

Montana Bison News

A newsletter from the Montana Bison Association

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Winter 2021 Edition

Edited and Produced by All Things Bison

MBA Plans 2021 Summer Conference in Plains, Montana

Summer Conference 2021 - June 11 - 13

This year's Summer Conference will be held in Plains, MT from June 11th-13th to be held in conjunction with the Western Bison Association.

The highlight of the Summer Conference will include several ranch tours of local MBA producers and a guided tour of the National Bison Range. Additionally, we will also have several interesting presenters, great food, and a beautiful location to visit about all-things-bison! Each organization will have an opportunity for Membership Meetings as well as several round-table discussions for new and experienced producers. Registration will open on-line in late April on the MBA Website. Please watch for emails or check the website for additional details and registration information.



The central point of our Conference will be the Sander's County Fairgrounds in Plains, MT. Activities will kick off Friday morning at the Fairgrounds with several guest speakers. It is a beautiful facility and offers great camping options as well as overnight horse boarding facilities. The area is full of local activities including fishing, natural hot springs, and Flathead Lake. Missoula and Kalispell are about 1.5 hours from Plains. Please know the rooms in Plains are first come first serve and tend to fill-up fast with tourists visiting Montana.

Dew Duck Inn: (406) 826-3346, (in Plains) Rooms start at \$85.00

Glacier Cross Hotel: (406) 826-3623, (in Plains) Rooms start at \$68.00

Quinn's Hot Springs Resort: (406) 826-3150, Ext.1 (About 15 minutes from Plains) Rooms start at \$199. River Cabins are \$299 and \$329. The River Lodge is also across the highway & rooms are between \$239-\$269.

Sanders County Fairgrounds: (406) 826-3202, Dry Camping 15.00 per night (with bath and shower house) and \$25.00 Full Hookups ***The Fairgrounds are beautiful and have horse stalls if interested.

The Falls: (800) 521-2184, (Thompson Falls, 30 minutes away) Rooms start at \$79.00

Riverfront Motel (406) 827-3460, (Thompson Falls, 30 minutes away) Rooms start at 94.00, cabins are 161.00. & houses are \$357.00 and \$324.00.

President's Corner - Julia Arnold

Greetings from North Central Montana! These sixty degree temperatures make me think spring is heading our way. I keep hoping the green

grass and new calves will be dotting our fields soon. I feel quite repetitive at this point saying 'wow, what a year we have had!' Between COVID-19 and falling bison prices, Montana producers have needed a new type of resiliency that has never been needed before.

Thus, I am excited that the MBA is moving forward with plans for the Summer Conference. This year's Summer Conference will be held in Plains, MT from June 11th-13th. This location was chosen due to its proximity to several Montana producers and the less stringent COVID regulations. Conference activities will be based out of the Sander's County Fairground with ranch tours, speakers, and activities already tentatively planned. Please make reservations ASAP as rooms are all first come, first serve. Don't hesitate to bring your camper or tent as the Sander's County Fairgrounds is beautiful and offers electric hook-ups, water, and a shower house. Please see the enclosed information on hotel reservations and general information about Summer Conference activities. The MBA will be joined by members of the Western Bison Association this year for our joint conference.

Besides the upcoming Summer Conference planning the Board has been monitoring the legislature for bills that might affect and/or reference bison. We have specifically reviewed House Bill 0318 and the Board has decided not to comment on this legislation surrounding wild bison in Montana. As t This bill looked to redefine Wild Bison, delineate Wild Bison vs. Domestic, and Wild Bison movement and relocation. No other bills have caused the Board any concern. We will continue to monitor what is happening in Helena throughout this legislative session and email with any immediate concerns.

Additionally, you will find the proposed by-law changes first shared in December. Please review the changes and reach out to a Board member if you should have any questions in regards to the proposals. In the following weeks you will receive a paper ballot through the USPS. The ballot will also include instructions and timelines for returning the ballot.

We have also included a list of all current members. We want to welcome several new members Pam Fromhertz, Terye Gaustad, Mimi Hillenbrand, and Larry Martin.

The Board would like to welcome Chris Bechtold as the newest Board Member. As a commercial bison producer he brings a wealth of knowledge surrounding bison production, bison DNA genetics, and insight of all things bison that he will willingly share. Several years ago he joined as a Lifetime Member and has already shared great ideas and commercial producer experience with the MBA Board. He manages the Diamond

Chris D. Bechtold

Ranch General Manager



Choteau, Montana

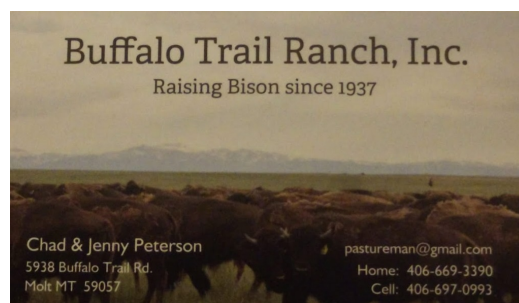
Phone: (406) 466-3611

Email: chris@diamond4dranch.com

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P.O. Box 857

Choteau, MT 59422



Roland R.H. Kroos

4926 Itana Circle,

Bozeman, MT 59715

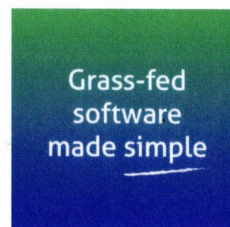
406.522.3862

Cell: 406.581.3038

Email: kroosing@msn.com

Website:

CrossroadsRanchConsulting.com



4D Ranch outside Choteau, MT.

With the Section 32 purchase of the bison meat and the Governor's directive relaxing COVID restrictions, we can hope that the market will move in a more positive direction for producers. Hopefully we will have a better sense of the market in mid-June at the Summer Conference. Until then, please send pictures of your calves so we can update the Facebook page. Who can't 'like' a cute bison calf picture. As always, please don't hesitate to contact Board members with questions or concerns.

Happy Easter!
Julia Arnold, President
Montana Bison Association



Proposed Changes to the MBA Bylaws

The Board of Directors has reviewed and approved changes to the Association's ByLaws. These changes were made to update, change and improve the ByLaws. The membership now needs to approve or reject these proposed changes.

Below is a copy of the revised Bylaws with the proposed changes included. The proposed changes are highlighted and underlined.

Very soon, all eligible members will receive another copy of the proposed Bylaws via US Mail, along with a ballot/and return stamped envelope. We ask that members review the proposed changes and complete the enclosed ballot to either accept or reject the proposed changes. Please return the completed ballot in the envelope, by the required deadline.

Any member(s) who may have a question on the proposed changes, please contact Craig Denney at montanabisonusa@hotmail.com
Thank You,
Craig Denney, Treasurer

PROPOSED REVISIONS TO THE MONTANA BISON ASSOCIATION BY-LAWS

The Board of Directors proposes to the membership, the following changes to the By-Laws of the Organization. These changes are being suggested to either clarify, update or improve conditions for the workings of the Association.

A summary of the proposed revisions are as follows:

1. Article 1, Section 1.2 Offices. The position of Treasurer is being shown separately.
2. Article's 2.1& 3.1, All references to the term "buffalo" have been replaced with the term "bison". This is being done to update the By-Laws.
3. Section 3.1 New Associate and Industry Memberships have been proposed.
4. Section's 3.2, 3.3 & 3.5 the position of Treasurer is being shown separately.
5. Section 4.2 Revised to clarify that payment of membership dues are due by January 1st of each year.

6. Section 4.3 Revised to clarify default provisions for membership dues not paid.
7. Section 5.1 New language is being proposed (last two paragraphs) in the event the annual meeting should have to be delayed in handling replacement director positions.
8. Section 6.2, Revised to clarify that only one person from each family, ranch or organization may be considered for office.
9. Section 7.1, Revised and updated language to clarify director positions that are to be replaced annually.
10. Section 11.2, Revised to show the fiscal year to run from January 1 thru December 31 of each year.
11. Section 11.3, Revised and updated to reflect latest language for completing financial audits of the organization.

MBA Board of Directors 2021

President: Julia Arnold - Outlaw Livestock - Conrad, MT - 406-899-1611 - tjwilsall@yahoo.com

Vice President: Matt Skoglund - North Bridger Bison - Wilsall, MT - 406-223-1950 - matt@northbridgerbison.com

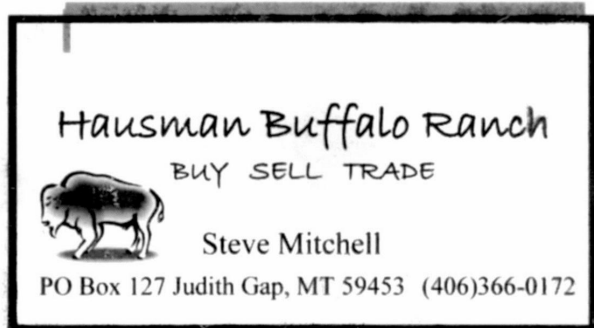
Treasurer: Craig Denney - DDC Ranch - Park City, MT - 406-633-2743 - montanabuffalousa@hotmail.com

Secretary: Candis Westre - Bitterroot Bison Co.- Missoula, MT - 406.531.5352 - candywestre@yahoo.com

Director: Chris Bechtold - 4D Diamond Ranch - Choteau, MT - 406-466-3611 - chris@diamond4dranch.com

Director: Jonathon Sepp - Roam Free Ranch - Hot Springs, MT - 571-243-8057 - info@goroamfree.com

Round Up: The Locals' Guide to Gifting From The Big Sky Journal



Editor's Note: The MBA Board would like to send another thank you to Jennifer Olsson for all of the time and energy she shared with the Association. She was featured in the Winter 2020 Big Sky Journal for her beautiful repurposed antique quilts featuring bison batting. What an amazing way Jennifer honors her love of bison while cherishing the contribution of many generations of women who took pride in their ability to provide beautiful art and function for their families.



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Reserve Operations Manager

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It's not always easy to find the perfect gift for any season or reason, but you can't go wrong with locally made products that offer not only quality craftsmanship, but also a tie to the places and activities we know and love in the Northern Rockies. From handcrafted wooden kitchen utensils to robes and activewear, Big Sky Journal

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• Jerky
• Pepperoni Stick
...and more


Steve Killorn
Ph. (406) 745-2375 • Cell (406) 690-0065
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editors have selected gift ideas with local flavor.

Patchwork quilt meets cozy in these one-of-a-kind creations, featuring bold colors, unique patterns, and uncommon materials. Jennifer Olsson, founder of Montana Bison Fashion & Furs, pairs antique quilts with felted Montana-ranched bison and wool. The end result is a luxurious blanket that's fit for everyday use but beautiful enough to hang on the wall. The company's mission is based on Olsson's respect for bison in the West (which served as an imperative provider of warmth for Native Americans), and also for the ranchers who have brought the animal back from near extinction. Also, check out her mittens, hats, scarves, shawls, and more.

Sizes and prices vary. Shop at mtbisonfashionfurs.com

[Read more](#)



CRAZY WOMAN BISON

Doug and Mary Stange, 2001 Chalk Buttes Road, Ekalaka, Montana 59324
(406) 775-8808 dstange@midrivers.com www.crazywomanbison.com

Leavitt Group

Josh Pulst, Commercial Producer & Risk Control Specialist
Leavitt Great West Insurance Services josh-pulst@leavitt.com

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406.599.9947 cell
866.751.8096 fax

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Livingston, MT 59047
www.leavitt.com/greatwest

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HOME (406) 926-3867
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USDA Approves \$17 Million Purchase of Bison Meat

From The National Bison Association

WESTMINSTER, CO (Dec. 4, 2020) – Bison business leaders hailed today's announcement from U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) that the agency had approved the National Bison Association's request for a \$17 million purchase of ground bison under the Section 32 Surplus Removal program.

The association filed the request for the Section 32 purchase in late August, noting that market pressures created by an unanticipated large crop of harvest-ready bison in 2019 was compounded by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The purchase of bison meat is part of a \$170 million Section 32 purchase that also included beans, butter, fluid milk and fresh grapes.

"Today's announcement helps place a foundation of stability under the bison business. That foundation will enable us to rebuild the strength and profitability that our business has enjoyed over the past decade," said Dave Carter, executive director of the National Bison Association.

Carter thanked the USDA personnel who had carefully weighed the economic information submitted by the bison association. He also thanked the 12 U.S. Senators, led by Sens. John Hoeven (R-ND) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) who weighed in with the USDA on behalf of the bison industry request.

"Individual bison ranchers who took the time to contact their congressional offices to push for this purchase deserve a lot of the credit for making this happen," he added.

Today's announcement binds the agency to buy up to \$17 million in bison meat, with the actual purchases dependent upon the number of bids submitted by qualified suppliers.

While the USDA purchases will be made from commercial processors, Carter noted that the purchase of bison meat will benefit everyone along the supply chain.

"We are just getting into the major auction season for live bison. This announcement provides buyers and sellers with a degree of confidence in the economic outlook of our business," he said.

Source

Challenge Grants Fuel Opportunities to Double Support for Bison Center of Excellence

From The National Bison Association

People wanting to support the newly-chartered Center of Excellence (COE) for Bison Studies now have an opportunity to double the value of their contribution, thanks to two generous donors committing challenge grants to support fundraising efforts last week.

The Center of Excellence was formally launched in September 2020 as a partnership between South Dakota State University, the National Bison Association and the National Buffalo Foundation. The Center of Excellence for Bison Studies is headquartered at SDSU's West River Research and Extension facility in Rapid City.



Following a presentation on the Center's activities at the National Bison Association Winter Conference last week, an anonymous donor offered to match up to \$50,000 in new donations in support of the Center. Immediately after that announcement, John Flocchini of the Durham Ranch in Wyoming announced that the ranch would match the \$50,000 commitment and would pledge an additional \$50,000 as a new challenge grant. Conference participants stepped up with pledges of \$23,000 toward that second \$50,000 challenge.

The next \$27,000 in pledges will continue to be matched by the Durham Ranch. Those pledges can be submitted to the National Buffalo Foundation, a public 501(c)(3) organization www.nationalbuffalofoundation.org/donate/

National Bison Association Executive Director Dave Carter said, "This grassroots commitment from individual bison producers demonstrates the strong commitment our members are making to support new research that will strengthen the health of our herds and the land, and that will help us continue to connect the public with deliciously healthy bison meat."

COE Director Dr. Kristi Cammack said, "the commitment made by the bison community today will go a long way to supporting the type of research and outreach that will benefit everyone in our business, and the customers who rely on us for high quality, nutritious products."

The 2018 U.S. Farm Bill authorizes the USDA's National Institute for Food and Agriculture to recognize centers of excellence in research, extension and education in the food and agricultural sciences. The Center of Excellence for Bison Studies is coordinated through SDSU, but will include active participation by researchers and extension officials from other land grant universities, including 1994 tribal land-grant colleges and universities.

The Center focuses on research activities to improve bison herd health and the economic viability of both private and tribal bison producers.

Source

Prairie Reserve's bison get clean bill of health, fresh start with Phillips County

From The Missoula Current

This month, American Prairie Reserve shared with the Phillips County Conservation District that, as before, our bison herd has been given a clean bill of health.

As Senior Bison Restoration Manager for American Prairie, I am one of several members of our team that's living and working in Phillips County, supporting the day-to-day management of the bison herds that graze on our properties. The health of our herds is just as important to us as it is to our neighbors in Phillips County.

Earlier this year, an adjustment board appointed by the state Department of Natural Resources and Conservation unanimously approved a new bison grazing and disease management



- Raised respectfully on pasture, hay & grains
- Fed without hormones or meat by-products
- Raised free-ranging

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Chris & Stacy Sullivan

406.246.7777 • sull@blackfoot.net

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agreement between our team and the Phillips County Conservation District. I can say first-hand that this agreement was the hard-won result of many months of constructive and respectful talks from parties who ultimately found common ground.

American Prairie was given a 10-year variance from the county's bison grazing ordinance. In exchange, we agreed to expand our already-robust disease management program, and routinely share that information with the Conservation District board.

Our team is dedicated to creating a refuge for wildlife and people. We want for all Montanans to have access to our state's incredible grasslands for generations to come, while also conserving one of the world's last prairie landscapes that can be protected on an ecosystem-scale. This includes bison, which are crucial to that ecosystem.

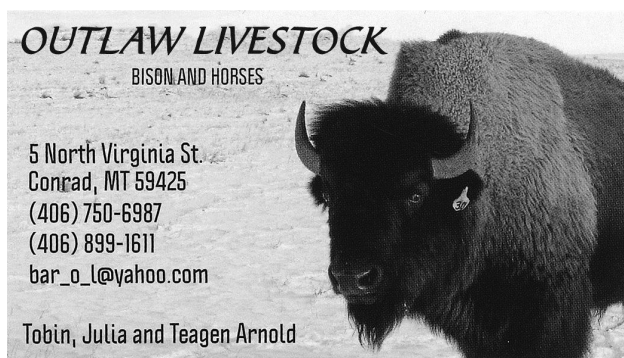
As of our last count, we have 810 bison in our herd. We source from herds that have been brucellosis-free for several decades. We meet or exceed all Montana Department of Livestock testing, vaccination, and quarantine requirements for every animal before it arrives on American Prairie property.

Our team is also dedicated to being good community-members. Fulfilling the terms of this new agreement with Phillips County comes at a significant operational cost to us, but it's important to us that our neighbors' concerns are heard.

In January, as soon as the agreement was finalized, a group of several employees and volunteers immediately got to work to implement the expanded disease testing requirements. We moved 136 animals through a carefully-designed series of corrals and chutes. Of that total, 97 bison were disease tested, 42 hair samples were taken for DNA testing, 94 LORa GPS Tags were deployed, and three GPS tracking collars were deployed. We were very glad to have more than 20 people from the community and Conservation District join us to observe the handling.

[Read more](#)

2021 Bison Auction Averages
From The National Bison Association



**CROSS THREE
+3
QUARTER HORSES**

HOME OF BIG SIZED MODERN COWHORSES
Wylie Gustafson
Facebook: @CrossThreeQuarterHorses
527 Furlough Rd, Conrad MT 59425
Cell 509-595-3971

Class price average listed per head:

January 9 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Auction - SD

Yearling Heifers - \$1,205
2 Year Old Bred Heifers - \$2,440
2 Year Old Yellowstone Bulls - \$9,750
2 Year Old Castle Rock Bulls - \$6,800
2 Year Old Bulls - \$8,400

February 11 - Linnebur Grain & Buffalo - CO

Mature Bred Cows - \$ 1,336
Mature Open Cows - \$1,000
Mature Bulls - 5 - 10 years - \$2,838
Mature Bulls - 10 plus years - \$2,600

February 20 - National Bison Gold Trophy Show and Sale - SD

2 Year Old Bred Heifers - \$5,750
Pen of 2 Year Old Bred Heifers - \$3,750
Heifer Calves - \$1,440
Pen of 5 Heifer Calves - \$900
2 Year Old Bulls - \$5,450
Yearling Bulls - \$4,735
Bull Calves - \$1,708

February 20 - Dakota Territory Buffalo Girlz Going Wild Auction - SD

Yearling Heifers - \$3,090

March 4 - Denver Mountain Parks Bison Auction - CO

Bull Calves - \$1,393
Heifer Calves - \$828

Groups raising funds for new bison quarantine facility in YellowstoneB

From The Billings Gazette

Two conservation groups are attempting to raise \$500,000 by June to help pay for modifying and building new quarantine pens near Yellowstone National Park so more bison can be transferred to tribes and avoid slaughter.

"We're a little over halfway to our goal," said Scott Christensen, executive director of the Greater Yellowstone Coalition.

The coalition pledged to raise \$250,000. [Yellowstone Forever](#), the park's fundraising arm, is pursuing another \$250,000.

"This is one of the park's highest priorities," said Lisa Diekmann, president and CEO of Yellowstone Forever, who added that her group is also more than halfway toward its goal. "I think in some ways bison are even more iconic than other Yellowstone wildlife. Hopefully, our constituents love them as well."

The Park Service will provide another \$500,000 to fund the million-dollar project. Construction could start this summer with a goal to have the expanded facilities available by next winter, according to Chris Geremia, the park's lead bison biologist.

"We've shown this can work on a smaller scale," said Cam Sholly, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park.

The new facilities will require an increase in park personnel to oversee their operation, as well.

"There's still a lot to be done, but this is a step in the right direction," Sholly said.

In a nod to the new effort, the park is now referring to the quarantine program as its [Bison Conservation Transfer Program](#).

"It's an indication of how important bison are, not only in Yellowstone but far beyond," Sholly said. "Ultimately, I'd like to set a longer-term goal of not consigning Yellowstone bison to slaughter."

[Read more](#)

2021 Montana Bison Association Membership

- Adam & Melinda Anakalea-Thompson Falls, MT
- Tobin & Julia Arnold - Conrad, MT
- Damien C. Austin- Malta, MT
- Doug Averill- Big Fork, MT
- Chris Bechtold-Choteau, MT
- Mark & Becky Blais- Florence, MT
- Marty Boehm-Kalispell, MT
- Dan & Ellette Day, Kalispell, MT
- Craig & Julie Denney-Park City, MT
- Moritz Espy-Rapid City, SD
- John & Gaylynn Flocchini, Gillette, WY
- Barkley & Melanie Flynn- Polson, MT
- Pamela Fromhertz-Golden, Co
- Tim Gardipee-Missoula, MT
- Terye Gaustad-Tracy, CA
- Wylie Gustafson-Conrad, MT
- Scott Heiderbrink-Malta
- Mini Hillenbrand-Rapid City, SD
- Steve & Jennifer Killorn-St. Ignatius, MT
- Steve Kroon-Manhattan, MT
- Roland Kroos-Bozeman, MT
- Roy & Amy Liedtke-Whitesboro, TX
- Lavvy Martin-Powell, WY
- Jim Matheson-Morrison, CO
- Scott & Mary McLeod-Big Timber, MT
- Steve & Rosemary Mitchell-Judith Gap, MT
- Alan & Victoria Oborny-Choteau, MT
- National Buffalo Museum-Jamestown, ND
- Jennifer Olsson-Bozeman, MT
- Chad & Jennifer Peterson-Molt, MT
- Jonathon Sepp-Hot Springs, MT
- Matthew & Sarah Skoglund-Bozeman, MT
- Rex Snyder-Lyman, WY
- Doug & Mary Stange-Ekalaka, MT
- Ty Stubblefield & Jeanie Engelke-Florence, MT
- Chris & Stacy Sullivan-Dixon, MT
- Snowcrest Ranch-Alder, MT
- Troy & Candy Westre-Missoula, MT
- Don & Bobbie Woerner-Laurel, MT
- Paws Up Ranch/Buffalo Leap-Greenough, MT
- Zoo Montana-Billings, MT

[Source](#)

[Bison Calendar of Events](#)

Please note, several bison events have been postponed/canceled due to the COVID-19 situation. Please contact the host to ensure the event is still planned.

- 3/31/2021 - Jerry Farlee Buffalo Ranch Online Bidding Deadline - SD
- 4/09/2021 - Minn. Bison Association's Annual Education Conference - MN
- 6/11/2021 - Montana Bison Association Summer Conference - MT
- 6/27/2021 - National Bison Assn. Summer Conference - Cheyenne, WY

[See more bison events here.](#)

Montana Bison Association
montanabison.org

