
Hebgen Lake Ranger District News Release



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Forest Service Releases Decision to Re-authorized Special Use Permit allowing a Bison Capture Facility on Horse Butte

West Yellowstone, MT... The Gallatin National Forest Supervisor signed a Decision Memo today re-authorizing a 10 year special use permit to the Montana Department of Livestock (DOL) to allow a portable capture facility on approximately 2 acres of national forest system land on the Horse Butte Peninsula and to use Forest Service Roads 610 and 2530D to access the capture facilities. The Horse Butte Peninsula is located approximately 9 miles northwest of West Yellowstone, Montana. Montana DOL was originally issued a 10-year special use permit for a capture facility in 1998 that expired December 31, 2008.

The capture facility has been used five of the last ten years, and continues to be an important bison management tool. Along with other bison management tools, the facility helps provide the framework for greater tolerance for bison in the Horse Butte Peninsula area as identified in the Adaptive Management Plan (Dec. 2008).

“I weighed the objectives of the State of Montana to minimize field removal of bison against the environmental and social consequences associated with permitting a capture facility and found the bison management objectives to be most compelling,” said Mary Erickson, Gallatin National Forest Supervisor. “I am very aware of and sensitive to the controversy that exists over the management of migrating bison and the difficult position the State of Montana is in trying to protect its domestic livestock industry. In the absence of a capture facility, the State would be left with no alternative beyond their existing authorities which include hazing and field removal of bison that may move beyond the thresholds identified in the Adaptive Management Plan. Despite the diverse opinions I hear on how to deal with this issue, most people agree that field removal is the least desirable option.”

The Decision Memo is available on the Gallatin National Forest website at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r1/gallatin> or by contacting the Hebgen Lake Ranger District at (406) 823-6961.

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