

# 2017 Montana Hunting Regulations

# Bison



These regulations and quotas are adopted under the authority granted to the Fish & Wildlife Commission (F&W Commission) in MCA 87-1-301, and are valid March 1, 2017 through February 28, 2018. These regulations were adopted by the F&W Commission on February 10, 2017. The F&W Commission reserves the authority to amend the seasons, limits and regulations herein if deemed necessary for wildlife management purposes. Martha Williams, Director.

State and Federal laws, Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, or disability. Anyone believing he or she has been discriminated against (as described above) in any Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) program, activity, or facility may write to FWP Personnel Office, 1420 East Sixth Avenue, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701 or the office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.

## Licensing

- A hunter may hold only one bison license.
- Bison licenses are allotted through a random drawing.
- Hunters must have applied for a bison license by May 1, 2017:
- Successful either-sex bison license applicants:
  - will receive a letter with instructions to view online bison hunter orientation.
  - hunters wishing to use **archery** equipment **MUST** also complete a mandatory archery orientation outlined in the letter sent to successful either-sex applicants.
- Potential Second Choice hunters will only be contacted in the event of the hunt roster being implemented. All bison applicants are given a roster number. Applicants can visit MyFWP at [fwp.mt.gov](http://fwp.mt.gov) to see their position on the roster. To check the status of the hunt and to see whether the hunt roster has been implemented, please call the bison hotline at (406) 994-5700 during the hunt periods.
- State-issued Tribal licenses will be issued free-of-charge by Helena Headquarters.

License cost:	Resident	Nonresident
Conservation	\$8	\$10
Base Hunting License	\$10	\$15
Bison Application Fee	\$10	\$50
Bison License	\$125	\$1250

## Bison License Quota

- A total of 85 either-sex State-issued licenses will be awarded.
- Second Choice only licenses - up to 200 Second Choice State-issued licenses **MAY** be incrementally awarded depending upon bison migration into individual hunting districts.
  - The Second Choice hunt roster will be created from the drawing of second choice applicants. If a roster hunt is activated based upon bison migration, Second Choice licenses will be issued to hunters incrementally in sequence drawn.
- Nonresidents are limited to, but not guaranteed, 10 percent of the hunting district's license quota.
- In addition to the 85 either-sex State-issued licenses and the potential 200 Second Choice State-issued licenses, Tribal treaty bison hunting may occur concurrently with state bison hunting.

## Bison Hunt Areas and Seasons

- The season is November 15, 2017 through February 15, 2018. The Absaroka Beartooth backcountry hunt dates are September 15 - November 14.
- Bison hunt information is available by calling 1-406-994-5700.
- License quotas, hunting district boundaries, and season structure can be modified by F&W Commission authority.
- There are two hunting districts:
  - **HD 385** – Gardiner Basin Portion AND Absaroka Beartooth Portion (wilderness north of Yellowstone National Park including the upper portions of the Hellroaring and Slough Creek drainages). See map, legal descriptions and hunting closures in these regulations.
  - **HD 395** – West Yellowstone Portion AND Cabin Creek Monument Mountain Portion (public land with no cattle allotments in the Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area, the Monument Mountain Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, and the upper Gallatin River drainage south of the mouth of Taylor Fork). See map, legal descriptions and hunting closures in the legal descriptions in these regulations.
- Hunting is allowed on public land. State-licensed hunting is also allowed on private land with landowner permission.
- Hunting is subject to emergency closure in the event it becomes necessary to allow for hazing under the Interagency Bison Management Plan.
- Closure area to protect eagle-nesting sites on National Forest System Lands on Horse Butte Peninsula as posted from Dec. 1 to Aug. 15.
- **Mandatory Reporting:** Successful bison hunters must report their harvested bison within 48 hours by calling 1-877-FWP-WILD (1-877-397-9453) or 406-444-0356.

### ----- HD 385 -----

**NOTE:** A bison hunter list will be created from a random drawing of all second choice applicants for HD385. Hunters may or may not be activated based upon bison presence. Successful bison hunters must report their harvested bison within 48 hours by calling 1-877-FWP-WILD (1-877-397-9453) or 406-444-0356.

### 385-20: 40 licenses

- Nov 15 - Feb 15 – Either Sex.

### 385-21: 5 licenses. Only valid in the Absaroka Beartooth portion of the HD. This is a wilderness backcountry hunt.

**NOTE:** The Absaroka-Beartooth portion is a very remote wilderness accessible only by foot or horse. Retrieving a harvested bison will present an extraordinary challenge. A mature bull bison can weigh 2,000 pounds and yield 800 pounds of meat. Hunters must be prepared to pack out this amount of meat, as well as the head and hide if desired, and to care for the meat properly in order to avoid spoilage. It is not recommended that hunters attempt this hunt without a string of pack-animals capable of this task and several additional people to assist with processing the harvested animal.

- Sept 15 - Nov 14 – Either Sex.

### 385-77: Bison Hunt Roster

- Nov 15 - Feb 15 – Second Choice only license. See "NOTE" above.

### ----- HD 395 -----

**NOTE:** A bison hunter list will be created from a random drawing of all second choice applicants for HD395. Hunters may or may not be activated based upon bison presence. Successful bison hunters must report their harvested bison within 48 hours by calling 1-877-FWP-WILD (1-877-397-9453) or 406-444-0356.

### 395-20: 40 licenses

- Nov 15 - Feb 15 – Either Sex

### 395-77: Bison Hunt Roster

- Nov 15 - Feb 15 – Second Choice only license. See "NOTE" above.

## General Regulations AND Methods and Means of Hunting

- Hunting is restricted to individuals with licenses issued via a drawing process similar to that employed for other special licenses issued by FWP or as designated by Tribal authority. All licenses are non-transferable.
- General regulations as listed in the 2017 Big Game Deer•Elk•Antelope hunting regulations shall govern the 2017 Bison season for all license holders.
- All bison hunters must wear hunter orange as described in 2017 Big Game Deer•Elk•Antelope hunting regulations regardless of season dates.
- Please refer to the 2017 Big Game Deer•Elk•Antelope hunting regulations for a description of firearms and archery equipment.
  - The only means of taking allowed are center-fire rifles and/or archery equipment. Crossbows and muzzleloading black powder rifles are not permitted.
  - Rifles are restricted to center-fire, 150 grain or larger bullet.
- To protect public safety and minimize traffic obstructions, no bison hunting is allowed within 100 yards of major highways.
- Hunting on national forest lands must follow restrictions in USFS order 36 CFR 261.10 (d) (firearm discharges are prohibited within 150 yards of residence, building, campsite, developed recreation site, or occupied area or across a forest service road or body of water).
- Hunting hours authorized for the taking of big game animals begin one-half hour before sunrise and end one-half hour after sunset each day of the hunting season. See official 2017 Sunrise-Sunset Tables in these regulations.
- Hunting shall be only by foot or horseback.
- It is unlawful to possess or transport the fetus or reproductive tissues of a bison away from the kill site. This shall not include specifically minimized tissues naturally attached to the carcass or a portion of the carcass as necessary for evidence of sex as follows:
  - Male: head with horns or penis.
  - Female: head with horns or vulva.
- Hunters who harvest a bison shall, upon field dressing the carcass, cut open the rumen and remove and spread its vegetative contents.
- Hunters who harvest a bison near a roadway or any other facility shall remove all unutilized parts of the carcass (entrails, tissues, bones, hides, fetuses, legs, etc.) to an area at least 200 yards from any roadway, dwelling, campground, designated trail or trailhead. These unutilized parts shall be placed in a manner as to be inconspicuous to passersby.

## Information and Recommendations

- Bison can achieve a live weight of up to 2,000 pounds, and can be very difficult for the average person to field dress alone. Participants should bring several people with them, or hire an outfitter to assist with the field dressing and handling of their bison. If participants plan to field dress and load their own animal, axes, knives, saws, and block and tackle may be necessary.
- Due to the bison's immense size and thick hide, palatable meat may spoil quickly without immediate and proper care. It is recommended that bison be skinned and quartered within five hours of the kill. The hide should not be left on the bison overnight, even if it is hanging.

## Brucellosis

- Bison in Yellowstone National Park carry bacteria that cause a disease known as brucellosis or Bang's disease. Brucellosis in Yellowstone National Park bison is one of the primary reasons that attempts are being made to control bison in Montana.
- Brucellosis in bison is caused by a bacterium that can also infect humans. In humans, brucellosis is called undulant fever. Symptoms include intermittent fever, chills, night sweats, body aches, poor appetite and weakness. If undulant fever is treated early, it is fairly easy to cure. However, if the disease reaches a chronic stage, treatment is difficult.
- In bison, the bacteria is concentrated in the lymph nodes, reproductive organs and the udder. Cooking destroys bacteria that may be present in the meat. Thus, when thoroughly cooked, the meat is safe to eat.

## Common Sense Precautions When Field-Dressing Big Game

- To minimize risk of disease or parasite transmission to humans, follow these proper ways to handle wild meat:
  - Consider every bison to be potentially infected. The results of blood tests show that about 50 percent of the bison are exposed to brucellosis.
  - Always wear protective gloves when dressing carcasses or handling viscera.
  - Minimize contact with animal fluids, brain and spinal tissues.
  - Avoid contact with milk or material from the reproductive tract.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth until you have scrubbed after handling the animal.
  - Individuals with open sores or cuts on their hands should be especially careful.
  - Discard organ meats.
  - Wash hands and instruments thoroughly after field dressing or processing.
- To minimize risk of disease or parasite transmission to your domestic dog, prevent consumption of big game viscera.

## Bison Hunt Legal Descriptions

The following areas are open to bison hunting for the 2017 season.

Note: No hunting within the city limits of West Yellowstone, no hunting within the fenced boundary of the West Yellowstone airport and closure area to protect eagle-nesting sites on National Forest System Lands on Horse Butte Peninsula as posted from Dec. 1 to Aug. 15.

### HUNTING DISTRICT 385:

**Gardiner Basin Portion** – Beginning at the boundary intersection of Yellowstone National Park and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness just east of Gardiner, then northerly and westerly along said Wilderness boundary to USFS Trail #64 near the Bear Creek campground, then northerly along said trail to the intersection with USFS Trail #62, then northwesterly along USFS Trail #62 to the watershed divide east of Monitor Peak, then northwesterly along the watershed divide over Monitor Peak to Red Mountain, then southwesterly along the watershed divide to Dome Mountain, then southwesterly in a direct line to the bison-resistant cattle guard across U.S. HWY 89 in Yankee Jim Canyon, then southerly in a direct line to crest of watershed divide between Sphinx Creek and Tom Miner Creek Basin, then southerly along the watershed divide over Black Mountain to the boundary of Yellowstone National Park at Shooting Star Mountain, then generally east along the Yellowstone National Park boundary to the boundary intersection of Yellowstone National Park and the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness just east of Gardiner, the point of beginning.

**NOTE: Gardiner Hunting Closure:** Closed to all hunting: Beginning at the Junction of U.S. Hwy 89 and Little Trail Creek, then up Little Trail Creek to the posted line (approx. 1/2 mile above U.S. Hwy 89), then southeasterly along said line to the Travertine-Trail Creek Road, then easterly along said road to its intersection with the Gardiner-Jardine Road, then northeasterly along said road to Eagle Creek, then southerly down said creek to the YNP boundary, then westerly along said boundary to the intersection with Stevens Creek, then northeasterly in a straight line to the intersection with U.S. Hwy 89, then northwesterly along said highway to the junction of Little Trail Creek, the point of beginning.

### **AND**

**Absaroka Beartooth Portion** (wilderness north of Yellowstone National Park including the upper portions of the Hellroaring and Slough Creek drainages) – The entire Hellroaring, Buffalo Fork, and Slough creeks drainages north of Yellowstone National Park.

### HUNTING DISTRICT 395:

**West Yellowstone Portion** – Beginning at the intersection of Grayling Creek and the Yellowstone National Park Boundary, then south along the Park boundary to its intersection with the south section line of Section 34, T13S, R5E (1/4 mile south of West Yellowstone), then west along said section line to its intersection with USFS Road 1700 (in the southwest corner of said section), then north and west along said road to its intersection with the South Fork of the Madison River, then

northwesterly along the east bank of the South Fork of the Madison River to its confluence with Hebgen Lake, then northwest along a straight line across said Lake to the tip of Edwards Peninsula, then northerly along the west shore of the Horse Butte Peninsula to The Narrows, then northwest along a straight line across The Narrows to the Lakeview Resort, then northeasterly along the private land/USFS boundary to Red Canyon Creek, then north up Red Canyon Creek to the mouth of Coal Canyon Creek, then up Coal Canyon Creek to the top of Graycroft Ridge, then southeasterly to the high point of Graycroft Ridge, then Northeasterly to Johnson Creek outlet at Johnson Lake, then southeast down Johnson Creek to its intersection with Little Tepee Creek Trail (#90), then south along said trail to its intersection with the Whits Lake Road, then northeasterly along said road to the Whits Lake trailhead, then southeasterly down the Whits Lake outlet stream to its confluence with Grayling Creek, then easterly up Grayling Creek to its intersection with the Yellowstone National Park Boundary, the point of beginning.

**AND**

**Cabin Creek Monument Mountain Portion** (public land with no cattle allotments in the Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area, the Monument Mountain Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness, and the upper Gallatin River drainage south of the mouth of Taylor Fork) – Beginning at the junction of U.S. Hwy 191 and the road leading to the trailhead for U.S.F.S. Trail 68 located between the mouth of Taylor Fork and Sage Creek, then southeasterly up the Taylor Fork/Sage Creek divide and the Taylor Fork/Beaver and Cabin Creeks divide to the west boundary of the Cabin Creek Recreation and Wildlife Management Area, to include those portions of said area lying south of the above description and including all of the Monument Mountain Unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness. The area open to hunting also includes the portion of the Gallatin drainage lying east of the Gallatin River and from Levinsky Ridge south to Yellowstone National Park.

**2017 Sunrise-Sunset Tables for Determining Hunting Hours**

These tables, including adjustments for daylight savings time, are the official sunrise-sunset tables adopted by the Montana Fish & Wildlife Commission for hunting in Montana. Authorized hunting hours for the taking of bison begin one-half hour before sunrise and end one-half hour after sunset each day of the hunting season. **(Do not use other sources).**

<b>ZONE 2</b>												
<b>INCLUDES: Beaverhead, Broadwater, Cascade, Chouteau, Deer Lodge, Gallatin, Glacier, Hill, Jefferson, Lewis &amp; Clark, Liberty, Madison, Meagher, Park, Pondera, Powell, Silver Bow, Teton and Toole Counties.</b>												
Day	Sept		Oct		Nov		Dec		Jan		Feb	
	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set	Rise	Set
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
01	6:49	8:06	7:27	7:07	8:10	6:12	7:52	4:42	8:12	4:52	7:52	5:32
02	6:50	8:05	7:29	7:05	8:12	6:11	7:53	4:42	8:12	4:52	7:51	5:34
03	6:51	8:03	7:30	7:03	8:13	6:09	7:54	4:42	8:12	4:53	7:49	5:35
04	6:52	8:01	7:31	7:01	8:15	6:08	7:56	4:41	8:12	4:55	7:48	5:37
05	6:54	7:59	7:33	6:59	7:16	5:07	7:57	4:41	8:12	4:56	7:47	5:38
06	6:55	7:57	7:34	6:58	7:18	5:05	7:58	4:41	8:12	4:57	7:45	5:40
07	6:56	7:55	7:35	6:56	7:19	5:04	7:59	4:41	8:12	4:58	7:44	5:41
08	6:57	7:53	7:37	6:54	7:21	5:03	8:00	4:41	8:11	4:59	7:42	5:43
09	6:59	7:51	7:38	6:52	7:22	5:01	8:01	4:41	8:11	5:00	7:41	5:44
10	7:00	7:49	7:39	6:50	7:24	5:00	8:02	4:41	8:10	5:01	7:39	5:46
11	7:01	7:47	7:41	6:48	7:25	4:59	8:03	4:41	8:10	5:03	7:38	5:47
12	7:03	7:45	7:42	6:46	7:26	4:58	8:03	4:41	8:10	5:04	7:36	5:49
13	7:04	7:43	7:43	6:44	7:28	4:57	8:04	4:41	8:09	5:05	7:35	5:50
14	7:05	7:41	7:45	6:43	7:29	4:55	8:05	4:41	8:09	5:06	7:33	5:52
15	7:06	7:39	7:46	6:41	7:31	4:54	8:06	4:41	8:08	5:08	7:32	5:54
16	7:08	7:37	7:48	6:39	7:32	4:53	8:07	4:41	8:07	5:09	7:30	5:55
17	7:09	7:35	7:49	6:37	7:34	4:52	8:07	4:42	8:07	5:10	7:28	5:57
18	7:10	7:33	7:50	6:35	7:35	4:51	8:08	4:42	8:06	5:12	7:27	5:58
19	7:12	7:31	7:52	6:34	7:36	4:50	8:08	4:42	8:05	5:13	7:25	6:00
20	7:13	7:29	7:53	6:32	7:38	4:50	8:09	4:43	8:04	5:15	7:23	6:01
21	7:14	7:27	7:55	6:30	7:39	4:49	8:10	4:43	8:03	5:16	7:22	6:02
22	7:15	7:25	7:56	6:28	7:41	4:48	8:10	4:44	8:03	5:17	7:20	6:04
23	7:17	7:23	7:57	6:27	7:42	4:47	8:10	4:45	8:02	5:19	7:18	6:05
24	7:18	7:21	7:59	6:25	7:43	4:46	8:11	4:45	8:01	5:20	7:16	6:07
25	7:19	7:19	8:00	6:23	7:45	4:46	8:11	4:46	8:00	5:22	7:15	6:08
26	7:21	7:17	8:02	6:22	7:46	4:45	8:11	4:47	7:59	5:23	7:13	6:10
27	7:22	7:15	8:03	6:20	7:47	4:44	8:12	4:47	7:58	5:25	7:11	6:11
28	7:23	7:13	8:05	6:18	7:48	4:44	8:12	4:48	7:57	5:26	7:09	6:13
29	7:25	7:11	8:06	6:17	7:50	4:43	8:12	4:49	7:55	5:28		
30	7:26	7:09	8:08	6:15	7:51	4:43	8:12	4:50	7:54	5:29		
31			8:09	6:14			8:12	4:51	7:53	5:31		

**Contacts**

Bison hunt information is available by calling 1-406-994-5700.

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks State Headquarters**

1420 East 6th Avenue, PO Box 200701, Helena, MT 59620-0701 ..... 406-444-2535

**Harvest Reporting** ..... 1-877-FWP-WILD (1-877-397-9453) ..... or 406-444-0356

Hunter Education.....406-444-9948  
 Wildlife Bureau .....406-444-2612  
 Enforcement Bureau.....406-444-2452  
 Parks Division (Montana State Parks).....406-444-3750  
 Special drawings .....406-444-2950  
 Resident and nonresident licensing.....406-444-2535  
 Hearing Impaired (use Montana Relay).....7-1-1 or 1-800-253-4091

**Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Regional Headquarters**



**REGION 1**  
 490 N Meridian Rd  
 Kalispell, MT 59901  
 (406) 752-5501

**LEWISTOWN Area Res Office (LARO)**  
 215 W Aztec Dr  
 PO Box 938  
 Lewistown, MT 59457  
 (406) 538-4658

**REGION 2**  
 3201 Spurgin Rd  
 Missoula, MT 59804  
 (406) 542-5500

**REGION 3**  
 1400 South 19th Ave  
 Bozeman, MT 59718-5496  
 (406) 994-4042

**REGION 5**  
 2300 Lake Elmo Dr  
 Billings, MT 59105  
 (406) 247-2940

**HELENA Area Res Office (HARO)**  
 930 Custer Ave W  
 Helena, MT 59620  
 (406) 495-3260

**REGION 6**  
 1 Airport Rd  
 Glasgow, MT 59230  
 (406) 228-3700

**BUTTE Area Res Office (BARO)**  
 1820 Meadowlark Ln  
 Butte, MT 59701  
 (406) 494-1953

**HAVRE Area Res Office (HVARO)**  
 2165 Hwy 2 E  
 Havre, MT 59501  
 (406) 265-6177

**REGION 4**  
 4600 Giant Springs Rd  
 Great Falls, MT 59405  
 (406) 454-5840

**REGION 7**  
 352 I-94 Business Loop  
 PO Box 1630  
 Miles City, MT 59301  
 (406)234-0900

**Contacts Outside Fish, Wildlife & Parks**

**Montana State Agencies**

**Agriculture**  
 406-444-3144  
**Guides & Outfitters**  
 406-841-2300  
**Livestock**  
 406-444-7323  
**State Lands**  
 406-444-2074  
**Tourism**  
 406-841-2870

**Land Maps**

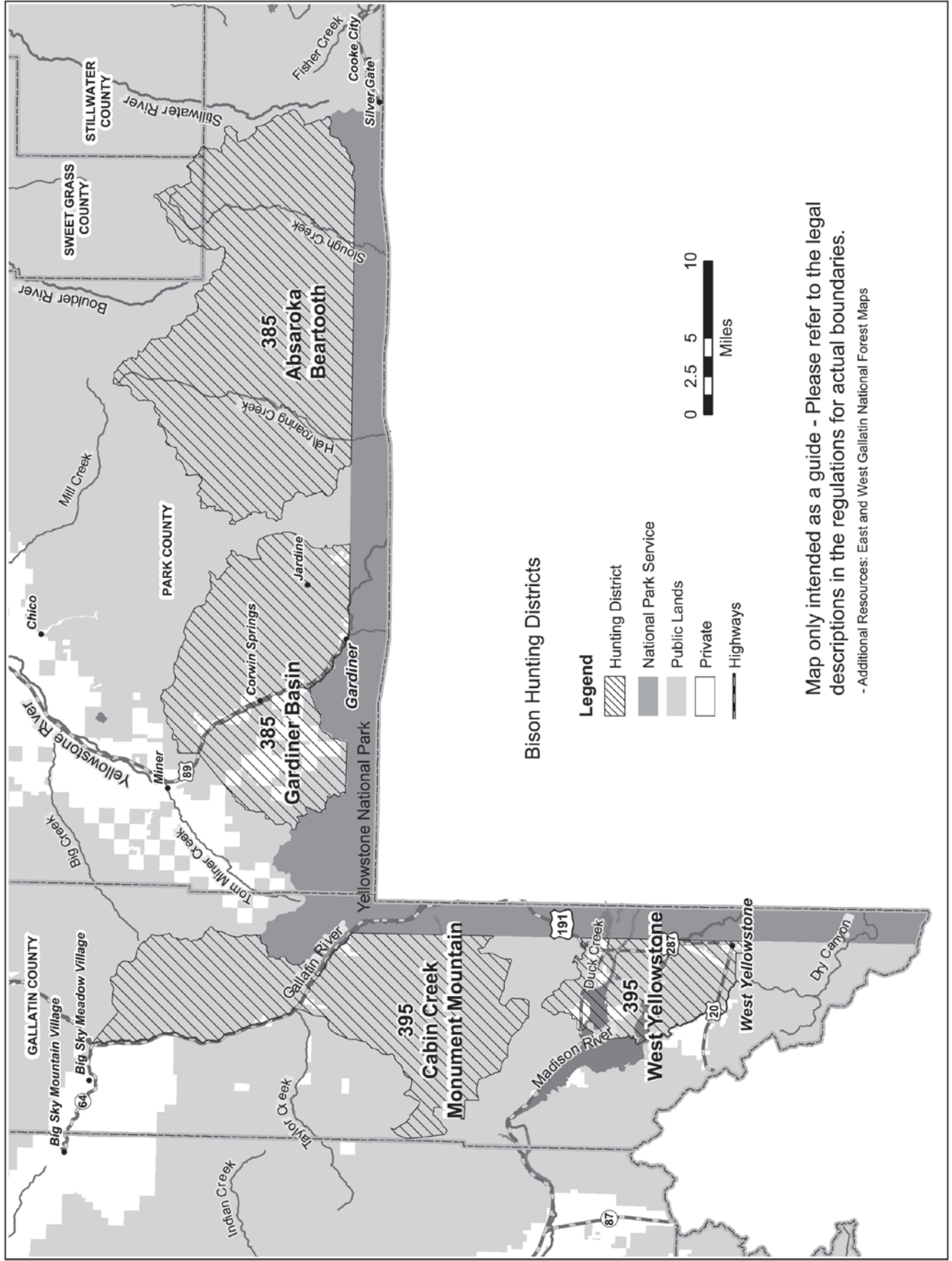
**Bureau of Land Management**  
 406-896-5000  
**Topographical (USGS)**  
 888-275-8747

**Tribal Lands**

**Blackfeet Reservation**  
 406-338-7276  
**Crow Reservation**  
 406-638-2179  
**Flathead Reservation**  
 406-883-2888  
**Fort Belknap**  
 406-353-2205  
**Fort Peck Reservation**  
 406-768-5305  
**Northern Cheyenne Reservation**  
 406-477-6526  
**Rocky Boy Reservation**  
 406-395-4207

**Federal Agencies**

**US Department of Interior**  
 202-208-3100  
**US Fish & Wildlife Service**  
 406-449-5225  
**US forest Service**  
 406-329-3511  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
 406-896-5000  
**National Weather Service**  
 406-329-4840 (Missoula)



Map only intended as a guide - Please refer to the legal descriptions in the regulations for actual boundaries.

- Additional Resources: East and West Gallatin National Forest Maps



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**  
<http://fwp.mt.gov>