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Montana Bison

"Promoting The Bison Industry"

November 2017

Association

Management-intensive Grazing on the Snowcrest

Submitted by Aaron Paulson

This past year we made some changes in grazing practices on a portion of the Snowcrest Ranch. We have one center pivot that was historically used for hay production. The price of bison and the cost to put up hay helped inspire change. With the full support and encouragement of our upper management in the Bozeman office we took a step in the direction of intensifying our grazing on a portion of the ranch. The term that best describes it is Management-intensive Grazing coined by Jim Gerrish. The emphasis is on the Management. And there is certainly a requirement for a dedicated person to ensure the system works. So I'm sure you are asking what did we do? The fenced pasture that includes the center pivot is 151 acres. The majority of this is under sprinkler irrigation and the periphery is under flood irrigation. We planned the installation of permanent division fences in strategic locations, and the ability to further subdivide with temporary electric fences with stock water in each paddock. We used 2 wire high tensile fences for permanent divisions. Single and 2 wire bungee electric gates, and 2 and 3 wire poly wire temporary subdivisions. Ultimately we were able to utilize 22 different individual paddocks that we grazed for 2-4 days each. We put 215 yearling bison bulls in this system to graze starting May 18 and they stayed in the pasture until November 12. In the early fall we exceeded the forage regrowth and had to remove the herd from the pasture for 35 days to allow for fall regrowth. And we supplemented the animals for the late October and November period to prepare them for finishing and to extend the pasture. Conservatively we were able to achieve 105 days of grazing off of 151 acres for a herd of 215 yearling bison. This system is not fertilized. And if we put rough numbers to this the figures are staggering. Looking at gross revenue on pounds of meat produced versus hay revenue there is a \$75,000 advantage to grazing.

In that number there are many variables such as cost to put up hay and cost to manage bison. But we were able to do this with a minimal capital investment and without adding additional labor on the ranch. *Continued on page 4*

Montana Bison Association Winter Meeting

January 5th & 6th

Radisson Hotel, Helena MT

***See Registration form for reservation
& hotel contact information included***



President's Corner By Aaron Paulson



Greetings to you and hoping the upcoming Holidays will be filled with family, friends and bison! By now most everyone likely has their calves weaned, bison sorted for winter, and are letting their critters thrive in snowy conditions. It was a busy summer this past year as we look back at the IBC and all the excitement that came to MT. There was extensive coverage and it seems most everything was good press about bison. The Montana Bison Association teamed up with Flathead Lake Lodge to donate 2 trips to the lodge. These were used for fundraising at the IBC and were a great help to help cover the costs of hosting the conference. We are very thankful for the assistance from Doug Averill and the Flathead Lake Lodge! The upcoming winter meeting is filled with a great lineup of presentation and hopefully they are helpful to everyone.

We have invited state officials and conservation district supervisors alike. We deeply need of everyone's assistance in making the effort to include their conservation district officials. Doing all we can to inform people how we manage our bison will help to keep ordinances out of your county. The agenda is pretty full and hopefully includes topics of interest to you. We are fortunate to have several producers that have offered to share how they manage their property and their bison. Through greater transparency we can help start the dialogue of ensuring bison producers are exposed to the best management practices. We look forward to seeing you, visiting with old friends and meeting new ones. As always this meeting is open to all and per the by-laws we aim to disseminate information. So, invite anyone and everyone you think might be interested or could to gain from the meeting.

Calendar of Upcoming Buffalo Auctions, Conferences and Events

November 11: Quarter Circle Y Buffalo Company, Mahto, SD. Contact Monty Hepper at 605-823-2357 or 605-848-0800.

November 18: 52nd Annual Custer State Park Fall Classic Bison Auction. Custer State Park Visitor Center. Contact Chad Kremer at 605-225-4515 for details and information.

November 18: 3rd Annual 777 Bison Ranch Production & Breeding Bull Auction. Hotel Alex Johnson Ballroom, Rapid City, SD. Contact Moritz Espy at (605) 430-7471.

November 24 - 25: Minnesota Buffalo Assn. Annual Legends of the Fall Bison Auction and Bison Fundamentals Education Class. Central Livestock Sale Barn, Albany, MN. (507) 454-2828 or www.mnbison.org.

November 26: Prairie Sky Ranch Annual Production Auction. At the ranch, 11983 Dry Lake Road, Sisseton, SD. Contact Bruce Prins at (701) 866-8485 or www.bradeenauction.com for updates and information.

November 27: Brownotter Buffalo Ranch Annual Production Auction. Grand River Casino, Mobridge, SD. Contact Ron Brownotter at (605) 848-2623 or www.bradeenauction.com for updates and information.

November 30 - December 2: Western Bison Assn. Wild West

Buffalo Stampede meeting and show and sale. Golden Spike Events Center, Ogden, UT. Contact Susan Maass at (605) 515-0318 for details or visit www.westernbison.org.

December 2: Kansas Buffalo Assn. 28th Annual Fall Buffalo Auction. Farmers and Ranchers Livestock Commission Company, Salina, KS. Contact Dick Gehring at (620) 345-6526 or visit www.kansasbuffalo.org.

January 17 - 19, 2018: National Bison Assn. Winter Conference, Denver, CO. (303) 292-2833 or www.bisoncentral.com.

January 20: National Bison Assn. Gold Trophy Show and Sale. National Western Livestock Auction Center, Denver, CO. (303) 292-2833 or www.bisoncentral.com.

February 2 - 3: Dakota Territory Buffalo Assn. Winter Conference. Best Western Ramkota Hotel, Rapid City, SD. (605) 519-1326 or www.dakotabuffalo.com.

February 4: Dakota Territory Buffalo Assn. Black Hills Buffalo Classic Show and Sale, Central States Fairgrounds, Rapid City, SD. (605) 519-1326 or www.dakotabuffalo.com.

April 20 - 22: Minnesota Buffalo Assn. Annual Spring Conference. Watertown, SD. www.mnbison.org.

Montana Bison Association Members can place their business card ads in the MBA newsletters at no charge. For non-members, the cost is only \$25 per year to be in all the Montana Bison Association newsletters.

• For information or to submit your card, contact •
**Julia Arnold at 5 N. Virginia St., Conrad, MT 59425
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Montana Bison Association meets with Conservation District Supervisors

By Craig Denney

Representatives from the Montana Bison Association and the National Bison Association attended a Montana Conservation District Supervisors meeting held in Great Falls, MT on Tuesday, October 31, 2017. At the invitation from Jeff Pattison from Valley County Conservation District, representatives met with Jeff and other Conservation District supervisors to discuss possible revisions to the original bison ordinances approved by Valley County and several other counties.


Attending the meeting from the NBA was Jim Matheson, and from the MBA was Andrew Bardwell and Craig Denney. Don Warner also attended the meeting.

During the meeting Jeff presented a revised bison ordinance that started the process of removing private bison ranchers from Valley County's Bison Ordinance. A considerable amount of discussion followed, with most being positive toward the proposed changes but some additional language changes were requested. Following this meeting, Jeff is to put together another draft and allow us to review and comment on it.

The goal is to arrive with a final document that Valley County and possible other counties with ordinances would submit to voter approval next fall. Jim Matheson offered the group to take a tour of bison ranches. We think this is a great idea to continue to educate the group and show them we do take care of our ranch land and water.

Thanks to everyone who participated in making this meeting a success. Special thanks to Aaron Paulson, who started the working relationship with Jeff. In addition, our thanks to Jim Matheson and Andrew Bardwell for taking time from their busy schedules to attend this meeting.

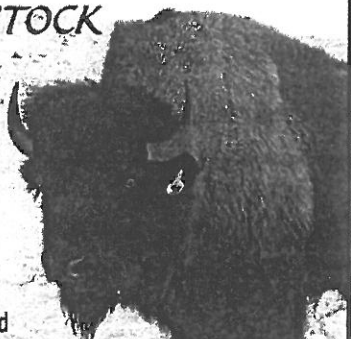
An update on this will be provided at the winter conference.



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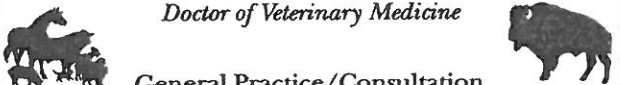
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Please consider receiving the MBA newsletter electronically; not only will it reach you days earlier, it will save the MBA money. Please let Julia know at jarnoldmt@gmail.com if you would like to receive your copy by email only. If you prefer to continue receiving the newsletter by snail mail, no response is needed.



Management-intensive Grazing on the Snowcrest *(continued from page 1)*

And diesel equipment was able to stay parked in the shed instead of making hay. These animals left the ranch in the fall and we will be able to refine our grazing next summer on the pivot and apply much of what we learned. And ultimately the land health is much better in that we had an efficient nutrient cycle, water cycle, and healthy animals. And we were not using fossil fuels to capture energy, rather we were using grazing animals designed for the efficient capture and transfer of energy. A few lessons learned are as follows: you measure forage left in paddocks in hours not in days. Therefore the herd will deplete their food supply in a matter of hours and the forage recovery period is stifled. When we removed the animals from the paddock while grass was still in Phase II the recovery was the shortest and we could return to graze much more quickly. The minimal fencing worked great, but if we stayed too long the herd would push through our 1 and 2 wire fences into the next paddock and we had extensive time invested in re-training them to respect electric fences. Due to the high prevalence of cattle in the region and the hot dry summer we dealt with pinkeye. We were slow to respond as we'd not had issues in the past. But we found that a simple metal frame structure with hanging oilers including Permethrin helped mitigate the issue. As we moved between paddocks the herd needed mineral and salt and the oiler frame for fly control. Both were on skids and could be moved with an ATV and one person. We speculate that the fly issues hampered average daily gains. And since the herd was not able to utilize larger more diverse pastures with trees and cover the flies were more of a problem. This system worked great for our operation and would work in other irrigated systems. The sprinkler irrigation works well as we can begin to develop a consistent carrying capacity for this portion of the ranch in drought or wet years. Thus helping plan for future. The bison were happy, we handled and moved them extensively and our fall weights and animal health have so far revealed that the benefits of applying Management-intensive Grazing fits well for bison in our operation. There are lessons learned we will apply to the system for next year, and improvements to be made that will simplify the operation. But all in all the results are quite favorable.

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Montana held International Bison Conference 2017

MONTANA BISON ASSOCIATION HOSTS OUTSTANDING EVENT

By LTC (Ret.) Tim A. Gardipee, MBA Board Member

OUTSTANDING! Was the continuous compliment! The summer of 2017 is one for the history books, with the United States hosting the Inter-National Bison Conference every 10 years. Montana and the Bozeman, Big Sky area is Ground Zero for a very special event, said Dave Carter three years ago at a winter MBA conference. For the last three years, with much collaboration with the NBA, the Montana Bison Ranchers have been planning and preparing for the most successful IBC ever. The MBA Board worked many hard volunteer hours.

MBA Board President Aaron Paulson, previous president, Andrew Bardwell, and MBA member Candee Westre, all IBC committee members, continuously strove over planning details, worked many logistical issues, and knuckled down on fund-raising. The Big Sky Resort, was truly pushed to maximum capacity to house, feed, promote, arrange, and transport, over 600 Bison Ranchers and enthusiasts. The 320 Guest Ranch, provided a unique setting for an Independence Day celebration on 4 July, with an excellent Bison meal,

a high technology drone exhibition, some bison display trailers by Jonathan Sapp with Flathead Bison Co. and a concert by Michael Martin Murphy. Which was all very well received! Beautiful Music, great fun!

The Last day of the Conference included a ranch tour of the Flying D Ranch, hosted by Owner and part-time Montana Resident Ted Turner, Turner Enterprises, Mark Knossler, and Ranch Manager Danny Johnson. The tour included lunch catered by "Teds Montana Grill", at the Cow Camp surrounding the 500 + visitors tent with a large herd of Elk and Grazing Bison. The IBC attendees were thrilled and amazed by the absolute beauty and size of the Flying D.

Montana is called the Big Sky Country, and has plenty of room for more Bison. The Bison "One million" campaign was launched. The MBA wants to promote Bison and Bison Ranching for the next generation, The summer 2017 IBC was covered on the local newscast KTVM NBC Montana, Bozeman, Mt. An excellent news story by Taylor Graham; <http://www.nbcmontana.com/news/ktvm/international-bison-conference-meets-in-big-sky/575618795>

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Winter Conference Details

Please join us for the Montana Bison Association Winter Meeting to be held in Helena, MT on January 5th and 6th, 2018. We will meet at the Radisson Hotel in Helena, MT. We are pleased to have a variety of presenters this year. Friday evening we will have a presentation from Hilary Cooley on Grizzly Bear in Montana. Saturday presentations cover a variety of Best Management Practices from Bison Tagging, Fencing & Containment, Grazing Management, and Bison Handling. Additionally, as the MBA Board of Directors has spent numerous hours working with the Montana Conservation Districts to help facilitate better communication and support County Bison Ordinances which do not penalize the Bison Rancher, the Winter Meeting will be an excellent venue to continue this discussion. Doug and Mary Stange & Steve Mitchell will join us with their valuable insight and knowledge of how they have been involved with their local Conservation Districts. Of course we will have our annual Bison Fun Auction and follow with the First Annual Ted Turner livestock auction via video streaming.

Cost for the General Conference will be \$100.00/person and include three meals. Please send check to address on registration form with details on how to use either a check or credit card to pay for the Winter Conference. Conference registration deadline is **December 26, 2017**. Additionally, please contact the Radisson Hotel in Helena to make reservations directly through the hotel at 406-443-2100 and mention the function, Montana Bison Association they will be attending or by using this online link <http://www.radisson.com/reservation/itineraryEntrance.do?hotelCode=USAHEMT&promotionalCode=BISO18> Click on the link, fill in the date of arrival (January 5th, 2018), and then click go. This will bring up a page with all of the rates listed for this room block. Rooms start at \$109.00.

Conference reservations accepted through December 26, 2017

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Montana Bison Association



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**Agenda for MBA Winter Meeting
January 5 & 6, 2018
Radisson Colonial Hotel – Helena, MT**

Friday, January 5

- 5:30** – Meet and Greet and Check In
at Hotel Conference Room
- 6:00** – Hillary Cooley – US Fish and Wildlife Service
Grizzly Bear Recovery Coordinator
- 6:30** – Dinner – Bison taco bar

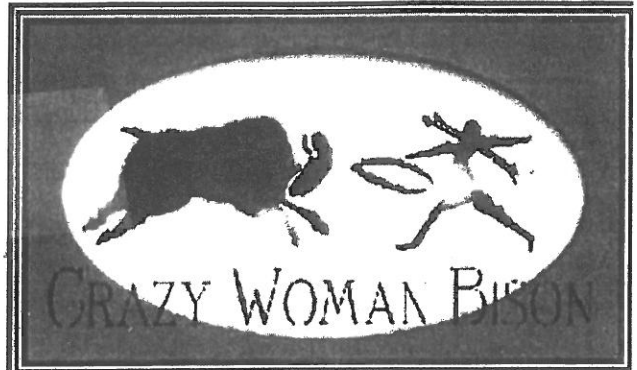
Saturday, January 10

- 9:00** - Welcome- Aaron Paulson
- 9:15** - Bison Tagging and Identification
 - What Works and What Doesn't
 - Sandy Burdette – Flying D Ranch
 - Tobin Arnold – Outlaw Livestock
 - Animal Health International
- 10:15** - Break
- 10:30** - Dr. Eric Liska, MT Dept. of Livestock
Brucellosis Management, Bison Shipping
Requirements, Disease Traceability, & Health Update
- 11:20** - High Country Ag Marketing – Larry Feight
- 11:30** - Kim Szcondronski, US Geological Survey
Fetal Scavenging Study
- 12:00** - Lunch
- 1:00** - Dave Carter – National Bison Association
- 1:30** - Best Management Practices
Fencing and Containment
 - Craig Denney - DDC Ranch, Park City
Grazing Management
 - Andrew Bardwell, Deep Creek Ranch, Choteau
Bison Handling
 - Aaron Paulson, Snowcrest Ranch, Alder
- 2:30** - Break
- 2:45** - Ranching with County Bison Ordinances
 - Doug and Mary Stange, Carter County
 - Steve Mitchell, Fergus County
- 3:45** - Break
- 4:00** - Business Meeting
- 5:30** - Social Hour
- 6:00** - Dinner
- 6:00** - Turner Ranches Prairie Performance Video Auction
Live from Rapid City (streamed live and optional
for those interested in watching or bidding)

7:30 – Fun Auction Sunday, January 11

- 8:00** - Board of Directors Meeting

Sponsors: High Country Ag Marketing – Tru- Test
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**Montana Bison Association
2018 Bison Advantage and
Winter Conference
Friday, January 5th & Saturday, January 6th
Radisson Hotel
Helena, Montana**

The Conference will be held this year in Helena, MT on January 5th and 6th, 2017 at the Radisson Hotel. Friday evening we will have a presentation from Hilary Cooley on Grizzly Bear in Montana. On Saturday presentations cover a variety of Best Management Practices and the current involvement of the MBA with local Conservation Districts. We will have our annual Bison Fun Auction and follow with the First Annual Ted Turner livestock auction via video streaming.

Cost for the General Conference will be \$100.00/person and include three meals. Please feel to contact the Radisson Hotel in Helena to make reservations directly through the hotel at 406-443-2100 and mention the function, Montana Bison Association they will be attending or by using this online

link <http://www.radisson.com/reservation/itineraryEntrance.do?hotelCode=USAHEMT&promotionalCode=BISO18>

Click on the link, fill in the date of arrival (January 5th, 2018), and then click go. This will bring up a page with all of the rates listed for this room block. Rooms start at \$109.00.

Reservations accepted through December 26, 2017

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# _____ REGISTERING (Adult: \$100 each) <small>***Registration includes Friday dinner, Lunch and Dinner on Saturday</small>	
# _____ Kids 14 AND UNDER FREE Which meals attending?	FREE
2018 MONTANA BISON ASSOCIATION DUES <small>***make checks payable to MBA; \$100/Year or \$500/Lifetime</small>	
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED <small>***make checks payable to MBA</small>	

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Montana Bison Association
Julia Arnold
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Conrad, MT 59425

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A \$5.00 service fee will be included in the cost of the
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Please call (406) 627-2436 or email: jarnoldmt@gmail.com with any questions.