

America's Last Bison Taken for Population Control Experiments

In the spring of 2011, Yellowstone National Park betrayed the American public and wild buffalo by secretly handing over 58 buffalo to the USDA Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) instead of releasing them from traps as the Park originally promised. APHIS, a federal overseer and promoter of the livestock industry, kept these buffalo to conduct birth control experiments on them. Under the guise of research, APHIS plans to conduct these experiments on up to 104 wild buffalo taken from Yellowstone.

This spring, ten more bulls were captured by APHIS and tested for brucellosis. Three of these bulls met the study criteria and were taken from the wild; the remaining seven were released after the mistreatment. The livestock agency intends to experiment on bison with GonaCon, a chemical sterilant and hormone disrupter developed by APHIS for use on "pest species" and to control "overabundant wildlife populations." Using taxpayers' money to protect the livestock industry it works for, APHIS seeks to arbitrarily control and limit the abundance and migration of America's last wild bison.



Photo by Ken Kole, BFC



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

Ear-tagged and micro-chipped, these bison behind fences at Corwin Springs have been taken from the wild for population control experiments by APHIS, a federal livestock bureaucracy.

Bison population control was rejected by the government and the public more than a decade ago because of significant, harmful impacts. Now, APHIS has decided that a livestock bureaucracy will decide the fate and evolutionary potential of America's last wild bison, an ecologically extinct species numbering just 4,000. Birth control will further endanger the bison.

Ask your U.S. Senators and Representative to cut funding for APHIS' bison population control study in Montana. Ask that APHIS be reigned in and the buffalo allowed to roam free. Visit our Take Action web page or call the Capitol Switchboard at (866) 220-0044 or (202) 224-3121 and ask to speak with your House and Senate members. **!**

Buffalo Field Campaign
Post Office Box 957
West Yellowstone, MT 59758
www.BuffaloFieldCampaign.org
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Buffalo Field Campaign is the only group working 365 days a year to protect the only continuously wild, free roaming and genetically intact population of wild buffalo in the United States. Buffalo Field Campaign volunteers defend the buffalo and their native habitat, and document every move made against them.

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Photo courtesy of Tim Springer

Take Action Wild buffalo need your voice!



Photo by Cindy Rosin, BFC

Get Involved!

Contact BFC for information on becoming a frontlines volunteer, hosting video showings, circulating petitions, distributing newsletters, and other ways to raise awareness and support. Email buffalo@wildrockies.org or call (406) 646-0070. Find us on facebook at www.facebook.com/bisonwild.

Updates from the Field!

Subscribe to BFC's weekly email newsletter. Send your email address to bfc-media@wildrockies.org or visit www.BuffaloFieldCampaign.org.

Contribute to BFC!

Individual donors contribute more than 65% of BFC's budget. Make a tax-deductible and secure donation online at www.BuffaloFieldCampaign.org or send a check through the mail.

Contact Congress & Yellowstone

! The American taxpayer is subsidizing a state of Montana law that outlaws native wild, migratory bison. Wild buffalo abuse is indefensible and another face of welfare ranching paid for with your tax dollars. The Interagency Bison Management Plan

(IBMP) costs American taxpayers over \$3,000,000 annually. Tell Congress to redirect wasteful and costly taxpayer funding away from the IBMP to initiatives that conserve, protect and restore habitat for America's wild buffalo to freely roam. Visit BFC's Take Action web page to send a letter, or call the Capitol Switchboard at (866) 220-0044 or (202) 224-3121 and ask to speak with your House and Senate members.

! Yellowstone National Park has nefarious plans to trap and kill hundreds of wild bison to appease Montana livestock interests. Tell Yellowstone Superintendent Dan Wenk to champion efforts to protect America's last wild buffalo, shut down the Stephens Creek bison trap, and abandon capture and slaughter plans. Visit BFC's Take Action web page to send your letter, or contact Superintendent Wenk directly at dan_wenk@nps.gov.

! To take these and other important actions visit: www.buffalofieldcampaign.org/actnow/takeaction.html

Buffalo Field Campaign



Masthead photo by Sandy Sisti

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The Last Wild Buffalo: The Issue in Brief

Standing over six feet tall at the hump, weighing more than a ton, and able to run faster than 30 miles an hour, the American buffalo, or bison, is the continent's largest land mammal. Native to most of North America and especially abundant on the vast prairies, buffalo once numbered in the tens of millions.

Buffalo are wild and sacred, a living testament to America's rich past and a source of hope for the future. The buffalo stands at once as a stark reminder of humanity's destructive power and as a living embodiment of our greatest potential. Nearly eradicated by the end of the 19th century, 23 wild

Issue in Brief, continued inside



Photo by Mike Measey, BFC

15 Years Protecting Wild Buffalo: Endless Pressure, Endlessly Applied



BFC file photo from 1998



Photo by David Rullan, BFC

Years ago agents on snowmobiles shot buffalo in the field. Now some buffalo are tolerated in Montana for a time before being hazed in the spring.

What has Buffalo Field Campaign (BFC) accomplished for wild buffalo in our first 15 years? Since 1997 we've never let up in our work to protect the buffalo and stop their slaughter and mistreatment. While we've achieved many victories, increased habitat for buffalo in Montana, and saved the lives of hundreds of buffalo, we're still fighting for a permanently protected and respected wild population. While the livestock industry continues to dictate the buffalo's fate through operations led by the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) and Yellowstone National Park, recent changes have undermined the industry's control over wild buffalo.

Looking back across the years the facts speak for themselves. Government shooters no longer wantonly gun down buffalo as they did during BFC's first few winters, when they would leave bodies strewn across the land and call in Native Americans to clean up their bullet-ridden carcasses. Other times they'd haul carcasses to the dump and leave gut piles to rot, undercutting the very disease arguments manufactured to justify the buffalo slaughter.

In those days buffalo couldn't find a moment's peace in Montana. Whenever they stepped across the Yellowstone boundary government agents chased them back to the park with snowmobiles, ATVs, **15 Years Protecting Wild Buffalo, continued inside**

"Yellowstone territory, the habitat of the last wild Buffalo Nation - is sacred ground, it has been a SACRED SITE for the First Nation's people, and for all humanity who hold deep respect for all Creation."

- Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th Generation Keeper of the White Buffalo Calf Pipe



Artwork by Dave Hayes

Working with First Nations to Save the Buffalo

Native Americans and buffalo have a rich relationship going back thousands of years. No one knows or understands the buffalo better than the people whose very existence revolved around them. Were it not for Native Americans, wild buffalo might not exist today. Ignoring the depth of this relationship, Montana and the United States have, until now, excluded tribes from all wild bison management decisions.

Buffalo Field Campaign, co-founded by Lakota elder Rosalie Little Thunder, has always been dedicated to strengthening tribes' involvement in managing wild buffalo. Chief Arvol Looking Horse, 19th generation keeper of the sacred white buffalo calf pipe, honors and supports the work of Buffalo Field

Campaign. In 2011-2012 BFC met with each of the tribes with treaty rights to the Yellowstone region. This spring BFC helped inspire the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council to formally demand an end to the harassment of wild buffalo in their habitat.

In 2010 the government agencies responsible for the Interagency Bison Management Plan - facing mounting pressure from all sides - finally granted the tribes voting seats. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai, the Nez Perce, and the InterTribal Buffalo Council are now equal partners. The voices of the tribes and, through them, the voices of the buffalo, have helped bring positive changes to the buffalo's treatment. **!**

Defending Wild Bison in the Courts

❶ *Bison Habitat Lawsuit*

Yellowstone National Park has slaughtered more than 2,600 bison since 2000. The Gallatin National Forest does not manage wintering range, calving grounds or corridors for migratory bison, a keystone species. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear our plea in August 2012 asking for the agencies to prepare a new environmental analysis with public input and ensure protection for viable populations of wild bison in Yellowstone Park and on National Forest habitats.

❷ *Public Trust Litigation*

BFC's public trust litigation aims to stop Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks from privatizing and commodifying America's last wild bison. After promising for years that bison completing Montana's quarantine experiment would be managed as native wildlife on public and tribal lands, the state made an eleventh-hour deal with a private corporation, Turner Enterprises, who agreed to hold the bison on Turner's Green Ranch in exchange for ownership of 75% of their offspring. The state of Montana will hear our public trust case in 2012-2013 to restore all of America's last wild bison as native wildlife on public and tribal lands.

❸ *Grizzly Bear Habitat Lawsuit*

Alliance for the Wild Rockies filed suit against multiple federal agencies for permitting Montana Dept. of Livestock helicopters that harass bison in threatened grizzly bear habitat on National Forest lands. Buffalo Field Campaign expertise, photos and video footage of the livestock agency's helicopter disturbing a distinct and isolated grizzly bear population helped secure a court order preventing its use in spring 2012. A court hearing is expected in 2013.

❹ *Montana Stockgrowers and Park County Lawsuit*

The Montana Stockgrowers joined Park County in a lawsuit to stop a plan by Montana to permit a few bison some room to roam in Gardiner Basin, a small part of the bison's winter range that originally reached 40 miles beyond the basin into Paradise Valley. BFC and other groups have intervened on behalf of locals who welcome the return of migratory bison along the Yellowstone river corridor.

❺ *Freedom of Information Act - Your Right to Know*

For years, Buffalo Field Campaign has submitted Freedom of Information Act requests to the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) to disclose records shedding light on its principal role in the Interagency Bison Management Plan. For too long APHIS thwarted disclosure and acted like the public did not have a right to know how the agency spent taxpayer money to gain control over wild migratory bison. After exhausting all remedies, we filed suit against APHIS to end their illegal pattern and practice of delaying and denying release of public records and operating unaccountable in the dark.

❶ Make a contribution today to support Buffalo Field Campaign's on-going advocacy in the courts and defense of America's last wild bison.



Documentation of grizzly sign from BFC field patrols was instrumental in getting the helicopter hazing shut down this past spring.

Buffalo Field Campaign Wouldn't Exist Without You

Buffalo Field Campaign is a grassroots conservation organization formed in 1997 to protect America's last wild bison. The leading source of news, information, and activism on wild buffalo and the dangers of the current management plan, BFC advocates for greater protection of wild bison and documents their migration and management.

With more than 65 percent of our funding coming from individual contributions, donations are essential to keeping patrols in the field, our legal team in the courts, and our grassroots pressure strong. We have made great progress in our efforts to force the government to abandon the failed Interagency Bison Management Plan in favor of a plan that respects and protects America's only continuously wild bison population. Your support will enable us to successfully earn freedom for the buffalo.

We rely on our grassroots network of supporters to take action for the buffalo and keep our programs financially sound. Please use the enclosed envelope or visit our website to make a tax-deductible contribution or to purchase BFC merchandise. If you care about the buffalo and want to see them protected, please contribute today.



Yellowstone Country Wild Bison 2013

Connect with the buffalo and support BFC! BFC's 2013 calendar combines superb photos, artwork, fun facts, stories, and poems to convey the spirit of wild bison. In addition to BFC's new calendar we have new BFC logo t-shirts and stickers, stainless steel Kleen Kanteen water bottles and pint cups, and many other items you can purchase to support our work at: www.BuffaloFieldCampaign.org/merch.html

Issue in Brief, continued from front page

buffalo survived the slaughter in the remote interior of Yellowstone National Park, the only place in America where wild buffalo have always roamed. Today, the future of the buffalo is threatened by many of the same forces that contributed to its near extinction.

Of the 20 to 40 million wild buffalo that once roamed in North America, only 4,000 remain. The buffalo living in Yellowstone National Park and Montana are the only buffalo to continuously occupy their native habitat. Untainted with livestock genes and unconfined by fences, they are genetically sound and still follow their ancient migratory instincts. Buffalo are a keystone species essential to the restoration of the native grasslands and prairie ecosystems considered to be some of the most endangered habitats in the world.

Since 1985 the Montana and federal governments have slaughtered or shot nearly 7,000 buffalo as they migrated beyond Yellowstone National Park. Thousands more have been "hazed" from their habitat. These brutal and unnecessary actions are conducted by our government under the guise that buffalo may transmit the livestock disease brucellosis to cattle, something that has never happened. Brucellosis is present in many species, including elk, deer, moose, coyotes, wolves, and bears. There are far more elk than buffalo in Yellowstone and elk have been implicated in transmitting brucellosis to cattle. Yet Montana permits elk to freely roam while buffalo are killed, captured and harassed in the same habitat.

Buffalo migrate from Yellowstone every year to access winter range and spring calving grounds. Buffalo Field Campaign patrols monitor and document these migrations and work to stop government actions against the buffalo. Patrols provide volunteers with a direct connection to the buffalo, informing and inspiring a variety of coordinated efforts aimed at preserving and protecting buffalo and their habitat. We share information gathered on patrols with our network of more than 30,000 supporters who we rely upon for support and to contact decision-makers and take grassroots actions to protect the buffalo. ❶

15 Years, from front page

horses, and helicopters – if they didn't kill them outright. Things are different today. Buffalo are left to themselves on some Montana lands at certain times of the year. Faced with direct opposition from BFC field patrols, mounting grassroots pressure, Congressional oversight, and legal action, government agencies have created "tolerance zones" along Yellowstone's northern and western boundaries. While these changes do not go far enough, they represent an important step toward the restoration of resident, year-round wild buffalo herds in Montana.

Buffalo Field Campaign was founded, in part, to help "strengthen the tribal voice in management decisions affecting the Yellowstone herd." We have always advocated for the inclusion of First Nations at the decision-making table. In 2010 the Nez Perce and Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes, along with the InterTribal Buffalo Council, were made voting partners of the plan that dictates the buffalo's fate. Their combined voices have served to remind the agencies of the plan's commitment, long ignored,



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC



A Park Service rider aggressively chases a pregnant buffalo from Gallatin National Forest lands – these public lands never host any cattle.

of "maintain[ing] a wild, free-roaming population." BFC has recently met with each of the treaty tribes to identify shared goals and find areas where we can work together for the buffalo. In May 2012 these efforts helped inspire the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council to pass a forceful resolution calling for an end to the harassment of wild buffalo. Montana answered with continued harassment of buffalo.

During 2011-2012 hunters shot 28 buffalo and government agents spent weeks aggressively hazing hundreds more from habitat on the Gallatin National Forest, but not a single buffalo was slaughtered. In a major

much needed relief.

Buffalo Field Campaign and our grassroots network of activist supporters have fought hard over the past 15 years to increase habitat for buffalo in Montana and bring greater protection to this American icon. Though we've achieved many victories, much work remains and the plan responsible for the senseless killing of 4,000 buffalo remains in place. As long as it does, and as long as the connection between wild bison and their habitat is severed by human intolerance, Buffalo Field Campaign will be here. With your support we will remain a strong force on the ground, in the courts, and at every level of the policy arena until wild buffalo and their habitat are permanently protected and respected in Yellowstone and Montana.

Dan Brister is BFC's executive director. His book, In the Presence of Buffalo, will be published in late 2012.

Buffalo or Bison?

BOTH! Buffalo is the popular name for North American Bison, whose scientific name is *Bison bison*. So, both names are correct and in common usage, and you'll see both throughout this newsletter.

In DC: Working for the Buffalo on Capitol Hill

The U.S. Congress holds the key to halting the unnecessary harassment and slaughter of America's most treasured wild buffalo herds. Millions of American tax dollars appropriated annually by Congress fund the State of Montana's Department of Livestock and Yellowstone National Park in their combined efforts to deny wild buffalo the right to freely roam their native habitat and be wild buffalo. As the leading source of information and news on the buffalo issue, BFC works directly with Congressional Representatives, Senators and their staffs to educate and offer fiscally responsible, respectful, and scientifically sound alternatives to the current management paradigm. ❶



Buffalo Field Campaign: In the Field Protecting Wild Buffalo for 15 Years

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