



June 19, 2017

**From:** Jim Unmacht

**Sent:** Monday, June 19, 2017 2:38 PM

**To:** 'Tarallo, Julie (McCain)'; 'Samuels, Jason (Flake)'; 'Podolak, Chuck (Flake)'; Nick Matiella (McCAIN); Buchanan Davis (Flake)

**Cc:** 'Small, Jeff'; 'Pat Madden'; 'Kurt R.Davis'; 'Jim Zieler'; 'Jim Ammons'; 'Eric Sparks'; 'Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation'; 'Roberson, Kelly'; Hunter Moore (Ducey)

**Subject:** RE: McCain & Flake applaud National Park Service proposal to address "unmanageable" bison herd at Grand Canyon National Park...REVISITED

**Importance:** High

Folks, while there was some optimism a few weeks back when we heard the Park Service was apparently going to allow some "citizens" to be involved with this bison situation, that enthusiasm has been dashed following the public meetings that took place in May and a careful read of the Environmental Assessment (EA).

It seems evident that the EA put forth by the new Park Superintendent Chris Lehnertz was an effort to respond to the Senator's concerns in their March 13, 2017 letter and "placate" citizen hunters, Arizona sportsmen and women, and the Senators' constituents, with the "opportunity" to cull "unmanageable" bison, and take home some meat. Of course this can only be done after they are trained.

Attached is a copy of AZSFWC's comment to the Park Service on this EA. AZSFWC and 28 of our member organizations supported this comment. We are not happy with what the Park Service is proposing and have suggested a third alternative to address the problems.

As I offered in my May 11<sup>th</sup> email to you following the press release, "We still have some work to do however.", which has certainly proved to be the case!

**We need to get this matter back on track with the following:**

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PO Box 12590 Glendale, AZ 85318

- Recognize the state of Arizona and its citizens own these bison, not the Park Service, nor the Native American tribes
- Allow the Arizona Game & Fish Department (G & F) access and authority to again manage this “unmanageable” herd, as they have done since 1929
- The North American Model of Wildlife Conservation should govern the management of these state owned animals.
- G & F should manage the public hunting opportunities available for all citizens
- Inspire the National Park Service to allow a lead role in the management of the herd both on and off the Park to G & F for hazing, corralling and capturing
- Management options should include a timetable for the herd reduction coordinated with G & F along with discretion on the disposition of these animals
- Citizen hunting would invoke the highest level of ethics and fair chase for these animals, with proper treatment and handling of the entire carcass, including meat, hide and horns
- We are continually told hunting is not allowed on National Park land, which is not true! As noted elk hunting is allowed on the Grand Teton National Park (Grand Teton) and coordinated with the Wyoming G & F
- Hunting is allowed on 51,097,000 acres of National Park Service administered lands, 60% of the total!
- <https://www.doi.gov/blog/hunting-and-fishing-national-parks-and-fish-and-wildlife-refuges>
- Park issues unique to Grand Canyon should be treated in a similar fashion as those that arose with Grand Teton and consider their model as a guideline: <https://www.fws.gov/bisonandelkplan/>
- Stop the waste of taxpayer’s money on this effort and let G & F manage and supervise hunts with citizens/constituents who are willing to pay to do so!

**We urge you to impress upon our Senators that it is well past the time for resurrection of the Grand Canyon Bison Management Act in Congress, that not only allows “hunting” on the Grand Canyon National Park along the same lines as the Grand Teton National Park, but does so at the direction and management of the Arizona Game & Fish Department in concert with the National Park Service, not unlike what is transpiring in Wyoming.**

**We are now 3 years into this study, with who knows how much spent in the process, while the bison population expands, and the habitat and resources on the Grand Canyon National Park suffer. This matter needs some Congressional attention!**

Thank you.

**Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director  
Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation**

AZSFWC email string with Arizona’s US Senators’ staff on GC Bison issues– 6-19-2017

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**From:** Jim Unmacht

**Sent:** Thursday, May 11, 2017 1:17 PM

**To:** 'Tarallo, Julie (McCain)'; 'Samuels, Jason (Flake)'; 'Podolak, Chuck (Flake)'; Nick Matiella

**Cc:** 'Small, Jeff'; 'Pat Madden'; 'Kurt R.Davis'; 'Jim Zieler'; 'Jim Ammons'; 'Eric Sparks'; 'Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation'

**Subject:** RE: McCAIN & FLAKE APPLAUD NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS UNMANAGEABLE BISON HERD AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK

Hi folks, Arizona sportsmen and women are encouraged with the National Park Service's (NPS) latest press release concerning the bison herd at the Grand Canyon National Park. We also appreciate the collective efforts of Senators McCain Flake and Congressman Gosar to bring the NPS into the realm of believing they can begin to control and reduce the bison numbers with hunters willing to pay to do so, and at the same time begin to curtail the habitat degradation blamed on these animals, thereby saving the NPS a lot of money in the process!

We still have some work to do however.

As the herd continues to increase, we are inching towards an outcome closer to what we have recommended since the beginning of the discussions dating back to the summer of 2014. We are pleased the NPS is now willing to consider using skilled volunteers to help cull the herd and are pleased that those skilled volunteers will also be able to retain any meat from an animal they harvest. However we are also advocating that the AZ Game & Fish Department be the coordinating agency for these efforts, at little cost to the NPS, and if those "skilled volunteers" have a successful harvest, be allowed to keep the hide and horns of that animal too.

We appreciate the continued follow up as we wade through the red tape, so we can collectively get on with the management of this currently "unmanageable bison herd", and stop the commensurate habitat destruction on the Park.

Thank you!

**Jim Unmacht**

**Executive Director**

**Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation**

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**From:** Tarallo, Julie (McCain)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 10, 2017 12:39 PM  
**To:** Tarallo, Julie (McCain)  
**Subject:** McCAIN & FLAKE APPLAUD NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS UNMANAGEABLE BISON HERD AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK



# UNITED STATES SENATE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**Contact:** Julie Tarallo or Samantha

Hiller

Wednesday, May 10, 2017

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## **McCAIN & FLAKE APPLAUD NATIONAL PARK SERVICE PROPOSAL TO ADDRESS UNMANAGEABLE BISON HERD AT GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK**

**Washington, D.C.** – U.S. Senators John McCain (R-AZ) and Jeff Flake (R-AZ) today applauded the National Park Service (NPS) for including a proposal in its newly completed Environmental Assessment on an Initial Bison Herd Reduction at Grand Canyon National Park to reduce the overpopulated bison herd by allowing lethal culling with skilled volunteer hunters.

Over 600 bison roam inside Grand Canyon National Park and the adjoining Kaibab National Forest as part of a failed cattle/buffalo cross-breeding experiment dating back to the early 1900s. Without any natural predators, the bison population is projected to grow to nearly 800 bison in the next three years and as many as 1,200 to 1,500 bison within 10 years if management actions are not taken. In addition to trampling native vegetation, natural springs, and sensitive grasslands, these animals also continue to pose a threat to the visitors' public safety.

"I am encouraged that the National Park Service is moving forward with plans to cull the growing bison herd at Grand Canyon National Park," **said Senator McCain.** "An estimated 600 bison roam inside and near the park's boundaries, and are trampling and devouring the pristine lands that make the park a national treasure for millions of visitors. I have long believed that enlisting the help of state-licensed volunteer hunters would be a commonsense way to solve the Grand Canyon's bison problem. The announcement today that park officials are incorporating hunters into its bison management plan is a laudable step forward and urgently needed."

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“The National Park Service’s announcement is another step in the right direction in addressing the Grand Canyon’s unmanageable bison herd that continue to damage resources within the park,” **said Senator Flake**. “I am pleased that the Park Service is taking into account our commonsense proposal that will allow volunteers to cull bison at no cost, instead of depending on hired contractors.”

During the 114th Congress, Senators McCain and Flake introduced the [\*Grand Canyon Bison Management Act\*](#), legislation that would direct NPS to complete work on a bison management plan and allow state licensed hunters to assist the park in culling the bison population and take home the full animal carcass. The bill was passed by the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, but never received a vote by the full Senate. Both Senators have called upon NPS to utilize hunters as part of a larger strategy to humanely remove bison from the park.

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