

Daphne White's Questions about bison in the Upper Gallatin

We do understand that it is a privilege to live and work in the Upper Gallatin and to share this landscape with a wide variety of wildlife. We work hard to be good stewards of the land and good neighbors. The Elkhorn has been here for 95 years and we hope to be here for many more generations. We are asking you all to understand that we are scared of the potential impacts bison will bring to doorstep. Increasing our unease is the fear of the unknown. As we discussed on the field trip and meeting just last week we would like to know what would happen if some bison came to our area.

Here is a listing of the many questions we at the Elkhorn came up with. Answers to these questions would help us understand the situation better and might alleviate our fears regarding bison coming into our area.

Yours,

Daphne White

If 6 bison walked up HWY 191. what if any management of the bison or the traffic will there be?

We have family, employees, guests and friends driving HWY 191 and it's a very dangerous road as it is today. I am concerned that Bison are going to make it more dangerous without meaningful management changes.

- I often drive HWY 191 into YNP at dawn and dusk as I am a birdwatcher. There is lots of car and truck traffic and I almost never see any speed limit enforcement. How often is this road patrolled? How many tickets are handed out? How many animals are hit per year that you know of?
How would the road be managed if there were bison on the Highway? I don't consider a sign that says "bison on highway" to be effective management. If there are reduced speed limits will they be enforced? How often?
- I drive HWY 191 north of YNP regularly in Gallatin County. Folks leave the park and hit the gas often passing as many people as possible before the canyon narrows farther to the north. How often does law enforcement patrol from the south of Ophir School to the YNP line? How many tickets are handed out? How many animals are hit per year that you know of? How would the road be managed if there where bison on the Highway?

As a local rancher/landowner what happens when the 6 bison come for a visit?

-Is there some sort of guidelines or training for landowners on living with bison? If its going to take 12-24 hours to get FWP folks out to haze the bison the damage will already be done. Can we haze them? Can we use flash bangs on them? Are there guidelines on hazing them and are there fencing guidelines?

- We have just under a mile of frontage on HWY 191. We use Jack fencing to keep our horses off the highway. Will Bison respect our fencing or walk right through to get to our irrigated pastures? What if one of the bison breaks our fence and our horses get out on the highway and cause a wreck?
- What if the bison come up around our cabins? How quickly can the dangerous situation be managed? I have been told FWP could take 12-24 hours to respond. We have around 40 guests including many kids and over 25 employees that need to walk around our cabins. Again in the park there seems to be a ranger watching each bison around populated areas and keeping people at a safe distance.
- What changes to our fence would be needed to keep the bison out? How tall? Electric fence has been mentioned.... Cost? Maintenance issues? We would continue to maintain our Jack Fence as it contributes to our Historic District listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Can we add electric to the jack fence or would we need two fences? (Note that the \$1000 that has been given to impacted landowners for fencing would buy about 100 feet of jack fence and we have around 5,000 feet of fencing along the highway)
- Our fence directly adjoins the Gallatin River for part of its length. What if a fisherperson touches our electric fence and gets hurt? What if our electric fence causes a fire to start?

What about folks that use the Upper Gallatin and Taylor Fork for recreation?

- When folks drive into YNP they are given all sorts of information on the dangers of bison, how will that information gotten out to folks using the forest and river up this way?
- When we travel into YNP there is almost always a ranger in attendance whenever there are bison near pedestrian areas or roads. Will bison/public interactions be managed in the Gallatin?
- How will campers/bison issues be managed on Taylor Fork?
- How will snowmobile users in the area be impacted?
- If Bison are hunted in the area how will the gut piles impact the behavior of our other wildlife or will the gut piles be packed out?
- Will the native American hunter be hunting other species than bison?

What if 20-25 bison arrived in Taylor Fork by truck? In addition to the questions above we have additional questions below.

- Who would manage them?
- Would they be monitored or tracked?
- What behaviors would be acceptable and what specific management steps would be taken.
- Would there be a hard cap on population growth?
- Would there be meaningful help for local ranchers for fencing or livestock management?
- Would the bison be removed/shot/... if they repeatedly crossed onto private lands or damaged fences?
- Would there be additional rangers to monitor folks coming up to see the bison?