

April 13, 2010

Commissioner Marty Malone,

As requested, the following is a report on the Bison activities in Gardiner on April 12 & 13, 2010.

Last evening at about 2100 hours, my wife and I had just returned home from a walk around the town of Gardiner. I sat on the couch and my house began to shake. At first I thought it was a small earthquake. My exterior motion light turned on and I heard the neighbor's dogs barking so I looked outside and saw two bull bison running into my front yard. My neighbor called me and said the two bison were in his yard near his dog kennel but they were now in my yard. He said it sounded like they were pushing against my fence.

I got a flashlight and stepped out my front door. I looked around the corner of my house and one of the bulls saw me and immediately came at me. I stepped back into my house. I watched the bulls through my living room window and waited for them to move away from my front door. I quietly stepped outside again and watched them as they were grazing on my lawn. They were breathing heavily and appeared to be highly agitated. Both bulls had blue paint stripes on their bodies. (I had been advised earlier in the day of a research project by APHIS to collect semen samples from bulls and suspected these bulls had been marked by them.)

One of the bulls started making his way around the side of my house and was headed for the fence around my back yard. I did not want them to get in there. I ran to my patrol vehicle to get a better flashlight. One of the bulls saw me and came at me so I got into my patrol vehicle. My wife had stepped out the front door and the other bison started moving in her direction. My neighbor and I saw this and yelled for my wife to get back in the house. The bull ran through a small opening between my fence and the front porch where my wife had been standing. The bulls then started moving down the road. I followed them to the end of the road with my patrol vehicle. I called and left a message for DOL Officer Jeff Mount to call me. I would have advised the Gardiner area deputy but we did not have one on duty last night.

The next morning at about 0640 hours I saw four bull bison grazing in another neighbor's yard. When I went to work at about 0710 hours the bulls had moved down Gardiner View Road. They appeared to be agitated, their tails standing straight up, and running at times. I made contact with Yellowstone dispatch and was advised a Warden with FWP had been in Gardiner last night because the bulls had caused some property damage (broken fence and garage window) in another neighborhood. I contacted DOL Officer Jeff Mount, FWP Captain Sam Sheppard, APHIS Ryan Clark, and NPS Ranger Brian Helms. I advised them of the situation and need to get these bison out of town in the interest of public safety. As FWP was working on resources I monitored the bison. They moved up the Jardine Road on Leach's property. I made contact with Mr. Leach and advised him of the

bison and their activities. He said he had no problem with them being there. I continued to watch the bison and they moved into a large field near Chapman's.

I met with Ryan Clark and called Captain Sheppard. My thoughts were as long as the bison were away from the populated areas they would be fine and may have an opportunity to settle down. Captain Sheppard advised me he was having a Warden respond to Gardiner to monitor the bison.

I have not had an opportunity to fully examine my fences for damage. I did notice an area of wire fence appeared to have been stretched and a top rail had been knocked off. A section of my cedar fence had been knocked down by bison a few weeks earlier. Down the street I observed two top rails of chain link fence had been damaged. I made contact with FWP Warden Jim Miller. He was responding to Gardiner to monitor the bison and survey the damage.

Scott Hamilton  
Park County Undersheriff