

2019-2020



**BUFFALO**  
**FIELD CAMPAIGN**

P.O. BOX 957, WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758 • (406)646-0070 • INFO@BUFFALOFIELDCAMPAIGN.ORG • BUFFALOFIELDCAMPAIGN.ORG

# Buffalo Struggle to Survive: The Issue in Brief

Since April of 1997, Buffalo Field Campaign has been standing in defense of the country's last wild buffalo: the Yellowstone herds. Our mission is to, "stop the harassment and slaughter of Yellowstone's wild buffalo herds; protect the natural habitat of wild, free-roaming buffalo and other native wildlife; and work with all people—especially Indigenous Nations—to honor and protect the sacredness of the wild buffalo." We envision a world in which buffalo are allowed to exist as they choose, naturally restoring themselves throughout their native range.

*Struggle to Survive, continued inside*



Musthead and feature photos by Stephany Seay, BFC

## **In the Field** Hundreds of Buffalo Escape Slaughter

Our 22nd season in the field with the last wild buffalo has come to a close. What a season this has been. Such a slow start to migration, with very few buffalo around for many winter months. This slow migration was mainly due to an initially mild winter, but also we must credit the buffalo for growing more savvy each year about

the dangers awaiting them. Either way, the late start kept hundreds of buffalo away from Yellowstone's trap and from many hunters, so hundreds more than expected survived this year. It wasn't until nearly March that the buffalo began to migrate into the Gardiner Basin to the north, and nearly April before they journeyed into the Hebgen Basin to the west. Though the hunters and government agents in the Gardiner Basin took every opportunity to kill as many buffalo as they could, with Yellowstone National Park's trap and slaughter operation killing nearly three hundred fifty animals, and the combined state and tribal hunts taking the lives of almost another hundred, they never met even half of their goal. The buffalo did not allow it.

*Escape Slaughter, continued inside*

### **Buffalo or Bison?**

Both are correct. Buffalo is the popular name for North American Bison, whose scientific name is *Bison bison*. Buffalo have many names given to them from the Buffalo Cultures who evolved with them, including ee-nee-wah (Blackfeet), quay-quai (Salish), tatanka (Lakota), ee dan non (Aaniiih), hotova'a (Cheyenne), qoq'a lx (Nez Perce), and many more.



Photo by Sandy Sisti, Wild at Heart Images

A late winter delayed migration, but when the herds finally did move from the park, the government trap and firing line awaited.



## Struggle to Survive, *continued from front*

Every year millions of people from around the world visit Yellowstone National Park with the hope of seeing wild buffalo. Just over a century ago, this remnant population barely escaped extinction by seeking refuge in Yellowstone's remote Pelican Valley. America's "greatest conservation success story," however, has yet to come true for the few buffalo who remain in the wild. They are still threatened with extinction by the very people sworn to protect them: Yellowstone National Park—in service to Montana's cattle lobby. While there are 500,000 "beefalo" in North America, only 11,000 to 13,000 remain wildlife. Of those, just 4,500 wild, migratory buffalo reside in Yellowstone, the last remnants of the once great herds of North America.

Wild bison are currently mismanaged under a joint government plan—the Interagency Bison Management Plan—crafted by cattle interests. The catalyst for the plan is a state law, MCA 81-2-120, that gives the Montana Department of Livestock control over wild buffalo, a clear conflict of interest from an agency that serves the cattle industry. This law classifies buffalo as "an animal in need of disease control" that are managed for removal under state veterinarian authority.

Livestock interests claim wild buffalo threaten cows with brucellosis—a bacteria originating in invasive cattle. There has never been a documented case of wild buffalo transmitting brucellosis to cattle. Elk have been implicated numerous times yet are free to roam. The centuries-old range war about grass and who gets to eat it is still being waged against the buffalo.

Yellowstone buffalo face serious threats, including government trapping-for-slaughter, excessive hunting, domestication through quarantine, and harassment on National Forest habitat. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature has "red listed" the American buffalo as "threatened with near extinction." Even the state of Montana classifies wild buffalo as "at risk" and "vulnerable to global extinction or extirpation in the state." Regardless of their biological status, wild buffalo have no protection, not even in Yellowstone National Park, where a bison trap has sent thousands to slaughterhouses.

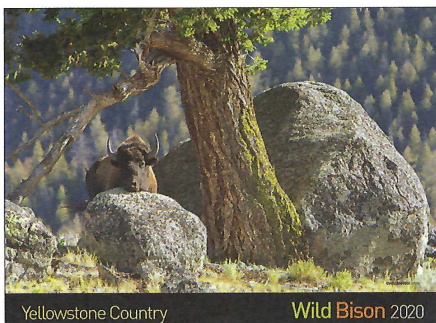
With no prospect in sight to protect buffalo under state law, we have turned to the Endangered Species Act to protect these imperiled gentle giants. Buffalo Field Campaign welcomes you to join our efforts in defending this sacred species. 🐾



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

**Managing for extinction: National Park Service employees prod and provoke buffalo caught in their trap before shipping them to slaughter.**

## Support Buffalo Field Campaign Needs You!



Visit [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org/merch](https://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org/merch) to find our 2020 calendar and more!

Buffalo Field Campaign needs your help to continue our important work on behalf of wild buffalo. Your donations keep our patrols in the field and the pressure on in the policy and legal arenas. Please make a tax deductible donation using the enclosed envelope or visit our website at [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](https://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org) to donate or shop our online store. With your help we will defend America's last wild, migratory buffalo until they once again roam free. Thank you! 🐾

*"Every time a calf stands is a victory for us."*

-James Holt, BFC Board Vice President and Nez Perce (Nimiipuu) tribal member

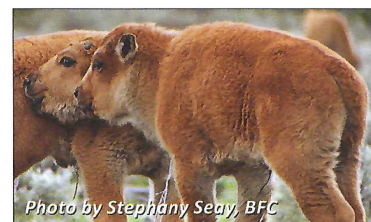


Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC



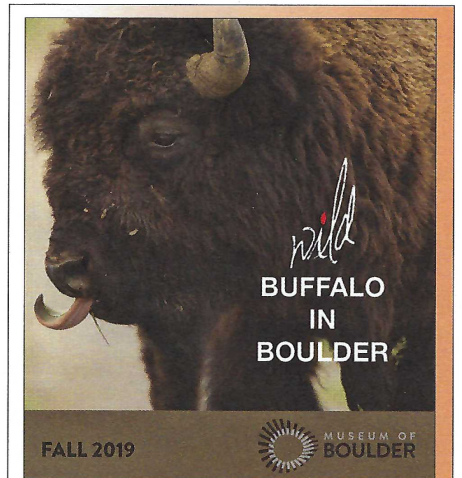
## Escape Slaughter, *continued from front*

This spring, though, they allowed us to be surrounded by their awesome presence, watching family groups with pregnant moms journey to their spring calving grounds on Horse Butte. For weeks our patrols waited for the first calves to arrive, and, like popcorn popping, calf by calf started to arrive and then exploded upon the greening landscape. As June approached and the calves got stronger, the buffalo made their own gentle way towards Yellowstone's summer range and rutting grounds, in the time that was right for them.

Livestock agents harassed buffalo on the south side of the Madison River—public lands on the Custer Gallatin National Forest that never host any cattle—but the relentless day after day, week after week, government hazing is over. Hazing buffalo during calving season is a terrible and unnecessary act of cruelty. We must claim the public lands south of the Madison River for the buffalo's right to roam. We will do it with your help (see our Take Action section). The cattle industry's assumed power will end, and wild buffalo will reclaim lands that are their birthright.

In addition to our unique field presence, we are fighting for the buffalo on numerous legal and political fronts. Our efforts continue to list wild, migratory buffalo under the Endangered Species Act; we press forward on our campaign to gain Species of Conservation Concern designation for wild buffalo on the Custer Gallatin National Forest; and we have defended wild buffalo against ridiculous but dangerous legislation during the 2019 Montana legislative session.

You are a huge part of making all of this happen; you are the reason we are able to be here at all. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your decades of support, your unbelievable and undeniable love for the buffalo, and allowing us to be here standing with these sacred relatives. The ground they choose to be on is expanding, and while we have so much further to go, together we'll get there. 🍌



**Buffalo Field Campaign is partnering with Thia Martin's Red Shoes Studio and the Museum of Boulder in Colorado for a multimedia art and educational exhibit celebrating wild buffalo. Join us in Boulder September through January!**

# Policy and Legal Action



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

**Wild buffalo are still forced off of National Forest habitat each spring.**

## A Species of Conservation Concern

National Forest habitat adjacent to Yellowstone National Park is critical to the survival of migratory bison. As the Custer Gallatin National Forest revises its forest plan, Buffalo Field Campaign and our network of supporters have been working to secure standards protecting habitat and listing bison as a species of conservation concern. Freedom for American bison to roam National Forest habitat, restoring habitat connectivity, and closing cattle allotments are some of the standards we are advocating for Forest Supervisor Mary C. Erickson to adopt in Alternative D, the environmentally preferred alternative.

The Custer Gallatin National Forest's final analysis will be released in 2020 with an objections period before a final decision is made. 🍌

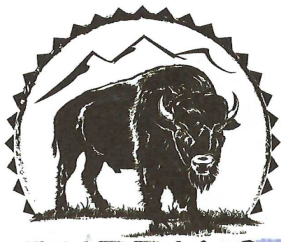
## Endangered Species Protection

Buffalo Field Campaign, Western Watersheds Project, and Friends of Animals are back in court to advance our petition to list the Yellowstone bison as an endangered species.

We filed a complaint in May 2019 to enforce U.S. District Court Judge Christopher R. Cooper's order for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to issue a new 90-day finding. Judge Cooper previously found the wildlife agency applied an unlawful evidentiary standard rejecting our petition. Our complaint seeks to enforce his order and require the wildlife agency to issue a new 90-day finding without further delay.

To find out more about our campaigns to protect buffalo and their habitat, check out the "What We Do" section on our website: [buffalofieldcampaign.org](http://buffalofieldcampaign.org). 🍌





**BUFFALO**  
**FIELD CAMPAIGN**  
 POST OFFICE BOX 957  
 WEST YELLOWSTONE, MT 59758  
 BUFFALOFIELDCAMPAIGN.ORG

Non-Profit Org  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 151  
 Great Falls, MT



*Protecting the Last Wild Bison*

Photo courtesy of Michelle McCarron

Printed on Recycled Paper

# Take Action Be a Voice for Wild Buffalo!

## Tell Gov. Bullock to Leave a Wild Legacy

Montana Governor Steve Bullock has his sights set on the White House. Tell him you take the buffalo into the voting booth with you! Ask Gov. Bullock for a new decision with public involvement and comment to protect more year-round habitat for wild buffalo, including the south side of the Madison River on the Custer Gallatin National Forest, where hazing still takes place on cattle-free public land.

He can order the Montana executive branch to start a public process and leave a legacy that this country can be proud of! Phone calls are best because they can't be ignored, but you can back your call up with an email. Call Gov. Bullock at (406) 444-3111 and email [governor@mt.gov](mailto:governor@mt.gov). Wild is the Way—Roam Free!

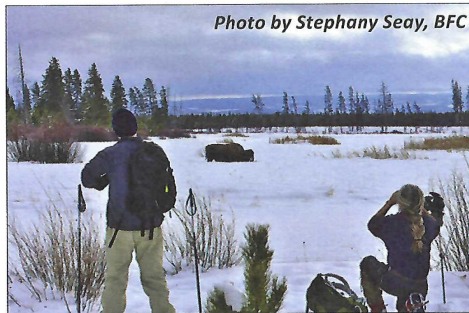


Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC

Come volunteer and stand with wild buffalo!

## Get Involved & Volunteer!

Contact BFC to learn about volunteering on the front lines, joining our summer outreach team, hosting video showings, distributing newsletters, and other ways you can spread the word to save the herds! Email [info@buffalofieldcampaign.org](mailto:info@buffalofieldcampaign.org) or call (406) 646-0070. See all the details at [buffalofieldcampaign.org/volunteer-with-us](http://buffalofieldcampaign.org/volunteer-with-us).

## Support BFC!

Individuals like you contribute the majority of Buffalo Field Campaign's budget. All donations are tax deductible. Make a secure online contribution at [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](http://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org) or use the enclosed envelope to donate by mail.

## Stay Engaged!

Visit [BuffaloFieldCampaign.org](http://BuffaloFieldCampaign.org) for our complete Take Action page and to sign up for Updates from the Field.

[youtube.com/bfcmedia](https://www.youtube.com/bfcmedia)

[facebook.com/buffalowild](https://www.facebook.com/buffalowild)

[instagram.com/buffalofieldcampaign](https://www.instagram.com/buffalofieldcampaign)

[twitter.com/BFC\\_WildBison](https://twitter.com/BFC_WildBison)



Photo by Stephany Seay, BFC