

# DOI Bison Report:

*Looking Forward*

*Natural Resources Report 2014*

*Stephen Torbit Ph.D., Science Applications  
Fish and Wildlife Service – Mountain Prairie Region*



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National Park Service  
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Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

## DOI Bison Report

*Looking Forward*

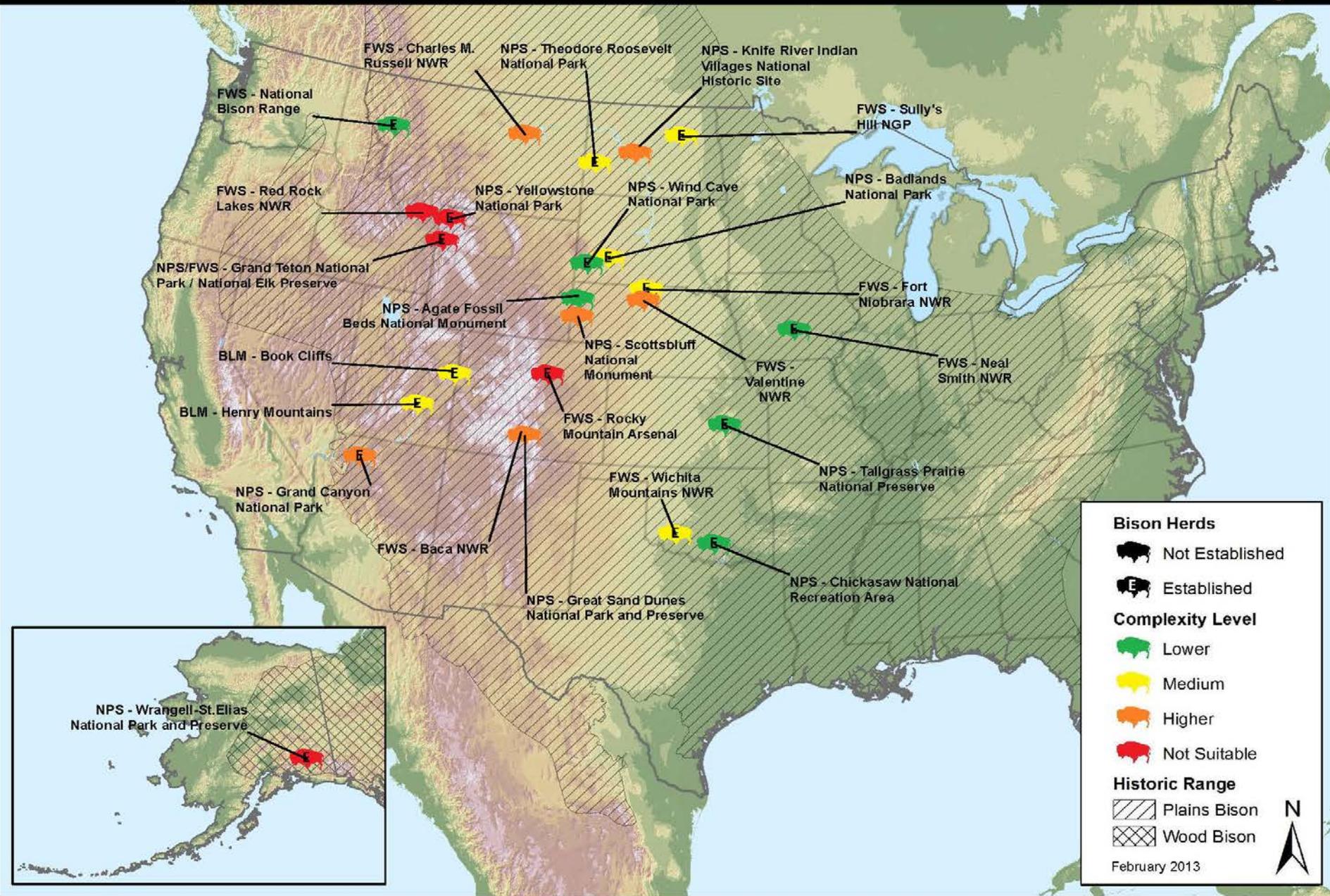
Natural Resource Report NPS/NRSS/BRMD/NRR—2014/821



Report on Bison  
Management, Reaffirming  
Commitment to Work  
With States, Tribes and  
Other Partners

<https://irma.nps.gov/App/Reference/Profile/2210987>

**Figure 1. Relative complexity of management and planning for consideration of placement of quarantined brucellosis-free Yellowstone-origin bison on DOI lands**



# DOI Lands that Currently Support Bison

Unit	State	Bureau	Fenced or Ranging	Approximate Herd Size	Approximate Area Size (ac) <sup>1</sup>
Badlands National Park	SD	NPS	Fenced	650	64,000
Book Cliffs	UT	BLM	Ranging	450	1,400,000
Chickasaw National Recreation Area	OK	NPS	Fenced	10	80
Fort Niobrara National Wildlife Refuge	NE	FWS	Fenced	350	17,000
Grand Canyon National Park	AZ	NPS	Ranging	300+	23,000
Grand Teton National Park/ John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Memorial Parkway, National Elk Refuge	WY	NPS, FWS	Ranging	900	360,000
Henry Mountains	UT	BLM	Ranging	325	300,000
National Bison Range	MT	FWS	Fenced	380	19,000
Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge	IA	FWS	Fenced	70	700
Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge	CO	FWS	Fenced	75	12,000
Sullys Hill National Game Preserve	ND	FWS	Fenced	25	540
Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve	KS	NPS	Fenced	20	1,100
Theodore Roosevelt National Park	ND	NPS	Fenced	500	71,000
Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge	OK	FWS	Fenced	640	59,000
Wind Cave National Park	SD	NPS	Fenced	450	28,000
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve	AK	NPS	Ranging	110	100,000
Yellowstone National Park	ID,MT,WY	NPS	Ranging	4,600	2,200,000

<sup>1</sup> Ranging herds may occur on DOI and adjacent lands

# Tribes and Quarantined Bison



NPS and BIA invited all 26 tribes associated with Yellowstone National Park (see following map) to a joint tribal consultation meeting held via conference call to gauge tribal interest in receiving brucellosis-free Yellowstone bison and collaborating with DOI on long-term quarantine operations in the future.

NPS also gave presentations to the ITBC Board of Directors and the Montana-Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council.

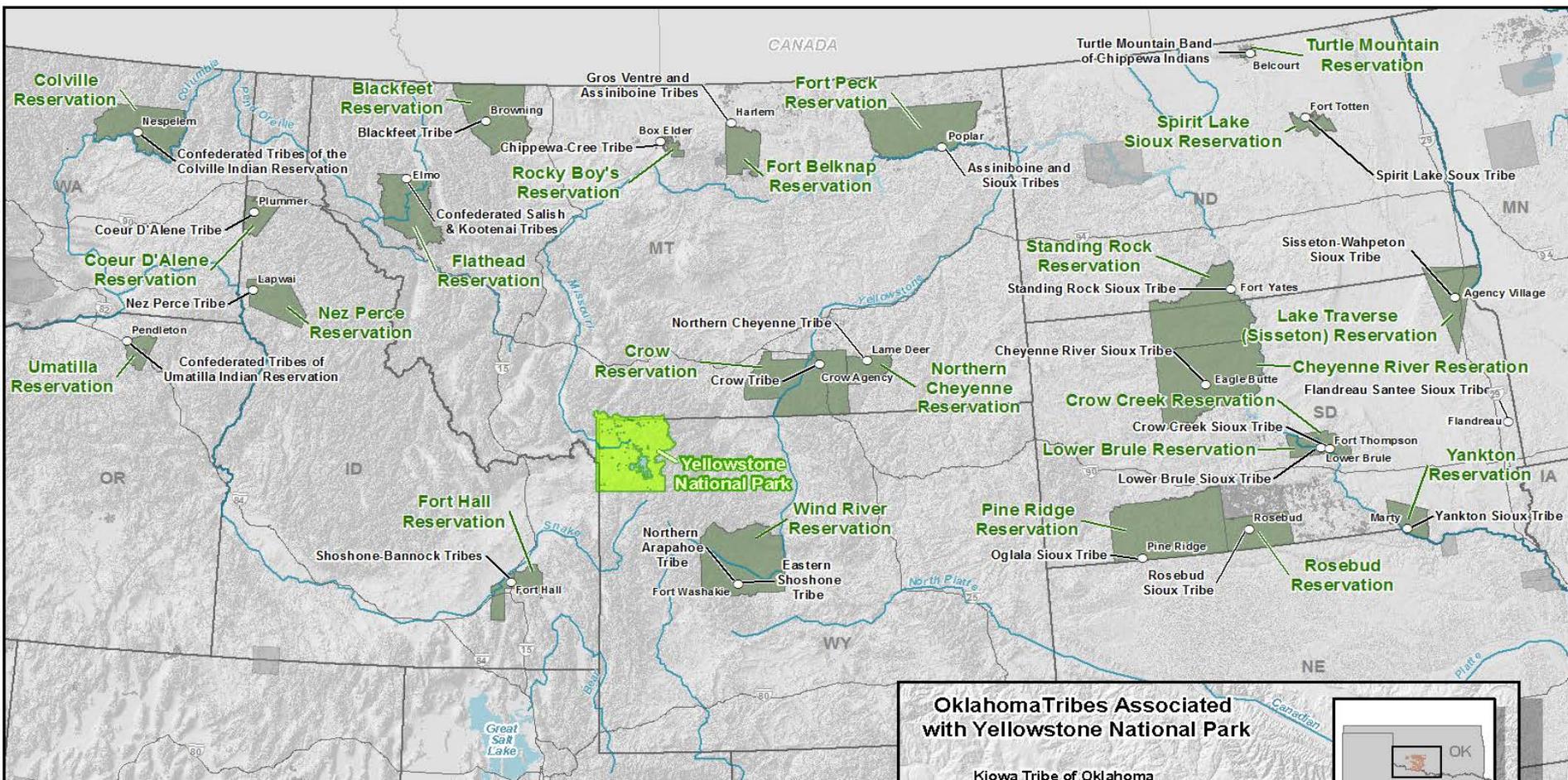
FWS was invited to discuss quarantine with the Wind River Tribes. FWS met with the tribes to discuss the status of the quarantined bison and options at Wind River.

# Tribes and Quarantined Bison



The tribal consultations also identified important issues such as the resources needed to install infrastructure and manage bison herds, potential conflicts with treaty bison hunting rights, and whether quarantine and relocation are suitable long-term management tools.

Some tribes have continued to express interest in receiving brucellosis-free Yellowstone-Origin bison. DOI will continue to engage and communicate with these tribes as the quarantine issue develops.



## Tribes Associated with Yellowstone National Park



The map was created by  
The Department of Interior  
Bureau of Indian Affairs  
Office of Trust Services  
Division of Water and Power  
Lakewood, CO  
Plot Date: February 2013

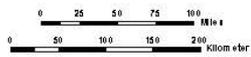


### Legend

- Reservations with Yellowstone Bison Initiative participating tribes
- Reservations not associated with the Yellowstone Bison Initiative
- Trust Land
- Yellowstone National Park
- City
- Interstate
- River



1 inch = 115 miles



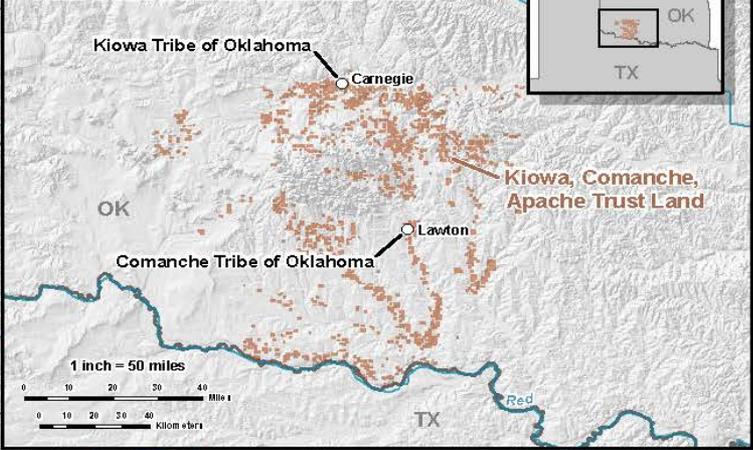
All data are projected to:  
UTM, Zone 12, Meters  
North American Datum 1983  
Spheroid: Geographic Reference System 1980

Data Sources:  
USGS elevation data: 1993-2002  
American Indian Reservation data  
last updated in 2005 from US Census data and  
"ESRI Data and Maps" 2008

Main Map Scale of 1:7,300,000 and Oklahoma Inset scale of  
1:2,500,000; Valid only when the map page is 8.5" X 11"

Map Use Constraints:  
The use of this map for engineering work or to legally define  
reservation boundaries is prohibited. Any use of trade,  
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## Oklahoma Tribes Associated with Yellowstone National Park



Kiowa Tribe of Oklahoma

Comanche Tribe of Oklahoma

Kiowa, Comanche,  
Apache Trust Land

1 inch = 50 miles





# Tribal Collaboration

DOI is committed to assisting American Indian tribes restore buffalo to tribal lands. Below are examples of DOI's work with interested tribes.

BIA has provided funding and technical assistance to assist Fort Peck and Fort Belknap to receive brucellosis-free Yellowstone bison

NPS and the Oglala Sioux Tribe are working together to establish a Tribal National Park and restore buffalo on the South Unit of Badlands National Park





# Bison Conservation on the Horizon

Formal and informal discussions regarding future bison conservation on DOI lands are occurring at the following locations. All DOI actions will adhere to prevailing and applicable legal and policy mandates as described above, including involvement by states, tribes, and the public.

## Arizona

Grand Canyon National Park: formal planning underway, in cooperation with the state of Arizona, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, to develop a long-term bison management plan

## Colorado

Baca National Wildlife Refuge: developing a Comprehensive Conservation Plan which will explore options for bison conservation

Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve: developing an Environmental Impact Statement for long-term elk and bison management, including potential bison restoration on NPS lands

# Bison Conservation on the Horizon



## Nebraska

Agate Fossil Beds National Monument: discussing potential bison reintroduction

## New Mexico

Río Mora National Wildlife Refuge: evaluating options for the bison herd pre-dating the establishment of this new wildlife refuge

## South Dakota

Badlands National Park: in discussion with Oglala Sioux Tribe to restore buffalo on the park's South Unit

Wind Cave National Park: potential bison pasture expansion using 5,000-acre park addition

# Conclusions



Over the past century, DOI has advanced bison conservation, and remains committed to doing so over the next century.



DOI bison resources will remain crucial to the long-term conservation of the species.



However, significant work remains to restore the species to its ecological and cultural role on appropriate landscapes.



DOI's bison conservation toolkit continues to grow: adaptive risk management, conservation genetics, meta-population management, and brucellosis quarantine.



However, DOI's most important bison conservation tool to achieve large landscape restoration is collaboration amongst state, local, and tribal partners.

# Conclusions & Questions?



The DOI Bison Conservation Initiative envisions that broadened bison conservation will entail innovative partnerships with both traditional and non-traditional partners to allow for ranging bison across multiple jurisdictions at larger landscape scales.



This scenario is at the heart of the successful establishment of the wildlife herd of huntable “Book Cliffs” bison on BLM and adjacent lands in Utah.



On the horizon, there are important case studies in places like Arizona, Colorado and South Dakota to measure DOI’s success in developing these types of innovative partnerships.



Above all, DOI remains committed to working in an open and transparent way that fosters collaboration with states, tribes, and the public.