

Management and Operations Plans for Yellowstone Bison

Winter 2013



Winter 2012

- 3,700 bison (2,300 north; 1,400 central)
- Recommended removal of 330 bison
- Mild winter; little migration out of park
- Hunters removed <30 bison; no shipping
- Little wolf predation (prefer elk)
- Little winter-kill (starvation)



Current Situation

- 4,200 bison (2,600 northern; 1,600 central)
- Forecast : Average winter
- Developed population and migration models
- Predicted migration:
 - Average snow: >300 north and 400 west
 - Above-average snow: >1,400 north and west



Management Plan

- **Manage abundance and composition**
 - Progress towards ~3,000-3,500 bison
 - Equal sex ratio and herd numbers
 - If possible, avoid large-scale removals
- **Hunting/selective culls of infectious bison**
 - Annual culls of ~400 bison for 5 years



Plan for Winter 2013

- Remove ~450 bison
 - Primarily females from northern herd
- Initially use hunting in Montana
- After hunting, ship infectious bison to slaughter up to removal objectives
 - American Indian Tribes
- Use quarantine/research if feasible



Issues

- **Governor's Executive Order**
 - If no reduction in 2013 → ~4,800 bison in 2014
- **Contingency plans – mass migration**
 - Increased tolerance; Haze/hold bison; Increased removals?
- **Harvest considerations**
 - Hunt west of Yellowstone River
 - Cow/calf hunts
 - Late season hunts
- **Start planning at the end of winter**

Revised Operations Plan

- Outlines actions to implement IBMP
- Proposes desired population conditions based on IBMP and NPS mission
- Incorporates 2005-2012 adaptive adjustments



Questions?

← ONE WAY

