

Prioritization of CWG goals for the IBMP Partners and Potential Projects for the CWG

Four top focus areas/priorities for the IBMP partners going forward include:

1. Completion of the new IBMP that reflects changes on the landscape, sets scientifically based population ranges, treats bison as wildlife, etc.

- This would address the lack of progress for many of the previous (and accepted) CWG population recommendations. Previous recommendations that could be accomplished through the above include:
 - **Population Recommendation's: 1, 5a-5f*, 6a-6d**

Potential role for CWG going forward? Unsure. Open to ideas from Partners.

2. Completion of the State-wide Bison Management Plan including the identification of sites to reintroduce bison in other parts of MT.

- This would address the lack of progress for many of the previous (and accepted) CWG recommendations. Previous recommendations that could be accomplished through the above include:
 - **Habitat Recommendations: 1 & 3e**
 - **Population Recommendations 2, 3*a, 6a-6d**

Potential role for CWG going forward? Unsure. Open to ideas from Partners.

3. Habitat & dispersal of bison outside the Park - North-side. Additional habitat and habitat improvement for bison outside the Park on the North-side, as well strategies to help bison better disperse in to existing and new habitat.

- This would address the lack of progress for many of the previous (and accepted) CWG recommendations. Previous recommendations that could be accomplished through the above include:
 - **Habitat Recommendations: 2, 3bi-3biii**
 - **Population Recommendations: 1, 3*b, 4, & 6a-6d**

Potential Ideas or Actions to get there:

A. Secure Additional Habitat

- Consider state & private lands that would welcome bison (i.e. Dome Mountain WMA)

- Consider outside the Gardiner Basin
- Updated or new landowner survey to assess where bison are/would be welcome on the landscape outside the Park (include areas outside the Gardiner Basin).

Potential role for CWG going forward? Yes

B. Habitat Improvement Projects

- Work with the Forest Service, etc.
- Consider prescribed burns or other habitat restoration tools.

Potential role for CWG going forward? Yes

C. Address the issue of hunting pressure/overcrowding to allow for dispersal of bison on the larger landscape (this includes addressing the firing line issue at Beattie Gulch)

- FWP/Tribal Cooperative Management Plan
 - Defines population objectives (min & max # bison) for lands outside the Park
 - Based on biological & social carrying capacity, management constraints, etc.
 - That adequately balances hunting desires & need for population reduction with goal of broader dispersal

Potential role for CWG going forward? Unlikely unless there is interest from the Tribes & FWP to work with the CWG on this.

D. Move away from managing toward a total population target of 3500

- This limits dispersal/broad distribution. *How to do we realistically allow for or promote dispersal on to the larger landscape when there's so much pressure to reduce the total population both through hunting and slaughter?*
- Assume this would have to be tackled through the New IBMP

Potential role for CWG going forward? Unsure but open to ideas from the Partners.

4. Habitat & dispersal of bison outside the Park - West-side. Habitat improvement for bison outside the Park on the West-side, as well strategies to help bison better disperse in to existing habitat.

- This would address the lack of progress for many of the previous (and accepted) CWG recommendations. Previous recommendations that could be accomplished through the above include:

- **Habitat Recommendation's: 3di-3dii**
- **Population Recommendations: 2, 3*a-b, 4, & 6a-6d**

Potential Ideas or Actions to get there:

A. Develop a plan for restoring bison in the new west-side expansion area (i.e. Upper Gallatin, Taylor Fork, etc.)

- Assisted migration?
- Translocation?
- Identification of corridor/pathway(s)
- Habitat improvement – prescribed burns?
- Highway crossing(s), road mitigation?

Potential role for CWG going forward? Yes. CWG could provide plan ideas/recommendations, engage local landowners, help with addressing landowner concerns, etc.

B. Hunt plan to allow for dispersal/restoration

- Should be addressed proactively on the west-side
- Consensus agreement to limited/no hunting during restoration of bison in to the new expansion area.
- FWP/Tribal Cooperative Management Plan
 - Population objectives (min & max # bison)

Potential role for CWG going forward? Unlikely unless there is interest from the Tribes & FWP to work with the CWG on this.