

Ranger Jason Brey  
Hebgen Lake Ranger District  
P.O. Box 520  
West Yellowstone, MT 59758

November 21, 2017

Dear Mr. Brey,

We the landowners and residents of the upper Gallatin Canyon have written the enclosed letter to share our concerns about bison coming to our area with Governor Bullock. As your agency is involved with the management of bison in the upper Gallatin Canyon we wanted to share our letter with your agency directly.

Sincerely,

Eva and Duncan Patten, Black Butte Ranch

Kurt and Melissa Puckett, Covered Wagon Ranch

Linda Miller, Jim McGuiness, Daphne White, Elkhorn Ranch

Kim, Kelly, and Kameron Kelsey, Nine Quarter Circle Ranch

John Richardson, Three Twenty Guest Ranch

Sandy Martin, Trappers Cabin Ranch

The Honorable Steve Bullock  
Governor of Montana  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 200801  
Helena MT 59620-0801

November 21, 2017

Dear Governor Bullock,

As residents of the upper Gallatin Canyon we understand the special responsibilities that come with living adjacent to some of Montana's most spectacular forest, wilderness, and Yellowstone National Park. We too know that bison are wild animals and understand their need to migrate out of the confines of Yellowstone National Park. We respect your decision to allow them to naturally move into the Upper Gallatin Canyon should they choose to do so. Today, we write you with our concerns related to the management of naturally migrating bison, and our opposition to the artificial introduction of a herd of bison into the upper Gallatin.

First, we want to state that we are unified in our opposition to the artificial introduction of bison into the Taylor Fork area. Recently at meeting and field trip sponsored by the Interagency Bison Management Plan Partners there was talk of introducing a herd of bison into this area. We are landowners and ranchers in the expanded bison tolerance zone in the Gallatin Canyon and we are uniformly opposed to the introduction of bison to this area by any artificial means including trucking or hazing.

Secondly, when some bison naturally migrate into the upper Gallatin Canyon we have concerns for the safety of our families and the long term viability of our ranches. We ask that you and your agencies work with us to make the migration of bison into the area a success for the bison and safe for the residents.

- Bison like all visitors will travel to this area via the Highway 191 corridor. This highway is heavily used by truckers and tourists, and our families and guests travel this road daily. Bison in this roadway will cause accidents resulting in injuries and deaths to people and the bison. Significant changes to speed limits with meaningful enforcement will be required when bison are present.
- In the past bison have destroyed our fences and other private property and killed livestock. There are many miles of fencing on our private lands and grazing allotments. We do not know what would be required to build fences to keep the bison out and livestock in, but such fences will surely cost more than the current fences and will not be a one-time expense but go on as long as bison are in the area. The cost of fencing for bison will be beyond what we could afford.
- Four of the six ranches in the area are commercial guest ranches that have been in operation in their current locations for the last century. They are dependent on grazing

allotments. We are concerned that the bison will threaten the continued access to area grazing allotments.

- The Taylor Fork area has heavy recreational use with little supervision by the National Forest rangers or the local police. The presence of bison will only exacerbate this problem.
- Taylor Fork is one of the State's premier habitats for native westslope cutthroat trout. A herd of grazing bison, if not heavily managed to keep them out of the riparian area, will severely degrade this valuable fishery.

We will need help from the many agencies of the State of Montana and Yellowstone National Park in making the migration of bison into our area a success for the bison, the residents of the area, and the people of Montana.

Sincerely,

Eva and Duncan Patten, Black Butte Ranch

Kurt and Melissa Puckett, Covered Wagon Ranch

Linda Miller, Jim McGuiness, Daphne White, Elkhorn Ranch

Kim, Kelly, and Kameron Kelsey, Nine Quarter Circle Ranch

John Richardson, Three Twenty Guest Ranch

Sandy Martin, Trappers Cabin Ranch