



# THE POST RIDER

Marias River Livestock Association, 72 Sweetgrass Hills Rd, Sweet Grass, MT 59484  
[www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com)

## Bison, Bison Everywhere

By Maggie Nutter

Seems like everywhere you look there is something about bison going on lately. It gets a little confusing as there are multiple issues and areas. Then just when you think you're getting a handle on the issues, a new issue arises. The Fort Belknap Bison were out on a hay field (Aug 30, 2012) and the Chinook rancher who leases the hay ground is angry and wants the Department of Livestock to do something about it. We have compiled articles starting in March of 2004 telling the troubled history of the Fort Belknap bison on the Issues & Events page of [www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com).

Then there is issue two, The Park County Yellowstone Bison Trial. The Park County Commissioners and Montana Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) are suing the MT FWP and Department of Livestock (DOL). Park County and

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MFBF are concerned that allowing bison to roam freely outside of Yellowstone National Park boundaries into the town of Gardiner and the surrounding area increases the risk of disease transmission, the risk of property damage and also the risk of personal injury to Gardiner area residents. After three days of testimony, the final testimony & completion of the trial is scheduled for Nov. 5, 2012 in Livingston, MT.

*Continue* [Bison, Bison](#) page 5

## Come and See Us at the Liberty County Harvest Festival

The Liberty County Chamber of Commerce is hosting the Liberty County Harvest Festival,

Chester, MT

Saturday, September 15

10:00am – 4:00pm

Come visit us at our booth!

Marias River Livestock Association wants to hear your concerns as a livestock producer. Come tell us the about the issues your area is facing in agriculture today. Let us know your ideas.

Then learn a little about us. We believe in a strong and unified voice for the Glacier, Liberty, Pondera and Toole county area livestock producers. We are voicing our concerns to government agencies to promote a better environment for the agricultural industry of today and tomorrow.

## So if you don't like bison, why don't you just sell your place and move?

By Maggie Nutter

How do you reply to a statement like that? Deep breath, calm voice, "I find that statement really offensive. You just kicked me in the balls. When you tell a 4<sup>th</sup> generation Montana rancher to sell and move it is the equivalent of kicking them in the balls. I don't know if that is what you intended, but I think it is something you should understand."

The lady, Bonnie, looks startled then sputters, "Well there is more money in reality than farming, I know because I'm in it."



FWP Julie                      Bonnie Lynn                      Glenn Hockett  
Attending the Gardiner Scoping Meeting

## Two Topics on Wolves

By Maggie Nutter

Comments are being accepted through September 21, 2012 on the new protocol for the Wildlife Services to address the wolf-livestock conflicts. In the new protocol, Wildlife Services will no longer need MT FWP permission to eliminate wolves involved in depredation.

The document is available online at [fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/wolf](http://fwp.mt.gov/fishAndWildlife/management/wolf) follow the links to the "Draft revisions to Montana's Wolf Depredation Response Protocol" about half way down the page.

"Well, it isn't all about money. I love my ranch. I love what I do. Some people have a big fancy house and a little yard. I have a dumpy old house with a plywood floor and a big, big yard. It's about lifestyle choices. I chose ranching."

Bonnie, "Wildlife comes with the land. It has been proven in the court of law."

Me, "In the four generations that my family has owned the ranch, I don't believe there has ever been buffalo on it. Bison didn't come with the ranch."

It's moments like this that I realize how different this lady and I think. How different our values, our culture, our norms, our realities are. I don't hate bison or elk. I just don't want

See *So Sell* Page 4

*"Bison  
didn't come with  
the ranch."*

We will also have a link on the front page of [www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com) for you to click and follow. FWP will be accepted through Sept. 21. Please give them your opinion. It does matter.

They can be emailed to [fwpwld@mt.gov](mailto:fwpwld@mt.gov) (subject line: Wildlife Services Protocol) or sent by regular mail to FWP, 1420 East Sixth, Helena, MT 59620.

Some of you may have filled out the wolf

Please see *Two Topics on Wolves* on page 9

## Jeff Habets Steps to the Plate

*By Maggie Nutter*

We are excited to announce that Jeff Habets has volunteered to step up and be the Youth Membership Chairman for Marias River Livestock Association.

Jeff will be serving two different groups: Youth (members under 18 years of age) and Young Producers, which are livestock producers or those involved in agriculture who are 18 to 40 years of age.

Habets' goal is to make contact with the Youth and let them know how important it is for them to be involved in agriculture and help keep them informed on ag-related educational events. He encourages all interested young people in learning more about livestock production and agriculture to become a member of the Association.

Youth membership is \$10 and 5 hours a year of

Please see *Habets Steps to the Plate* on page 4



*Jeff Habets ready to go to work and help young producers find ways to be involved in the leadership of the agriculture.*

## The Light Comes on: Federal Grazing Rights Explained

Sylvan Walden and her husband Bob are ranchers in McCone County. Sylvan earned degrees in both Range Science and Animal Science at Montana State University.

She has found great frustration trying to explain to people that Federal Grazing Rights are not "Welfare." Hopefully this shortened explanation will help understand the word "Rights" as applied to grazing.

### **Grazing Rights on Federal Lands**

by Sylvan Walden

I have come to realize that most of the people living in the U. S. don't understand the ownership layers of the so called "public" lands (federal lands) and how that relates to grazing leases. So I will try

to explain it in simple, non-legal terms.

Each parcel of land comes with several layers of ownership. These layers may be all owned by one person or owned by separate people. There is the person who actually owns the land surface (in this case, the federal government). Then there is the person or people who own the water rights (i.e. the right to use the water originating on that land), the mineral rights (i.e. the right to use the oil, gas, coal, etc. that originates underneath that land's surface), and then there are the GRAZING RIGHTS (i.e. the right to use the herbaceous plant material growing on that land). The land and these various rights can be owned as one or bought and sold separately.

see *Federal Grazing Rights* on page 6

*So Sell* from page 1

them in my hay stack, eating my grass or infecting my cattle with disease. Yellowstone Park seems like a good place for the bison to me. The Gardiner Bison Scoping Meeting to “*Assess the tolerance for bison outside of Yellowstone Park on a year round basis,*” was very educational for me.

I encourage you to go to [www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com) and read the comments collected by the Montana FWP at the scoping meetings in West Yellowstone and Gardiner. The comment submitted by Marias River Livestock Association is also under the “Issues/Events” tab.

Reading the comments is a great lesson in the diversity of opinions and values in Montana.

Remember the FWP is supposed to be impartial. If someone makes an incorrect statement, it is not the FWP’s job to correct them, just record what they said.

The comments will be compiled and assessed by the FWP staff and if deemed relevant those issues will be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement.



Gardiner High School and football field where bison are known to graze when they wander out of Yellowstone Park’s boundaries.

## Save the Date

Sept 20, 6:30pm Marias River Livestock Association Elks Club Shelby, Brucellosis Presentation by Jeanne Rankin DVM, Policy vote on Elk Management.

Sept. 25–27 “Women Stepping Forward for Agriculture” Symposium. Montana Expo Park Great Falls MT.

[www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news.womenag.html](http://www.mt.nrcs.usda.gov/news.womenag.html)

Contact Lori Valadez 406–587–6969

October 5–7 Young Ag Leadership Conference Holiday Inn, Great Falls MT

Register online [www.mfbf.org](http://www.mfbf.org)

Oct 18, 5:15pm FWP Citizens Advisory Council Meeting, Region 4 Headquarters, Great Falls MT.

The public is welcome to these meetings.

Contact Peggy Filipowecz (406)454–5841

[pfilipowecz@mt.gov](mailto:pfilipowecz@mt.gov)

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*Habets Steps to the Plate* from page 3

volunteer service approved by the Youth Membership Chairperson.

Habets’ passion is to work with the Young Producer Group. “There are so many great events geared towards this group being offered. We just need to make them aware of the events and how the events can help the Young Producer getting started to make his/her operation successful. They also help keep us aware of the current issues.” Jeff Habets believes, “The Young Producers are the ones that should be fighting the hardest for the future of agriculture. It’s going to affect us the most.”

If you are interested in membership information or the “Young Agriculture Leadership Conference” October 5–7 in Great Falls Montana, give Jeff a call and he’ll be glad to help you out.

Jeff Habets (406)450–1976

*Bison, Bison cont from pg 1*

Next, DOL and the MT FWP have put out a proposal to have the Yellowstone bison herd be allowed to roam a larger area out of the Park boundaries YEAR ROUND not just during the winter months prior to their "calving season." Go to [www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com) and read the public comments submitted at the FWP Scoping meeting in Gardiner and West Yellowstone. The website also contains the comments submitted by agricultural groups such as Wool Growers, Montana Farm Bureau Federation and the Marias River Livestock Association. FWP will assess the comments and come out with a draft plan that will then be released for a 15 day comment period. That should happen in early October or so.

Find out more at  
[www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com)

Remember the Bison Scoping for "Free Roaming Bison" that was conducted in May with meetings held all over the state? Well they aren't finished yet. According to their documents we should be seeing some sort of decision about what level of freedom they have decided on for the bison and the identification of potential restoration locations soon. FWP had hoped that this fall they would form "Citizen Working Groups" and they projected that a draft document of the Free Roaming Bison Plan would be developed this coming winter. Again a 15 day comment period should follow the release of that plan. Stay alert and stay informed.

The last issue is Governor Brian Schweitzer's request to Ken Salazar, Secretary of DOI (Department of the Interior), to assist in relocating Yellowstone Bison to Department of Interior lands and Salazar's directive to multiple agencies and departments to assist in getting it done. Salazar's directive indicated we should be hearing more about that plan after Dec 1, 2012.

## Marias River Livestock Membership Application

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

RANCH  
NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:**

Marias River Livestock Association  
72 Sweetgrass Hills Rd  
Sweet Grass, MT 59484

**Membership is per individual.  
One Person = one vote.**

\_\_\_ Charter Member \$100

Voluntary higher due available this year to Active and Youth Members who join between March 2012 and November 2013 and wish to be recognized as Charter Members from now on.

\_\_\_ Charter Associate Member \$100

Voluntary higher due available this year to non-voting Associate Members who join between March 2012 and November 2013 and wish to be recognized as Charter Associate Members from now on.

\_\_\_ Active Member \$50

Any individual 18 years of age or older, active in the livestock production industry in the counties of Glacier, Liberty, Pondera, or Toole, Montana is eligible for active membership in the Marias River Livestock Association

\_\_\_ Youth Member \$10

Youth are under 18 years of age and interested in learning about livestock production, promoting the livestock industry and willing to volunteer 5 hours a year.

\_\_\_ Associate Member \$50

An individual, firm, corporation or partnership, no matter where it's or his/her place of business or residence may be eligible for non-voting Associate Membership



## Gary: Behind the scenes

Gary Buffington is the sponsor for this issue of The Post Rider newsletter.

Gary grew up in Northern Montana and got married right out of high school. Him and his wife Gay both worked “in town” to support their family and get their cattle operation in the Ledger area started. Now they watch proudly as their two children try to follow the same path.

**MRLA:** Gary, why did you think it was important to sponsor this newsletter?

**Gary:** It is important for farmers and ranchers to know what is going on. They need to be informed on a local level of what is happening that could affect their operations and their children’s operations in the future. As a group we need to stay on top of these issues. This letter goes to the tables of those who need to know and it needs to go even farther. Not just livestock producers.

See *Gary* page 9

### *Federal Grazing Rights Explained* page 3

When federal lands have grazing permits that means a private individual has paid fair market value for those grazing rights and they are PRIVATELY owned by that person even though they are on federal lands. The federal government does not own those grazing rights. The person who owns the grazing rights pays “grazing fees”, which are basically a property tax on the ownership of those grazing rights.

This structure would be a lot like owning a house within the city limits compared to owning one outside the city limits. You pay city taxes and have to follow city zoning laws even though you own your own house and lot. If you lived outside the city (i.e. owned the land surface and the grazing rights) you wouldn’t have to pay those city taxes (grazing fees) or follow the city zoning laws (rules and regulations about how you use your permit).

Often you hear people claim that the “cheap” grazing fees are a government subsidy for the owners of grazing rights. You need to remember that they are more of a tax on a private property (similar to city taxes) and not actual fees for a grazing leases or rent of a pasture and grazing rights owned by someone else. To charge the going lease rate for grazing on a grazing right you own would be like having to pay the going rate for rent to live in a house you own.

You also need to remember that even though John Q. Public has the right to access and enjoy federal lands (as long as the federal government doesn’t object), that there is private ownership existing there also and that needs to be respected. This explains why most grazing permit holders tend to get crabby when John Q. Public decides there should be horses, buffalo, etc. using the herbaceous material. The grazing permit holder actually owns the right to the use of that herbaceous material and has paid fair market value for it, paid taxes on it, and followed all the rules.

# Be a Bull Bucks Winner

Want a chance to be drawn for one of the Bull Bucks Vouchers? Join Marias River Livestock Association and you are eligible to be put in the drawing at the Annual Membership Dinner November 16, 2012 at the Elks Club in Shelby Montana.

How it works: Participating Registered Bull Breeders and Seed Stock Female Producers each contribute \$35 for the "POT." At the Annual Membership Meeting two lucky winners will be drawn from the current Marias River Livestock Association Membership to receive a Bull Bucks Voucher. The Vouchers (each for ½ the Pot) are good towards the purchase of Registered Bulls or Seed Stock Females from the participating Breeders/Producers.

The amount of each Voucher will depend on the number of Breeders/Producers who participate in the program. The Vouchers are good only for cattle purchases from the participating Breeders/Producers and cannot be redeemed for cash. The Association keeps no money. All funds are placed in the POT for the members Bull Bucks Vouchers.

## Benefits for Participating Producers

The Bull Bucks program encourages the winners to purchase from the participating breeders. When the Breeder turns in the Bull Bucks Voucher to Marias River Livestock Association, they will receive a check for the amount of the Voucher. So the only cost to participate in the Bull Bucks Program is the original \$35 each breeder pays into the pot.

Marias River Livestock Association will mention each Breeder on other social media such as Facebook. Perhaps including breeder information such as history and pictures.

Breeders will have the opportunity to purchase a separate ad in the Marias River Livestock Association Newsletter and on the Association's website. Cost depends on the size of ad.

By supporting The Marias River Livestock Association membership campaign you are supporting a local association that is working to address the issues that livestock producers are facing today, working to promote the livestock industry and educate the general public about agriculture today. We encourage each Breeder to become a member themselves to support the Association in it's mission.

Those breeders who do not have a website are encouraged to speak with Lindsey Foard/Hi Line Web Design to get some web presence. [www.hilinelinedesign.com](http://www.hilinelinedesign.com)

## Thank you Participating Producers

**Hawks Angus**– Adrian & Janet Hawks  
432-5355

**Turner Angus**– Paul Turner 337-3800

**Flesch Angus**–Jeff Flesch 337-3402  
John Flesch 450-1080

**Curry Cattle Inc.** – Gene Curry 279-  
3561 Replacement Angus Females

**Gillespie Show Cattle**– Butch & Doreen  
Gillespie 337-2943 or 949-4453

**Diemert Ranch Herefords**– Ace & Tara  
Diemert 432-3412

**Diamond D Angus**– Mark DeBoo  
279-3633

**Bobcat Angus**– Bryan or Ernie  
Ratzburg 406-937-5858

**Kicking Horse Ranch Gelbvieh**  
Kathleen Rankin 406-937-4815

**Rocky Ridge Angus**  
Dean Lerum 460-0186  
David Lerum 432-3550  
Seed stock females

For more details go to

[www.MariasRiverLivestock.com](http://www.MariasRiverLivestock.com)

## Help us help you

Marias River Livestock Association wants to keep you informed about public comment periods. Information such as when and where to comment and the open dates can be hard to find. Some comment periods can be as short as 15 days. As we only put out newsletters every other month we are afraid that some of these important opportunities will be missed.

Help us to put the information you need in your e-mail box. If you would like an occasional update between The Post Rider newsletters, please e-mail Maggie at [nutter@northerntel.net](mailto:nutter@northerntel.net) and let her know you want on the list.

## WFP Elk/Brucellosis Working Groups Recommendations

The FWP Elk/Brucellosis Working Group has formulated some recommendations for the FWP Commission to consider.

The present concern is how to keep Bison and Elk from transmitting Brucellosis back to cattle. Elk wander freely with the cattle now and are suspected as the host for the most recent transmissions of Brucellosis to cattle. Ignoring the issue was not going to make it go away.

*"In response to seroprevalence rates, livestock infections, the DSA and debate among livestock and wildlife interests, in fall 2011 the FWP Commission endorsed the concept of a citizen working group to explore elk management guidelines in areas with brucellosis. The specific objective of this working group was to identify and propose elk management guidelines in areas with brucellosis for consideration by the FWP Commission. As an initial step, the group framed a problem or issue statement to help communicate and guide this effort. The working group met six times and has*

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*developed guidelines and recommendations. These guidelines, if endorsed by the FWP Director and Commission, will help focus future elk management in areas with brucellosis."*

The Elk/Brucellosis Working Group will be presenting the full recommendation to the FWP Commission during the November 8, 2012 meeting in Helena.

The Commission will also be hearing public comment at that time.

As livestock producers it is in our best interest to be informed about the recommendations and the future actions that will be taken by the FWP Commission.

This is your time to speak up.

Save the date!  
November 8, 2012  
Listen, Learn and Speak up.  
FWP Commission Meeting

*Two Topics on Wolves from page 2*

surveys and then wondered whatever became of the information. Well here is what FWPs found out through the surveys. This is quoted from the FWP.

**Background information from the FWP Commission Meeting Agenda for Aug 30, 2012**

“Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) recently conducted four separate surveys of resident Montanans regarding Montana’s wolf hunt. Survey findings revealed that tolerance with wolves being on the Montana landscape was quite low. At the same time, there was considerable tolerance for the concept of wolf hunting in the state. Of note, tolerance for wolf hunting was not just limited to those survey respondents who reported they were intolerant of wolves in general. Other survey findings revealed that public satisfaction with wolf management in the state significantly improved as

a result of the 2011 Montana wolf hunt. While there was little agreement among survey respondents regarding whether or not the regulations for the 2011 Montana wolf hunt were satisfactory, results suggest support for a more aggressive approach to wolf harvest regulations considering the fact that wolves are elusive and difficult to hunt even under the best of circumstances. These findings support the FWP Commission’s recent decision to implement a more liberal wolf harvest package for the 2012 season.”

**Survey findings revealed that tolerance with wolves being on the Montana landscape was quite low.**

*Gary page 6*

MRLA: So Gary, when you look around your ranch, what would you say you are proudest of or value most about it??

Gary: That I am 3<sup>rd</sup> generation here. I consider myself “caretaker” of my Grandfather’s place

MRLA: Now tell us a little about your job or career. Is it right to call you a cattle buyer?

Gary: Well I’m not really a cattle buyer. I don’t actually purchase calves. I’m a Area Representative for Northern Livestock Video Auction. I go out and video the cattle and talk with the producer. I then take that information and try to fit it to the buyers that I think those cattle will work for. I get the contracts and oversee delivery.

MRLA: You must get to see a lot of ranches?

Gary: That’s what I enjoy most about this job. I get to go and spend an afternoon on another family’s ranch looking at good cattle. Hearing the history of the places and seeing the pride they have in their places and families. I’ve made lifelong friends doing this work.

MRLA: How long have you been doing this?

Gary: I started this type of work in 2003. It’s a dream job as it allows me to take care of my ranch and make a second income. Most ranches appreciate a second source of income now days.

MRLA: When you talk about matching producers cattle up to potential buyers is there any certain area or buyers you sell to?

Gary: Well, Northern Livestock has a base of about 3000 buyers. They are mostly in the Corn Belt; Nebraska, Missouri, Minnesota, Kansas. Over time you get to know the feeders operations and what type of cattle work in that operation. Each area produces unique cattle so it’s important to have a good fit for both the buyer and the seller. You want the relationship to work again and again for both of them.

Thank You Gary for supporting our newsletter. I hope we can keep this relationship working again and again also.

**Marias River Livestock Association**  
72 Sweetgrass Hills Rd  
Sweet Grass, MT 59484

**Phone:**  
406-937-2751

**E-Mail:**  
nutter@northerntel.net

**Motto**  
Honoring the Past  
Protecting the Future

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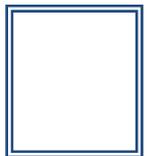
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Marias River Livestock Association Membership Meeting  
Thursday, Sept 20, 2012. 6:30 PM Elk's Club, Shelby MT

Marias River Livestock Association, 1st Annual Membership  
Dinner, Entertainment and Bull Bucks Drawing.  
Friday, Nov. 16, 2012 Elk's Club, Shelby MT