5/30/19

MARY ERICKSON
REGION 1, FOREST SUPERVISOR
BOZEMAN MT

MA'AM

REGARDING THE UPCOMING EVALUATION OF THREATENED SPIESIES IN THE CG NATIONAL FOREST, I WOULD LIKE TO BESEECH RELEVANT INDIVIDUALS IN POSITIONS OF PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY TO ALLOW THE LAST WILD BISON (AKA YELLOWSTONE) TO PROPAGATE IN THE NATIONAL FORESTS TO ABUNDANT NUMBERS. THEY WERE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF THE RECENT PAST ECO SYSTEM AND CAN HELP RESTORE THAT BY MULTIPLYING THEIR NUMBERS. (SEE ATTACHED SHEETS).

I SUBMIT MY EARNEST REQUEST IN BEHALF OF PEOPLE. GOOD ECOLOGY IS GOOD ECONOMICS, WE CANNOT GUARD THE ENVIRONMENT TOO MUCH, I'M CERTAIN THAT SAFEGUARDS TAKEN FOR FLORA AND FAUNA WILL NEVER BE REGRETTED, AND, IN FACT, WILL SAVE US.

THANK YOU.

SINCERELY
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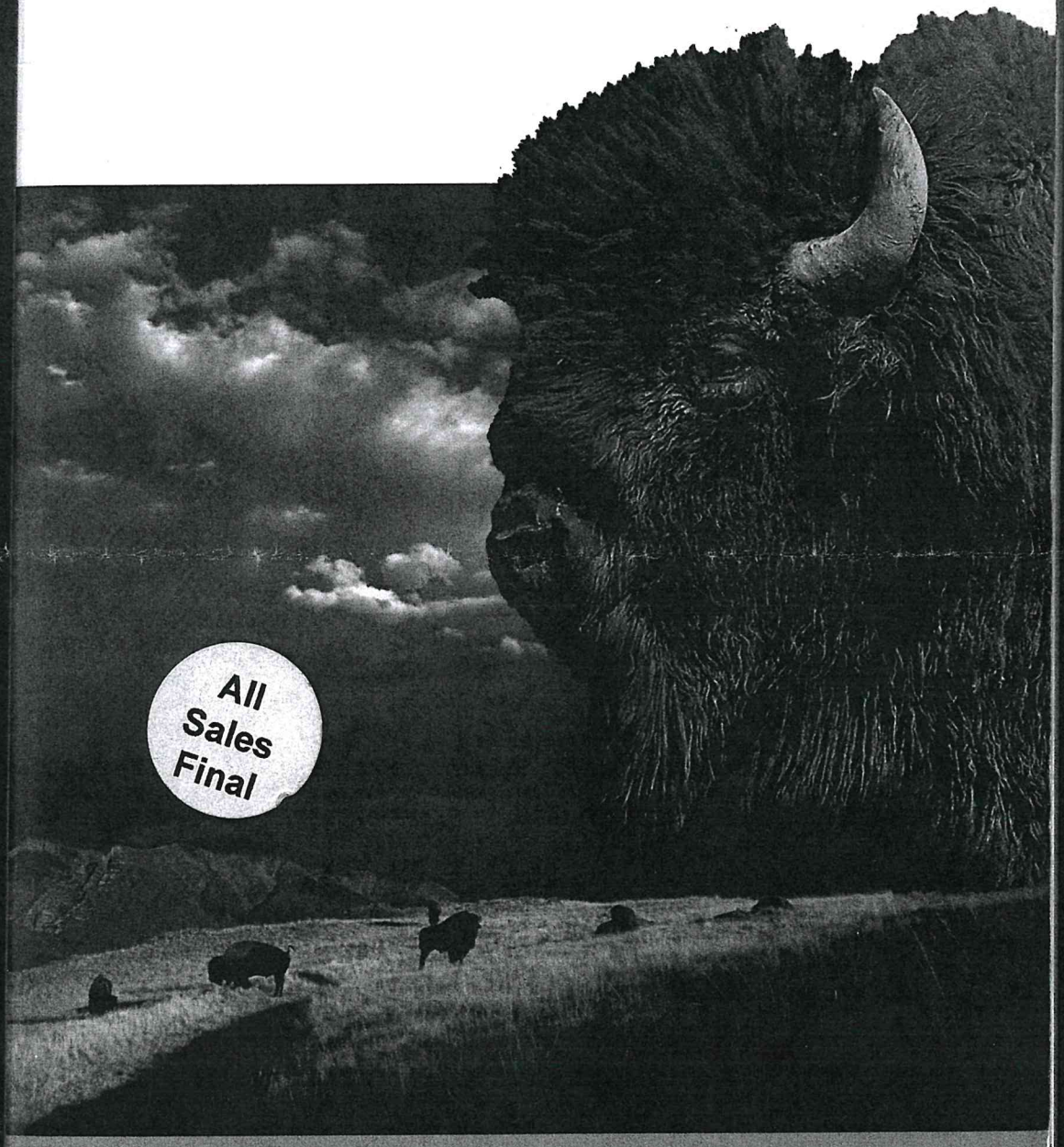
American Plains Bison
Rewilding An Icon



James A. Bailey

have implications for how we manage the world and ourselves.

Our cattle industry manages bovine diseases with vaccinations, deworming, antibiotics and selective slaughter of infected animals. In contrast, wild bison would evolve with their disease organisms, and would develop some disease resistance. Given the recent advances in gene therapy, it is not unreasonable to predict that one day genes for disease resistance could be transferred from wild bison to domestic cattle.[3]

Humans are committed to monotonizing the world into an artificial, domestic environment dictated by, usually short-term, human needs. Wildlife and wild environments can serve as valuable counterpoints of comparison, so we may know what we have done to the world, and may better understand our options.

Ecological Value

Wildlife are valuable as integral parts of complex ecosystems. The numerous interactions among plants, animals, soils and water serve to create and maintain these ecosystems of many interdependent parts. If an ecosystem, such as Yellowstone National Park, has value, then all of its components contribute to that value. Removing or diminishing one species from such an ecosystem may cause perturbations throughout much of the system, diminishing its total value.

In this respect, bison were a "keystone species" on the Great Plains of North America.[4] Their interactions with prairie ecosystems were listed in Chapter 3 and are important enough to repeat here. Bison influenced the habitats and behaviors of many native species. Their periodic intensive grazing and wallowing maintained species and structural diversity in the vegetation. Bison wallows may seem too small to have been a significant component of the ecology of the Great Plains. However, there may have been 100 million wallows affecting vegetation and distribution of soil moisture. Bison provided disturbed habitat needed by plants that are unwelcome "weeds" in

today's production-oriented livestock management. Disturbed sites supported animals, such as mountain plovers, and prairie dogs with numerous plants and animals that use prairie-dog towns.

Bison supported wolves that no longer exist on the vast majority of native bison range. Their carcasses fed a host of scavenger species including coyotes, bears, eagles, ravens, and even small birds that picked maggots and suet from bison remains. A dead bison is part of a living grassland ecosystem. In the end, the carcass site provides nutrient-rich soil supporting quality forage plants that are especially adapted to such sites.

The effects of bison cascaded through prairie ecosystems. Each spring, shed bison hair was used as insulating nest material by numerous grassland birds. Buffalo birds (now we call them cowbirds) evolved to feed on the backs of, and under the feet of, abundant bison. This commitment to feeding on and with bison, and the bison's great mobility, would not allow buffalo birds enough time for nesting in any one place. Consequently, buffalo birds adapted as nest parasites, laying their eggs in the nests of other birds, then moving on to follow bison. Thus, there are implications of bison for buffalo birds, for other prairie birds, and for the insect and plant foods of other birds, as well as for their predators.

Ecological values of bison are now diminished and rare. Cattle, especially with production oriented grazing, do not provide all these ecological values.[5] Cattle ranching tends to monotonize the range, converting as much land as possible into one condition that maximizes meat production. Moreover, a majority of the bison conservation herds are managed in ways that limit the ecological values of plains bison. A recent treatise on the future of plains bison declared, "The plains bison is for all practical purposes ecologically extinct within its original range."[6]

Esthetic, Historical, Cultural and Religious Values

These values of wildlife are diverse and personal. Esthetic value

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as a wildlife species

Fig. 6.3. Bison in a
statue, Tallgrass Pr

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