

**Red Sleep Mountain Drive Self-Guided Tour**

*The numbered signs provide information on habitat and natural features.*

- 1 These grasslands are made up of a combination of native bunchgrasses and broad-leaved plants called forbs. The plants are dry-land adapted and can survive the Bison Range's average precipitation of only 13 inches per year. Some bird species nest only in these bunchgrasses.
- 2 Pauline Creek is an intermittent stream with several small impoundments that supply water for wildlife. The streamside thickets are supported by water seeping out from the creek. Watch for song birds that use this area. In summer, bears frequently search here for berries.
- 3 Elk Lane joins most of the eight grazing units of the Refuge and leads to the roundup corral. Bison are held in this lane during roundup each falls. Springs in the lane and elsewhere on the Range have been improved with watering troughs for better wildlife water supply.
- 4 Edge habitats are excellent places to view wildlife, especially birds. Each habitat has its own complement of wildlife species. The edge between two habitats will harbor species from both and some are creatures that live only along edges.
- 5 Forest communities thrive at the higher elevations, on the cooler north sides of the hill, and in moist draws and depressions. Douglas fir grow on the north sides where their seedlings can get a foothold. Ponderosa pine are found on the dryer, warmer south sides of the hills.
- 6 The High Point of Red Sleep Mountain Drive is 4,700 feet above sea level. The highest spot on the Refuge, at 4,885 feet, is to the south. The display describes historic Glacial Lake Missoula, which helped to form this valley.
- 7 Grasslands have evolved along with the grazers. Bison, elk and pronghorn use this prairie resource. Grasses grow from the base of the stem so they can still continue to grow after being grazed. Different animals eat different kinds or parts of plants at different growth stages and thus minimize competition.
- 8 Buffalo wallows are dry dust beds, often found in clay banks. Bison roll here to rid themselves of insects. They also display dominance by displacing lower-ranked animals from the wallows.
- 9 River bottom woodlands of Cottonwood and Juniper are sub-irrigated from the stream and provide lush vegetation and cover. Watch for white-tail deer, elk and a variety of waterfowl and other birds.
- 10 The Bison Corrals provide for safe handling of the bison during the annual roundup. At this time, bison are marked and check for health.

**Bison and Bison Facts**

While true buffalo are the Cape buffalo of Africa or the water buffalo of Asia, the American bison has been called "buffalo" for so long that we now use the names interchangeably in the United States. The only other bison in the world is called the wisent, which survives in small numbers on reserves in Europe.

Bison are well adapted to life on the open grasslands. Their heavy coats protect them from both summer sun and winter winds. Their thick winter coat is so well insulated that snow can lay on their backs without melting.

Bison are unpredictable and can be very dangerous. They appear slow and docile yet are quite agile and can run as fast as a horse.

Bison bulls weigh about 2,000 pounds and have heavy horns and a large hump of muscle which supports their enormous head and thick skull. They have a mass of fur on their heads and a heavy cape of fur even in summer. This enhances their size and protects them when fighting. They are especially ill-tempered during the breeding season from mid-July through August.

Cows weigh about half as much as bulls. Their horns are narrower. Cows have smaller humps and a smoother summer coat. Calves are born from mid-April through May and are a bright rust red color for the first two months. Cows are very protective of their young and can be even more dangerous than a bull.



**Wildlife of the National Bison Range**



**Whitetail Deer** - brown tail is "flagged" (raised) when deer runs.



**Elk** - very large, dark brown with light tan rump and small tail.



**Pronghorn Antelope** - small tan-and-white animal with black horns.



**Bighorn Sheep** - gray with large curly horns.



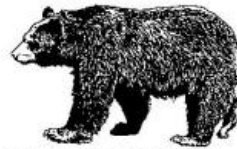
**Mule Deer** - white rump and tail with a black tip.



**Magpie** - large black and white bird with long tail.



**Golden Eagle** - large, brown bird.



**Black Bear** - comes in many colors: brown, black, tan, etc.

**ADMINISTRATION**

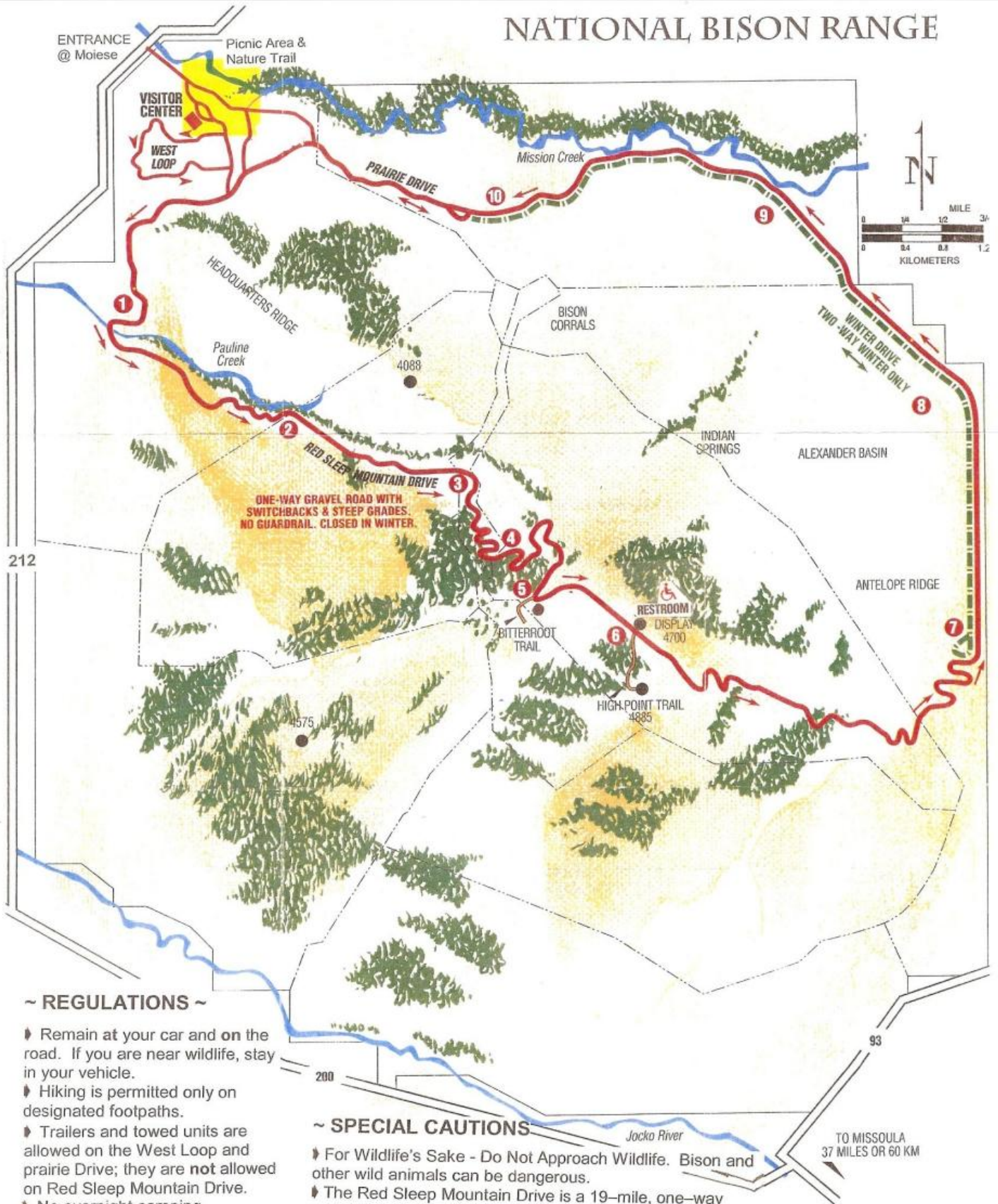
The National Bison Range is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Further information can be obtained from the Refuge Manager, National Bison Range, 58355 Bison Range Road, Moiese, Montana 59824. (406) 644-2211 extension 0 <http://bisonrange.fws.gov>

**AFTER HOURS CONTACT**

**Lake County Sheriff  
406-883-7301**



# NATIONAL BISON RANGE



## ~ REGULATIONS ~

- ◆ Remain at your car and on the road. If you are near wildlife, stay in your vehicle.
- ◆ Hiking is permitted only on designated footpaths.
- ◆ Trailers and towed units are allowed on the West Loop and prairie Drive; they are **not** allowed on Red Sleep Mountain Drive.
- ◆ No overnight camping.
- ◆ Firearms are prohibited.
- ◆ All pets must be on a leash.

All regulations strictly enforced.

## ~ SPECIAL CAUTIONS

- ◆ For Wildlife's Sake - Do Not Approach Wildlife. Bison and other wild animals can be dangerous.
- ◆ The Red Sleep Mountain Drive is a 19-mile, one-way gravel road with 10% grades. Be sure of your brakes.
- ◆ Observe the ONE WAY ONLY and DO NOT ENTER traffic signs. Roads are narrow and disregard of the signs could lead to accidents.

TO MISSOULA  
37 MILES OR 60 KM