

Public meeting of the Interagency Bison Management Plan Partners



Nov 27/28, 2012

2011/12 Lead Agency: Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Meeting Host: MFWP (contact: Andrea Jones; 406.994.6931)

Don Herriott—Associate Regional Director; Veterinary Services; W. Region Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

Ron Trahan—Tribal Council Representative; Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Ervin Carlson—President; Inter Tribal Buffalo Council

Pat Flowers—Region 3 Supervisor; MT Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

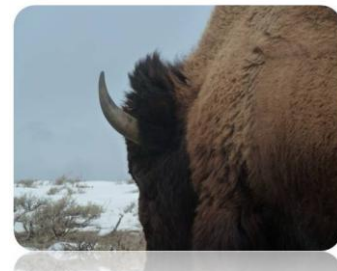
Christian Mackay—Executive Officer; Montana Board of Livestock

Marty Zaluski—State Veterinarian; MT Department of Livestock

Brooklyn Baptiste—Tribal Chairman; Nez Perce Tribe

Dan Wenk—Superintendent; NPS-Yellowstone National Park

Mary Erickson—Forest Supervisor; USFS-Gallatin National Forest



Background

The Federal and State Records of Decision in December 2000 for the Long-Term Interagency Bison Management Plan for Montana and Yellowstone National Park (IBMP) were the result of extensive deliberation and legal proceedings that yielded an unprecedented agreement amongst federal-state agencies (National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Montana Department of Livestock, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks). Under the IBMP, these agencies harness their respective skills and operational resources to work cooperatively within an adaptive management framework to conserve a wild, free-ranging bison population while concurrently protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle.

Partner agencies are committed to the adaptive management framework of the IBMP, as signified by their signing and publication of an adaptive management plan on December 18, 2008. The plan was the result of a series of seven, two-day working meetings that occurred between August and December, 2008. Tribal members—the Nez Perce, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, and the InterTribal Buffalo Council—were invited to join the deliberative table beginning at the November 2009 Partner meeting.

The IBMP meetings allow the Partners to continue progress toward meeting their shared goal of conserving a wild-free-ranging bison population while concurrently protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle. To accomplish this goal the partners plan to meet several times each year in public forum to consider prevailing conditions and review collected data, and then develop and apply short- and long-term adaptive management adjustments to the IBMP.

Tuesday, November 27th

**NOTE THAT AGENDA TIMES ARE APPROXIMATE AND FOR PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY—
ACTUAL TIMES MAY VARY DEPENDING ON PARTNER INTERACTION NEEDS**

*Maps to be available at each meeting per Nov09 agreement:
YNP—IBMP zones; APHIS—land ownership; MFWP—elk range*

12 noon	<i>Scott Bischke, facilitator; all present</i>	<p>Welcome, meeting overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions of all present • Meeting logistics, format, process, expectations, agenda modifications (?) • Timeline—where we’ve been, where we are going • Partners’ acceptance of last meeting notes?
12:15 PM	<i>Steve Olsen</i>	<p>Seroprevalence and brucellosis</p> <p>Issues of seroprevalence, shedding, elk and brucellosis, research dollars needed for and utility of creating a new vaccine</p>
1:30	<i>John Treanor</i>	<p>Maintenance of brucellosis in Yellowstone bison: implications for management</p>
2:00	<i>***</i>	<p>Break (here or as called for by the Partners)</p>
2:20	<i>Partner/ CWG open discussion</i>	<p>Discussion of risk reduction and importance of seroprevalence as IBMP driver</p> <p>As promised by Partners following Steve Olsen’s talk and with respect to CWG <i>Population Recommendation 13.—Develop and work with the livestock industry to implement an effective cattle vaccine and protocol to reduce the risk of transmission and make bison presence/translocation more acceptable. Support/secure funding for ongoing vaccine research.</i> Possible goals of discussion:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Identify gaps in current vaccine use 2) List priorities for research 3) Revisiting value of naming of CWG/Tech Team group to meet to develop areas of potential consensus that might lead to AM efforts.
3:20	<i>Scott Bischke Pat Flowers</i>	<p>Discussion of status and next steps for 2012 IBMP Annual Report</p> <p>Plan for final posting to IBMP.info</p>
3:30	<i>Pat Flowers</i>	<p>Status of signing North Side AM changes</p>
3:40	<i>Pat Flowers, C. Mackay</i>	<p>State MEPA Process for addition of new west side lands open to bison</p>
3:50	<i>As noted</i>	<p>Partner briefings/update/discussion on ...</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Andrea—Update on efforts toward developing and implementing a factual education program about bison 2. Pat—use of dogs for bison, report on discussion with Keith Aune 3. Pat—status of relocation of quarantined bison from YNP 4. Pat—potential of late season damage hunts (? from Aug IBMP meeting) 5. Pat, Mary, PJ—status of current litigation as shown in table below the agenda. Are there others or can any of these be removed? 6. Dave, Pat—Status of the Brucellosis Panel 7. Ryan—update on Gonacon trials 8. Ariel, Matt—current status of the CWG 9. SB—updates on IBMP.info: upcoming revamp of library to include meeting notes; anything else
4:05	<i>Partners</i>	<p>Action item / task list planning, including for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partner lead changeover 1 Jan 2013 to APHIS—any issues to discuss? ○ Mary—introducing the idea of potential Partner broad scale planning re:

what is the priority work of the IBMP Partners now that Partners have a solid AM plan in place, are acting on many CWG recommendations, etc.

- **2013 meeting planning**
 - When, where?
 - Field trip needed?

4:30	<i>Public</i>	Public comment 3-4 min per person, depending on level of sign-up sheet
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5 PM	***	Adjourn—please travel safely!

Wednesday, November 28th

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8 AM	<i>Scott Bischke</i>	Call back to order • Introductions of anyone newly present
8:10	<i>Scott Bischke Pat Flowers</i>	Partner Protocols Review, discuss, sign (?) version 3 of this document. Particular focus on the need to have protocols set to engage in Nov28 discussion and signing of Winter 2013 IBMP Operations Plan
9:30	***	Break (here or as called for by the Partners)
9:45	<i>Dave Hallac PJ White</i>	Discussion, signing of Winter 2013 IBMP Operations Plan (Based on YNP Bison Management Plan)
11:00	<i>PJ White</i>	Discussion of status and next steps for Protocols for Transfer of Yellowstone Bison to American Indian Tribes
11:10	<i>PJ White</i>	Introduction of proposed zone concept adaptive change
11:20	Scott Bischke	Wrap up; further planning or action item review as needed
11:30	Public	Public comment 3-4 min per person, depending on level of sign-up sheet
12 noon	***	Adjourn—please travel safely!

Meeting facilitator Scott Bischke, MountainWorks (scott@emountainworks.com)

Questions from the CWG to consider as part of the discussion of risk reduction and importance of seroprevalence as IBMP driver.

1. What are the opportunities and constraints for the development and application of a livestock vaccine that would prevent transmission of brucellosis from elk and bison to cattle?
 - a. What is the potential and time table to get brucella abortus off the biological agent list of Homeland Security so reasonable and financially feasible research can occur?
 - b. Given the nature of the brucella abortus organism, is there a reasonable possibility that a vaccine could be developed that will effectively keep a domestic cow from becoming infected with brucellosis if they are exposed to infected material? If this could be done, what would be the timeframe?
 - c. What entity would you recommend to do this research given that it will be challenging, expensive and time sensitive? There are many institutions that would be interested because of the money involved, but which one has the skills, knowledge, facilities, technology and personnel to accomplish this task?
2. Please discuss the logistics of even attempting to eradicate brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Also it is important to recognize that there are other “reservoirs” of the disease in feral swine in the South.
3. Please discuss brucellosis immunity. Do we know anything about variation among animals (within species) in their abilities to develop resistance to such bacterial diseases? When we remove seropositive elk or bison, might we be removing exposed, uninfected, resistant animals? Does a calf receive any resistance-benefits from its antibodies in its seropositive mother? And how do the current tests for brucellosis factor into this (e.g., testing for seropositive but immune or non-contagious animals)?
4. It seems that as we concentrate elk in time and space, during late gestation, there should be an increased potential for transmitting Brucella among elk. The extreme case is the feedground situations in Wyoming. But what about elsewhere? We are trying to maintain the same numbers of elk, while the amount of elk winter range is decreasing. There is less habitat and elk may not move around as much as they once did. We encourage them to use Wildlife Management Areas. Is there any evidence that this process has caused an increase in Brucella infection rates in elk?
5. What is the current status of the quarantine animals? What is occurring with the APHIS birth control study?