

# BISON

## Concern

### Range expansion of bison into the Braeburn and Mount Nansen area concerns local residents because of potential damage to vegetation, increased hunter traffic, and impacts of bison and hunter disturbance on other wildlife.

With a potentially growing bison herd (Figure 7), people are concerned that herd size will be managed by increasing permits for bison hunters, leading to increased disturbance of wildlife in the bison herd range — both direct, and indirect because of increased trails and traffic. An increase in the number of packed trails may provide better access for wolves. Trapping in the area has already been affected by snowmobiles used for bison hunting during winter, and more hunter traffic would only make the situation worse. The combination of bison hunting and other hunting has resulted in increased disturbance in the area.

Social interactions between bison, caribou and moose are not well understood, and it is not known if bison “push” caribou and moose out of areas. Residents have noted that there are some benefits of the bison harvest (economic, and the value of meat from a harvested bison).

## Solution **Recommend ways to reduce impacts of bison to the Yukon Wood Bison Technical Team.**

The Yukon Wood Bison Technical Team (YWBTT) includes members from LSCFN and CRRC and makes recommendations to YTG, LSCFN and Champagne and Aishihik First Nations (CAFN) about the management of the Aishihik bison herd. At the time of this plan, the bison team is drafting a new bison management plan for 2004-2009. The draft is not yet completed, and through the participation of the LSCFN and CRRC, community concerns and suggested solutions in this plan can be recommended in the bison plan.

## Commitment

By who? By when?

**CRRC, LSCFN**  
2004

Recommend more active Game Guardians and YTG Conservation Officer participation during the harvest to help manage harvest activity. [9]

For hunters accessing the bison herd from the Aishihik area, the local Game Guardian and YTG Conservation Officers assist hunters to locate groups of bison during the hunt. This helps to minimize the impact of concentrated numbers of people hunting the herd. Doing so in the Mount Nansen area may similarly help to manage negative impacts of the hunt.

**CRRC, LSCFN**  
2004

Recommend support for a local knowledge study about bison interactions with wildlife. [10]

Through the YWBTT and bison plan development, CAFN has raised similar concerns about the social impacts of bison on people and other wildlife. Through participation on the YWBTT, the LSCFN can recommend support for this study and request participation in the development of the methodology. The proposed study relates to work already underway by LSCFN to document traditional land use and identify important places on the land.

**CRRC, LSCFN**  
2004

Recommend that bison hunters continue to be educated about the importance of respect for the land and other wildlife when out on the land. [11]

Annual hunter workshops provide the opportunity to remind hunters about the need to respect the land and wildlife.

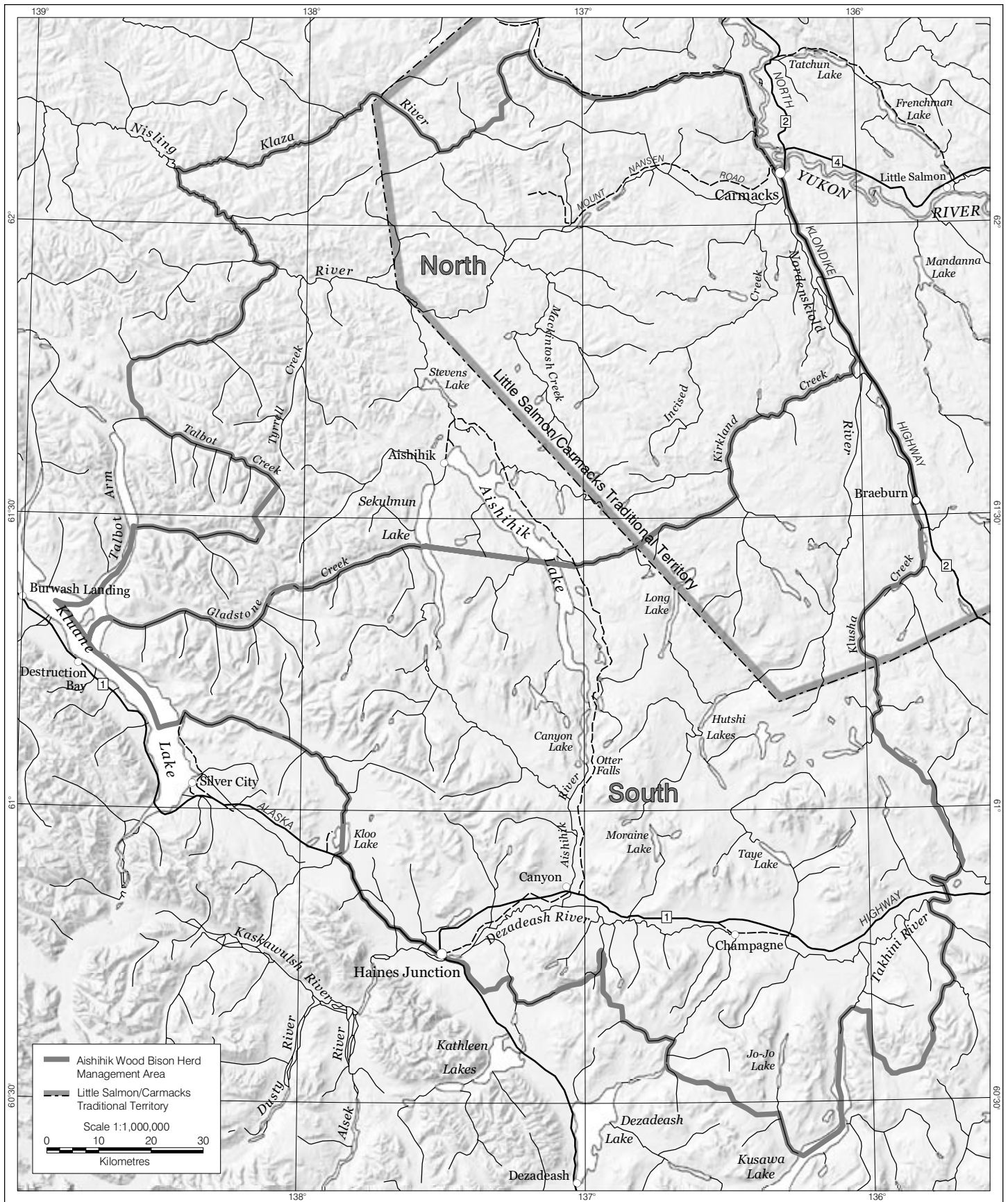


Figure 7. Aishihik Wood Bison Herd management area. Management area includes the current range of the bison herd.

**Concern****The community needs information about bison management to be better explained and made more accessible.**

A bison management plan has been in place for the Aishihik wood bison herd since it was introduced in 1987. This plan sets out how the herd will be managed for five-year terms. The 1998-2003 plan is currently under review, guided by the YWBTT. With range expansion of the herd towards the Carmacks area, the potential for increased herd harvesting, and increased impacts seen by area residents from hunting, Carmacks area residents want more information on how this herd will be managed.

**Solution Make bison management information more accessible to the community.**

There are a number of ways to get information to the community about bison management. These include a bison newsletter, periodic columns in the local newspaper, holding YWBTT meetings in Carmacks enabling community attendance at the meetings, and installing wildlife viewing panels at a highway pull-off to provide information about bison.

**Commitment**

By who? By when?

**CRRC, LSCFN**  
2004

Recommend to the YWBTT ways to improve communication with the community. [12] Through their participation on the YWBTT, the LSCFN and CRRC can recommend how the YWBTT can best convey information about bison management to the community.

**Concern****Local trappers/traplines are being disturbed by bison hunters.**

Some trappers have noticed impacts on their traplines from snowmobile trails and activities associated with bison hunting in the late winter.

**Solution Better information identifying active traplines and addressing concerns should be highlighted for bison hunters.**

All bison permit holders are required to take an annual workshop. This provides the opportunity to share information with hunters about how to avoid trapline trails and disturbing traps. Signs posted on trapline trails would also help identify active traplines for people travelling on the land.

**Commitment**

By who? By when?

**YTG, LSCFN**  
2004-2009

Provide clearer information to bison hunters about how to avoid conflicts with trapping activities. [13]

This can be provided at the compulsory annual workshop for bison permit holders.

**CRRC**  
2004-2009

Provide signs for trappers that are concerned. [14]

To encourage people on the land to travel through the area with care, trappers can post signs identifying that their traplines are active, and that traps are set along trails.