



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **AMERICAN PRAIRIE OPENS MORE ACRES TO HUNTING**

*Nonprofit organization provides public opportunities to harvest bison and hunt elk*

American Prairie is expanding public hunting opportunities on its deeded property for the 2021-2022 hunting season. The conservation organization is increasing public access by enrolling thousands of additional acres of its private land in the Block Management hunter access program managed by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). This move boosts the total inventory of property open to hunters to over 69,000 acres.

In addition, American Prairie is pleased to announce 20 members of the public have drawn a bison harvest opportunity and 18 members of the public drew a special limited elk hunt on the wildlife-rich Blue Ridge property.

“We know Montana outdoor recreationalists and hunters share our deep appreciation for the landscape and its wildlife,” said Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie. “Being able to share this land with the public is a core, and highly rewarding, component of our mission. We want more Montana families to experience what the American Prairie can offer.”

### **NEW AMERICAN PRAIRIE PROPERTIES ENROLLED IN BLOCK MANAGEMENT**

For the upcoming hunting season, American Prairie expanded its Block Management Area (BMA) inventory by enrolling the White Rock property and the recently acquired Cow Creek property for 4,736 new acres. That brings the total deeded land enrolled to 69,498 acres, spanning nine unique BMAs.

American Prairie consults annually with MT FWP and public hunters to determine which lands are enrolled into Block Management. That inventory is revised each year based on management objectives, population estimates, and habitat quality.

“One of our goals is to support the growth of wildlife populations,” said Dr. Daniel Kinka, wildlife restoration manager for American Prairie. “However, decades of scientific research teach us that a healthy prairie ecosystem relies on predation, which has historically included human hunting on the grasslands. When carefully managed, wildlife populations can continue to grow and thrive amidst human hunting.”

For the first time this year, the conservation organization will provide special boat-in hunting access to the PN Ranch and Cow Creek properties, which are adjacent to the Missouri River Corridor. According to Mike Quist Kautz, Director of Recreation and Public Access, the boat-in access will help boost the diversity of habitat and hunting styles that are offered this year.

“We are offering nine diverse Block Management units this year to help hunters access grasslands, ponderosa ridges, and the rolling prairie,” said Kautz. “Based on hunter feedback, the new boat access will provide a unique way to get into that Missouri River Breaks country.”

A full list of American Prairie’s 2021 BMA inventory is below and more information about enrolled properties can be found at <https://www.americanprairie.org/hunting>

Property Name & Map	Acres Enrolled	BMA Type
<a href="#">2-Crow</a>	7,335	2
<a href="#">PN Ranch</a>	20,203	2
<a href="#">Dry Fork</a>	12,310	2
<a href="#">Timber Creek</a>	18,213	1
<a href="#">Blue Ridge</a> (formally called Burnt Lodge)	4,489	1
<a href="#">Cow Creek*</a>	1,588	1
<a href="#">White Rock*</a>	3,148	2
<a href="#">Ragland Bench</a>	639	1
<a href="#">Spring Creek</a>	1,573	1

## SPECIAL ELK HUNTS AWARDED

For the second year in a row, American Prairie has offered public hunters an opportunity to hunt bull elk on its wildlife-rich Blue Ridge property, located in southern Phillips County.

For many years, Montanans were unable to access the Blue Ridge property, nestled in the Larb Hills, located approximately 45 miles southeast of Malta. That changed in 2021 after American Prairie purchased the property and opened it to the public for a wide array of recreational opportunities, including the offering of a special limited hunt in prime habitat for bull elk.

A special online drawing took place last month to award a total of 18 elk hunts on the 9,695-acre Blue Ridge Special Management Area. For the 2021 season, eight archery permit holders and eight rifle permit holders have been awarded an opportunity to hunt bull elk. American Prairie also offered two additional permits for youth-only antlerless elk hunts on the property.

The free drawing was open to hunters who already possessed a permit in districts 620-20, 620-21, 622-20, or a 622-01 youth elk permit. The 18 recipients were randomly selected and notified earlier this month. All but two of the winners are from Montana and represent local communities from all over the state including Choteau, Helena, Malta, Nashua, Glasgow, Circle, Condon and Fort Benton.



## **BISON HARVESTS AWARDED**

American Prairie is also pleased to announce 20 successful applicants have been awarded bison harvest opportunities. Similar to previous years, the public expressed strong interest in the harvest and submitted over 3,100 applications.

Applicants were chosen based on a random lottery and 19 of the 20 went to the people who live and work in Montana and the communities surrounding the Reserve. The bison harvest drawing was free to enter, but registrants awarded a harvest opportunity are required to pay a non-refundable fee of \$300.

According to Damien Austin, Vice President and Reserve superintendent, the bison harvest is a unique opportunity for hunters and an important management tool for American Prairie.

“Public bison harvests have been a real win-win for the community and for us,” said Austin. “They provide a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for hunters, and they serve as a critical tool to help us replicate natural predation for the health of our herd and the land.”

More information about the bison harvest can be found at <https://www.americanprairie.org/bison-harvest>

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## **About American Prairie Reserve**

American Prairie Reserve’s vision is to create a vast and collaboratively-managed prairie destination that serves as a fully functioning ecosystem for wildlife, and offers visitors permanent access to the landscape that shaped our nation’s character. When complete, the Reserve will be larger than Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined, and will support wildlife species that historically called the Great Plains home. Already open to the public for recreation including camping and hunting, the Reserve offers visitors an opportunity to connect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at [americanprairie.org](http://americanprairie.org).