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Hovenweep National Monument

Colorado National Parks

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### US Dept of Interior (NPS) Hovenweep National Monument Square Tower Group: Hovenweep Memorandum

National Park Service of the United States

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The eight-foot gate can be handled by a man on the ground if necessary. He can open the gate and stand behind it until the animals go through, then swing it closed and climb topside. However, a rope would be safer handled by a man on top.

Men working gates on the sorting pen and chute should remain motionless and as well hidden as possible until they swing the gates shut. Spectators often frighten the animals too.

A technique that might prove useful would be as follows: Have all animals in the 32x32 corral, move a few of them into the 32x24 corral and close the gate on the rest. Then move one animal into the sorting pen, look it over and decide what to do. If it is to be left, open an outside gate. If it is to be shipped, open the chute gate and, by waving and prodding if necessary, start it up the chute and keep it moving. If there is but one animal in the 32x24 corral, decide what to do with it there. If it is to be shipped, open both the sorting pen and chute gates and haze the animal as fast as possible. When moving they will always head for an open gate, but once they back out of the chute or crate it will be exceedingly difficult to make them reenter.

If you are planning to slaughter, use the sorting pen. The animals should be shot from above where the neck joins the head - in the nape. A rifle with calibre better than .30 is preferable. The carcass can be hauled out by a horse for butchering. The "smell of blood" does not seem to frighten buffalo, so you should have no special trouble getting other animals into the pen for slaughter.

In one of your previous memoranda you mentioned that there are no facilities for rounding up the bison. Baiting with hay worked well at Yellowstone last winter. The animals were hungry and we took a hay rack over then dribbled hay along until we got into the corral, then we dumped quite a bit. The rest was easy. Whether that will work or not, I do not know. If it does not, you can try hazing the animals on horseback (sometimes dangerous, especially in winter) or with pickup trucks. They move easily if not rushed. But do not try it on foot because buffalos are faster and more dangerous than they look. Caution must be exercised to keep the man handling the gate hidden and motionless or all your efforts at getting the animals corraled will be lost.

Wildlife Ranger Estes Suter of Wind Cave is an expert at handling bison. If you believe it necessary this first year, it might