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## Rep. Gosar Comments on New Park Service Plan to Address Invasive Beefalo in the Grand Canyon

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**For Immediate Release**

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### **Rep. Gosar Comments on New Park Service Plan to Address Invasive Beefalo in the Grand Canyon**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** - Today, U.S. Congressman **Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S. (AZ-04)** released the following statement after the National Park Service (NPS) released an Initial Bison Herd Reduction Environmental Assessment (EA) and announced commencement of a 30-day public comment period on a new plan to address the invasive “beefalo” population within Grand Canyon National Park (the Park):

“The Park Service has been twiddling their thumbs for more than three years trying to develop a plan to address the ‘beefalo’ population in the Park. Today’s proposal was supposed to be published last summer. Unfortunately, the NPS has continuously pushed out half-cocked and costly management suggestions a day late and more than a few dollars short, failing to reduce the herd to sustainable levels and protect the Park from utter devastation,” stated **Congressman Gosar**. “After years

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of badgering, the NPS has finally warmed up to our proposal to put Arizona hunters to work and allow these skilled volunteers to keep the meat. While this is encouraging, the plan announced today is far from perfect. Legislation is still likely necessary as this proposal fails to provide a long-term management plan, creates a new 1:1 sex ratio goal to encourage future breeding, provides too much flexibility for the NPS to scrap lethal culling, and fails to allow skilled volunteers to keep the entire bison.”

### **Background**

The text of the 201 page EA published today by the NPS can be found [HERE](#).

The EA proposes reducing the size of the herd to fewer than 200 animals by enlisting the assistance of skilled volunteers (supervised hunters) for humane lethal culling. The EA’s preferred alternative also allows for these skilled volunteers to keep the meat. Congressman Gosar has consistently pushed the NPS to adopt these two policies. The preferred alternative also allows for reduction of the herd through sharpshooters and other nonlethal means which include corralling, hazing, herding, fencing and use of attractants.

Over the last 10 to 15 years, the cross-breed of cattle and bison, “the beefalo”, have migrated from the Kaibab National Forest and found sanctuary inside the Grand Canyon National Park, protected from hunters. The estimated 600 head of beefalo are wreaking havoc on the parklands, eating native grasslands and polluting wetlands with their waste. A Fox News article documenting the devastation caused by of the beefalo in the Grand Canyon National Park can be found [HERE](#). It is estimated that the herd needs to be reduced by about 400 head to meet sustainable management levels. The NPS estimates that the target herd level can be achieved over the course of the next three to five years. The NPS also estimates “that this bison herd could grow to nearly 800 bison in the next three years and as large as 1200 to 1500 animals within ten years if further management actions are not taken.”

These bison are not the genuine, iconic American buffalo seen

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roaming Yellowstone National Park or the Great Plains. They are actually the brood of a bison-cattle crossbreeding experiment that was abandoned in the 1900's.

On March 19, 2015, Congressman Gosar introduced the Grand Canyon Bison Management Act, a bipartisan and bicameral bill that authorizes volunteer hunters to cull bison inside Grand Canyon National Park and to take home the meat. Specifically, the bill directed the Park Service to use state-licensed skilled-volunteers as part of the solution for addressing this invasive population. The tags sold for these beefalo would result in significant revenues for state and conservation coffers. The bill also clarified that bison meat is not 'federal surplus property' and that the full bison is allowed to be removed from the park.

The bill sought to allow hunters and conservationists to play an important role in addressing the beefalo population problem. This legislation required compliance with all federal environmental laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act.

Congressman Gosar's bill, the Grand Canyon Bison Management Act, was included in Title XV of the SHARE Act, the 114th Congress' Sportsmen's Package and passed the House on February 26, 2016. Read more [HERE](#).

Congressman Gosar initially attached H.R. 1443 to H.R. 2406 by passing an amendment during markup when the bill passed the House Committee on Natural Resources in October 2015. Read more [HERE](#). The Senate version of the bill, S.782, passed the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources on November 19, 2015.

The NPS will also host three in-person meetings to receive public comments on the EA. To review the EA and provide comments click [HERE](#). The 30-day comment period will conclude on June 7, 2017.

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