

**Rust, Sherry**

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**From:** Harris, George  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 10, 2003 2:41 PM  
**To:** Bridges, Marc; Linfield, Dr. Thomas  
**Subject:** Bison Cooperative Agreement Narrative

Please review the attached narrative and edit anything that has changed. It is important for our 04 budget preparation for the feds. Also next week let's get together and hammer out the budget. I will set a time.



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Thanks

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**Narrative/Workplan:  
Cooperative Agreement 04-9730-0124CA  
Montana Department of Livestock**

The purpose of Montana's bison operations is to implement the Interagency Bison Management Plan and to prevent the introduction of brucellosis into the State of Montana due to brucellosis infected bison entering the state from Yellowstone National Park (YNP). The State of Montana accomplishes this objective by hazing bison back into the park, capturing and testing bison or if necessary lethal removal of bison as per the Joint Bison Management plan adopted on December 22, 2000.

In order for Montana to maintain its brucellosis-free status it is legislatively mandated to ensure that brucellosis infected bison moving from the YNP area do not spread the disease to Montana's livestock. In order to accomplish this task the State of Montana has employed staff and contracted with veterinarians, and various vendors to haze bison back into the park, haze bison into capture facilities, collect blood and/or tissue samples, conduct tests of the bison, as necessary transport bison to slaughter facilities, and donate heads, hides and meat to Native Americans and various charitable organizations as provided by state law. Department of Livestock (DOL) staff assemble capture facility(s) and also reclaim the area after the capture facility(s) is dissembled each year.

The bison move out of YNP into the Gardiner and West Yellowstone areas. They may also move onto various livestock producer and other private properties and cause damage as well as threaten the spread of brucellosis to animals and possibly undulant fever to humans.

DOL staff assemble a capture facility near Horse Butte after December 1<sup>st</sup> in accordance with a forest service use permit. The facility is taken down in late spring. It must be dissembled in accordance with USFS permit during the interim months. The Duck Creek capture facility is located on private property.

The capture facility(s) operation involves around the clock observation and security. Rental of equipment is necessary for snow plowing one and a half miles of forest service road leading into the Horse Butte facility and for snow removal in and around the capture facility(s). The snow accumulation is often over five feet per year. Contacted services also include the transportation of bison to slaughter or for release, aircraft contract for bison surveillance and hazing. DOL has an interagency service agreement with the Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks to provide personnel and equipment to implement the Joint Bison Management Plan.

Equipment rental also includes snowmobiles, and a skid-steer loader. Necessary supplies, materials, communications and travel are included in the budget. DOL purchases necessary equipment for the operation of the capture and testing facility(s). The Joint Bison Management Plan provides greater detail of this cooperative effort to prevent the entrance of brucellosis into the State of Montana.