

2012 — 6 **Yellowstone Cattle Buffer**

Beef cattle are pretty much everywhere. According to Wikipedia, the world cattle population is estimated to be about 1.3 billion head. The following Wikipedia table shows the cattle population in 2009.

| Region | Cattle Population |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| India | 281,700,000 |
| Brazil | 187,087,000 |
| China | 139,721,000 |
| United States | 96,669,000 |
| EU-27 | 87,650,000 |
| Argentina | 51,062,000 |
| Australia | 29,202,000 |
| Mexico | 26,489,000 |
| Russian Federation | 18,370,000 |
| South Africa | 14,187,000 |

Cattle are large animals and use vast amounts of the earth's land area and resources to sustain them. These are resources that if not used to raise cattle, might be put to use for other purposes. Examples include providing habitat for native wildlife and vegetation or cultivating less destructive products for human consumption.

Where ever cattle exist in large numbers, land along riparian zones is trampled and over-run with tracks and manure. Erosion and runoff from cattle negatively affects stream banks, shoreline, and water quality.

The existence of cattle can have severe impacts near sensitive areas such as habitat adjacent to national parks. Near Yellowstone for instance, wildlife that leaves the park is often hazed or shot on behalf of cattle. Some Yellowstone bison and elk carry a bacterium called *Brucella* which causes a disease called Brucellosis. There is the potential that this disease could be spread to cattle on public lands. Consequently, Montana agencies routinely round up and slaughter bison that leave the park. The bison are doing what they need to do to survive. Because Yellowstone is a high plateau, during severe winters many elk and bison seek forage at lower elevations in the national forest lands outside the park.

Sometimes wolves are harassed and shot when they leave Yellowstone. As wolves mature, some will leave the pack and seek mates and new territories outside the park. Some wolves will harass and kill cattle. Wolves are keystone predators. Without wolves, there are a multitude of negative trophic cascades that propagate up and down the ecosystem affecting everything from beavers, eagles, ravens, grizzly bears, coyotes, song birds, and vegetation along steam banks.

Therefore, Be It Resolved: The Minnesota Division of the Izaak Walton League of America in Convention at Wabasha MN on April 22, 2012 supports a 3 mile buffer zone on national public lands adjacent to Yellowstone National Park that protects seasonal forage and migration routes for elk, bison, and allows natural ecological processes such as wolf denning and predation on elk and bison to occur without hindrance on these lands. Consequently domesticated cattle should be excluded from public lands within 3 miles of Yellowstone Park so as to remove the conflict between wildlife and cattle.

Submitted by:
Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter