# [***Tribes, Conservation Groups Support Investigation of Yellowstone Bison Sabotage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5RFG-0241-JC11-130T-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

The ***Defenders of Wildlife issued*** the following news release:

The Fort Peck ***Tribes*** and representatives from Defenders of Wildlife, World Wildlife Fund and the National Wildlife Federation welcome Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke's decision to open a criminal investigation into the illegal release of more than 50 bison from Yellowstone National Park's Stephens Creek Quarantine Facility.

Late on Tuesday, a containment fence was cut allowing the quarantined bison out. Approximately half of the 50 bison being held were slated for relocation to the Fort Peck ***Tribes***' bison program as part of an effort to relocate genetically-pure, brucellosis-free Yellowstone bison to tribal lands as an alternative to the annual practice of culling the herd by shipment to slaughter. It now remains unclear what will happen to the bison that escaped.

This illegal bison release highlights a decades-long conflict over how bison are managed in Yellowstone National Park. The current policy focuses on shipment of bison to slaughter each winter as a means of population management. Fort Peck ***Tribes*** and other tribal governments have offered to quarantine and relocate these bison to tribal lands for cultural and conservation purposes. An efficient bison translocation program to transport brucellosis-free bison to tribal and other lands rather than to slaughter is desperately needed to reduce conflict at Yellowstone and to restore our national mammal to parts of its historic range.

"The Fort Peck ***Tribes*** are committed to restoring Yellowstone buffalo to additional places where they once roamed," said Fort Peck Tribal Chairman Floyd Azure. "We have built a quarantine and relocation facility on our lands for Yellowstone buffalo and have provided a place for our growing cultural herd. It's time for Governor Bullock, Secretary Zinke and Secretary Perdue to implement our common-sense plan and help end the controversial and needless Yellowstone bison slaughter."

"Bison conservation is complex, and the National Wildlife Federation and our partners are committed to returning bison to the plains and other destinations where appropriate," said Garrit Voggesser, national director for tribal partnerships at the National Wildlife Federation. "Acts of sabotage like these set us back as oppose to moving us forward. In fact, they jeopardize the animals."

"This act of sabotage did these bison more harm than good," said Chamois Andersen, Rockies and Plains senior representative at Defenders of Wildlife. "They were destined for relocation rather than slaughter. And that is part of the solution to solving this decades-long conflict at Yellowstone. When the people of Fort Peck Reservation and others are lining up to restore these wild bison to new places rather than see them shipped to slaughter, our public officials should accept this offer. It's time to make this happen."

"I think that it is important for those who do not support quarantine to understand, that without this process, these animals will be sent to slaughter," said Dennis Jorgensen, bison initiative coordinator at the World Wildlife Fund. Yellowstone National Park's bison population is at full-capacity but quarantine offers both a way to save these animals and support tribal bison programs. We encourage both state and federal governments to work swiftly and seek solutions that put this process back on track."

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