

# INTERAGENCY BISON MANAGEMENT PLAN



## IBMP PARTNER PROTOCOLS

*As of October 29, 2024*

### IBMP PARTNER COMMITMENT, APPROACH, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Commitment.** Each Partner commits to the overall IBMP goals of conserving a wild, free-ranging bison population while concurrently protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle.

**Approach.** The Partners will work as a collaborative, problem-solving body seeking to coordinate management actions that address, to the greatest extent possible, the needs and interests of all participants. As part of their collaboration, the Partners work jointly to educate each other on their differing values and interests and develop the baseline information needed for effective collaborative management.

**Authorities and Jurisdictions.** Many decisions related to bison management have been made under the exclusive authority and sole responsibility of Federal or State agencies and Tribes based on their statutory mandates and management policies. (See: *IBMP Partner Reference Tool: Partner Statutory Authorities & Jurisdictions Relevant to IBMP*). Federal agencies also have a unique relationship with American Indian Tribes, which is founded in law and strengthened by a shared commitment to stewardship of the land and resources. Decisions made by the IBMP Partners to cooperatively implement bison management across jurisdictions include those to improve communication, coordination, research and knowledge, access to operate across jurisdictions, maintenance of records, disease surveillance, bison transfers and transport, and response planning and implementation to protect safety and property. These decisions sometimes involve agreements to implement actions of common benefit, such as Adaptive Management and Operations Plans, and provide a forum for discussions of issues.

### IBMP PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS AND LEAD PARTNER

**Makeup.** Nine organizations constitute the IBMP Partners, as shown in Table 1. Each of the Partners is responsible for naming a Primary that will represent its group at IBMP Partner Meetings, and a Second(s) to act on behalf of the Primary should the Primary be unavailable. The exception is the Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL) and Montana Board of Livestock (MBOL): the Primaries may act as Seconds for each other and/or can name a Second. The Primary for each Partner entity and their Seconds are shown in Table 1. The IBMP Facilitator maintains a current Directory of IBMP Partner Primaries and Seconds, provides this to the Partners upon request, and utilizes it to ensure communications and requests for input and decision-making are routed appropriately.

*Table 1. IBMP Partner Primaries and Seconds and Schedule of IBMP Lead Partner Roles*

<b>IBMP Partner</b>	<b>Organization Primary &amp; Seconds as of 10/25/2024</b>	<b>Past Years as Lead Partner</b>	<b>Next Year as Lead Partner</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)</b>	Primary: Tom McDonald Seconds: James Bing Matt, Len Two Teeth, John Harrison	2014, 2020 (Virtual)	2027	Lead Partner in conjunction with ITBC and NPT
<b>InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC)</b>	Primary: Ervin Carlson Seconds: Jason Baldes, Trudy Ecoffey, Majel Russell	2014, 2022 (Spring meeting)	2027	Lead Partner in conjunction with CSKT and NPT
<b>Montana Board of Livestock (MBOL)</b> <b>Montana Department of Livestock (MDOL)</b> (Montana State Veterinarian)	Primaries: Mike Honeycutt (MBOL) and Tahnee Szymanski (MDOL) Seconds: Lindsey Simon, Brad DeGroot	2009/10, 2016, 2023	2029	MBOL and MDOL serve together as Lead Partner
<b>Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MFWP)</b>	Primaries: Dustin Temple Second: Marina Yoshioka	2012, 2018	2025	
<b>Nez Perce Tribe (NPT)</b>	Primary: Ashton Picard Seconds: Adam Villavivencio, Erik Holt, Eric Kash Kash, and Mike Lopez	2014, 2020, 2021	2027	Lead Partner in conjunction with CSKT and ITBC
<b>National Park Service (NPS), Yellowstone National Park</b>	Primary: Cam Sholly Seconds: Tim Reid, Jennifer Carpenter	2008/09, 2015, 2022 (Fall Meeting)	2028	
<b>USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)</b>	Primary: Dr. Burke Healey Seconds: Rebecca Bigelow, Dr. Jeffrey Richards, Dr. Jennifer Siembieda	2013, 2019	2026	
<b>USDA Forest Service (USFS), Custer Gallatin National Forest</b>	Primary: Matt Jedra Seconds: Kathy Minor, Jennie O’Conner Card, Marna Daley, Michael Thom, Wendi Urie	2010/11, 2017	2024	

## LEAD PARTNER ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Lead Partner.** Each year the Partners will select, on a rotating basis (see Table 1), a Lead Partner, who has the following responsibilities:

- Creating agendas, arranging teleconference/virtual meeting lines and in-person meeting locations, and leading all meetings, including some held in the field.
- Compiling a list of any and all adaptive management changes completed during that year and those recommended by IBMP Partners.
- Acting as the lead compiler and author for the IBMP Annual Report, which is completed by the end of each calendar year.
- Updating, achieving consensus and getting signatures on, and posting the annual Operations Plan by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year.
- Paying for: (1) an IBMP Facilitator to work with the Partners through the year to facilitate meetings, manage the IBMP web information portal, and complete other such items delegated by the Lead Partner to the Facilitator; (2) meeting space for regular IBMP Partner Meetings; and (3) teleconference/virtual meeting access.

All IBMP Partners agree to serve as Lead Partner on a rotating basis. Tribal entities will act as a single Partner when acting as and taking on the financial obligations of the Lead Partner. Likewise, MDOL and MBOL will be considered a single Partner when acting as and taking on the financial obligations of the Lead Partner.

**New Partners.** The IBMP partnership consists of governmental agencies and entities that carry out some aspect of management and/or hunting of bison that migrate from Yellowstone National Park into the Tolerance Zone within the state of Montana.

1. All requests to join the IBMP as a Partner shall be made in writing to the IBMP Partners and shall include the following:
  - a. The full name of the federal agency, state agency, or federally-recognized Tribe
  - b. Citation to the agency's or Treaty Hunt Tribe's statutory or legal jurisdiction and direct role in managing migratory Yellowstone bison habitat outside of Yellowstone National Park and/or hunt operations within the Western and Northern Management Areas of the bison Tolerance Zone 2 in the state of Montana, and in the case of:
    - A federal or state agency, direction or authorization from the state governor or federal department secretary directing the agency to seek inclusion as an IBMP Partner; or
    - A federally-recognized Tribe, a resolution from the governing body of the tribe formally seeking inclusion as an IBMP Partner.
2. Any written request to join the IBMP partnership shall also include a statement acknowledging the:
  - a. Obligations and duties incumbent with membership in the IBMP, including the financial and administrative obligations.
  - b. Requesting entity shall assume all obligations and duties of an IBMP Partner, including the financial and administrative obligations, upon joining the IBMP as a full Partner.
  - c. Partner Primary will come to the IBMP Partners Meetings with the capacity to vote on IBMP Decisions.

## IBMP PARTNER MEETINGS

“IBMP Partner Meetings” are formal, in-person (unless virtual is required) meetings of the Partners that are hosted by the Lead Partner and facilitated by the IBMP Facilitator and take place in a public forum. At IBMP Partner Meetings, the Primary representative of each IBMP Partner entity sits at the Deliberative Table and takes action on IBMP Decisions.

**Timing.** IBMP Partner Meetings occur two times each calendar year.

**Agendas and Meeting Preparation.** The agenda provided by the Lead Partner to the other IBMP Partners shall include items designated Action Items or Discussion Items. An Action Item indicates an IBMP Decision topic likely to be voted upon by the Partners at the IBMP Partners Meeting. A **Discussion Item** refers to other topics relevant to IBMP but not likely to be voted upon by the Partners. All Partner-designated representatives must come prepared and with the authority to vote on agenda items designated as “Action Items” at the IBMP meetings. If a Partner is not prepared to vote on an Action Item, then the Partner shall **abstain** from the full Partner vote.

**Agenda Posting.** Two weeks in advance of each IBMP Meeting, the Facilitator will post a draft agenda on the IBMP website on behalf of the Lead Partner that has been developed with an opportunity for input by all the Partners. The Facilitator, in coordination with the Lead Partner, will provide to the Partners a draft meeting agenda at least 45 days prior to each regularly scheduled IBMP meeting. Each Partner shall have 30 days to review and propose additions or other changes to the draft agenda. For each agenda, all items for which a full Partner vote is likely required, shall be designated as “Action Items.” All other items not requiring a full Partner vote shall be designated as “Discussion Items.” Documents supporting Action or Discussion items are named in an annotated version agenda and provided electronically to each Partner.

**Deliberative Table.** For IBMP Partner Meetings, each Partner provides one Primary to represent itself at the Deliberative Table (i.e., nine Primaries at the Deliberative Table). The Primary can name an official Second(s), who can act in place of the Primary if the Primary is absent. Both the Primary and Second(s) may provide input during IBMP Meetings (see Table 1 in these Protocols). The IBMP Facilitator keeps an IBMP Directory of Partners up-to-date with named Primaries and Seconds, and also Partner staff who are identified as being those who should have the opportunity to provide input on or else just receive IBMP documents for review.

**Teleconferences, Virtual Meetings, or Field Trips.** These types of meetings may be held in conjunction with, or between, the Spring and Fall IBMP Partner Meetings to address specific issues or topics, with the opportunity for participation provided to all Partners. Any Partner may request to convene a meeting other than the official IBMP Partner Meetings.

**Interaction with the Public.** All IBMP Partner Meetings are open to the public and are recorded. Meetings allow a total of 30 minutes for members of the public to address the Partners (members of the public are typically allocated about 3 minutes per person, though the amount of time can vary depending on the number signed up to speak). The title of this session in the agenda shall be “Public Feedback Session.”

While in general the public does not participate in discussions among the Partners at IBMP Meetings, the Partners may choose to waive this stipulation for specific discussions. Also, presentations by individuals who are not IBMP Partners or Facilitators may be made at the invitation of the IBMP Lead Partner and incorporated into the agenda.

**Participation of Treaty Hunt Tribes in IBMP Meetings.** Limitations on public participation in IBMP meetings shall not apply to any federally-recognized Indian Tribe that manages a treaty hunt for wild Yellowstone bison migrating out of Yellowstone National Park.

**Documentation of IBMP Partner Meetings.** Spring and Fall IBMP Partner Meetings will be recorded. A written report will be prepared by the IBMP Facilitator to document each IBMP Partner Meeting with the goal of posting it as a draft to the IBMP website within one month of the meeting. The Meeting Report may include the invited formal presentations made to IBMP Partners. Public Feedback Session presenters will be listed by name and organization represented (if applicable). The Lead Partner shall allow for a 2-week review of the draft by Partners prior to approval for posting the draft Meeting Report on the IBMP website as a clearly-marked DRAFT. If a Partner(s) has a substantive edit to the posted draft, then the Lead Partner will ensure that posting of the draft is suspended. The Meeting Report shall remain a draft document available for review and amendment by the Partners until the next IBMP Partner Meeting. Partners will vote to accept the Meeting Report as is or with modifications at the beginning of the next IBMP Partner Meeting. Once accepted, the Meeting Report will be re-posted on the IBMP website as FINAL.

## GENERAL METHODS OF DECISION-MAKING

IBMP Partner entities take individual actions under the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan (AMP) that are dictated by their own statutory authorities and jurisdictions. However, the Partners also work together to coordinate on broader strategies to accomplish the shared IBMP goals of **conserving a wild, free-ranging bison population while protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle**. Joint Partner decisions to coordinate on actions under the AMP and other matters connected to these Protocols are called “**IBMP Decisions**” and require unanimous agreement of the Partners. Unanimous agreement is referred to as “**consensus**” in these Protocols. Each of the nine Partner organizations has one vote in IBMP Decisions. An IBMP Decision is made only in one of four ways:

1. All 9 Partners vote in favor (no objections by a single Partner)
2. All 9 Partners vote against (no Partners in favor)
3. The Partners vote in favor (or against) with a Partner(s) choosing to abstain from the vote. “**Abstain**” means to formally decline to vote either for or against.
4. The Partners vote in favor (or against) with a Partner(s) not represented at the Deliberative Table (absent and therefore assumed to have **deferred** its decision with no objection).

Partners may **defer**, which means allow others to decide or choose something. To defer participation, a Partner agency must indicate to the Lead Partner that it does not wish to be represented at the Deliberative Table and will accept the decision of the other Partners. Quorum Rules also affect whether or not a Partner defers.

All Partner-designated representatives must come prepared and with the authority to vote on agenda items designated as “Action Items” at the IBMP meetings. If a Partner is not prepared to vote on an Action Item, then the Partner shall **abstain** from the full Partner vote.

A Partner may **dissent** in a vote on an IBMP Decision; dissent means to withhold approval. When consensus has not been reached because one or more Partners has voted no, the dissenting Partner(s) shall present to the Partners an alternative solution for consensus consideration.

The Lead Partner is responsible for facilitating discussions and determining via vote if **consensus** of the Partners has been achieved and an IBMP Decision is made. The IBMP Facilitator records this IBMP Decision in the Meeting Report.

**Method of Voting.** In face-to-face meetings, Partners vote on IBMP Decisions by indicating their position with a “thumbs-up” for yes or “thumbs-down” for no.

**Methods of Document Review and Signature.** The review of IBMP documents, including AMP changes, Operations Plans, Annual Reports, Meeting Agendas, and Protocols, will be accomplished via both in-person and virtual meetings or conference calls and by email. The IBMP Facilitator or Lead Partner will send documents to all Partners. Each Partner will use the TRACK CHANGES function in MS Word to add their changes and insert their comments, then provide that version of the document to the IBMP Facilitator who will compile all edits into a single document, indicating which Partner requested the tracked-change. The Facilitator will send both a clean version and tracked-changes version to all the Partners according to the timeline for review in the IBMP Calendar. Document review and, as applicable, signing is expected to take one month or less.

IBMP Decisions on an AMP change and the annual Operations Plan (see below) require the signature of all Partner Primaries. The IBMP Facilitator is responsible for carrying out the electronic signing process, aiding Partners as needed, and informing the Lead Partner of any issues and supporting the Lead Partner in working to resolve these issues. Document signing will be accomplished using an online electronic signing service and coordination by the IBMP Facilitator.

**Quorum Rules.** All IBMP Partners should participate in discussions regarding IBMP Decisions. Table 2 of these Protocols shows AMP topics involving the jurisdictions and authorities of one or more Partner(s). To reach an IBMP Decision regarding a bison management activity requiring coordination, each Partner involved in conducting that activity (as indicated in Table 2) must either be present at the Deliberative Table or **defer** participation in making the decision.

**Table 2. Resource levels that may be necessary to conduct an array of bison management activities described in the Interagency Bison Management Plan and subsequent adaptive management adjustment documents**

Operation Size / Resources	MDOL	MFWP	NPS	APHIS	USFS	NPT	CSKT	ITBC
<i>Media relations / Public information</i>	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
<i>Monitoring bison movements/distribution</i>	√	√	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Human safety and property damage</i>	√	√	√	NA	√	NA	NA	NA
<i>Hunting</i>								
Biologists (modeling / recommendations)	NA	√	√	NA	NA	√	√	NA
Game wardens	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	√	√	NA
Law enforcement officers	√	NA	√*	NA	√	NA	NA	NA
<i>Hazing</i>								
Horses and riders	√	√	√*	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
ATVs	√	√	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
Snowmobiles	√	√	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
Law enforcement officers	√	√	√	NA	√	NA	NA	NA
<i>Shooting</i>								
Law enforcement officers	√	√	√*	NA	√	NA	NA	NA
Lethal control teams	√	√	√*	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
ATVs	√	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Snowmobiles	√	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Tissue sample collectors	√	√	√*	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Capture (Stephens Creek)</i>								
Horses and riders	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Law enforcement officers	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Testing personnel	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Bison handlers	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vaccination	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Bison transfer and transport (from Stephens Creek)</i>								
Inspectors	√	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
Vehicles, trailers, and drivers	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Distribution of meat, hides, etc.	NA	NA	√	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
Armed escort	√	√	√	NA	NA	NA	√	NA
<i>Research and disease surveillance</i>	√	√	√	√	NA	NA	NA	NA
<i>Quarantine operations</i>	√	NA	√	√	NA	NA	NA	√
<i>Monitoring cattle turn-on and/or vaccination</i>	√	NA	NA	√	√	NA	NA	NA

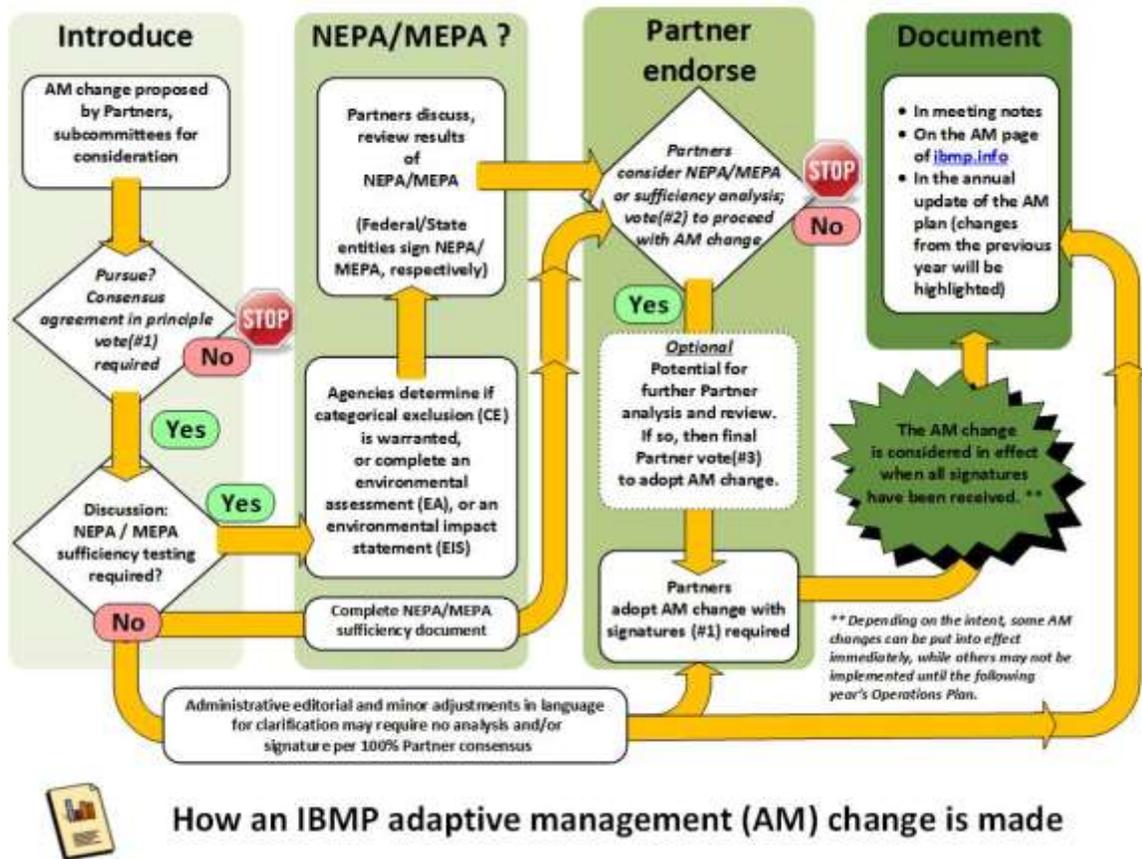
\* Inside Yellowstone National Park. Assistance with hazing or other activities outside the Park will be considered on a case-by-case basis based on the location, situation, capacity, and other priority needs.

## PROCESS FOR MAKING ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT CHANGES

The process for making adaptive management changes to the IBMP involves multiple steps (see Figure 1):

1. ***Proposed Adaptive Management Change Introduced.*** A proposed adaptive management change can be brought forward by any Partner, under the following guidelines and expectations:
  - a. The proposed change may arrive from a variety of sources; for example, from individual Partners, a group of Partners, or staff and/or subcommittees charged with suggesting adaptive management changes.
  - b. Changes may be most often expected at the Fall IBMP Meeting, as the collection of data for the IBMP Annual Report is nearing completion at this time (meaning analysis of the past year's data is possible per the standard adaptive management cycle) and because the annual Operations Plan will be presented by the Lead Partner for vote by the Partners.
  - c. To be incorporated into the AMP, a proposed adaptive management change requires an IBMP Decision (per the process described above) and:
    - For an AMP change to be considered an IBMP Decision:
      - It must be preceded by a **Briefing Statement** in this format:
        - (1) IBMP Partner proposing and contact person.
        - (2) Date of Briefing Statement and meeting at which the Partner would like the proposed AMP change considered.
        - (3) Rationale for submitting the requested AMP change.
        - (4) Background, situation appraisal, and/or current state of knowledge related to the rationale.
      - This Briefing Statement must be sent to all Partners at least 4 weeks before the scheduled IBMP Partners Meeting at which the proposing Partner would like the AMP change to be considered.
      - Partners may choose to utilize a Briefing Statement to simply to share new information related to science or policy as a precursor to an impending or future adaptive management change.
2. ***Possible NEPA/MEPA Analysis.*** Following discussion of a proposed AMP change, the Partners will determine if there is a need for additional National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) compliance before the adaptive management change can be implemented.
  - a. If the Federal and State agencies determine no additional NEPA and/or MEPA compliance is needed, then a NEPA/MEPA sufficiency statement should be completed and placed in the [www.ibmp.info](http://www.ibmp.info) online document record and noted the Meeting Report.
  - b. If the Federal and State agencies determine additional NEPA and/or MEPA compliance is needed, then a categorical exclusion (CE), environmental assessment (EA), or environmental impact statement (EIS) will be completed prior to the IBMP Partners deciding whether or not to implement the proposed adaptive management change. As applicable, Federal Partners will sign the NEPA finding/decision document, while State agencies will sign the MEPA finding/decision document.

Figure 1. The Making of an IBMP Adaptive Management Change



3. *Documenting adaptive management changes and communicating to the public.* Once adopted by way of an IBMP Decision, Adaptive Management changes will be documented via:
- The applicable IBMP Partners Meeting Report.
  - Adaptive Management page of the IBMP website ([www.ibmp.info](http://www.ibmp.info)).
  - An annual update of the Adaptive Management Plan, if changes have been made, published along with the IBMP Annual Report. This annual update does not require signatures as the individual adaptive management changes have already been signed off by the Partners. Each year, the Annual Report will describe any changes in the AMP made that year.
  - The IBMP Facilitator will house the originals of newly-signed AMP documents and be responsible for posting scanned versions of these on [www.ibmp.info](http://www.ibmp.info).

## PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE OPERATIONS PLAN

The Operations Plan for the annual period of November 1 to October 31 is finalized by **consensus** during the Fall IBMP Partners Meeting. Partner submissions for assembly by the Lead Partner into the forthcoming year's Operations Plan begin just following the Spring Meeting. Moreover:

- The Operations Plan recognizes the distinct obligation of each Partner to take responsibility for its actions according to relevant law and policy and as such sets the stage for differentiating an "IBMP Decision" (made jointly by the Partners) from the independent authorities.

In submitting its requested entries for the Operations Plan, each Partner should refer to the *IBMP Partner Reference Tool: Partner Statutory Authorities & Jurisdictions Relevant to IBMP*, which each Partner is obligated to update as authorities and jurisdictions change. The Operations Plan will contain a statement at the beginning of the document that adoption of the Operations Plan by the IBMP Partners is not an endorsement of the validity of other Partners' authorities. The Operations Plan must be developed based on the most recent AMP, including changes made by the Partners that year as IBMP Decisions but that might not yet have been incorporated in the year-end compilation of changes to the AMP. Partners should take care not to propose AMP changes in the context of the Operations Plan but rather comply with the established AMP amendment process described above.

2. **Operations Plan Format and Partner Submissions:** Text that Partners request to appear in the draft Operations Plan is submitted under the four Operations Plan headings as defined below. Partners are encouraged to cite AMP clauses for clarification or as means of summarization.

- a. **Partner Authorities**—The *IBMP Partner Reference Tool: IBMP Partner Statutory Authorities & Jurisdictions Relevant to IBMP* will be cited.
- b. **Planned Operations**—Concise statements about actions the Partner plans to perform during the IBMP Operations year as obligated under its own individual Partner Authorities.
- c. **Needs or Opportunities for Cooperation**—A listing by the Partner of areas for desired cooperation with other IBMP Partners as each Partner performs its Planned Operations. These may include (but are not limited to) cooperative activities such as:
  - Communication and notifications at critical times.
  - Data sharing to ensure that a Partner's decision is fully informed
  - Sharing of resources (equipment or personnel) to accomplish a task.
- d. **Partner Reporting Metrics**—The planned numbers and narrative collected by Partners for reporting in the IBMP Annual Report.

3. **Optional Operations Plan Subcommittee**

- a. In order to foster collaboration amongst the Partners toward an Operations Plan each Partner will sign, the Partner Primaries and/or their designees may form a temporary Operations Plan Subcommittee that would work together from June-September in order to present a draft ready for signing at the Fall IBMP Partners Meeting.
- b. The Operations Plan Subcommittee may be convened on an ad hoc basis.

4. **Operations Plan Process Timeline**

- a. Partner submissions for assembly by the Lead Partner into the forthcoming year's Operations Plan begin just following the Spring Meeting.
- b. A draft of the Operations Plan should be ideally circulated 6 weeks prior to the Fall Meeting.
- c. The final draft Operations Plan up for vote at the Fall IBMP Partners Meeting must be circulated to the Partners by at least 2 weeks prior to the Fall Meeting.
- d. To be posted on the IBMP website by December 31 by the IBMP Facilitator on behalf of the Lead Partner, the IBMP Operations Plan must be approved by **consensus** and signed by all the Partners.

## ANNUAL REPORT PROCESS

The Lead Partner is responsible for producing the IBMP Annual Report, meaning completing its own section(s) of the report, and collecting and compiling all sections from the other Partners as well, with support from the IBMP Facilitator.

The IBMP Annual Report is a direct compilation and, as appropriate, evaluation of activities conducted and data gathered under the current AMP. Partners who are shown as “lead” for each monitoring metric are responsible for reporting on the outcome for the year. As necessary, dissenting opinions and conflicting analyses from other agencies will be noted and/or described to indicate that there was disagreement on that particular activity or analysis.

The Annual Report is scheduled for completion by December 31 of each year. Finalizing the Annual Report does not require the signature of all Partners; the Lead Partner has final say on any lingering discrepancy.

## IBMP CALENDAR

The Partners shall meet in person and in a public forum twice per year, once in Spring and once in Fall. Other meetings of the Partners shall occur as needed by teleconference, virtual meeting, or on a field trip, as agreed by virtue of an IBMP Decision.

<i>January 1</i>	New Lead Partner assumes duties.
<i>January - May</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Core season for bison management activities carried out by the Partners as described in the Operations Plan.</li> <li>(2) Develop and circulate draft agenda for Partner review no later than 45 days prior to the Spring IBMP Partners Meeting.</li> </ol>
<i>Spring IBMP Partners Meeting</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Review of annual operations to date. Presentation and discussion of potential changes that might be required for operations during the following year.</li> <li>(2) Begin collecting, if applicable, ideas for proposed changes to the AMP and annual Operations Plan.</li> <li>(3) Reports by IBMP subcommittees and/or hunt managers, if applicable, on proposed new adaptive management or other activities.</li> <li>(4) Partner planning for completion of individual duties for Annual Report.</li> </ol>
<i>Summer/ Early Fall</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Discussion of draft Operations Plan for the following year. Focus is on those items that will or might change (e.g., to accommodate an adaptive management change)</li> <li>(2) All Partners compile and evaluate the data they are responsible for including in the IBMP Annual Report.</li> <li>(3) As needed, Partner or subcommittee discussions on proposed adaptive management efforts (e.g., changes to annual operations, methods of collaboration, measures tracked, methods of public interaction) that are to be made, particularly in reaction to outcomes of activities and operations from the previous winter.</li> </ol>
<i>Early Fall</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Compilation of Partner write-ups of their sections of the Annual Report.</li> <li>(2) Draft Annual Report completed and circulated to Partners for review.</li> <li>(3) Biologists from NPS complete annual bison counts and classifications. They evaluate the status of the population and provide recommendations for bison</li> </ol>

	<p>conservation and management to the Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. The results of the counts will be sent to the other Partners by October 1. Two weeks before the Fall IBMP Partners Meeting, the IBMP Facilitator posts these on the IBMP website.</p> <p>(4) Preparation of final draft Operations Plan for the upcoming year. Lead Partner sends request to Partners to provide expected changes from the previous year's Operations Plan and compiles all proposed changes with help from the Facilitator. Goal is for the draft to be largely complete to the satisfaction of the Partners and ready for vote at the Fall Meeting.</p> <p>(5) Partners discussions (potentially teleconference) regarding issues under consideration in the draft Operations Plan for the upcoming year.</p> <p>(6) Partners review the Operations Plan internally and prepare to send their Primary representative to the Fall IBMP Partners Meeting with a decision and the authority to vote on it. Those with dissenting views prepare to present their alternatives.</p> <p>(7) Develop and circulate draft agenda for Partner review no later than 45 days prior to the IBMP meeting.</p>
<i>Fall IBMP Partners Meeting</i>	<p>(1) Reports of subcommittees, if applicable, on proposed new adaptive management activities and continued collection of ideas for adaptive management changes for the following year.</p> <p>(2) Partners review draft Annual Report; commit to complete any remaining items by December 31 .</p> <p>(3) Partners review and agree to or reject proposed adaptive management changes for the upcoming year.</p> <p>(4) Final Partner discussion and agreement on the Operations Plan for the upcoming year.</p>
<i>December</i>	Partners submit minor modifications to draft Annual Report and/or Operations Plan. Electronic signing of the Operations Plan by all Partners.
<i>December 31</i>	<p>Lead Partner posts completes and posts to <a href="http://www.ibmp.info">www.ibmp.info</a>:</p> <p>(1) Draft Fall Meeting Report.</p> <p>(2) The final Annual Report for the year.</p> <p>(3) Operations Plan for the upcoming year.</p>

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS OF PARTNERS

As a member of the IBMP, Partners accept the following financial obligations:

- Lead Partner is responsible for paying for an IBMP Facilitator to work with the Partners through the year to facilitate and help Partners plan for effective meetings, manage the IBMP web information portal, and complete other such items as the Lead Partner desires to delegate.
- Host Partner (often but not always the Lead Partner) is responsible for acquiring and paying for meeting space for IBMP meetings.
- Lead Partner is responsible for paying for teleconference and virtual meeting access.
- Tribal entities will be considered a single Partner when taking on the obligations of the Lead Partner. Likewise, MDOL and MBOL will be considered a single Partner when taking on the obligations of the Lead Partner.

- All Partners are responsible for their own travel, lodging, and expenses for attending IBMP Partner meetings.
- All Partners agree to periodically host regular IBMP Partner meetings (refer to Table 1).
- Partners may at times share costs for activities, such as website design, field trips, and Citizens' Working Group meetings.

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE PARTNER PROTOCOLS**

These Protocols may be amended at any time that all Partners agree to these amendments by virtue of having made an IBMP Decision.