



Montana Bison Association Board of Directors

President

Aaron Paulson
Snowcrest Ranch
PO Box 136
Alder, MT 59710
(406) 842-5379
aaron.paulson@retranches.com

Vice President

Roland Kroos
Crossroads Ranch Consulting
4926 Itana Circle
Bozeman, MT 59715
(406) 522-3862
kroosing@msn.com

Secretary/Treasurer

Julia Arnold
5 N Virginia St.
Conrad, MT 59425
(406) 899-1611
tjwilsall@yahoo.com

Board Members

LTC Tim A. Gardipee
Medicine Bull Bison Ranch
755 Council Way
Missoula, MT 59808
(406) 214-5056
medicinebull@earthlink.net

Steve Kroon
Kroon Bison
1265 Heeb Road
Manhattan, MT 59741
(406) 539-1044
stevenmodel870@gmail.com

Craig Denney
DDC Ranch
294 S. Park City Road
Park City, MT 59063
(406) 633-2743
montanabuffalousa@hotmail.com

MONTANA BISON

"Promoting The Bison Industry"

May 2016

ASSOCIATION

Summer Ranch Tour at the Durham Ranch

Members of the Montana Bison Association will have an opportunity on June 10 to tour the renowned Durham Ranch near Wright, Wyoming. We would encourage all members to mark this date on your calendar and register today to attend this exciting tour. We would encourage to also make your hotel reservations at the Wright Hotel by calling (307) 464-6060 and mention you are with MBA for a special rate.

In the 1930s, Armando Flocchini, Sr., grandfather, purchased the Durham Meat Company in San Francisco where he worked as a butcher. In 1965 he purchased a 55,000 acre bison ranch near Wright, Wyoming and renamed it Durham Ranch. Three generations later, this same ranch continues to be operated by the Flocchini family and remains one of the larger bison operations in North America. The Durham Ranch has provided seedstock for many bison ranches in North America. In preparation for this tour, if you would like to learn more about the Durham Ranch, visit their web site at <http://durhambisonranch.com> or the facebook page: Durham Bison Ranch.

The Durham Ranch has been practicing Holistic Management since 1986. They have hosted more than 10 Holistic Management seminars for bison producers on the ranch. On the morning of June 10, John Flocchini, Pat Thomson and Roland Kroos will all share some of the Holistic Management strategies used to manage 2,000 bison on this landscape. This ranch currently is subdivided into approximately 80 pastures and the large bison herd is moved from pasture to pasture every three to six days. By attending the tour you will have an opportunity to see:

- A large bison herd of approximately 2,000 animals.
- How 2,000 animals can beneficially garden native rangeland.
- What types of fencing they use to contain this large herd.
- A watering system that can meet the water needs of over 3,000 head of bison.
- Working corrals
- Land health monitoring program (we plan to visit one of the 26 monitoring sites).
- What the pasture looks like before and after it has been grazed by this large herd.
- How this ranch stock piles feed for year round grazing.

You will have a chance to visit with other bison producers from the region. Learn what works and what doesn't work. Eat some great tasting bison that has been produced on the Durham Ranch and have a beer or two with friends. The Montana Bison Association has a full day of camaraderie, learning and good food planned for the whole family. Register NOW!

Directions to Durham Ranch: Those of you with GPS or smart phone, can simply enter the address: 7835 Hwy 59, Gillette, WY. The Durham Ranch is three miles north of Wright, Wyoming or 33 miles south of Gillette, Wyoming (from I-90). As you travel on Highway 59, you will see highway markers on the east side of the highway. The turn-off to the Durham Ranch is located between highway marker 78 and 79. Ranch headquarters are ½ mile west of the highway.

Camping: There are three private RV parks/campgrounds in Gillette, Wyoming. All Seasons RV Park, Greentrees Crazy Woman Campground and High Plains Campground. If you have a self-contained camper and do not require hook-ups and running water, you can camp on the Durham Ranch for no charge.





President's Corner By Aaron Paulson



Spring is upon us here in Southwest MT. After a fairly hard winter, we are eager to see the green grass. Hopefully you feel the same sentiments; although many parts of the state still need significant moisture to make up for the dry winter. We have lots of calves on the ground...new life is so exciting! Bison is a quickly growing business in the state and in the nation, and new life is a renewed hope for another great year.

The MBA is faced with challenges unique to other states with the publicity surrounding bison. Namely, the publicly owned bison. We have had challenges in trying to define the difference in ranches bison raised for commercial purposes and public owned "free range bison". This is where we lean on you. If you meet someone that has an unclear understanding of the difference in management and how we manage private herds, please take the time to explain these differences in detail. Paying per capita fees, vaccination and identification as required by the MT Department of Livestock, and strategic management of our animals through handling and/or fencing to ensure they are responsibly cared for in order to sustain and protect the land, soil, and water they thrive upon are key facts. Many people do not understand how you carefully manage your bison in order to achieve desired results, care for them, and protect your land. All this ensures you are a sustainable operation and that the consumer is receiving the product they expect.

With the upcoming legislative session in 2017, we must be out in force right now helping with this educational component. This education is vital for fellow livestock producers, conservation groups, legislators, and the general public. If we can educate people now we will have a better chance in ensuring any proposed bills in the 2017 legislature and county ordinances clearly differentiate our bison producers from publicly owned "free ranging" bison, thus any additional rules and laws do not apply to your livestock. There are ordinances that are directed at requiring all bison managers how to manage their bison; this includes fencing, grazing and multiple facets of your operation. We can prevent this from spreading through teaching. What we need is your help as a member with outreach and education. Please contact a board member if you need support and additional resources or you can send interested or concerned people to the MBA board.

We lean on the NBA for assistance in carefully drafting responses that are consistent with both organizations. Dave Carter and Jim Matheson are great resources in the productive education component and have been a great help to our organization. If you know of people or groups who are skeptical of bison, please encourage them to attend the summer tour at the Durham Ranch. We have a wonderful opportunity to showcase a successful forward thinking operation of great scale. The Durham ranch is a trend-setter for bison businesses throughout the country. Please bring your family and friends and come learn and join the excitement during this summer tour. A big thanks to the Durham Ranch for offering to host! We look forward to your attendance and if you have friends or other interested people please encourage them to attend.

Durham Ranch Summer Ranch Tour Agenda - June 9 & 10

Thursday, June 9, 2016

6:30 - 8:30 pm: Informal gathering at Wright Hotel conference room (bison skewers and other snacks). Mini bar will be available.

Friday, June 10, 2016 (Meet at Durham Ranch HQ)

9:00 - 10:00 am: MBA President, Aaron Paulson - opening comments
Welcome and history of Durham Ranch and operations (John Flocchini)
Infrastructure (pastures, waters systems, drought plan (Pat Thomson)
Grazing system and other land management strategies (Roland Kroos)

10:00 - 10:15 am: Break

10:15 - 10:45 am: Report from NBA (Jim Matheson or Dave Carter)

10:45 - 12:00 pm: Leadership in Agriculture, How can we be more effective?

Olin Oedekoven, Peregrine Leadership Institute

12:00 - 1:00 pm: Barbecued bison burger lunch

1:00 - 5:00 pm: Tour Durham Ranch and bison herd (2,000 plus). We will see the large herds impact to the land (before and after grazing), health monitoring transect and monitoring process, look at cell center (water tanks, fencing, etc) and the corral system.

6:00 - 7:00 pm: Barbecued bison steaks at Durham Ranch

7:00 - 8:30 pm: Bonfire, S'mores, fun auction and karaoke



DON'T FORGET YOUR FUN AUCTION ITEMS!

We will be holding our Fun Auction on Saturday evening at the Durham Ranch at 7:00 p.m. Please bring an item or two to sell and be ready to buy! This is always a fun time and a way to support your association!

Montana Bison Association Members can place their business card ads in the MBA newsletters at no charge. For non-members, the cost is only \$25 per year to be in all the Montana Bison Association newsletters.

• For information or to submit your card, contact •
Julia Arnold at 5 N. Virginia St., Conrad, MT 59425
(406)899-1611 or e-mail: tjwilsall@yahoo.com

International Bison Conference in Big Sky

The International Bison Conference (IBC) is rapidly approaching. Make sure to mark your calendar for July 4-7, 2017 and join us in Big Sky for all the fun.

Throughout the past year the IBC board has had several meetings and planning is progressing quite well. This is an event you should not miss. The speakers and entertainment are currently being lined up. There is sure to be a wonderful education opportunity with something for everyone. Plan to bring your family and spend Independence day 2017 in Big Sky, MT.

Raffle and auction items are being procured and you will see these tickets at upcoming events. If you are interested in helping to sell tickets, organize, or promote this event please contact the IBC committee. You can contact Aaron Paulson at (406) 842-5379 or email him at aaron.paulson@retranches.com for more information.

MBA Forms New Outreach and Education Committee

Throughout the past several months, the tension has been building with all the issues surrounding privately owned bison and public owned bison. These issues have surfaced on many fronts, including social media, print press and from conservation districts within the state. The MBA Board has decided that our best approach to ensure we are part of the discussion with these groups is to increase our education and outreach. To do this, we feel the best method is to assemble a group of MBA members and start an outreach and education program.

As a board we are in the process of reaching out to several groups within the state. These groups include the Montana Stockgrowers, Montana Farm Bureau, conservation districts via the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC),

MBA Unveils New Logo

The Montana Bison Association held a contest to develop a new logo for the association this spring. We had 24 logos submitted for review and we want to thank all who participated! The board voted and selected the top three and then asked the MBA membership to vote for the best logo. The winner was Candi D'Agnese of Colorado Springs, CO. Candi is a graphic artist graduating from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. She has worked for the Kansas City Transit Authority and Focus on the Family. She is currently a high school art teacher at The Classical Academy Charter School. Candi was encouraged to enter a logo by her brother-in-law, Roland Kroos MBA member.



Candi D'Agnese

Soon you will have an opportunity to buy hats, t-shirts, fleece vests, six pack coolers, and other merchandise with this logo. You will see this logo printed on promotional information and MBA stationary. It's also on this newsletter!

legislators and the Billings Gazette outdoor editor. The initial approach is to see how we could better interact with them and portray how our producers sustainably produce bison. We anticipate this will lead into some ranch tours, presentations at their meetings by MBA members, producer updates and profiles showing the everyday workings of your operation and an increased social media push on our MBA Facebook page.



If you are interested in joining this committee please communicate your interest to the board. Also, if you have any opportunities to do outreach in your community that would assist in positively portraying bison production this would greatly help the educational aspect. And as a board we are here to support you should you need assistance in putting together a local ranch tour.

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Arnold Family Wins Rookie Market Producer of the Year at NBA

Montana ranchers Tobin and Julia Arnold and son Teagen were awarded the Rookie Market Producers award during the 21st National Bison Association convention held this past January in Denver.

Additionally, they won the Silver Award for their Bison Heifer Carcass. This is the first year Tobin has entered Market Class animals in the Show and Sale. Tobin is a second generation bison producer and specializes in top quality meat production.

At right: Julia, Tobin and Teagen Arnold accept the Market Class Rookie of the Year award from sponsor North American Bison Co-op.




The purpose of the Montana Bison Association shall be as follows:

To promote buffalo (also known as bison, hereinafter referred to as "buffalo") and buffalo products, namely breeding stock, meat and by-products. To seek fair and equitable regulations in the control of disease and in the movements of buffalo and buffalo products, for intrastate, interstate and international purposes. To perpetuate buffalo as a great North American native animal and to study, sponsor research, collect and disseminate pertinent information pertaining to buffalo. The Association shall be known as a non-profit organization, with the monies accumulated being used to carry out functions of the Association and the promotion and welfare of the buffalo. Source: MBA Bylaws Section 2.1

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Eden, ID 83325**



Office (800)853-2333 or
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MBA Board Member Shares Bison Information With Students

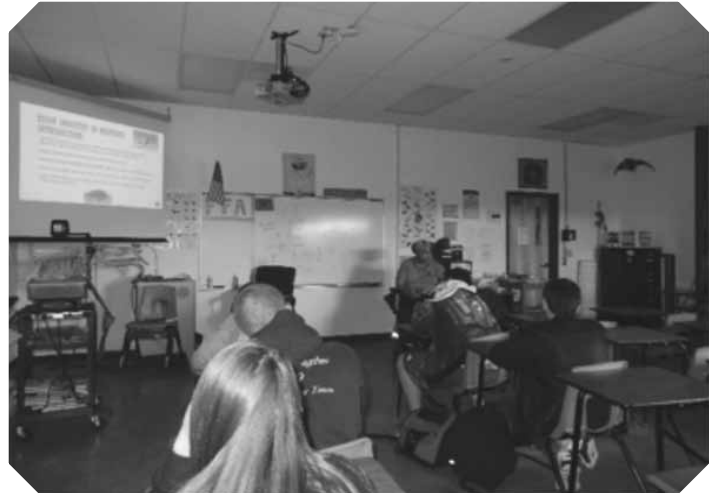
By LTC (ret) Tim Gardipee

In late March, high school students from Missoula were educated about the bison industry. The FFA Advisor and Teacher of the year, Tom Andres, invited MBA board member, Tim Gardipee.

Gardipee put together a presentation for the Big Sky High School Agriculture Class. A class of 20 FFA students and four adults were positively exposed to the life of a bison, the benefits of the bison in Montana and the growth of the industry.

The class taught the very important aspects of bison health, basic growth and numbers of private and public herds. The students were receptive and asked many questions. Col. Gardipee shared the basics of the bison industry, including reproduction, growth, feed, time-seasons, fence, sales, slaughter and food chain.

The students thoroughly enjoyed the guest speaker, enjoyed hearing about the magnificent bison, Montana's potential and the super growth of the bison industry. Many students and adults expressed interest in raising or at least consuming bison!



National Bison Association Summer Conference
June 20 - June 22 • Elk River, Minnesota

Hosted by

the Minnesota Buffalo Association and Snake River Farm
www.bisoncentral.com for details and registration

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NBA Hosting Bison Advantage Workshop Event

From the National Bison Association

Bison is in the news on a daily basis now, but what you may not have heard is that bison meat is the fastest growing sector of the US meat industry. We're still a fragment of the US protein sector, having processed approximately 65,000 bison in 2015 versus cattle's 125,000/day on average, but we've developed a great market for this fine product over the past ten years and we are in need of more farmers and ranchers raising these incredibly hardy and resourceful animals to keep pace with growing demand. With wholesale bison meat prices approaching \$4.50/lb. (hot hanging weight), about twice what a fed steer will currently bring, we're seeing more and more ranchers exploring the bison advantage and we need ag leaders to be equipped to answer the questions that will inevitably be coming their way regarding bison.

Are you looking to learn about the emerging bison market? If so, then please consider joining us for a free, half-day workshop to learn the basics of this emerging sector of American agriculture. The training is scheduled to run from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Wednesday, June 15th in Rapid City, SD. Registration is free and all participants have to do to register is email jim@bisoncentral.com, or call him 303-292-2833. Please register by June 8th.

The workshop will include an two hours of classroom time to

review the basics of holistic bison production. We'll also enjoy a networking lunch and a tour of the host's working bison ranch. We'll also send participants home with a "bison toolkit" including literature on sustainable bison production, our Insider's Guide to Bison Handling and Management, a bison learning curriculum – with access to the accompanying online training, and more. All free of charge.

These workshops, made possible thanks to a North Central SARE Research and Education grant, are allowing us to train extension agents, ag educators, veterinarians, ag officials, new and transitioning producers and others about the bison advantage. Even as our business continues to grow, we find many new and existing bison farmers and ranchers being turned away by local ag leaders due to a lack of basic understanding of bison being raised as livestock. This project aims to change that and we need your help in reaching out to the appropriate stakeholders. As such, please forward this information on to anyone you think may benefit from this project.

You can see further details regarding this event here: <http://bisoncentral.com/events/bison-advantage-outreach-and-education-workshop-777-ranch>

Calendar of Upcoming Buffalo Auctions, Conferences and Events

June 9 - 10: Montana Bison Assn. Summer Ranch Tour. Durham Ranch, Wright, WY. www.montanabison.org or (406) 899-1611.

June 15: Bison Advantage Outreach and Education Free Workshop. 777 Ranch, Hermosa, SD. www.bisoncentral.com.

June 20 - 24: National Bison Assn. Summer Conference. Hosted by MnBA and Snake River Farm. Elk River, MN. www.bisoncentral.com or www.mnbison.org.

August 5: Bison Advantage Outreach and Education Free Workshop. National Buffalo Museum, Jamestown, ND. www.bisoncentral.com.

August 5 - 7: North Dakota Buffalo Assn. 25th Anniversary Ranch Tours Bus Trip. Jamestown, ND. www.ndbuffalo.com.

September 26 - 29: American Bison Society Workshop and Meeting, Banff National Park. www.wcs.com

July 4 - 7, 2017: 5th International Bison Conference. Big Sky, MT. www.bisoncentral.com.



Montana Bison Association 2016 Summer Ranch Tour

**Friday, June 9 & Saturday, June 10, 2016
Durham Ranch • Wright, WY**

Join the Montana Bison Association for its summer conference in Wright, Wyoming. On June 9th from 6:30-8:30 we will have an informal gathering at Wright Hotel Conference Room with Bison skewers and other snacks and a mini bar will be setup in conference room. On June 10th we will have an opportunity to tour the renowned Durham Ranch. We would encourage all members to mark this date on your calendar and register today to attend this exciting tour.

We would encourage you to make your hotel reservations at the Wright Hotel call 307-464-6060, mention you are with MBA for a special rate. Make your reservations ASAP.

We would appreciate your registration or a call soon so we can make the necessary arrangements with the caterer.

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of PRE-REGISTERING Adults at \$60 each _____

(Registration includes lunch and dinner on Saturday)

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2016 Montana Bison Assn. Membership Dues - \$50 _____

(Membership year is from January 1 to December 31)

Total Amount Enclosed (please make checks payable to MBA) _____

Please fill out form and return to:

Montana Bison Association • Julia Arnold, 5 N. Virginia St., Conrad, MT 59425
Or call (406) 627-2436 or email: jarnoldmt@gmail.com to reserve your place