

Public meeting of the Interagency Bison Management Plan Partners



MAY 13-14, 2026

**LEAD PARTNER & HOST FOR THIS MEETING: ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE
(CONTACT—MELANIE ARMSTRONG, RUCKELSHAUS INSTITUTE, 307-766-5037)**

Mike Neafsey: Director of Ruminant Health Center, Veterinary Services; Animal & Plant Health Inspection Service

Tom McDonald: Tribal Council Vice Chair; Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Ervin Carlson: President; InterTribal Buffalo Council

Christy Clark: Director, Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks

Mike Honeycutt: Executive Officer; Montana Board of Livestock

Tahnee Szymanski: State Veterinarian; Montana Department of Livestock

Tim Reid: Chief of Center for Resources, NPS—Yellowstone National Park

Aaron Gould: Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee; Nez Perce Tribe

Matt Jedra: Forest Supervisor; USFS—Custer-Gallatin National Forest

Meeting location

Holiday Inn

West Yellowstone, MT

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For room reservations call
(406) 646-7365

Background

The Federal and State Records of Decision in December 2000 for the Long-Term Interagency Bison Management Plan for Montana and Yellowstone National Park (IBMP) were the result of extensive deliberation and legal proceedings that yielded an unprecedented agreement amongst federal-state agencies (National Park Service, USDA Forest Service, USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Montana Department of Livestock, and Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks). Under the IBMP, these agencies harness their respective skills and operational resources to work cooperatively within an adaptive management framework to conserve a wild, free-ranging bison population while concurrently protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle.

Partner agencies are committed to the adaptive management framework of the IBMP, as signified by their signing and publication of an adaptive management plan on December 18, 2008. The plan was the result of a series of seven, two-day working meetings that occurred between August and December 2008. Tribal members—the Nez Perce, Confederated Salish and Kootenai, and the InterTribal Buffalo

Council—were invited to join the deliberative table as Partners beginning at the November 2009 Partner meeting.

The IBMP meetings allow the Partners to continue progress toward meeting their shared goal of conserving a wild-free-ranging bison population while concurrently protecting against transmission of brucellosis from bison to cattle. To accomplish this goal, the partners meet several times each year in public forum to consider prevailing conditions and review collected data, then develop and apply short- and long-term adaptive management adjustments to the IBMP.

Wednesday, May 13th

IBMP Bison Tolerance Zone Field Trip

Date/Time: May 13th 1:00pm – 4:30pm

Meeting location: Holiday Inn lobby area

Scheduled Stops:

1. Cougar Creek Bridge: discussion on wildlife friendly underpass design and fencing
2. Junction Highways 191 and 287: discuss bison use along Duck Cr and the north side of Hebgen Lake
3. Rainbow Point Road, North Hebgen thinning units: discuss the N. Hebgen project and bison grazing opportunities
4. Horse Butte Lookout: discuss the larger landscape and how bison use the tolerance zone

Thursday, May 14th

Note that agenda times are approximate and for planning purposes only. Actual times may vary depending on partner interaction needs

NOTE: MAPS TO SUPPORT MEETING ARE AVAILABLE ONLINE AT WWW.IBMPINFO.ORG/MEETINGS-1

Per Partner Protocols (newly revised for two meetings/year on 12/20/21), the overall goal of the spring meeting is:

- 1) Review of winter operations to date.
- 2) If applicable, ideas for changes to the IBMP adaptive management plan. Methods for making adaptive management changes are provided in the Partner Protocols, found at <https://www.ibmpinfo.org/meetings-1>
- 3) Reports of subcommittees, if applicable, on proposed new adaptive management or other activities.
- 4) Partner planning for, commitment to, and schedule review for completion of individual duties for Annual Report due at year end.

Time	Speaker	Topic
7:30	All	Room opens Coffee and tea provided
8:00	Ruckelshaus Institute Facilitation Team or as noted	<p>Invocation, welcome, meeting overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invocation • Opening words from Lead Partner Mike Neafsey • Introductions of all present • Meeting logistics, format, process, expectations, any agenda modifications? • A brief IBMP timeline • Summary of action items from last meeting • Verification of Partner acceptance of last meeting report
8:30	All	<p>Partner updates and introduction of new facilitator <i>~3 min per Partner and treaty hunting Tribe to provide a brief summary including legislative, agency, or Tribal Council actions; and other changes since last IBMP meeting, and how those might impact the IBMP</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin with host and Lead Partner APHIS • ITBC, CSKT, MDOL/MBOL, MFWP, NPS, NPT, USFS • Blackfeet, CTUIR, Northern Arapaho, ShoBan, Yakama • Welcome from new IBMP facilitator Ruckelshaus Institute • Website updates
9:00	Clint Kolarich	<p>Review and discussion of May 13 field trip <i>Clint Kolarich, District Ranger, Custer Gallatin National Forest, Gardiner Ranger District overviews the previous day's field trip.</i></p> <p>Open discussion. Begin with feedback from Partners and staff. Please focus comments on possible opportunities that were discussed in the field, what adaptive management changes those opportunities might lead to.</p>
10:00	Troy Heinert	<p>Presentation: BIA's role in bison initiatives <i>Troy Heinert, Bureau of Indian Affairs.</i></p> <p>Discussion follows.</p>

10:20	Break	Here or as called for by the Partners
10:50	Madison Stevens	<p>Presentation: Social science insights on managing bison as wildlife <i>Madison Stevens, Assistant Professor of Human-Environment Geography, Montana State University.</i></p> <p>Discussion follows.</p>
11:30	Public	<p>Public comment <i>Maximum 4 minutes per person. The facilitator asks that speakers be respectful.</i></p>
12:00	Lunch	Lunch on your own
1:15 PM	Facilitator	<p>Call back to order <i>Introductions of anyone newly present.</i></p>
1:15	All	<p>Review of Winter Operations to date <i>Review of winter operations to date and begin collecting, if applicable, ideas for changes for the following winter.</i></p> <p>Topics TBC</p> <p><i>After review of winter operations-to-date, begin discussing proposed adaptive management changes or collecting ideas for adaptive management changes for the following winter.</i> Per Partner Protocols. Consider instituting or engaging subcommittee(s), if needed, to address these AM change requests.</p>
2:45	Break	Here or as called by Partners
3:15	Tahnee Szymanski	<p>Presentation: Brucellosis Research Updates <i>Dr. Tahnee Szymanski, Montana state veterinarian</i></p> <p>Discussion follows.</p>

4:05	Facilitator	Planning for 2026/27 Winter Operations Plan and 2026 Annual Report Close with agreed-upon process, timeline, and responsibilities for completing the Winter Ops Plan and Annual Report.
4:15	Facilitator	Administrative Items <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reminder of next meeting date and location• Request for agenda items for next meeting• Other closing items?
4:30	ADJOURN	Please travel safely!

Meeting support materials