

Public meeting of the Interagency Bison Management Plan Partners



APRIL 25TH, 2018

LEAD PARTNER & HOST FOR THIS MEETING: MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE, & PARKS
(CONTACT—ANDREA JONES [406] 994-6931)

Rebecca K. Frey: Wildlife Disease Specialist—GYA, Veterinary Services;
Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

Leonard Gray: Tribal Council Representative; Confederated Salish
and Kootenai Tribes

Ervin Carlson: President; Inter Tribal Buffalo Council

Mark Deleray: Region 3 Supervisor; MT Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

Mike Honeycutt: Executive Officer; Montana Board of Livestock

Marty Zaluski: State Veterinarian; MT Department of Livestock

Quincy Ellenwood: Member of the Nez Perce Tribal Executive
Committee

Dan Wenk: Superintendent, NPS—Yellowstone National Park

Mary Erickson: Forest Supervisor; USFS—Custer Gallatin National
Forest



Meeting location:
**Holiday Inn West,
West Yellowstone, MT**
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For room reservations call
(406) 646-7365.
Special rates available for
Partners & staff (ask for the
“IBMP” block)

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 as Partners 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 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.

Wednesday, April 25th

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

Note: maps to support meeting are available online at ibmp.info/library.php

Start	Speaker	Topic
7:30	All	Room opens Coffee and tea provided
8:00	Scott Bischke, facilitator; all present	Welcome, meeting overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions of all present • Meeting logistics, format, process, expectations, any agenda modifications? • A brief IBMP timeline • Verification of Partner acceptance of last meeting report
8:30	Technical Committee and as noted	Improving IBMP effectiveness topic of agreed interest: <i>Improve utilization of expanded bison habitat, especially in new West side tolerance area (Q&A/discussion after each item)</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Taylor Fork field trip report (Scott to summarize) 2. Technical Committee reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chris Geremia (NPS; 30 min) — NPS will provide habitat suitability modeling for <i>outside</i> the Park applying what they have learned from <i>inside</i> the Park. Modeling/determining suitable habitat for bison, especially in the winter. ▪ Chris and Julie Cunningham review migration routes from to West Side ▪ Julie presents discussion points from Technical Committee to Partners 3. Response to land owner questions posed after Aug field trip and IBMP meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Included in this discussion — what management actions, if any, would be undertaken per current Winter Operations Plan should bison arrive in the Taylor Fork on their own and soon 4. Status of West Side Bison Tolerance Technical Committee — charter complete?
9:30	Panel of North and Westside landowners	Q&A and information sharing session regarding living with bison
10:15	***	Break (here or as called for by the Partners)
10:30	NPS, MDOL, APHIS	Improving IBMP effectiveness topic of agreed interest: <i>Bison quarantine and translocation</i> Including impact of release of bison.
11:10	Tribal Hunt Managers	Improving IBMP effectiveness topic of agreed interest: <i>Improving safety, quality of the north side hunt/improving boundary issues</i>
11:50	***	Lunch (on your own)

1:15 PM	Public	<p>Call back to order / Introductions of anyone newly present (Scott Bischke)</p> <p>Public comment Typically 2-4 min per person, depending on level of sign-up sheet. The facilitator asks that speakers be respectful.</p>
1:45	All or discussion leads as appropriate	<p>Report on 2017/2018 Winter IBMP Operations to date</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Overall removals (MDOL/MFWP/NPS) 2. Hunt results (MFWP, CSKT, CTUIR, NPT, SB) 3. Status of newest Tribes participating in or petitioning to hunt (Yakama, Blackfeet, Crow, others) 4. Evaluation of bison distribution, including use (or not) of newest North and West Side tolerance areas (MFWP, CSKT, CTUIR, NPT, SB) 5. Culls /transfer /distribution of bison to processing facilities and tribal groups (NPS, CSKT, others?) 6. Transfer of bison to research facilities (APHIS) 7. Scope, timing of upcoming hunt planning meeting — May 2018? (MFWP, CSKT, CTUIR, NPT, SB) <p>-----</p> <p>For reference, the following objectives are described under the “Hunt-trap Coordination Protocol” section of the 2018 Winter Ops Plan (p 8):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Optimize hunter harvest take while assuring combined hunt/trap take of 600 bison to 900 bison. 2) Reduce impacts of the Stephens Creek bison trap (“trap”) operations and boundary area hunting actions on the ecology of wild Yellowstone bison migrating to lower elevation areas outside Yellowstone National Park (“Park”). Work together to achieve reasonable: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Bison outward migration to, and beyond, the Park boundary; b. Bison distribution into suitable historic habitats available to bison throughout the Gardiner Basin; c. Distribution of bison throughout the agreed-upon conservation area/parameters in Montana that are not harvested or hazed back into the park; d. Understanding of population demographics, recognizing many bison migrating from central Yellowstone may eventually move to the northern Park boundary.
3:30	***	Break (here or as called for by the Partners)
3:50	Partners	<p>After review of winter operations-to-date, begin collecting ideas for adaptive management changes for the following winter. (NONE SUBMITTED AS OF 4/24/18)</p> <p>Per Partner Protocols. Consider instituting or engaging subcommittee(s), if needed, to address these AM change requests.</p>
4:20	As noted	<p>Status of ongoing activities related to Yellowstone bison and brucellosis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jennifer—NPS Quarantine FONSI 2. PJ—Status of legal challenge to USFWS decision not to list bison under the Endangered Species Act 3. Jennifer—Update on EIS for bison management 4. Shana Drimal <if anything new to report>—Update on bison coexistence/fencing project 5. Julie—Update on recent changes to WY bison hunt 6. Partners and staff—Questions on status of other ongoing activities?
4:40	Scott Bischke	<p>Administrative items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review dates of remaining 2018 IBMP meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aug 1 — Bozeman, Nov 28 — Gardner or Chico • Other items to review or close
5 PM	***	Adjourn—please travel safely!

Meeting support materials

Table 1.—Annual IBMP calendar, as agreed to in Partner Protocols

Jan 1	New Lead Partner assumes duties
Jan – Jun	Core season for IBMP field operations carried out under the Operations Plan
Spring meeting (generally May)	Review of winter operations to date and begin collecting, if applicable, ideas for adaptive management changes for the following winter.
Jun-Aug	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) All Partners compile yearly data they are responsible for in preparation for Annual Report. (2) As needed, Partner or subcommittee discussions on proposed adaptive management efforts (i.e., operational changes) to be made for following winter given results of previous winter activities. (3) Develop recommendations for harvests/culling for the following winter. (4) Preparation of draft Operations Plan for the following year.
Summer meeting (generally Aug)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Partner planning for completion of individual duties for Annual Report. (2) Reports of subcommittees, if applicable, on proposed new AM activities and continued collection of ideas for adaptive changes for the following winter. (3) Presentation and discussion of draft Operations Plan for the following year (including recommendations for harvests/culling).
Oct/Nov	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Compilation of Partner write-ups of their sections of the Annual Report. (2) Draft Annual Report completed and circulated for review to Partners. (3) Partners discussions (potentially telecons) regarding issues under consideration in draft Operations Plan for the following year.
Fall meeting (generally Nov)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Partners review Draft Annual Report; commit to complete any remaining items by Dec 31. (2) Partners review and potentially agree to proposed adaptive management changes for the upcoming winter (if applicable, not every year will have AM changes). (3) Final Partner discussion and signature of Operations Plan for the following year.
Dec	Partners submit any modifications to Draft Annual Report.
Dec 31	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Previous year’s Annual Report completed and posted to www.ibmp.info. (2) Lead Partner posts revised Operations Plan for the coming winter.

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