

**FEDERAL AID  
FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT**

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME  
DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION  
PO Box 115526  
Juneau, AK 99811-5526

**Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
State Wildlife Grant**

**Grant Number:** T-7-1 **Segment Number: 1**  
**Project Number:** 1.0  
**Project Title:** Planning for and implementing wood bison restoration in interior Alaska  
**Project Duration:** 26 February 2008 – 30 June 2014  
**Report Due Date:** 28 September 2014  
**Principle Investigator:** Tom Seaton  
**Project Location:** Elk Island National Park, Alberta, Canada, Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center at Portage, Alaska and Interior Alaska, including Minto Flats, Yukon Flats and lower Innoko/Yukon River areas.

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**I. PROBLEM OR NEED THAT PROMPTED THIS RESEARCH**

This is not a research project; this is a reintroduction of an extirpated subspecies, wood bison, (*Bison bison athabasca*) into its former range in Alaska.

**II. REVIEW OF PRIOR RESEARCH AND STUDIES IN PROGRESS ON THE PROBLEM OR NEED**

N/A

**III. APPROACHES USED AND FINDINGS RELATED TO THE OBJECTIVES AND TO PROBLEM OR NEED**

In 2008 53 young wood bison were imported to Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center (AWCC) from Elk Island Park in Alberta Canada. Those bison were added to 13 others that had been confiscated by USFWS in 2003 and given to AWCC

**IV. MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

Several objectives of the wood bison restoration project were met. The animals were successfully imported from Canada; they were extensively tested and certified as disease-free; the herd grew and remained healthy; the final ESA classification of “nonessential experimental population” was published; and plans began for a spring 2015 release to the Lower Innoko/Yukon River release site.

Further work to be accomplished includes finalizing a management plan, and accomplishing the logistics of transporting and releasing up to 100 animals.

**V. SUMMARY OF WORK COMPLETED ON JOBS**

**Objective 1:** : Continue public information and education efforts, initiate collaborative planning to evaluate wood bison restoration in one or more specific locations and develop cooperative management plans.

- Produced *Wood Bison News* issues to update the public on the status of the bison.
- Cooperated with AWCC and Bear Trust International who produced a curriculum for wood bison for grades 7–8.
- Gave PowerPoint presentations and other talks to a variety of groups and organizations.
- Helped AWCC with their public education information
- Delays in establishing the 10(j) nonessential experimental population rule set back the cooperative planning process. Therefore, the cooperative planning process was not accomplished during the life of this grant. The first meeting is scheduled to begin in late September 2014.

**Objective 2:** Purchase and import up to 70 young wood bison from EINP in early 2008 or at the earliest opportunity, and transport them to the temporary holding facility at AWCC.

- Brought 53 young bison from Elk Island National Park in 2008. They and their progeny have been held in captivity at AWCC.
- Completed all health testing protocol. The herd is certified as disease-free.
- Obtained and updated all permits required for activity with the bison.

**Objective 3:** : Provide support for maintaining wood bison at the temporary holding facility at AWCC and health monitoring required prior to release.

- Supported AWCC in all aspects of bison husbandry including:
  - Purchased food and other supplies
  - Supported disease testing and health monitoring
  - Worked with Alaska State Veterinarian and Alaska Wildlife Veterinarian to address any husbandry and health issues. When necessary, consulted with other veterinarians and authorities to resolve any health issues.
- Conducted on-going disease/health monitoring programs to ensure wood bison remained disease-free.

**Objective 4:** Prepare temporary facilities and transport wood bison from AWCC to Lower Innoko/Yukon area or other approved locations for release into the wild.

- Because of delays experienced establishing the final rule that designated wood bison as a nonessential experimental population under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act, **this objective was not accomplished during the life of this grant.**

**Objective 5:** Prepare for and initiate baseline biological monitoring and post-release biological and population monitoring.

- Because of delays experienced establishing the final rule that designated wood bison as a nonessential experimental population under section 10(j) of the Endangered Species Act, **this objective was not accomplished during the life of this grant.**

## VI. PUBLICATIONS

*Wood Bison News* •—can be viewed on line following links listed below.

- [Wood Bison News 2013](#) (PDF 239 kB)
- [Wood Bison News 2011](#) (PDF 859 kB)
- [Wood Bison News 2010](#) (PDF 567 kB)
- [Wood Bison News 2008-2009](#) (PDF 2,657 kB)
- [Wood Bison News 2007-2008](#) (PDF 686 kB)
- [Wood Bison News 2005-2006](#) (PDF 809 kB)

## VII. ADDITIONAL FEDERAL AID-FUNDED WORK NOT DESCRIBED ABOVE THAT WAS ACCOMPLISHED ON THIS PROJECT DURING THIS SEGMENT PERIOD

**Prepared by:** Tom Seaton

**Date:** 08-29-2014