**Buffalo in Yellowstone Struggle to Survive: The Issue in Brief**

Wild buffalo, or bison, once migrated freely across North America and numbered in the tens of millions. Nineteenth century hunters nearly wiped the species out by 1902, when only twenty-three wild buffalo survived by taking refuge in Yellowstone. Their descendants survive to this day and comprise the only genetically intact, migratory population to continuously occupy their native habitat. Unfenced and uncontaminated with cattle genes, the buffalo in Yellowstone are a keystone species essential to the restoration of native grasslands, sagebrush steppes, and prairie ecosystems—some of the most endangered habitats in the world.

**Struggle to Survive, continued inside**

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**The Story of S3: a Matriarch of the Imperiled Central Herd**

She was a powerful leader from the imperiled Central herd who followed the winter migrations unique to her kind: trailing the Firehole to Madison rivers into Hebgen Basin, trekking the Madison to Gibbon to Yellowstone rivers into Gardiner Basin.

She was a descendant of twenty-three buffalo who survived an onslaught of market hunters and a United States government-led extermination campaign just over a century ago when millions roamed free across North America.

She gained immense wisdom from her mother and grandmother, as they in turn learned from their mother and grandmother. Like the old matriarchs before her, she taught the young ones where to find the best water, where to give birth, how to escape government agents flying helicopters and riding horses and ATVs during hazing season.

Years ago, she was captured and violated by Yellowstone biologists, who placed a thick leather radio collar around her neck to keep track of her movements. They labeled her “S3.” Our field patrols knew her for many years. In migrating to Hebgen Basin and making the trek to Gardiner Basin too, she and her family were doubly threatened by hunting, hazing, and capture for slaughter—actions orchestrated by the state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park under the infamous Interagency Bison Management Plan. After patrols saw her numerous times this winter, she met her end when a hunter’s rifle took her life.

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**TAKE ACTION! Call Secretary Zinke and tell him pull Yellowstone out of the IBMP.**

Visit BuffaloFieldCampaign.org for our complete Take Action page and to sign up for Updates from the Field.

**Support BFC!**

Individuals like you contribute the majority of Buffalo Field Campaign’s frugal budget. All donations are tax deductible. Make a secure online contribution at BuffaloFieldCampaign.org or use the enclosed envelope to donate by mail.

**Get Involved & Volunteer!**

Contact BFC to learn about volunteering on the front lines, hosting video showings, distributing newsletters, and other ways you can spread the word to save the herd! Call (406) 646-0070 or email info@buffalofieldcampaign.org.

**Stay Active & Engaged!**

Visit BuffaloFieldCampaign.org for our complete Take Action page and to sign up for Updates from the Field.

**In the Field**

Yellowstone’s trap was hit by direct action four times this season—two lockdowns that temporarily shut the trap, and two anonymous actions that saw the release of over 120 buffalo held captive there. BFC supports all brave warriors fighting for the buffalo.

**Matriarch of the Central Herd, continued inside**
Hunters killed two female buffalo who were the collars of government mismanagement. The collars clearly show, though, just how far ranging these matriarchs were.

Matriarch of the Central Herd, continued from front

For crossing the "boundary line beyond which bison will not be tolerated," this winter the state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park eliminated the matriarch with the S3 collar, and with the last wild ones who roam their native habitat, as we continue to hammer away towards freedom and respect for the sacred buffalo.

The last wild buffalo unceremoniously shipped to slaughter.

Struggle to Survive, continued from front

Thousands of buffalo have been hunted, slaughtered, or removed from their native ecosystem as they migrate toward or across Yellowstone National Park’s boundaries. Thousands more have been aggressively chased from their National Forest habitat. The state of Montana and Yellowstone National Park conduct these actions under the guise that wild buffalo may transmit brucellosis to cattle, something that has never happened in the wild. Brucellosis is present in many species, including elk. Elk far outnumber buffalo and have transmitted brucellosis to cattle, yet elk freely roam between the park and Montana while buffalo are persecuted. As of spring 2018, less than 3,600 buffalo remain in the wild.

Every winter and spring buffalo migrate from Yellowstone to habitat in Montana. Buffalo Field Campaign patrols monitor and document herd migrations and work to stop government actions against the buffalo. Patrons provide volunteers with a direct connection to the buffalo, informing and inspiring a variety of coordinated efforts to protect the buffalo and their habitat. We share information gathered on patrols with our grassroots network of supporters whose donations fund our programs and whose actions pressure decision-makers to stop the slaughter and respect the buffalo's freedom to roam.

Buffalo Field Campaign works in the field and on the policy front to stop the slaughter and harassment of native bison. Donations keep our patrols in the field and the pressure on the government to abandon the failed Interagency Bison Management Plan in favor of a vision that recognizes and protects the United States’ only continuously wild population of bison. BFC relies on our grassroots network of supporters to take action and contribute to our work. Please use the enclosed envelope or visit BFC's website to make a tax-deductible contribution or merchandise purchase. We cannot help the buffalo without you. Thank you!

Support Buffalo Field Campaign Needs You!

Wild Buffalo Step Closer to Endangered Species Recognition

Buffalo Field Campaign and Western Watersheds Project’s petition to list the buffalo in Yellowstone as endangered cleared its first legal hurdle in Washington, D.C.

On January 31, 2018, U.S. District Court Judge Christopher R. Cooper ruled the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service violated the law in finding that the imperiled population did not warrant Endangered Species Act protection. Judge Cooper found the wildlife agency unlawfully discounted science in our petition finding that bison were at risk under the Interagency Bison Management Plan.

Natalie Halbert and other scientists say genetic diversity is being lost because managers are not considering that bison form two distinct subpopulations or herds. Yellowstone National Park biologists contend any distinction is a man-made artifact. The judge wrote, "where there is disagreement among reasonable scientists, the Service must use the ‘may be warranted’ finding.

The wildlife agency has appealed their loss to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. Our attorneys at Friends of Animals stand ready to defend our victory. Stay tuned for the outcome of the next round in our long-term campaign to gain Endangered Species Act protection for the buffalo that roam Yellowstone.

Politics & Courtroom

Why We Fight for Buffalo on National Forests

Millions of acres of National Forest lands surround Yellowstone National Park. These public lands are largely within the Custer Gallatin National Forest. Access to these habitats is critical to the survival of migratory bison.

The Custer Gallatin is revising its forest plan to guide decisions for the next thirty years. Under the forest’s proposed action, bison are restricted to 7,725 acres and excluded from hundreds of thousands of acres of National Forest habitat.

Concurrent with the plan revision, Regional Forester Leanne Martin is evaluating Species of Conservation Concern whose long-term viability is not secure. BFC submitted an evidence-based report asking that bison be added to the list. Without National Forest habitat, bison face an increased risk of extinction.

BFC’s report called on the Custer Gallatin to evaluate our proposed action for the forest to manage for native bison populations, migration corridors, connectivity to habitat, and access to their home ranges.

Report signatories included the Piikani Nation and Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, twenty-three businesses, fifty-nine non-profit organizations, and 2,721 individuals.

The public will have another opportunity to help wild buffalo on the National Forest in Fall 2018. Sign up for BFC’s Updates to stay informed on how to take action on these coming decisions.