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NBA Weekly Update for July 15, 2022

The Weekly Update is a service designed to provide National Bison Association members with news and information affecting bison production and marketing. Many items in the Weekly Update are reprinted from outside sources. The content of those articles does not necessarily reflect the policy position of the National Bison Association. The articles are reproduced here only as a means to keep our membership informed as much as possible of all information and opinions relating to bison that is circulating publicly.



2022 International Bison Convention a

Great Success



NBA Executive Director Jim Matheson, along with many NBA members, attended the 2022 International Bison Convention (IBC) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan this week. The conference was an enormous success, with hundreds of bison enthusiasts gathering in Canada to celebrate, learn, and network. The International Bison Conference occurs every five years, with the NBA and the Canadian Bison Association switching hosting duties each time. The last IBC was in Big Sky, MT in 2017.

This year's IBC had a diverse agenda that touched on all aspects of the species, from production to research to conservation to culture, the conference had it all. Attendees were treated to wonderful gourmet meals at each sitting, all of which featured local Canadian bison. The CBA pulled out all the stops with entertainment the first two evenings, concluding with a banquet dinner on Thursday night that included a fun auction that raised significant funds for the association, graciously served by auctioneer, Brennin Jack.

Matheson provided opening remarks and participated as a judge in the convention's poster session, which featured innovative research by North American graduate and PhD students. Said Matheson, "This year's IBC was very well organized, planned and facilitated and was enjoyed by all in attendance. The get together was as much a reunion as it was a conference, and the CBA certainly raised the bar with IBCs to come. Kudos to all involved in making this IBC a tremendous success."

Mark Silzer Inducted into the National Buffalo Hall of Fame

Last night at the International Bison Conference, the National Buffalo Foundation inducted Mr. Mark Silzer into their Hall of Fame.

The purpose of the Hall of Fame, which began in 1980, is to honor those who have done the most for the North American Buffalo, inclusive of both historic individuals as well as those today, which through their dedication and conscious effort further the restoration of bison.



Mr. Silzer has been a leader of the North American bison industry for decades, serving as Chair of the Canadian Bison Association among other leadership positions, which in his time there helped forge the productive working relationship with the National Bison Association that we as an industry enjoy and utilize today.

NBA Executive Director, Jim Matheson, had the privilege of inducting Mr. Silzer, who is a longtime friend and colleague.

Learn more about the Hall of Fame at <https://www.nationalbuffalofoundation.org/hall-of-fame/>.

Mycoplasma bovis Task Force Meets

The Center of Excellence (COE) for Bison Studies led M. bovis Task Force met today to continue their work on gaining a better understanding of the virus and offering mitigation options.

Members of the task force include not just members of the COE, but also researchers and staff of the National Park Service, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the University of Wyoming, Colorado State University and South Dakota State University, the Nature Conservancy, Turner Enterprises, Inc., and the USDA's Agriculture Research Service.

Dr. Bryan Kaplan, a newly hired M. bovis research with USDA ARS, updated the group and shared some encouraging news in that ARS is in the process of testing two vaccines by the end of this summer to be tested on ten bison to determine safety and efficacy.

Further, the COE recently announced that this year's funded research projects include a project at the University of Wyoming that will assess the factors that influence the virulence of Mycoplasma bovis in bison. See the NBA's M. bovis fact sheet [here](#).

Funding for these important research projects are the result of contributions to the National Buffalo Foundation, which has funded all research projects to date at the COE. Please consider making a charitable contribution to continue this important research at <https://www.nationalbuffalofoundation.org/donate/>.

Editor's Note: The following news stories were distributed by organizations not affiliated with the National Bison Association. They may not reflect the opinions or the positions held by the NBA on matters such as genetic integrity, animal management, and other issues.



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Why Hosting RVers Through Harvest Hosts Can Be Great for Your Business

From Harvesthosts.com

If you're a small-business owner, you likely use traditional ways to attract customers to your business, such as online and print advertising, social media, in-person consumer shows, and word of mouth.

But one method you may not have considered can bring you thousands of dollars of additional annual revenue: hosting RV travelers at your business location at *no extra cost* to you through Harvest Hosts.

More than 3,500 small businesses across North America ("Hosts") already welcome Harvest Hosts RVers ("Members") at their properties.

Harvest Hosts Members pay an annual fee to access a robust list of Host locations in Canada and the United States, where they can park their rigs for the night. The Harvest Hosts' Code of Conduct highly encourages Members to make a purchase of at least \$20 at each Host location.

However, most RVers readily spend more than that, whether it's the entire family paying for museum admission, buying multiple souvenirs at a farm gift shop, or enjoying dinner and dessert at a brewpub. It's not unusual for Harvest Hosts Members to pay for a wine tasting and then purchase a couple of full bottles to take with them on their travels.

A Host doesn't pay anything to join the Harvest Hosts program, yet you have the potential of making thousands of dollars annually, thanks to multiple RVers who may stop at your property.

In 2021, Members spent nearly \$40 million across Host locations, with that number projected to hit more than \$40 million in 2022. On average, well-established Hosts saw an additional revenue boost of \$10,000 to \$25,000 from Harvest Hosts Member spending.

Read [more](#).

American bison are making a major comeback

From [azfamily.com](#)

The Fish and Wildlife Service in early June announced that several petitions to add Yellowstone bison to the List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 presented “substantial” arguments that ESA protections “may be warranted.”

It wasn't too long ago—roughly 150 years—that nearly 30 million American bison (Bison bison) lived throughout the Great Plains between the Rocky Mountains in the West and the Appalachian Mountains in the East. But with white settler populations exploding throughout the region in the late 19th century, hunters severely diminished the bison population by killing around 5,000 of the animals every day in 1871 and 1872. At the same time, bison habitat rapidly eroded as farmland, cities, and fenced-off pasture for cattle were established in the shadows of bison territory. Novel diseases took care of the rest.

By 1889, free-ranging bison numbers dwindled to almost zero. This reduction of more than 99.9% of the population ushered in a century of bison-less Great Plains. Natural habitat, grassland, other animal populations, and Indigenous communities all suffered. A modest collection of federally managed herds in the early 20th century brought bison back from the brink. With approximately 11,000 Plains bison in 19 herds, the Department of the Interior is today's lead conservation steward for North American Plains bison across 4.6 million acres of National Park Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Bureau of Land Management lands in 12 states.

Conservation efforts, responsible farming, and an ambitious relocation effort have afforded a bison population boom in recent years. While small and isolated, populations are ascending with roughly 350,000 Plains bison in production herds, 30,000 in public herds, and around 20,000 in tribal herds. To learn more about the ultimate American comeback story, Stacker explored the history of bison populations in the U.S. and repopulation efforts underway.

Read [more](#).

Once nearly extinct, bison are now climate heroes

From [Washingtonpost.com](#)

Miles of prairie stretched out across the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in southern Oklahoma, acre after acre of brush, grasses and hearty vegetation creeping toward the low-range granite mountains rising in the distance. Like in much of Oklahoma, the road is flat here, but the speed limit remains 30 mph. That's because of the bison.

They appeared seemingly out of nowhere: dozens of massive animals lumbering up the shoulder of the road to cross to the fresh vegetation on the other side. The herd moved slowly, their soft, bovine eyes barely registering the stopped cars awaiting their passage. They quickly set to work mowing down the fresh springtime grass.

The bison's quiet munching does more than nourish their bodies — it's one of many things they do to nurture their entire ecosystem, one that is increasingly under threat from climate

change. Grazing bison shaving down acres of vegetation leave more than dung behind: Their aggressive chewing spurs growth of nutritious new plant shoots, and their natural behaviors — the microhabitats they create by rolling in the ground, the many birds that forged symbiotic relationships with them — trickle down the food chain. Once bordering on extinction, bison now serve as a great provider for their ecosystems, standing as an example of the ways in which animal conservation and ecological protection can work in tandem.

“Buffalo is the original climate regulator,” said Troy Heinert, a member of the Sicangu Lakota (Rosebud Sioux) tribe and executive director of the InterTribal Buffalo Council, a coalition working to restore the animal on tribal lands. “Just by how they use the grass, how they graze, how their hoofs are designed, the way they move. They did this job for us when we allowed them to be buffalo.”

Tribes are leading the effort to bring back the bison, Heinert says, which in turn allows for the return of other native grasses, animals and insects — all of which will “help fight this changing climate.”

Read [more](#).

Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes want sacred Big Medicine returned to National Bison Range

From Greatfallstribune.com

When Congress passed and President Donald J. Trump signed into law the legislation that would restore the National Bison Range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes, it marked a homecoming of sorts as the land, the operations and the bison were returned to tribal management.

Now, Native leaders throughout the state need one more thing returned: Big Medicine. Big Medicine is the name given a white bison calf born on the range in 1933. Not an albino, Big Medicine had a mostly white coat with a tuft of brown that sometimes appeared near his horns. Many Indigenous cultures, including the Salish and Kootenai, regarded the birth as an omen of good fortune and renewed hope, and Big Medicine was kept alive on the range for 26 years, nearly triple the age of the average bull bison.

Since his death in 1959, Big Medicine has been housed at the Montana State Historical Society in Helena. The display is right across from the archives on the second floor, and he remains one of the most popular attractions for Native and non-Natives alike.

However, the Montana Native American Caucus has supported the effort by the CSKT to bring Big Medicine home, back to where he lived, to be a part of a planned museum and interpretative center.

Molly Kruckenberg, the executive director of the historical society, said that while the decision to return Big Medicine to the CSKT is in the hands of the society’s board of trustees, she said staff generally support the effort so long as the animal, which is in somewhat fragile condition, can be returned safely and preserved for the next generation of Montanans and tourists.

Read [more](#).

Cameras could offer snapshot of bison migration into state

From The Daily Sentinel

Several dozen times over the last decade, wild bison living in the Book Cliffs in Utah have crossed a demarcation known only to man and went from being a big game species huntable only with a license in the Beehive State to living and dying in Western Colorado.

Here, no regulations govern or limit bison hunting, and people could, and did, kill those

bison for free.

It's thanks to what the nonprofit group Grasslands Unlimited says is a regulatory loophole in the state under which Colorado Parks and Wildlife classifies bison only as livestock, rather than both as livestock and a big game species, meaning it is not under the agency's jurisdiction.

"They cross this invisible boundary and suddenly they go from wild animals to livestock without ever realizing it, and we're at that point powerless to protect them," said Trevor Pellerite, the group's president.

Grasslands Unlimited hopes to change that. But in March, the Parks and Wildlife Commission denied its request to take immediate steps to protect the animals from unregulated hunting, pointing to only anecdotal reports that it is occurring. Agency staff argued that the regulatory change hasn't been shown to be warranted, questioning how many bison have dispersed into the state from Utah and whether there's a significant problem the agency should spend some of its limited resources solving.

But the agency's director, Dan Prenzlou, who later was placed on administrative leave over allegations about making a racist comment at a conference, committed in March to have agency staff meet with Pellerite and see if a problem exists.

"He did say that the agency is open to kind of an ongoing discussion about what the state can do to restore bison and what can and should be done to change the regulations," said Pellerite. "But it was definitely not the kind of initiative on their end that we were hoping we would see."

As a result, the group decided to take its own initiative by hiring a 2022 Colorado Mesa University graduate, Dayna Leonard, to set up camera traps this summer to get a better idea of the degree to which bison are showing up in Colorado from Utah, making them vulnerable to unlicensed hunting.

Pellerite said Parks and Wildlife indicated this was the only path forward for Grasslands Unlimited to further pursue the issue, as the agency isn't in the position to take on that kind of research.

Read [more](#).

Sask. project aims to create a life-saving bison vaccine

From Regina Leader-Post

A vaccine and genetics project is trying to save the lives of vulnerable bison herds across Canada.

Genome Prairie and Genome Canada are spending \$5.1 million on the Bison Integrated Genomics project to develop a vaccine for Brucella and bovine tuberculosis — diseases that pose serious threats to small herds lacking in genetic diversity.

The money is split between \$3.8 million in federal funding and \$1.3 million in provincial money, [a news release said](#).

"There was a time when tens of millions of bison roamed the vast reaches of North America," Genome Prairie CEO Mike Cey noted at the International Bison Convention on Thursday.

"And now, with only a few thousand left in the wild, we must work together to find solutions to ensure the wellbeing of (surviving) populations."

A vaccine addressing both brucella and bovine tuberculosis has never been done before, said Todd Shury, acting manager of wildlife health and management at Parks Canada.

In infected populations, brucellosis affects about 30 percent of bison, while bovine tuberculosis sits roughly between 25 and 50 percent, he said.

The future vaccine would aim to protect herds in Northern Canada, particularly around Wood Buffalo National Park, he said.

The park, which sits between Alberta and the Northwest Territories, is the largest in Canada and roughly the size of Switzerland.

That makes it difficult to track down wild animals roaming within its borders, which is why it's important to address both diseases with a single dose to protect an animal over the course of its lifetime, Shury said.

Read [more](#).

Bison convention roams through Saskatoon

From CJME.com

After bison almost became extinct in the late 1800s, work to conserve and produce the animal continues.

The International Bison Convention is being held in Saskatoon this week.

The event brings together people from all aspects of the industry to collaborate and find the best ways to take care of and keep bison herds healthy.

Organizer and Canadian Bison Association president Les Kroeger says Saskatoon was the perfect place to hold the convention.

"It was just a good opportunity to showcase our province and the beautiful city of Saskatoon," Kroeger said, noting much of the industry does business here.

"We just thought Saskatchewan is one of the hubs, the heartland of the bison industry." There have been a number of speakers throughout the week, including people who have operated bison herds and ranches for more than 50 years.

And having that much experience, there was no opposition to holding it here.

"We have about 80 percent of the national bison herd located in the prairies, and Saskatchewan plays a major role in the industry," Kroeger said.

When they presented the idea of holding the convention in Saskatoon, Kroeger said he was met with the response: "Go ahead and plan it."

There are many aspects to taking care of bison, and Kroeger adds there needs to be a lot of cooperation between Indigenous people, conservationists, researchers, and commercial producers in order to maintain healthy herds.

The International Bison Convention wraps up on Friday.

USDA Invests \$14M to Bolster U.S. Meat and Poultry Sector Resilience

From Drovers.com

USDA announced an additional investment on July 13 of more than \$14 million to support agricultural workforce training in historically underserved communities that will increase the resilience of the U.S. meat and poultry processing sector.

This investment is part of the Biden-Harris Administration's ongoing efforts through the American Rescue Plan to strengthen the nation's food supply chain by promoting fair and competitive agricultural markets, USDA said in a release.

"Food insecurity and food system interruptions have hit underserved communities hardest during the ongoing pandemic. By investing in education and workforce development at these institutions, we are training the workforce of the future to develop long-lasting

solutions to these and other critical agricultural issues facing our nation," Chavonda Jacobs-Young, Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics and USDA's Chief Scientist said in a release.

Funding is available through the USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) Request for Applications process to eligible universities. Eligible applicants include

- Qualified Centers of Excellence at 1890 Land-grant Universities
- 1994 Land-grant Tribal Colleges
- Hispanic-serving institutions
- Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian institutions
- Participants in the Resident Instruction Grants Program for Institutions of Higher Education in Insular Areas

"These investments provide critical support to our higher education partners to increase rural prosperity and economic sustainability of food systems in underserved agricultural communities," Jacobs-Young said.

Minority-serving institutions, Hispanic-serving institutions and land-grant tribal colleges have made invaluable contributions to advancing scientific research and developing future agricultural leaders and change-makers, USDA said. Program investments at these institutions have the ability to build a pipeline of well-trained workers and support the management of small-scale meat or poultry processing plants.

The Hispanic-serving Institutions' grants are competitive among qualifying higher education institutions. Complete information on this funding opportunity can be found on the [NIFA website](#). The deadline to submit applications is 5 p.m. Eastern Time on Monday, August 29.



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- 7/21/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 8/15/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online
- 8/18/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 9/10/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Mission, SD
- 9/15/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 9/24/2022 - Rocky Mountain Bison Assn. Fall Ranch Tour - WY
- 10/14/2022 - Wisconsin Bison Producer's Association Fall Meeting - WI
- 10/15/2022 - NBA Regenerative Ranch Tour Workshop - Villa Grove, IL
- 10/20/2022 - Jack Auction Group Video Bison Auction - Online
- 11/05/2022 - Custer State Park Annual Buffalo Auction - SD
- 11/09/2022 - Antelope Island State Park Bison Auction - Online
- 11/19/2022 - Coyote Trail Buffalo Ranch Simulcast Production Auction - SD
- 11/25/2022 - Minnesota Bison Association Bison Fundamentals - MN
- 11/26/2022 - Minnesota Bison Association Legends of the Fall Sale - MN
- 11/27/2022 - Rocking P Ranch Simulcast Production Auction - SD
- 11/14/2022 - TNC Joseph H. Williams Tallgrass Prairie Preserve Auction - Online

- 12/01/2022 - Kansas Buffalo Association Sale - KS
- 12/01/2022 - Western Bison Association Meeting and Show/Sale - UT
- 1/07/2023 - Turner Bison Exchange Prairie Performance Simulcast Auction - SD
- 1/18/2023 - NBA Winter Conference - Westminster, CO
- 1/21/2023 - NBA Gold Trophy Show and Sale - Denver, CO
- 2/11/2023 - Dakota Dynamite Buffalo Sale Simulcast Auction - SD
- 3/09/2023 - Eastern Bison Association Winter Conference and Auction - PA

Please visit <https://bisoncentral.com/calendar/> for details and more up-to-date events. If you have a bison event coming up that's not listed, please send the details to jim@bisoncentral.com and the NBA will post the event on its website at no charge.

[Click Here for NBA Calendar of Events](#)

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