

Delta Bison Interim Management Plan Staff Report

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Staff Report Presenter

Darren L. Bruning

Delta Area Biologist

**Division of Wildlife
Conservation**



Purposes of the Presentation

- **Identify the key changes in the 2012 Delta bison interim management plan**
- **Provide an opportunity for public comment**
- **Seek discussion and feedback from the Board on Delta Bison Herd (DBH) management**

DBH Management is Complex



ADF&G must balance statewide hunting & conservation interests with local agricultural land use & crop depredation issues.

- The DBH is a wildlife resource with statewide importance
- Intensively managed herd (15 –20%/yr harvest rate)
- One of most sought after permits
- Bison utilize private land
- Private landowners have an impact on herd size & management via control of access for hunting

DELTA BISON INTERIM MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Delta Bison Interim Management Plan (DBIMP) serves as a guide for DBH management program.



Photo by Stephen D DuBois

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Division of Wildlife Conservation**



2012

Delta Bison Working Group



The DBWG was formed in 1992 to advise ADF&G on DBH management

- 7 member citizen's advisory group**
- Had been in existence for 2 decades**
- Provided recommendations to ADF&G on bison management issues**

Delta Bison Working Group



The DBWG was formed in 1992 to advise ADF&G on DBH management

- **Statewide hunting**
- **Delta Jct. agriculture**
- **Delta Jct. hunting**
- **Statewide ag. & research**
- **Delta Jct. community**
- **Delta Jct. business**
- **U.S. Army**

Delta Bison Interim Management Plan Mission Statement

Maintain a healthy, free-ranging bison herd in the Delta Junction area

that provides the greatest reasonable opportunity to hunt and view bison

while also keeping conflicts between bison and private property owners to the minimum level possible using all management techniques available to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

Why an Interim Management Plan?

- Plan is interim pending resolution of the issue of fencing
- DBWG agreed that fencing was the best solution to minimize conflicts
- No agreement on a specific fencing solution supported by key interest groups



Why an Interim Management Plan?



- Farming community's preference to explore mgmt. alternatives that ADF&G funding cannot support/outside scope of authority
- Some recommendations by DBWG require legislative action
- Suspend planning efforts to resolve fencing debate

Why an Interim Management Plan?

- **As appropriate, ADF&G will provide input to DNR and the Legislature**
 - **Fencing issues & fence design**
 - **Means of prevention of damage to ag. fields**



Why an Interim Management Plan?

- **ADF&G will continue to implement management options**
 - **Within existing legal mandates**
 - **Funding levels**
 - **Biologically sound and feasible**



Why an Interim Management Plan?

- **ADF&G will work within legal authority and funding capabilities to minimize bison conflicts**
 - **Delta Jct. Bison Range**
 - **Hunting and Harvest**



Why an Interim Management Plan?

- The interim plan will provide the basis for carrying out all other aspects of management of the DBH
 - Game Management Plan required in AS 16.20.310



2012 Changes from the 2000-2005 Delta Bison Management Plan

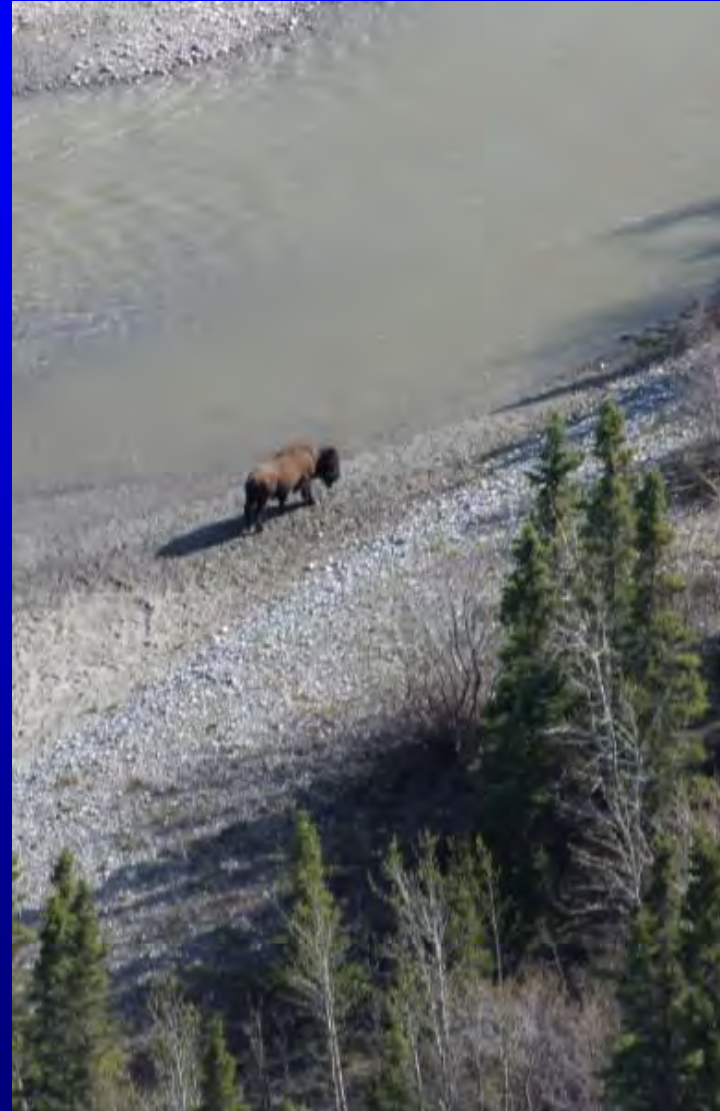
- **Primary accomplishment-agreement that long-term solution to eliminate conflicts is bison-proof fences**



2012 Changes from the 2000-2005 Delta Bison Management Plan

Recommendations from DBWG

- Reduction in herd size objective from 360 (precalving) to 275-325 bison (precalving)
- Continue cooperative (ADF&G/DNR) annual crop damage assessment



2012 Changes from the 2000-2005 Delta Bison Management Plan

Recommendations from DBWG, continued

- For the legislature to increase permit application fee from \$10 to \$20 for Delta bison management funding
- For the legislature to establish a state cost-sharing program to assist ag. producers with constructing bison-proof fences



Recent Developments

House Bill No. 202 - Representative Feige

- Increase application fee for bison drawing permit to \$20
- Add “mitigation of bison damage...” to game management plan
- Authorize DNR Commissioner to make grants for fencing



Summary

- **ADF&G worked extensively w/the DBWG to develop the Delta Bison Interim Management Plan**
- **DBWG agreed that fencing was the best solution to minimize conflicts**
- **No agreement on a specific fencing solution supported by key interest groups**
- **Some resolution preferences cannot be supported by ADF&G funding and are outside ADF&G scope of authority**

Summary

- **Some recommendations by DBWG require legislative action and should be developed with opportunities for broad public participation which reflects the statewide interest in the DBH**
- **Primary accomplishment of planning process- agreement that long-term solution to eliminate conflicts is bison-proof fences**
- **Recommendation for reduction in herd size objective from 360 (precalving) to 275-325 bison (precalving)**

Summary

- **Continue cooperative (ADF&G/DNR) annual crop damage assessment**
- **Recommendation for the legislature to increase permit application fee from \$10 to \$20 for Delta bison management funding**
- **Recommendation for the legislature to establish a state cost-sharing program to assist ag. producers with constructing bison-proof fences**

Summary

- **House Bill No. 202**
 - **Increase application fee for bison drawing permit to \$20**
 - **Require inclusion of “mitigation of bison damage to farm crops, and farm and personal property...” to game management plan (AS 16.20.310)**
 - **Authorize Commissioner of DNR to make grants to property owners for mitigating or preventing bison damage**

Summary

- **The DBH is a wildlife resource with statewide importance**
- **ADF&G will continue to implement management options**
 - **Within existing legal mandates**
 - **Funding levels**
 - **Biologically sound and feasible**
- **The interim plan will provide the basis for carrying out all other aspects of management of the DBH**
- **Plan is interim pending resolution of the issue of fencing**



The End

**Board Comments and
Recommendations are Welcome**

Questions?