and the State Veterinarian (absent) did not sign but are expected to following the meeting (\*\* action item 6). KL noted that the NP need to take the signature decision to Tribal council for approval.

## Winter Operations Plan for Yellowstone bison

---

PJ presented NPS’s proposed winter 2011/12 (field) Operations Plan for Partner deliberations (the presentation is available at [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info)). PJ noted that the current 2009 Operations Plan is way out of date, and does not include 2008 Adaptive Management changes.

The NPS proposal took into account situational analysis of current bison population, modeling of future population trends and resulting expected migration patterns, and disease prevalence<sup>2</sup>. Based on this background, the NPS revised the 2009 Operations Plan that includes proposed desired population conditions based on IBMP and NPS mission, plus incorporates 2005-2011 adaptive adjustments. PJ noted a number of issues associated with updating the 2009 Operations Plan to the proposed 2011 Operations Plan, including:

- No consensus on Plans/Adjustments
  - e.g., population levels; agency contributions

---

<sup>2</sup> John Treanor of NPS described the findings of a research team he worked on as reported in the *Journal of Applied Ecology*. The abstract for that paper can be found at <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1365-2664.2011.02058.x/abstract>.

- Can't agree to changes in timely manner
- Tolerance outside park? – uncertainties
  - Litigation
  - Require a change in hazing practices
  - Reasonable numbers and distribution
- Hunting – tool for reducing abundance
  - Hunting not authorized in Yellowstone
  - Locations; Timing; Age/sex classes
  - Does little to reduce disease prevalence
- Slaughter – tool for suppressing disease
  - Governor may prohibit the importation of bison into Montana
  - Transport bison to Tribes for slaughter?
- Quarantine – not a long-term solution for reducing abundance
  - Quickly reach saturation of disease-free bison
  - Trouble placing disease-free bison on public lands in Montana or elsewhere
- Stephens Creek – holding bison
- Not talking about issues: distrust/litigation

PJ concluded with a broad summary of the NPS plan:

- Consider Citizen's Working Group recommendations
- Implement 2011 tolerance agreement with 150-200 bison north of park
  - Increased hunting; Learn to live with bison
  - Will likely need to hold bison (Stephens Creek)
- Implement selective culling of infectious bison and vaccination of females during February (after most hunting complete)
- Transfer bison to Tribes and research
- Respond to unilateral actions/litigation

Partners originally planned a more detailed, point-by-point discussion of the proposed 2011 Operations Plan. Instead, they set that effort aside to address the ramifications of the pending State of MT EA on the adaptive management changes (see preceding section). Partners asked how the EA decision—whether in support or against Partner adaptive management plans—might impact the 2011/12 Operations Plan (hunting, hazing, etc). They recognized that they could not act on those possible impacts prior to the EA decision, but also that winter is rapidly approaching with expected bison migration out of YELL. The critical uncertainty, aside from timing of the EA decision, is whether or not bison will be tolerated outside the North Side of YELL, as being considered under the EA.

Thus, the Partner decided that they could not sign the proposed 2011 Operations Plan and instead set a timeline to structure their decision, all built around an expectation of a Jan2012 State of MT EA decision. The Partners provided consensus to the following timeline/plan (\*\* **action item 7**):

1. Dec 2-Jan 15—Partners assign staff to meet and edit concerns in Operations Plan as proposed to arrive at Operations Plan having all parties in agreement (i.e., ready to sign).
  - a) This negotiation will include the sections of the Ops Plan explicitly dealing with expanded North Side habitat.

- b) Included during this time period is effort by tribal entities, as possible, to do preliminary review of the plan with tribal council and/or decision makers, and set planning for council signing on or before Feb 24 Partner/CWG meeting.
2. ~Jan 15—State of MT EA complete on Spring 2011 adaptive management (AM) changes on the North Side
- a) **If EA agrees to these AM changes**, then Partners proceed with Operations Plan as created in step 1.0
    - 1. Operations Plan is then complete ~Jan 15 with signatures via mail or at Feb 24 Partner/CWG meeting
  - b) **If EA denies these AM changes**, then Partners set plan to create Operations Plan recognizing ramification of EA decision
    - 1. Initial default is to return to Operations as prior to Mar 9, 2011 meeting with Governor Schweitzer.
    - 2. Partners have 30 days to assign staff to meet and finalize Operations Plan
    - 3. Complete Operations Plan by Feb 15
    - 4. Partners sign AM Plan at Feb 24 Partner/CWG meeting

Tribal entities noted the need for ~3 weeks lead time. They agreed that they could take the current document. KL provided a number of thoughts from the NP perspective:

- The NP do not want to use harvest for distribution and population management.
- Partner tools, however, should prioritize harvest before slaughter or translocation.
- NP recognize that the discussion on the numbers, ages, sex, and so on to be very complex, given seeking consensus from eight groups. The only similar issue KL said he knew of was the discussion of salmon harvest in the Columbia River.
- Tribes do not want to pre-empt harvest opportunities with shipment or slaughter. Such a course of action would tread on treaty rights.

PJ noted that if sero-prevalence decrease was not a big issue as put forth by the CWG, then NPS was less likely to ship bison to slaughter. KL said that Tribes need time to consider the ramifications of whether sero-prevalence or population levels are the bigger goal.

When asked if the NP supported the numbers put forth for the North Boundary, KL stated that the Tribes had voiced concern about 3000 as the park-wide goal population. Now that the population is at ~3200, down from ~3700, the Tribes want to evaluate harvest management to see if additional harvest on the North Side might be a valuable tool. TM stated a need to maximize hunting and utilize hunters to achieve the population goals. He stated further that the CSKT planned to use new lands on the North Side for hunting, pending State of MT EA result.

## **Subcommittee Reporting on AM recommendations**

---

Four subcommittees have been working on developing a prioritized list of AM recommendations: 1) Bison restoration to other locations in the country (Julie Cunningham & Karen Loveless); 2) Increasing habitat (Jodie Canfield); 3) Population modulation & resources vs population (PJ White); and 4) Prevalence reduction (Rick Wallen). The leads for the first two subcommittees reported at this meeting. Both Karen Loveless and Jodie Canfield provided written notes for their presentations. Those notes are reproduced here and thus not posted at [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info).

### **BISON RESTORATION TO OTHER LOCATIONS IN THE COUNTRY (KAREN LOVELESS & JULIE CUNNINGHAM)**

#### **Background**

1. Subcommittee members agree that bison used for restoration efforts must be disease free
  - Quarantine feasibility study is still underway, will not be complete until 2015



- We will not have disease-free bison available for restoration efforts until 2015
- 28. Work towards a Bison Conservation Plan for Montana is in progress including detailed consideration of bison restoration, with a target completion date of 2015.
- 29. It will not be possible to implement bison restoration before 2015; however decisions need to be made more immediately on whether to take additional animals into quarantine.
- 30. Population modulation subcommittee/NPS population models have suggested that removal of 330 bison per year will likely maintain the population below 3,500
- 31. Options for removal for population modulation purposes are harvest, culling and quarantine.
  - On average, annual harvest between tribal and state hunters has not been sufficient for population modulation
    - Expansion of bison tolerance area and area open for hunting may increase number of animals harvested
    - bison harvest will continue to be highly influenced by winter severity
  - Seroprevalence reduction subcommittee has recommended culling efforts targeting the most likely infectious animals, with likelihood of reducing seroprevalence if implemented.
  - Current quarantine facilities are occupied; immediate options for taking additional animals into quarantine have not been identified
- 32. Transfer of bison to tribes with approved quarantine facilities is being addressed separately
  - these animals are not appropriate for restoration of free-roaming bison herds unless/until quarantine/testing protocol is complete
  - this also applies to transfer of bison to quarantine facilities in other regions or states

### **Recommendations**

With the understanding that currently quarantined bison will be available for restoration efforts in 2015:

1. IBMP managers should define the goals/objectives of bison restoration, in order to design an appropriate quarantine program to meet those goals
  - This subcommittee provided a detailed list of philosophical and logistical issues that could be used as a guideline for discussion
  - Due to the complexity of this issue we suggest this be taken on in a focused discussion, i.e. as an agenda item at a meeting or conference call.
33. IBMP managers should consider whether there is value in taking additional animals into quarantine if it is not necessary for population modulation
  - Is operational quarantine desirable in and of itself as a means towards restoration, or is it mostly a tool to manage large migration events
  - Prioritization may be necessary between seroprevalence reduction efforts and taking animals into operational quarantine
  - Limited holding capacity limits effectiveness of quarantine as a population modulation tool.
34. Given agreed upon goals/objectives for bison restoration, managers should consider the cost of operational quarantine and who is committed to paying for it
35. Disposition of post-quarantine bison should be determined before taking additional animals into quarantine.

## INCREASING HABITAT (JODIE CANFIELD)

### *Instructions from IBMP Partners*

- The group should return to work that Rick W, Lisa S, Tom L had done in the past. Some mapping efforts are already available.
- The group should look at issues of habitat and they reconcile with current zone definitions. Recommendations associated with changing zone boundaries are acceptable.
- The geography under discussion is considered limited. For example, do not consider ID, Paradise Valley, Madison Valley.
- Looking at the Taylor Fork is ok.
- Consider restoration of existing habitat that is already available but of poor quality as one route to increasing habitat.

Consider for discussion the relationship between wildfire and bison; for example how wildfire impacts travel corridors and habitat quality.

### *Progress*

The subcommittee met in April, 2011 and again in September to conduct a field review of an area identified as potential expansion in the April meeting. Notes from the September Habitat Committee field trip can be found posted at [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info).

### *Northside recommendations*

We identified issues associated with the 2011 adaptive management Zone 2 boundary at Yankee Jim Canyon and recommend specific management practices to mitigate these issues. These are detailed in the April meeting notes.

### *Westside recommendations*

We discussed several areas both inside and outside of Hebgen Basin, and **need clarification from the partners whether we are to look at winter range only or yearlong bison habitat**. For example, Taylor Fork and Cabin Creek have suitable summer range, but not winter range.

- We recommend including the area along the Park Boundary – south of West Yellowstone (South Fork Madison) be included in Zone 2 and that opportunities to improve habitat be considered (clearing timber along the road, opening up meadows encroached by conifers).
- We recommend expanding the temporal tolerance for bison in the current Zone 2 and using fire to improve the habitat on Horse Butte.

Partners and staff had several comments and questions following Jodie's presentation, most surrounding the potential of the Taylor Fork drainage as winter habitat for bison. Bison most recently lived in the Taylor Fork during the winter of 1996-1997. During the winter they came to US Hwy 191 and were removed (no description of this process given) as a safety hazard.

ME stated that the Partners need to discuss what their powers are within the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan to make changes, and when a NEPA/MEPA analysis is necessary.

## Partner Briefings and Updates

---

### *Mary—follow up with Park County Commissioner Malone regarding past Partner responses to his questions.*

Mary provided a copy of a past IBMP partner response letter to Counties to Commissioner Malone. She will follow-up to see if the Counties have a reply.

### *Mary, PJ, Pat—status of lawsuits pending.*

Two items were combined into one, with PF providing a short summary of the multiple lawsuits underway. Table 3 captures the conversation.



**Table 3.—Summary of current lawsuits surrounding IBMP as of 12-1-11\***

	<b>Defendant</b>	<b>Sued by (Plaintiff)</b>	<b>Reason</b>
1	MDOL	MT Stockgrowers Association	deviation from implementing the IBMP on the west side of YNP
2	USFS, NPS, APHIS, MDOL, YELL	environmental orgs & others, including BFC, WW, GWA, more	over their participation in implementation of IBMP; to stop federal agencies from killing bison
3	State of MT	Park County Stockgrowers	implementation of proposed 2011 adaptive changes in Gardiner Basin
4	(MDOL, MFWP)	Park County	
5	MFWP	Gallatin Wildlife Association	"privatization" of previously quarantined YELL bison (i.e., sending to Turners)
6	YELL, GNF	Alliance for Wild Rockies	helicopter hazing

\* Note: This table put together by facilitator via verbal report from PF with “on-the-fly” additions made by Partners. Thus, specific details may not be exact or may be incomplete.

***JS, PJ—Feedback from Partners on YNP/ITBC past plan laying out a possible method of transfer of bison to tribe, including issues of operations, funding, and social/political concerns [for the latter, discussion of social issues associated with quarantine, transfer, and receiving of bison].)***

JS noted that the ITBC endorses a decrease in disease prevalence but is concerned about the idea of sending younger animals to slaughter, as mentioned in the proposed Ops Plan presentation. He stated that Partners need to explore the potential for quarantine as an alternative to slaughter, in part because these animals could be placed with willing Tribes.

***PJ—Status of draft EIS for remote brucellosis vaccination of bison***

PJ noted that the NPS has received thousands of comments, split ~50/50 for and against remote vaccination. Two areas of relatively high agreement come out of the comments: that remove vaccination is too costly and has too low efficacy. NPS will continue its internal review through the winter.

***SB—update on AM history and other items on IBMP.info***

SB showed that a new web page has been added at <http://ibmp.info/adaptivemgmt.php> that shows the history of IBMP adaptive management.

## Future Meeting Planning

The Partners set the IBMP meeting schedule for 2012 as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4.—IBMP schedule for 2012**

Date(s)	Time (expected)	Location	Host	Notes
Feb 24	8 AM – 5 PM	Bozeman MT	MFWP	Meeting dedicated to discussion of CWG recommendations; actual site of meeting TBD. Potential for Partner/staff Feb 23 tour of Taylor Fork hosted by MDOL and GNF.
Apr 9-10	Noon to 5 PM; 8 AM to noon	Bozeman MT	MFWP	actual site of meeting TBD
Aug 14-15	Noon to 5 PM; 8 AM to noon	W Yellowstone MT	MFWP	actual site of meeting TBD
Nov 27-28	Noon to 5 PM; 8 AM to noon	Pray MT	APHIS	Meeting expected to be held at Chico Hot Springs. Meeting will be convened by the 2012/13 IBMP Partner lead as of 1 Nov 2013, APHIS.

### PARKED ITEM LIST (POTENTIAL AGENDA ITEMS OR FUTURE MEETINGS)

The following parked items list is to be considered as a possible source of agenda topics for future meetings. The list is carried forward to, and updated after, each IBMP meeting.

- (1) Partner Operating Procedures
- (2) MFWP to sit down with landowners and identify AM opportunities based on their constraints.
- (3) NPS to share experience in managing bison interactions with traffic along roadways. Partners to engage with Montana Department of Transportation to initiate a discussion regarding traffic safety in the bison conservation area. A request was also made to include the CWG and/or Buffalo Field Campaign in the presentation with a topic area of “living with bison”. Some discussion that this item should be led by MFWP.
- (4) A request was made by MFWP that the Partners begin talking about conservation easement funding. A statement was also made that the CWG could be helpful in this realm.
- (5) Brian M to provide a set of quarantine procedures describing methods of safe quarantine and release of bison.
- (6) The Partners need a public relations campaign to explain the benefits of transferring bison away from YNP as an integral part of achieving the goals of the IBMP.
- (7) A suggestion was made that the Partners piggyback a meeting of their own (whether formal IBMP meeting or open house was not discussed) with the CWG meeting.
- (8) Consider having a meeting (field trip, open house) in the Gardner Basin due to large interest there, particularly after the adaptive management changes made in Mar/Apr 2011. Desired outcome of the field trip would include review of public infrastructure and boundary adaptive management changes; looking at future challenges; showing work done to prepare for new North perimeter; challenges and opportunities associated with Mar/Apr 2011 adaptive management changes.
- (9) Request to move to 1-day format to minimize travel for NP (others?) who drive to IBMP meetings.
- (10) Request for Tribal entities to take on leadership of IBMP in the future.

## Public Comment

---

The following notes on public comment to the IBMP Partners are not intended to be complete, but rather reflect the facilitator's best effort to capture key statements. The facilitator has especially attempted to capture those comments from the public that appeared to be solution oriented and have the potential for inclusion in AM planning and/or process improvement. These items, as well as other potentially actionable items, are called out with a "\*\*\*" in the listings that follow.

Names associated with comments are available from the facilitator. They are not included here, however, in an effort to focus on the comment rather than the speaker. Line breaks in the bullets indicate a new speaker.

### **November 30<sup>th</sup>**

- A story told about beauty and value of bison living along the Firehole River in YNP.
- \*\* Thought presented that migration patterns and timing differ depending on the number of bison migrating. As such, population matters. Thus a plea for IBMP Partners not to remove bison from the Central herd.
  
- Statement that 6600 bison have been slaughtered since 1988.
- \*\* Statement that remote vaccination is worthless—"quit it!"—and asking our excellent biologists to do this work is an insult.
- \*\* Request to get rid of Stephens Creek facility and instead rehabilitate the landscape for bison.
- \*\* Agreement stated to hunting bison, but requested that the hunting not occur at YELL boundaries to allow bison to become established in MT.
- \*\* Statement that education is the #1 priority.
  
- Statement that CWG consensus does not really represent consensus of all parties.
- Statement that infected bison are allowed into the DSA.
- Statement that MDOL can move the DSA boundaries anytime they want.
- Statement that IBMP is running over private property rights and that GNF can take away grazing rights anytime they want.
- Statement that the RTR fence does not work and that we need a real fence.
- Statement that Park County will close the road to Stephens Creek; that citizens cannot be expected to keep paying to repair the road.
- Statement that bison issues are imprinted on the minds of people in Park County. True, maybe more in southern Park County than out in Miles City. Here they have to test, test, test.
  
- Readings from a report from the IUCN:
  - IUCN has red-listed American bison. They occupy <1% of their historic range.
  - Bison are for all practicality extinct in their historic home range.
  - Less than 1.5% of bison in existence are genetically pure. The rest have much genetic introgression from domestic cattle which adversely impacts mitochondrial fitness.
  - Only 3 population of bison still existing can be considered genetically pure and only one (YELL bison) can be considered truly wild.
  - Wild is defined as "self willed".
  - Normal YELL bison migratory behavior is being stifled.
  - Many more statements put forward from IUCN.
  
- \*\* Statement that education is the key. Critical to talk with people "on the ground".
- Statement that Gardiner is the only place in the world that lives with migrating bison, thus people in Gardiner and YELL area are at the forefront of living with bison.

- Statement that even with migrating bison there have been no injuries and minimal problems with little property damage. The animals let people get close and as long as you treat them like wildlife, there is generally no problem.
- Statement that we have learned to live with deer, elk, etc so we can do the same with buffalo.
- Statement that it is crazy for people to come and live next to YELL and not want or expect that wildlife will come out of the Park and potentially be on or pass through their property.
- Statement that the Operating Space of the IBMP is the 800 pound gorilla in the room.
- The key is how the information presented by the CWG goes back to, and is received by, the state and stock growers.
- Recognition that USGS in Bozeman spend a great deal of time and effort working on brucellosis issues.
- \*\*An offer of USGS services to the IBMP Partners and/or CWG, especially for education services, with a statement that USGS has funds to work with the MSU Film School.

### **December 1<sup>st</sup>**

- Thanks to Partners for supporting CWG.
- \*\* Statement that we need to become responsive to the 800 pound elk in the room, i.e., elk and brucellosis.
- Statement that wildlife are a public trust. Thus worried that YELL is becoming the Amazon warehouse of bison—i.e., planning on sending bison out for multiple purposes.
- Reading of FS2601-9500-4 regarding the charge to NPS to protect wildlife.
- \*\* Statement that the IBMP Partners a) restrict public input, and b) input is only taken after decisions have already been made.
- Statement that Partners need to be accountable for public safety.
- \*\* Statement of the need for adequate fencing.
- \*\* Request for new study to determine if elk from WY are really to blame for brucellosis in MT.
- Statement that the Yellowstone area is the only place where brucellosis is prevalent—we need to know where it comes from.
- \*\* Request that if Stephens Creek facility is to be used, then the IBMP Partners and Park County should each contribute \$10,000 to a road fund for road upkeep.
- Statement of respect for tribal hunt. The hunt serves as a reminder to us all about what is behind the treaty: a legacy of individuals who had to sacrifice to get to the point that the treaty was signed, who defended their villages and their homelands. We must think of this past when we invoke the statement, “respect treaty rights”.
- \*\* Statement that BFC, tribes, and hunters will interact in the field and that these meetings and discussions are a great part of learning each others’ needs and goals.
- Statement that we have all made mistakes, that we need to get out into the field to learn more.
- Statement that BFC is committed to engage with tribes, and to learn from them.
- \*\* Statement stressing the importance of education for all things bison and brucellosis. Included in an education campaign should be eliminating misinformation, describing how to live with bison on the land (e.g., how to shepherd bison off private lands), managing bison scratching up against fences or buildings.
- \*\* Statement that agency people are great in the field but tend to be too heavy handed when working with bison around private houses. They need to get off their horses and have a “softer” touch to avoid bison knocking down fences and similar.
- Statement that bison labeled as being “bad tempered” most often result from bad treatment.

- Statement of thanks to Partners for supporting and listening to the CWG. “Now let’s melt the glacier and get the sun shining!”
- Statement that wild bison are ecologically extinct and that simple fact is being ignored in all Partner deliberations.
- Statement that biologist Joel Berger has said that bison are cut off from 100% of their historic migration corridors.
- Statement that current management is leading toward domestication of bison; papers can be found on BFC website to substantiate this claim.
- Statement that long distance migration defines bison as wild and that the discussions in this meeting will do nothing to increase that wildness.
- \*\* Statement that the Plains are being lost and that bison can be a tool to help restore them as bison evolved with the landscape.
- Statement of concern about APHIS request for birth control.
- Statement that birth control and culling for an ecologically extinct species is absolutely unacceptable.
- Statement that today’s meeting was sad and disheartening.
- Invitation to all to get out on the landscape this winter and witness what is going on.
- Statement of thanks to the Partners for supporting the CWG.
- Concern stated that we don’t understand the impact of lethal removal of bison on sero-prevalence of bison.
- \*\* Statement that the CWG sees a decrease in risk of transmission as a more important goal than a decrease in sero-prevalence.
- Statement of support for expanding bison movement north of YNP.
- Statement that culling should not be used except as a last resort.
- Statement that CWG chose to emphasize reduced risk of transmission over sero-prevalence reduction but sero-prevalence remains important.
- Statement that to date the Partners have been most focused on which animals are the most infectious, and thus tend to always focus on actions that decrease sero-prevalence.
- Statement that as we expand habitat we must define: “What is socially acceptable?” Decreasing sero-prevalence remains very important to producers.
- \*\* Statement that a huge outstanding question is this: Does sero-prevalence in elk impact bison and vice versa?
- \*\* Request that Partners keep talking about decreasing sero-prevalence.
- Statement that the concept of “population modulation” hinders movement.
- Statement that natural selection and co-evolution are highly important and that YELL is the only place in North America where these processes can operate on bison. Natural selection is needed to maintain a healthy and wild population.
- Statement that random, artificial removal of members of the population competes with the natural process of genetic drift.
- \*\* Statement that decreasing sero-prevalence by removing the more infectious younger animals may be unproductive since some of those animals may be resistant to the disease and thus we want those genes to be propagated. Or, similarly, they may co-evolve to live with the changing Brucella virus and again, we want those genes to remain in the gene pool. In other words, natural selection favors disease resistant animals so we need to let natural selection work and not interfere with it.
- Question—why work on population control when risk of transmission is already near zero and being well managed?

- \*\* Statement that IBMP protocols need to address what information is available to the public. It is disconcerting not to have the same documents as the Partners. Under MT sunshine law having “deliberative” documents that are not available to the public is unacceptable. This situation is especially tough when you have CWG struggling with the same issues as the Partners and staff. Partners need to respect the policy of the state of MT on what information is available to the public. It is wrong to leave citizens in the dark.
- Statement of thanks to (a) the Partners for supporting the CWG process, and especially for providing facilitation, and (b) to the citizens for their efforts.
- Statement that the CWG is a fully open forum and direct invite to Park County Commissioner Malone to participate with a simple caveat: the CWG agreed that it will not go backwards, that new members must agree to move forward from where the group is at the point the new member joins.
- Statement that the CWG is looking for solutions and hopes that the Partners will help.
- Statement that many in the CWG are ready to continue on from here.
- \*\* Statement that most productive part of Partner meetings are when audience is asked to engage directly. Why not do that after each topic? The facilitator could manage the crowd successfully.
- Request that the Partners think about every action with this question: is there a need for us to intervene?
- Question to the Partners and YELL about what is the population target for .... Speaker provided a long list of animals in YNP that were not bison.
- Statement that there are 60 species of mammals in GYE and again a question, “How many of those species have population targets?”
- \*\* Statement that the Upper Taylor Fork is in the ROD already as habitat available to bison. The only limitation in the ROD was whether cattle operations are underway, which they are not. The other main issue is highway safety. Thus the issue for allowing bison to migrate into the Taylor Fork drainage is operational, not whether it is allowable.
- Statement of thanks to the CWG for its great progress, and to the Partners for supporting the effort.
- Statement of encouragement for including Tribes in CWG.
- Statement that in North America we have been associated with the bison for 10,000 years yet we haven’t come to terms with bison in modern society because bison don’t adapt well to our way of living.
- Statement that many things we are trying to do inside YNP could be done at places outside and distant (non GYE) from the Park; for example on tribal lands, USFWS refuges, state WMAs.
- Statement that we need to make the YELL bison issue part of the American dialogue.
- Statement that the more we learn from the bison itself, the better off we will be.
- Statement that efforts of the CWG had two possible outcomes: (1) bogged down and got nowhere, or (2) found consensus. Amazing and happy that the CWG did find consensus. Thus the Partners should feel lots of pressure to implement the CWG recommendations.
- Statement that because of the CWG consensus, all eyes are now on the Partners. Thus please implement the CWG recommendations unless some law precludes implementation. In contrast, if you own internal policies are in the way, change them.
- Statement of thanks to MFWP for announcement of moving bison to Fort Peck Reservation.

## Abbreviations

---

- |  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| • AM—Adaptive management                           | • BFC—Buffalo Field Campaign |
| • APHIS—Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service | • BM—Brian McCluskey         |
| • BB—Brooklyn Baptiste                             | • CM—Christian Mackay        |

- CSKT—Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes
- CWG—Citizens’ Working Group
- DH—David Hallac
- DSA—Designated Surveillance Zone
- DW—Dan Wenk
- EA—Environmental Assessment
- EC—Earvin Carlson
- GAO—Government Accountability Office
- GNF—Gallatin National Forest
- GWA—Gallatin Wildlife Association
- GYA—Greater Yellowstone Area
- ITBC— Inter Tribal Buffalo Council
- JS—Jim Stone
- KL—Keith Lawrence
- MBOL—Montana Board of Livestock
- MD—Marna Daley
- MDOL—Montana Department of Livestock
- ME—Mary Erickson
- MEPA—Montana Environmental Policy Act
- MFWP—Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
- MK—Michael Keator
- ML—Mike Lopez
- MO—McCoy Oatman
- MOU—Memorandum of Understanding
- MR—Majel Russell
- MSGA—Montana Stockgrowers Association
- MSU—Montana State University
- MZ—Marty Zaluski
- NEPA—National Environmental Policy Act
- NGO—Non-governmental organizations
- NP—Nez Perce
- NPS—National Park Service
- NPCA—National Parks Conservation Alliance
- NRDC—Natural Resources Defense Council
- Park—Yellowstone National Park
- PF—Pat Flowers
- PIOs—Public Information Officers
- PJ—PJ White
- RC—Ryan Clarke
- ROD—Record of Decision
- RFP—Request for proposals
- RT—Rob Tierney
- RTR—Royal Teton Ranch
- RW—Rick Wallen
- SB—Scott Bischke
- SEIS—Supplemental EIS
- SK—Salish Kootenai
- SS— Sam Sheppard
- TM—Tom McDonald
- USFWS—US Fish and Wildlife Service
- USGS—US Geological Survey
- WMA—state of MT wildlife management areas
- YELL—Yellowstone National Park
- YNP—Yellowstone National Park