

# Summary Report from the Interagency Bison Management Plan Meeting December 1, 2016



**First draft presented 5 December 2016 by meeting facilitator Scott Bischke**

The following summary report reflects activities at the December 1, 2016 meeting of the Interagency Bison Management Plan (IBMP) Partners, held at Chico Hot Springs in Pray, MT. This report comes from the flip chart notes of facilitator Scott Bischke<sup>1</sup>. The report will be marked “Draft” until formal Partner agreement before the start of their next meeting. The nine Partner attendees were Don Herriott (APHIS), Leonard Gray (CSKT), Ervin Carlson (ITBC), Mike Honeycutt (MBOL), Martin Zaluski (MDOL), Sam Sheppard (MFWP), Quincy Ellenwood (NPT), Daniel Wenk (NPS-YNP), and Mary Erickson (USFS-CGNF). In addition to those at the deliberative table, ~25 staff members from across IBMP organizations and ~55 members of the public were present at various times during the day.

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<sup>1</sup> MountainWorks Inc.; [scott@eMountainWorks.com](mailto:scott@eMountainWorks.com)

## Action items identified

Table 1.—Action items identified during this meeting

#	Who	What	By when
1	SB	Post the Aug 2016 meeting report to the website as final	ASAP
2	MDOL, all Partners	MDOL to write and drive completion of 2016/17 Winter Operations Plan, including soliciting and taking input from all Partners	Both complete by Dec 31 (see timelines in report below)
3	Partners, MDOL, SB	Write and drive completion of 2016 Annual Report, including soliciting and taking input from all Partners, per the schedule provide in the report below. Final Partner input required by Dec 10.	Both complete by Dec 31 (see timelines in report below)
4	SB	Connect with all Partners to let them know the email addresses he has for their group and Partners will respond back with additions or removals.	Before next meeting
5	SB	(See addendum at the end of this report) The Partners assigned the facilitator to work with MDOL to incorporate the ERRATUM information into the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan, then repost it to the website. This is a carryover from the past meeting due to some confusion about how to handle revision control when there is no Partner signature process.	ASAP

<Facilitator’s note: a few items were moved from their location on the meeting agenda due to time constraints. The report that follows, however, presents all items in order as they are shown on the agenda.>

## Agreeing to previous meeting minutes

The meeting started with introductions of Partners, staff, and all members of the general public in attendance, followed by a short review of IBMP history. Then the facilitator asked if there were any objections or changes to the draft meeting report from the August 2016 meeting, and noted the report has been available in draft for review since shortly after that meeting. No objections were brought forth. Thus the facilitator, per Partner Protocols, is to post the August 2016 meeting notes to IBMP.info as “final” (\*\* action item 1).

## Completing the 2016-17 Winter Operations Plan

As part of its role as IBMP Lead Partner for 2016, MDOL has the responsibility of creating the 2016-17 Winter Operations Plan. That Plan guides on-the-ground operations by IBMP agencies.

### CHANGES MADE TO DRAFT PLAN DURING THE MEETING

Dr. Emily Kaleczyc built the first draft of this year’s plan on last year’s plan and provided that first draft to Partners in early September. Emily took Partners comments/edits back and rewrote the plan to incorporate those comments/edits. Then later in the fall Emily provided a second chance for Partners to review the plan and provide further comments and/or edits.

Coming into the meeting, then, Emily was only aware of roughly a half dozen unresolved places where Partners had described issues they had with the draft Winter Ops Plan. With the help of the facilitator she stepped through those conflicts one-by-one. The Partners held discussion on, and came to resolution on, each

of the areas of conflict. Changes to be made to the draft Winter Ops Plan as of this meeting follow (facilitator's note: items below refer to the NPS-provided review/red-lining of the most recent draft Winter Ops Plan as of this meeting; this draft Winter Ops Plan is available from the facilitator but will not be posted to IBMP.info to avoid confusion with the *final* Winter Ops Plan):

- (1) Page 3.—add reference to say that Yakama Tribe plans to exercise its treaty hunting rights; run the reference by Sam Sheppard to verify verbiage is OK. The Yakama Nation representatives provided several additional locations within the winter operations plan that they would like to be included in language about tribal treaty hunting.
- (2) Page 4.—Delete the sentence: “In accordance with state and federal regulations and limiting the risk of brucellosis transmission some bison may be transferred to research, quarantine, or slaughter facilities in Montana or elsewhere, including to tribal nations.”
- (3) Page 9.—Likewise delete sentence: “Additionally, following the restrictions of state and federal laws and in situations that do not pose a disease transmission risk, NPS may choose to ship captured bison to research or quarantine facilities.”
- (4) Partners directed Emily to review entire document to assure quarantine language is consistent given the changes agreed to in (2) and (3) above.
- (5) Page 6.—Accept the NPS change as requested to remove “including upper portions of Hellroaring and Slough Creeks” so that the paragraph now reads: “In addition to the year-round tolerance on the west side specified in the Governor’s 2015 EA decision, unlimited numbers of bison are allowed to occupy the Eagle Creek/Bear Creek area, Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area, the Monument Mountain Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, and in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness year-round without interference.”
- (6) Page 10.—Strike the sentence “MDOL will aid in issuing the appropriate transport permits to allow the animals to be shipped within Montana or to other states.”
- (7) Page 10.—In the first full paragraph, APHIS and NPS to talk about language regarding sample collection from slaughter facilities and return any change in language to Emily. If they do not reply to Emily by Dec 8, the Winter Ops Plan will remain as is.
- (8) Page 8.—NPT and NPS to meet to discuss some language around numbers of bison to be hunted versus trapped. If they do not reply to Emily by Dec 8, the Winter Ops Plan will remain as is.

## DISCUSSION REVIEW

Over the course of this ~2 hour session, much discussion was held by the Partners on a number of topics. The most prevalent topics of discussion are highlighted below:

- *Inclusion of language in the Winter Operations Plan concerning quarantine.*—There was an additional discussion of operational quarantine in the afternoon, but this morning discussion focused on the inclusion of the sentence, “In accordance with state and federal regulations and limiting the risk of brucellosis transmission some bison may be transferred to research, quarantine, or slaughter facilities in Montana or elsewhere, including to tribal nations.” (pg. 4 of the draft Winter Ops Plan). NPS expressed concern with the possible implications of including state and federal law in this section given the preference to treat bison as wildlife and the dispute regarding the interpretation of Montana Code Annotated 81-2-120. It was noted that without this sentence (and corresponding language later in the document) any transfers of bison to quarantine or research would be outside the scope of the Winter Operations Plan; however, the plan could potentially be amended later, if necessary. The partners eventually reached consensus to remove language concerning quarantine from the 2017 Winter Operations Plan.
- *Are bison wildlife or livestock?*—MH clarified that under Montana law bison can be wildlife, domestic, or feral. Yellowstone bison are considered wildlife. DH noted that APHIS has authority over domestic livestock. He said when you capture bison the interpretation of whether the animals are wildlife or livestock becomes less clear. PJ pointed out that a state court had ruled Yellowstone bison sent to the Fort Peck Reservation following the quarantine feasibility study were wildlife.

- *How were diseased animals allowed to go to Colorado State University?*—MH said that prior movements to Colorado may have also been covered by the prohibitions in 81-2-120. He said he had made the same statement to ITBC and its representatives at a meeting earlier in the fall.
- *Access to animals or tissue or similar sample for research.*—Partners discussed the recognition that there are not always enough animals to meet researcher requests. Partitioning those animals can be troublesome: some would have one group get all its sample needs met with others getting potentially no samples; others prefer making sure each research groups gets some samples, albeit fewer per availability than they might have requested. The point was made that the animals don't belong to anyone. A counterpoint was made that they do belong to the tribal entities once the Park signs them over. Another sticking point is the potential for overcrowding or chaos at private slaughter houses. Most seemed to agree that the key to the situation was and remains good communication, coordination, and cooperation between the players. One key statement that seemed to apply to all, "We don't want exclusivity, we just don't want to be excluded." This debate was not resolved during the meeting and concerned partners agreed to work together on any changes needed to the language in the Winter Operations Plan.
- *Addition of treaty hunting tribes.*—Virgil Lewis stood for the Yakama Tribe to say that the tribe planned to exercise its treaty hunting rights and that they had so informed the Governor of Montana. Three others—the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre tribes at Fort Belknap and the Blackfeet—also stated their plan to exercise treating hunting rights. Partners decided not to add reference to the latter three in the Winter Ops Plan (see #1 in the previous section) as it wasn't established that any of the three had yet provided notice to the Governor of Montana.
- *Hunting safety concerns.*—A short discussion was held regarding the fact that hunter safety—already a concern—will be further jeopardized if there are more hunters in the field as per the Yakama (and potentially other tribes) joining the bison hunt. This statement was made: "The reality of the landscape is that we have reached the point of staff safety tolerance. So we can't just hunt more and more and more."
- *Hunt numbers.*—A number of questions that have been asked previously were presented: How do we achieve our population reduction goals? How do we decide what numbers will be allowed past the Stephens Creek trap? How do we get bison to utilize new areas of tolerance? How many bison will be trapped? When will bison exit the Park and how many will exit the Park? Why can't we trap later? Why not trap bison in the Lamar Valley and move them to the northern boundary? Why can't we go back to numbers and also specific dates as is done in the Pacific NW with salmon?  
Some responses: Last year we trapped late and it did not work. We did not get the number of animals captured we needed to meet our goal of a decreasing population. It is possible with more hunters and when there are mild winters that state and tribal hunters will need to accept lower limits and likelihood of success. Conversely, history has shown that >5000 animals in the Park can lead to many issues outside of the Park as the bison are driven to out-migrate (e.g., safety, breaching into Zone 3). Bison migration, largely a reaction to snow, forage, and population density, cannot be as readily predicted as salmon.
- *Importance of Winter Ops calls.*—It was pointed out that an important source of information for hunters, managers, and safety personnel are the Winter Ops calls. SS said that MFWP would again coordinate these calls and that the calls would start soon.



Figure 1.—Roughly 90 people attended this meeting of the IBMP Partners.

### **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION OF 2016/17 WINTER OPS PLAN**

- Dec 1—today’s discussion
- Dec 8—Final input from Partners to Lead Partner
- Dec 13—Lead Partner completes Winter Ops Plan
- Dec 14—Electronic signing request sent to Partners
- Dec 30—Electronic signing complete
- Dec 31—2016-17 Winter Ops Plan posted to [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info)

The Partners noted that their past contingency if consensus could not be reached on the Winter Ops Plan (i.e., not signed by all groups) was to use the last signed version of Winter Ops (i.e., last year’s version).

**\*\*Action item 2\*\***: MDOL to write and drive completion of 2016/17 Winter Operations Plan, including soliciting and taking input from all Partners.

## **Summary on the 2016 fire activity in and near Yellowstone National Park**

Roy spoke about the fires of 2016 in the Park. He noted that there were four major fires within the Park in the summer of 2016: Maple, Fawn, Buffalo, and Central.

Roy’s thoughts included reflections on the level of burn seen in areas previously burned in the major fire year of 1988, on bison use of grazed areas, and on speed of forest and grassland regeneration. Roy cited the results of several studies that compared grass regrowth post fire, looking across several time horizons.



Figure 2.—Roy Renkin spoke to Partners, staff, and public about the 2016 fire season in Yellowstone.

Roy’s full presentation can be found on the IBMP website at the meeting page: <http://ibmp.info/Library/20161201/20161201.php>.

## Continuing discussion of Northern Range habitat assessments

Chris Germania, NPS scientist

Chris addressed the status of the Northern Range of Yellowstone National Park, focusing on the inside of the Park. His talk was part of on-going Partners review of range conditions inside and around YNP, and how they might impact, or be impacted by, bison populations.

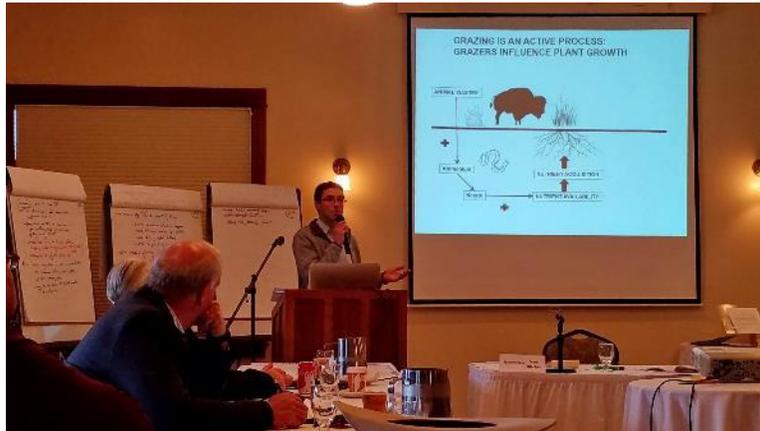


Figure 4.—Chris Germania spoke about the difference between standing crop (shoot biomass) and production (rate of increase of loss of biomass), and importance of understanding that difference.

Chris described aboveground net primary production (ANPP) as the foundation upon which all creatures—insects, birds, herbivores, carnivores—survive. He noted that grazers directly impact plant growth by changing such things as the water balance on the soil, and the amount of sunlight reaching plants. Additionally, grazers leave behind nutrients in the form of their liquid and solid wastes. Chris talked about bison migration and how that movement across the landscape impacts production. He provided five key points

- (1) Production is the amount of new plant tissue made during a growing season. Production is a key indicator of ecosystem health, because it is the basic component of food for all higher organisms in the ecosystem
- (2) Grazing increased production on wintering and transitional areas used by bison in northern Yellowstone. With 4,000 bison in northern Yellowstone, grazing intensities were moderate (10-40%) with a period of the growing season where no grazing occurred
- (3) Bunchgrass-shrubland communities on summering areas in northern Yellowstone that were grazed were less productive than ungrazed areas. Grazing intensities were 20-50%, but areas were used by bison throughout the growing season. Continued use and the effects of trampling and wallowing reduced productivity. These areas provide some indication that grazing at similar intensity for long periods of time may not be sustainable.
- (4) Production was maintained under high grazing (50-70%) in sod-forming, wet vegetation communities with 4,000 bison in northern Yellowstone. These areas were repeatedly grazed throughout summer and shoot biomass at the end of the growing season averaged 50% of ungrazed areas.
- (5) Grazing had positive feedbacks on production and food quality. Grazing improved nitrogen availability which likely contributed to sustaining/enhancing ANPP under grazing. Grazing improved food quality by reducing shoot biomass, increasing crude protein, and in some cases, lowering the amount of indigestible material in plant tissue.

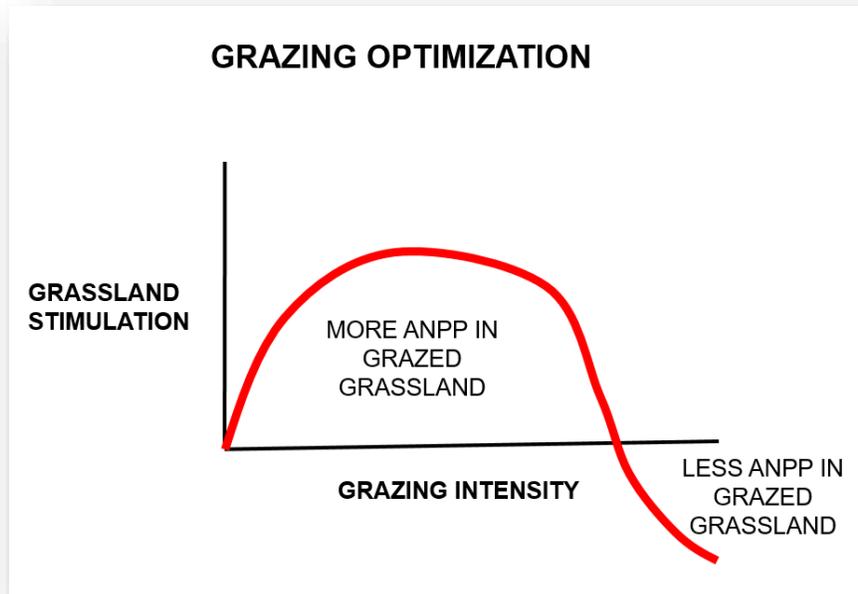


Figure 4.—Figure showing that some level of grazing intensity can stimulate grassland aboveground net primary productivity (ANPP); too much can depress it.

Chris closed by listing the next steps for his rangeland work for the Park:

- Identify conditions that are unsustainable for key vegetation communities
- Perform greenhouse and field manipulation experiments that simulate disturbance
- Expand monitoring to include production, consumption, abundance, and composition
- Assess how much sites are moving towards unsustainable conditions

Chris's full presentation can be found on the IBMP website at the meeting page: <http://ibmp.info/Library/20161201/20161201.php>.

## Review and discussion of quarantine protocols

Operational quarantine can provide a way to move bison away from YNP, thereby decreasing Park bison populations and spreading YELL bison genetics out beyond YELL. A fundamental stumbling block with moving bison away from YNP for operational quarantine is Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 81-2-120. As interpreted by MDOL legal counsel, 81-2-120 says that MDOL may not allow animals that potentially are infected by *Brucella abortus* to travel around the state outside of the DSA. Thus, they cannot allow bison to travel to the in-place quarantine facility at the Fort Peck reservation that was specifically built to put animals through APHIS-approved quarantine procedures. The Fort Peck site has the ability to put animals through quarantine to be proven brucellosis free. However, those animals cannot travel to Fort Peck until they are proven brucellosis free. Hence a *Catch-22* exists. APHIS clarified that the published bison quarantine feasibility study clearly lays out procedures and requirements for bison to graduate from quarantine and be considered disease free.

Forty animals remain in the Stephens Creek trap. Higher level managers in DOI and USDA than at the table have debated the operational quarantine quandary. Per DH and MZ, these animals likely could move within the DSA. But no such facility exists. If one did, according to MZ, alternative 2 of the quarantine EIS currently underway could be employed. As such, questions were asked regarding whether the Corwin Springs facility (inside the DSA) could be used for operational quarantine. A statement was made that while it meets the

containment specifications necessary for quarantine, the facility's limited capacity makes it inappropriate for an effective operational quarantine. Separately, a statement was made that switching to a facility inside the DSA (Corwin Springs or otherwise) would change the preferred alternative (Fort Peck facility) in the Operational Quarantine EIS.

A suggestion was put forward that since NPS is federal, and the Fort Peck Tribe is a sovereign nation, that parties could seek a federal preemption to state law that says the bison cannot be transferred to the Fort Peck facility.

## **Partner briefings/updates—status of ongoing activities related to Yellowstone bison & brucellosis**

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*< Facilitator's note: Partners stated that several items listed in the agenda had no update, so they are not reported on here. Also, as quarantine was discussed at length earlier in the day, it is not presented here. >*

### **Status of new Bison Management Plan/EIS—Jennifer Carpenter**

- NPS-State of Montana (MDOL and MFWP) are co-leads on plan with five cooperating agencies: CSKT, CTUIR, ITBC, NPT, USFS).
- NOI was released in March 2015.
- A 90-day review period was provided for 6 or 7 concepts for the EIS that were presented. ~8800 comments were received and have now been reviewed.
- The Institute on Environmental Conflict Resolution has completed their interviews with cooperating partners and provided feedback on the results to the state and NPS via a webinar.
- There is a long way to go still in part due to tough issues like quarantine.
- Web information on the EIS can be found at [www.parkplanning.NPS.gov/yellbisonplan](http://www.parkplanning.NPS.gov/yellbisonplan).

### **Status of lawsuit regarding access to Stephens Creek facility—Jennifer Carpenter**

The lawsuit includes two plaintiffs. The lawsuit premise is that the plaintiffs have a first amendment right to access the Stephens Creek facility at all times. The lawsuit has been denied multiple times with a finding that the two did not have standing.

Separately, JC noted that NPS was planning a public viewing of the Stephens Creek facility. Interested parties should talk to Jody Lyle of NPS.

### **Status of FWS petition to list bison under ESA—PJ White**

In 2015, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a negative 90-day determination on two citizen's petitions to list a distinct population segment of Yellowstone-area bison as threatened or endangered. Three groups recently sued over the agencies decision and currently USFWS is in the process of responding. PJ said that to his knowledge no date has been set for trial. The issues include lack of historical habitat, concerns about genetic diversity, and contentions regarding the numbers of animals that should exist in the Northern and Central herds.

### **Update on NAS review of brucellosis in wildlife in the GYA—Don Herriott**

The National Academy of Sciences panel has completed the final draft of their findings which have been sent out for anonymous review. After those reviews are complete and any modification made, the final report will be released. The expected release date for the final report is now spring of 2017. (Meeting notes and project announcements are available on the NAS website at <http://dels.nas.edu/Study-In-Progress/Revisiting-Brucellosis-Greater-Yellowstone/DELS-BANR-14-03?bname=banr>).

### **Status of North-side habitat study—Mary Erickson**

ME described that Dr. Marlow's team had completed their field work on the North side of YNP and she expects that a final report on the work will be available in 2017. CGNF has requested that Dr. Marlow replicate the work on forestlands on the West side of YNP, as well.

**Update on bison coexistence/fencing project—Shana Drimal**

The project goal is to increase or maintain public tolerance to bison outside YNP through the funding (cost share up to \$1000) and technical assistance to build bison exclusion fencing. The effort continues on with new funding. They are looking for projects and ask everyone to spread the word.

**Proposed removal of *Brucella abortus* from the CDC select agents list—Marty Zaluski**

A federal panel of experts responding to a presidential directive has recommended removing *Brucella abortus* from select agents list. It is expected that removal from the list would open the door to research into development of a *B. abortus* vaccine.

**Update on proposed management action to vaccinate bison in the western management area—Marty Zaluski**

This work is under consideration.

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**Is there an on-going role for the Citizens' Working Group (CWG)**

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Matt Skoglund, who formerly served as co-lead of the CWG, provided a brief history of the ground work, formation, operations, and output of the CWG. That output came in the form of ~30 recommendations to the Partners in November of 2011.

This session, requested by ITBC, was set up as a simple discussion of possibilities with no intent to settle on reformation (or not) of CWG. The thoughts expressed were frank and included both positive and negative statements about convening another CWG, as well as questions posed. A short summary hitting on key points follows:

- Yes there is interest. CWG presence could help keep past CWG ideas alive. So yes, start with the recommendations from 4 years ago as the base, but then the focus should be looking forward. Meetings would be open and perhaps the same number of CWG meetings as IBMP meetings (3 per year).
- It would be useful if the CWG had a time-slot at each IBMP meeting (assuming they had items to report back on).
- The CWG would need to be empowered; they would want to have tasks and have valuable input to the process, not simply exist to exist. No one wants to waste their time. Partners could give the CWG challenges.
- Could the CWG serve as a barometer for public sentiment about IBMP work and direction?
- Could the CWG do mediation over items of contention under the IBMP? So often the IBMP is arrives at an impasse—perhaps the CWG could help.
- CWG is valuable even if only because it gets people together to talk who don't necessarily agree with each other.
- Important to consider that the CWG is not an advisory committee and thus Partners cannot treat them as consultants having priority over tribal (and other) commitments.
- Several members of the public expressed interest in serving on a new CWG as long as they had a specific goal and project for their work.
- The CWG provides better, more useful input to the Partners than 3 min public testimony. It is a good place to meet and share ideas. Plus right now all we as public can really do is comment on things *after* they've been decided.
- We do not favor the CWG as it seems to put NGOs ahead of tribal interests. Tribal interests are trust responsibilities, nation-to-nation treaties so we do not want the CWG getting in the way. Recall for us IBMP meeting are not consultations; we have to report back to our tribal councils.
- Yes the CWG is a good idea but it has not met its full potential. That can only be done if we can get the livestock interests more involved.
- If the CWG reconvenes, do they need a facilitator? Could they involve tribes? Could they involve people outside the region via tele-conferencing?

To close the discussion, Matt made a proposal to the Partners that the CWG convene on their own to gauge interest, set possible goals given interest, and report back to the IBMP Partners at their spring meeting. That proposal was accepted.

## **Preparation of Annual Report**

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Emily Kaleczyc reported the Annual Report to be perhaps 98% complete, relative to feedback she has received and incorporated into the document. The facilitator reminded the Partners of the guidelines for the Annual Report as stated in their Partner Protocols:

- Completion deadline for the Annual Report is Dec 31, 2016
- The Annual Report does not have to be signed by the Partners
- Lead Partner (MDOL for 2016) is responsible to drive completion
- Lead Partner has final say in any disputes

Emily and the facilitator then provided the following timeline for completion of the Annual Report:

- Final Partner input to MDOL by Dec10
- MDOL completes Annual Report by Dec 30
- Facilitator posts to [ibmp.info](http://ibmp.info) by Dec 31

**\*\*Action item 3\*\***: MDOL to complete the 2016 Annual Report per the schedule provided above, and the supply it to the facilitator for posting to [IBMP.org](http://IBMP.org).

## **Changing Lead Partner, setting meetings for 2017, administrative items**

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IBMP Partners, staff, and the public gave Marty Zaluski a round of applause in thanks for acting as their Lead Partner in 2016. MZ, in turn, thanked Emily Kaleczyc of his staff for her great work and support, particularly with putting together the Winter Ops Plan and Annual Report. Partners, staff, and the public then provided Mary Erickson of the CGNF a warm welcome as the Lead Partner for 2017.

The IBMP Partners selected the following dates and locations for their three meetings in 2017 (all dates and locations should be considered tentative): April 6<sup>th</sup> in West Yellowstone, August 3<sup>rd</sup> in Bozeman, November 28<sup>th</sup> in Pray (Chico Hot Springs).

Two administrative items:

- The Partners declined a chance to talk about what happens to the IBMP after then new EIS currently in progress is released. JC noted that it is too early for such a discussion.
- In response to a question, Partners said that the facilitator need only keep one IBMP email list rather than email Partners and seconds for some items, all Partners and staff other times. Thus the facilitator is to connect with all Partners to let them know the email addresses he has for their group and Partners will respond back with additions or removals. (**\*\* action item 4**)

## **Public comment**

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The following notes on public comment to the IBMP Partners are not intended to be complete, but rather reflect the facilitator's best effort to capture key statements. The facilitator has especially attempted to capture those comments from the public that appeared to be solution-oriented and/or have the potential for inclusion in adaptive management planning and/or process improvement and/or use as agenda items for future meetings. These items, as well as other potentially actionable public input, are called out with a "\*\*\*" in the listings that follow.

Names associated with comments are available from the facilitator. They are not included here, however, in an effort to focus on the comment rather than the speaker. Line breaks in the bullets indicate a new speaker. Public comment was taken just after lunch in reaction to numerous past public comments about public input being of less value at the very end of the day.

- I love bison and recognize this group has made lots of progress over the years. But one of the things that we have to fix is capturing bison and sending them to slaughter.
- Why don't we haze bison to where they can be hunted?
- I think there is discrimination within in the hunt since some can hunt preferentially to others.
- \*\* I wish that all hunters had to listen to all enforcement officers, regardless of what group the officer came from—state or tribal. Hunters should all be managed under the same rules.
- I support the NPS to tribe transfer of bison. But I wish bison could be made available to anyone who wants them, not just tribal groups.
- Yes, I would like to see the CWG re-instituted.
- \*\* I worry that this group focuses too narrowly on the year ahead. I would like to see us focus more long-term, how we want things to be say 5, 10, 40 years out.
  
- The Governor gave us the gift of new lands for bison (provides description of all new areas open for bison tolerance). We need to let the bison get out into these lands. They have lost the knowledge of migration routes out into these lands.
- \*\* Perhaps we could do some "loose herding"—that means giving bison a little incentive to get to back into those newly available areas again. Red Canyon, which the USFS defines as a wildlife corridor, provides a good place for bison to go north. There are no cattle there so there should be NO argument.
  
- I've been in the field a lot longer than almost any of you.
- The bison is the new national mammal of our country and Americans want them to be free to roam.
- \*\* The DSA just had another brucellosis case and MZ said that's OK. If so, why can't bison be free to roam out into the DSA? Why?
- \*\* The biggest news is being ignored: that *Brucella abortus* is no longer on the terror list. Given that, why not study a vaccination on cows instead of GonaCon or RB51 use on bison? Let's find something that helps bison.
- Expanding habitat is such a great idea. With new hunting tribes as we heard about today, 3000 bison is not nearly enough. It will be a war zone on the park boundary.
- We need to let bison roam; we need to let buffalo be buffalo. Yellowstone is not their habitat—they are plains animals.
  
- I was one of the few cattlemen working on the CWG, plus have past experience working on the national level committees.
- We worked hard to clear up brucellosis over the years and have succeeded except in the YELL area. It's sad that we haven't ended brucellosis.
- In the Ag world we see brucellosis is in elk and that elk give brucellosis to cattle. We know that.
- We also know that predators move elk into cattle. I live east of the Crow reservation and we now have elk — we never had elk before. So I don't think it is long that we will also have brucellosis in cattle in Eastern Montana. Then Eastern Montana will need to be added to the DSA.
  
- Remote vaccination for the west side, as DOL is considering, really concerns me. In 2013 disease managers from around the country met and evaluated whether remote vaccination was useful. (Quote from that study was read saying remote vaccination won't be successful). Remote vaccination will not be effective in stopping brucellosis in bison, nor in stopping spillover into cattle. If there are thoughts still to try this technique, it needs to be discussed openly, transparently, with the public.
- I am also very concerned about the idea of a GonaCon field study. If there were to be such a study, it needs to be open and transparent. Also, any decision needs to be made by all members of the IBMP, not just by APHIS and MDOL. The reason? Bison move back and forth between jurisdictions.
- Bison are managed as wildlife, not livestock.

*\* final \**

- The next speaker read a long section, verbatim, of an APHIS review of the Montana Brucellosis Management Plan. The key point seemed to be that in the review APHIS said that a new DSA is not required to move bison to Fort Peck.
- Bison are not just plains animals historically; some lived in the mountains
- It is important that we need to disperse the bison. This has been shown repeatedly with issues such as hunting safety and grizzly concentration on gut piles.
- \*\* By virtue of the current hunting system, are we creating a grizzly bear feeding ground in direct conflict with NPS (or other) goals?
- I am concerned about the proposed management action to vaccinate bison. As has been stated, I think such a decision should not be made without all Partners weighing in.
- It has been shown that vaccinating bison is not effective. The only effective way to eliminate brucellosis is to kill large numbers of animals which does not work in wildlife populations and, for example, can't be done in the GYE particularly since brucellosis is in elk.
- \*\* I urge the Partners to focus any vaccination efforts on livestock, not bison.
- We don't want livestock to get brucellosis either, that's bad news for everyone.
- I echo some of what has been said. It is like ground hogs' day where we have the same discussions over and over again. In the end, it *always* comes back to a single best solution: expanded habitat.
- I urge the Partners to recall that they work on a learn-as-you-go approach. We have barely lived under the new expanded habitat rules for a year so we don't know how bison will utilize those lands.
- \*\* But what I'd like to see the group work on are some proactive options to get bison into those new areas.
- Fort Peck has gone through and spent a half million \$s to meet MDOL and APHIS requirements to build a state of the art quarantine facility. What more do they have to do to be allowed to take bison?
- No one else stepped up except for the Fort Peck Tribe. They did so to protect the genetics of bison.
- It is a remote area with only 3 cattle operations (one owned by the tribe) nearby.
- But now they are at an impasse with the state even though there is less opportunity for bison there to come into contact with cattle than bison in the DSA.
- The tribe is wide open to anyone coming to review and inspect the facility.
- Fort Peck is ready to go. Why can't bison be moved to Fort Peck and thereby provide the IBMP with another tool for decreasing YNP bison population?

*\*\* Meeting adjourned \*\**

## Abbreviations

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- AJ—Andrea Jones
- AM—Adaptive management
- APHIS—Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- BB—Brooklyn Baptiste
- BFC—Buffalo Field Campaign
- CGNF—Custer Gallatin National Forest
- CS—Carl Scheeler
- CSKT—Confederated Salish Kootenai Tribes
- CTUIR—Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- CWG—Citizens’ Working Group
- DH—Don Herriot
- DSA—Designated Surveillance Zone
- DW—Dan Wenk
- EA—Environmental Assessment
- EC—Ervin Carlson
- GAO—Government Accountability Office
- GNF—Gallatin National Forest
- GW—Germaine White
- GWA—Gallatin Wildlife Association
- GYA—Greater Yellowstone Area
- ITBC—Inter Tribal Buffalo Council
- JC—Jennifer Carpenter
- JH—John Harrison
- JS—Jim Stone
- LG—Leonard Gray
- MBOL—Montana Board of Livestock
- MD—Marna Daley
- MDOL—Montana Department of Livestock
- MDOT—Montana Department of Transportation
- ME—Mary Erickson
- MEPA—Montana Environmental Policy Act
- MFWP—Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks
- MH—Mike Honeycutt
- MO—McCoy Oatman
- MOU—Memorandum of Understanding
- MR—Majel Russell
- MSGA—Montana Stockgrowers’ Association
- MSU—Montana State University
- MZ—Marty Zaluski
- NAS—National Academy of Sciences
- NEPA—National Environmental Policy Act
- NGO—Non-governmental organizations
- NP—Nez Perce
- NPS—National Park Service
- NPT—Nez Perce Tribe
- NPTEC—Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee
- NRC—National Research Council
- NRDC—Natural Resources Defense Council
- NT—Neil Thagard
- Park—Yellowstone National Park
- PIOs—Public Information Officers
- PJ—PJ White
- QE—Quincy Ellenwood
- RC—Ryan Clarke
- ROD—Record of Decision
- RF—Rebecca Frye
- RFP—Request for proposals
- RT—Rob Tierney
- RTR—Royal Teton Ranch
- RW—Rick Wallen
- SB—Scott Bischke
- SEIS—Supplemental EIS
- SG—Stephanie Gillin
- SK—Salish Kootenai
- SS—Sam Sheppard
- TM—Tom McDonald
- USFWS—US Fish and Wildlife Service
- USGS—US Geological Survey
- WMA—state of MT wildlife management areas
- YELL—Yellowstone National Park
- YNP—Yellowstone National Park

## **Post-meeting addendum from facilitator**

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At the August 2016 meeting the facilitator was given the following action item:

*The Partners assigned the facilitator to work with MDOL to incorporate the ERRATUM information into the IBMP Adaptive Management Plan, then repost it to the website. This is a carryover from the past meeting due to some confusion about how to handle revision control when there is no Partner signature process.*

In review of this document, the facilitator found that the current Adaptive Management Plan is signed and in PDF form. Thus it can be changed, but will require copying the signature sheet into a new Word document, followed by recreation of a new pdf. That new sheet will have the erratum information, as described in the action item, however the signatures will not have come on that specific document. Given the odd nature of the documentation lineage, the facilitator will seek a second go-ahead from the Lead Partner for proceeding with this process (\*\* **action item 5**).