

Montana Department of Livestock
Bison Management Cooperative Agreement #06-9730-0124-CA

4th Quarter and Final Report of FY2008
July 1 – September 30, 2008

**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:

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 FY2008 included:

Summary Bison Removals Through All Management Actions – State & Tribal Hunt, Slaughter, Bison Quarantine Facility, Lethal Removal. 1730 bison were removed from a Yellowstone National Park population during the 2007-2008 operational season. Primary removal occurred through shipment of bison that exited the park in the Gardiner Basin to slaughter. The hunt resulted in 166 removals and was a combination of aboriginal tribal Hunt harvest as well as state harvest through permits issued by Fish Wildlife & Parks (FWP). Additionally, 112 calves were sent to the bison quarantine facility.

Bison Removed by Management Operations & Hunt, 2007-2008 Operational Season	
63	Hunt/State
64	Hunt/Nez-Perce
39	Hunt/ Salish Kootenai
166	Hunt Total
1,276	Sent to slaughter/Stephens Creek
158	Sent to slaughter/West Side
1,434	Sent to slaughter total

1,600	Total Hunt & Slaughter
8	Lethally removed
10	Capture/shipping related mortalities
112	Bison calves sent to quarantine facility
1,730	Total bison removed from population via hunt, slaughter & quarantine study

- Bison Hazing.** Implementation of the IBMP continues to focus on spatial and temporal separation of bison and cattle outside YNP. Department personnel monitored the distribution and abundance of bison in the Montana Greater Yellowstone Area (GYA). The table below summarize hazing activities on the North and west side and the north side during the third quarter of this cooperative agreement.

MDOL Bison Operations Cumulative Totals 2008			
Date	Hazed	Captured/ Shipped	Details
	1928	57	
6/16/08 West	29		26 mixed bison from West Yellowstone to 7 mile bridge with aid of helicopter 3 bulls from Duck Creek to Cougar Meadows with aid of helicopter
6/14/08 West	26		26 mixed bison from West Yellowstone Airport to Park boundary
6/11/08 West	3		3 bulls from duck creek to Park boundary
5/30/08 West	50		hazed 50+ from Cougar Meadows to Madison Junction with aid of helicopter – All agencies participated
5/29/08 West	166		166 adults and 50 calves were hazed from Horse Butte with the aid of helicopter, and hazed into the park by horseback riders.
05/21/08 West		6	6 Bulls captured at Duck Creek.
05/20/08 West		3	3 bulls captured at Duck Creek.
05/19/08 West	14		Hazing of 14 bison with 7 calves from Madison arm resulted in 10 adults and 4 calves being hazed into park.
05/16/08 West	75		Approximately 75 mixed hazed off of Horse Butte.
05/15/08 West	40 28		1) 40 mixed had hazed from Horse Butte to Cougar Meadows area; 2) 28 scattered bulls hazed from north side of Grayling arm to mouth of Cougar Creek; 3) NPS hazed ? head from Seven Mile Bridge to Madison Junction.
05/14/08 West	95 101		1) 95 mixed head hazed from S. Madison/Baker's Hole area to Seven Mile Bridge area; 2) 101 mixed hazed from back side of Horse Butte to Bake's Hole area
05/13/08 West	1		MDOL received call for assistance from WY Police Department to assist with bull bison in city limites.
05/10/08 (2) West	7 200		1) 7 bulls hazed from Duck Creek area into park; 2) 200 mixed hazed from the Narrows onto Horse Butte interior.
05/04/08 North	17		17 bulls hazed off of RTR, 3 NPS.
05/03/08 (3)	2		1) 2 bulls hazed off of Bill Hoppe's; 2) 14 bulls hazed off of RTR into

North	14 5		park; 3) 5 bulls hazed off of Cutler Meadows into park.
05/02/08 North	25		25 mixed hazed off of Patrick Hoppe's, 2 MDOL, 3 NPS.
04/29/08 North	7		7 bulls hazed off of RTR into Park, 2 MDOL, 2 NPS.
04/29/08 (2) North	1 7		1 bull hazed off of Bill Hoppe's, 1 MDOL, 1 NPS; 2) 7 bulls hazed off of RTR into Park, 2 MDOL, 2 NPS.
04/28/08 (2) West	2		Hazed 1 bull off of 191, then 1 bull from Duck Creek area into park.
04/28/08 West		3	3 bulls captured at Duck Creek, shipped to processing Tuesday 04/29/08.
04/25/08 (2) North	16 38		1) 16 bulls off Hoppes, 2 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted; 2) 38 mixed off of RTR into park, 2 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted.
04/25/08 North	8		8 bulls off of RTR into park. 2 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted.
04/24/08 North	6		Hazed 6 bulls off of RTR into park. 3 MDOL, 1 NPS, all mounted.
04/21/08 North	17		17 mixed hazed off of private property north of Hoppe's (Sporanos). 2 NPS & 2 MDOL mounted, 1 USFS and Gallatin County Sheriff for traffic control.
04/20/08 North	9		Hazed 9 bulls off of RTR into SC capture facility inside the park. 2 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted.
04/19/08 North	8		Hazed 8 bulls off of RTR into park. 2 NPS, 1 MDOL, all mounted.
04/17/08 North	4		4 bulls off of RTR into park. 2 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted.
04/16/08 (2) North	1 9		1) 1 bull off of RTR into park; 2) 9 bulls off of private property/highway across river into park.
04/15/08 North	2		2 bulls off of private property (Hoppes) up Little Trail Creek. 2 MDOL, 1 FWP, all mounted.
04/14/08 North	18		18 bison hazed off of RTR into park. 3 MDOL, 1 FWP.
04/14/08 North	4		4 bison hazed off of Bill Hoppe's. 3 MDOL, 1 FWP, all mounted.
04/13/08 North	21		21 bulls hazed off of RTR into park at request of MDOL. 3 NPS.
04/13/08 North	18		54 mixed hazed off of Bill Hoppe's. 3 MDOL, 1 FWP.
04/12/08 North	6		6 bulls hazed off of RTR into park at request of MDOL. 3 NPS.
04/12/08 North	54		54 mixed hazed off of Bill Hoppe's. 3 MDOL, 1 FWP.
04/11/08 North		1 Lethally removed	1 bull lethally removed at Patrick Hoppe's. A joint MDOL-NPS operation. It was the third time this bull, which had been hazed the previous day, had attempted to take out a rider/riders.
04/11/08 North		5 Lethally removed	5 bulls lethally removed on private property in Yankee Jim Canyon. A joint MDOL, FWP and NPS operation. Had spent most of the previous day attempting to haze bulls south.
04/11/08 North	20		Hazed 20 head off of Patrick Hoppe's up Little Trail Creek. 2 MDOL, 4 NPS, all mounted.
04/11/08 North	80		Hazed 80 mixed head off of RTR. 1 MDOL, 2 NPS, all mounted.
04/11/08 North	60		Hazed 60 head off of Patrick Hoppe's. 2 MDOL, 4 NPS, all mounted.
04/10/08	5		Spent most of the day attempting to haze 5 bulls south. 2 MDOL, 3

North			NPS, etc.
04/10/08 North	1		Hazed one "cranky" bull off of Hoppe's. 2 MDOL, 3 NPS.
04/10/08 West		1	One bull captured at Duck Creek facility. 1 MDOL.
04/09/08 West		4	Four bulls captured at Duck Creek facility. 1 MDOL.
04/09/08 (2) North	120 1		#1) 120 bison hazed off of RTR into park and into SC capture facility. 4 NPS and 1 MDOL, all horseback. #2) 1 lone bull.
04/08/08 West		34	4 MDOL and 2 NPS on snowmobiles, 1 Gallatin County Sheriff's Department deputy, 1 Montana Highway Patrol.
04/08/08 (2) North	51 25		#1) 8 a.m., 51 head hazed off of private property at Patrick Hoppe's. 3 DOL, 1 FWP, 1 NPS, all horseback. #2) 2 p.m., 25 bulls hazed off of Bill Hoppe's. 2 DOL.
04/07/08 North	7		Hazed 7 bulls off of private property at subdivision by Patrick Hoppe's up little Trail Creek.
04/07/08 North	100		Hazed 100 mixed off of RTR into park. 3 DOL, 1 FWP, all horseback.
04/06/08 (2) North	12 45		#1) Hazed 12 off of Patrick Hoppe's pasture. 3 DOL, all horseback. #2) Hazed 45 off of RTR into park. 1 DOL, 2 NPS, all horseback,
04/05/08 (3) North	50 19 3		#1) Hazed 50 mixed off of RTR into park. 1 NPS, 3 DOL, 1 FWP, horseback. #2) Hazed 19 off of RTR into park. 1 NPS, 3 DOL, 1 FWP, horseback. #3) Haze 35 off of RTR into park. 3 DOL, 1 FWP, horseback.
04/04/08 (3) North	53 10 35		#1) Hazed 53 mixed bison from edge of town to Eagle Creek. 3 DOL, 1 FWP, all horseback. #2) Hazed 10 mixed off of Bill Hoppe's pasture up Trail Creek. 2 DOL, 1 FWP, all horseback. #3) Hazed 35 mixed bison off of RTR into park. 1 NPS, 3 DOL, 1 FWP.
04/02/08 North	???	???	Operations conducted but not reported.
04/01/08 (2) North	77		#1) 13 bison hazed off Hoppe pastures up Little Trail Creek; 2 DOL, 1 FWP. #2) 64 mixed bison hazed off of RTR into park; 2 DOL, 1 FWP, 1 NPS, all horseback.

- Brucellosis diagnosis in livestock:** On June 9, NVSL confirmed a case of brucellosis in a heifer from Pray, Montana. The herd was bled on May 15 as part of a voluntary herd plan. Subsequent disease investigation revealed no other cases in cattle. Contractor was used for conducting epidemiology, herd testing, and other activities related to this case of brucellosis. Significant resources from The Department of Livestock Brands Division were also used as part of this disease investigation. The complete epidemiology report is available at the MDOL web site and is enclosed. The conclusion of the epidemiological investigation, is that wild free ranging elk are the source of infection in the 2008 case. New hoofprinting information conducted as part of this investigation also points to wild free ranging elk as the most likely source of the case of brucellosis in livestock diagnosed in May 2007.
- Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP).** The IBMP partners have met on several occasions during the fall of 2008. There have been several significant changes in the IBMP partner meetings including the use of a facilitator to guide the

partner in deliberations, opening the meetings to the public, as well as including a public comment period during each day of the deliberations.

In addition to working on an operations plan for the 2007 2008 season, the IBMP partners are making efforts to comply with the recommendations made by the General Accountability Office. These include:

1. Clearly define measurable objectives to express desired outcomes and refine, revise, or replace the plan and agency operating procedures as needed to reflect these objectives.
2. Systematically apply adaptive management principles, including defining specific scientific and management questions to be answered, identifying the activities to be conducted to answer them, developing a monitoring program to assess the impacts of those activities, and incorporating the results into the bison management plan.
3. To enhance interagency collaboration, promote transparency, and strengthen the agencies' accountability to the American public:
4. Establish a single publicly available repository, on a Web site or at a location easily accessible to the public that includes all documents reflecting decisions made and actions taken with respect to plan implementation.
5. Report annually to Congress on the progress and expenditures related to the plan's measurable objectives once these have been clearly defined.
6. Appoint a group comprised of a representative from each of the partner agencies or designate one of the five interagency partners (perhaps on an annual rotating basis) as a lead entity for plan oversight, coordination, and administration.

For 1 & 2 above, the partners are systematically reviewing the changes that have taken place, either in knowledge, advancement of science, or landownership, since the Record of Decision was signed in December of 2000. These changes become a driving force for adaptively managing the IBMP and most appropriately address the two overarching objectives of the plan: To prevent transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle, as well as to preserve a wild free ranging bison herd.

For 3 & 4 above, the partners are conducting meetings that are noticed, open to, and attended by the public, and accepting public comment during every session. The partners have also designed a document repository on the Internet at www.ibmp.info and are posting meeting materials on a timely and regular basis.

For 5 & 6 above, the IBMP partners have committed to submitting an annual report to Congress, and have identified the National Park Service as the lead agency for submitting this report, and for other administrative needs associated with the execution of the IBMP.

Screen capture of the web site www.ibmp.info.

Interagency Bison Management Plan

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Welcome to the Interagency Bison Management Plan Repository

Updated October 21, 2008

The Interagency Bison Management Plan is a cooperative, multi-agency effort that guides the management of bison and brucellosis in and around Yellowstone National Park. The plan was developed by the National Park Service, USDA-Forrest Service, USDA-Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service, Montana Department of Livestock and Montana Fish Wildlife & Parks. After more than 10 years of negotiations, the plan was adopted in 2000.

Specifically, the IBMP seeks to:

- Maintain a wild, free-ranging bison population;
- Reduce the risk of brucellosis transmission from bison to cattle;
- Manage bison that leave Yellowstone National Park and enter the State of Montana;
- Maintain Montana's brucellosis-free status for domestic livestock.

A complex document that utilizes the principals of adaptive management, the IBMP complies with the diverse mandates of the five partnering agencies and is based on the best available scientific information.

This web site is the official repository for all formal documents associated with the Interagency Bison Management Plan. We hope you find it useful.
