

InterTribal Buffalo Council



To restore bison to Indian Nations in a manner which is compatible with their spiritual and cultural beliefs and practices.

April, 2012

ITBC Member Tribe Welcomes First Yellowstone Buffalo

By Jim Stone

As many of you may know, the bison that were being held in the Yellowstone National Park Quarantine Facility have finally been transferred to one of our member Tribes, Fort Peck. The current plan is for those animals to be held by Fort Peck until they can send some of the animals to the Forth Belknap Indian Community. This has been a long, drawn out action that has generated much political and court activity in the state of Montana which is still going on today.

In May of 2008 a meeting was held to discuss how to dispose of the bison that were in the quarantine pro-

ject and that were getting ready to complete their three years of quarantine and were eligible to be transferred to willing recipients with assurances that



amounted to an extended five year semi quarantine period. The attendees represented the agency representatives to the interagen-

cy bison conservation committee. This included representatives from the Inter Tribal Buffalo Council, Yellowstone National Park, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Montana Department of Livestock, US Fish and Wildlife Service, USDA APHIS and the US Forest Service. Other groups represented were the WCS American Bison Society,

the American Buffalo Society and the Gallatin Wildlife Association. The members of the bison conservation committee were tasked with

developing a format for allocating the bison from the quarantine facility.

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has said further Yellowstone bison relocations are under consideration for public lands in Colorado, South Dakota and elsewhere. According to Fort Peck tribal leaders, the relocation offers a chance to revive their connection with an animal that provided food, clothing and shelter for their ancestors. The arrival of the buffalo from Yellowstone was followed by a caravan of tribal members who drove behind the trailers that carried the bison across the river and onto the reservation.

President's Message...Ervin Carlson

Greetings to all of you! I hope everyone did well during these winter months as we all look forward towards Spring. I would like to thank the ITBC membership for the confidence and support expressed at the annual meeting in December and voting me into the Presidency for another term. I take your support seriously and will strive to serve the organization to the best of my ability. Since the annual meeting, the ITBC Board

has been active on numerous fronts. First, to inform the new officers and regional directors, the Board met in Denver to review the federal charter and the first version of the ITBC bylaws. After review, the Board is recommending some changes to the bylaws that are reflective of actual business practices. Second, discussions with Notah Begay have continued to develop a partnership with his food

corporation, Kiva-Sun, for the marketing of buffalo to high-end consumers. The Board agreed by formal action at the January Board meeting, to allow Kiva-Sun to utilize the ITBC logo for marketing. I believe we have developed a positive relationship that we are now hoping to formalize through a written agreement and a test run of animals to determine prices.

Third, we have been continuing to coordinate with the

Wind River Ranch in New Mexico as it transitions into a United States Fish and Wildlife national refuge. ITBC Director Jim Stone and I have met with Teresa Gray of WRR and the Denver Zoo as the Zoo will serve as the fiscal agent for WRR and the USFW acquisition. Denver Zoo is most interested in continuing a relationship with ITBC for a buffalo program on the Wind River Ranch.

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Director's Message...Jim Stone

Well I hope you are all as glad as I am to see the newsletter being published again. Due to staff changes it has been very difficult to get these things put together and sent out lately. The Board of Directors recognized that the newsletter was very important to the member Tribes so we have contracted with Susan Ricci who used to do a great job on the newsletter in the past to spend a few hours each quarter putting the newsletter together.

We have also contracted Susan to plan the anniversary celebration and she has been working diligently with the Board and myself to get this done. Hopefully by the time this is delivered to you we would have had the FY 2012 Herd Development Grant materials sent out to everyone and hopefully we would have completed the contracting of our funds from the BIA by then. We also need to start planning our Regional Training sessions for this year our grant from USDA for 2012 follows the calendar year versus the past grant which was on the fiscal year.

So I hope everyone is enjoying spring which in my neck of the woods involves walleye fishing and collecting morel mushrooms and wild asparagus. It is also going to be calving season so if you get any good pictures send them to us.

Bison – The National Mammal Campaign: The Inter Tribal Buffalo Council has joined forces with the Wildlife Conservation Society, the American Bison Society and the National Bison Association to kick start an effort to get the bison designated as the National Mammal. At present there is no National Mammal and based on the bison's place in the history of the Tribes we should be at the forefront of this effort.

We are doing this with a bill called the "National Bison Legacy Act". The following paragraph is an excerpt from a fact sheet we are using to build support for the campaign.

Bison—our largest land mammal—embody our country's history, heritage and character. Once ranging from Oregon to New Jersey and Alaska to Mexico, bison herds inspired awe in western explorers, like Lewis and Clark. Bison were integrally linked with the economic, physical and spiritual lives of Native Americans, central to their sustenance, trade, ceremonies and religious rituals.



Bison are a symbol of frontier culture in the United States and sustained early settlers and traders. A monumental effort to save bison from extinction began in 1905, initiated by men and women from all walks of life, including ranchers, Native Americans, industrialists, Teddy Roosevelt, and general

citizens. This grassroots campaign to save bison on small refuges in Oklahoma, Montana, and South Dakota served as the world's first successful wildlife restoration effort.

We started in January with planning sessions to discuss what we wanted to do and to develop our outreach and communication plans. We visited Washington DC to talk with Senators that we felt would be supportive of our efforts and as a result of the meetings Senator Enzi (WY) has agreed to introduce the bill. Senator Johnson (SD) has agreed to co-sponsor the bill and at this time we are trying to get additional co-sponsors of the bill from across the country. We have asked Tribes to write letters to their Senators from the Tribal leadership encouraging them to support the bill and possibly become co-sponsors. We would also like to see the youth get involved by having them write letters to the Senators as well.

There has been a website: votebison.org set up that will allow people to contact their Senators and for groups to join our effort. One of the next steps may involve getting members of the House of Representatives involved so if you have a Representative you work with closely who you may think would sponsor or co-sponsor a bill in the House let me know.

Bison Facts:

- There are currently 500,000 bison in North America including 15,000 bison on tribal lands.
- Between 3,500 to 4,000 bison roam in Yellowstone National Park.
- The life span for bison in the wild is between 18-22 years old; in captivity it can be over 30 years

President's Message continued

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Fourth, I have been monitoring the ongoing work by the office to transition from a 638 grant for BIA funding to a 638 contract. This process involved close out work for previous years, negotiation of an Indirect Cost Rate and review of proposals for start up and pre-award costs. Once this negotiation phase is completed, ITBC will have more autonomy from the BIA and can hopefully streamline the award of herd development grants.

Fifth, I have been discussing opportunities with the Board about developing the capacity of ITBC, how to grow the organization, improve communication and provide enhanced technical services to its

members. I am hoping to work with the Board and staff to expand the ITBC funding base through additional grants and partnerships.

Finally, I have been working with the Board, staff and former ITBC event planner, Susan Ricci, on the planning of the ITBC 20th Anniversary Event. We are in the beginning stages of planning but intend to host the event in Rapid City early this fall for a celebration of ITBC's successes.

As always, I am available any time to listen to any concerns you may have. Please don't hesitate to call. I look forward to working with all of you on another successful year for the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

Ervin Carlson, ITBC President

Welcome Back to Buffalo Tracks

**We have a new look!
Buffalo Tracks will be published quarterly and available by email as well as hard copy.**

**If you need extra copies or if you are interested in submitting any stories, please contact Susan Ricci at
susanricci36@yahoo.com.**

Flandreau Indian School Serving Buffalo Meat Lunches

FLANDREAU, S.D. - A group of Indian students at the Flandreau Indian School in South Dakota are part of a pilot project started by the Flandreau Santee Sioux tribe and South Dakota State University researchers to restore the cultural significance of the buffalo, and consumption of its meat among community members, particularly young people. Through cooking demonstrations and educational outreach opportunities, the students are learning that there are healthier, tasty options that also connect them to their ancestors more than any prepackaged meat or drive-thru order could. "You can't go to Hy-Vee and just pick up ground buffalo to actually get the spiritual connection. I think that's kind of been lost," said Geriann Headrick, acting food service manager at the Flandreau Indian School, referring to a regional

supermarket chain. The school began preparing meals with fresh bison meat last year as part of the pilot project. Nearly 20 professors across five departments at SDSU are involved in the project, which they hope will be used as a model among other tribes trying to revive the demand for bison. One of more than 30 students from the Flandreau Indian School to take part in cooking workshops with bison as the main ingredient, senior Dillon Blackbird said he now knows how to whip up his own dishes with bison, which has less fat and fewer calories than beef. "I make basic stuff: tacos, enchiladas, spaghetti, lasagna," Blackbird said. SDSU researchers want other teenagers to follow Blackbird's lead. The Flandreau Santee Sioux tribe is a member of the InterTribal Buffalo Council

(ITBC) whose mission is to restore buffalo to Indian Nations in a manner which is compatible with their spiritual and cultural beliefs and practices. The Flandreau Santee maintains its own herd as a tie to its ancestors who relied on bison for survival of its ancestors who relied on bison for survival. Until the Flandreau program is self-sustaining, the InterTribal Buffalo Council, a cooperative of more than 50 tribes is donating the animal meat to the Flandreau School. Officials also are hoping to get more money for the project through grants. The Flandreau tribe is believed to be the first to create a self-sustaining commercial market from production to consumption, said Jim Stone, executive director of the InterTribal Buffalo Council.

(Associated Press)

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ITBC Upcoming Anniversary Event

The Intertribal Buffalo Council (ITBC) will be celebrating two decades of restoring bison to tribal lands. To mark this special milestone, ITBC is holding a 20th Anniversary Event this fall in Rapid City, South Dakota, home to the ITBC headquarters.

The event will feature a children's pow wow, informational breakout sessions, an honoring luncheon for original ITBC founders and a formal banquet with a silent auction and entertainment.

"We will be inviting all of those individuals from the public and private sector who helped make the ITBC a reality twenty years ago. This event is as much to honor them as it is to honor the buffalo," said Ervin Carlson, ITBC President.

The bison restoration movement has come a long way over the past two decades and ITBC is looking forward to sharing its stories and its successes with all of its many supporters.

For more information or if you would like to contribute suggestions, contact Susan Ricci at ITBC 605-394-9730.