



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

JULY 25, 2018

Contact: Beth Saboe, Public Information & Outreach Manager

Phone: 406-600-4906

Email: beth@americanprairie.org

**AMERICAN PRAIRIE RESERVE RELEASES UPDATED BISON
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

New protocols will guide Reserve's vision for conservation of America's national mammal

BOZEMAN, MT - American Prairie Reserve is pleased to announce a new, comprehensive, and innovative plan for bison restoration and management. Restoration of a large population of bison is central to APR's mission to create in the northern plains of Montana the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of America's heritage.

Since creating its first Bison Management Plan in 2004, American Prairie Reserve has made great strides in bison conservation and is methodically bringing bison back to their historically pivotal role on the prairie. Beginning with the first reintroduction of 16 bison in 2005, APR's herd grew to approximately 860 animals in 2017. What's more, the herd continues to be healthy by every measure: genetics, disease, reproduction and survivorship.

"We at American Prairie Reserve are looking forward to continued management of a robust and healthy herd under the guidance of this document," said Alison Fox, CEO of American Prairie Reserve. "We are proud of our progress on restoring bison as a keystone species and the preservation of the vital prairie ecosystem."

Reintroduction of a native species requires adaptive management as the population grows and thus this new plan is needed to guide decision-making over the next 5-10 years. As a living document, the Bison Management Plan will be modified and adapted as needed to incorporate current best practices, science, and research.

"This updated plan has benefited from input and review by numerous experts in bison and prairie ecology and management," said Damien Austin, Reserve Operations Manager.

“Already we have been working diligently under the guidance of the Bison Management Plan, employing tactics that will help us maintain a healthy herd while we work toward our goals.”

The complete [Bison Management Plan](#) is available online but top objectives include:

- Establishing a self-sustaining, naturally regulated and ecologically effective population of at least 10,000 bison that is free of cattle-gene introgression, semi-free ranging and subject to the forces of natural selection.
- Restoring all native species and ecological processes and their natural interactions with bison.
- Establishing a population that enhances the long-term survival of the species genetically, behaviorally and ecologically, and that promotes prairie conservation.
- Establishing a population that contributes to removal of wild bison from the list of Species of Greatest Conservation Need by the state of Montana and from “near threatened” on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species.
- Collecting and disseminating scientific information on bison biology, reintroduction techniques and the ecological requirements for successful wild bison restoration.

###

On Behalf of American Prairie Reserve

Many thanks to the authors of the comprehensive Bison Management Plan: Curtis Freese, Kyran Kunkel, Damien Austin, and Betty Holder. Special thanks and acknowledgement to those providing the peer reviews, including: Samuel D. Fuhlendorf, Ph.D., Regents Professor and Groendyke Chair in Wildlife Management, Oklahoma State University, and Kate A. Schoenecker, Ph.D., Ecologist, USGS Fort Collins Science Center, and Ecosystem Science and Sustainability, Colorado State University.

About American Prairie Reserve

American Prairie Reserve’s mission is to create the largest nature reserve in the continental United States, a spectacular refuge for people and wildlife preserved forever as part of America’s heritage. When complete, the Reserve will be larger than Yellowstone and Glacier National Parks combined and will support all the animals that historically called the Great Plains home, including buffalo, wolves, bears, elk, deer, pronghorn, bighorn sheep, swift fox, upland birds including the greater sage grouse,

birds of prey, and all manner of snakes, amphibians, and insects. Already open to the public for recreation including camping, hunting, fishing, and birding, the Reserve offers visitors a once-in-a-lifetime, horizon-expanding opportunity to reconnect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at americanprairie.org