



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Tallgrass Prairie
National Preserve

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Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve News Release

November 12, 2009
For Immediate Release
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Special Bison Bus Tours and Weekend Activity at the Preserve


Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is offering a day of special bison bus tours on Friday, November 27, 2009, announced Superintendent Wendy Lauritzen. “It will be an opportunity for those gathered for the holiday weekend to have a unique opportunity to enjoy the peaceful prairie environment and view for themselves these magnificent animals,” stated Lauritzen. Given the interest that has been expressed to see the newly reintroduced bison, up to two bus tours will be given at 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. for a total of six tours. Walk- ins are welcome or reservations can be made by calling the preserve at 620- 273- 8494. Reservations are encouraged due to the high interest. Visitors may reserve up to 10 spaces on a bus. Buses are wheelchair equipped. All tours are free of charge. Bison viewing is also available through backcountry hiking along the trails.

The presence of the 13 genetically pure bison from Wind Cave National Park returns a keystone species to the preserve’s landscape. The bison will be the parent herd for the preserve that are now making the 1078- acre Windmill pasture their home. The Wind Cave herd started with 15 animals and is maintained at under 600 animals in the park. The Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve herd is expected to reach a herd size of 100 bison in 8 – 12 years with the herd size being maintained at that level once it is reached.

Visitors may have the opportunity to view the bison from afar, but as with all wildlife viewing, an absolute sighting is not guaranteed on any one visit. Bison information, a hide and education materials will be available to enhance a hands on experience by visitors. Severe weather or bad road conditions from heavy rains may cancel bused tours. Please call ahead to check the status. Weather conditions are less likely to close trails to hikers.

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“For people who want a weekend of activity, Chase County is the place to be,” stated Lauritzen. Along with the bison tours offered on Friday, the Preserve’s ranch house will be decorated for the holidays. On Saturday November 28, between the hours of 12 pm and 4 pm , historic characters will be celebrating with an old- fashioned holiday party. The preserve activities on Saturday are part of the Chase County Chamber of Commerce kick off of “Christmas in Cottonwood Falls.” Visitors to the preserve will experience people dressed in historic costumes, playing music, and enjoying the day as they decorate the tree and read “Twas the Night Before Christmas.” Light refreshments will be served.

Visitors may wish to visit the information desk in the main ranch house before hiking into the backcountry to obtain hiking in bison country information and learn precautions to take through a short training session. The hours of operation for the buildings are 9 to 4:30 pm. Hiking opportunities in the backcountry is best during daylight hours. There is no overnight camping.

Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is located two miles north of Strong City on Kansas State Highway 177 (the Flint Hills National Scenic Byway). For more information or to make group reservations, visit the preserve’s website at www.nps.gov/tapr, email tapr_interpretation@nps.gov, or call the preserve at (620) 273- 8494. Superintendent Wendy Lauritzen can be reached at the Cottonwood Falls office headquarters at 620- 273- 6034.

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