

COMMENTS FROM INDIVIDUALS AND IN PETITIONS AND FORM LETTERS

OVERVIEW

This section includes individual comments, listed by comment number in Table 1, and responses. As shown in the table, the number of individuals who expressed each type of comment was totaled. Responses are included for those comments that are substantive.

While the agencies acknowledge comments expressing a preference for a particular alternative, those comments are not considered substantive and are not included in the responses. The number of commenters who expressed support or opposition to a particular alternative is detailed below under “Alternative Preference.”

Comments are organized by topic, as indicated in Table 1. Each comment has a corresponding code number. Comment code numbers marked with an asterisk (*) are considered to be substantive and are responded to. (Note: Comment codes are not sequential, as not all codes were used.)

To find a response to a particular substantive issue, find the comment code for the substantive comment of interest, then find the comment and the agencies’ response. Responses to substantive comments begin on page 198.

Comments have been summarized and paraphrased.

TABLE 1: COMMENT CODES AND ISSUE DESCRIPTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS

Comment Code	Comment / Issue Description	Number of Comments	Percentage of Comments
Alternatives			
11	Alternative 1: No Action	1	< 0.1%
12	Alternative 2: Minimal Management of Habitat and Populations with Support for Migrations	4	< 0.1%
12.1	Support for Alternative 2, with modification	1	< 0.1%
14	Alternative 4: Restore Habitat, Improve Forage, and Phase Back Supplemental Feeding	328	2.8%
15	Alternative 5: Restore Habitat, Improve Forage, and Continue Supplemental Feeding	171	1.4%
15.1	Support for Alternative 5, with modification	2	< 0.1%
16	Alternative 6: Restore Habitat, Adaptively Manage Populations, and Phase Out Supplemental Feeding	1,746	14.7%
16.1	Support for Alternative 6, with modification	11	0.1%
18*	New alternatives or elements	2	< 0.1%
19	Opposition to all alternatives	1	< 0.1%
Consultation, Contractors, and Coordination			
21	Consultation, contractors, and coordination of agencies	1	< 0.1%
22*	Cooperation between and among governments and individuals	2	< 0.1%
Cultural Resources			
31	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about cultural resources	1	< 0.1%
Disease			
40*	Specific substantive comments about diseases	1	< 0.1%
41	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about diseases	322	2.7%
43*	Disease transmission from elk or bison to/from livestock	12	0.1%
44*	Disease transmission from elk or bison to/from other wildlife	1	< 0.1%
45	Impact of disease to bison and elk	3	< 0.1%
46*	Connections between disease and supplemental feeding	6	0.1%
47*	Concern about the spread of chronic wasting disease	3	< 0.1%
Supplemental Feeding			
50*	Specific substantive comments about supplemental feeding	4	< 0.1%
51	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about supplemental feeding	17	0.1%

Comment Code	Comment / Issue Description	Number of Comments	Percentage of Comments
52*	Impact of supplemental feeding on the bison and/or elk population	6	0.1%
55	Opposition to supplemental feeding	13	0.1%
55.1	Phasing out supplemental feeding	1,729	14.5%
56	Support for supplemental feeding	61	0.5%
Hunting			
60*	Specific substantive comments about hunting	2	< 0.1%
61	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about hunting	13	0.1%
62*	Opposition to hunting on the National Elk Refuge	4	< 0.1%
63	Support for elk hunting opportunities	20	0.2%
64	Support for bison hunting opportunities	24	0.2%
64.1	Support for Native American bison hunt	1	< 0.1%
64.2	Opposition to Native American bison hunt	2	< 0.1%
65*	Concern about increased hunting accidents	1	< 0.1%
66*	Concern about hunting management	3	< 0.1%
67*	Concern about impacts on hunting opportunities	15	0.1%
Impact Analysis			
70*	Specific substantive comment about the impact analysis	2	< 0.1%
Livestock			
91	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about livestock	2	< 0.1%
93*	Negative impacts to/from livestock	1	< 0.1%
General Comments			
101	Miscellaneous comments	2	< 0.1%
102	Comments not pertaining to this management plan	9	0.1%
103	Non-substantive comments	8	0.1%
104*	Comments questioning the EIS analysis and conclusions	3	< 0.1%
Population Control			
200*	Specific substantive comments about population control	4	< 0.1%
201	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about population control	6	0.1%
202	Positive impacts of population control	4	< 0.1%
204*	Reducing/increasing size of bison herd	15	0.1%
204.1	Support for reducing the bison herd	37	0.3%
204.3*	Reducing the bison herd to the lowest genetically viable population would make it vulnerable to extirpation	1	< 0.1%
204.4*	Manage bison like other big game species, using accepted principles	1,735	14.6%
205	Reducing/increasing the size of the elk herd	14	0.1%
205.1	Support for reducing the elk herd	2	< 0.1%
205.2	Opposition to reducing the elk herd	15	0.1%
205.3*	Concern about starvation of elk	18	0.2%
206*	Manage population with hunting and habitat protection	1,450	12.2%
Private Land			
300*	Specific substantive comment about private land	1	< 0.1%
301	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about private land	1	< 0.1%
302*	Herd control to avoid encroachment on private land	9	0.1%
303*	Impacts to private land	2	< 0.1%
Purpose and Need			
400*	Specific substantive comment about the purpose and need for the study	1	< 0.1%
401	Planning process and policy	2	< 0.1%
402	Scope of the analysis	3	< 0.1%
403	Park legislation and authority	2	< 0.1%
408*	USFWS authority to manage state wildlife populations	5	< 0.1%
Refuge/Park Operations			
500*	Specific substantive comment about refuge and/or park operations	1	< 0.1%
502*	Additional winter range	1	< 0.1%
503*	Contract irrigation to a private party	2	< 0.1%
Socioeconomics			
601	Methodologies and assumptions about socioeconomics	7	0.1%
602*	Positive economic impact	3	< 0.1%
603*	Negative economic impact	4	< 0.1%
604*	Economic importance of the elk herd	17	0.1%
605*	Economic benefits of hunting	10	0.1%

Comment Code	Comment / Issue Description	Number of Comments	Percentage of Comments
606*	Effects of a disease outbreak on local outfitting and ranching operations	287	2.4%
Threatened or Endangered Species			
801	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about threatened or endangered species	3	< 0.1%
803*	Impacts of specific threatened or endangered species (grizzly bear, wolves, bald eagles)	2	< 0.1%
Vaccination			
900*	Specific substantive comment about vaccinations	1	< 0.1%
901	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about vaccinations	1	< 0.1%
902	Support for vaccinating elk or bison	16	0.1%
903*	Opposition to vaccinating elk or bison	8	0.1%
904*	Opposition to using existing vaccines; possible support for more effective or safe vaccines	1,738	14.6%
Vegetation Habitat			
1000*	Specific substantive comment about vegetation habitat	2	< 0.1%
1001	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about vegetation habitat	1	< 0.1%
1002	Impacts on habitat (marshlands, native grassland, and sagebrush shrub)	1	< 0.1%
1003*	Impacts on specific vegetation (such as aspen and willow)	2	< 0.1%
1004	Support for habitat management/enhancement	7	0.1%
1004.1	Use of prescribed fire to enhance habitat	2	< 0.1%
1004.2*	Opposition to habitat management	1	< 0.1%
1005	Cumulative impacts on vegetation habitat	1	< 0.1%
Visitor Use			
3001	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about visitor use	1	< 0.1%
3002	Impacts on park traffic and parking	1	< 0.1%
3003*	Impacts on recreational opportunities	5	< 0.1%
3004*	Impacts on wildlife viewing	10	0.1%
Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat			
4000*	Specific substantive comment about wildlife and wildlife habitat	1	< 0.1%
4001	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about wildlife and wildlife habitat	3	< 0.1%
4002	Impact to/from existing Jackson bison and elk herd	4	< 0.1%
4003*	Impact to/from predators and scavengers	4	< 0.1%
4003.1*	Impacts of wolves and grizzly bears on elk	7	0.1%
4003.2*	Impacts of wolves on elk	22	0.2%
4004*	Impacts to/from wildlife migration	1	< 0.1%
4004.1	Protecting/restoring wildlife migrations	1,743	14.6%
4004.3*	Migration to native range	5	< 0.1%
4005*	Impacts to other species' habitats	2	< 0.1%
4005.1	Benefits to/from other species/habitat	1	< 0.1%
4005.2	Impacts to other species if feeding reduced	41	0.3%
4005.3*	Impacts of human activity/development	17	0.1%
4005.4*	Impacts from livestock grazing on public lands outside the refuge and the park	11	0.1%
4005.5*	Restore habitat off site	3	< 0.1%
4006*	Carrying capacity analysis	4	< 0.1%
Water Resources			
6000*	Specific substantive text about water resources	2	< 0.1%
6001	Regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about water resources	1	< 0.1%
6002.1	Support for irrigation	1	< 0.1%
6002.3*	Opposition to the use of sprinklers	3	< 0.1%
6005	Cumulative impact to water resources	1	< 0.1%

NOTE: Comment codes are not sequential as all codes were not used.

PETITIONS AND FORM LETTERS

The agencies received mass correspondence in the form of petitions or form letters from three different groups commenting on the Draft Plan/EIS:

- Greater Yellowstone Coalition
- National Parks Conservation Association
- Legacy Granite

The amount of correspondence received from each source and the comments are described below. Substantive comments in this correspondence are described and responded to in the following section.

Greater Yellowstone Coalition

The agencies received 1,443 copies of a form letter, which contained the following comments (comment codes are shown in Table 1):

- *Comment 16:* Specific comments about Alternative 6 and expressing support.
- *Comment 55.1:* Comments suggesting phasing out supplemental feeding.
- *Comment 204.4:* Bison should be managed like other big game species, using accepted principles.
- *Comment 206:* Population should be managed with hunting and habitat protection.
- *Comment 904:* Opposition to using existing vaccines; may support more effective or safe vaccines.
- *Comment 4004.1:* Support for protecting or restoring wildlife migration.

National Parks Conservation Association

The agencies received 287 copies of a form letter, which contained the following comments:

- *Comment 14:* Specific comments about Alternative 4
- *Comment 16:* Specific comments about Alternative 6 and expressed support.
- *Comment 41:* Comments about regulations, methodologies, and assumptions about disease.
- *Comment 55.1:* Comments suggesting phasing out supplemental feeding.

- *Comment 204.4:* Bison should be managed like other big game species, using accepted principles.
- *Comment 606:* Disease outbreak could jeopardize local outfitting and ranching opportunities.
- *Comment 904:* Opposition to the use of existing vaccines; may support more effective or safe vaccines.
- *Comment 4004.1:* Support for protecting or restoring wildlife migration.

Legacy Granite

The agencies received a petition representing 20 individuals, who expressed the following comment:

- *Comment 15:* Specific comments about Alternative 5 and expressing support.

ALTERNATIVE PREFERENCE

The most common topic found in the individual comments (and form letters) was preference for or opposition to a particular alternative. Many of the commenters, however, did not express a preference for any particular alternative. The agencies consider all comments in the decision-making process. In the interest of disclosure about the public comments received on the plan, Table 1 shows the number of comments that were received about each alternative, and Table 2 below shows the preferences of those comments from all sources (individual comments, form letters, and petitions). Comments expressing alternative preference are not considered substantive and were not included in the responses to comments.

TABLE 2: ALTERNATIVE PREFERENCE

Alternative	Support	Support with Modification	Oppose
1	1	–	–
2	4	1	–
3	–	–	–
4	8	–	321
5	170	2	1
6	1,747	11	1

MOST COMMON CONCERNS OR ISSUES

The 10 most common concerns or issues expressed in the individual comments (including form letters) were:

1. Support for protecting and restoring wildlife migration routes (comment 4004.1).
2. Opposition to the use of existing vaccines (comment 904).
3. Suggestion that bison should be managed like other big game species (comment 204.4).
4. Suggestion that supplemental feeding should be phased out (comment 55.1).
5. Suggestion that populations should be managed with hunting and habitat protection (comment 206).
6. General concerns about disease (comment 41).
7. Concern that a disease outbreak could jeopardize local outfitting and ranching opportunities (comment 606).
8. Support for supplemental feeding (comment 56).
9. Concern about impacts to other species if elk and bison feeding is reduced (comment 4005.2).
10. Support for reducing the size of the bison herd (comment 204.1).

INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

ALTERNATIVES

Comment 18: New alternatives or elements

Comment 18: Suggested an alternative that would leave elk numbers at their current level and would reduce bison to 400, since they are the ones damaging the woody areas and the habitat.

Response 18: Another alternative is not necessary as Alternative 5 contains the elements requested by commenters. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department determines the population objective for the entire herd, and the current objective for the Jackson elk herd is 11,000. Currently the herd is above the state's objective,

and up to 7,500 elk winter on the National Elk Refuge. Under Alternatives 1 and 5 the number of elk wintering on the refuge would remain at about 7,500, but under Alternative 5 the bison population would be reduced to 350–400. While increasing numbers of bison have impacted woody vegetation on the refuge, they primarily use the northern half of the refuge during the fall and winter months. Elk also have significantly overbrowsed woody vegetation over many decades of feeding on the refuge. In particular, areas near the feedgrounds have been heavily overbrowsed by elk.

CONSULTATION, CONTRACTORS, AND COORDINATION

Comment 22: Cooperation between and among government and individuals

Comment 22: Advocated better cooperation between government agencies and individuals.

Response 22: Cooperation is very important when trying to manage species that move across jurisdictional boundaries. The Draft Plan/EIS highlighted that ongoing cooperative efforts, such as the Jackson Interagency Habitat Initiative and participation in the Jackson Elk Studies Group and the Greater Yellowstone Interagency Brucellosis Committee, would continue, as would management of the bison and elk populations in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Under the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS, more emphasis is placed on consultation and cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and others to manage the herds, using good science and established criteria. Further, additional emphasis is placed on working with adjacent landowners to minimize conflicts, including adding the costs of providing staff or other resources to assist with these efforts.

DISEASE

Comment 40: Specific substantive comments about diseases

Comment 40: Brucellosis is better controlled in the winter feedgrounds than being scattered about.

Response 40: Winter feedgrounds promote the spread of brucellosis by concentrating animals and

increasing the degree of infection in the herds. Because high numbers of animals gather at feedgrounds, more animals are likely to investigate infected materials from abortions or births and become infected as a result. Free-ranging elk have almost no brucellosis (1.65% in the Greater Yellowstone Area versus 28.56% or more with feedground elk). Although feedgrounds restrict winter elk and bison distribution and therefore limit co-mingling with livestock, they cannot eliminate the chance that some co-mingling could occur. Because feedgrounds create and maintain higher brucellosis levels in western Wyoming elk and bison, they also increase the likelihood that livestock could be infected (GYIBC 1997; Thorne 2001; Smith 2001). Infected elk associated with winter feedgrounds are the suspected source of recent brucellosis infections in Wyoming and Idaho livestock (Hillman 2002; see also Draft Plan/EIS, p. 128). By maintaining feedgrounds, it is unlikely that brucellosis would be eliminated in the bison and elk herds, at least not without the development of more effective vaccines. Whereas, if winter feedgrounds were eliminated, brucellosis levels in the long-term would likely be greatly reduced in elk. Reducing brucellosis levels in bison may be more difficult due to their social nature (Tessaro, Forbes, and Turcotte 1990; Roffe, Rhyon, et al. 1999). Bison have shown a strong fidelity to seasonal ranges, and by limiting the population to what the habitat can support during the winter, they are more likely to remain in traditional areas (Draft Plan/EIS, pp. 312, 318, 336). It is also more likely that their presence would not be tolerated on private lands (WGFC regulations, ch. 41 (2002) and ch. 15 (2004)).

Comment 43: Disease transmission from elk or bison to/from livestock

Comment 43: Concern about increased co-mingling of bison or elk with livestock if supplemental feeding is reduced.

Response 43: Under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative) improved forage on the refuge and reduced elk and bison numbers would decrease the likelihood of livestock conflicts and disease transmission. Some elk might leave the refuge when no supplemental feed is provided, but many would remain because the area is good winter

range and should provide adequate forage during mild and average winters. Mitigation, including financial support for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to prevent and manage potential co-mingling, has been added to the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS. Areas of native winter range would also be improved.

Comment 44: Disease transmission from elk or bison to/from other wildlife

Comment 44: Concern about increased spread of disease if supplemental feeding is reduced.

Response 44: See responses 43 and 4005.

Comment 46: Connection between disease and supplemental feeding

Comment 46: Skepticism about a connection between disease transmission and supplemental feeding.

Response 46: Research has verified a link between animal densities and disease transmission and prevalence (Draft Plan/EIS, p. 128; GYIBC 1997). If supplemental feeding was not used to concentrate elk for up to three months each year, the number of opportunities for transmission due to contact with fetal membranes or fluids associated with abortions would decrease. Fewer animals would contract brucellosis and could not potentially transmit the disease to other non-infected animals. Prevalence in non-fed versus fed Wyoming elk supports the belief that feeding and disease prevalence are connected.

Comment 47: Concern about the spread of chronic wasting disease

Response 47: Experts believe that chronic wasting disease will at some time infect the herd. As discussed in the Draft and Final EISs, the risk of adverse impacts to the elk population would be greatest in alternatives with nearly annual winter supplemental feeding. Alternative 4 includes moderate changes to the winter feeding program on the National Elk Refuge, changes that would decrease ungulate concentrations on the refuge and reduce disease prevalence, transmission, and the risk of major impacts to the herd if and/or when chronic wasting disease infects Jackson elk.

SUPPLEMENTAL FEEDING

Comment 50: Specific substantive comments about supplemental feeding

Comment 50a: There is no scientific reason to change the elk herd feeding program.

Response 50a: See response 46.

Comment 50b: Perhaps artificial feeding programs could work better if they were more spread out in other areas.

Response 50b: Currently supplemental feeding occurs at four general areas on the refuge that are within reasonable proximity to the pellet storage areas and equipment. Within these general areas feeding sites are changed daily, and feed is spread out in long meandering lines. Elk and bison are separated to the extent possible. Areas around the marshlands and open water are avoided, as are other areas where it is not practical to travel great distances from the areas where pellets and equipment are stored.

Comment 50c: Closing the feedgrounds and discontinuing supplemental feeding should not even be considered until suitable habitat exists to support the present elk population.

Response 50c: The agencies agree that suitable habitat is necessary to support bison and elk populations. Under Alternatives 3, 4, 5, and 6 the quality of native and cultivated forage would be improved by minimizing the composition of non-native plant species and using better irrigation methods on cultivated fields on the National Elk Refuge. Under the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS the agencies have proposed that any reduction in supplemental feeding would be phased in and based on monitoring and established criteria developed in consultation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Comment 50d: The five-year time span for eliminating elk feeding seems a bit arbitrary. Consider adopting key annual metrics, which will assure negative consequences are kept in check. Use those metrics to guide the rate of feed reduction rather than a five-year goal.

Response 50d: The objective identified in Alternative 6 to phase out feeding in five years was chosen to allow time for elk reductions to occur

and to reduce the potential for management conflicts and starvation if bison and elk numbers were higher than winter forage could support. Under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS) a number of actions are proposed, including (1) the development of criteria for when to begin and end feeding, based on monitoring and other factors, and (2) the implementation of a phased reduction in feeding based on a structured framework developed in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Comment 52: Impacts of supplemental feeding on the bison and/or elk populations

Comment 52: General reference to an artificially high elk population and subsequent disease concerns, and unnatural expansion of the bison population)

Response 52: Comment noted. See also responses 46 and 204.

HUNTING

Comment 60: Specific substantive comment about hunting

Comment 60a: To hunt these animals, there needs to be access to the park and refuge.

Response 60a: The 1950 legislation authorizing the expansion of Grand Teton National Park allowed for elk reduction in the park when necessary to manage the herd. The National Park Service will continue to work cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to facilitate herd management.

Current access on the refuge is adequate, with five parking areas (two of which are handicapped accessible) and road use that is designed to provide a quality hunting experience that blends access with the ability for hunters to walk several miles from their vehicles if they desire. To aid in the retrieval of carcasses, certain roads are opened for use after 2 p.m. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to work cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to achieve successful elk population management. The agencies believe that strategies need to be implemented to move elk out of safe areas on the National Elk Refuge to increase harvest levels and meet population objectives.

Comment 60b: Suggestion for limited hunting for antlerless elk on the refuge for youths under age 16 and hunting with an appointed “hunting guide” who works on the refuge.

Response 60b: Currently the refuge manages a hunt for youths age 17 and under on the first weekend of the annual refuge hunt period. Only youths may hunt during these two days, but they must have an adult with them. Appointing a refuge “hunting guide” has not been necessary.

Comment 62: Opposition to hunting on the National Elk Refuge

Response 62: The Draft Plan/EIS acknowledged (p. 17) that “some stakeholders were against hunting of any kind.” The agencies understand that these stakeholders would oppose alternatives that incorporated hunting. While Alternative 2 would eliminate elk hunting on the refuge and the elk reduction program in the park, the Preferred Alternative would maintain hunting on the National Elk Refuge and the elk reduction program in the park if needed for herd management. The agencies believe that ethical hunting is a reasonable and useful tool to manage wildlife populations.

Comment 65: Concern about increased hunting accidents

Comment 65: Discontinued hunting in Alternative 2 would reduce hunting accidents.

Response 65: See response 62. Hunting accidents on the National Elk Refuge and in Grand Teton National Park have been extremely rare and are not a significant issue in this planning process.

Comment 66: Concern about hunting management

Comment 66: Commenters generally opposed any reductions in hunting, or any changes in how elk populations are managed, and supported hunting of bison.

Response 66: The current population of the Jackson elk herd is currently higher than the Wyoming Game and Fish Department’s objective. Larger herd sizes provide economic and recreational benefits to some members of the public, but they also result in damaged habitat and management conflicts. The management actions identified under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS) are based on reducing the

herd to the state objective while continuing to provide economic and recreational benefits. The agencies believe that the consequences of not taking any action to reduce either the prevalence of brucellosis in elk or the risk of other more serious non-endemic diseases could have a greater impact to the hunting community in the long term. Under alternatives with bison hunting, hunting would occur on the refuge and in the national forest, but no bison hunting would be allowed in the park.

Comment 67: Concern about impacts on hunting opportunities

Response 67: See response 66. Alternative 4 would provide elk hunting opportunities as high as or higher than under Alternative 1 (the No-Action Alternative) and would provide greatly increased bison hunting opportunities. Elk hunting in northwestern Wyoming would continue.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Comment 70: Specific substantive comment about the impact analysis

Comment 70a: Why will the biological assessment not be completed until after the public comment period on the Draft Plan/ EIS? As a result, it is premature to issue a Final Plan/EIS prior to a thorough assessment.

Response 70a: A biological assessment will be completed for the Preferred Alternative as presented in the Final Plan/EIS prior to signing of the Record of Decision. An environmental impact statement analyzes all the alternatives that are considered, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act, whereas a biological assessment is a consultation requirement under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

Comment 70b: Why is the analysis using the Hobbs, Singer model as the foundation for all evaluations of impacts related to the six alternatives? Also, blending the two wildlife species (bison and elk) into the planning process was improper because the agencies do not have legal authority to set population goals and objectives for bison and elk.

Response 70b: See responses 400, 408, and 4006.

LIVESTOCK

Comment 93: Negative impacts to/from livestock

Comment 93: General concerns about increased disease transmission to livestock due to elk dispersal to private lands, and the impacts of grazing on elk populations and their habitat.

Response 93: Concerns about increased disease transmission to livestock are addressed in response 43. Habitat impacts from livestock are addressed in response 4005.4.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Comment 104: Comment questioning the EIS analysis and conclusions

Comment 104: Commenter questioned the adequacy of the carrying capacity analysis (4006) and the adequacy of the analysis related to elk impacts from movement onto private lands (302 and 303).

Response 104: See responses 4006, 302, and 303.

POPULATION CONTROL

Comment 200: Specific substantive comments about population control

Comment 200a: There is a problem with using the term “winter severity” in the Draft Plan/EIS. This would be difficult to determine and could cause unneeded mortality due to judgment calls being made too late to stop continued mortality in the herd.

Response 200a: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found a strong correlation between the January 1 Index of Winter Severity measurements (calculations intended to estimate the response of animals to climatic and vegetative conditions on winter range; Farnes, Heydon, and Hansen 1999) with refuge feeding start dates (1980 through 2005). This index includes snow water equivalents, temperature, and forage amount, giving them different weights in the analysis. Staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department would continue field evaluations of winter conditions, forage availability, and elk body condition and behavior. In the Final Plan/EIS the Preferred Alternative proposes criteria for beginning and ending feeding, which would be

established in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department.

Comment 200b: Since an effective approach to management of the park elk herd has not been demonstrated, it could well be that the herd’s numbers already are in the range of a population of 4,000 animals, or will increase to this quantity in the near future.

Response 200b: Summer elk censuses in 1996 and 2000, which were adjusted for sightability, estimated that from 3,200 (in 1996) to 2,500 (in 2000) elk summered in the park. The current elk reduction program, which is coordinated by NPS and WGFD staff, emphasizes the hunting of antlerless elk, and numbers of elk are decreasing. Annual monitoring of the central valley portion of the park herd shows a decreasing trend (NPS 2005). Management of the park elk herd has been successful.

Comment 200c: Supported a reduction in feeding, but the decision to feed should be based on available forage, not a mortality trigger.

Response 200c: Mortality would not be used as a trigger for initiating supplemental feeding on the refuge under any alternative in the Draft or Final Plan/EIS. The USFWS biologist at the refuge and a WGFD biologist evaluate a number of different criteria, including snow conditions, temperature, and available forage. Revisions were made to the Final EIS to clarify these criteria. Goal 3 in Chapter 2 was clarified to prevent readers from interpreting mortality rate as a trigger for initiating supplemental feeding and was revised to include criteria that would be evaluated, such as environmental factors, habitat, and animal condition.

Comment 200d: The bull-to-cow ratio of 1 to 1 is overly restrictive and not practical. Under the current situation most bulls are taken during the hunting season.

Response 200d: The Final Plan/EIS was modified to recommend adoption of desired bull-to-cow ratios, and it emphasizes that the agencies would work cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to establish ratios. A higher bull-to-cow ratio would be justified biologically because it would provide greater potential for genetic diversity in the herds. See response 204.3

regarding the minimum number for maintaining genetic viability.

Comment 204: Reducing/increasing size of bison herd

Comment 204: General concern about the size of the bison herd.

Response 204: Current numbers of 1,000 bison (2006 herd estimates) are causing a number of problems on the refuge. It is increasingly difficult for refuge managers to keep bison separated from elk during feeding periods on the refuge. Bison distribution on the refuge also appears to be increasing as the herd grows. During periods when winter feeding occurs, elk and bison remain close to feeding areas and damage nearby woody vegetation. In the Final Plan/EIS the recommended bison numbers would be approximately 500 for Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative) and Alternative 6.

Comment 204.3: The bison herd should not be reduced to the lowest genetically viable population; it would make it vulnerable to extirpation.

Response 204.3: The preferred alternative in the Final Plan/EIS would implement a bison hunt on the refuge and reduce the bison herd through harvest to a recommended objective of approximately 500 animals in order to maintain a genetically viable herd (400 is considered to be the minimum number to maintain genetic viability).

Comment 204.4: Bison should be managed like other big game species, using accepted principles.

Response 204.4: The agencies' preferred alternative in the Final Plan/EIS would recommend an objective of approximately 500 animals. A maximum number would not be recommended, and it would be based on available habitat and other factors. Based on current conditions, it is believed that the herd would need to be reduced to about 500 in order to achieve the desired habitat conditions considered in the Final Plan/EIS.

Comment 205.3: Concern about the starvation of elk.

Response 205.3: The intent of reducing supplemental feeding is not to reduce the herd by starving elk, nor does any alternative identify starvation as a desired outcome. The intent of reducing

supplemental feeding is to address the serious consequences of large concentrations of wintering elk and bison feeding on the National Elk Refuge. These include a high prevalence for brucellosis, an increased risk for non-endemic diseases spreading in the herd, the rapid growth of the bison herd, and the continued decline in woody vegetation that negatively affects other species. By law, these are issues that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must address. Hunting would continue to be the primary management tool used to reduce numbers over 10–15 years while supplemental feeding on the refuge was being gradually reduced. In the Final Plan/EIS a phased reduction in supplemental feeding under the Preferred Alternative would be based on established criteria and monitoring, in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, and it would be implemented in the mildest winters first, when more forage on native range would be available. At the same time, enhanced irrigation and cultivation techniques would improve forage quality on parts of the refuge, and other forage enhancement would occur in other areas. While winter mortality could be slightly higher in some years than the artificially low figure now (currently averaging 1% to 2%), the agencies are committed to working cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and adjacent landowners to reduce conflicts and to improve conditions for wildlife. Jackson Interagency Habitat Initiative efforts to improve winter and transitional habitat for all ungulates on native range would also add to available forage.

Comment 206: Manage populations with hunting and habitat protection

Comment 206: Hunting and habitat protection should be used to manage elk and bison populations.

Response 206: Under all alternatives except Alternative 2 (where no hunting would be allowed) the primary tool for managing elk and bison numbers on the refuge would be hunting, along with the elk reduction program in the park when necessary. (No bison hunting would occur on the refuge under Alternative 1, or in the park under any alternative). Under Alternatives 3 through 6 woody vegetation would be protected through the use of fencing. Over the life of the

plan the quality of habitat would be improved under Alternatives 2–6.

PRIVATE LAND

Comment 300: Specific substantive comment about private land

Comment 300: Appropriate mitigation for ranchers affected by the phase out (of irrigation and crops) should be developed.

Response 300: The Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4) would increase the quality of crops produced by using sprinkler irrigation and would include an emphasis on minimizing conflicts with adjacent landowners. Conflicts would be minimized by providing human and/or financial resources to manage co-mingling and to reduce crop depredation by elk and/or bison on private lands. Alternative 6 in both the Draft and Final EISs also identifies this option.

Comment 302: Herd control to avoid encroachment on private land

Comment 302: Herd controls should be used to avoid encroachment on private land by elk and bison.

Response 302: The Jackson elk and bison populations are not strictly confined. They are free-ranging herds in the summer but are attracted to and voluntarily confine themselves to established feedground areas in the winter. Stopping refuge supplemental feeding abruptly while elk numbers remained high or forage was not available would likely result in elk moving onto adjacent private lands or the state feedgrounds. However, major problems would be unlikely if numbers were gradually reduced as forage on the refuge and on winter range was improved, and if mitigation to prevent conflicts on private lands was in place. The Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS incorporates an adaptive management emphasis and mitigation to counter increases in elk on private property and management conflicts. Actions might include staff or other resources to minimize conflicts, such as herding elk back onto the refuge, and the use of fencing.

Comment 303: Impacts to private land

Comment 303: General concern about impacts to private land.

Response 303: The Draft Plan/EIS acknowledged that increased winter elk distribution would occur to some extent during non-feeding years. Alternative 4 was revised in the Final Plan/EIS to incorporate mitigation for livestock and private property conflicts. Mitigation would attempt to prevent conflicts and assist in managing those that did occur. There are benefits to increased distribution of elk, including reduced habitat damage from high elk concentrations, reduced disease transmission and prevalence among elk, and reduced long-term risk to livestock.

PURPOSE AND NEED

Comment 400: Specific substantive comment about the purpose and need for the study

Comment 400: Blending a management plan for two wildlife species into the EIS process is improper.

Response 400: A federal judge ordered a full analysis of the effects of the supplemental feeding program on bison. The agencies decided to include management of both elk and bison in one plan because the supplemental feeding program on the refuge greatly affects both species. Further, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required by law to develop a comprehensive conservation plan for the National Elk Refuge, and that process is scheduled to begin following completion of this EIS process. The impacts of supplemental feeding on bison and elk would have to be addressed for the comprehensive conservation plan. It is much more cost-effective to address the two species together, providing the foundation for the environmental analysis for the subsequent comprehensive conservation planning process.

Comment 408: USFWS authority to manage state wildlife populations

Comment 408: Questioned the authority of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage state wildlife populations.

Response 408: The Draft Plan/EIS acknowledged that the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has responsibility for managing resident wildlife species throughout most of Wyoming and further that the department was a major partner in this planning process. In Wyoming wildlife management goals and objectives (e.g., bull-to-cow ratios,

herd objectives, and hunting seasons) are set through a public review process that requires public input and a final recommendation to be approved by the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission. Under the selected plan the agencies would recommend objectives and coordinate with WGFD personnel (Draft Plan/EIS, pp. 4, 21). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service have the responsibility to manage lands under their jurisdictions to meet their respective missions, purposes, and other legal mandates. The agencies share this responsibility through a cooperative relationship with state wildlife agencies in order to protect wildlife and other natural resources.

PARK AND REFUGE OPERATIONS

Comment 500: Specific substantive comment about park and refuge operations

Comment 500: The habitat of the winter feeding area needs to be kept clean. In the spring the elk should be encouraged to feed at the north end of the refuge. Currently, the practice has been to bring the elk to the southern end of the park for harvesting the elk antlers.

Response 500: Winter feeding operations are moved periodically on the refuge to help keep feeding areas clean. The elk are not brought to these areas for any reason, including the harvesting of antlers. In the fall elk begin to move to the southern end of the refuge, partly because that is when the elk reduction program in the park and hunting on the north end of the refuge take place. Depending on snow and forage conditions, elk sometimes move northward after these programs end. Winter feeding occurs on various parts of the refuge, often through March, and most elk antlers are shed at that time near the feeding areas. Although most of the elk move north on their own after the feeding program stops for the year, the few that remain on the refuge are often encouraged to leave by late April, when new vegetation appears. Several alternatives include closing, or the potential for closing, hunt areas in the southern end of the park and the northern end of the refuge if they were not needed to manage the herd so that elk would stay longer in these transitional areas and make use of available forage.

Comment 502: Additional winter range

Comment 502: Support for acquiring additional winter range.

Response 502: Under all alternatives private lands within the approved boundary of the National Elk Refuge that could be protected would be identified, but any acquisition or protection of additional winter range outside federal boundaries is beyond the scope of the decision being made in this Final Plan/EIS.

Comment 503: Contract irrigation to a private party

Response 503: Contracting irrigation to a private party would be considered. Past efforts to contract irrigation have not been successful because it is difficult to find firms in the Jackson Hole area that can employ sufficient personnel for irrigation operations. The hours are varied and work is difficult, so finding people willing to take such a job has been a challenge.

SOCIOECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Comment 602: Positive economic impact

Comment 602: General references to the economic importance of hunting (comment 604) and the economic value of wildlife viewing (comment 3004) and biodiversity.

Response 602: See responses 604 and 3004.

Comment 603: Negative economic impact

Comment 603: Commenter referred to the monetary costs of private land impacts if supplemental feeding was reduced, and the economic impacts from perceived reductions in hunting and wildlife viewing.

Response 603: See responses 604 and 605. Under the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS the Jackson elk herd would be maintained at the WGFD objective of about 11,000 animals, and the agencies would recommend a bison population objective of approximately 500 animals. The agencies would work collaboratively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and adjacent landowners to seek solutions for mitigating and minimizing private land impacts. Fencing materials, staffing to herd elk back onto the refuge, and other options would be explored as ways to reduce conflicts. Initially, hunting

opportunities would likely increase as the herd was brought down to the objective levels set by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Many opportunities for wildlife viewing would continue, and economic impacts are expected to be minimal if any.

Comment 604: Economic importance of elk herd

Comment 604: Comment about the economic importance of the elk herd and what would happen if the herd was reduced.

Response 604: The Jackson elk herd is currently larger than the WGFD objective. A larger herd provides economic and recreational benefits to some members of the public but also results in damage to habitat and management conflicts. Under the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4 in the Final Plan/EIS) the agencies would work cooperatively with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to reduce herds to objective levels while continuing to provide economic and recreational benefits. Although many stakeholders desired high elk herd numbers, factors such as available habitat, habitat damage, disease prevalence and transmission, and reducing the potential for major adverse impacts from non-endemic diseases that are present in nearby parts of Wyoming were considered when the agencies developed alternatives for the Bison and Elk Management Plan and EIS.

Comment 605: Economic benefits of hunting

Comment 605: Comments about the economic benefits of hunting to the local community, and changed management would reduce those benefits.

Response 605: See response 604. While hunting does provide revenue to Wyoming, potential revenues would decrease if a non-endemic disease infected a large portion of the herds due to supplemental feeding (on an annual or nearly annual basis) on the refuge. The Jackson elk and bison herds are currently above objective numbers. High numbers provide economic and recreational benefits to some members of the public but also result in damaged habitat and management conflicts. The management actions described under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS) would reduce the elk herd to the state's objective and would

continue to provide economic and recreational benefits. It should be noted that the herd reduction program in Grand Teton National Park was authorized in 1950 when necessary for herd management. It is not a mandated public use.

Comment 606: Effects of a disease outbreak on local outfitting and ranching operations

Comment 606: Concern about the possibility of a disease outbreak jeopardizing local outfitting and ranching operations.

Response 606: Alternative 4 as proposed in the Draft Plan/EIS would not solve the serious disease threats to wildlife and livestock. Brucellosis prevalence would be reduced, but the risk of transmission to livestock would continue. If chronic wasting disease or bovine tuberculosis infected the herds, these diseases could adversely impact local outfitting and ranching operations. In the Final Plan/EIS the Preferred Alternative (Alternative 4) proposes an adaptive management strategy to achieve the desired conditions over the life of the plan. While many actions are similar to the Draft Plan/EIS, a key difference would be the development of a structured framework, in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, with actions based on specific criteria to reduce feeding and assess the prevalence of brucellosis, chronic wasting disease, and other diseases. No specific timeframes were identified to implement the actions, rather a phased approach based on criteria developed in consultation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department would be used to determine what actions to take.

THREATENED OR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Comment 803: Comment about impacts on specific threatened or endangered species (grizzly bears, wolves, bald eagles).

Comment about the importance of grizzly bears and wolves in setting elk population goals, and the potential reduction in accidental grizzly bear shootings if elk hunting was eliminated.

Response 803: Wolf and grizzly bear predation are considered by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department when setting annual elk harvest numbers. While accidental take of grizzly bears may occur, it is an issue beyond the scope of this management plan. Ethical hunting is a reasonable and useful tool to manage wildlife populations.

VACCINATION

Comment 900: Specific substantive comment about park and refuge operations

Comment 900a: Deworming with Ivermectin should be part of the (vaccination) program.

Response 900a: Providing winter habitat for elk and other big game species is one of the primary purposes of the National Elk Refuge. Although the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has allowed the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to vaccinate elk wintering on the refuge for several years, these elk are not managed in the context of animal husbandry. They are considered free-ranging wildlife, and the service's philosophy has been to avoid overmanagement where possible. The Jackson elk herd currently experiences very low winter mortality and is not affected by lungworms to a great extent.

Comment 900b: The Draft Plan/EIS stated that there would probably not be any livestock impacts associated with vesicular stomatitis. This is incorrect. At present vesicular stomatitis causes significant hardship to livestock producers, even those without disease in their herds.

Response 900b: Vesicular stomatitis (VS) is of concern to the livestock industry and is a reportable disease in the United States, largely because its initial clinical signs cannot be distinguished from those of foot-and-mouth disease in cattle and swine (Radostits et al. 1999:1069–71; Yuill and Seymour 2001, cited in Peterson 2003). The agencies recognize that potential wildlife reservoirs would cause concern but believe that heightened concern in this case appears unwarranted for several reasons. The role of wildlife in relation to vesicular stomatitis is unclear, no occurrences of this disease in wildlife in the Greater Yellowstone Area have been reported, and free-roaming bison or elk do not seem more likely to serve as reservoir hosts for VS viruses than would other wild or domestic mammals (Peterson 2003). Following discussion at a meeting of disease experts held in Jackson Hole (Disease Expert Meeting 2002) it was agreed that vesicular stomatitis did not need to be analyzed in detail because there are not likely to be any impacts associated with this disease in bison, elk, other ungulates, threatened or endangered or sensitive species, livestock, or humans.

Comment 903: Opposition to vaccinating elk or bison

Response 903: The current brucellosis vaccines for elk and bison (Strain 19 and RB51, respectively) have been determined safe for these wildlife species (for bison, specifically calf and non-pregnant cows), as well as nontarget species. Strain 19 efficacy in protecting against abortion is low; up to 25% of elk are protected. Researchers differ on the levels of efficacy found for RB51, and while there has been no consensus, some evidence of efficacy from clinical studies has been reported (Olsen, Kreeger, and Schultz 2002; Olsen 2004). Vaccination may not be cost-effective if benefits are limited, but because it is safe and may have some benefits, its use by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department was included under several alternatives in the Draft and Final EISs. If more effective vaccines are developed, vaccination could be a valuable tool to reduce brucellosis prevalence. Text was added to the Final Plan/EIS to provide more information on available vaccines.

Comment 904: Opposition to existing vaccines; possible support for more effective or safe vaccines

Response 904: See response 903.

VEGETATION HABITAT

Comment 1000: Specific substantive comment about vegetation habitat

Comment 1000a: Controlled burns should occur on the refuge every spring to reduce large sagebrush and create more vegetation for elk.

Response 1000a: The use of prescribed fire currently on the refuge is limited. Prescribed fire would continue to be used under all alternatives except Alternative 2 to improve native grasslands and cultivated fields, and to reduce nonnative plant species. Specific prescriptions and details would be developed in subsequent planning efforts.

Comment 1000b: Rejuvenate the feedgrounds on the National Elk Refuge with controlled burns, additional sprinkler systems, and flood irrigation.

Response 1000b: See response 1000a regarding prescribed fire. Various tools and options would be used to manage native and cultivated fields on

the National Elk Refuge to improve the quality of forage. Flood irrigation and some sprinkler irrigation (60 acres) would continue under Alternative 1 (the No-Action Alternative). The flood and sprinkler irrigation systems would be improved and irrigation increased under Alternatives 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS), as well as Alternatives 5 and 6. Under Alternative 2 irrigation would be phased out, and under Alternative 3 it would be either phased out or the flood irrigation system would be repaired.

Comment 1003: Impacts on specific vegetation (such as aspen and willow)

Comment 1003: Concern about impacts on vegetation such as aspen and willow communities.

Response 1003: Jackson elk currently degrade aspen, willow, and cottonwood communities. Effects are most pronounced along Flat Creek, where willows have nearly disappeared over time. Changes on the refuge are detailed in Smith, Cole, and Dobkin (2004). In non-feeding years under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS), elk concentrations on and near feedgrounds would be reduced, and elk would disperse more widely based on available forage. They would be less likely to remain near feeding areas and heavily browse woody vegetation communities in these areas.

Comment 1004.2: Opposition to habitat management

Comment 1004.2: Commenter opposes raising crops in Grand Teton National Park and irrigation on the National Elk Refuge.

Response 1004.2: No crops would be cultivated in Grand Teton National Park; about 4,500 acres of previously cultivated areas would be returned to native vegetation.

There is a limited amount of adequate winter range available to support the numbers of elk that have existed in Jackson Hole since the early 1900s. Producing standing forage on cultivated fields provides grazing habitat for longer periods so that the use of supplemental feed can be delayed as long as possible, thus reducing the concentration of bison and elk on the refuge. The Draft Plan/EIS proposed several options for providing winter forage on the National Elk Refuge. Under Alternative 2 cultivated fields

would be restored to native grasslands over the life of the plan. Under Alternative 3 two options would be considered, including converting cultivated areas to native communities over the life of the plan. Under Alternative 6 sprinkler and flood irrigation would be phased out if bison and elk populations were successfully reduced and native forage provided adequate winter range. Under Alternative 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/EIS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service would develop a structured framework in cooperation with the Wyoming Game and Fish Department to adaptively manage bison and elk populations so that supplemental feeding could be progressively reduced by identifying prescribed levels of forage production.

VISITOR USE

Comment 3003: Impacts on recreational opportunities

Response 3003: See responses 67 (hunting), 604 and 605 (socioeconomic conditions), and 3004 (wildlife viewing).

Comment 3004: Impacts on wildlife viewing

Response 3004: While the existing feeding programs greatly increase opportunities to see elk in easily accessible areas, they also contribute to adverse effects on the wildlife herds and habitat. Although elk viewing opportunities would be more variable under the Preferred Alternative, opportunities to view elk (and possibly bison) would be plentiful. During years when feeding did not occur elk would disperse based on available forage. Elk would still be seen in smaller groups because, as herding animals, they would form these naturally.

WILDLIFE AND WILDLIFE HABITAT

Comment 4000: Specific substantive comment about wildlife and wildlife habitat

Comment 4000a: The current situation should be phased-out after several years, with feeding areas placed along current trails so that these animals can be slowly weaned from the habituated migration into Jackson Hole.

Response 4000a: Several alternatives in the Draft and Final EISs recommend support for groups

that want to encourage elk migration out of Jackson Hole to other wintering areas. However, no specific recommendations were made to make this happen because this effort is beyond the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. The agencies noted that the presence of state feedgrounds along potential migration corridors would likely attract elk and stop further movements, and that critical support from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department for establishing migration is not present.

Comment 4003: Impact to/from predators and scavengers

Comment 4003: Comments generally refer to the impacts to wolves if elk populations are reduced.

Response 4003: Wolves would continue to have an adequate elk prey base under all alternatives. Independent of this Plan/EIS, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department would continue to reduce the Jackson elk herd from its current estimate of about 13,000 elk to the state's objective of 11,000, with the herd size fluctuating around this number. Under Alternatives 2, 3, and 6 in the Draft Plan/EIS the herd would likely be reduced further in some years, but impacts to wolves would not be expected even at the low end of estimated herd sizes.

Comment 4003.1: Impacts of wolves and grizzly bears on elk

Comment 4003.1: Commenter concerned about the current decline of elk populations due to predation by wolves and grizzly bears. Discontinuing supplemental feeding could further impact the elk population.

Response 4003.1: See responses 803 and 4003.2. The 2006 population estimate for the Jackson elk herd was 12,855 (Brimeyer, pers. comm. 2005), about 2,000 elk above Wyoming Game and Fish Department's objective of 11,000 despite predation by wolves and grizzly bears. To date, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department has not adjusted harvest levels due to increased predation by wolves and grizzly bears. Wolves were killing less than 1% of the Jackson elk herd annually through 2003 (WGFD 2003). Wolf predation continues to account for mortality of less than 1% of the Jackson elk herd (Jimenez, pers. comm.

2006). Grizzly bears occur in Grand Teton National Park but have not been sighted on the National Elk Refuge since 1994 (Draft Plan/EIS, pp. 153–54). While predation on elk calves in Grand Teton National Park by grizzly bears is likely, it has not been documented, probably because calf carcasses are quickly consumed. The Draft Plan/EIS (pp. 136–40) discussed what is known about wolf predation (both summer and winter) and its effects on elk recruitment (calf-to-cow ratios) in the Jackson elk herd. A number of factors can impact elk recruitment, including drought, harvest rates, older cows, and predators, but without further research definitive conclusions cannot be made about declines in recruitment rates of elk. The Final Plan/EIS was updated to reflect the 2005 data on elk predation by wolves.

Comment 4003.2: Impacts of wolves on elk

Comment 4003.2: Concern about the impacts of wolves on the elk herd.

Response 4003.2: See responses 803 and 4003.1. The agencies believe that the risk of adverse consequences if a non-endemic disease such as chronic wasting disease became established in the herd would be much greater than the percentage of elk taken by wolves if no actions were taken to address the high numbers of concentrated elk on the feedgrounds as a result of supplemental feeding. Wolf populations have been limited due to livestock conflicts that have resulted in the killing of individual wolves or packs of wolves. Further, wolf predation is considered when the Wyoming Game and Fish Department determines how many elk should be harvested annually from the Jackson elk herd, and to date harvest levels have not been reduced.

Comment 4004: Impacts to/from wildlife migration

Comment 4004: Concern about competition with other species and cattle along migration route.

Response 4004: See response 4004.3 regarding cumulative impacts.

Comment 4004.3: Migration to native range

Comment 4004.3: Establishing migrations to native range is not realistic.

Response 4004.3: Actively establishing migrations to wintering areas outside the refuge and

the park is outside the agencies' jurisdiction. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department has responsibility for managing the state wildlife populations and is opposed to allowing migration into other areas. Under Alternatives 2 and 3 it is believed that migrations to lands outside the National Elk Refuge and Grand Teton National Park could occur, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service would actively support others in their efforts to establish migration to areas with adequate winter range. The reasonably foreseeable activities that are expected to occur in areas outside the primary analysis area were identified for a secondary analysis area. In addition to the direct and indirect effects that could occur with migrations into other areas, the cumulative impacts were also analyzed.

Comment 4005: Impacts to other species' habitats

Response 4005: The Draft Plan/EIS acknowledged the likelihood of increased competition in some areas during some years, but it is difficult to predict the extent of impacts, particularly because ungulates often differ in their habitat choices (Draft Plan/EIS, pp. 359–81). In addition, deer, moose, and bighorn sheep populations in this area have been declining for unknown reasons, and more research needs to be done to determine the causes for these declines.

Comment 4005.3: Impacts of human activity and development

Comment 4005.3: Concern about how human activity and development could affect habitat and result in loss or degradation.

Response 4005.3: The Draft Plan/EIS discussed the cumulative impacts of each alternative and population growth and private land development on the Jackson elk herd (pp. 308–9) and the bison herd (p. 342).

Comment 4005.4: Impacts from livestock grazing on public lands outside the refuge and the park

Comment 4005.4: Concern about what impacts on wildlife and wildlife habitat are caused by livestock grazing on public lands outside the boundaries of the National Elk Refuge and Grand Teton National Park.

Response 4005.4: Grazing management on public lands outside the refuge and the national park is beyond the jurisdiction of the agencies.

Comment 4005.5: Restore habitat off site

Response 4005.5: Projects to rehabilitate areas deemed critical for winter range have started. However, elk numbers are above what the available habitat can support and above the Wyoming Game and Fish Department's herd objective of 11,000. The size of the herd is gradually being reduced.

Comment 4006: Carrying capacity analysis

Comment 4006: Comment questioned the accuracy of the carrying capacity analysis.

Response 4006: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service used various information sources to evaluate impacts, including scientific literature; site-specific information on species on park, refuge, state, and national forest lands, including completed and ongoing studies, when available; and the professional judgment of park, refuge, state, and forest biologists and managers familiar with management concerns related to individual species (see "Impacts to the Jackson Elk Herd," p. 250 in the Draft Plan/EIS). Modeling exercises are not perfect because they are based on assumptions, but they can provide reasonable estimates of what could occur under given circumstances. Modeling by Hobbs et al. (2003) provided a way to assess forage use by ungulates under different winter conditions and to estimate mortality over the winter. Baseline information included vegetation and snow accumulation data, research data on how much each animal would consume daily, and the age/sex composition of the Jackson elk herd. Results from the models were used, along with the professional judgment of local biologists, long-term site-specific information on the area and its wildlife, and published research, to develop and analyze the impacts of the alternatives.

WATER RESOURCES

Comment 6000: Specific substantive comment about water resources

Comment 6000a: A sprinkler system should be purchased, and any water rights lost should be retained. The sprinkler system or dams should be

moved several times a day to cover as much ground as possible.

Response 6000a: Alternatives 4 (the Preferred Alternative in the Final Plan/ EIS), 5, and 6 would use sprinkler irrigation to meet forage production objectives. The cost of purchasing the sprinkler system was included in the budget estimate of the total cost of each alternative (Table 2-1, Draft Plan/EIS, p. 77). Also see response 503.

Comment 6002.3: Opposition to the use of sprinklers

Comment 6002.3: Commenters questioned the need for sprinkler irrigation, as the flood irrigation is adequate or could be improved by better maintenance of the ditches, without the need for purchasing additional irrigation systems.

Response 6002.3: It has been difficult to efficiently manage water on the refuge only using flood irrigation due to the porous soils, the poor condition of ditches and headgate structures, and the limited number of irrigators. Of the water that is currently being diverted annually for flood irrigation, only an estimated 5%–10% actually reaches its destination (USFWS 1998; see Draft Plan/ EIS, p. 97). Improvements to the current flood irrigation system are proposed, but it is not the most effective or efficient way to improve the quality of the forage produced. Sprinkler irrigation would allow refuge managers more flexibility in determining the amount and timing of water application, which affects the growth and nutritional value of forage. Sprinklers also increase the efficiency of irrigation by requiring less water from creeks, and fewer staff would be needed to implement the program (Draft Plan/EIS, pp. 223–27). Also see response 503.

PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

The following transcripts are for public meetings conducted on the following dates:

- Bozeman, Montana — August 29, 2005
- Jackson, Wyoming — August 30, 2005

- Riverton, Wyoming — August 31, 2005

Responses to substantive comments are included in the responses to individual comments in the previous section.

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<p>1 WHEREUPON, the following proceedings were had:</p> <p>2 MR. HUGHES: I think we are ready to get started.</p> <p>3 Let me start by welcoming all of you here. My name is</p> <p>4 Mike Hughes; I'm with an organization called the</p> <p>5 Keystone Center. And though I don't think it's going to</p> <p>6 be heavy lifting for me tonight, I'm going to act as a</p> <p>7 facilitator for tonight's meeting. And I'll say a word or</p> <p>8 two about that in just a second when we get to the public</p> <p>9 comment portion, but first, we want to start with some</p> <p>10 opening remarks from the folks who have invited you here</p> <p>11 tonight; first from the National Elk Refuge and then from</p> <p>12 the National Park Service and then back to the U.S. Fish &</p> <p>13 Wildlife Service to give you an overview of the</p> <p>14 alternatives and kind of lay the ground work.</p> <p>15 So I'm going to let those three folks sitting over</p> <p>16 there (indicating) make their opening comments and say</p> <p>17 what they have to say, and then I'll come back up and talk</p> <p>18 a little bit about the format for tonight's meeting.</p> <p>19 So, Barry, I'm going to give you the floor.</p> <p>20 MR. REISWIG: Good evening. I'm Barry Reiswig,</p> <p>21 refuge manager of the National Elk Refuge. I want to</p> <p>22 welcome you folks. I know most of you, some of you from</p> <p>23 Jackson and some of you from my former life as the refuge</p> <p>24 manager of Red Rock Lakes. I'm glad to see you all here.</p> <p>25 A little bit about the history of this project: It</p>	<p>1 started back in the late '90s. Three federal agencies and</p> <p>2 the Wyoming Game & Fish Department developed a manage-</p> <p>3 ment plan for the Jackson bison herd, and that plan was</p> <p>4 immediately litigated. There was an environmental</p> <p>5 assessment. The judge found the plan to be deficient and</p> <p>6 sent us back to the drawing board and also directed that</p> <p>7 in addition to redoing that portion about bison</p> <p>8 management, that we take a look at the feeding program on</p> <p>9 the Refuge, as well. That turned out to be a major task,</p> <p>10 which our staff has been working on jointly with</p> <p>11 Grand Teton National Park for about the last four years.</p> <p>12 The product, of course, is the draft that you see before</p> <p>13 you.</p> <p>14 As the issue has gone on, we are finding that the</p> <p>15 disease situation that we're facing at the Elk Refuge is</p> <p>16 becoming more compelling all the time. Certainly, the</p> <p>17 brucellosis issue, which is no stranger to this end of the</p> <p>18 ecosystem, is, in its own way, a major issue in the</p> <p>19 southern end of the GYA. We are also faced with the</p> <p>20 specter of chronic wasting disease, which is now less than</p> <p>21 200 miles from the refuge boundary. Obviously, we are</p> <p>22 very concerned about the impacts of CWD reaching the</p> <p>23 National Elk Refuge.</p> <p>24 We've developed six alternatives, which Laurie is</p> <p>25 going to outline here briefly in a couple of minutes. The</p>																										

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<p>1 Department has selected the Alternative 4 as our proposed 2 action. I'm not going to talk at length about that, but 3 I'll just say that in this comment period, we will leave 4 it to you folks to judge how well this alternative deals 5 with the disease issues that we are going to face. 6 There's no question, from my perspective, that the disease 7 issue thing has really become a big deal in the future of 8 the National Elk Refuge. It's something that we take very 9 seriously. We're very concerned about it. It could have 10 some very devastating impacts if we don't do our best to 11 deal with it. 12 So with that, I will turn this over to my colleague 13 from Grand Teton National Park. 14 Thank you. 15 MS. CONSOLO-MURPHY: I'm Sue Consolo-Murphy. 16 I'm the chief of science and resource management at 17 Grand Teton National Park and am here on behalf of the 18 superintendent of the park. 19 Following up on what Barry said a little bit, of 20 course, there is a very long history, obviously, with elk 21 particularly associated in Jackson Hole and with 22 Grand Teton National Park. And I suppose it's -- you 23 know, if there is a so-called iconic species for 24 Grand Teton, most people would probably think it was elk. 25 The elk and bison both have always been popular and are</p>	<p>1 even increasingly so, you know, to our many visitors, 2 which generally top about two-and-a-half million a year. 3 One of the economic studies that's cited in the 4 bison-elk EIS tried to estimate, capture the economic 5 value or impact of visitation to Grand Teton National 6 Park; and Jackson Hole, but the vast majority of visitors, 7 91 percent or more, who come to Jackson Hole say they are 8 there to visit the park, as a high-priority attraction. 9 And they, based on several-years-ago data even, spend an 10 average of \$83 a day per person, which calculates out to 11 an annual contribution to the economy of almost 12 \$600 million. This is substantial, in Wyoming or anywhere 13 else. And a lot of that is associated with the attraction 14 that the park provides in terms of wildlife viewing 15 opportunities. 16 Laurie will talk about the major objectives of the 17 plan, but we are certainly concerned about the 18 sustainability of the economy, of the visitor attraction, 19 and the wildlife populations there that are so integral to 20 Jackson Hole and the experience of visiting the park. And 21 again, with the range of alternatives, we have hopes to 22 achieve sustainability across multiple spectrums related 23 to bison and elk. 24 So we encourage your participation tonight, your 25 sharing with us your issues, concerns, comments about this</p>
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<p>1 plan. And Laurie will talk to you about multiple ways of 2 doing that. If you don't feel willing or interested in 3 speaking tonight, you know, there are other ways to 4 provide your comments, but we're here to mostly listen to 5 you. So I hope you will share honestly with us what 6 you're thinking and feeling tonight. 7 MR. HUGHES: Thanks, Sue. 8 MS. SHANNON: And I'm Laurie Shannon; I'm with 9 the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and I'm the project 10 manager for this project. I've been asked to give a five 11 or ten-minute overview of the alternatives. And if any of 12 you have looked at our document and looked at the 13 alternatives, you know that there is a lot of information 14 there. So trying to put it into five minutes for you all, 15 I recognize that you all will still have a lot of 16 questions, not sure you quite get it, because I've been on 17 this project about a year and it's just been a crash 18 course. So I would encourage you -- As Sue said, we are 19 here to listen to you tonight. After you've heard the 20 public comments and after the meeting is over, if you want 21 to talk to us, we're more than willing to do that. If you 22 want to look on our website, if you want to call me or 23 call any of our planning staff, those are all ways you can 24 get additional information. 25 The six alternatives were basically based on</p>	<p>1 four goals that were set for the project, and those goals 2 came out of public meetings that occurred back in 2001, 3 what we call the scoping meetings. There were about 4 18 scoping meetings that were held on this project, and 5 part of the alternatives were based on a lot of that 6 information, as well as our own agency's legal directives 7 and our mission and all those sort of legal kinds of 8 things. Those four goals are pretty straightforward and 9 easy. 10 The first one is habitat conservation. We think that 11 by taking care of the habitat for both bison and elk and 12 for the other species that are found on the Elk Refuge and 13 on the park, that, you know, most of our job is done. I 14 mean, you know, a lot of our work is done. And then 15 secondly, the second goal is sustainable populations; that 16 if we can have populations that we can sustain and they're 17 healthy, in the long term, again, that's a goal that we 18 want to have. The third goal is, we want to be a partner. 19 We want to be able to contribute to the Jackson bison and 20 elk herd as a whole; we want to work with the State of 21 Wyoming in trying to meet their objectives. And fourth, 22 as Barry said, disease is a considerable concern to us, 23 and we want to be able to -- you know, over the long term, 24 our goal would be to reduce the prevalence of brucellosis 25 and also reduce the risk of sort of adverse consequences</p>

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<p>1 of non-endemic diseases getting into the herd, such as 2 chronic wasting disease. So basically, all 3 six alternatives look at those four basic goals and look 4 at various options for managing the herd in the long term. 5 I'm going to start by just kind of pointing out some 6 things that are common about all the alternatives, and 7 that way, I don't forget, I don't miss something, and 8 you'll know that they're all common elements. For 9 example, these green blobs (indicating) that you can see 10 there in Alternatives 2 through 6 are on the Grand Teton 11 National Park, and under all those alternatives, it 12 represents former agricultural lands that would be 13 converted to native vegetation under any one of those 14 scenarios. 15 Under Alternatives 4, 5, and 6, you can see there's 16 some pink spots here (indicating). That all represents 17 woody vegetation. And we have different strategies for 18 trying to protect woody vegetation on the National Elk 19 Refuge, and, you know, they vary a little bit, but that's 20 basically what that is. 21 You'll see these little circle things (indicating), 22 these little squares, the blue lines, under 23 Alternatives 4, 5, and 6. Those are where the irrigation 24 areas are, and they represent kind of different strategies 25 we have about improving the amount of forage that we</p>	<p>1 produce on the National Elk Refuge in the winter. 2 And then under Alternatives 3 and 6, you'll see this 3 red hatching down here, cross-hatching (indicating). 4 That's the southern part of the Elk Refuge where, 5 currently, in the fall, those areas are closed to hunting. 6 And we are looking at ways -- Actually, it's, I'm sorry, 7 3, 4, and 6. Typically what happens is, the elk move down 8 into the southern part of the Refuge, where they can't be 9 hunted. Under these alternatives, we are looking at ways 10 that we can move the elk out of those southern areas into 11 areas where we can have greater success, the greatest 12 harvest on them. And we are looking at different things, 13 whether we might have an early-season hunt or explore 14 perhaps whether we would have public use down in those 15 areas to, again, try and move the animals up. Under 16 Alternatives 3 and 6, there's some cross-hatching up here 17 (indicating). That represents areas that are in the 18 northern part of the Refuge, southern part of the park, 19 where we would look to maybe close those areas to hunting 20 in order that we could improve transitional use by elk of 21 some of the habitat that they're not perhaps using as well 22 as they could. 23 With that, I think I'll start with the Alternative 1, 24 and I imagine most people are already familiar with what 25 we do there. We winter up to about 7500 elk on the</p>
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<p>1 National Elk Refuge, and there's about 2500 elk that 2 summer in Grand Teton National Park. Under this 3 alternative, we don't control bison at all. We expect, by 4 the end of the planning process, that the herd will be 5 well over 1,000, and there would be no controls on bison 6 at all. 7 We feed almost on an annual basis; we use supplemental 8 feed, that is, I should say. And under this alternative, 9 Alternative 1, we would not have any kind of vaccination 10 program at all, any use of any kind of vaccine. Now, the 11 only way we do work to minimize disease concerns, and that 12 would apply under any of the alternatives where we feed, 13 is that we try to practice good management. We try to 14 feed in a different location every day, we continue feed 15 different -- four different lines, meandering, that sort 16 of thing. That would continue. 17 Alternative 2 represents sort of a philosophy of 18 trying to work over the length of the plan, which is about 19 15 years, of trying to work towards minimal management of 20 populations. And that's kind of a -- you know, minimal 21 management to the extent that you can do that. And under 22 this alternative, we would expect that as a result, you 23 would have greater fluctuations of the herd. You could 24 see as many as 1200 to 6,000 on the Elk Refuge every year, 25 depending on the winter, and you could have anywhere</p>	<p>1 between 600 and 3,000 summering in the park; we'd see 2 these big fluctuations. Bison, there would be no control 3 on bison, but we would try to use some fertility control 4 on bison, at least in the short term, to bring the herd 5 down to maybe in the 250 to 500 range. Elk reduction, 6 we'd also eliminate all hunting of elk on the Elk Refuge 7 or Grand Teton National Park. We would phase out feeding 8 over 15 years, and there would be no use of vaccines at 9 all. 10 One thing I forgot to mention, under both this 11 Alternative 2 and 3, these red arrows (indicating), we 12 recognize, under these two alternatives, that there could 13 be movement off the Elk Refuge in the wintertime. And 14 while we have no -- You know, if they do move off the 15 Elk Refuge in the winter, we have no jurisdiction over 16 supporting that or not supporting that. There are 17 certainly some stakeholders that would like to see elk be 18 able to migrate to other areas. All we're saying in these 19 two alternatives is that we would support others in their 20 efforts, but we have no decision -- we have no ability to 21 make that kind of decision in this planning effort. 22 Alternative 3, I kind of liken to the basic ideas that 23 you would reduce the numbers of elk on the Elk Refuge to a 24 point where you could also improve the utilization of 25 forage where we would only need to feed -- use</p>

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<p>1 supplemental feed in the severest of winters. And just as 2 an example, you might see 1 to 2,000 elk, in the long 3 term, on the Elk Refuge in the wintertime and 500 to 1,000 4 in the park, summering in the park. We would institute a 5 bison hunt. We would maintain the herd about where it is 6 right now or where we think it will be by the end of the 7 planning process. We would continue with the elk hunt on 8 the Refuge in the Grand Teton National Park. We call it a 9 reduction in the park. Vaccination, we would only allow 10 for vaccinations to be used when there is at least 11 50 percent efficacy found. I think that's the main things 12 there.</p> <p>13 I'm going to come back to Alternative 4, because that 14 is the proposed action and I know a lot of people are 15 focused on it. So very quickly, I want to talk a little 16 bit about 5 and then a little bit about 6. Alternative 5 17 has a lot of similarities to 1 in terms of the numbers of 18 elk that we would expect to be wintering on the 19 Elk Refuge, 7500, or close to it, less than 2500 summering 20 in the park. We would institute a bison hunt and bring 21 the herd down to about 400 or so. So that's the 22 difference between 1, is that there would be a hunt, we 23 would continue to have the elk hunt on the Refuge and on 24 the park lands. We would feed almost every year; nine out 25 of ten years is our estimate, that it would occur nine out</p>	<p>1 of ten years. And we would allow the State use Strain 19 2 to vaccinate elk and RB51 on bison.</p> <p>3 And then Alternative 6, the philosophy more on it is 4 really to try to emphasize adaptive management, I guess, 5 if you will; not to say that the other ones don't use 6 adaptive management, but I think a much heavier emphasis 7 on being able to adapt our management. And under this 8 alternative, this alternative phases out feeding the 9 quickest. We would phase out feeding within five years. 10 It would be a transition, it's not going to happen all 11 right away. And in the long term, we would see that you 12 would winter about 2400 to 3200 elk on the Elk Refuge and 13 1200 to 1600 in the park. We would institute a bison 14 hunt, we'd bring the herd down to about 400, continue with 15 elk hunting on the Refuge and in the park lands. And we 16 would use vaccination when we could find vaccines that 17 were greater than 50 percent efficacy on it.</p> <p>18 So that brings me to Alternative 4, the proposed 19 action. And I know a lot of people want to know, why is 20 this the proposed action? And the primary reason it is 21 because throughout this planning process, as we heard 22 early on in scoping, there's a very diverse stakeholder 23 opinion on this plan. And this alternative basically 24 takes into account the fact that there really isn't a 25 middle ground in terms of stakeholder views. They're all</p>
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<p>1 over the map. We do take into account some of the 2 economics, the economic analysis, and at the same time, we 3 feel like we need to be able to take some steps to meet 4 some of our agencies' goals and missions and those types 5 of things. And this alternative, I guess, allows us to 6 take some steps, if you will. I kind of liken it more to 7 taking some baby steps before you can get to maybe where 8 you need to get to.</p> <p>9 Under this alternative, we would reduce the number of 10 elk on the Elk Refuge to between 4 and 5,000; summering in 11 the park, between 1300 and 1600. So about 1,000 less 12 summering in the park, about. We would implement a bison 13 hunt, control the population between 450 and 500. It's 14 hard to keep all those numbers straight. And we would 15 feed in above-average winters only. We would allow the 16 State to use Strain 19 for elk, and we would allow them -- 17 or we would use RB51 when we could find a 50 percent 18 efficacy for that vaccine.</p> <p>19 So that's it in a nutshell. I know a lot of you guys 20 are, like, fading. I don't know if there's anything else 21 that I forgot to mention, but I'm going to turn it over to 22 Mike so that we have an opportunity to really hear from 23 you.</p> <p>24 MR. HUGHES: And one of the things we're going to 25 do is move these things (indicating) out of the way.</p>	<p>1 Several of the folks who did the introduction 2 mentioned that this is an environmental impact statement. 3 They've mentioned that an EIS has been written, that the 4 draft is available to you, and that that's really what 5 we're here tonight to deal with. There is something very 6 specific that these agencies need to fulfill their 7 obligations under the National Environmental Policy Act as 8 they write an environmental impact statement, so that 9 brings me to the very specific request we have of you 10 tonight.</p> <p>11 Having released a draft environmental impact 12 statement, the obligation of the agency now is to put that 13 forward for public comment and to provide you with an 14 opportunity -- and tonight is one of the primary 15 opportunities -- to provide your feedback about that. So 16 that's what we're going to do for the next little while, 17 is give you an opportunity, based on the speaker list I 18 have here, to take three minutes of your time to express 19 whatever you want to express about that document, to give 20 the agencies advice about how they can make improvements 21 to it as they move from a draft environmental impact 22 statement to a final environmental impact statement; they 23 then turn what would be described as a proposed action 24 into some final decision. Now, it may be precisely the 25 proposed action or altered in some way, perhaps even a</p>

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<p>1 different alternative, based on the kind of feedback and 2 comments and suggestions that they get. So that's the 3 opening that you have tonight, is to try to influence that 4 decision.</p> <p>5 Sue mentioned that there are lots of ways to do that, 6 and so we're not suggesting that the public comment period 7 we're about to do is the only way. You might not even 8 find it the most effective way. But we want to do that 9 formally, so we've got a court reporter here who is going 10 to take down, verbatim, your use of those three minutes so 11 that we have those comments on the record. But there are 12 lots of other ways to do it. If for some reason you 13 decide talking tonight isn't what you want to do, there 14 are lots of ways for you to provide that input. We've got 15 a flip-chart back there (indicating), and we could write 16 it down for you at a break once we finish tonight's 17 meeting. There's an e-mail address where you can turn in 18 an electronic comment. There are staff here; they were 19 for the open house, and they're going to stick around a 20 little bit when we're done here. You can talk to them and 21 make sure that those comments get in. The advantage of 22 speaking tonight and going on the record in this formal 23 way is that that becomes a formal part of the record. So 24 that's the importance of the three-minute opportunity 25 we're going to give you tonight.</p>	<p>1 Three minutes. It's kind of a small group. We could 2 easily give you six. However, we're going to Jackson 3 tomorrow, and we're probably not going to have 12; we 4 might have 10 times 12. So what we want to do is create a 5 consistent opportunity in this official public comment 6 moment, so I'm going to actually turn on the timer and 7 read down the list and give you those three minutes, just 8 as we will in Jackson, no matter how long that takes, and 9 in Riverton the night after that; we're expecting slightly 10 larger crowds. Then, again, if there are additional 11 questions that you have, once we break up the formal 12 public comment period, which we will do once I get through 13 the speaker list, you can feel free to stick around and do 14 the same. I have one speaker who was signed up for later, 15 may not be back yet, so if not, we will have the court 16 reporter stay and we'll sort of restart that three-minute 17 moment for him when he comes. But for the rest of you, 18 we're going to give you the floor.</p> <p>19 So Amy, I'm going to ask you to begin, if you would. 20 If you could come up here (indicating) just to make sure 21 that the court reporter gets it all.</p> <p>22 And then Joe Gutkoski next, Norm Bishop after that. 23 MS. McNAMARA: My name is Amy McNamara, and 24 I'm the national parks program director for the Greater 25 Yellowstone Coalition. I want to thank you all for coming</p>
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<p>1 up to Bozeman. These are national assets, and we 2 appreciate the opportunity to weigh in. And we realize 3 that Bozeman's far, but again, we're very concerned about 4 these issues.</p> <p>5 GYC, at this point, is offering preliminary comments, 6 and we will be submitting additional thoughts in writing. 7 At this point, we're supporting a modified Alternative 6, 8 which is your environmentally preferred alternative. And 9 tonight, I'm going to speak about what we'd like to see 10 and the recommendations we make.</p> <p>11 At this point, we encourage you always to be using the 12 best available science and management principles to 13 emphasize sustainable conservation of wildlife. We 14 recognize that it will require adaptive management and 15 will also require that we take efforts to manage the 16 natural habitat. We're hoping that your agencies will 17 manage for the widest possible geographic distribution of 18 big game during the winter in order to mitigate the risk 19 of transmission of disease.</p> <p>20 Also, the National Elk Refuge is only one location 21 where big game is currently being fed, but we believe that 22 the Fish & Wildlife Service and the National Park Service 23 can be leaders and hopefully influence the management of 24 others and show that it is possible to phase out 25 supplemental feeding of wildlife in Wyoming.</p>	<p>1 At this point, we're not prepared to offer what we 2 believe to be the optimal herd numbers, but are concerned 3 that 400 bison is a very small number of bison for that 4 herd and recognize at least that concern at this point.</p> <p>5 So at this point, we recommend the following: Phasing 6 out of feeding of big game in the shortest possible time 7 frame. Game numbers should be adjusted or redistributed 8 through management actions combined with natural selective 9 processes. We encourage -- strongly encourage you to 10 discontinue vaccinating elk with Strain 19. If the feed 11 grounds, all of 23 of them, are phased out, we believe 12 vaccines for elk are unnecessary. We're encouraged that 13 you're considering that the previously cultivated areas 14 within Grand Teton and the National Elk Refuge would be 15 converted as soon as possible to native plant species. We 16 also encourage you to maintain populations of big game 17 that can be regulated through a fair-chase hunt. And 18 finally, we'd like to encourage both agencies to do 19 everything possible to enhance big game migrations between 20 seasonal ranges and that actions that would lead toward 21 restoring these migration routes would receive the highest 22 priority in management decisions.</p> <p>23 Thank you for your time. 24 MS. SHANNON: Thank you. 25 MR. HUGHES: Thanks, Amy.</p>

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<p>1 Joe.</p> <p>2 MR. GUTKOSKI: My name is Joe Gutkoski, and I'm</p> <p>3 secretary of the American Buffalo Foundation.</p> <p>4 We support phasing out the feeding as soon as possible</p> <p>5 in the Jackson Refuge, and we support hunting to balance</p> <p>6 the number of animals to the available forage. We support</p> <p>7 the acquisition of additional winter range in the area,</p> <p>8 and that would be the responsibility both of the Refuge</p> <p>9 and the National Forest Service and the Park Service.</p> <p>10 And as far as disease, brucellosis, I think, will</p> <p>11 eventually work its way out of the system if the animals</p> <p>12 become dispersed year-round, both in the winter range and</p> <p>13 in the summer range. An extensive vaccination program,</p> <p>14 that's okay if you want to feel like you're doing</p> <p>15 something, but it's throwing money away.</p> <p>16 Let's see, I had a question about phasing out. I</p> <p>17 just -- In my own mind, phasing out feeding, I can't get</p> <p>18 in my mind whether cold turkey is best or phasing out,</p> <p>19 maybe just feeding on heavy snow years. And they are</p> <p>20 probably becoming more scarce because of global warming.</p> <p>21 Phasing out, you know, if you put out a little bit of</p> <p>22 feed, just as many animals are going to show up, and</p> <p>23 they'll eat what you put out and they'll hang around. So</p> <p>24 it's possible that cold turkey would be the cheapest way</p> <p>25 to go.</p>	<p>1 Thank you.</p> <p>2 MR. HUGHES: Thanks, Joe.</p> <p>3 MS. SHANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>4 MR. HUGHES: Norm.</p> <p>5 MR. BISHOP: Thanks so much for the opportunity</p> <p>6 to comment. I'm Norm Bishop; I live here in Bozeman.</p> <p>7 I retired in 1997 after 36 years of interpreting</p> <p>8 natural systems in national parks. From 1980 to 1997, I</p> <p>9 was a resource manager and interpreter in Yellowstone</p> <p>10 National Park. In the last 12 years I served in</p> <p>11 Yellowstone, my main job was educating the public about</p> <p>12 wolf restoration. I am the Greater Yellowstone field</p> <p>13 representative for the International Wolf Center, and I</p> <p>14 serve on the board of the Wolf Recovery Foundation of</p> <p>15 Idaho -- of Pocatello.</p> <p>16 I was struck -- By the way, if you want my technical</p> <p>17 comments, just ditto Joe and Amy, and you're pretty well</p> <p>18 there. But I was struck, in reading the Draft Bison and</p> <p>19 Elk Plan and EIS, by the similarities of issues today with</p> <p>20 those of earlier days, so I thought I'd limit my comments</p> <p>21 to those things. In 1913, one year after the National Elk</p> <p>22 Refuge was established, Aldo Leopold, then supervisor of</p> <p>23 the Carson National Forest in New Mexico, was recuperating</p> <p>24 from nephritis -- that's kidney disease -- in Iowa. He</p> <p>25 wrote to his staff on the forest, "I here offer a 66 foot</p>
<p>1 chain wherewith to measure our progress. My measure is,"</p> <p>2 and this is in caps, "THE EFFECT ON THE FOREST." By</p> <p>3 "forest," he meant all the resources: Timber, water,</p> <p>4 forage, farm, recreative, game, fish, and esthetic</p> <p>5 resources. Today, we might add several developing</p> <p>6 concepts to Leopold's list: Natural processes,</p> <p>7 biodiversity, and functionality of trophic systems.</p> <p>8 In a later essay, "The Land Ethic," Leopold proposed a</p> <p>9 standard for a land ethic. He wrote, "quit thinking about</p> <p>10 decent land-use solely as an economic problem. Examine</p> <p>11 each question in terms of what is ethically and</p> <p>12 esthetically right, as well as what is economically</p> <p>13 expedient. A thing is right when it tends to preserve the</p> <p>14 integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community.</p> <p>15 It is wrong when it tends otherwise."</p> <p>16 I'll offer further specific comments on the Plan and</p> <p>17 EIS in writing. Generally, I favor Alternative 6, because</p> <p>18 it most closely meets Leopold's measure of affecting the</p> <p>19 land community most positively. Alternative 6 appears</p> <p>20 most likely to preserve the integrity, stability, and</p> <p>21 beauty of the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem.</p> <p>22 I hope bison will be managed as native wildlife and</p> <p>23 that enough large carnivores, including wolves, will be</p> <p>24 allowed to recover their functionality in the southern</p> <p>25 half of Greater Yellowstone.</p>	<p>1 Thanks.</p> <p>2 MS. SHANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>3 MR. REISWIG: Thank you.</p> <p>4 MR. HUGHES: Anyone else want three minutes while</p> <p>5 we've got them?</p> <p>6 (No response.)</p> <p>7 MR. HUGHES: Okay. Then what we'll do is end</p> <p>8 this portion. Obviously, again, staff are here, able to</p> <p>9 answer questions, take comments, have more conversation</p> <p>10 with you in depth.</p> <p>11 Written comments: A couple of the speakers mentioned</p> <p>12 providing those comments in writing. There is a public</p> <p>13 comment period, which is open through --</p> <p>14 MS. SHANNON: November 7th. It's been extended.</p> <p>15 MR. HUGHES: So November 7th, you've got a</p> <p>16 deadline for written comments. The two agencies welcome</p> <p>17 those comments in writing, as well. Those become a part</p> <p>18 of the record in the same way as the recorded comments do</p> <p>19 here tonight.</p> <p>20 MR. REISWIG: I'd like to just introduce a couple</p> <p>21 of staff. The folks who worked on this process,</p> <p>22 Joanna Behrens, Carol Cunningham, if you could identify</p> <p>23 yourselves there. We also have Steve Cain with us, a</p> <p>24 biologist from Grand Teton Park, back in the director's</p> <p>25 chair. And we also have with us tonight Dr. Tom Rowe. He</p>

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<p>1 is a veterinarian with Fish & Wildlife Service. He has 2 worked on disease issues on elk and bison, both at this 3 end of the ecosystem and the other end. If you have any 4 technical questions about brucellosis, CWD, or other 5 diseases that elk carry at the Elk Refuge, he is an 6 excellent source of information. 7 So I just wanted to make sure that you knew that there 8 were other folks out there with technical expertise. 9 MR. HUGHES: So unless we get other speakers who 10 sign up, which will cause, of course, us to reopen the 11 three-minute portion of this, we'll give you a chance to 12 talk with one another, ask other the questions, and you're 13 free to go if you want. 14 (A recess was taken at approximately 7:20 p.m., and 15 the public hearing resumed at 8 o'clock p.m.) 16 MR. HUGHES: For those of you who weren't here a 17 little bit earlier, we opened the formal public hearing 18 portion of tonight and ran through the list of those who 19 were present, gave everybody a chance to take off, and now 20 we will reopen it so you get the opportunity to have the 21 same three minutes that each of them had. 22 Let me first give these three people the opportunity 23 to introduce themselves so you know who it is that you're 24 addressing, and then we'll give you three minutes to 25 address yourself to them and to the content of the draft.</p>	<p>1 Any comments you have, any advice you have, any places 2 where you want to call their attention to some piece of 3 information or some preference you have, we'll give you a 4 chance to do that. 5 MS. SHANNON: I just want to mention, since they 6 weren't here earlier, even though this has been a small 7 group here tonight, we have limited -- to be consistent at 8 all meetings, we've limited everyone's remarks to 9 three minutes so that we could be fair no matter where we 10 went. 11 MR. HUGHES: And this obviously is only one means 12 of providing comment, so we're going to give everybody in 13 the public hearings the same three minutes, but lots of 14 ways for you to make your comments. You can send them in 15 electronically. There's a written comment period that 16 closes November 7th. 17 So, again, let's do some introductions, and then we'll 18 continue. 19 MR. REISWIG: I'm Barry Reiswig; I'm from the 20 National Elk Refuge. 21 MS. CONSOLO-MURPHY: I'm Sue Consolo-Murphy; 22 I'm the chief of science and resource management at 23 Grand Teton National Park. 24 MS. SHANNON: And I am Laurie Shannon; I'm with 25 the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and I'm the project</p>
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<p>1 manager for this planning process. 2 MR. HUGHES: As you can see, we have a court 3 reporter here so that we capture all of it. So I'd ask 4 each of the speakers to come up here (indicating), and 5 that way, you can look at the three of them and look at 6 the court reporter and make sure that she's getting 7 everything. And I'll give you a one-minute heads-up. 8 MR. STEVENS: Hi, my name is Tim Stevens; I'm the 9 Yellowstone program manager for the National Parks 10 Conservation Association, out of Livingston, Montana. 11 NPCA is a national parks protection organization with 12 300,000 members nationwide. And here out of the Northern 13 Rockies Office, we have the Yellowstone Program, we also 14 have the Grand Teton field office. So tonight will 15 constitute a part of these EIS comments, and you'll also 16 hear verbal comments from our Jackson field office 17 tomorrow, and then we will submit more exhaustive 18 comments -- written comments before the end of the comment 19 period. So I thank you for this opportunity to give a 20 quick overview of NPCA and our focus on this issue. 21 First of all, overall, NPCA is concerned and committed 22 to make sure that we have a healthy, abundant, 23 well-distributed population of elk and bison in the 24 southern half of the GYE. We believe that decisions that 25 are made in the National Elk Refuge and Grand Teton</p>	<p>1 National Park will certainly drive future decisions up 2 here in the northern end, so therefore, it affects the 3 entire ecosystem. 4 We are most concerned about the spread of disease and 5 the potential point source that the feed grounds can serve 6 as a point source to spread disease. As science has 7 shown, that's an area of most concern. So really, what we 8 would like to see is a well-distributed population that 9 would potentially reduce transmission of disease. As 10 such, NPCA supports a modified Alternative 6. The 11 particular points that we find intriguing about 12 Alternative 6 that we support, it acknowledges that the 13 feed ground conditions need to be phased out; second, it 14 transitions elk and bison to native range while protecting 15 healthy hunting economies and ranching economies; and 16 third, it restores the 4500 acres of agricultural land in 17 Grand Teton National Park. 18 In addition, what we would like to see in terms of 19 modifications -- and again, we'll expand on these in our 20 comments -- are four points in terms of modifying the 21 alternative to improve it that we believe will lead to a 22 healthy population of elk and bison. Those will include 23 dispersing the elk and bison by giving highest priority 24 restoration of phase-out of the feed grounds. Second is 25 to begin that phase-out in the shortest possible time</p>

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<p>1 frame and also restoring traditional winter ranges and 2 existing migration routes. Third is research on more 3 effective vaccines before vaccines are more aggressively 4 applied in the field. And fourth is that bison numbers 5 should be managed, not at some artificially low floor, but 6 actually at a higher level, somewhat higher than the floor 7 or ceiling of 400. So bison numbers should be managed 8 based on the carrying capacity of the land and not some 9 artificially low number.</p> <p>10 I'll just close out by saying that we support a vision 11 that maintains an abundant, well-distributed population of 12 elk and bison, and we look forward to working with the 13 Park Service and the Fish & Wildlife Service to achieve 14 that goal.</p> <p>15 Thanks very much.</p> <p>16 MS. SHANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>17 MR. HUGHES: Bob.</p> <p>18 MR. WHARFF: Some of you probably have already 19 seen this (indicating). I'm Bob Wharff, the executive 20 director of Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife in Wyoming. 21 This is a summary of the Roby report. I didn't bring the 22 lengthy document. This summarizes some of the stuff he 23 did.</p> <p>24 I happen to have been on the brucellosis task force 25 the Governor appointed. We've dealt quite a bit with some</p>	<p>1 of the factors that you guys are addressing with the 2 Bison-Elk EIS, and I can tell you that our group has some 3 concerns with, I guess the priorities. We have an 4 elk refuge that was initially set up for the preservation 5 of elk. We had bison that showed up there; they began to 6 proliferate. They've gotten well beyond what originally 7 was the desired number of bison in that area. I can 8 appreciate the fact that everybody wants to have more; 9 however, I think it's important that we recognize what the 10 original purpose of the Elk Refuge was and that we try to 11 maintain that.</p> <p>12 I'm fairly confident that our group is going to put in 13 a formal recommendation that you go with Alternative 5. 14 That's the alternative that pretty much leaves the elk 15 numbers where they currently are, leaves pretty much 16 everything in place with the exception that it does call 17 for a substantial reduction in the number of bison. Some 18 of the reasons for that, obviously, you know, we're 19 concerned about brucellosis and the impacts it's had in 20 our state. However, I think more could be done.</p> <p>21 The Elk Refuge actually provides quite a bit of area 22 that you could feed those elk and spread them out over a 23 greater distance over a period of time, and I think you're 24 probably better off to maintain that feed, make sure that 25 they have ample feed available to them. One of the</p>
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<p>1 factors that is going to make those animals more 2 susceptible to all the diseases that are out there that 3 everybody keeps talking about is stress. They are just 4 like us; as long as we're healthy and in good condition, 5 our immune system will keep most of those bugs at bay. 6 When you start stressing those individuals, they are going 7 to become more susceptible to those diseases that are out 8 there. So I guess I would argue that you're better off to 9 feed them a full diet and make sure that their energy 10 demands are being met.</p> <p>11 In addition, one of the concerns that we have with the 12 cessation of feeding that some groups and organizations 13 have proposed or supported is the fact that we do have a 14 disease issue, that being brucellosis, and just stopping 15 the feeding of these animals will actually cause them to 16 disperse and has the potential to actually spread the 17 disease rather than contain the disease. And I think 18 right now, the State of Wyoming is going to try some 19 test-and-slaughter techniques that Idaho has been trying, 20 somewhat with success; not on the scale that Wyoming is 21 going to do. And I think it would be beneficial to wait 22 and see if, in fact, we are able to successfully remove 23 brucellosis from that population.</p> <p>24 Because the problem isn't necessarily that we're 25 feeding elk. The problem is that they were infected. And</p>	<p>1 the truth is, if we can get the disease out of the 2 population out of that reservoir, there's no reason not to 3 feed them. I happen to have run a feed ground for 4 10 years in Utah. We never, ever had brucellosis there. 5 And because we've never had it, it's never been an issue. 6 The State of Utah maintains a feed ground. It's not the 7 fact that we're feeding them that's the issue. The issue 8 is, these animals became infected, and we've got to figure 9 out a solution to deal with that infection.</p> <p>10 So I guess our group is probably going to come down 11 with a recommendation that you go with Alternative 5, 12 mainly because it allows us to maintain the elk, which the 13 Refuge was initially was intended for, and it still, I 14 think, will provide us a means. Hopefully, we can get an 15 MOU worked out between the states that will allow us to 16 further address brucellosis in a manner that doesn't 17 require us to eliminate all our elk populations.</p> <p>18 Thank you for your time.</p> <p>19 MS. SHANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>20 MR. HUGHES: Clark.</p> <p>21 MR. ALLAN: I'm Clark Allan; I'm with the Wyoming 22 Game & Fish Commission, although the commission hasn't 23 had an opportunity to meet and discuss this and take an 24 official position. So I guess I'm speaking largely for 25 myself today, but I have talked to Terry Cleveland and</p>

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<p>1 people in the Game & Fish and have a pretty good idea how 2 some of them feel about this.</p> <p>3 One comment I'd like to make: We need to remember the 4 purpose of the Refuge and why it was started. It was 5 started because we took the winter range away from the 6 elk. We had a lot of winter range, we had a lot of elk in 7 Jackson Hole before the people came in and altered that 8 ecosystem. And because we altered it, we had to provide 9 them an alternate way to live through the winter or lose 10 the elk. And that's where the Refuge came from.</p> <p>11 But it wasn't just to preserve the elk. One of the 12 driving forces was to separate the elk from the ranches 13 and the cattle and avoid the conflicts that come with 14 that. A lot of problems have been avoided over the years, 15 and that really worked well for a lot of years; 60, 16 70 years, it worked well. The current management, which 17 is pushing toward some of these alternatives, has been to 18 hold off feeding the elk until the very last possible 19 moment to encourage the elk to disperse both on and off 20 the Refuge. I believe that that's a lot of the problem 21 right now, the reason why we're having brucellosis 22 outbreaks with cattle, because the elk have been 23 encouraged to disperse, and that's where they wind up, is 24 on the ranches. Now, we didn't have those -- We had 25 brucellosis in the elk for many years, and we didn't have</p>	<p>1 outbreaks in cattle until we started trying to force them 2 off the Refuge. The other problem we get there is the 3 competition with other animals for the winter range.</p> <p>4 We have a report that has been disseminated by 5 Garvice Roby that says that if we cease feeding that 6 northern Jackson Hole herd, we'll lose 60 percent plus of 7 our elk. Game & Fish has estimated we'll lose 75 percent 8 or more; 70 to 80 percent, I think, is what they said. So 9 we've got a lot of things going on here, but one of them 10 is the simple fact of are we going to have elk or not in 11 Jackson Hole? I think most of us want to have elk there, 12 and feeding is the only way to do it, because we've taken 13 the winter range away.</p> <p>14 The only thing that's really changed in the last 15 10 years or so that has caused the problem is we have the 16 introduction of buffalo, bison in there that has changed 17 the dynamic -- they're hard on the Refuge, hard on the 18 range -- and we've had a change in bureaucrats that run 19 the system. Those are the two things that have changed. 20 The Refuge runs fine if you take care of those two 21 problems.</p> <p>22 Game & Fish in Wyoming is charged with elk manage- 23 ment. Their objective is to have 11,000 elk in that northern 24 Jackson Hole herd. Regardless of what the Refuge does, 25 the Game & Fish isn't going to change their goals based on</p>
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<p>1 what a federal agency does.</p> <p>2 Essentially, feeding needs to be determined by winter 3 and snow conditions and the need to feed as opposed to by 4 some political decision. And I imagine that the Game & 5 Fish will probably end up pursuing the Alternative 5, or 6 supporting that.</p> <p>7 Thanks.</p> <p>8 MR. HUGHES: Steve.</p> <p>9 MR. MEADOWS: My name is Steve Meadows, and I 10 wear many hats. I'm on the Wyoming Wildlife and Natural 11 Resource Trust Fund Board; I'm also a board member of the 12 Chamber of Commerce, the local chapter chair of Sportsmen 13 for Fish & Wildlife, and a businessman in Jackson Hole, 14 Wyoming, in the lodging industry.</p> <p>15 First of all, I'd like to talk just briefly about the 16 preferred alternative, about Alternative 4. As I have 17 looked at it and analyzed it, I'm very concerned that far 18 too little attention was paid to competition with other 19 ungulate species by elk, by our most numerous ungulate 20 species, that being the elk.</p> <p>21 We are experiencing, in Jackson Hole, a crisis in 22 two ungulate populations right now, that being moose and 23 sheep, bighorn sheep. And with Alternative 4, the 24 preferred alternative, there is very little doubt in my 25 mind, and, of course, is confirmed by Garvice Roby, who</p>	<p>1 was the Game & Fish biologist who oversaw that northern 2 Jackson Hole elk herd for over 20 years, that this 3 problem, the crisis -- I mean, our moose levels are at 4 40 percent or less, 30 percent of what they were in 1990, 5 as are the sheep -- that this crisis will be exacerbated 6 by a cessation or curtailment of the feeding of elk. You 7 force the more numerous ungulate species out onto that 8 winter range, which is very limited, and the sheep get 9 driven into the ground, as do the moose.</p> <p>10 And there are those who will say that moose don't 11 feed -- moose and elk don't share winter range. Well, I 12 would refer them Murie. In 1951, he recognized that and 13 showed how a number of elk died because they caught a 14 certain -- there was a certain disease that came from 15 feeding on willows. They were feeding on willows and now 16 competing with moose in the 1950s. That, I'm sorry, is a 17 fallacious argument.</p> <p>18 I see cites in the Elk-Bison EIS. As I look at that, 19 I don't see any original research done in terms of 20 competition with other ungulate species. Everything I see 21 is 20 years old, 25 years old, 30 years old. There's no 22 original research. There has been such little attention 23 paid to that, and we've got two ungulate species in 24 crisis. I think that, to me, is a serious, serious 25 oversight.</p>

1 Secondly -- I'll be brief -- is the economics. The
 2 Chamber of Commerce, this past Wednesday, wrote a
 3 letter -- discussed this issue and wrote a letter, of
 4 which I have seen a draft copy, to you guys soundly
 5 criticizing -- roundly, rather, criticizing the lack of
 6 economic analysis in the Elk-Bison EIS and, again, the
 7 short shrift that economics was paid in terms of your
 8 research and analysis. This will have a very significant
 9 impact on the economy of Jackson Hole, in terms of image,
 10 in terms of direct dollars, in terms of -- and I could go
 11 on and on, but I don't have time. So the economics are
 12 poor.

13 And then brucellosis, it's just a potential for
 14 spreading brucellosis to the remaining livestock in the
 15 valley. And as Garvice Roby clearly states, it will
 16 happen. The first year you don't feed, you're going to
 17 have another brucellosis outbreak.

18 I support Alternative 5 because Alternative 5 would
 19 maintain a very successful program that has lasted some 75
 20 to 80 years in the valley. It has maintained an elk herd,
 21 an elk population, and seen the sheep and moose population
 22 and deer populations thrive. And to maintain our historic
 23 numbers, we must continue to feed. As it says in the Roby
 24 report, there is no available winter range that isn't
 25 being utilized by an ungulate species. If you wish to

1 force the elk out, then they will replace those who were
 2 there originally, they will out-compete. And that's the
 3 bottom line.

4 MR. HUGHES: Okay. As we did before, we'll end
 5 the formal portion of this. We are going to stick around
 6 on the possibility that we might get some other speakers
 7 who are going to come. So that gives you a chance -- If
 8 you have other questions, want to strike up a conversation
 9 with the staff, this gives you a few minutes to do that.

10 (A recess was taken at 8:17 p.m.)
 11 (The proceedings were concluded at 8:30 p.m.)

COURT REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

STATE OF MONTANA)

ss.

COUNTY OF LEWIS AND CLARK)

I, CHERYL ROMSA, Court Reporter, Notary Public in
 and for the County of Lewis and Clark, State of Montana,
 do hereby certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were reported by
 me in shorthand and later transcribed into typewriting;
 and that the -38- pages contain a true record of the
 proceedings to the best of my ability.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
 and affixed my notarial seal this 7th day of September
 2005.

CHERYL A. ROMSA
 Court Reporter - Notary Public
 My Commission Expires 8/4/2007

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> PUBLIC COMMENT DRAFT BISON AND ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 30 August 2005 Jackson, Wyoming USA </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"> BUNN & ASSOCIATES Registered Professional Reporters Worldwide Post Office Box 297 310 South Main Street Lusk, Wyoming 82225 USA In USA 1-800-435-2468 Worldwide 001-307-334-2423 Worldwide Telefax 001-307-334-2433 E-mail: BUNNORLDWIDE@aol.com </p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p> APPEARANCES: MARY GIBSON SCOTT Superintendent Grand Teton National Park National Park Service U.S. Department of Interior Post Office Drawer 170 Moose, Wyoming 83102 USA PH 307-739-3410 FX 307-739-3440 mary_gibson_scott@nps.gov BARRY REISWIG National Elk Refuge Manager Post Office Box 510 675 East Broadway Jackson, Wyoming 83001 USA PH 307-733-9212 FX 307-733-9739 Barry_Reiswig@fws.gov LAURIE C. SHANNON Planning Team Leader National Wildlife Refuge System U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6 134 Union Boulevard Lakewood, Colorado 80228 USA PH 303-236-4317 FX 303-236-4792 laurie_shannon@fws.gov MICHAEL HUGHES The Keystone Center 1580 Lincoln Street Nbr 1080 Denver, Colorado 80203 USA mhughes@keystone.org </p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p> APPEARANCES (Continued): CAROL CUNNINGHAM JOANNA BARNES TOM ROWE PRESENTERS: BARRY REISWIG MARY GIBSON SCOTT LAURIE C. SHANNON ATTENDEES: Joe Albright Flat Creek Ranch Clark Allan Game & Fish Commission Ernest LaBalle Private Citizen Richard Barth NPS Joel Berger Private Citizen Doug Brimeyer Private Citizen Steve Brock USFWS NER Franz Camenzind JCH Conservation Alliance David Cheiney NRCC Bonnie Cannon Rep. Barbara Cubin's Office Eric Cole USFWS NER Jim Darwiche T.C. Commissioner Tom Darin JHCA Ray Elser Private Citizen Patty Ewing Private Citizen Margaret Flagg Society of Conservation Biology Whitney (Illegible) Casper Star Tribune Niamon Gillespie Private Citizen Mark Goecke WGFD Gigi Hallaran Conservation Alliance B.J. Hill Outfitter, Teton Wilderness Heith Hill Private Citizen John Hoggan Jackson Hole Wildlife Company Bernard Holz WGFD Robert Hoskins Dubois Wildlife Stan Hunter Private Citizen </p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p> APPEARANCES (Continued): ATTEENDEES (Continued): Rebecca Huntington JH News and Guide Lou Iverson USFWS Becky Johns Private Citizen Gus Johnson Private Citizen Susan Johnson Teton County Planning Larry Jorgenson Teton County Commissioner Louise Lasky Citizen Lynne Koontz USGS Marcia Kunstel JHCA (Illegible) Outfitter Lael Lindstrand Private Citizen Amy Lerch Private Citizen Tony Ligeki Private Citizen Lynn Madsen Private Citizen Page McNeill Private Citizen Tim Meehan Private Citizen Shane Moore Private Citizen Dale Petersen Private Citizen Charleen N. Petersen Private Citizen Lorna Miller Private Citizen Shane Moore Private Citizen Pam Pauline U.S. Senator Craig Thomas' Office Marianne Randell JHCA Chad Ridgway Private Citizen Steve Robertson Private Citizen Linda Rome Grand Circle Tours Lyn Shanaghy Sen. Mike Enzi's Office Sandy Shuptrine Private Citizen Don Singler Private Citizen Dyanne Singler NWF Dylan Taylor Northern Rockies Conserv. Coop. Glenn Taylor Private Citizen Meredith Taylor Wyo. Outdoor Council Harold Turner Private Citizen David Vandenberg Friends of Pathway Bob Wharff Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife Heather Wayne Bering in South </p>

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<p>1 staff members, who are going to welcome you here 2 and, and give you a bit of the history and 3 perspective at, at, both from the U.S. Fish and 4 Wildlife Service, and from the National Park 5 Service. 6 So, they're going to make some 7 opening comments and, and kind of set the context 8 for tonight's meeting. And then after those 9 introductory remarks, they're going to give the 10 floor to a member of the team who's working as 11 the Project Manager for the Environmental Impact 12 Statement, who is then going to give you an 13 introduction to these alternatives. 14 And so for those of you who did come 15 to the Open House, a little repetition. But for 16 those of you who didn't, or who haven't found 17 their way through every work in that Draft 18 Environmental Impact Statement, this will be just 19 a quick overview of the alternatives to set. 20 And then the primary purpose for 21 tonight's meeting will follow, which is to give 22 members of the public, people who have a stake in 23 the outcome of the Environmental Impact Statement</p>	<p>1 and the Decision that will follow from it, the 2 opportunity to speak on the Record and to offer 3 their, your perspective, your comments, your 4 concerns about the Draft. And the purpose for 5 doing that is so that moving from a Draft 6 Environmental Impact Statement to a Final 7 Environmental Impact Statement, that document can 8 be improved. 9 And so that's the reason to have you 10 come here tonight to give your perspective, your 11 input, your thoughts, so that the best document 12 can come out from the other side once we go from 13 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to a 14 Final. So, all the comments that you make 15 tonight will, will get close scrutiny and will be 16 reviewed, and will go into consideration of what 17 the Final Environmental Impact Statement will 18 say, and usually what the Final Decision will be. 19 How are we going to do that? We have 20 a whole series of public meetings. 21 And what we'll want to do is have a 22 consistent opportunity for people to speak on the 23 public Record at these meetings. And to do that,</p>
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<p>1 given that some of these meetings are going to be 2 large and some are going to be small, we'll be 3 adding time or taking time away, depending on the 4 size of the crowd. 5 So, I'm going to give everybody three 6 minutes. And I'll, as you get an opportunity to 7 speak three minutes to the folks who will be 8 making this decision, I'll be letting you know 9 when you've got a minute, 30 seconds, and when 10 you need to end your comments. 11 That happens so you can take full 12 advantage of your three minutes. We're going to 13 ask everybody else in the room to be respectful 14 of what you have to say, even if they disagree 15 with it. 16 So, that means when somebody else is 17 up here giving their opinion, I'm going to ask 18 that you withhold any comment that you have from 19 out here, whether you agree. So clapping, 20 booing, standing up and scolding, you should 21 avoid all that stuff so people can get their full 22 three minutes. 23 And then we're going to ask that</p>	<p>1 everyone else give you that same respect when 2 it's your turn, to give you three minutes so you 3 can speak without interruption and without 4 reservation. One of the things that's true about 5 public speaking, though it's not true for me, is 6 that that's a, very stressful, the opportunity 7 for people. 8 And we're going to give you the full 9 benefit of the full three minutes. I have a 10 sign-up sheet, and I'm going to run down from the 11 top to the bottom, giving people a chance to 12 speak and make their comments. 13 And then we're going to continue to 14 take sign-ups. So, if you didn't put your name 15 on the list, and you still find that you want to 16 speak, or you're prompted to speak once you hear 17 other people take their turn, feel free to do 18 that. 19 And we'll, we'll take sign-ups 20 throughout the evening. At the end of those 21 public comments, then I'm going to give the floor 22 back to the Record Manager to summarize what he 23 believes to have heard, and to answer some of the</p>

Page 13	<p>1 questions that came, if that's possible, although 2 often you can't get the answer. 3 You have to wait until the analysis 4 is done, and the consideration is given to the 5 question you raised. And it gets answered in the 6 translation from the Draft to the Final; and then 7 to offer any final information that he might have 8 to clarify some of the things that he's heard at 9 this time. 10 So, that will be the last part of 11 this. At the end of that, what we have been 12 doing for these public meetings is asking the 13 staff and the consultants who were working on 14 the, on the Environmental Impact Statement to 15 stick around so there can be some opportunity for 16 you to ask some clarifying questions, speak with 17 the decision-makers. 18 So, that's kind of the flow. Some 19 introductory remarks; give you the alternatives. 20 Three minutes apiece in public 21 comment, and then we'll end the public hearing 22 part and take just a few minutes informally for 23 you to speak with the staff.</p>	Page 14	<p>1 And so with that, let me give the 2 floor first to Barry, with U.S. Fish and 3 Wildlife. He's the National, Manager for the 4 National Elk Refuge. 5 So, you can make some opening 6 remarks. 7 MR. REISWIG: All right. I just want 8 to introduce a couple of folks. 9 Couple of folks who have done a lot 10 of work on the EIS, Carol Cunningham -- Stand up; 11 Joanna Barnes. The document was written and put 12 together by those two individuals. 13 We also have with us tonight Dr. Tom 14 Rowe. Tom is a veterinarian with the Fish and 15 Wildlife Service. 16 He has worked extensively on 17 Brucellosis issues, both at the north end of the 18 ecosystem in the Gardiner area, and down here as 19 well. He's also very familiar with some of the 20 ins and outs of Chronic Wasting Disease, and he 21 has worked on that issue extensively in a number 22 of states where that disease is prevalent. 23 Just a little bit about the history</p>
Page 15	<p>1 of this process. How do we get to this point? 2 It all started out a number of years ago 3 when we completed an Environmental Assessment 4 on bison management. When I say "we," that was 5 the Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the 6 Forest Service, and the Game and Fish Service. 7 That Environmental Assessment was 8 litigated. It was found to be insufficient, and 9 we were sent back to re-do it. 10 Additionally, the Court also directed 11 us to evaluate the feeding program on the Refuge, 12 which became a much larger part of the job than 13 the initial condition with the bison. So we've 14 been working with that for a number of years to 15 get to this point where the Draft is up for 16 comment. 17 Over the years we've had some 18 changing conditions. Several disease issues have 19 become more prominent. 20 Of course, the Brucellosis issue is 21 still with us, and one that was not a major 22 factor when we first started, Chronic Wasting 23 Disease, which seems to be steadily marching</p>	Page 16	<p>1 across the landscape as we speak. 2 So, with that, I will turn this over 3 to Mary. 4 MS. SCOTT: Thanks, Barry. 5 Just a little bit of introduction, as 6 well. We have in the audience Cecilia Murphy 7 (phonetic), who has, who has helped us to achieve 8 much science resource, as well as David Cheiney, 9 who is our Senior Wildlife Biologist in the Park. 10 So, if you have any questions 11 afterwards, or during this discussion, I'm sure 12 we can help you out. You know, this is really 13 critical to the future management of these 14 important species of wildlife, both bison and 15 elk, at Grand Teton National Park, and that's 16 the, the Agency that I represent in these 17 discussions. 18 And, of course, our mission is to 19 conserve resources, including wildlife, 20 unimpaired for future generations. So that's 21 sort of the context within which we manage for 22 wildlife. 23 And so the -- Our, our management</p>

Page 17	<p>1 policies also give us guidelines on managing the</p> <p>2 ecosystem levels, and also emphasizing natural</p> <p>3 abundance, diversity, and genetic integrity. And</p> <p>4 we strive not to intervene in the parks in the</p> <p>5 natural processes, although with legislation as</p> <p>6 we have in Grand Teton, we do allow for elk</p> <p>7 reduction.</p> <p>8 However, we do not have legislation</p> <p>9 that authorizes for any bison reduction. That's</p> <p>10 not within our authority, just for your</p> <p>11 information.</p> <p>12 We work with land managers, both the</p> <p>13 Forest and the Refuge, as we work on wildlife</p> <p>14 issues, the, including bison and elk. And on</p> <p>15 its -- And as you'll read in the document, if you</p> <p>16 haven't read already, in the socioeconomic</p> <p>17 analysis, wildlife viewing is one of the premier</p> <p>18 experiences that people come to Grand Teton</p> <p>19 National Park to experience.</p> <p>20 And, of course, that plays into the</p> <p>21 tourism and the economic benefit that results to</p> <p>22 this community and the economy of Wyoming. So</p> <p>23 we're interested in maintaining sustainable</p>	Page 18	<p>1 populations for future generations, and we look</p> <p>2 forward to your comment today.</p> <p>3 And we appreciate your spending your</p> <p>4 time and visiting with us here tonight. Thank</p> <p>5 you.</p> <p>6 MS. SHANNON: I'm Laurie Shannon.</p> <p>7 I'm with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'd</p> <p>8 like to welcome everybody, and thank you for</p> <p>9 coming out this evening.</p> <p>10 I'm sure you all have other things to</p> <p>11 do with your time, so the fact that you took time</p> <p>12 to come here and give us your feedback, we</p> <p>13 appreciate. I have been tasked with giving you</p> <p>14 all an overview of the alternatives in a short</p> <p>15 amount of time, in about ten or 15 minutes, and</p> <p>16 if any of you have looked at our 600-page</p> <p>17 document, you know that that's quite a challenge,</p> <p>18 because there is a lot to this document.</p> <p>19 And so my, my remarks are going to be</p> <p>20 brief, but I would encourage you that if you have</p> <p>21 questions at all at the end of what I have to say</p> <p>22 at the end of the comment period, that you stick</p> <p>23 around and talk to, talk to any of the staff,</p>
Page 19	<p>1 talk to me. You can go on line.</p> <p>2 You're going to get a copy of the</p> <p>3 document at the library. Call us; e-mail us; any</p> <p>4 of those things.</p> <p>5 We'll be glad to try to answer your</p> <p>6 questions so that you have time to make your</p> <p>7 comments, which are due on November seventh to</p> <p>8 us.</p> <p>9 Couple other things I'd like to</p> <p>10 mention, I guess, is that these -- I heard</p> <p>11 someone mention earlier, before we started, that</p> <p>12 we already had our mind made up. And I would</p> <p>13 just want to assure you that we don't.</p> <p>14 The reason that we do have a public</p> <p>15 meeting is so that we do take feedback, and we do</p> <p>16 listen to the public. So, anybody has a notion</p> <p>17 that we already have our mind made up, that's,</p> <p>18 that's not correct.</p> <p>19 In the Final Preferred Alternative,</p> <p>20 which we expect to be, hopefully, by the end of</p> <p>21 next year, we could pick the same proposed action</p> <p>22 in our, as our preferred; it could be a different</p> <p>23 one; it could be a combination. So we're here to</p>	Page 20	<p>1 listen to you.</p> <p>2 So, with that I'm going to start. If</p> <p>3 you -- Considering just --</p> <p>4 MR. HILL: Can I ask one question?</p> <p>5 MS. SHANNON: Can you wait till we're</p> <p>6 done?</p> <p>7 MR. HILL: I need to ask one</p> <p>8 question.</p> <p>9 MS. SHANNON: Can you wait till we're</p> <p>10 done?</p> <p>11 MR. HILL: Why can't I ask the one</p> <p>12 question?</p> <p>13 MS. SHANNON: Can you wait till we're</p> <p>14 done?</p> <p>15 MR. HILL: Okay, go ahead.</p> <p>16 MS. SHANNON: Thank you. I</p> <p>17 appreciate it.</p> <p>18 I'll lose my track of thought. These</p> <p>19 alternatives were based on four management goals</p> <p>20 that were, that came out of the earlier public</p> <p>21 meetings.</p> <p>22 Now, I know a lot of you all have</p> <p>23 been waiting for this Draft Plan for a long time,</p>

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<p>1 and the earlier meetings that occurred in 2001 2 really lead to what these alternatives are all 3 about. And they're based on four goals that are 4 very straightforward goals.</p> <p>5 And the other part of how those goals 6 were developed did a lot with our own legal 7 directives that we have to follow as federal 8 agencies. Those four goals are:</p> <p>9 Habitat management. We think if we 10 have healthy habitat for both bison and elk 11 populations, as well as the other critters that 12 we're, that we're responsible for, that have, you 13 know, we're, we're, we're ahead of the job.</p> <p>14 We -- The second goal is for 15 sustainable populations. We want to have healthy 16 populations for the long term.</p> <p>17 If we can do that, we've, we've 18 accomplished our goal.</p> <p>19 Our third goal is to be a partner, 20 and contribute to the State's herd objective, 21 which is at 11,029. And all of these 22 alternatives are based on that objective.</p> <p>23 And the fourth goal is, is regard, is</p>	<p>1 with regard to disease management, in that we 2 would like to be able to reduce the prevalence of 3 Brucellosis in the herd, and we would also like 4 to risk, reduce the risk of adverse consequences 5 as a result of nonendemic diseases such as 6 Chronic Wasting Disease. As most of you know, we 7 have six alternatives.</p> <p>8 I'm going to start with -- I'm going 9 to identify some of the common threads to these 10 alternatives, which will help me get through them 11 a little bit. I have a feeling that some of you 12 are very familiar with these alternatives, and 13 some of you may not be.</p> <p>14 And I apologize a little bit for the 15 light. It is a little bit bad, so I'm going 16 to -- I whipped out a fancy little laser.</p> <p>17 And if you notice, the, the, this 18 green blob on Alternatives 2 through 6, that's 19 the Grand Teton National Park. And under those 20 alternatives, we would convert some of the former 21 agricultural land to native vegetation.</p> <p>22 Also, it's a little bit hard to see, 23 but under Alternatives 4, 5, and 6, there's some</p>
Page 23	Page 24
<p>1 pink splotches. That represents woody 2 vegetation.</p> <p>3 And there's some different strategies 4 that we would implement on those alternatives to 5 protect woody vegetation. Under Alternatives 4, 6 5, and 6, you'll also notice that there's some 7 little circles and blue lines.</p> <p>8 And that represents some of the 9 irrigation systems on the Refuge, and we, how we 10 might improve how we are using sprinkler 11 irrigation or flood irrigation on the National 12 Wildlife Refuge. Under Alternatives 3, 4, and 6, 13 you see this red crosshatching in the southern 14 part of the Refuge.</p> <p>15 Under those alternatives, we would 16 try to look for a different strategy that we 17 might be able to move elk in the fall out of the 18 southern part of the Refuge into areas where we 19 could have more successful harvest rates.</p> <p>20 And then, under a couple of the alternatives, 21 we've looked at some strategies at how we might 22 increase the use of some of the transitional 23 range, and actually close some of the northern</p>	<p>1 part of the Refuge and the southern part of the 2 Park to hunting so that we could improve some of 3 the use of that range.</p> <p>4 All right, I'm going to start, and 5 then under, just under Alternatives 2 and 3, 6 these red arrows, under those two alternatives we 7 recognize that there could be some movements off 8 the Refuge in the wintertime. And the Decision 9 Area for our Management Plan is the National Elk 10 Refuge and Grand Teton National Park.</p> <p>11 We do not have the authority or the 12 jurisdiction to make decisions that are, happen 13 outside of our Refuge boundaries or the Park 14 boundaries. But, we recognize that others may 15 have interests, and trying to secure habitat in 16 other places.</p> <p>17 And under those two alternatives, we 18 would support others in their efforts. But we 19 recognize that we don't have the jurisdiction to 20 do that.</p> <p>21 I'm going to start with Alternative 22 1, which is the no-action alternative, or the 23 status-quo alternative. And I bet some of you</p>

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<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p>	<p>already know this one by heart, but as you know, we currently winter up to 7,500 elk on the Elk Refuge. There's about 2,500 elk that summer in the Park. Under the current Management Plan, we do not control bison. We expect the bison herd to be about 1,000 by the time the Plan is finished. Under this alternative, there, we would not control bison through any type of a hunt. Under this alternative, we would current-, continue to have the elk hunt on the Refuge, and herd reduction on the Park units as it's necessary. And, we would continue with the use of supplemental feed on almost an annual basis. And there would be no vegetation program in effect. We would continue to, to try to implement those management tools that try to minimize disease, the spread of disease, but there would no other vaccination program. Alternative 2 is a -- What? I guess the emphasis on this alternative is that in the</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p>	<p>long run, that we would have, work towards having a minimal management or, or emphasis on management of habitat and populations over the long term. And under this alternative we would work over 15 years to phase out feeding. It would be a transition over 15 years. We would expect that we would see great fluctuations of the elk population on the Elk Refuge and on the Park units. It could be as high as 6,000 wintering, or as low as 1,200. It could be 600 on the Park units; as high as 3,000 summering in the Park. Much greater fluctuation. We would not have hunting on either the Refuge or the Park lands. We would convert as much as we could to native vegetation, and then we would stop irrigation at all. And there would be no vaccination program. And that would be -- There's -- That's kind of the main emphasis of that. Alternative 3, I, I look at this alternative as trying to reduce the elk</p>
<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p>	<p>population and trying to improve the, the production of forage that we have right now out there, and the use of forage, and then reducing the number so that we only needed to feed in the severest of winters, which we would expect to be about two out of ten winters. Under this alternative we would, the numbers on the Elk Refuge would be as low as 1- to 2,000, and perhaps summering in the Park, 500 to 1,000. The -- We would implement a bison reduction on the, on the Elk Refuge with up to about five animals that could be taken by the Native Americans, and, but we would maintain the bison herd somewhere between 800 and 1,000. We -- As I said earlier, we would feed during severe winters only, and we will only use vaccines when we would, there could be a 50-percent efficacy for that. I'm going to skip over Alternative 4 for right now, but I'll come back to it, because I know many of you are interested in Alternative 4. And I'm going to come back to that one. Alternative 5, under this alternative</p>	<p>1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23</p>	<p>there are some similarities with Alternative 1 in terms of how many elk we would winter on the Elk Refuge in the wintertime. It would be up to 7,500; 2,500 in the Park units. Under this alternative, one major difference is that we would implement a bison reduction. We would bring the herd down to about 400. We would cooperate to have the elk hunt on the Refuge, and we would, we would have the herd reduction in the Park as necessary, as well. Feeding would be nearly annual, and we would, we would have, we would allow for vaccination with Strain 19 on elk, and RB51 on bison. And then Alternative 6 is the alternative that would look to phase out feeding the soonest. In essence, it, under this alternative, again, it would be a transition. You -- It would transition over five years, basically, to, to try to phase it out, but one of the main purposes of this alternative would be to really emphasize kind of an</p>

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<p>1 adaptive-type of management emphasis so that, you 2 know, as we learn through research or monitoring 3 or from experience that we can adapt what we 4 learn to our practices. 5 And under this alternative, if we, if 6 we could find some vaccines that were 50-percent 7 efficacy, then we would, we would adopt those 8 vaccines and use them, but not if, if we weren't 9 finding vaccine -- If we didn't have a vaccine 10 that was that type of, or that high of an 11 efficacy, we would not use it. 12 Under this one we would expect to see 13 the herd around 2,400 to 3,200 on the Elk Refuge, 14 and about 1,200 to 1,600 on the Park units. As 15 in some of the other ones, we would have a, an 16 elk herd on the Refuge, a herd reduction in the 17 Park as necessary. 18 We would allow for a, a, Native 19 Americans to take up to five of those bison. We 20 would bring them, as I think I said, the bison 21 herd down to about 400. 22 I think those are the main elements. 23 And that brings me back to Alternative 4, the</p>	<p>1 proposed -- It's a Proposed Action Alternative. 2 And I would like to say that I've 3 heard a lot of people call it our "Preferred 4 Alternative." And just -- It's kind of a 5 semantics, I guess, on words, but we do not call 6 it, we do not identify a preferred alternative 7 until we get to the Final, and it could change by 8 then. 9 So, you know, we're, we're calling it 10 "Proposed Action" so that we can hear from all of 11 you, for you to give us feedback on it. But 12 under this alternative, this alternative 13 recognizes that we have a broad perspective as 14 stakeholders in, in this planning effort. 15 And I can tell you, I've heard 16 viewpoints that are all over the map. This one 17 recognizes that we do have many stakeholder 18 perspectives, and it, it tries to balance that. 19 It tries to balance the, some of the 20 economic analysis that we conducted, and it also 21 balances with some of our own agency directives 22 and our own missions that we have to follow as 23 federal age-, agencies. Under this alternative</p>
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<p>1 we would reduce the herd size to about 4- to 2 5,000 elk on the Elk Refuge in the winter, and it 3 would, about 1,300 to 1,600 elk on the, summering 4 in the Park units. 5 Under this alternative we would feed 6 in only above-average winters, which is expected 7 to be about five out of ten winters. The bison, 8 we would implement a bison hunt and bring the 9 herd down to about 450 to 500 animals; elk hunt 10 on the Refuge per reduction on the Park units as 11 necessary; and we would allow the State to use 12 Strain 19 to vaccinate elk. 13 And when we could find a vaccine ac-, 14 -- I can't say that fast enough. -- a vaccine 15 with a 50-percent or higher efficacy for bison, 16 we would vaccinate for, for disease on, the 17 Brucellosis on bison. 18 I think that's some of the main 19 points. And with that, I'm going to turn it back 20 over to Mike and we're going to open it up and 21 hear from you. 22 MR. HUGHES: Okay, great. Thanks. 23 Do you want to just get the question</p>	<p>1 out and -- 2 MR. HILL: I want to ask her a 3 question. I wanted to -- Why, why was that first 4 meeting, which I guess was last night, held in 5 Bozeman? 6 MS. SHANNON: We had, in the earlier 7 public meeting, in the earlier public meetings 8 back in 2001, they ran, like, 18 public meetings, 9 and they had them all over the place. They had 10 meetings in Casper. 11 They had meetings in Cheyenne. And 12 some, many of those meetings they only had two or 13 three people show up. 14 When we looked at how, you know, 15 where we were going for public meetings for the 16 release of the Draft, we tried to look at, you 17 know, where we had the biggest, the most people 18 that came to the last meetings, and those three 19 areas were Riverton, Jackson, and Bozeman, 20 Montana. 21 And because of, you know, just 22 looking at that, we felt like that we would try 23 to do that. We certainly had a lot of interest</p>

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<p>1 earlier on, and that we would hold meetings up 2 there, and that's what we did. 3 Thank you. 4 MR. REISWIG: Okay. So, again, we 5 will, to get to the main purpose for tonight's 6 meeting, and that is for you to have the 7 opportunity to provide, to provide feedback on 8 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. 9 In other words, that the improvements 10 could be made, and ultimately a final 11 Environmental Impact Statement can be written. I 12 want to say before we do that that this three 13 minutes isn't your only opportunity. 14 Some people wouldn't even consider it 15 your best opportunity. Laurie referred to the 16 opportunity to make written comments by November 17 seventh, and so one of the things that I would 18 encourage you to do is put those thoughts in 19 writing and, and present something by that 20 November seventh deadline. 21 Having something in the written 22 Record in that way is a very important way to 23 ensure that your concerns go in the Record. But</p>	<p>1 obviously, you can see we're going, we're going 2 to make sure about that tonight. 3 But didn't want people to think that 4 three minutes is all you ever get. It's what we 5 want to hear now. 6 And there are lots of ways to provide 7 input, feedback, and make your concerns known. 8 For the moment, we're going to provide you a 9 chance to have three uninterrupted minutes to say 10 what you need to say about what concerns bring 11 you here: 12 What's most important to you. Which 13 alternatives you think work. 14 What questions you have about the 15 analysis. And where you think it's been, or 16 moves in the wrong direction, et cetera. 17 So, we're going to give you the 18 floor. I have got eight speakers so far, but we 19 may get more as we go. 20 So, let me identify the first four, 21 and then we'll -- Again, I've got cards with "1 22 minute," "30 seconds," and "Stop." And so I'm 23 going to sit right here</p>
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<p>1 We'll start with Shane Moore, then 2 Tim Young, then Meredith Taylor, then B.J. Hill. 3 So, Shane, I'll give you the floor. 4 Come on up. 5 And, again, I want you to direct your 6 comments to the decision-makers here. You'll 7 just state your name. 8 If you represent an organization, 9 that would be useful. Well, and here we go. 10 MR. MOORE: Hello. My name is Shane 11 Moore. 12 I appreciate the opportunity to make 13 comments here. There's been a, a great deal of 14 attention given to Brucellosis throughout the 15 planning process, as there should be. 16 This disease has significant economic 17 implications for the entire state. However, 18 there's a far more serious threat to Jackson Hole 19 elk that is literally just over the horizon, and 20 that is Chronic Wasting Disease, or CWD. 21 Nearly all experts agree that the 22 risk of CWD in the Jackson Hole herd is not a 23 question of if. It is only a question of when it</p>	<p>1 will arrive. 2 It may be next year. It may be five 3 years, ten, 20 years. 4 But there's no sound basis to think 5 that it won't arrive here relatively soon. This 6 disease is always fatal. 7 There is no resistance, and no known 8 cure. So why do I think CWD will be devastating 9 if we're still feeding elk? 10 It's known to spread quickly. The 11 captive elk are an example of this, and 12 well-documented in scientific literature. 13 When CWD is detected on game farms, 14 all animals are typically slaughtered. And 15 infection rates have ranged from 40 to 85 16 percent. 17 If you think that a feed ground is 18 not comparable to a game farm, you're right. Of 19 course, game farms concentrate animals 20 year-round, while feed-ground concentrations are 21 seasonal. 22 However, disease transmission rates 23 on feed grounds may be higher than, than game</p>

<p>Page 37</p> <p>1 farms because elk densities on feed grounds are</p> <p>2 approximately ten times greater. That's right.</p> <p>3 Feed ground densities are ten times</p> <p>4 grater than game farm densities. And we know how</p> <p>5 fast CWD spreads on game farms.</p> <p>6 Could we stop the spread by stopping</p> <p>7 feeding if CWD arrives here? No, because the</p> <p>8 incubation period for CWD is over two years, and</p> <p>9 it will be very difficult to detect when it first</p> <p>10 arrives.</p> <p>11 Since CWD is known to persist in the</p> <p>12 soil for more than five years, it will be</p> <p>13 virtually impossible to eliminate the disease if</p> <p>14 it becomes established. If we want Jackson Hole</p> <p>15 elk to survive CWD, quality habitat is the best</p> <p>16 hope.</p> <p>17 And in my opinion, supplemental</p> <p>18 feeding in the presence of CWD is our worse</p> <p>19 nightmare.</p> <p>20 Is that one minute left?</p> <p>21 MR. HUGHES: One minute left.</p> <p>22 MR. MOORE: I believe that we need to</p> <p>23 very closely watch the progression of this</p>	<p>Page 38</p> <p>1 disease toward us, and phase out feeding in a</p> <p>2 time scale that matches the movement of this</p> <p>3 disease. The current preferred alternative would</p> <p>4 make some strides toward dispersing elk on native</p> <p>5 winter range, but continuing to feed elk the</p> <p>6 approximately half the winter would not eliminate</p> <p>7 the likelihood of a serious epidemic.</p> <p>8 Recently there have been three main</p> <p>9 scientific panels assembled by the Colorado</p> <p>10 Division of Wildlife, the Wisconsin Department of</p> <p>11 Natural Resources, and the Canadian Government to</p> <p>12 advise emphasis on prudent management as far as</p> <p>13 CWD.</p> <p>14 Included on these panels are the</p> <p>15 recognized world experts on CWD. All of these</p> <p>16 panels published recommendations in strong,</p> <p>17 clear, unambiguous language that supplemental</p> <p>18 feeding should be prohibited to minimize the</p> <p>19 impacts from CWD.</p> <p>20 This disease isn't subtle, and</p> <p>21 neither were the recommendations from disease</p> <p>22 experts.</p> <p>23 Thank you.</p>
<p>Page 39</p> <p>1 MS. SHANNON: Thank you.</p> <p>2 MR. HUGHES: Okay. Tim Young,</p> <p>3 Meredith Taylor, B.J. Hill, and then Robert</p> <p>4 Hoskins.</p> <p>5 MR. YOUNG: Hello. My name is Tim</p> <p>6 Young, with the National Parks Conservation</p> <p>7 Organization.</p> <p>8 We're a national conservation</p> <p>9 organization with about 300,000 members devoted</p> <p>10 to protecting and enhancing our National Parks</p> <p>11 for present and future generations. I want to</p> <p>12 thank you for this important planning effort.</p> <p>13 And we believe this decision will</p> <p>14 drive future wildlife management for all the</p> <p>15 Greater Yellowstone, so it's very important. It</p> <p>16 does not seem the proposed action will solve the</p> <p>17 long-term disease threats to wildlife such as</p> <p>18 Brucellosis, Chronic Wasting Disease, and</p> <p>19 tuberculosis.</p> <p>20 If current management practices</p> <p>21 continue, the spread of disease among the</p> <p>22 wildlife populations in the region could reach</p> <p>23 epidemic proportions, threatening not only</p>	<p>Page 40</p> <p>1 world-class wildlife populations, but also local</p> <p>2 outfitting and ranching operations.</p> <p>3 Feed grounds that pack large elk</p> <p>4 populations artificially close harbor the</p> <p>5 greatest degree of threat for outbreaks of</p> <p>6 diseases such as CWD, which can force managers to</p> <p>7 wipe out entire infected herds. Science shows</p> <p>8 that free-ranging elk and bison on native ranges</p> <p>9 are healthier and less susceptible to disease</p> <p>10 outbreaks.</p> <p>11 My organization is still reviewing</p> <p>12 and refining our final recommendations, but at</p> <p>13 this point we're considering an improved version</p> <p>14 of Alternative 6, which acknowledges that feedlot</p> <p>15 conditions need to be phased out, carefully</p> <p>16 trans-, carefully transitioning elk and bison to</p> <p>17 native range, while protecting a healthy hunting</p> <p>18 lifestyle and economy, and restores 4,500 acres</p> <p>19 of former agricultural lands to wildlife habitat</p> <p>20 in Grand Teton Park, greatly improving the</p> <p>21 quality and quantity of elk and bison habitat.</p> <p>22 And while Alternative 6 is a start,</p> <p>23 it needs to be improved in order to protect our</p>

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<p>1 treasured wildlife populations, and protect 2 livestock producers over the long term. And some 3 of those improvements might include dispersing 4 elk and bison by giving highest priority to 5 restoration of traditional winter ranges and 6 migration routes, and protection of existing 7 migrations between seasonal ranges. 8 Begin the phaseout of feeding of big 9 game in the, the shortest possible timeframe. 10 Game numbers should be adjusted or redistributed 11 through hunting and habitat enhancements, 12 combined with natural selective processes. 13 And I think we need to get more 14 comfortable with the concept that variations are 15 natural and healthy, and that they would 16 fluctuate somewhere in the range of the Jackson 17 herd objective. We need to research more 18 effective vaccines. 19 We recommend to do that. And 20 partnerships are critical with federal and state 21 drug companies and universities, and suggest the 22 effort in Laramie recently, would like to see 23 that continue.</p>	<p>1 It was good. Also continue to 2 develop an effective, much needed test for actual 3 brucellosis infection, not just testing for 4 seropositive antibodies, since there are so many 5 false positives that result from this ineffective 6 test. 7 Bison numbers should be managed based 8 on the carrying capacity of the land, as any 9 other big-game species, not artificially 10 suppressed and managed at bare-minimum numbers 11 that could leave them vulnerable in the future. 12 We're concerned that Grand Teton, with 400 bison, 13 is a, at that bare minimum. 14 Somewhere in the range of 600 seems 15 much safer. So, to close, healthy, diverse 16 wildlife populations are one of our greatest 17 economic assets, and are an investment in our 18 region's future. 19 Careful transition is critically 20 important. It will require investment of agency 21 time. 22 It's going to take resources to help 23 all the affected parties. It won't be easy, but</p>
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<p>1 the consequences of waiting, or not doing the 2 right thing now are dire. 3 There is enough winter range to 4 support healthy herds in the range of the Jackson 5 herd objective. Yet, the proposed Management 6 Plan continues feeding too long, and threatens 7 this vital cultural and economic asset. 8 So, NPC supports this work and wishes 9 you well, and appreciates your consideration of 10 these comments. Thank you. 11 MR. HUGHES: So, the, as I do the 12 30-second one, people start talking faster. 13 So, Meredith Taylor, then B.J. Hill, 14 then Robert, then Franz. And I apologize for my 15 terrible pronunciation if I got any of those 16 wrong. 17 MS. TAYLOR: Thanks, Mike. 18 MR. HUGHES: You bet. 19 MS. TAYLOR: I'm Meredith Taylor, 20 with the Wyoming Outdoor Council, as the Wildlife 21 Coordinator. Wyoming Outdoor Council is a 22 nonprofit organization. 23 The members that range from wildlife</p>	<p>1 enthusiasts to hunters, anglers, and 2 conservationists. I'm also an outfitter, and 3 with my husband, we've run Taylor Outfitters for 4 the last 25 years in Yellowstone, Bridger-Teton, 5 and Shoshoni National Forest. 6 We have a vested interest in the 7 future of Wyoming's wildlife. I want to thank 8 you for this extraordinary effort to produce a 9 concise, or more concise, I should say, and 10 readable document. 11 Even though it's almost 600 pages 12 that are a lot to read, I appreciate the fact 13 that the team covered the issues as well as they 14 did. It's a lot to swallow. 15 Wyoming Outdoor Council agrees with 16 the main goal to restore healthy, free-ranging 17 migratory wildlife at carrying capacities on the 18 National Elk Refuge and surrounding areas. We 19 particularly appreciate the leadership of this 20 team to address the issues that stem from disease 21 and winter feeding on the basis of the Jackson 22 Hole elk herd's habitat area of the southern 23 Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.</p>

Page 45	<p>1 This herd should be managed on a</p> <p>2 landscape scale, as they migrate across</p> <p>3 Yellowstone National Park, Grand Teton, U.S.</p> <p>4 Forest Service lands, National Elk Refuge, and</p> <p>5 State lands. Wyoming Outdoor Council, it</p> <p>6 supports a modified version of Alternative 6.</p> <p>7 The modifications should agree with</p> <p>8 habitat restoration and improvement, bison and</p> <p>9 elk hunts on sustainable populations, adaptive</p> <p>10 management, and phaseout of feeding. But we do</p> <p>11 not support a vaccination with ineffective</p> <p>12 vaccines, as we've seen so far.</p> <p>13 This just becomes more animal</p> <p>14 husbandry of elk that inevitably leads to</p> <p>15 programs such as the Wyoming Game and Fish</p> <p>16 Department's misguided test-and-slaughter program</p> <p>17 that's been proposed on Muddy Creek. This gets</p> <p>18 to the issue at hand.</p> <p>19 Wyoming Outdoor Council supports a</p> <p>20 modified Alternative 6 in conjunction with our</p> <p>21 conservation process to phase out the three Gros</p> <p>22 Ventre feed grounds. In cooperation with this</p> <p>23 Plan, the Jackson Hole elk herd would be more apt</p>	Page 46	<p>1 to winter out than play musical feed grounds</p> <p>2 between Gros Ventre and National Elk Refuge.</p> <p>3 This natural dispersal would help</p> <p>4 reduce Brucellosis and other diseases in, in an</p> <p>5 effort to prevent future crises. As an</p> <p>6 outfitter, hunter, and wildlife fan, I depend on</p> <p>7 sustainable populations to hunt antelope, elk,</p> <p>8 deer, bison, moose, and Pronghorn.</p> <p>9 We also support and enjoy the large</p> <p>10 carnivores for wildlife watching as business and</p> <p>11 pleasure of our outfitting. Now is our window of</p> <p>12 opportunity to promote healthy wildlife on</p> <p>13 habitat in the Final Environmental Assessment.</p> <p>14 It's the best decision for Jackson</p> <p>15 hunters, ranchers, and most importantly, the</p> <p>16 wildlife. We urge you to move forward with the</p> <p>17 modified plan of Alternative 6, and become</p> <p>18 leaders for free-ranging migratory wildlife</p> <p>19 populations on native range.</p> <p>20 Thank you.</p> <p>21 MR. HUGHES: Okay, B.J.</p> <p>22 B.J., then Robert, Franz, and Glenn</p> <p>23 Taylor.</p>
Page 47	<p>1 MR. HILL: Well, this is an emotional</p> <p>2 deal for me. It has been since it started.</p> <p>3 I would like to say that this is not</p> <p>4 Yellowstone Park. Everybody that has come up</p> <p>5 here and testified so far is a naturalist.</p> <p>6 I guess naturalist is fine. I'm a</p> <p>7 naturalist, so to speak, but what has made</p> <p>8 Jackson Hole great is that elk herd and those</p> <p>9 Grand Tetons and our immediate ecosystem.</p> <p>10 Every time I've, I've -- For the last</p> <p>11 five to ten years someone has been trying to tear</p> <p>12 this elk herd down. And CWD pops up,</p> <p>13 tuberculosis pops up, the Brucellosis thing has</p> <p>14 popped up.</p> <p>15 Until Yellowstone Park gets rid of</p> <p>16 their diseases up there, we will never be free of</p> <p>17 them down here. And I'm not convinced that CWD</p> <p>18 is an elk disease.</p> <p>19 Secondly, our forefathers that</p> <p>20 created this thing a hundred years ago looked</p> <p>21 into the future and said this could be a great</p> <p>22 thing, and it has. It's a hundred years of, my</p> <p>23 opinion, perfection.</p>	Page 48	<p>1 It is the most, best elk scenario in</p> <p>2 the West. And every time you pick up the paper</p> <p>3 or look at anything, someone is tearing this elk</p> <p>4 herd down.</p> <p>5 It's the greatest thing that Jackson Hole's got</p> <p>6 next to the Grand Tetons. And the naturalists</p> <p>7 tear up the, the Brucellosis thing.</p> <p>8 Not one of them's got a cow. They</p> <p>9 don't know a cow from a horse.</p> <p>10 Like I said, the tuberculosis thing,</p> <p>11 they're looking into the future. The CWD, this</p> <p>12 guy gets up and testifies that it's going to come</p> <p>13 to Jackson Hole.</p> <p>14 It's been in Wyoming for 25 years</p> <p>15 from Laramie to Worland. It's still not here.</p> <p>16 I just love how everybody can see</p> <p>17 into the future on this disease thing. We have</p> <p>18 not went ahead and identified the habitat in</p> <p>19 Jackson Hole before this thing came out, and</p> <p>20 fixed the problem. And getting strict with our</p> <p>21 winter range use, and getting real technical</p> <p>22 about it, and figuring that out before we start</p> <p>23 doing all this stop the feeding in Gros Ventre</p>

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<p>1 and stop the feeding in the, in the Refuge, we're 2 back to Alternative 4. 3 Before my time's up, first of all, 4 you cannot be just feeding five years. You'll 5 starve these elk down to nothing. 6 Number two, the Feds brought in the 7 wolf. The wolf is going to hammer these elk in 8 the wintertime to the point between you guys not 9 feeding and a wolf, I'm an outfitter out of 10 Pacific Creek. 11 I live up there six months out of the 12 year. I hunt these elk three months out. 13 I guarantee, with the predations 14 that's within this country right now, that 15 there's no way you guys cannot feed for five 16 years. So, whatever you're going to do with your 17 disease thing and your habitat thing, you go 18 ahead and do it. 19 But you cannot sustain an elk herd 20 with your predations and five years of not 21 feeding them. Alternative 5 is the proposed 22 action I think we should come up with. 23 Try to figure out our habitat</p>	<p>1 scenario, and get these endangered species 2 delisted, and start getting that problem fixed. 3 Thanks for your time. 4 MR. HUGHES: Okay. 5 Robert, then Franz, then Glenn, then 6 Charlie Peterson. 7 MR. HOSKINS: My, my name is Robert 8 Hoskins. I, I'm part of the Dubois Wildlife 9 Association, across the Divide, from Dubois. 10 Dubois Wildlife Association has taken 11 a pretty strong ethical stand on this whole elk 12 issue, as when we voiced our issue with the 13 Wyoming Wildlife with the test-and-slaughter 14 program that's planned for over in Pinedale elk 15 herd. We've been working with this issue for a 16 long time. 17 I've been dealing with this for 18 almost ten years. I'd like to address my, my 19 comments more to some of the general problems 20 that I find with the Draft EIS. 21 I don't support any of the 22 alternatives. In my view, none of these 23 alternatives reduce densities of elk on the</p>
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<p>1 Refuge or the Park to the degree that will 2 prevent an epidemic of Chronic Waste Disease 3 coming into this area. 4 It's going to get here from the feed 5 grounds. It's coming up the Green River Basin. 6 It's already west of the Continental 7 Divide and in with Colorado. It's been moving up 8 through the mule deer, and it's a, going to be 9 here within five years. 10 And I think we're going to have an 11 epidemic in ten. And probably it's long on the 12 production. 13 But the issue is the densities of elk 14 on their habitat. As I said, none of these 15 alternatives takes us anywhere close to reducing 16 the densities to the degree that we can reduce 17 the risk of an epidemic. 18 Part of this is because of the faulty 19 analysis that we see all through the EIS. 20 There's a failure to understand that this problem 21 from an operational standpoint, conservation, is 22 that we are intensively managing elk and bison as 23 if they're livestock.</p>	<p>1 And as long as we continue to feed 2 and vaccinate, stick and bleed and slaughter, 3 we're going to continue to submit these elk or 4 force these elk to a disease problem. And that's 5 just pure science. 6 But I'm not a scientist, but I think 7 I understand what the problems are. We need to 8 start thinking in terms of reducing the intensity 9 of management if we're going to have a wild, 10 free-ranging herd. 11 One of the problems with the EIS is 12 that there's a, a pretty limited and inadequate 13 discussion of migration. We know that migration 14 can work. 15 The Game and Fish Department made 16 this experiment in the 1940s, where they picked 17 up elk on the Elk Refuge and took them down to 18 the Red Desert and turned them loose. That's not 19 much of an experiment, but it worked for seven 20 years. 21 They worked on this experiment, and 22 it did work. They had elk returning to Jackson 23 Hole from that experiment.</p>

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<p>1 Of course, it was killed by the Green 2 River Association in 1950, and haven't heard 3 anything from it since. So really, this Plan 4 needs to rethink its analysis.</p> <p>5 We need to start thinking, versus 6 free open management. And we need to get those 7 elk moved out on the Green River area.</p> <p>8 And as I said, it's worked before, 9 and it can work again. Thank you.</p> <p>10 MR. HUGHES: Okay. 11 Franz. 12 Franz, then Glenn, then Charlie.</p> <p>13 MR. CAMENZIND: Thank you. My name 14 is Franz Camenzind, and I'm here speaking this 15 evening on behalf of myself.</p> <p>16 This is a pretty emotional issue. I 17 didn't realize that.</p> <p>18 We're here because of a disease 19 issue, and it's Brucellosis. Brucellosis in 20 itself doesn't really debilitate the elk and the 21 bison, but the political atmosphere around it is 22 going to bring a lot of political pressure onto 23 the herd.</p>	<p>1 The real issue is CWD and bovine 2 tuberculosis. And Shane Moore's, I think, 3 captured, and I might add, he is a wildlife 4 biologist.</p> <p>5 What we're doing here is playing 6 Russian Roulette to the current system. The 7 alternatives you presented, although they're 8 good, they don't capture what I think needs to be 9 done here, which is a phasing out of the feed 10 ground, and a rather rapid phaseout of the feed 11 ground.</p> <p>12 Brucellosis is, at best, a red flag, 13 or a cannery in the mine shaft. It's telling us 14 that what we're doing isn't working.</p> <p>15 And concentrating these animals on 16 feed grounds isn't working. We do have to take a 17 broad approach.</p> <p>18 We have to look at the entire 19 ecosystem. I agree with those comments that were 20 made earlier regarding that, but we have to start 21 somewhere.</p> <p>22 And I think this is the best place to 23 start. We have to start by reducing the elk</p>
<p>1 herd, the Jackson Hole elk herd, to at least its 2 objective numbers.</p> <p>3 We're 1,500 or more over objective 4 right now. And I would challenge the people who 5 have arrived at this objective to show me how 6 they did that, because I think it's based on 7 artificial feeding.</p> <p>8 And if we looked at more of a natural 9 habitat regime, I think our objective might even 10 be lower. I think we have to start doing that.</p> <p>11 The transition between where we are 12 today and where we need to end up is going to be 13 rough. There's no question about it.</p> <p>14 And we're going to have to take 15 precautions during that process. We're going to 16 have to make attempts to protect the private-use 17 industries, the livestock, and the homeowners.</p> <p>18 We're going to have to do those 19 things. But again, I'll say that the way we're 20 going right now is untenable.</p> <p>21 If we don't start cutting this down, 22 and taking these animals off the feed ground, I'd 23 say that the United States Fish and Wildlife</p>	<p>1 Service, Wyoming Game and Fish, and Jackson Hole 2 Chamber of Commerce better start advertising this 3 as the largest elk herd on a feedlot, and the 4 most manipulated, tested, and inoculated herd in 5 the world. It is no longer a wild herd.</p> <p>6 And if we want to achieve some kind 7 of wilderness back in this area, I think we have 8 to take them off the feedlots.</p> <p>9 And with that I'll, I'll stop. And I 10 have 20 seconds to give to someone.</p> <p>11 MR. HUGHES: Okay. Glenn, then 12 Charlie.</p> <p>13 MR. TAYLOR: My name is Glenn Taylor. 14 I'm an outfitter/rancher.</p> <p>15 I have lived here in this valley all 16 my life so far, and I don't need three minutes to 17 say what I have to say. I prefer Alternative 5 18 because it mirrors the intent of the Refuge.</p> <p>19 The intent of that Refuge in which it 20 was established in 1912 was to take care of the 21 elk herd. Those who talk about disease, I just 22 have one comment.</p> <p>23 Fear is a great motivator. And I</p>

Page 57	<p>1 think it's rude and disrespectful of our</p> <p>2 ancestors who worked hard to establish what we</p> <p>3 have here today, because the elk herd, which is</p> <p>4 famous, it's already been said that this is what</p> <p>5 brings people to Jackson Hole.</p> <p>6 If we eliminate that elk herd on that</p> <p>7 Refuge, it's going to eliminate a lot of other</p> <p>8 economic values to our valley. And as an</p> <p>9 outfitter and a rancher, I'm, I'm not</p> <p>10 particularly worried about the disease issue.</p> <p>11 I'm not near as worried about that as</p> <p>12 I am not having elk to hunt and elk for people to</p> <p>13 see. Hunting doesn't mean that much to us that</p> <p>14 have lived here.</p> <p>15 It's part of our livelihood. I think</p> <p>16 it's more important that we emphasize the fact</p> <p>17 that Jackson Hole is famous for the elk herd, and</p> <p>18 we need to keep it here.</p> <p>19 And, again, I do have some questions</p> <p>20 that I'll ask at the end of the meeting of how we</p> <p>21 intend to get these numbers where the proposals</p> <p>22 up on the board here are saying. Thank you for</p> <p>23 the opportunity.</p>	Page 58	<p>1 MR. HUGHES: Okay.</p> <p>2 Charlie, you're up, and then Gigi,</p> <p>3 then Tom Darin, then Joel Berger.</p> <p>4 MR. PETERSEN: I'm Charlie Petersen.</p> <p>5 I've lived here all my life.</p> <p>6 I'm in favor of Alternative 5. I</p> <p>7 have some other questions about who's going to</p> <p>8 keep this program in order, such as the elk herd</p> <p>9 and the bison.</p> <p>10 I can remember when there was just</p> <p>11 about 15 bison up here in the Jackson preserve,</p> <p>12 and they're up in the Park. And now look where</p> <p>13 the problems are.</p> <p>14 We've got Brucellosis. Whose fault</p> <p>15 is that?</p> <p>16 Is that you guys', or is that the</p> <p>17 Government's fault? Who done that?</p> <p>18 Ask yourself where this come from. I</p> <p>19 know where it come from.</p> <p>20 I'd just like to hope that we can get</p> <p>21 Alternative 5 going, and we can get this bison</p> <p>22 down to where we can control it, and the</p> <p>23 Brucellosis will be a little less.</p>
Page 59	<p>1 MR. HUGHES: Okay.</p> <p>2 So I've got, then, Tom; then Joel</p> <p>3 Berger; and then Tony. And I'm not even going to</p> <p>4 test these names.</p> <p>5 I'll just --</p> <p>6 MR. LIGEKI: I'll help you: Ligeiki.</p> <p>7 Go ahead.</p> <p>8 MS. HALLORAN: This is going to be</p> <p>9 short. My name is Gigi Halloran, and I'm</p> <p>10 speaking for myself.</p> <p>11 I don't think there's any doubt that</p> <p>12 concentrating animals on feed grounds is going to</p> <p>13 contribute to disease, whether it's Brucellosis,</p> <p>14 Chronic Wasting Disease, or tuberculous. I think</p> <p>15 it will come.</p> <p>16 I think that's pretty obvious. So I</p> <p>17 think we need to be talking about reducing</p> <p>18 feeding on the Refuge, whether it's within five</p> <p>19 years or ten years.</p> <p>20 Actually, I mean, whether it's either</p> <p>21 five years or ten years, but I just hope that we</p> <p>22 do something to get the support of the ranchers,</p> <p>23 because I think we're also trying to protect the</p>	Page 60	<p>1 cattle. And so whether it's protecting their</p> <p>2 haystack, putting up big fences, it may be even</p> <p>3 electric fences to keep the bison and elk out, I</p> <p>4 think we need to do that, because if the elk are</p> <p>5 just milling around with the cattle, then I don't</p> <p>6 think we're achieving our goal.</p> <p>7 MR. HUGHES: Okay.</p> <p>8 Tom Darin and Joel Berger, Tony</p> <p>9 Ligeiki, then John.</p> <p>10 MR. DARIN: Thanks, and good evening.</p> <p>11 My name is Tom Darin, and I'm representing</p> <p>12 tonight the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance,</p> <p>13 and our over 1,800 members, most of them locally.</p> <p>14 I'd like to thank the National</p> <p>15 Wildlife and Park Services for working hard on</p> <p>16 this issue to form a document that portrays the</p> <p>17 issues very well and allows us to comment. To us</p> <p>18 at the Alliance and our members, bison and elk</p> <p>19 play a critical and important role in the diverse</p> <p>20 and abundant wildlife that make Jackson wildlife</p> <p>21 important for hunting, wildlife viewing, and are</p> <p>22 part of the thriving regional economy that is</p> <p>23 very much linked to wildlife populations.</p>

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<p>1 Indeed, these magnificent animals are 2 symbols of the West. Unfortunately, these 3 wildlife pollutions are not healthy, nor is the 4 habitat on which they thrive.</p> <p>5 If you want to take one line out of 6 the 60-page EIS and focus on that, I suggest it's 7 on Page 10, where it says, "All of the biological 8 issues identified stem from the winter feeding 9 program." This is because winter feeding 10 unnaturally concentrates animals, and this 11 affects habitat and propagates wildlife diseases.</p> <p>12 Currently, the Brucellosis averages 13 28 percent for elk in the Refuge, while in freely 14 migrating populations in the other parts of the 15 region this disease drops to three percent or 16 less. Future diseases are much more threat to 17 wildlife.</p> <p>18 Page 84 of the EIS talks about 19 Chronic Wasting Disease. If that comes to the 20 Refuge, it could hit up to 90 percent.</p> <p>21 That could drop to five percent if we 22 have a feeding, rest feeding and dispersed 23 animals. The Alliance's position at this time is</p>	<p>1 that winter feeding must come to an end on the 2 Refuge in order to alleviate these artificial 3 concentrations and ensuing problems.</p> <p>4 Biologically, that's easy to 5 conclude. We're not advocating time for an 6 arbitrary number of years for the feeding to 7 phase out.</p> <p>8 This is because we also recognize 9 that the solution here must not be biological, 10 but social and political as well. We have to 11 take the time to do this right.</p> <p>12 We have to protect ranchers. We have 13 to protect private landowners from livestock 14 commingling and property damage.</p> <p>15 We must ensure robust and healthy 16 populations of bison and elk for sportsmen and 17 the strong tourist economy. Thus, the Alliance 18 will start an aggressive campaign to reach out to 19 groups and the local citizens to ask what it will 20 take as a community for this to happen to make it 21 work where we need this buy-in of people.</p> <p>22 I've got about 30 seconds. I want to 23 point out a couple things.</p>
<p>1 First, as someone else before me 2 pointed out, this won't be easy. There will be a 3 transition period.</p> <p>4 We have to remember that it will get 5 easier. We must together, come together as a 6 community to protect our wildlife and economic 7 concerns, and put together a Plan to make this 8 work.</p> <p>9 We need to take comfort from the 10 science in the Draft Plan that says if feeding is 11 eventually halted, you can still have 9,300 to 12 11,000 elk throughout. And that is very close to 13 the Wyoming Game and Fish Department herd 14 objective of 11,029.</p> <p>15 And so I thank you for the time and 16 opportunity to comment, and for coming out this 17 evening.</p> <p>18 MR. HUGHES: Joel, then Tony, then 19 John Hoggan, then Clark Allan.</p> <p>20 MR. BERGER: Hi. I'm Joel Berger, 21 here speaking as an individual.</p> <p>22 I'm a professional wildlife 23 biologist, and I want to point out that I believe</p>	<p>1 in the current missions of the Refuge and the 2 Park, as these were derived as desires of 3 American citizens. I believe in healthy 4 ecosystems.</p> <p>5 We know, based on comments here, plus 6 pure peer reviewed science, that when populations 7 are dense, as they can be on feed grounds, where 8 densities may be up to 1,200 animals per square 9 mile, disease risk is heightened. We know at 10 captive facilities, such as that maintained by 11 Colorado Division of Wildlife, populations of elk 12 approach even only 100 per square mile, yet 13 infection rates approached 80 percent.</p> <p>14 With disease, neither animal 15 populations nor ecosystems are healthy. The 16 question really is a question of risk.</p> <p>17 What are we willing to tolerate? 18 What will we do to minimize the risk now and in 19 the future?</p> <p>20 I'd like to conclude by saying that I 21 advise prudence, prudence in meeting agency 22 objectives. What this means, however, is that 23 wildlife populations will be at lower densities,</p>

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<p>1 and ecosystems potentially healthier.</p> <p>2 MR. HUGHES: Tony.</p> <p>3 Tony, then John, then Clark, then</p> <p>4 Harold Turner.</p> <p>5 MR. LIGEKI: My name is Tony Ligekei,</p> <p>6 and I -- My name is Tony Ligekei, and I'm here to</p> <p>7 support Alternative 5 versus 4. The reason for</p> <p>8 that being is you've begun to vaccinate the bison</p> <p>9 with the best vaccine we can find.</p> <p>10 Let's continue vaccinating the elk</p> <p>11 with the vaccines we've got until we can find the</p> <p>12 better vaccine. You're not solving the problem</p> <p>13 by cutting back feeding, by distressing elk</p> <p>14 further out.</p> <p>15 You're still going to have</p> <p>16 Brucellosis. You're still going to have CWD</p> <p>17 coming in here.</p> <p>18 We need to have the Government, the</p> <p>19 University of Wyoming spend some money or find</p> <p>20 some vaccines, or say medicine, to cure these two</p> <p>21 diseases. We need to become a frontrunner in the</p> <p>22 State, in the world on Brucellosis and CWD, not</p> <p>23 penalize the elk, not cut back their feeding so</p>	<p>1 they all starve to death, because some are going</p> <p>2 to starve to death.</p> <p>3 We need to take the forefront here.</p> <p>4 We need to become proactive.</p> <p>5 Quit talking about these diseases and</p> <p>6 get the State of Wyoming to support the</p> <p>7 University. We've got the money; \$900 million.</p> <p>8 One-half a percent, \$21 million, what</p> <p>9 would that do to help solve the disease problems?</p> <p>10 You've got to get together with the State of</p> <p>11 Wyoming and talk to your Congressmen, Senators.</p> <p>12 Let's get this problem solved. Don't</p> <p>13 penalize the elk, the bison, any of these.</p> <p>14 They're all part of our heritage. I</p> <p>15 love these animals.</p> <p>16 I wear a shirt that shows them all.</p> <p>17 Let's support them.</p> <p>18 We need to put the money where we</p> <p>19 need to support the University of Wyoming. Give</p> <p>20 them some money to solve this problem.</p> <p>21 Let's get on with our lives, but</p> <p>22 don't cut back the feeding until you've got the</p> <p>23 problem solved. All you're doing is making it</p>
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<p>1 worse.</p> <p>2 You've not solved the Brucellosis</p> <p>3 problem. You've not solved CWD.</p> <p>4 Oh, got a minute left.</p> <p>5 MR. HUGHES: Got a minute.</p> <p>6 MR. LIGEKI: How's Dr. Cast</p> <p>7 (phonetic)?</p> <p>8 I want you to look at this from the</p> <p>9 economic values as a businessman. You cut back</p> <p>10 on the elk herd, there's no reason for people to</p> <p>11 keep coming to Jackson Hole.</p> <p>12 We'll lose the skiing here. We lose</p> <p>13 the tram.</p> <p>14 We lose the elk herds. You know,</p> <p>15 let's all go out in the wintertime, because I</p> <p>16 sure prefer it.</p> <p>17 I don't make it here in the winter</p> <p>18 now. I make that much less, we might as well</p> <p>19 just go run, hang out in Arizona someplace, enjoy</p> <p>20 the sun, enjoy some beach fish.</p> <p>21 MR. HUGHES: Okay.</p> <p>22 Then John, then Clark, Harold; then</p> <p>23 Marcia. John Hoggan, then Clark Allen, then</p>	<p>1 Harold.</p> <p>2 MR. HOGGAN: I'm John Hoggan. I'm a</p> <p>3 businessman here in town, and I just had a couple</p> <p>4 of things to say.</p> <p>5 Just going to tell you a short story.</p> <p>6 In the '80s, over to Pinedale, Wyoming, hunted</p> <p>7 there for years.</p> <p>8 And great herd of mule deer. And the</p> <p>9 powers to be decided that there were too many</p> <p>10 mule deer, and so we had two years over there</p> <p>11 where they, as I remember, you could shoot seven</p> <p>12 does and a buck.</p> <p>13 And, of course, everybody did. And</p> <p>14 we certainly did not, but everyone did.</p> <p>15 And funny thing, you know. The,</p> <p>16 when -- Before that happened, we had big bucks,</p> <p>17 lots of deer.</p> <p>18 Everything was great. Then we shot</p> <p>19 way too many for two years, followed by two hard</p> <p>20 winters.</p> <p>21 We've completely destroyed the gene</p> <p>22 pool. I challenge you to find a buck that's 30</p> <p>23 inches in that country.</p>

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<p>1 And what's left? We've been, since 2 the '80s, we've been 15, nearly 20 years, we have 3 reduced hunts. 4 We have no gene pool. There it is. 5 What is the economic value of elk to 6 Jackson Hole? To Wyoming? To all of us? 7 What are you -- No matter what you do 8 here, what is the economic value of this herd? 9 How would you -- I can't even imagine reducing 10 this elk herd. 11 Let's just say, pick out a target 12 number, whatever that is: 5,000 on the Refuge. 13 You open this up, you shoot whatever it is to get 14 to a 5,000, and then God only knows how many 15 predators are taking. 16 You take that and you factor that in. 17 You factor in a hard winter, and some powers to 18 be decides not to feed the elk that are left. 19 And the poor things stand there and 20 starve to death, because starvation starts six 21 weeks out before they die. And so what's left? 22 If you, if you, if you reduce these 23 numbers, and CWD hits, as everyone says it's</p>	<p>1 going to, what's left? You already killed them 2 before they could die, for Hell's sakes. 3 You know, if -- You know, if, if, if 4 you, if, if, if, if, if this stops here, the 5 numbers that we see today, without CWD, without 6 re-, without shooting the elk, without reducing 7 the numbers in the Park, I venture to guess, with 8 the predators alone, we'll have half the elk we 9 have in five years, as well as the buffalo. 10 And we've already seen it with the 11 BJ, BJ Pack. So, anyway, I'm just completely 12 opposed to reducing this herd until you decide 13 what to do with the predators, and until you 14 decide a level that is the real level, not just 15 something that someone pulled out of the air. 16 Thanks. 17 MR. HUGHES: Thanks. 18 Clark, then Harold Turner, then 19 Marcia, and then Lynn Madsen. 20 Clark. 21 MR. ALLAN: You know what we've got 22 to be careful of here? Everybody's afraid of 23 some book.</p>
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<p>1 I mean, and we don't really know 2 what's going to happen with Chronic Wasting and a 3 lot of other things. Every expert you talk to 4 has a different answer. 5 But I tell you what we've got to 6 avoid is having the cure be worse than the 7 disease. We go out and stop feeding, kill 70 8 percent of our elk, that's probably worse than 9 what's going to happen if these diseases arrive 10 in the valley. 11 You've got to think about: Why did 12 we start feeding the elk? We started to feed 13 them because we took away their winter range. 14 I've heard a lot about: Well, it's 15 not natural to feed elk. On the other hand, what 16 is natural? 17 In this valley it was natural to have 18 15-, 20,000 herd of elk in those mountains. You 19 pare that down by 70, 80 percent, where you've 20 got a couple spread all through those mountains, 21 that's not natural. 22 You know, we're trying to maintain -- 23 I'm sorry. At the beginning I should have</p>	<p>1 mentioned I'm with the Wyoming Game and Fish 2 Commission. 3 We haven't been able to meet and 4 discuss this Release, so I can't speak for the 5 Commission, but I can speak for myself. And I am 6 a Commissioner. 7 There's another issue you've got to 8 look at here. We have had rammed down our 9 throats, or any way you look at it, a federal 10 mandate that we have to maintain at least, 11 maintain at least 500 grizzly bears in here. 12 We've probably got 7- or 800. We've 13 got another federal mandate to maintain at least 14 134 wolf packs, and that means you're going to 15 have 200, anyway. 16 Now we've got one part of the 17 Government saying we've got to maintain all the 18 predators, and another part saying, "Hey, let's 19 take away the pray base." You can't have both. 20 If you're going to have the 21 predators, you're going to have to have something 22 to, for them to eat. These elk are being pounded 23 from a lot of different directions.</p>

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<p>1 Let's see what happens with the 2 predators with the elk. Let's let that rattle 3 out for a few years before you start changing the 4 equation from another place and pulling the feed. 5 Because part of the problem will be 6 you won't know, you know, in a few years what 7 happened and what, what the cause of the problems 8 are, because you're playing with too many 9 variables. And I, I guess that's the bottom 10 line. 11 If you're going to maintain Wyoming 12 to keep predators, you can't pull the pray base. 13 We've got to maintain something for them to eat 14 as well. 15 And I, I will tell you, the Game and 16 Fish is not even considering reducing their, 17 their quotas on elk. And, in fact, when those 18 quotas were set, and those objectives were set, 19 we had thousands of cattle in those mountains. 20 They don't have the cattle anymore. 21 We really ought to be talking about increasing 22 the objectives on the elk, also, so that we can 23 handle the predators that we've got, and so we</p>	<p>1 can prepare for the loss we're going to take from 2 disease hits. 3 We really ought to be looking the 4 other directions, too. 5 Clark Allan. 6 MR. HUGHES: Harold, then Marcia, 7 then Lynn Madsen. Then I'm at the end of my list 8 unless I've got a couple more. 9 And if somebody wants to step up at 10 that point, we'll add you at the bottom of our 11 list. 12 MR. TURNER: I'm Harold Turner, and 13 I'm speaking for myself. I've lived here all my 14 life, and I'm also an outfitter, dude rancher, 15 and a connoisseur of watching our elk herds, 16 because it's one of the favorite things I do in 17 this, ever since I was born. 18 And I think, as far as talking about 19 doing away with our feeding ground and our, the 20 Elk Refuge feeding program is all a bunch of 21 smoke and mirrors. It does not significantly 22 help any of the problems that I have heard here 23 tonight, other than reduce probably one of the</p>		
<p>1 greatest icons Wyoming has, and that is the 2 Jackson Hole elk herd. 3 And the reason for that being is that 4 we have such limited winter range in this 5 country, the elk on those winter ranges are very 6 concentrated as it is. And with the predator 7 situation, which has been consulted this evening, 8 those, the wolves keep those elk, at least on the 9 winter range, which I watch almost every day of 10 the year, they keep those elk so bunched that all 11 they do is go from one bare knob to the next bare 12 knob, back to the next bare knob. 13 At least if we have a feed ground 14 where they are concentrated, as they are on our 15 winter feed grounds right now, they will have 16 something to eat. They won't keep recycling the 17 dirt that they're now recycling, and they will -- 18 And they're only using a small portion of these 19 small winter ranges as it is. 20 They're not using the entire range 21 because of the wolves keeping them bunched up. 22 It makes absolutely no sense. 23 And I, I don't see a connection where</p>	<p>1 everybody says that this is not natural for this 2 elk herd. Feeding these elk in Wyoming is 3 totally natural. 4 This is a natural happening for those 5 elk. It is the same as going to the Red Desert 6 or back to the Red Desert. 7 I'm sure if they had more food in Red 8 Desert, they wouldn't want to get rid of near as 9 many wild horses as they're doing. I don't think 10 they have any. 11 But we've fought to feed our elk, to 12 maintain the, this icon that Wyoming now has. 13 Thank you very much. 14 MR. HUGHES: Marcia, and then -- 15 Marcia, and then Lynn. And then, again, if we 16 have -- One more? 17 One more back here, and then we'll 18 add anybody else to the list that needs to be 19 added. 20 MS. KUNSTEL: Hi. Thank you all for 21 doing this. 22 My name is Marcia Kunstel, and I'm 23 involved and an active member and on the Board of</p>		

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<p>1 the Conservation Alliance.</p> <p>2 But I'm also here primarily because</p> <p>3 my husband and I run a dude ranch, a guest ranch</p> <p>4 above the Elk Refuge. And we also have an</p> <p>5 outfitting business that's up above the Elk</p> <p>6 Refuge.</p> <p>7 And so I go across the Refuge</p> <p>8 probably three or four or five days a week, and,</p> <p>9 times a week, and then on up into the Gros</p> <p>10 Ventre. And I think I have a, a pretty good</p> <p>11 appreciation for, for what you guys do down</p> <p>12 there.</p> <p>13 And I think that you've done a great</p> <p>14 job in coming up with these alternatives. I, I</p> <p>15 think from the fact that, that most of your</p> <p>16 alternatives suggest that a phaseout in feeding</p> <p>17 is necessary really speaks right to the point</p> <p>18 that I, I agree that that is what you need to do.</p> <p>19 When I was driving down just this</p> <p>20 morning over the Elk Refuge, I finally ran into</p> <p>21 some tourists who I think are from Germany,</p> <p>22 because most of them couldn't speak English. But</p> <p>23 one of them could, and what the guy asked me was,</p>	<p>1 "Where are the animals?"</p> <p>2 And I, you know, explained to him</p> <p>3 that they're not down here at this time of the</p> <p>4 year, and they're up higher in the mountains.</p> <p>5 But I really am afraid that Chronic Wasting</p> <p>6 Disease, Brucellosis, are, are going to be real</p> <p>7 critical problems that -- Well, they're already</p> <p>8 critical problems that we're facing.</p> <p>9 And I would hate to see this elk</p> <p>10 population devastated by these diseases. And</p> <p>11 we'll have more people like these guys I saw</p> <p>12 today who are here saying, "Where are the</p> <p>13 animals?"</p> <p>14 I realize that there is a difference</p> <p>15 of opinion among the number of the, the people</p> <p>16 here tonight, and I just hope that you all will</p> <p>17 make the best use of the scientific information</p> <p>18 that you have. I think it's very important to</p> <p>19 look at the fact that you have a much higher</p> <p>20 concentration of Brucellosis among animals that</p> <p>21 are on the feedlots, the elk that are on feedlots</p> <p>22 than you have elk that are free-ranging.</p> <p>23 And that is, is one fact that I, I</p>
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<p>1 think speaks eloquently to the problems that are</p> <p>2 faced by having all these animals concentrated</p> <p>3 in, in one area. And it, it just promotes the</p> <p>4 transmission of diseases.</p> <p>5 And I think, you know, we could be</p> <p>6 facing a real crisis here if, if we don't do</p> <p>7 something about it. Thank you</p> <p>8 MR. HUGHES: Okay.</p> <p>9 Lynn.</p> <p>10 MR. MADSEN: Lynn Madsen. I'm an</p> <p>11 outfitter/hunter.</p> <p>12 I have to echo Clark Allan's</p> <p>13 comments. I think it really struck home.</p> <p>14 You know, I've heard a lot of these</p> <p>15 experts talk about CWD and Brucellosis and all</p> <p>16 these diseases, but every one of them's got a</p> <p>17 different point that they pull out of the air.</p> <p>18 They don't know.</p> <p>19 They don't have all the answers. But</p> <p>20 there are a few facts that we've got, we, we can</p> <p>21 look at.</p> <p>22 If you don't have anything to eat,</p> <p>23 you'll starve to death. And that's, that's --</p>	<p>1 These elk don't have something to eat, they'll</p> <p>2 starve to death.</p> <p>3 You can't feed them one out of five</p> <p>4 years. You feed them one year, you've got to</p> <p>5 feed them every year.</p> <p>6 I mean, habitat in Jackson Hole is in</p> <p>7 the form of hay pellets or hay bales in the</p> <p>8 wintertime. That's all there is to it.</p> <p>9 We just, we've got to have it.</p> <p>10 They've got to be fed.</p> <p>11 I keep hearing this about migrating.</p> <p>12 Where are they going to migrate to?</p> <p>13 You know? I mean, they talk about</p> <p>14 the Red Desert and Green River.</p> <p>15 What are they going to do, go down</p> <p>16 there and eat lichen? I mean, there's, there's</p> <p>17 nothing for them to eat down there.</p> <p>18 There's no place for these elk. You</p> <p>19 know, I'm all for improving habitat, but you've</p> <p>20 got to have habitat first.</p> <p>21 I keep hearing this about them, the</p> <p>22 elk are a herd animal. Even in the summertime</p> <p>23 they'll herd up.</p>

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<p>1 I mean, it's nothing to see them, 2 particularly on the calving areas, for 20 and 30 3 elk together, and nose to tail. So regardless of 4 whether you stop feeding or not, you're going to 5 have these diseases. 6 And, and you take away the feeding, 7 where are they going to go? The first place 8 they're going to go is to the feed grounds or to 9 cattle, you know. 10 There you're just compounding the 11 problem. And I just -- You know, if you're going 12 to do that, tear down the fences and let them go 13 where they want. 14 You know, we, we have taken their 15 habitat, all the summer homes and everything that 16 are here. Now we've got to take care of them. 17 And if we're going to have elk, we're 18 going to have to feed them. That's the bottom 19 line. 20 And just to echo Clark's comments, 21 you know, nobody's even talked about the wolf 22 predation. Man, we're getting hammered. 23 And they're getting hammered by that</p>	<p>1 big-time. So you bet those are things we've got 2 to think of. 3 One other question is, you're going 4 to maintain these elk, how are you going to 5 harvest these Teton Park elk? Thirty -- You 6 know, in -- Halfway, whatever they can be from 7 Teton Park into the -- How are you going to 8 harvest them elk? 9 Thanks. 10 MR. HUGHES: One more sign-up. And, 11 again, if anyone of, of you are of, you are, are 12 prompted to add to the list. 13 Bob, and then we'll take anybody else 14 who wants their three minutes. 15 Bob. 16 MR. WHARFF: Thank you. Once again I 17 appreciate the chance to be here and talk to you 18 guys. 19 Appreciate the fact that you're 20 willing to go through this process and take the 21 public comments so you can have the best 22 information available to you when you make a 23 decision. The one thing is, is important.</p>
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<p>1 I think one of them has been 2 mentioned. I think you've heard a lot of 3 sportsmen and a lot of people in this room saying 4 it's unacceptable to reduce the elk numbers. 5 One of the things, we can talk about 6 stopping the feeding program that's currently in 7 place. We don't know exactly how significant 8 that would reduce those elk numbers, but we do 9 know it would be an exact, or it would be a 10 definite reduction in elk numbers. 11 And we're asking that the people in 12 this state to basically reduce elk numbers, 13 knowing that it, that that's the only result that 14 will come from not feeding, on the premise that 15 we may get CWD. And I think that's one of the 16 problems. 17 You also are going to run into a 18 problem with the fact that it, it, in order for 19 the Game and Fish Department to change or lower 20 the population objective, that has to be done 21 through public comment. The -- Just because the 22 Elk Refuge chooses not to feed elk, that doesn't 23 necessarily mean we're going to reduce elk.</p>	<p>1 And, like I said, the whole purpose 2 of establishing this feed ground was to feed elk. 3 And I, I think we can learn from our past. 4 I wasn't here when we had 2,500 head 5 of elk that died from starvation. I am fairly 6 confident that those elk don't, it doesn't matter 7 to an elk whether he dies from starvation or CWD; 8 the end result is it's a dead elk. 9 And I think we're going down a road 10 that perhaps I, I see it as being very dangerous. 11 You're talking about killing healthy animals, and 12 I'm saying through the form of starvation. 13 There's the Roby (phonetic) Report. 14 I've got some copies of our summary of the Garvis 15 Roby report. 16 Those of you that would like to have 17 a copy of that, Garvis Roby worked for the Game 18 and Fish Department for 20-plus years running the 19 feed grounds. And he, he has brought to light 20 some questions that I really think -- I haven't 21 had a chance to go all the way through the 22 document, but there really is in my mind 23 insufficient current data to the, really address</p>

Page 85	<p>1 what the impacts would be on other wildlife that</p> <p>2 are out there on that native range should we push</p> <p>3 the, these elk that have been currently fed,</p> <p>4 force them up on that range.</p> <p>5 That's another thing that needs to be</p> <p>6 addressed as well. But I do appreciate your</p> <p>7 time.</p> <p>8 I hope you will take into account the</p> <p>9 fact that this is a very public process. I</p> <p>10 appreciate the fact that you're here taking that</p> <p>11 comment, but we definitely are going to support</p> <p>12 Alternative 5, and we would urge you to do the</p> <p>13 same.</p> <p>14 Thanks for your time.</p> <p>15 MR. HUGHES: Any other comments?</p> <p>16 (Whereupon, no response was had.)</p> <p>17 MR. HUGHES: Again, thank you for</p> <p>18 coming up. I'm going to give Barry the floor</p> <p>19 again to summarize what he's heard, and make</p> <p>20 conclusions, and then, again, staff's going to</p> <p>21 stick around so, if you have questions.</p> <p>22 Barry, let me give you the floor.</p> <p>23 MR. REISWIG: Thank you, Mike.</p>	Page 86	<p>1 Pretty easy to summarize the</p> <p>2 evening's viewpoints of, of, of, of, of --</p> <p>3 Harold's comments got me thinking. I just got</p> <p>4 back Sunday night from the southeast corner of</p> <p>5 the Gros Ventre Wilderness.</p> <p>6 I had a chance to see a herd, oh, I</p> <p>7 don't know, 45, 50 head of elk; bulls bugling;</p> <p>8 cows running back and forth; spikes. Had one old</p> <p>9 four-point bull was covered with mud right up to</p> <p>10 his head.</p> <p>11 He looked like a bull -- He looked</p> <p>12 like an elephant; gray, not brown. And I</p> <p>13 certainly appreciate the love and concern that</p> <p>14 everybody has for these animals.</p> <p>15 I certainly savor that. As Harold</p> <p>16 said, it's the highlight of my stay here in</p> <p>17 Jackson to be able to go out and see.</p> <p>18 I also hunt elk, but just to go out</p> <p>19 in the area and see them is spectacular. Gosh,</p> <p>20 shouldn't be any secret.</p> <p>21 Already two major viewpoints here</p> <p>22 tonight. We have a group of folks who say if it</p> <p>23 ain't broke, don't fix it.</p>
Page 87	<p>1 Things are fine. This system has</p> <p>2 worked well for a hundred years.</p> <p>3 Don't monkey with it. Take the bison</p> <p>4 herd down to a lower level and keep on going.</p> <p>5 I heard another viewpoint that these</p> <p>6 issues are compelling. We need to shift</p> <p>7 strategies to try to move elk away from</p> <p>8 supplemental feed, to winter range situations.</p> <p>9 And I think that's probably as simply</p> <p>10 as, as what I heard tonight. Resolving that's</p> <p>11 not going to be easy.</p> <p>12 This Decision will probably be made</p> <p>13 at very high levels in the Interior Department.</p> <p>14 Your comments will be forwarded and, and sent up</p> <p>15 to the decision-makers, who are going to be</p> <p>16 taking a hard look at this.</p> <p>17 Those decision-makers are very</p> <p>18 familiar with Jackson Hole, its history, its</p> <p>19 animals. And we hope to provide them with as</p> <p>20 complete a record of viewpoints, and what was</p> <p>21 said, and people's feelings as we can.</p> <p>22 And I very much appreciate you folks</p> <p>23 taking up this beautiful summer evening to come</p>	Page 88	<p>1 in here and sit through yet another meeting. For</p> <p>2 those of us at Jackson Hole, that seems to be a</p> <p>3 major pastime for us.</p> <p>4 But anyway, I want to thank you for</p> <p>5 coming tonight. As -- Like I say, I think Mike</p> <p>6 said we'll be here to answer some questions, and</p> <p>7 if you have any, or if you want to have those</p> <p>8 viewpoints made known.</p> <p>9 Thank you.</p> <p>10 MR. HUGHES: Okay, Mary?</p> <p>11 MS. SCOTT: No, thank you.</p> <p>12 (Whereupon, at 8:04 p.m. MT, the</p> <p>13 above Public Hearing was concluded.)</p> <p>14 I certify the foregoing to be a</p> <p>15 true transcript from my notes.</p> <p>16 E-signature: D. I. BUNN</p> <p>17 _____</p> <p>18 CSR CP RPR</p> <p>19 CERTIFICATION</p> <p>20 I, D. I. Bunn, a Registered</p> <p>21 Professional Reporter, Certified Conference</p> <p>22 Reporter, and Notary Public, do hereby certify</p> <p>23 that the foregoing testimony was duly taken and</p>

1 reduced to writing before me at the place and
2 time therein mentioned. I further certify that I
3 am neither related to any of the parties by blood
4 or marriage, nor do I have any interest in the
5 outcome of the above matter.

6 In witness whereof, I have hereunto
7 set my hand and affixed my official seal, at
8 Lusk, Wyoming, this 7th day of September, 2005.

9 E-signature: D. I. BUNN

10 Notary Public

11 My Commission expires January 5, 2007.

<p style="text-align: right;">Page 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> PUBLIC COMMENT DRAFT BISON AND ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS </p> <p style="text-align: center;"> 31 August 2005 Riverton, Wyoming USA </p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;"> BUNN & ASSOCIATES Registered Professional Reporters Worldwide Post Office Box 297 310 South Main Street Lusk, Wyoming 82225 USA In USA 1-800-435-2468 Worldwide 001-307-334-2423 Worldwide Telefax 001-307-334-2433 E-mail: BUNNORLDWIDE@aol.com </p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 2</p> <p> APPEARANCES: MARY GIBSON SCOTT Superintendent Grand Teton National Park National Park Service U.S. Department of Interior Post Office Drawer 170 Moose, Wyoming 83102 USA PH 307-739-3410 FX 307-739-3440 mary_gibson_scott@nps.gov BARRY REISWIG National Elk Refuge Manager Post Office Box 510 675 East Broadway Jackson, Wyoming 83001 USA PH 307-733-9212 FX 307-733-9739 Barry_Reiswig@fws.gov LAURIE C. SHANNON Planning Team Leader National Wildlife Refuge System U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Region 6 134 Union Boulevard Lakewood, Colorado 80228 USA PH 303-236-4317 FX 303-236-4792 laurie_shannon@fws.gov MICHAEL HUGHES The Keystone Center 1580 Lincoln Street Nbr 1080 Denver, Colorado 80203 USA mhughes@keystone.org </p>																														
<p style="text-align: right;">Page 3</p> <p> APPEARANCES: CAROL CUNNINGHAM JOANNA BARNES TOM ROWE PRESENTERS: Stanley Honendeck Rancher Bobby Lane SFW Dave Vaughan Private Citizen Darlene Vaughan Private Citizen Bob Wharff Sportsmen for Fish & Wildlife, Wyoming ATTENDEES: Pam Billine U.S. Senator Craig Thomas' Office Jiggs Black SFW Danny Cosner USDA John Durrion USDA Brodie (Illegible) Casper Star-Tribune Kirk Koch SFW Fremont County Dwayne Oldhome WLSB Tim O'Neal WLSB Gordon Roupe Private Citizen Don Singler Private Citizen Dyanne Singler National Wildlife Federation Niki Tippets Private UI Zimmers WRVC </p>	<p style="text-align: right;">Page 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I N D E X</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 80%;"></th> <th style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;"><u>Page</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="2">OPENING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Michael Hughes</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">PRESENTATIONS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Barry Reiswig</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Mary Scott</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">9</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Laurie Shannon</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">PUBLIC COMMENTS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Darlene Vaghan</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">27</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Dave Vaghan</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">29</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Bobby Lane</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">31</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Bob Wharf</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">34</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Stanley Honendeck</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">38</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">CLOSING REMARKS</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">By Michael Hughes</td> <td style="text-align: right; vertical-align: bottom;">34</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>Page</u>	OPENING REMARKS/INTRODUCTIONS		By Michael Hughes	5	PRESENTATIONS		By Barry Reiswig	6	By Mary Scott	9	By Laurie Shannon	11	PUBLIC COMMENTS		By Darlene Vaghan	27	By Dave Vaghan	29	Bobby Lane	31	Bob Wharf	34	Stanley Honendeck	38	CLOSING REMARKS		By Michael Hughes	34
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<p>1 PUBLIC COMMENT</p> <p>2 DRAFT BISON AND ELK MANAGEMENT PLAN</p> <p>3 AND</p> <p>4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT</p> <p>5 Public Hearing was held pursuant to</p> <p>6 Notice at the Conference Room Taggart's 1,</p> <p>7 Holiday Inn, North Federal at Sunset, Riverton,</p> <p>8 Wyoming, USA, commencing on the 31st day of</p> <p>9 August, 2005, at 6:43 p.m. MT.</p> <p>10 TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS</p> <p>11 MR. HUGHES: Okay, I think we're</p> <p>12 going to go ahead and get started. And despite</p> <p>13 the, our expectations, and I think we're going, I</p> <p>14 think we're going to go ahead and jump in.</p> <p>15 Well, thank you. Great to have you</p> <p>16 here.</p> <p>17 My name is Mike Hughes, and I'm going</p> <p>18 to just give you a sense of what the -- how, how</p> <p>19 this meeting was expected to proceed, and, and I</p> <p>20 think how it will. And then I want to do some</p> <p>21 introductions, and give an opportunity for staff</p> <p>22 from the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish</p> <p>23 and Wildlife Service to kind of set the context</p>	<p>1 and, and walk you through the alternatives.</p> <p>2 So, we're going to start with that,</p> <p>3 and then we will open it up for public comment.</p> <p>4 We've been giving members of the public three</p> <p>5 minutes to take some time uninterrupted to</p> <p>6 provide their view of the alternatives, their</p> <p>7 view of the EIS, to raise any concerns about,</p> <p>8 about the alternatives or the analysis, or</p> <p>9 anything else.</p> <p>10 And then, and then, because we</p> <p>11 haven't had, we haven't filled the entire meeting</p> <p>12 up with, with that time, basically the staff have</p> <p>13 been willing to stick around and be able to</p> <p>14 answer some questions informally. And I think we</p> <p>15 will be able to do that again tonight.</p> <p>16 So, with that, what I want to do is</p> <p>17 begin with the Manager of the National Wildlife,</p> <p>18 the Fish and Wildlife Service, and then -- Okay.</p> <p>19 MR. REISWIG: Thank you. Should give</p> <p>20 you a little history of the process that we're</p> <p>21 in.</p> <p>22 First I want to make a couple of</p> <p>23 introductions, couple of the folks that have</p>
Page 7	Page 8
<p>1 worked very hard on this process over the years.</p> <p>2 Joanna Barnes, -- Raise your hand; Carol</p> <p>3 Cunningham, are very familiar with the document.</p> <p>4 Also want to introduce Dr. Tom Rowe.</p> <p>5 He's a Fish and Wildlife Service veterinarian.</p> <p>6 He's worked extensively on wildlife</p> <p>7 disease, especially Brucellosis. Done a</p> <p>8 considerable amount of work on Chronic Wasting</p> <p>9 Disease in a variety of locations in the United</p> <p>10 States, and is familiar with the Brucellosis</p> <p>11 issue in the north end of the ecosystem, in the</p> <p>12 Gardiner area, and also familiar with the</p> <p>13 situation down in Jackson Hole.</p> <p>14 So, if you have any questions or</p> <p>15 anything to discuss, Tom is a great resource on</p> <p>16 disease issues.</p> <p>17 Basically, this process got started a</p> <p>18 number of years ago, at least four, when the four</p> <p>19 agencies in Jackson, the Elk Refuge, Grand Teton</p> <p>20 National Park, the Bridger Teton National Forest,</p> <p>21 and the Game and Fish, developed an Environmental</p> <p>22 Plan on managing the Jackson bison herd. That</p> <p>23 Plan was litigated by an animal rights</p>	<p>1 organization.</p> <p>2 The Judge found the assessment to be</p> <p>3 inadequate, and directed us to re-do it with an</p> <p>4 Environmental Impact Statement. He also directed</p> <p>5 us to analyze the feeding program on the Refuge,</p> <p>6 which obviously became about 90 percent of the,</p> <p>7 of the document later.</p> <p>8 So, that's what, what we have done:</p> <p>9 come up with six alternatives. The Proposed</p> <p>10 Action is Alternative 4.</p> <p>11 Laurie will talk about that here in</p> <p>12 just a couple of minutes. As times change,</p> <p>13 several issues have become probably more</p> <p>14 compelling.</p> <p>15 I think one of the major things we're</p> <p>16 looking at now are, is the disease issue.</p> <p>17 Certainly Brucellosis, as the rest of the United</p> <p>18 States has become Brucellosis free, or is close</p> <p>19 to becoming Brucellosis free, a spotlight is now</p> <p>20 really shining on northwestern Wyoming as far as</p> <p>21 Brucellosis and wildlife.</p> <p>22 We're also concerned about the rise</p> <p>23 in Chronic Wasting Disease, and the speed with</p>

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<p>1 which it is moving not only here, but in a number 2 of western states. And so with that, I will turn 3 it over to Mary. 4 MS. SCOTT: Thanks, Barry. 5 I'd also like to introduce our Senior 6 Wildlife Biologist for Yellowstone National Park. 7 Steve Kernes is in the back. 8 And this is a very important document 9 for managing these two species of wildlife. And 10 the Park Service mission is to conserve wildlife 11 and to provide for their enjoyment, unimpaired, 12 for future generations. 13 So, this is an important management 14 document for the future. And in our management 15 policies, we like to focus on ecosystems levels, 16 which is why we're looking cross-jurisdictionally 17 with the Refuge, and emphasis on natural 18 abundance, ecological diversity, and integrity in 19 the ecosystem. 20 And it is our policy not to interfere 21 in natural processes. We strive not to do that 22 unless we absolutely have to. 23 Our, our authorizing legislation for</p>	<p>1 Grand Teton allows an elk reduction program. We 2 do not have authority to permit bison reduction. 3 So, that's a unique aspect of Grand 4 Teton. That we allow elk reduction at all in the 5 Park is part of our establishing legislation. 6 And we work very closely with the 7 land managers adjacent to the Park in an 8 ecosystem to manage for all types of wildlife and 9 other issues that we deal with. We know that 10 wildlife viewing is one of the most popular 11 activities in Grand Teton, and it plays a huge 12 part in tourism and in the economy in this 13 region. 14 And our interest is in maintaining 15 sustainable herds for future generations. So, 16 with that, we look forward to your comments this 17 evening, and thank you for spending time with us 18 tonight. I know it's difficult for busy people 19 at this time of the year to do that, especially 20 on a night when tomorrow it will turn to 21 September. 22 MR. HUGHES: So, could I ask you to 23 take a seat on this side, and I'll move them all</p>
Page 11	Page 12
<p>1 along over here and folks can take a look? Give 2 this way. 3 MS. SHANNON: Will that work? 4 MR. HUGHES: Yeah, I think it will. 5 MS. SHANNON: Might as well, since we 6 have a smaller group. Had them all nice and even 7 and all that before. 8 So, hello. I'm Laurie Shannon. 9 I'm with U.S. Fish and Wildlife 10 Service, and I've been tasked with giving 11 everyone an overview of the alternatives. And I, 12 I saw a few folks come in with the big heavy 13 document, the 600-page, -page monstrosity. 14 And you know that, if you've looked 15 at it at all, it's, there's a lot to the 16 document. There's a lot to all the alternatives, 17 so to try to explain it all in a matter of a, you 18 know, you know, ten, 15 minutes, is, is a 19 challenge. 20 So I'm going to give you kind of an 21 overview, and not explain everything that's in 22 it. So I would encourage you that if you still 23 have questions, or if you don't understand</p>	<p>1 everything after the meeting, please stop and 2 talk to us. 3 You can go on line. The document's 4 available on line. 5 You can call us. You can e-mail us. 6 Anything that we can do to, you know, 7 to facilitate communication about this document, 8 we will do so. Couple things I would explain 9 about sort of the alternatives as a whole. 10 All the alternatives are based on the 11 Jackson, the State's objective for the Jackson 12 elk herd, which is about 11,029. I think in some 13 models, where they came up with the exact number 14 of 29 on the end, but, but about 11,000 elk for 15 the Jackson herd. 16 Now, right now the population is 17 about 13,500. None of these alternatives will 18 affect their objective, okay? 19 So it's all based on that objective 20 number. Couple other things I'd like to point 21 out is that -- I'm going to point out some 22 similarities in the document. 23 The alternative -- Couple things.</p>

Page 13	<p>1 Alternatives 2 through 6, as you can see, all 2 have this green blob up here in Grand Teton 3 National Park. 4 And under all those alternatives, 5 they will convert former agricultural land, about 6 4,500 acres, to native vegetation. Another thing 7 I'd point out is on Alternatives 4, 5, and 6, 8 you'll see these different pink blobs. 9 Six is a little bit different, and 10 those represent some of the woody vegetation on 11 the National Elk Refuge. And there are some 12 different strategies under those alternative 13 ver-, alternatives for trying to protect some of 14 the woody vegetation -- aspen, willows, 15 cottonwood -- on the National Elk Refuge. 16 Under Alternatives 4, 5, and 6, you 17 see these blue circles and straight blue lines. 18 Those represent some of the irrigation systems on 19 the Elk Refuge, and under those three 20 alternatives, we're trying to improve the amount, 21 the quality, and the quantity of the forage that 22 we produce on the Elk Refuge because we do, we do 23 grow standing forage now.</p>	Page 14	<p>1 There's flood irrigation. We're 2 looking at ways to try to improve on that. 3 Under Alternatives 3, 4, and 6, you 4 see this red hatching across the bottom of it. 5 That's the southern part of the Refuge, and 6 currently those areas are closed to hunting in 7 the fall. 8 And we're looking at ways that we 9 might be able to increase the harvest in the fall 10 by actually either, by being able to push the elk 11 up out of the southern part of the Refuge, 12 because what they, they tend to do is they go 13 down there into some of the protected areas and 14 then it's hard to, to harvest them down there. 15 So we're, we're looking at some different ideas 16 on how we might improve that, either through 17 allowing an early-season hunt, or perhaps even 18 opening the southern part of the Refuge to 19 visitor use in the fall. 20 Again, try to get the animals to 21 move up. Also, under Alternatives 3 and 6 22 there's some cross-hatching up here, and what, 23 under these alternatives, in a, slightly</p>
Page 15	<p>1 different for each, is that we are going to look 2 at seeing if we could close off hunting in some 3 of those areas to see if we could improve the 4 transitional, some of the utiliti-, utilization 5 by elk of some of that transitional habitat. 6 And that's what that represents. 7 Under Alternatives 2 and 3, you, you see that 8 there are some red arrows. 9 And those look at -- are, are 10 basically recognizing that under these 11 alternatives there could be movement off of the 12 Refuge. Now, I would like to say that under all 13 of these alternatives, they were based on four 14 management goals that were developed early in 15 this process or as the process has gone along. 16 And the goals really came out of 17 earlier public meetings that were held back in 18 2001, which probably seems like a lifetime ago. 19 But we took the direction from, from the input we 20 received from the public early on. 21 And then, also, we also developed the 22 goals from our own -- You know, our agencies have 23 legal directives that we have to follow, and</p>	Page 16	<p>1 those goals came out of that as well. 2 So, there's financial goals that all 3 the alternatives look at, and they're pretty 4 straightforward. It's, it's habitat management. 5 We grow good habitat for elk and, and 6 bison and the other critters that we have, then, 7 you know, half our job is done. If we have -- If 8 we can have sustainable populations into the 9 future, that is a, you know, that's, that's our 10 goal. 11 So, that's the second goal, is 12 sustainable wild-, you know, elk and bison 13 populations. Our third goal is to be a partner 14 and be able to contribute, make our contribution 15 towards making the State's herd objective of 16 11,029. 17 Appears, then, the fourth goal is 18 about disease management. We would like to be 19 able to reduce the prevalence of Brucellosis in 20 the herd, and we would also like to be able to 21 work towards reducing the risk for adverse 22 consequences of some of these nonendemic diseases 23 that we have concern about.</p>

Page 17	<p>1 Many people probably know. I'm sure</p> <p>2 many of you already know what we do currently on</p> <p>3 the Elk Refuge, but currently we winter up to</p> <p>4 7,500 elk, and there's about 2,500 elk that</p> <p>5 summer in the Park.</p> <p>6 Now, the last few years, that, it's</p> <p>7 been so mild there has been far fewer elk than</p> <p>8 that.</p> <p>9 In fact, I think, Barry, it's between</p> <p>10 five- and 6,000.</p> <p>11 You know, it's been, been in that</p> <p>12 neighborhood in the last few years. And, of</p> <p>13 course, that changes, depending on the kind of</p> <p>14 winter we have.</p> <p>15 We currently don't have a controlled</p> <p>16 hunt at all for bison, as Barry explained</p> <p>17 earlier. The herd is, is close to 900 right now.</p> <p>18 We expect it to be well over 1,000 by</p> <p>19 the time we are finished with this planning</p> <p>20 process. And under this alternative, we would,</p> <p>21 we would not use any kind of control on bison.</p> <p>22 It would just be allowed to continue</p> <p>23 to grow. As we continue to -- We will continue</p>	Page 18	<p>1 to have a (sic) elk hunt on the Refuge, and a</p> <p>2 herd reduction in the Park as it's necessary.</p> <p>3 We use supplemental feed almost on a</p> <p>4 (sic) annual basis, and we, we do grow some</p> <p>5 forage to have some standing forage on the</p> <p>6 Refuge. And under this alternative, there would,</p> <p>7 we would not use that, any vaccination for either</p> <p>8 bison or elk.</p> <p>9 Alternative 2 kind of looks at trying</p> <p>10 -- I should say, all of these alternatives are</p> <p>11 based on a 15-year plan, and then we would</p> <p>12 evaluate and either make some changes and, and</p> <p>13 rewrite or, or continue on, depending on. But,</p> <p>14 under this one, under Alternative 2 (a), what we</p> <p>15 would try to strive for in 15 years would be to</p> <p>16 have a, a more minimal approach, management</p> <p>17 approach for both habitat and populations.</p> <p>18 And under this one, we would expect</p> <p>19 that we'd see greater fluctuations of the herd,</p> <p>20 both bison and elk. And we could have between</p> <p>21 1,200 and 6,000 elk on the refuge in the</p> <p>22 wintertime.</p> <p>23 We could have between 500 and 3,000</p>
Page 19	<p>1 elk summering in the Park; again, these big</p> <p>2 fluctuations. As far as bison, we would probably</p> <p>3 initially use some fertility control to bring</p> <p>4 that herd down in size, but -- And it, too, would</p> <p>5 fluctuate, but we would try to get it down</p> <p>6 between 250 and 500.</p> <p>7 Under this alternative, we would</p> <p>8 eliminate hunting on the Elk Refuge. We would</p> <p>9 also eliminate the Elk Reduction Program on the</p> <p>10 Park lands, phase out feeding over 15 years.</p> <p>11 It would be a transition to, to phase</p> <p>12 that out. We would convert almost all the</p> <p>13 acreage that we now, you know, put to have in</p> <p>14 forage production, we would try to convert that</p> <p>15 over to native vegetation, and then we wouldn't</p> <p>16 manage the habitat, theoretically, after that</p> <p>17 other than normal weed control.</p> <p>18 Under Alternative 3, I think the</p> <p>19 focus on this alternative is to, to try to reduce</p> <p>20 the herds and improve, you know, have some better</p> <p>21 forage production, or utilization of the forage,</p> <p>22 I should say, and, and then look at just using</p> <p>23 supplemental feed in the severest winters, which,</p>	Page 20	<p>1 you know, we're estimating may occur two years</p> <p>2 out of ten. So that would be what, that would be</p> <p>3 kind of focused on as sort of emergency-only type</p> <p>4 feeding, if you will.</p> <p>5 Under here, we could, this</p> <p>6 alternative, you could see the elk numbers drop</p> <p>7 between one- and 2,000 elk on the Refuge. And we</p> <p>8 can always -- 500 to 1,000 on the Park units.</p> <p>9 Under this one we would institute a</p> <p>10 bison hunt on the, on the Refuge, but we would</p> <p>11 probably maintain the herd about 800 to 1,000,</p> <p>12 kind of where it is, is now. We would, as I</p> <p>13 said, severe winters only for feeding.</p> <p>14 And we would only use vaccination</p> <p>15 when we could find vaccines that were at least</p> <p>16 50-percent effective. Now, I'm -- If you don't</p> <p>17 mind, I'm going to skip over Alternative 4.</p> <p>18 That is our Proposed Action, and I</p> <p>19 know a lot of people are, you know, have a lot of</p> <p>20 interest in it. And then I'm going to talk about</p> <p>21 Alternatives 5, 6, and then come back to 4.</p> <p>22 Alternative 5, under this alternative</p> <p>23 we would, like, like Alternative 1, the numbers</p>

Page 21	Page 22
<p>1 would be, for elk would be similar; up to 7,500 2 on the Elk Refuge in the winter; around 2,500 in 3 the Park units. Under this Alternative we would 4 try, we would institute a bison hunt. 5 We would try to bring the numbers 6 down to about 4,000. We would feed almost every 7 year, estimated, you know, nine out of ten years. 8 We would also use Strain 19 for elk, 9 and RB51 for bison as a vaccine. Under this -- 10 On Alternative 6, this alternative looks at it's 11 the alternative that would phase out feeding the 12 soonest, and that, in general, would, we would 13 phase out feeding in about five years. 14 It would be a transition. It 15 wouldn't be all, you know, cut off right away. 16 We would -- During that five years, 17 we would look to improve forage on the Refuge and 18 in the Park lands. And under this alternative, 19 we also would institute a bison hunt, and we 20 would bring 500, the herd down, the bison herd 21 down to about 400. 22 We would, we would use vaccines when 23 we could find vaccines that were at least, have</p>	<p>1 an efficacy of at least 50 percent or greater. 2 And those are kind of the main elements to that. 3 That brings me back to Alternative 4, 4 which was the Proposed Action. And I have, using 5 the word "Proposed Action," because under, the 6 way we do our planning, we don't call it a 7 "preferred alternative" until we get to the 8 final. 9 And at the final, which we would 10 anticipate right now that would be the end of 11 '06, it could be the same as Alternative 4. We, 12 after we get public input, we may change 13 alternatives. 14 We could, could be modified in some 15 manner. But we don't, we don't select it as a 16 preferred alternative until the, towards the end 17 of this planning process. 18 Under this alternative, this 19 alternative is the Proposed Action. And the 20 reason for it is because we recognize that the 21 stakeholder groups are, there's a very diverse 22 stakeholder opinion in this planning process, and 23 this one tries to balance stakeholder</p>
Page 23	Page 24
<p>1 perspective. 2 It tries to look at other things, 3 like the economic value or the, the, the 4 economics to the communities involved here. At 5 the same time, it allows us to begin to take some 6 action towards addressing some of the concerns 7 that we have to address as agencies. 8 And under this alternative, we would 9 like to bring down the herd to between 4- and 10 5,000 on the Elk Refuge in the wintertime, and 11 between 1,300 and 1,600 in the Park, on the Park. 12 We would also institute a bison hunt on this 13 alternative, and the, we would bring the herd 14 down to between 450 and 500. 15 We would feed, use supplemental feed 16 on about five out of ten years. You know, that's 17 the estimated to be above-all winters. 18 Again, like I said earlier, 4, 5, and 19 6, it goes in hand with having a forage on the 20 Refuge, improving the forage on the Refuge in the 21 Park lands. So it doesn't mean that we're just, 22 you know, not going to have forage for elk. 23 It means that we're going to try to</p>	<p>1 balance some of that. We would allow the State 2 to use Strain 19 for elk, and when we could find, 3 when there, there was found to be vaccines that 4 were greater than 50-percent efficacy for bison, 5 we would, we would implement that. 6 And the other thing I would -- Under 7 all these alternatives we would use some, we will 8 use adaptive management approaches, but probably 9 6 lies the most, or has the most emphasis on 10 adaptive management. And by "adaptive 11 management" I mean that we're going to kind of -- 12 We're going to learn from experience, from 13 research, from monitoring. 14 And then it allows us to have some 15 flexibility on trying to apply the right 16 solutions that come up, which we don't have much 17 flexibility at all right now. So, I think that 18 hits -- I'm sure I've probably forgotten some 19 things, so if you, again, if you have got some 20 questions when we finish, please come talk to us. 21 All right? Thank you very much. 22 MR. HUGHES: So, Laurie and others 23 have referred to the Environmental Impact</p>

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<p>1 Statement, and, and that's the document that, 2 that really guides the conversation tonight. And 3 the fundamental purpose of tonight's meeting is 4 to give those of you who are here, members of the 5 public, the opportunity to provide comment about 6 that document.</p> <p>7 As Laurie suggested, none of the 8 decisions have been made. This is the point in 9 that development of that Environmental Impact 10 Statement when it's time to ask the public, you, 11 what you think of what you've seen so far.</p> <p>12 What areas take on these 13 alternatives? What areas take on the analysis? 14 If you were the decision-maker, would 15 you do one of these, or some combination of 16 those? What direction would you offer to the 17 folks who are trying to ultimately make this 18 decision?</p> <p>19 In each of the two meetings before 20 tonight, here's how we've done it. And, and in 21 the interest of being fair to all the people who 22 have spoken up to this point, this is what I'm 23 going to ask to those of you who, who would wish</p>	<p>1 to speak in the next few minutes.</p> <p>2 I've been giving everybody three 3 minutes of uninterrupted comment, so I'd ask that 4 even if you're hearing things you wouldn't agree 5 with, that you give that speaker their three 6 minutes to say whatever they wish to say, make 7 their opinion known. We have a Court Reporter 8 present, and so we are going to take an exact 9 transcription of the remarks that you make in 10 those three minutes.</p> <p>11 We're, we have plenty of time, so any 12 of who you, who want to take advantage of that 13 opportunity of the three minutes, we'll do that 14 now, and, and then when that is done, we'll close 15 the formal public hearing part of this, and then, 16 as I suggested earlier, and as Laurie suggested, 17 we'll, that will give us time to really stop 18 there and have a much more informal conversation, 19 giving you a chance to ask questions, et cetera.</p> <p>20 In the transition between your asking 21 questions and that, I'm going to give the floor 22 back to Barry, who will make some kind of 23 concluding remarks, and we'll be done. So, this</p>
Page 27	Page 28
<p>1 is a small enough setting, and it's uncomfortable 2 enough to speak.</p> <p>3 My hunch is that you can hear from 4 where folks are setting, so probably -- 5 MS. VAGHAN: Myself and -- 6 MR. HUGHES: Right. So if you would 7 just start with your name, and then I'll give you 8 the three minutes.</p> <p>9 At the one-minute-left mark I'll give 10 you a signal; at the 30-seconds-left I'll give 11 you another one; and then I'll let you know when 12 the three minutes are done.</p> <p>13 So, Darlene, we've got you signed up? 14 MS. VAGHAN: I did. Didn't want to 15 go first, but I guess I will.</p> <p>16 MR. HUGHES: Okay, great. Wherever 17 you're comfortable.</p> <p>18 MS. VAGHAN: Oh, up here's fine. I 19 took some notes.</p> <p>20 Okay. I'm Darlene V-a-g-h-a-n, from 21 Lander.</p> <p>22 I took some notes as you all were 23 speaking, and I'd just like to mention a few of</p>	<p>1 the items that you were talking about. My main 2 concern with all of these alternatives is the 3 reduction in the elk herd.</p> <p>4 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife has put 5 wolves, grizzly bears, all in that, and made sure 6 that the grizzly bear population has expanded 7 greatly, even though it's the Game and Fish 8 that's working on it; and have put the wolves in.</p> <p>9 Now you reduce the elk, what are they 10 going to eat? That's my biggest question.</p> <p>11 Where are those predators going to go 12 when they have no food? They're not going to 13 look at each other and go, "Oh, gee. We can't 14 have any pups this year because there isn't any 15 food."</p> <p>16 They won't do that. So what is going 17 to happen to the wolves and grizzly bears?</p> <p>18 Thirty years ago the U.S. Fish and 19 Wildlife closed the dumps in Yellowstone Park, 20 which really reduced the number of grizzlies. 21 Now we've spent all these years building them up 22 again, and to what avail?</p> <p>23 Now they're infringing on our</p>

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<p>1 property rights in Wyoming, so we want to stop 2 that part of it. And I would like to know from 3 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife what your plans are, 4 if you've even looked that far ahead to see 5 what's going to happen to these predators. 6 If there's no food up there, they're 7 not going to die off right away. Where are they 8 going to go, and what are they going to eat? 9 That's my main concern. Thank you. 10 MS. SCOTT: Thank you. 11 MR. HUGHES: And again, ma'am, I'm 12 going to give the floor to Barry to deal with 13 questions, but we can deal with them informally 14 as well, to make sure so anybody else wants to 15 take three minutes and offer some, any comments 16 for the Record. 17 I'll give you the floor from there, 18 from the wood. 19 MR. VAGHAN: My name's Dave Vaghan, 20 and I represent 800 members of Farm Bureau in 21 Fremont County. And I wondered why you didn't 22 approach this from the aspect of another 23 alternative, which would be to leave the elk</p>	<p>1 alone? 2 Because we've, we've worked with elk 3 since 1912, and that system has worked rather 4 well for both the sportsmen and for the Game and 5 Fish Department of Wyoming. But in that time, 6 the bison have expanded substantially. 7 And so why don't we have an 8 alternative of leaving the elk where it is, where 9 it has been, which has been a successful 10 operation, and limiting the number of bison, who 11 obviously are, are damaging the woody areas and 12 the habitat? Because, as they increased, then 13 the habitat has declined, according to your 14 statistics. 15 So I'd like to see another 16 alternative, where we leave the elk alone, 17 successful project that it is, and that we 18 concentrate on reducing the bison to, say, 400. 19 I understand there was a study done back in the 20 late '50s and they established that 250 bison was 21 about the right number for Grand Teton and 22 Jackson area. 23 And so I'd like to go back and do</p>
Page 31	Page 32
<p>1 some more scientific study on reducing the bison. 2 Thank you. 3 MS. SCOTT: Thank you. 4 MR. HUGHES: Okay, anybody else? 5 A SPECTATOR: When are you going to 6 do the questions? After everybody -- 7 MR. HUGHES: Yeah. Yeah. 8 Just want to make sure we give you 9 the same opportunity that we did the other 10 attendees. But there are no takers. 11 MS. VAGHAN: If you guys don't speak 12 now, it's not going to be on that Record. 13 MR. HUGHES: But then I should say 14 there are lots of other ways. Written comments 15 by November seventh, which is fine. 16 MR. LANE: My name's Bobby Lane. I'm 17 formerly with Elk for Tomorrow, now Sportsmen for 18 Fish and Wildlife. 19 I've been involved in this thing 20 since the very get-go. And what amazes me is how 21 all the faces have changed from what we've 22 started. 23 The only one still left is Barry.</p>	<p>1 And, yes, we have been in some very, very heated 2 discussions over all of this, back and forth, 3 trying to compromise with the environmentalists 4 and the sportsmen, and back and forth. 5 And what amazes me is it's still 6 going. We ain't got a damn step further, closer 7 anything, except here we are going to start 8 arguing alternatives again. 9 Of course, we prefer 5. And I 10 understand where you guys are coming from on 4, 11 because it's part here, part there, a little bit 12 down the middle. 13 I'd like to see the process speed up, 14 because I know it's going to end up in court. 15 And we're going to fight. 16 And we're going to continue to fight. 17 And we're all going to die, and it's going to end 18 up maybe settled in the next five to 30 years, 19 because we're not going to stand for it. 20 I'll make that comment known. We're 21 not going to accept 1, 2, 3, 4. 22 We can't accept 5, so we're going to 23 fight it. Dave Vaghan and his wife made a good</p>

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<p>1 point.</p> <p>2 When we start reducing elk numbers,</p> <p>3 we have a bigger predator base. And I think you</p> <p>4 need to start thinking about that for the private</p> <p>5 landowners.</p> <p>6 Then I'll ask my questions.</p> <p>7 MR. HUGHES: Okay. Okay, anybody</p> <p>8 else?</p> <p>9 (Whereupon, no response was had.)</p> <p>10 MR. HUGHES: Okay, good. Thank you</p> <p>11 all.</p> <p>12 Barry, do you want to start in?</p> <p>13 Shall we open it for questions?</p> <p>14 How would you like to do it?</p> <p>15 MS. SHANNON: Why don't we make it --</p> <p>16 We can turn that off.</p> <p>17 (Whereupon, at 7:17 p.m. MT, remarks</p> <p>18 were made among those present, off the Record,</p> <p>19 after which, at 7:51 p.m. MT, the following</p> <p>20 occurred:)</p> <p>21 MR. HUGHES: Okay, let me reopen it,</p> <p>22 and if there are any of the folks that just came</p> <p>23 in that want to take that three minutes, now is a</p>	<p>1 good time to say.</p> <p>2 MS. SHANNON: Just mainly for</p> <p>3 Dottie's --</p> <p>4 MR. HUGHES: Great. So if you're</p> <p>5 going to speak, we need you to also sign in over</p> <p>6 there.</p> <p>7 So, let me give you the floor. Okay.</p> <p>8 So, gentlemen, three -- Bob, I'll</p> <p>9 give you three.</p> <p>10 MR. WHARF: You guys want to sit down</p> <p>11 for three more minutes? I guess one of the</p> <p>12 things that I set here, we've had some discussion</p> <p>13 at length.</p> <p>14 I'm a little bit concerned. It seems</p> <p>15 like, you know, there's some options that are on</p> <p>16 the table that weren't considered; that being the</p> <p>17 fact that the Park could decide to actually</p> <p>18 irrigate some of these areas, and actually grow</p> <p>19 some -- Yeah.</p> <p>20 It might not, might not stop you from</p> <p>21 having to grow it, but it's been mentioned that</p> <p>22 bison have a tendency to already stay up there.</p> <p>23 The, if there was some standing forage that was</p>
Page 35	Page 36
<p>1 readily available for those bison, that, to me,</p> <p>2 seems like a viable option that hasn't been</p> <p>3 considered.</p> <p>4 And I think it's hypocritical. We've</p> <p>5 talked a lot about trying to get the ranch owners</p> <p>6 a, and sportsmen be able to give up and give up</p> <p>7 some stuff, and their rights. I look at it,</p> <p>8 here's the Park that, that's sitting on a</p> <p>9 substantial area that says, "No, we don't," but</p> <p>10 they're telling us that everybody has to, to make</p> <p>11 exceptions to the rules that they've laid down.</p> <p>12 But seems to me like the Park Service</p> <p>13 should say, "This is an alternative that should</p> <p>14 be explored." They used to do it.</p> <p>15 And the bottom line is: I don't</p> <p>16 think it matters to elk or bison with, that's</p> <p>17 something that you guys have grown. If it allows</p> <p>18 them to survive through the winter, that's cool.</p> <p>19 And if it allows us to disperse them</p> <p>20 better, that's cool. It might not necessarily</p> <p>21 match with all the goals, but I know that if, if</p> <p>22 the operator in that area is to, to do all these</p> <p>23 things we're talking about, reduce disease, and</p>	<p>1 particularly reduce the Brucellosis prevalence,</p> <p>2 if irrigating that stuff would allow us to</p> <p>3 disperse those animals, perhaps even delay those</p> <p>4 by those coming down to, to revenue, that should</p> <p>5 be considered.</p> <p>6 Just because somebody made the</p> <p>7 decision that the Park wasn't the goal to do</p> <p>8 that, to me, I guess I just question with --</p> <p>9 We're asking the other landowners.</p> <p>10 Like the people in the Gros Ventre</p> <p>11 said. You guys should be doing something that</p> <p>12 lets these elk winter somewhere else.</p> <p>13 And I guess the point I have is,</p> <p>14 seems like to me if you have the ability to do</p> <p>15 some things, you should be doing that, too. It</p> <p>16 shouldn't be always up to the public to sacrifice</p> <p>17 and do the things they don't want to do.</p> <p>18 And I don't know that that's been</p> <p>19 visited. I wasn't privy to the discussions</p> <p>20 earlier that Bobby mentioned earlier, some of the</p> <p>21 things that happened to Steve earlier.</p> <p>22 But seems to me that possibly that</p> <p>23 should be an alternative so people knew that that</p>

Page 37	<p>1 has, that has been a topic that's been brought</p> <p>2 up, has been identified, and possibly that should</p> <p>3 have been on the table as well, because it seems</p> <p>4 only reason to me that if, by irrigating it</p> <p>5 right, you increase your production by 200</p> <p>6 percent, what would that do if we were growing</p> <p>7 forage up there? And maybe you can grow more</p> <p>8 native forage and still use that, that irrigation</p> <p>9 to produce more, you know, increase your</p> <p>10 production.</p> <p>11 But, thank you.</p> <p>12 MR. HUGHES: We've got that down.</p> <p>13 Okay.</p> <p>14 MR. REISWIG: Just a couple closing</p> <p>15 thoughts.</p> <p>16 MR. HUGHES: There were a couple more</p> <p>17 who came in. Want to make sure that folks who</p> <p>18 want to have three minutes have that opportunity.</p> <p>19 Do you want to have three?</p> <p>20 MR. HONENDECK: I haven't had a</p> <p>21 chance to look at your alternatives, but --</p> <p>22 MR. HUGHES: We want to do this on</p> <p>23 the Record. If you want tell us who you are?</p>	Page 38	<p>1 MR. HONENDECK: Well, I'd like to</p> <p>2 look at that stuff a little bit better. And I'm</p> <p>3 a rancher, and can I --</p> <p>4 (Whereupon, at 7:56 p.m. MT, remarks</p> <p>5 were made among those present, off the Record,</p> <p>6 after which, at 8:02 p.m. MT, the following</p> <p>7 occurred:)</p> <p>8 MR. HONENDECK: Well, I'm Stan</p> <p>9 Honendeck. I'm a rancher from Lander.</p> <p>10 From what I can see up there, there's</p> <p>11 only two that would be acceptable to me, and</p> <p>12 that's Number 1 and Number 5. Appears if, if the</p> <p>13 vaccinate, if they've got a vaccination that</p> <p>14 would work, it would certainly be Number 5.</p> <p>15 I don't know what the success has</p> <p>16 been with the two differing types of vaccine that</p> <p>17 we have, but to me, to, to cut back those</p> <p>18 numbers, as what the other ones are doing, I</p> <p>19 don't think's acceptable to the, to the</p> <p>20 sportsmen. And the, and the, if you don't, if</p> <p>21 you're not interested in producing more forage</p> <p>22 through irrigation, then to me the only other</p> <p>23 alternative, then you better start buying</p>
Page 39	<p>1 ranches, because I don't think it's acceptable to</p> <p>2 cut these herds to what these other ones.</p> <p>3 Thank you.</p> <p>4 MR. HUGHES: Thank you.</p> <p>5 Anyone else?</p> <p>6 (Whereupon, no response was had.)</p> <p>7 MR. HUGHES: Okay, thank you all for</p> <p>8 coming. Appreciate it.</p> <p>9 And, again, now, folks are going to</p> <p>10 stay around, and if you have specific questions,</p> <p>11 need to, to grab one of the staff and, and get</p> <p>12 anything in particular --</p> <p>13 (Whereupon, at 8:02 p.m. MT, the</p> <p>14 above Public Hearing was concluded.)</p> <p>15 I certify the foregoing to be a</p> <p>16 true transcript from my notes.</p> <p>17 e-signature: D. I. Bunn</p> <p>18 CSR CP RPR</p> <p>19 CERTIFICATION</p> <p>20 I, D. I. Bunn, a Registered</p> <p>21 Professional Reporter, Certified Conference</p> <p>22 Reporter, and Notary Public, do hereby certify</p> <p>23 that the foregoing testimony was duly taken and</p>	Page 40	<p>1 reduced to writing before me at the place and</p> <p>2 time therein mentioned. I further certify that I</p> <p>3 am neither related to any of the parties by blood</p> <p>4 or marriage, nor do I have any interest in the</p> <p>5 outcome of the above matter.</p> <p>6 In witness whereof, I</p> <p>7 have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official</p> <p>8 seal, at Lusk, Wyoming, USA, this 6th day of</p> <p>9 September, 2005.</p> <p>10 E-signature: D. I. Bunn</p> <p>11 Notary Public</p> <p>12 My Commission expires January 5, 2007.</p>

REFERENCES CITED: VOLUME 2

The following abbreviations are used in text bibliographic references:

NPS	National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior
USFS	U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture
WGFC	Wyoming Game and Fish Commission
WGFD	Wyoming Game and Fish Department

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