Buffalo Field Campaign is the only group working in the field every day to stop the slaughter of Yellowstone’s wild Buffalo.

Buffalo Field Campaign volunteers defend the buffalo on their traditional winter habitat and advocate for their protection. Our daily patrols stand with the herd and the ground they choose to be on, and document every move made against the buffalo.

January 25—As sunrise broke on the snow-covered trees and distant mountains, two tripods blockaded a Forest Service road to a proposed buffalo capture facility on Horse Butte, prime winter buffalo habitat and habitat for threatened species like the bald eagle. Sitters have occupied two platforms for over two weeks now in the wind and subzero temperatures. Mysteriously, three more tripods have appeared. The DOL has not built the facility yet, and the sitters plan to stay until they are removed or the plans for the new trap are scrapped.

—BFC volunteer

Winter ’98–’99

Cold Mountain. Cold Rivers is the fiscal for Buffalo Field Campaign.
CMCR is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
CMCR
Box 794
Missoula, MT 59807

Matt McGovern-Rowan photo.
January 13—Yesterday, the DOL hazed eight bull buffalo from Red Canyon, forcing them to 8 miles back towards Yellowstone Park, and pushed seven tired creatures into the Duck Creek trap. Two more hungry buffalo were lured into the facility today prior to the hazing operation. Before first light this morning, activist Sue Naksenoy sat in the top of a 30-foot tripod on Duck Creek Road to prevent the buffalo from being trucked to the slaughter. She delayed the operation for 5 hours, though 5 buffalo were eventually shipped to slaughter.

—BFC Volunteer.

January 7—As dawn broke over Yellowstone, BFC volunteers shepherded 10 grazing buffalo away from the buffalo capture facility. Eleven other buffalo had been lured with hay into the facility by the DOL the night before. One captive bull freed himself. Before the buffalo could escape the outermost fencing, DOL security blocked the only open gate. The buffalo saw the truck and broke through a closed gate as he jumped out to freedom. Eight of the ten buffalo remaining in the pens were shipped to slaughter, and three volunteers were arrested for taking non-violent direct action to stop the transport of the buffalo to slaughter.

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—BFC Volunteer.

There was no soul searching, none of that. It is why I’m here. The cops cuffed me. The DOL agents shot all six buffalo while I sat, holding my baby. I screamed, and prayed. That is why I’m here.

—Corey Mascio

Yes! I’d like to help support the Buffalo Field Campaign

Your contributions go directly to front line protection of the last wild buffalo.

Name __________________________
Address ________________________
City, State, Zip ________________
email __________________________
contribution $___________________

Please send contributions and requests to: Buffalo Field Campaign, PO Box 957, West Yellowstone, MT 59758

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We, the people, implore you to take immediate action to help the plight of one of our nation’s great symbols, the largest and last free-ranging wild buffalo herd in the United States. Montana’s Governor Marc Racicot has made the Yellowstone buffalo into a political punching bag instead of managing them as wildlife. This is evident in Montana’s refusal to let biologists manage them, and instead treating them as domestic cattle. Please be the voice of reason and action and end this debacle for the concerned citizens of the United States as well as the world.

Federal agencies and officials have continued to fail to properly evaluate the environmental impacts of buffalo management or to properly evaluate the impacts of the buffalo slaughter on imperiled species in violation of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. Forest Service lands should be used for wildlife as intended by law. Current grazing allotments should be converted over to buffalo habitat.

It is necessary to stop watering grazers dollars in managing these wild buffalo. It is time that you, as public servants, take personal responsibility and serve the public and address these issues.

http://www.wildrockies.org/buffalo

Buffer Bull

Buffalo Bull is a 50 minute documentary exposing the Yellowstone Buffalo slaughter. The film combines footage shot in the field since 1990 and interviews with local residents, politicians, and agency officials to present the issue in its historical and current context. The video is a must see for anyone interested in the plight of America’s last wild, free-roaming buffalo herd. (50:00 VHS)

Print the order form at http://www.wildrockies.org/buffalo/video.html or send a $20 check or money order to: Cold Mountain, Cold Rivers PO Box 7941, Missoula MT 59807.
**Showdown at Horse Butte**

_Spring, 1999— The State of Montana broke laws and violated citizens’ rights while capturing and slaughtering America’s last wild buffalo._

In an attempt to immobilize Field Campaign activists, the State arrested them on false charges, imposed bail restrictions to prevent them from being present at capture and hazing operations. They also repeatedly intimidated and threatened people. DOL agents knowingly violated Forest Service regulations and hazzled buffalo through closed bald eagle critical nesting habitat on snowmobilers. In April and May, the DOL repeatedly hazed pregnant females and other buffalo with cracker-barrel from snowmobiles, ATV’s, trucks, helicopters, and horses.

On March 31—the same day that the Montana State Legislature was hearing HB 643, a bill to transfer buffalo management to a wildlife agency instead of a livestock agency—more than 20 law enforcement officers from a variety of agencies gathered near West Yellowstone. They came to remove a blockade maintained by BFC volunteers that had prevented construction of the DOL’s last bison trap at Horse Butte for two months. Six activists were arrested, the blockade removed, and construction of the new bison trap underway.

Later the same day, four buffalo walked from the Duck Creek trap to Horse Butte. When the law enforcement agents saw the buffalo approaching they blocked the road with their snowmobiles.

Volunteers who were walking with the buffalo were then followed by the agents, who lacked one without provocation and handcuffed him. Two others were quickly apprehended. The fourth violated the road and was repeatedly assured that he would not be charged or arrested. When the sheriff arrived, the volunteer was taken into custody and his radio, video camera, and tape were confiscated. The activists spent a day in jail with charges being filed. Fortunately, the videocassette clearly showed the charges to be false, and 3 of the 4 cases were dropped, with the last one still pending.

Previously, volunteers arrested while protecting buffalo were released on 417½ bail or on recognizance. This time the state prosecutor requested bond to be set at $500. Conditions of release restricted the activists from going within 1500 feet of both capture facilities and all DOL operations. Although no one was convicted, everyone arrested was banned from private and public lands including National Forest and National Park lands. The legality of those restrictions are currently under challenge in court.

By the third week of March the bison trap was nearly complete. The first major capture effort at Horse Butte occurred on March 31. With the help of numerous law enforcement officers, the DOL confined off the area and hazed 29 buffalo into the trap, 18 of which were shipped to slaughter. Activities video documented two DOL special use permit violations, including snowmobiling hazed within 1/4 mile of an eagle nest site, and hazed within 1/4 mile of open water. They submitted copies of the videotape of these violations to both the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks for the Forest Service, who only issued a warning to the DOL agents then.

On April 14 the DOL conducted their largest bison capture of the year, capturing 71 buffalo at Horse Butte and slaughtering 45. Six other buffalo died from injuries incurred in captivity. Four buffalo died while being held by the DOL. Two pregnant females testing negative for brucellosis were released by the DOL only to die from injuries sustained while confined. Five BFC volunteers were arrested while protesting the capture and another 2 were illegally detained and never charged with a crime. One volunteer was tackled, cursed at, and held to the ground by DOL agents, although he did nothing to provoke or resist the arrest. After being detained and threatened for over an hour he was released with no charges.

From mid-April on, the DOL engaged in numerous hazing operations, scattering buffalo with cracker-barrel from motorized vehicles and stampeding them back to the park. Many of those buffalo were about to or had just given birth. That harassment and stress can cause serious complications resulting in the death of mother and calf.

The arrests, the false charges, and the unreasonable conditions of release set by the court are examples of increasing power play by the DOL in their attempts to thwart our ability to protect the buffalo. The Department of Livestock is the wrong agency to control the fate of these magnificent creatures. Buffalo are not cattle and deserve all the protections that other wild species receive. All decisions affecting the buffalo should place emphasis on maintaining wild, free-ranging, self-sustaining herds.

**What You Can Do**

_Solutions to the Problem_

• Buffalo should be managed by wildlife agencies employing contemporary wildlife management techniques with full public involvement and in conjunction with Native American tribes.

• Cattle vaccination would protect livestock far more effectively than such a fraction of the cost of the current war against the buffalo.

• 98% of the lands used by the buffalo outside National Park boundaries are our National Forest lands. The Forest Service should close grazing allotments, or at least modify the stocking rates of such allotments to minimize buffalo/cattle overlap.

• If the buffalo herd grows beyond a truly science based carrying capacity, public lands adjacent to Yellowstone, buffalo could be relocated to 47 tribes who want to re-establish herds on tribal lands. Wild buffalo could be restored on public lands suitable for their recovery.

• The Department of Livestock is the wrong agency to control the fate of these magnificent creatures. Buffalo are not cattle and deserve all the protections that other wild species receive. All decisions affecting the buffalo should place emphasis on maintaining wild, free-ranging, self-sustaining herds.

• Under no circumstances should your tax dollars be wasted to pay for the capture of Yellowstone bison on public lands.

_Speak Out for the Buffalo!_

It just takes a moment and can help make a difference! Use your pen, phone, or computer to urge our public officials to stop the slaughter and implement some common sense solutions to the problem (above). Letters to the editor of your local paper are also a great way to let people know about this droght. Check out our website for more info and speak out for the buffalo and future generations!

**Montana Folks responsible for the killing:**

Montana Department of Livestock
Box 202201
Helena, MT 59620

The DOL’s acting director is Marc Bridges. Phone from Montana at (800) 523-3162; ext. 3 or from out of state (406) 444-2023

Vice Pres. Gore; 1401 Independent Ave SW
Washington, DC 20246
Phone: (202) 720-3631; Fax: 202-720-2166

President; 1400 C St NW
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Governor Marc Racicot
Travel Bureau of Montana
Within Montana: (800) 332-2272
Or from out of state (800) 847-4868

Phone calls are good (& free)… (800) 847-4868
Email: matthew@travel.mt.gov

Mark Alan Wilson photo.

Mark Alan Wilson photo.

Brian Daly, CMCR photo.
The "Crisis" In Current Buffalo Management

State and federal management agencies justify killing buffalo by saying the buffalo pose an unacceptable risk of brucellosis transmission to Montana cattle, and that the cattle industry must protect its brucellosis-free status. Brucellosis is a bacterial disease present in both domestic animals and wildlife such as elk, deer and moose. Infected domestic cows tend to abort their first calf and then birth normally, although it does not seem to affect wildlife.

Facts:
- The available scientific evidence demonstrates that the risk of brucellosis being passed to cattle is extremely remote. There has never been a documented case of brucellosis transmission from buffalo to livestock in a natural setting.
- In Grand Teton National Park, buffalo and vaccinated cattle have co-mingled for over 40 years without a single cow contracting the disease.
- Management agencies have not addressed possible brucellosis transmission from wildlife such as coyotes, elk, deer, moose, and others. If managers truly believe brucellosis is a threat, they would manage the disease instead of the buffalo.
- The national Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will not recognize Montana's brucellosis-free status if the state tolerates the presence of "low risk" buffalo such as bulls and calves. Of the 1,095 buffalo killed in the last two winters, almost half posed a low risk for transmission (346 were bulls, 149 were yearling calves).
- Costly cattle import restrictions, imposed by other states, are regulations that the federal government can impose without restrictions, and all states must respect the federal brucellosis classification.

What Happens to Buffalo Entering Montana?

Buffalo that cross the invisible park boundary are put into the deadly grasp of the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL), an agency with no wildlife management training nor any capacity, capture and kill buffalo that enter the state. However, the DOL's mandate is to promote Montana's livestock industry—the ultimate disincentive for managing a wild buffalo population.

When buffalo enter Montana, DOL agents on snowmobiles, ATVs, horses or trucks round them up and force them to run for up to ten miles and over barred wire fences back to the park. As the snow accumulates, creative hazing stresses the buffalo unnecessarily and causes winter kill. Buffalo Field Campaign documented a herd of over 100 elk running from a DOL snowmobile during bison hazing, running over barred wire fences, and getting injured.

DOL baits their capture facilities with hay or rounds up buffalo and traps them. These traps are a maze of cattle fences and plywood that funnel the buffalo back to their confinement, which causes the animals to break horns, panic and gore each other. DOL agents hit captive buffalo with sticks, shock them with cattle prods, and chase them with Bobcat miniblitz tractors.

The test that the DOL conducts is a blood test which can only prove that the buffalo might have been exposed to brucellosis, not that they have or could transmit the disease. About 57% test positive and are sentenced to death, even though most of those, because of sex, age or reproductive status, could not, if infected, transmit the disease.

According to the results of tissue and blood tests conducted by State and Federal officials during the winter of 1993-94, less than one and one percent of Yellowstone bison were infected. Of the 218 bison sampled, not one, at the time of death, was capable of transmitting brucellosis bacteria to cattle. The DOL even shoots buffalo in the field without testing them for brucellosis. Even worse, in the winter of 1996-97 the DOL shot buffalo in the field even after they had already captured and released them after they tested negative for brucellosis.

Is History Repeating Itself?

Sixty-five million buffalo once roamed America from coast to coast. Buffalo were essential to the survival of Plains Indians, providing spiritual guidance, food, shelter, and tools. 19th century American military leaders recognized the Indians' dependence on the buffalo and launched an all-out attack on the Indians' very source of life. Buffalo were killed by the millions and their remains were left to waste on the prairies. By 1900 only a few hundred buffalo remained, most in captivity. In the remote backcountry of Yellowstone National Park, the last 23 wild buffalo survived, the ancestors of today's herd.

By 1997 the Yellowstone buffalo herd numbered 3,500— one of the greatest conservation success stories in American history. Unfortunately, the success was short-lived. Buffalo are no longer welcome on the public lands outside of Yellowstone, their traditional winter habitat, having been displaced by powerful cattle interests. The buffalo slaughter of the 18th century has resumed. The State of Montana and federal government agencies are killing the direct descendants of the buffalo brought back from the brink of extinction in the last hundred years.