



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Plains Bison Introduction into Banff Park Pure Folly!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton March 5, 2015)... Alberta's largest conservation group, the Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA) is outraged at Parks Canada's decision to introduce plains bison into the Rocky Mountains in Banff National Park under the guise of re-introduction. Bison haven't been seen there in more than a century.

The Association's main concerns regarding this action are:

- 1) Disease such as mycoplasma (pneumonia), lungworm, anthrax which are most fatal to Alberta's provincial mammal the Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep which are native to the release site,
- 2) Competition with sheep, elk and deer for winter forage,
- 3) Confinement; although Parks Canada says it will be a free-roaming herd there will be fencing involved to control movement. Notwithstanding this contradiction in terms, fencing and /or drift fencing poses a threat to all other wildlife cutting off travel corridors.
- 4) Management costs; will escalate exponentially with diversion of resources both inside and outside of the park especially when taking into consideration that all animals and fencing will be, according to Parks Canada, flown in by helicopter.
- 5) Bison/human conflict; the proposed introduction site is one of the few, most unique and already compromised montane areas which is a valuable ungulate wintering ground that also sees heavy equestrian and hiking activity. In short bison and tourists on foot or horseback are incompatible in spite of Parks Canada's claim that bison will enhance the mountain experience.
- 6) Migration out of the park; bison are known for their roaming which historically has been proven to be hundreds of kilometres in order to take advantage of availability of forage at different times of the year. This will result in farmers and ranchers bordering the Park to suffer agricultural losses which most likely will be paid for by taxpayers.

AFGA President, Wayne Lowry said, "All in all this is a poorly thought out idea for a number of reasons without getting into the exorbitant costs, especially from an outfit like Parks Canada who seem to be losing qualified staff and decreasing services at a phenomenal rate." "The money could be better spent on correcting that situation or in helping to save the threatened woodland caribou", he added.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and the conservation of their habitats. The AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals and has a province-wide membership of more than 24,000 individuals spread among 90+ Clubs.

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