

IBMP Briefing Statement

Agency: NPS, APHIS, USFS, MFWP, MDOL

Issue: GAO Recommendations

Date: Aug 6, 2008

Background:

In March 2008, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) released the report entitled “Yellowstone Bison Interagency Plan and Agencies’ Management Need Improvement to Better Address Bison-Cattle Brucellosis Controversy,” (GAO-08-291). In the report, the GAO made five recommendations to the Interagency Bison Management Plan.

Current Status:

GAO Recommendation 1: The Secretaries of Agriculture and of the Interior direct the federal agencies to work with the State agency partners to improve the management of Yellowstone bison in the National Park and the State of Montana. Clearly define measurable objectives to express desired outcomes and refine, revise, or replace the plan and agency operating procedures as needed to reflect these goals and objectives.

GAO Recommendation 2: The Secretaries of Agriculture and of the Interior direct the federal agencies to work with the State agency partners to improve the management of Yellowstone bison in the national park and the state of Montana. Systematically apply adaptive management principles, including defining specific scientific and management decisions 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.

GAO Recommendation 3: To enhance interagency collaboration, promote transparency, and strengthen the agencies’ accountability to the American public: 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.

GAO Recommendation 4: To enhance interagency collaboration, promote transparency, and strengthen the agencies’ accountability to the American public: Report annually to Congress on the progress and expenditures related to the plan’s measurable objectives once these have been clearly defined.

GAO Recommendation 5: To enhance interagency collaboration, promote transparency, and strengthen the agencies’ accountability to the American public: Appoint a group comprising 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.

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