

A Proposal to Revise Portions of Bison Hunting District 395

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks August 31, 2018

At the 8/1/2018 IBMP meeting, partners discussed the potential to close a portion of the West Side hunting area (near West Yellowstone) to reduce disturbance and enhance the opportunity for bison to move north into expanded tolerance areas. The IBMP partners charged MFWP to provide a map and legal description of the potential closure that they could share with and possibly propose to their decision makers. Partners strive for agreement on hunting regulations and conservation activities when possible. The proposed bison hunting closure aims to maintain a wild and free ranging bison population.

MFWP proposes to change the Gallatin Watershed Portion (currently closed to bison hunting) and the Madison Watershed Portion (currently open to bison hunting) as follows: The Highway 191 corridor in the Madison Watershed Portion will be added to what is now the Gallatin Watershed Portion to allow bison movement. The new combined area will be called the West Side Special Management Area (closed) and the remaining open area, a portion of what is now called the Madison Watershed Portion, will be called the Hebgen Portion (see attached map). The Hebgen Portion is where most bison harvest occurs. A proposed state hunting regulation change requires public process and approval of the MFWP Fish and Wildlife Commission to be final.

The Legal Description of the West Side Special Management Area (closed to hunting) would be:

Those portions of Gallatin and Madison Counties lying within the following-described boundary: beginning at the intersection of Buck Creek and the Gallatin River, then up Buck Creek to the Madison-Gallatin Rivers Divide, then south and east along said divide to White Peak, then south along the Cabin Creek-Tepee Creek Divide to the headwaters of Red Canyon Creek, then south along the west bank of Red Canyon Creek to its inlet at Hebgen Lake, then eastward along the north shore of Hebgen Lake to Duck Creek, then east along the north bank of Duck Creek to Cougar Creek, then east along the north bank of Cougar Creek to the Yellowstone Park Boundary, then north along the Yellowstone Park Boundary to its intersection with the Gallatin-Yellowstone Rivers divide, then then in a northerly direction along said divide to Eaglehead Mountain, then in a westerly and northerly direction along the Portal Creek-Porcupine Creek divide and along the Porcupine Creek-Levenski Creek divide to the Gallatin River near the mouth of the West Fork of the Gallatin River, then southerly up the Gallatin River to Buck Creek, the point of beginning.

The Legal Description of the Hebgen Portion (open) would be:

Those portions of Gallatin County lying within the following-described boundary: Beginning where the western boundary of Yellowstone National Park intersects the Montana-Idaho Border, then northerly along the Yellowstone National Park boundary to the north bank of Cougar Creek, then west and north along the north bank of Cougar Creek to Duck Creek, then west along the north bank of Duck Creek to the north shore of Hebgen Lake, then west along the north shore of Hebgen Lake to Red Canyon Creek, then north along the west bank of Red Canyon Creek to the Cabin Creek-Tepee Creek divide, then, north along said divide to White Peak, then northwesterly along the Gallatin-Madison Rivers watershed divide to the headwaters of Beaver Creek, then south along the west bank of Beaver Creek to its confluence with Earthquake Lake, then south and east along the south shore of Quake Lake and Hebgen Lake to the South Fork

of the Madison River, then southerly and easterly along the west bank of said river to Forest Road 478, then southwest along Forest Road 478 to Reas Pass at the border of Idaho, then south and east along the Montana-Idaho border to the point of the beginning.

