

## YELLOWSTONE BISON UPDATE

April 10, 2018

### WINTER 2017/2018 OPERATIONS SUMMARY

- Approximately 800 bison were captured in the Stephens Creek facility
  - Capture began 2/16/18 and ended 3/11/18
- An additional 800 bison were in the Gardiner Basin area (Mammoth to Yankee Jim Canyon)
  - Over 400 bison outside the park at times
- Removal total and detail (ongoing as of 4/10/18; tribal treaty hunt data still incoming)
  - **TOTAL: 1168** removed from population as of 4/3 (last treaty hunt update)
    - **694** - transferred to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes (Flathead nation)
    - **372** – state and treaty hunt harvest (last update 4/3/18)
    - **98** - entered in to NPS quarantine (73m/25f)
    - **4** - mortality at facility due to injury or illness
- Population project post-calving for summer 2018: 4200-4300

**RATIONALE FOR REMOVAL NUMBERS:** The NPS has been working since 2012 to obtain a summer bison population in the range of 4,200. Removal of 1100-1200 bison in 2017/18 provided the best chance for summer 2018 population of 4,200. Benefits include:

- Fewer future removals by culling, more by hunting.
- Allows NPS/IBMP managers and treaty tribes to focus on better efficacy, optics and management of hunt activities (eliminate firing line at boundary, better distribution of bison over hunt landscape).
- Shift focus of Stephens Creek facility to quarantine operations rather than culling.

### QUARANTINE

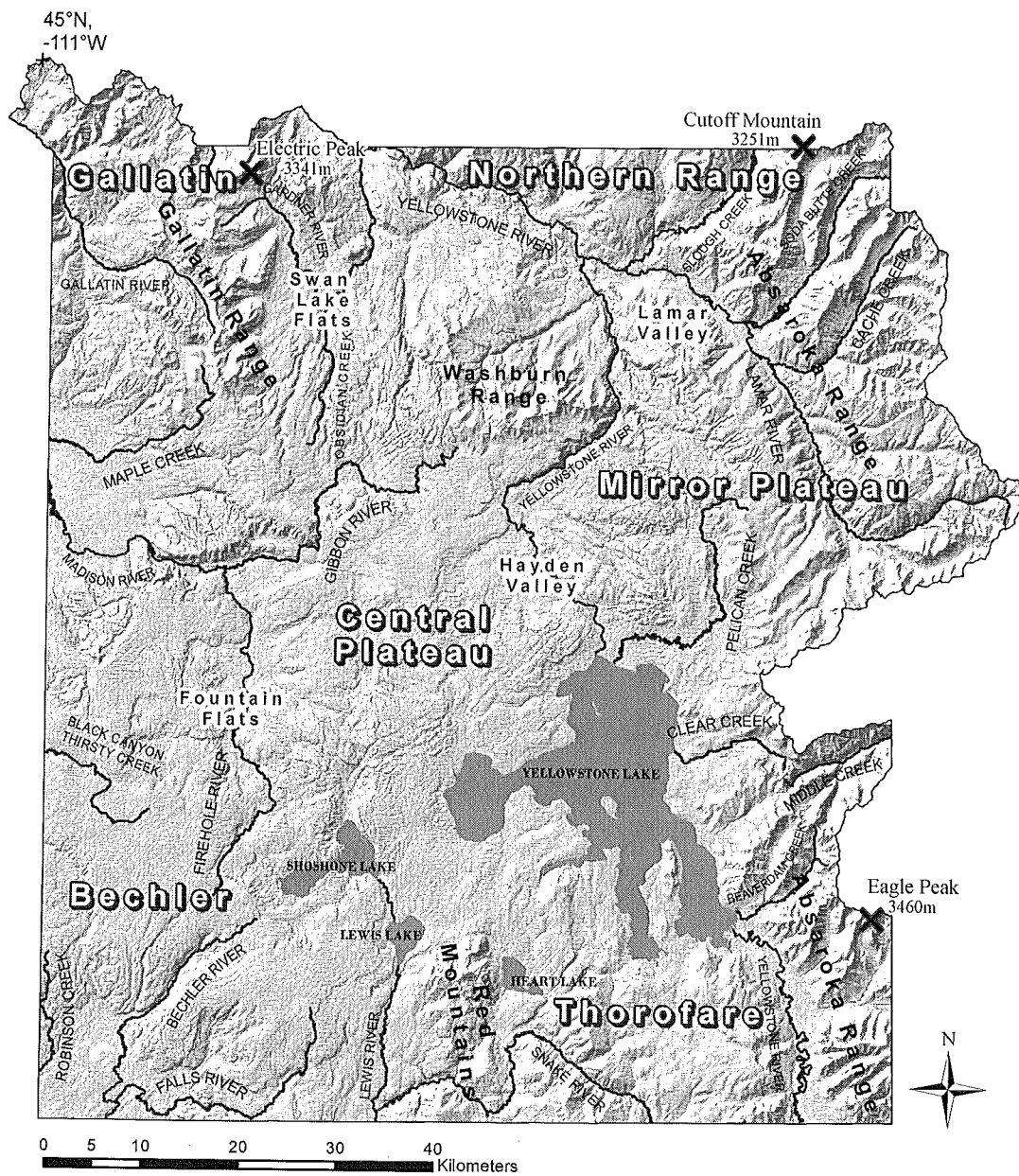
- 98 capture yearling bison put in to Stephens Creek quarantine pastures (73m/25f).
- First sero-testing occurred 4/9/18. Three positive reactors were detected and removed from the quarantine population, leaving 4/10/18 total of 95 yearling bison in program.
- On 4/5/18 YELL staff held conference call with Jack Shere and Brian McCluskey of USDA-APHIS, with these discussion topics and outcomes:
  - **Facility certification** - YELL Stephens Creek is considered certified, letter forthcoming, certification date will be 12/07/17, date of APHIS/State of Montana inspection. Shere indicated that the Ft. Peck facility will be inspected in near future.
  - **Transfer of male yearlings to Ft. Peck in CY2018** - Shere will review data provided by YELL during risk assessment and generate yay/nay on CY2018 transfer of Stephens Creek male yearlings to Ft. Peck.
  - **MOUs/MOAs** - Working on next draft MOU for Stephens Creek with less subjective language for certification of quarantine graduates as brucellosis-free (State of MT).

APHIS wants separate agreements for Stephens Creek (NPS/State/APHIS), Ft. Peck (APHIS/DOI/NPS), and Corwin Springs (APHIS/MDOL/NPS/CSU-NGOs).

- **Corwin** - Shere has directed staff to renew lease for 5 years and to move existing bison (60+) through quarantine as soon as possible in order to free up space for new cohort(s). A risk assessment and facility certification is being completed on Corwin. Agree that a meeting is needed to define clear roles, responsibilities and cost-share with all Corwin partners.
- **Sero-testing lab work** - McCluskey requesting that YELL bison serology be sent to APHIS Natl Vet Services Lab in Iowa, in order to eliminate any potential questions.

#### STEPHENS CREEK SECURITY

(b)7e







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

---

## YELL Bison Update

1 message

---

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

Tue, Apr 10, 2018 at 11:40 AM

To: David Mihalic &lt;david\_mihalic@ios.doi.gov&gt;

Cc: Sue Matica &lt;ue\_matica@nps.gov&gt;, Dan Wenk &lt;dan\_wenk@nps.gov&gt;

Dave -

Dan, who is on the road to a meeting, requested that I transmit the attached YELL Bison Update to you. The second attachment is the latest State of Montana bison hunt update, which provides treaty harvest breakdown by tribe.

Available at numbers in footer for questions or clarification.

Best -

Tim

---

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

---

### 2 attachments

 **YELLOWSTONE BISON UPDATE\_4-10-18.pdf**  
334K **Bison Harvest Update 4-3-2018.pdf**  
55K

## YELLOWSTONE BISON UPDATE

April 10, 2018

### WINTER 2017/2018 OPERATIONS SUMMARY

- Approximately 800 bison were captured in the Stephens Creek facility
  - Capture began 2/16/18 and ended 3/11/18
- An additional 800 bison were in the Gardiner Basin area (Mammoth to Yankee Jim Canyon)
  - Over 400 bison outside the park at times
- Removal total and detail (ongoing as of 4/10/18; tribal treaty hunt data still incoming)
  - **TOTAL: 1168** removed from population as of 4/3 (last treaty hunt update)
    - **694** - transferred to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes (Flathead nation)
    - **372** – state and treaty hunt harvest (*last state update 4/3 attached*)
    - **98** - entered in to NPS quarantine (73m/25f)
    - **4** - mortality at facility due to injury or illness
- Population project post-calving for summer 2018: 4200-4300

**RATIONALE FOR REMOVAL NUMBERS:** The NPS has been working since 2012 to obtain a summer bison population in the range of 4,200. Removal of 1100-1200 bison in 2017/18 provided the best chance for summer 2018 population of 4,200. Benefits include:

- Fewer future removals by culling, more by hunting.
- Allows NPS/IBMP managers and treaty tribes to focus on better efficacy, optics and management of hunt activities (eliminate firing line at boundary, better distribution of bison over hunt landscape).
- Shift focus of Stephens Creek facility to quarantine operations rather than culling.

### QUARANTINE

- 98 capture yearling bison put in to Stephens Creek quarantine pastures (73m/25f).
- First sero-testing occurred 4/9/18. Three positive reactors were detected and removed from the quarantine population, leaving 4/10/18 total of 95 yearling bison in program.
- On 4/5/18 YELL staff held conference call with Jack Shere and Brian McCluskey of USDA-APHIS, with these discussion topics and outcomes:
  - **Facility certification** - YELL Stephens Creek is considered certified, letter forthcoming, certification date will be 12/07/17, date of APHIS/State of Montana inspection. Shere indicated that the Ft. Peck facility will be inspected in near future.
  - **Transfer of male yearlings to Ft. Peck in CY2018** - Shere will review data provided by YELL during risk assessment and generate schedule on CY2018 transfer of Stephens Creek male yearlings to Ft. Peck.
  - **MOUs/MOAs** - Working on next draft MOU for Stephens Creek with less subjective language for certification of quarantine graduates as brucellosis-free (State of MT). APHIS wants separate agreements for Stephens Creek (NPS/State/APHIS), Ft. Peck

(APHIS/DOI/NPS), and Corwin Springs (APHIS/MDOL/NPS/CSU-NGOs). Agreed that Stephens Creek/Ft. Peck agreements done in tandem, Corwin agreement done after meeting with prospective partners.

- **Corwin** - Shere has directed staff to renew lease for 5 years and to move existing bison (60+) through quarantine as soon as possible in order to free up space for new cohort(s). A risk assessment and facility certification is being completed on Corwin. Agree that a meeting is needed to define clear roles, responsibilities and cost-share with all Corwin partners.
- **Sero-testing lab work** - McCluskey requested that YELL bison serology be sent to APHIS Natl Vet Services Lab in Iowa, in order to eliminate any potential questions.

#### STEPHENS CREEK SECURITY

(b) 7e

## 2017-18 HD-385 Bison Hunt Harvest Log (GARDINER)

	Male	Female	(M) Calf	(F) Calf	Unknown	RUNNING TOTAL
	113	66	11	14	72	276
STATE	19	9	0	0	0	State ... 28
CSKT	0	2	0	0	0	CSKT ... 2
NP	56	34	9	12	0	NP ... 111
SB	23	12	0	0	0	SB ... 35
CTU	15	9	2	2	0	CTU ... 28
YN	0	0	0	0	40	YN ... 40
BN	0	0	0	0	32	BN ... 32

## 2017-18 HD-395 Bison Hunt Harvest Log (WEST)

	Male	Female	(M) Calf	(F) Calf	Unknown	RUNNING TOTAL
	26	38	5	6	11	86
STATE	6	14	1	0	0	State ... 21
CSKT	18	18	3	6	0	CSKT ... 45
NP	1	2	1	0	0	NP ... 4
SB	0	2	0	0	0	SB ... 2
CTU	0	0	0	0	0	CTU ... 0
YN	1	2	0	0	5	YN ... 8
BN	0	0	0	0	6	BN ... 6

## 2017-18 Bison Hunt Harvest Log (TOTALS)

	Male	Female	(M) Calf	(F) Calf	Unknown	RUNNING TOTAL
	139	104	16	20	83	362
STATE	25	23	1	0	0	State ... 49
CSKT	18	20	3	6	0	CSKT ... 47
NP	57	36	10	12	0	NP ... 115
SB	23	14	0	0	0	SB ... 37
CTU	15	9	2	2	0	CTU ... 28
YN	1	2	0	0	45	YN ... 48
BN	0	0	0	0	38	BN ... 38

### Additional information:

**Six wounded bison** were dispatched by agency personnel on the north side. **One unattributed/left cow** on west side. **One bison** hit/killed by vehicle. **Three bison** recorded as state harvests were prosecuted as poaching.

NPS reports 663 bison captured and consigned, 130 removed to quarantine, and three capture pen mortalities.

CSKT hunt ended 2/14.

State general season ended 2/15.

Blackfeet season ended 2/15.

Umatilla season ended 3/17.

Nez Perce season ended 3/18.

Shoshone-Bannock season runs year-round.