

DEPARTMENT OF LIVESTOCK



BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR

PO BOX 202001

STATE OF MONTANA

BOARD OF LIVESTOCK (406) 444-7323
BRANDS ENFORCEMENT DIVISION (406) 444-2045
ANIMAL HEALTH DIVISION (406) 444-2043
CENTRALIZED SERVICES DIVISION (406) 444-9040
MEAT & POULTRY INSPECTION BUREAU (406) 444-5202
MILK & EGG BUREAU (406) 444-9761

HELENA, MONTANA 59620-2001

February 22, 2006

Dr. Paul Sciglibaglio
Area Veterinarian In Charge
USDA/APHIS
208 North Montana Suite 101
Helena, Montana 59601

Re: ✓ First Quarter Report FFY 2006 - Cooperative Agreement # 06-9730-0124-CA

Dear Dr. Sciglibaglio:

The Department of Livestock has completed its first quarter report for our bison operations Cooperative Agreement for federal fiscal year 2006 (FFY 2006). I have attached a 269 reflecting the expenditures for this period and the 270 requesting the first \$100,000 which will enable us to meet our obligations. Please let me know if you require additional information. I can be reached at 444-4994. Thank you very much for your assistance.

Sincerely,

George H. Harris
Administrator, Centralized Services Division
Montana Department of Livestock

Enclosures

C: ✓ Marc Bridges
Dr. Thomas Linfield
Janet Nick

Montana Department of Livestock
Bison Management Cooperative Agreement #06-9730-0124-CA
Report of 1st Quarter Activity- FY2006
(October 1, 2005 – December 31, 2005)

**Bison Management in the Montana
Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA)**

OBJECTIVES:

- ❖ Maintain Montana’s Brucellosis Class Free status.
- ❖ Reduce the risk of *Brucella abortus* transmission from YNP bison to livestock in Montana.
- ❖ Protect the economic interests and viability of Montana’s livestock industry.
- ❖ Protect private property in Montana.
- ❖ Preserve a viable wild population of YNP bison.
- ❖ Cooperatively implement the Interagency Bison Management Plan with member agencies.
- ❖ Provide science-based, factual information to the public regarding brucellosis in the GYA.

PROGRAM ACTIVITY:

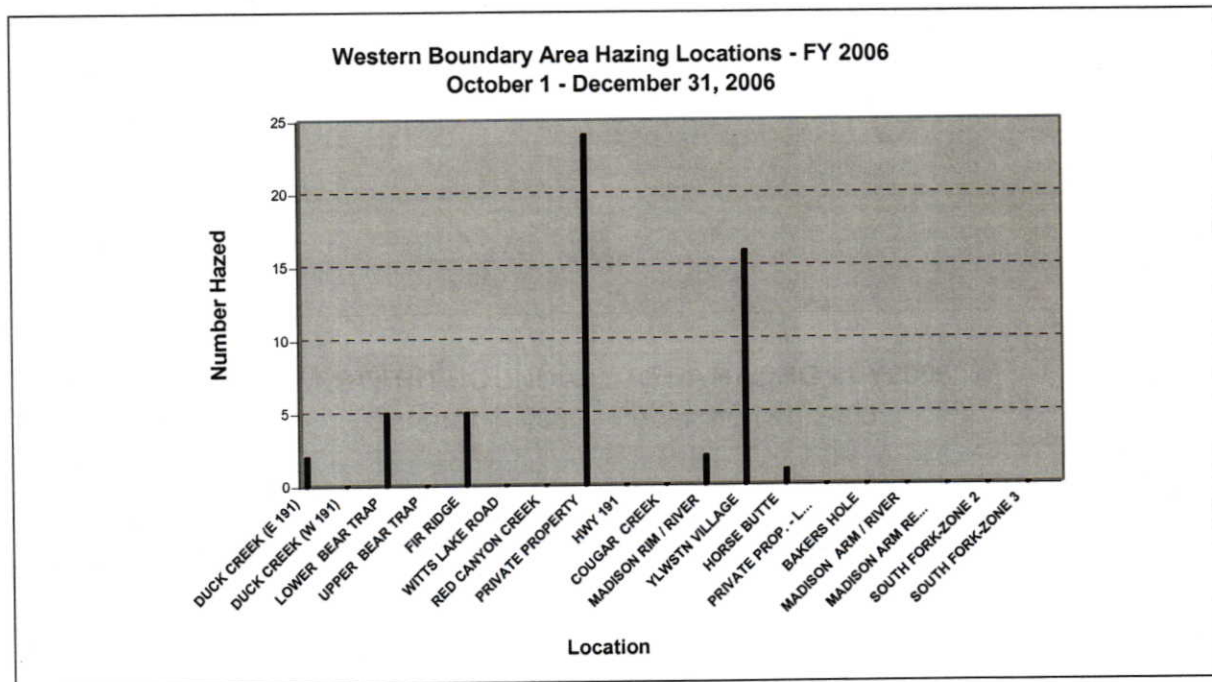
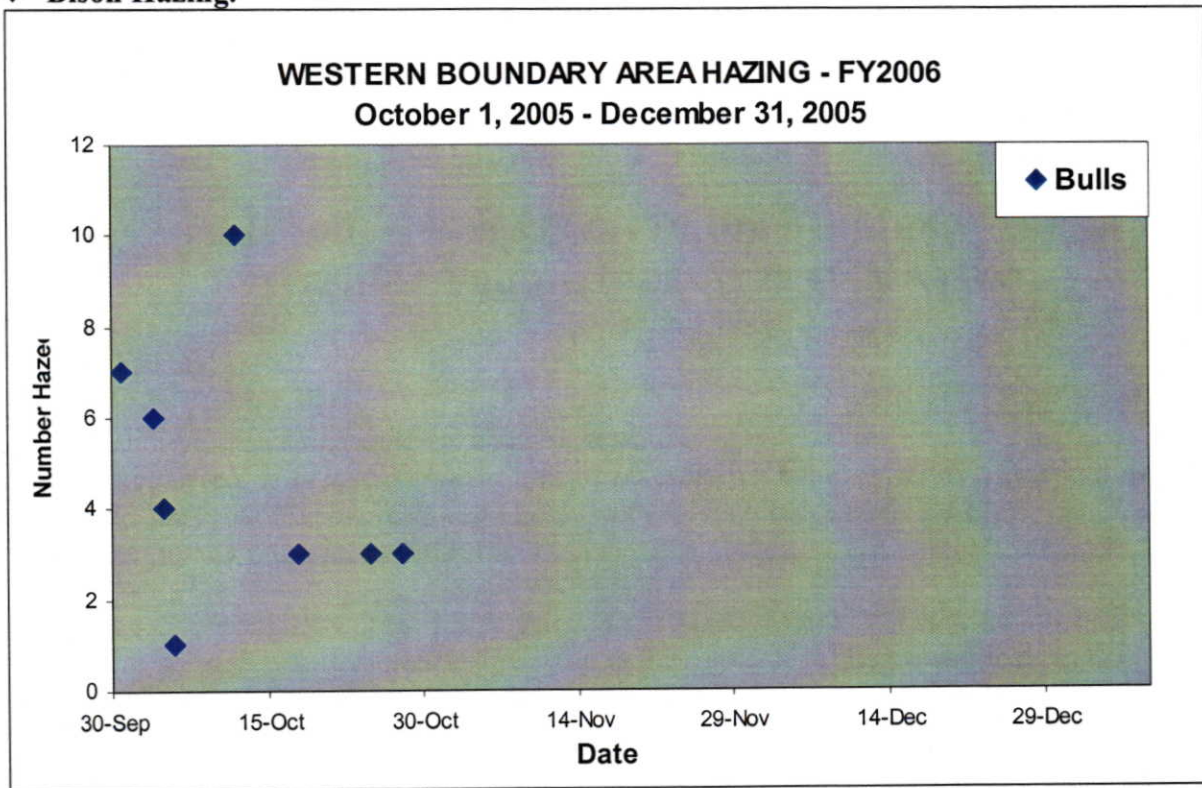
During the first quarter of FY2006, the Department of Livestock (MT DOL) continued to jointly implement the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) with National Park Service, US Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Through implementation of the IBMP, the member agencies were successful in realizing the program objectives (above). Activities during the first quarter of FY2006 included:

- ❖ **Bison Hazing.** Implementation of the IBMP continues to focus on spatial and temporal separation of bison and cattle outside YNP. MT DOL personnel monitored the distribution and abundance of bison in the Montana Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). Hazing operations were conducted on 8 different days in the Western Boundary Area. MT DOL did not conduct any hazing operations in the Northern Boundary Area. The tables below and the graphs on the following page summarize hazing activities in which MT DOL was the lead agency.

Western Boundary Area Hazing October 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005	
# Hazing Operation Days	8
Bull Bison- Successful	29
Bull Bison - Unsuccessful	8
Total Bull Bison Hazed	37
Mixed Bison - Successful	0
Mixed Bison - Unsuccessful	0
Total Mixed Bison Hazed	0
Total Bison Hazed	37

Northern Boundary Area Hazing October 1, 2005 - December 31, 2005	
# Hazing Operation Days	0
Bull Bison- Successful	0
Bull Bison - Unsuccessful	0
Total Bull Bison Hazed	0
Mixed Bison - Successful	0
Mixed Bison - Unsuccessful	0
Total Mixed Bison Hazed	0
Total Bison Hazed	0

❖ **Bison Hazing.**



❖ **Bison Capture.** During the first quarter of FY2006, there were no bison capture operations conducted in the Western Boundary Area of YNP.

❖ **Bison Lethal Removal.** During the first quarter of FY2006, there were no lethal removals of bison in the Western Boundary Area of YNP.

- ❖ **Monitoring Sero-negative Pregnant Bison.** During the first quarter of FY2006, there were no sero-negative, pregnant bison cows radio-collared and implanted with vaginal radio telemetry devices.
- ❖ **Recording and Reporting of Management Activities.** MT DOL recorded and reported on all IBMP activities and management operations in the Western Boundary Area of YNP. Daily activity reports related to management activities are provided to IBMP member agencies following management activities. Similarly, the MT DOL communicated with the National Park Service (NPS) regarding bison management activities in the Northern Boundary Area of YNP, where the NPS is the lead agency within YNP. Additionally, the MT DOL provided media releases regarding IBMP activities.
- ❖ **IBMP Managers Meeting.** Dr. Linfield participated in an IBMP “Managers” meeting October 14, 2005 to discuss and review bison management and issues related to implementation of the IBMP. This meeting focused on the following:
 - Agency management and research updates
 - Proposed bison hunt
 - Bison Quarantine Feasibility study
 - IBMP Status review report
 - IMBP Operating procedures and proposed revisions to accommodate bison hunt
 - USAHA Special Committee of Brucellosis in GYA – Laramie workshop.
- ❖ **IBMP Status Review.** The IBMP status review report was released September 29, 2005. Subsequently, the report was revised November 30, 2005 to clarify terminology used throughout the report regarding “Special Management Areas”.
- ❖ **IBMP – Bison Hunting Demonstration Project.** The MT Board of Livestock approved a bison hunting demonstration project, as an adaptive management adjustment to the IBMP Operating Procedures. Specifically, this project will focus on the use of bison hunting as an additional management tool. A bison hunting season was established by the MT FWP Commission and included the issuance of 25 either-sex bison licenses for each of the following time periods:
 - November 15, 2005 – January 15, 2006
 - January 16, 2006 – February 15, 2006.

During the bison-hunting season, the IBMP agencies did not interfere with ongoing hunting activities and did not actively manage bison. However, the MT DOL continued to monitor bison abundance and distribution. The portion of the bison-hunting period in the first quarter of FY2006 was conducted successfully. No additional active bison management activities, such as hazing or capture, were necessary during this period in the Western Boundary Area.

The table on the following page summarizes bison hunting activity that occurred during the first quarter of FY2006.

Bison Hunting Demonstration Project – FY2006				
#	Date	Location	WBA or NBA	Sex
1	11/15/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
2	11/15/05	Duck Creek, private	WBA	Bull
3	11/18/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
4	11/19/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
5	11/19/05	West Yellowstone	WBA	Bull
6	11/22/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
7	11/25/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
8	11/25/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
9	11/29/05	Horse Butte	WBA	Bull
10	12/2/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
11	12/3/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
12	12/3/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
13	12/3/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
14	12/5/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
15	12/9/05	Duck Creek, private	WBA	Bull
16	12/18/05	Eagle Creek	NBA	Bull
1st Quarter – FY 2006 Summary:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 Bison Harvested (All Bulls) • 12 in Northern Boundary Area (NBA) • 4 in Western Boundary Area (WBA) 				

- ❖ MT DOL consulted with MT FWP and USDA-APHIS-VS regarding the Bison Quarantine Feasibility Study and the associated Environmental Assessment for Phases II & III of the study.
- ❖ MT DOL and USDA-APHIS-VS personnel bled 80 head of cattle on November 3, 2005, which, while grazing in Zone 3 in the West Yellowstone area, were exposed to YNP bison on September 9, 2005. All 80 cows were sero-negative (BAPA).
- ❖ Dr. Linfield attended the USAHA meeting in Hershey, PA. He developed and delivered a presentation on the IBMP and the GYIBC to the Brucellosis Committee.
- ❖ Dr. Linfield attended and participated in a public forum in Gardiner Montana on December 6, 2005. The forum focused on brucellosis in the greater Yellowstone area as well as the ongoing bison hunting demonstration project.
- ❖ Dr. Linfield participated in a meeting with Royal Teton Ranch (RTR) personnel on December 19, 2005 to discuss Northern Boundary Area IBMP operations and potential impacts to RTR.