



White, P &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;

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**Bison briefing statements for the Secretary of the Interior**

1 message

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**White, P** <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Wed, Mar 8, 2017 at 4:28 PM




To: Dan Wenk &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;

Cc: "Carpenter, Jennifer" &lt;jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov&gt;, Kerrie Evans &lt;Kerrie\_Evans@nps.gov&gt;, Rick Wallen &lt;rick\_wallen@nps.gov&gt;, Chris Geremia &lt;chris\_geremia@nps.gov&gt;, "Haas, Sarah" &lt;sarah\_haas@nps.gov&gt;, Patrick Kenney &lt;pat\_kenney@nps.gov&gt;

Attached:

Issues and recommended long-term management strategy  
Bison management (focusing on winter operations and 2017)  
Quarantine program  
Bison grazing effects

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**4 attachments** **YELL\_BisonManagement\_Mar2017.docx**  
19K **YELL\_LongTermBisonMgmt\_USDISecretary\_Mar2017.docx**  
30K **YELL\_BisonQuarantine\_Mar2017.docx**  
28K **BisonGrazing\_GrasslandHealth\_Mar2017.docx**  
21K

**Briefing Statement FY 2017**

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)

**Issue:** Bison Management: Long-term Strategy

**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



(b)5 Draft-Deliberative



**Contact Person:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, 307/344-2002, [dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)  
**Last Updated:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017

## Briefing Statement FY 2017

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)  
**Issue:** Bison Management  
**Member:** General Interest  
**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

### Key Points:

- There is very limited tolerance for wild bison in Montana due to concerns about competition with cattle, human safety, property damage, and brucellosis transmission. Idaho and Wyoming do not want wild bison outside parks.
- Approximately 5,500 Yellowstone bison were counted during summer 2016. High bison densities can degrade other resources and result in the migration of thousands of bison into Montana, which can overwhelm managers' abilities to maintain separation with cattle and protect people and property.
- In December 2016, YELL and other members of the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) agreed to manage for a decreasing population this winter, using hunting in Montana and capture/culling (primarily shipments to slaughter) to remove more than 750 bison; possibly as many as 1,300 bison.
- As of March 8, 2017, 439 bison have been harvested, 563 have been shipped to slaughter, and 23 have been removed by other means (1,025 total). Another 176 bison have been captured, but not yet shipped to slaughter. Additional captures and shipping may continue through March.
- The shipment of bison to meat processing (slaughter) facilities is extremely controversial and generates negative publicity. However, there is limited habitat inside the park and limited tolerance for bison outside the park.

### Background:

- The federal government and the State of Montana are signatories to the IBMP, which has been implemented since 2001 to manage Yellowstone bison and reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from bison to cattle.
- The plan has been successful at conserving a viable population of wild, wide-ranging bison and there have been no transmissions of brucellosis from bison to cattle. Other members involved with the IBMP include the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, Forest Service, InterTribal Buffalo Council, and the Nez Perce Tribe.
- Five tribes have hunted bison on open and unclaimed lands in Montana adjacent to YELL, including the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Nez Perce Tribe, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Yakama Nation.
- There are recurring ethical, public relations, and safety issues in communities of Montana adjacent to YELL due to concentrations of hunters, gut piles near roads and residences, shooting across roads, shooting elk, and hunting practices perceived to be unethical (e.g., firing lines of hunters along the park boundary; "flock" shooting).
- Hunting is prohibited in YELL. However, when bison migrations into Montana are small or late, tribal hunters become frustrated and assert that treaty rights include hunting bison inside the park; a point that is encouraged by the Montana legislature, state veterinarian, and organizations associated with the livestock community.

### Current Status:

- While hunting and meat processing are currently available tools for managers, quarantine and release of live, brucellosis-free animals are being considered as a future option. The NPS has prepared a decision document (i.e., FONSI) which is currently under review at the Intermountain Region.
- Montana recently decided to provide for some additional tolerance of bison north and west of the park. In addition, the NPS and Montana have initiated the preparation of a new Environmental Impact Statement to consider changes in the management of bison and brucellosis given substantial new information, changed circumstances, and the passage of 15 years since the IBMP was initiated.

**Contact Person:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, 307/344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov  
**Last Updated:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017

**Briefing Statement FY 2017**

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)  
**Issue:** Quarantine Program for Yellowstone Bison  
**Member:** General Interest  
**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



**Contact:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov  
**Last Updated:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017

**Briefing Statement FY 2017**

**Bureau:** National Park Service  
**Issue:** Bison Grazing Effects on Northern Grasslands  
**Member:** General Interest  
**Park:** Yellowstone National Park

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



**Contact Person:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, 307/344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov  
**Last Updated:** Wednesday, March 8, 2017





Wenk, Dan &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;

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## Bison overview BP

1 me age

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**Masica, Sue** <sue\_masica@nps.gov>  
To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>

Tue, Mar 14, 2017 at 10:24 AM

A few edits/comments. If you need to proceed with the others, please do so ... I didn't get them until this AM and have not had a chance to review in detail, and won't until noon California time.

---

Sue Masica | National Park Service | Regional Director, Intermountain  
12795 W. Alameda Parkway | Lakewood, CO 80228 | (303) 969-2503



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**Bison Management Brief and Topics 03-14-17.doc**

55K



**Briefing Statement**

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**Bureau:** National Park Service

**Issue:** Bison Issues (Population, Quarantine, Removal/Winter Operations)

**Park Site:** Yellowstone National Park

**Date:** March 2017

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the majority of the page, obscuring all content except for the text at the top and the text '(b)5 Draft-Deliberative' on the right. The box is solid black and extends from the top margin down to the bottom margin, spanning most of the page width.

# (b)5 Draft-Deliberative

**Contact:**

Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent (307) 344-2002 [dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)

Pat Kenney, Deputy Superintendent, (307) 344-2003 [pat\\_kenney@nps.gov](mailto:pat_kenney@nps.gov)





White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

1 message

White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Wed, May 24, 2017 at 1:34 PM

To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>

Cc: Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

Attached for your reading pleasure. We will be revising this draft over the summer.



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110K

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

*P. J. White, Rick Wallen, and Chris Geremia  
Yellowstone National Park, Mammoth, Wyoming*

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



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Wenk, Dan &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;

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**Fwd: Bison briefs**

1 message

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**Dan Wenk** <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>

Thu, Jun 22, 2017 at 5:08 PM

To: Bert Frost &lt;Bert\_Frost@nps.gov&gt;, Sue Masica &lt;Sue\_Masica@nps.gov&gt;

The following two briefs. The first is a general bison brief as of June 5th. The second is directed toward Quarantine and the transfer of 24 bull bison from the Designated Surveillance Area (DSA) to the Quarantine facility at Fort Peck. It includes the positions of the parties and recommended talking points by the Secretary with Governor Bullock if the schedule a sidebar discussion.

Questions please let me know.

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
(307) 344-2002  
>  
>

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**2 attachments****YELL\_BisonQuarantine\_Jun2017.docx**  
27K**Bison combined BP updated 06-05-17.docx**  
33K



## Briefing Statement FY 2017

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)  
**Issue:** Quarantine Program for Yellowstone Bison  
**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

### Background

- The NPS has proposed to transfer 24 male Yellowstone bison testing negative for brucellosis exposure since March 2016 from YELL to a facility on the Fort Peck Reservation for the completion of the quarantine testing protocol and eventual release on the Reservation. Bison transport would occur on highways through Montana.
- The actual risk of brucellosis transmission from these bison in quarantine to cattle is negligible because males do not transmit brucellosis, as well as the state-of-the-art facility, rigorous and proven testing protocol, and commitments from the Fort Peck tribes to collaborate with APHIS on further testing.
- Shipments of bison to slaughter are disdained by the public and, as a result, bison managers have investigated alternatives such as quarantine to preserve valuable brucellosis-free bison for augmenting or creating new herds with the diverse genetics and unique adaptive capabilities inherent in Yellowstone bison.
- The Fort Peck tribes constructed a double-fenced quarantine facility, within a larger fenced pasture, that meets the specifications used by APHIS and the State of Montana during a 2006-2010 quarantine study and agreed to use the same brucellosis testing requirements as specified in the Uniform Methods and Rules developed by APHIS.

### Initial Positions of Other Parties

- The State of Montana has maintained the shipment of Yellowstone bison through Montana to the Fort Peck Reservation is not allowed per Montana Code Annotated [MCA] 81-2-120 until the bison complete quarantine and are certified as brucellosis-free. Otherwise, Montana's livestock industry will be threatened.
- The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) has maintained quarantine facilities must be located in or near YELL and approved by state and federal animal health officials per the Uniform Methods and Rules. Ongoing discussions between the Departments of Interior and Agriculture may have reduced this opposition.
- The Fort Peck tribes are frustrated the NPS has not released a decision document and by the State of Montana's and APHIS' refusal to allow the quarantine of bison at Fort Peck.

### Talking Points

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

**Contact Person:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, 307/344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov

**Last Updated:** June 22, 2017

## Briefing Statement      FY 2017

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)  
**Issue:** Bison Issues (Population, Quarantine, Removal/Winter Operations)  
**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

### Key Points

- The management of bison migrating outside YELL during winter remains a contentious issue involving the NPS, State of Montana, Animal Plant Health and Inspection Service (APHIS), Native American tribes, U.S. Forest Service, and other stakeholders (livestock, conservation, animal rights).
- Winter operations, including harvests in Montana and capture/culling in northern YELL, are conducted pursuant to an Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP). During 2017, approximately 1,276 bison were removed from the population, including 748 shipped to slaughter, 468 harvested in Montana, 34 male calves held for quarantine, and 26 otherwise removed (e.g., killing of animals wounded during hunts; vehicle strikes).
- Twenty-four male bison have been held in isolation at the Stephens Creek capture facility in northern YELL since March 2016 pending transfer to the Fort Peck Reservation for quarantine. After completing a brucellosis surveillance period lasting 1 year, bison remaining test-negative will be released on the Fort Peck Reservation in their wild conservation/cultural herd.
- Bison management requires communication and cooperation among multiple federal and state agencies and tribes with different mandates, philosophies, and treaties. Complicating any movement of bison outside the park are Montana and APHIS requirements about brucellosis-free certifications and a Montana executive order regarding state approval to transport bison on state roads. If those parties are in disagreement with NPS actions, they may reach out to DOI leadership for engagement.

### Background

- Yellowstone bison are important due to their large population size, high genetic diversity, lack of interbreeding with cattle, and wild behaviors and adaptive capabilities like their ancestors.
- Many bison are infected with the disease brucellosis, which was introduced by cattle and induces abortions, reduces pregnancy rates, and poses a risk of transmission back to cattle.
- Brucellosis and concerns about property damage, human safety, and competition with cattle limit tolerance for bison outside YELL and prevent relocations elsewhere to restore the species.
- Yellowstone bison have high reproductive and survival rates, with few animals perishing due to predators and severe winter conditions. Thus, some bison need to be culled from the population.
- Alternative strategies for bison management have been constrained by legal and administrative factors, including federal trust responsibilities to tribes, Montana statutes and executive orders, and APHIS' Uniform Methods & Rules with regard to protocols for quarantine.

#### Current Population Size and Management Actions

- The federal government and the State of Montana have implemented the IBMP since 2001 to sustain a viable population of Yellowstone bison, with no brucellosis transmission from bison to cattle. For comparison, 27 livestock herds in the Greater Yellowstone Area have been infected by wild elk since 1998.
- Bison numbers almost doubled to 5,500 bison during 2008 to 2016, leading to concerns that high grazing intensities on some summer ranges may not be sustainable over time. Also, the mass migration of bison into Montana can overwhelm efforts to protect people, cattle, and property.
- Managers removed approximately 1,276 bison from the population during winter 2017, primarily through public and treaty harvests in Montana and capture in YELL for shipment to slaughter. Tribes transfer bison to meat processing facilities and distribute the meat to their members.
- The shipment of bison to processing facilities is extremely controversial and generates negative publicity. However, the effectiveness of hunting has been limited by concentrations of hunters near the park boundary that prevent bison from distributing, wound bison, and cause safety issues.

#### Consideration of a Quarantine Program

- In 2012, the Secretary of the Interior directed YELL to explore developing and operating quarantine facilities for Yellowstone bison. Park managers drafted a Finding of No Significant Impact to implement quarantine with initial screening in the park and completion of APHIS' testing protocol on the Fort Peck Reservation.
- Montana maintains the shipment of bison to the Fort Peck Reservation is prohibited by state law until bison complete quarantine and are certified as brucellosis-free. Also, APHIS maintains quarantine facilities must be located in or near YELL and approved by animal health officials according to their 2003 Uniform Methods and Rules, which are directed at managing livestock.
- The NPS is at an impasse because Montana and APHIS have refused to allow bison quarantine on the Fort Peck Reservation. Also, DOI solicitors maintain the Secretary must conclude this impasse is preventing the carrying out of our statutory duties before bison can be transferred without agreement.
  - Departmental policies regarding state and federal relationships are set forth at 43 CFR Part 24. Such policies direct agencies to consult with states and comply with state permit requirements regarding the planned removal of surplus or harmful populations of wildlife and the disposition of these wildlife except in instances where the Secretary determines that such compliance would prevent him from carrying out his statutory responsibilities (*e.g.* 43 C.F.R. 24.4(i)(5)).
- The Fort Peck tribes are frustrated the NPS has not released a decision document and by the State of Montana's and APHIS' refusal to allow the quarantine of bison on the Fort Peck Reservation.
- YELL recommends issuing a Finding of No Significant Impact to conduct quarantine at the Fort Peck Reservation, while continuing negotiations with the State, APHIS, and the Tribes.

#### Development of a New Interagency Bison Management Plan

- The NPS and the State of Montana have entered into an agreement to co-lead the development of a new Yellowstone Bison Management Plan. The NPS is funding the effort.
- There are six cooperating agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, Nez Perce Tribe, and InterTribal Buffalo Council. The states of Wyoming and Idaho, as well as APHIS, declined to participate.
- Public scoping was initiated in 2015, with 8,300 individual comments received. Since that time, the NPS and Montana have met several times to develop a range of alternatives for a draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- There has been little agreement on many facets of bison management, both under the existing IBMP and in this new planning process. Montana has two agencies involved, the Department of Livestock and Fish, Wildlife & Parks, which differ in their perspectives on bison management. This has made it difficult to come to agreement on a range of alternatives, tools for management, and overall objectives and goals.
- In addition, relationships are strained due to the conflict over the NPS bison quarantine proposal and current management under the existing IBMP. There may need to be a reevaluation of goals and objectives, as well as renewed State of Montana commitment, to a new bison management plan to move forward.

#### **Current Status**

- Biologists at YELL will conduct post-calving counts of bison in the central and northern regions of the park during June and July. These counts will be used to determine the appropriate levels of removals next winter to continue to decrease population size towards 4,200 bison.
- YELL will retain the 24 male bison in isolation at Stephens Creek until an option for quarantine is determined. Options include: 1) sending the bison to the Fort Peck Reservation for quarantine (preferred); 2) sending the bison to pastures leased by APHIS in Corwin Springs, Montana for quarantine; and 3) conducting quarantine at the Stephens Creek capture facility in YELL.
- The Intermountain Region is prepared to complete its work on the quarantine Environmental Assessment and sign the Finding of No Significant Impact.

**Contact Person:** Daniel N. Wenk, Superintendent, 307-344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov

**Last Updated:** June 5, 2017





White, P &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;

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**Strategic Mtg - save the date**

2 messages

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**Reid, Tim** <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Thu, Jan 25, 2018 at 2:30 PM

To: PJ White &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;, jennifer\_carpenter &lt;jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov&gt;, Rick Wallen &lt;rick\_wallen@nps.gov&gt;, Pete Webster &lt;pete\_webster@nps.gov&gt;, "Lyle, Jody" &lt;jody\_lyle@nps.gov&gt;

Cc: Dan Wenk &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;, Patrick Kenney &lt;pat\_kenney@nps.gov&gt;

# (b)5 Draft-Deliberative

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Jody - I believe that Strat Comm has an obvious role in this...you or Morgan in the room will ensure that the leaders intent, issue/sub-issue background and nuance are clear.

Stay tuned. It may be that I ask for a short notice/short duration confab on Monday.

Tim

---

Tim Reid  
Superintendent  
Devils Tower National Monument  
307/467-5283 x213

---

**White, P** <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Thu, Jan 25, 2018 at 3:04 PM

To: "Reid, Tim" <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, jennifer\_carpenter <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>, "Lyle, Jody" <jody\_lyle@nps.gov>  
Cc: Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>, Kerrie Evans <Kerrie\_Evans@nps.gov>

The latest revision of the strategic plan framework is attached.

[Quoted text hidden]

1/25/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Strategic Mtg - save the date

--

P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

NOTE: *Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.*



**BisonMgmtStrategy\_QuarantineRecommendations\_Jan2018\_v2.docx**

32K

**Briefing Statement FY 2018**

**Bureau:** National Park Service (NPS)

**Issue:** Long-Term Bison Management Strategy, including Quarantine

**Park:** Yellowstone National Park (YELL)

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



(b)5 Draft-Deliberative





(b)5 Draft-Deliberative







White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

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## Bison science and governance manuscript

1 message

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White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Wed, Mar 14, 2018 at 11:52 AM

To: Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

Cc: "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Revision attached for your review and comments before submission to the journal *Policy Sciences*. Thanks.

--  
P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

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(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

*P. J. White<sup>1</sup>, Rick Wallen, and Chris Geremia  
National Park Service, Yellowstone National Park, Mammoth, Wyoming*

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White, P &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;

---

**Re: information about bison numbers**

2 messages

**Reid, Tim** <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 10:09 AM

To: "Lyle, Jody" &lt;jody\_lyle@nps.gov&gt;

Cc: Dan Wenk &lt;Dan\_Wenk@nps.gov&gt;, "Herbert, Neal" &lt;Neal\_Herbert@nps.gov&gt;, Morgan Warthin &lt;morgan\_warthin@nps.gov&gt;, PJ White &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;

Jody - I think it looks good. Per my conversation with you, PJ, and Rick....my stab at teeing up the concept that collar data indicating most bison in or moving to basin in mid-feb were northern range bison, the target for reduction.

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

Tim

---

Tim Reid  
Bison Management Coordinator  
Yellowstone National Park  
O: 307/344-2035  
C: 307/281-1343

On Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 9:24 AM, Lyle, Jody <jody\_lyle@nps.gov> wrote:

Dan, Tim, Morgan, Neal - Per our conversation this morning, here is the text I'm proposing we use from PJ's briefing paper when we get press calls about this today or early next week. Dan, I made the changes you requested. Anyone see anything we should fix? If not, we'll hold this until we get questions.

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

# (b)5 Draft-Deliberative



**Jody Lyle**

Chief, Office of Strategic Communications

Yellowstone National Park

307-344-2012 (office)

406-589-7712 (cell)

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3/23/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Re: information about pension numbers

**Lyle, Jody** <jody\_lyle@nps.gov>

To: "Reid, Tim" <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Fri, Mar 23, 2018 at 10:32 AM

Cc: Dan Wenk <Dan\_Wenk@nps.gov>, "Herbert, Neal" <Neal\_Herbert@nps.gov>, Morgan Warthin <morgan\_warthin@nps.gov>, PJ White <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Thanks Tim. I think the first version works best. We'll make the change.

**Jody Lyle**

Chief, Office of Strategic Communications

Yellowstone National Park

307-344-2012 (office)

406-589-7712 (cell)

Visit us online: [Official Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Flickr](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Periscope](#)

[Quoted text hidden]





White, P &lt;pj\_white@nps.gov&gt;

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## Recommendations for Bison Conservation and Management

3 messages

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**White, P** <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Fri, Apr 6, 2018 at 12:04 PM

To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>  
Cc: Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

Attached are recommendations which outline a strategy for NPS management actions with bison. If we can agree to a revision, then I can prepare an environmental assessment within 1-2 weeks. Thanks.

--  
P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

**BisonConservation\_ExecutiveSummary\_RevisedApr2018.docx**

45K

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**Wallen, Rick** <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>

Fri, Apr 6, 2018 at 3:56 PM

To: "White, P" <pj\_white@nps.gov>  
Cc: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

There you go again PJ... channeling your inner Cool Hand Luke. We can all see you from here, standing in the rain, talking to yourself.

This is absolutely the right message to share. Thank you for hoisting the guide on!

I think you know my thoughts here already. I am feeling a lot like Phil Connor, and that makes today February the 2nd. I am a bit numb from seeing this proposal so many times I don't know how to respond now.

I recommend that we gather the first five folks on the **send to** list and go through this proposal with an ear for discussion about the key topics. We should be able to do this in one to 1 1/2 hours max. This would be an excellent preparation for the upcoming IBMP meeting and prepare park leadership to decide whether we have a theme to work from on 25 April.

RW

[Quoted text hidden]

---

**Tim Reid** <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Fri, Apr 6, 2018 at 4:16 PM

To: "Wallen, Rick" <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>  
Cc: "White, P" <pj\_white@nps.gov>, Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

I like it.

Sent from my iPhone

[Quoted text hidden]

April 6, 2018

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

To: Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park  
Through: Jennifer Carpenter, Director, Yellowstone Center for Resources  
From: P. J. White, Rick Wallen, and Chris Geremia, Yellowstone Center for Resources  
Subject: Recommendations for the Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Bison

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**





**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



This image shows a document page with a large black redaction box covering the majority of the content. The text "(b)5 Draft-Deliberative" is written in red at the top left. On the right edge of the page, there are two circular punch holes.



4/17/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Bison strategy meeting on Thursday



White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

---

## Bison strategy meeting on Thursday

1 message

---

White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Tue, Apr 17, 2018 at 10:47 AM

To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>, Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>  
Cc: Kerrie Evans <Kerrie\_Evans@nps.gov>

see attached proposal

--

P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.



**BisonConservation\_ExecutiveSummary\_RevisedApr2018\_v3.docx**

41K

April 17, 2018

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

To: Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park  
From: P. J. White, Rick Wallen, and Chris Geremia, Yellowstone Center for Resources  
Subject: Recommendations for the Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Bison

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**





4/20/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Environmental Assessment: Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Bison



White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

---

## Environmental Assessment: Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Bison

1 message

---

White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Fri, Apr 20, 2018 at 12:37 PM

To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>, "McPadden, Raymond" <raymond\_mcpadden@nps.gov>

The attached EA evaluates the new strategy we discussed yesterday, as well as 3 other alternatives that we considered during scoping for the new EIS.

--  
P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

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**BisonConservationManagementEA\_Apr2018.doc**

716K

**National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior**



**Yellowstone National Park  
Idaho, Montana, Wyoming**

---

**Conservation and Management of Yellowstone Bison**

Environmental Assessment

April 20, 2018



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White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

---

## IBMP PPT

1 message

---

Reid, Tim <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Fri, Apr 20, 2018 at 11:31 AM

To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, jennifer\_carpenter <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, PJ White <pj\_white@nps.gov>, Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>

Attached is a draft ppt for the IBMP mtg. This is based off of a draft template that Rick generated. It includes some updated numbers and additional discussion points. Please edit/comment as you see fit. The summary numbers slide reflects our discussion (sans Dan) from yesterday.

Thx -

Tim

---

Tim Reid  
Bison Management Coordinator  
Yellowstone National Park  
O: 307/344-2035  
C: 307/281-1343



---

BisonSlides\_IBMP\_WinterOps\_NPS\_4-20v1.pptx  
806K

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(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative



**From:** [Dan Wenk](#)  
**To:** [Dave Mihalic](#)  
**Subject:** Bison habitat  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 16, 2018 1:04:19 PM

---

Dave,

The information below is from a trusted colleague in the BLM giving me some good information on getting this up and running. Just got this yesterday so I haven't made any calls following up on the recommendations. This is for you and sharpening any talking points please do not share directly with the Secretary.

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
(307) 344-2002

Begin forwarded message:

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



(b)5 Draft-Deliberative







Wenk, Dan &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;

---

**Re: Sorry to ask...**

1 message

---

**Wenk, Dan** <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>  
To: "Mihalic, David" <david\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>

Wed, May 16, 2018 at 4:50 PM

Dave,

attached is the beginning of a brief on this issue. The information may be good for your discussions tomorrow.

Questions please let me know.

more information tomorrow morning concerning your other questions.

On Wed, May 16, 2018 at 1:54 PM, Mihalic, David &lt;david\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov&gt; wrote:

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



Dave

--

David A. Mihalic

Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
MIB Room 6124  
1849 "C" Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Phone: 202-208-4130  
cell: 202-706-4978  
[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)

*Remember, everything I send or receive is subject to the Freedom of Information Act*

--

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park

7/2/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Re: Sorry to ask...

307-344-2002

Fax: 307-344-2014

[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)



**BisonGrazingMgmt\_May2018.docx**

40K



(b)5 Draft-Deliberative



# (b)5 Draft-Deliberative



**Contact Person:** Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2002, [dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)

**Last Updated:** May 16, 2018

**Updated By:** P. J. White, Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources Branch, Yellowstone Center for Resources



5/16/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - Fwd: Sorry to ask...



White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

## Fwd: Sorry to ask...

1 message

Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>

To: jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov, pj\_white@nps.gov, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>

Wed, May 16, 2018 at 3:28 PM

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
(307) 344-2002

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Mihalic, David" <david\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov>  
**Date:** May 16, 2018 at 1:54:13 PM MDT  
**To:** Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>  
**Subject:** Sorry to ask...

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**

Dave

--  
David A. Mihalic

Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
MIB Room 6124  
1849 "C" Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Phone: 202-208-4130  
cell: 202-706-4978  
david\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov

5/16/2018

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR Mail - [REDACTED] Sorry to ask...

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White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

## Briefs on Bison Grazing and Abundance

1 message

White, P <pj\_white@nps.gov>

Thu, May 17, 2018 at 6:52 AM


To: Dan Wenk <dan\_wenk@nps.gov>, "Carpenter, Jennifer" <jennifer\_carpenter@nps.gov>, Tim Reid <tim\_reid@nps.gov>, Rick Wallen <rick\_wallen@nps.gov>, Chris Geremia <chris\_geremia@nps.gov>, Pete Webster <pete\_webster@nps.gov>, Patrick Kenney <pat\_kenney@nps.gov>  
Cc: Kerrie Evans <Kerrie\_Evans@nps.gov>

attached

P. J. White  
Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources  
Yellowstone National Park  
Mammoth, Wyoming 82190  
Office: 307/344-2442

NOTE: Every email I send or receive is subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act.

2 attachments

 **BisonAbundanceIBMP\_May2018.docx**  
22K

 Brief\_BisonGrazingMgmt\_May2018.docx  
42K

## Briefing Statement FY 2018

**Bureau:** National Park Service  
**Issue:** Bison Abundance under the Interagency Bison Management Plan  
**Member:** State of Montana, Montana Congressional Delegation  
**Issue:** Yellowstone National Park

### Key Points:

- When the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) was negotiated (late 1990s), there was pressure to prevent cattle from being infected with brucellosis to maintain interstate movements and trade agreements without additional testing. A population target of 3,000 bison was chosen to reduce migrations outside the park to prevent brucellosis transmission. Elk were considered unlikely to mingle with cattle and transmit brucellosis.
- We now know brucellosis is sustained independently in elk populations inhabiting about 17 million acres, whereas bison inhabit about 1.5 million acres near the core. Elk commonly mingle with livestock and have transmitted brucellosis to them 27 times since 1998. No transmissions from bison to cattle have been detected.
- A 2006 adjustment to the IBMP clarified "a population of 3,000 bison is defined as a population indicator to guide implementation of risk management activities, and is not a target for deliberate population adjustment."
- During 2006-2017, spatial and temporal tolerance for more untested bison in Montana was increased several times due to fewer cattle adjacent to YELL, desire for larger public and treaty harvests, changes in APHIS regulations regarding brucellosis class-free status, recognition that bull bison are not transmission vectors, and successful management to reduce conflicts with landowners and livestock operators.
- Bison numbers were allowed to increase and averaged ~4,200 during 2001-2017 (range ~2,900-5,500).

### Background:

- 2000: The goal of the IBMP is "to maintain a wild, free ranging population of bison and address the risk of brucellosis transmission to protect the economic interest and viability of the livestock industry in Montana."
- 2002: An independent review of grazing and grasslands in northern YELL by the National Academy of Sciences concluded the park was not overgrazed and managers could continue to allow numbers of ungulates to fluctuate in response to predators, resource limitations, weather, and hunting outside the park.
- 2004-2005: The State of Montana completed environmental evaluations for a public bison hunt and hunting was included in the IBMP as a management action outside YELL.
- 2005: An independent evaluation of the food-limited carrying capacity for Yellowstone bison was completed by Colorado State University and the U.S. Geological Survey. With about 5,000 elk, the model predicted a carrying capacity of more than 8,000 bison. With about 20,000 elk, the model predicted a capacity of about 6,200 bison. Currently, there are about 8,000 northern Yellowstone elk; 80% of which winter outside YELL.
- 2006: Montana recognized the treaty rights of the Salish and Kootenai tribes and the Nez Perce tribe for harvesting bison on open and unclaimed federal lands adjacent to YELL. Treaty rights of the Shoshone-Bannock, Umatilla, Yakama, and Blackfeet tribes were recognized during 2009-2018.
- 2006: The IBMP was adjusted to increase tolerance for bull bison in Montana because there is virtually no risk of them transmitting brucellosis to cattle.
- 2008: The State of Montana signed a 30-year livestock grazing restriction and bison access agreement with the Church Universal and Triumphant, Inc. to remove livestock from the Royal Teton Ranch, located just north of the park boundary. The National Park Service provided \$1.5 million to implement the initial payment for this agreement and allow progressively increasing numbers of bison to use habitats north of the park boundary, including portions of the Royal Teton Ranch and the Custer Gallatin National Forest.
- 2009: A peer-reviewed article by YELL staff proposed maintaining a bison population that varies on a decadal scale between 2,500 and 4,500 animals to satisfy the collective long-term interests of stakeholders, as a balance between the park's forage base, conservation of the genetic integrity of the bison population, protection of their migratory tendencies, brucellosis risk management, and other societal constraints.
- 2010: APHIS promulgated a regulatory rule that greatly reduced the risk of Montana losing its brucellosis-free status and experiencing associated economic costs by dealing with outbreaks in cattle on a case-by-case basis and eliminating the need to remove exposed herds and test across the entire state.
- 2011-2012: Several adjustments were made to the IBMP to substantially increase spatial and temporal tolerance for bison migrating north and west of YELL during winter.



- 2015: The Governor of Montana approved a greater distribution of wild bison on some lands near YELL, including year-round in some areas, which he concluded would not increase the risk of brucellosis transmission to cattle.
- 2016: An independent analysis of genetic data determined all cattle herds infected with brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area were from elk, not bison. There were five distinct strains of *Brucella abortus* bacteria, four of which were associated with elk and originated from the feed grounds in Wyoming. Brucellosis was self-sustaining in elk and spreading at an increased rate in populations outside of the feed grounds. As a result, control measures in bison likely would not affect the dynamics of unrelated strains in elk populations.
- 2016: At meetings with the State of Montana regarding alternatives for a new Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding bison management, there was agreement in principle to average 4,200 bison (summer count) over 5-year moving windows.
- 2017: The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine issued a report revisiting brucellosis in the Greater Yellowstone Area and concluded there was clear evidence that brucellosis transmission to livestock has come from infected elk and, as a result, aggressive control measures in bison seem unwarranted until tools become available that would simultaneously allow for an eradication program in elk.

**Current Status:**

- A total of 4,816 bison were counted in YELL during summer 2017, including 3,969 in northern YELL and 847 in central YELL. About 1,173 bison were removed from the population this winter, primarily in northern YELL. Thus, biologists expect about 4,300 bison after calving, which will be verified with a count in late July.
- Under the IBMP, there has been no detected transmission of brucellosis from wild bison to cattle, while a viable, wild population of bison has been sustained in YELL.
- Preparation of a new EIS for the IBMP has stagnated in recent years due, in part, to a lack of commitment, funding, and staff participation from the State of Montana and some cooperators. The Superintendent of YELL intends to reinstate discussions regarding whether this effort should be rekindled.

**Contact Person:** Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov

**Last Updated:** May 17, 2018

**Updated By:** P. J. White, Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources Branch, Yellowstone Center for Resources

**Briefing Statement FY 2018**

**Bureau:** National Park Service  
**Issue:** Bison Abundance under the Interagency Bison Management Plan  
**Member:** State of Montana, Montana Congressional Delegation  
**Issue:** Yellowstone National Park

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



# (b)5 Draft-Deliberative



**Contact Person:** Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2002, [dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)

**Last Updated:** May 17, 2018

**Updated By:** P. J. White, Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources Branch, Yellowstone Center for Resources

Briefing Statement FY 2018

Bureau: National Park Service

Issue: (b)5 Draft-Deliberative

Member: State of Montana, Montana Congressional Delegation

Issue: Yellowstone National Park

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

**(b)5 Draft-Deliberative**



**Contact Person:** Dan Wenk, Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park, (307) 344-2002, dan\_wenk@nps.gov  
**Last Updated:** May 16, 2018  
**Updated By:** P. J. White, Chief, Wildlife and Aquatic Resources Branch, Yellowstone Center for Resources



**From:** [Dan Wenk](#)  
**To:** [Mihalic, David](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Sorry to ask...  
**Date:** Thursday, May 17, 2018 7:09:07 AM

---

Dave,

That was not ready for prime time and therefore not set up as a brief. I was just giving you information informally. We will adjust for all the things you are concerned about before we would submit (b)5 Draft-Deliberative

Did you see the brief I just sent?

And there is no second brief or no 1 of 2.

We can talk at about 8:45 your time.

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
(307) 344-2002

On May 17, 2018, at 7:03 AM, Mihalic, David <[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Dan,

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

When can we talk?

Dave

On Wed, May 16, 2018 at 6:50 PM, Wenk, Dan <[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)> wrote:

Dave,

attached is the beginning of a brief on this issue. The information may be good for your discussions tomorrow.

Questions please let me know.

more information tomorrow morning concerning your other questions.

On Wed, May 16, 2018 at 1:54 PM, Mihalic, David

<[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

Dave

--

David A. Mihalic

Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior



MIB Room 6124  
[1849 "C" Street NW](#)  
[Washington, D.C. 20240](#)

Phone: 202-208-4130  
cell: 202-706-4978  
[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)

*Remember, everything I send or receive is subject to the Freedom of Information Act*

--

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
307-344-2002  
Fax: 307-344-2014  
[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)

--

David A. Mihalic

Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
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1849 "C" Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Phone: 202-208-4130  
cell: 202-706-4978  
[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)

*Remember, everything I send or receive is subject to the Freedom of Information Act*



**From:** [Mihalic, David](#)  
**To:** [Dan Wenk](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Sorry to ask...  
**Date:** Thursday, May 17, 2018 7:24:21 AM

---

Got it - after 8 am your time - and - I don't think that brief is needed (or helpful) at this time. Let's see how this shakes out - (b)5 Draft-Deliberative  
(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

D

On Thu, May 17, 2018 at 9:19 AM, Dan Wenk <[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)> wrote:  
Anytime between 10:00 - 11:00 your time, call me.

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
(307) 344-2002

On May 17, 2018, at 7:03 AM, Mihalic, David <[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

Dan,

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

When can we talk?

Dave

On Wed, May 16, 2018 at 6:50 PM, Wenk, Dan <[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)> wrote:  
Dave,

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On Wed, May 16, 2018 at 1:54 PM, Mihalic, David  
<[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)> wrote:

(b)5 Draft-Deliberative

Dave

--

David A. Mihalic

Senior Advisor to the Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
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cell: 202-706-4978

[david\\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov](mailto:david_mihalic@ios.doi.gov)

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--

Dan Wenk  
Superintendent  
Yellowstone National Park  
307-344-2002  
Fax: 307-344-2014  
[dan\\_wenk@nps.gov](mailto:dan_wenk@nps.gov)

--

David A. Mihalic

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United States Department of the Interior  
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David A. Mihalic

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