



We will carry on for the generations yet to come our ancient relationship of respect and reverence for q̓'eyq̓'áy (buffalo).

We, the Séliš, Qlispé and Ksanka people, warmly welcome you to the Bison Range.

Enjoy your visit! good day!  
X̓est Sxl̓xalt, Ki'su'k kyukyit! –

CSKT Bison Range  
58355 Bison Range Road  
Moiese, MT 59824  
(406)-644-2211  
Website: [BISONRANGE.ORG](http://BISONRANGE.ORG)  
Facebook: [CSKTBISONRANGE](https://www.facebook.com/CSKTBISONRANGE)

After Hours Contact  
CSKT Tribal Law Enforcement  
(406)-675-4700  
Emergency: 911



# THE BISON RANGE

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
of the Flathead Reservation



# The Bison Range

---



Snq̓'eyq̓'aytn

Place of Buffalo (Séliš)

Ya·qa·kił Haqa'ki Kamquq̓ukul' Iyamu

Where the Buffalo Live (Ksanka)

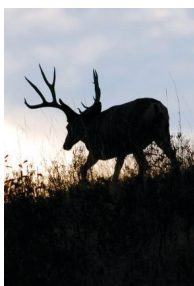


Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
of the Flathead Reservation

## Welcome



Mountain Bluebird.  
Photo by Dave Fitzpatrick



Mule deer.  
Photo by Eugene Beckes

## A Home for Wildlife

The Séliš, Q̓lispé, and Ksanka people warmly welcome you to the Bison Range, and we hope you enjoy your visit. In 2020, Congress, via Public Law 116-260, restored the Bison Range to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. For us, this was a monumental decision. It allows us to maintain our ancient relationship of respect and reverence for bison and to share with you our language and cultural traditions around this magnificent animal.

Salish and Kootenai Tribal members were directly involved in saving the bison as a viable wildlife species. The bison herd here descends from a free-ranging Reservation herd started by tribal members in the 1800s, when plains bison were near extinction. As bison faced extermination, Łatatí (Little Falcon Robe), a Q̓lispé man, traveled to the Northern Great Plains and returned to his home on the reservation with a group of bison calves. Many of the bison purchased by the U.S. government for the Bison Range's initial herd were descendants of those bison.

The Bison Range encompasses a large area of native intermountain grassland, a rare habitat in North America that provides essential habitat for a variety of birds, mammals, plants, and other creatures. Well-known for its incredible wildlife viewing and photographic opportunities, the Bison Range is a great place to experience nature in western Montana.



Bighorn sheep rams. Photo by Dave Fitzpatrick

8. Bison wallows are shallow, circular depressions in the ground, often found in clay banks. Bison roll in these areas to rid themselves of insects. They also display dominance by displacing lower-ranked animals from the wallows.

9. Cottonwood and juniper trees line the creek and provide lush vegetation that serves as cover for wildlife. Watch for bald eagles year-round and for trumpeter swans in Mission Creek during the winter.

## **The Tribes: A History of Excellence in Conservation**

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are a people of vision and stewards of our land and natural resources, being the first in setting environmental standards for the lands retained from our traditional homelands. We maintain stringent air quality standards and established the nation's first Tribal wilderness. We administer our own water quality standards and established an ordinance to protect all waterways. Tens of thousands of acres of Reservation lands are set aside as grizzly bear, elk, bison, and bighorn sheep conservation areas. Once locally extinct native species — trumpeter swans, peregrine falcons, and leopard frogs — have been re-established. Our restoration efforts on the Jocko and Flathead Rivers and our acquisition and restoration of fish and wildlife habitat across the Reservation are models cited nationwide.

We achieve good stewardship through excellent fish and wildlife management, continuing our cultural traditions, working together across Tribal programs, setting high standards and professional qualifications, providing due process and public involvement as part of regulation development, staying active in the political process, and coordinating with Federal agencies and State government on regional topics. The Séliš, Qlispé, and Ksanka people who call this land home are strong advocates for protection of our cultural resources, our lands, wildlife, water, and people now and into the future.



Photo by Dave Fitzpatrick



## Vehicles

### **Red Sleep Mountain Drive** *Self-guided Tour*



Near the top of Red Sleep Mountain Drive. Photo by David Fitzpatrick

- The use of any type of wildlife call is prohibited, including elk bugling and bird calls. The use of calls for identification purposes is allowed as long as they are not loud enough to attract/repel wildlife.
- Fishing regulations are available at the visitor center.
- All passengers must be seated inside vehicles while the vehicle is in motion.
- Motorcycles, ATVs, and bicycles are only allowed on paved roads within the visitor center and Day Use areas — not on the auto-tour routes.
- Parking is allowed along the wildlife drives, as long as traffic is not impeded.

Red Sleep Drive is named for Louise K<sup>w</sup>ils?ítš or Red Sleep. She was a woman of Séliš, Nez Perce and Qlispé (Kalis-pel or Pend d'Oreille) descent and was married to Duncan McDonald, who was a Scottish and Nez Perce fur trader, interpreter, and tribal leader. Duncan McDonald assisted Dr. Morton Elrod of the American Bison Society in reviewing and recommending the Ravalli Hill location on the Flathead Indian Reservation for establishment of a national bison preserve.

The following information corresponds with numbered signs located along the Red Sleep Mountain Drive.

1. The expansive grasslands on the Bison Range consist of native bunchgrasses and wildflowers. Some species of conservation concern, like the grasshopper sparrow, nest only in these bunchgrasses.



Ruffed Grouse.  
Photo by Eugene Beckes

2. Pauline Creek is an intermittent stream with several small impoundments that provide water for wildlife. A variety of songbirds inhabit these riparian areas. During the summer, black bears search these thickets for berries.

3. This fenced area, known as Elk Lane, was constructed to aid in bison management by joining



Buck White-tailed Deer  
Photo by Eugene Beckes

the grazing units within the Bison Range to a corral system. In spring and early summer, abundant wildflowers, birds, and other wildlife can be seen.

4. Forest communities thrive at high elevations and in moist draws and depressions. Watch for red-naped sapsuckers in this habitat.

5. Bitterroot Trail is named for the beautiful bitterroots that grow in the spring. Bitterroot is a very culturally significant plant for the Séliš, Qlispé, and Ksanka people. The trail also has a view of the valley that is sure to take your breath away.



Cow and calf Elk.  
Photo by Eugene Beckes

6. High Point trailhead is 4,700 feet above sea level. The highest elevation on the Bison Range is 4,885 feet, a one-mile round-trip hike from the trailhead. To the east is the 93,000-acre Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness Area, where the nearly 10,000-foot high peaks are part of the first wilderness area designated by an Indian Tribe in the United States.

7. Grasslands have evolved along with grazing animals such as bison, elk, and pronghorn, which depend on the grasslands for survival. Listen for the buzzy songs of clay-colored and grasshopper sparrows in the grasslands.



Bitterroot flowers. Photo by David Rockwell



Redtail Hawk  
Photo by Eugene Beckes

In the early 20th century, Congress passed laws that opened the Reservation to non-Indian homesteading. Around the same time, Congress expropriated land from the Tribes for the establishment of the refuge, and President Theodore Roosevelt signed legislation on May 23, 1908, authorizing funds to obtain suitable land for the refuge. This was the first time Congress appropriated tax dollars to secure land specifically to conserve wildlife.

## **Enjoying the Refuge**

Staff at the visitor center can answer your questions and provide you with the latest wildlife sighting locations. Visitor center exhibits provide information about the wildlife and the natural and cultural history of the Bison Range.

### *Refuge Hours*

The Bison Range is open during daylight hours, weather and road conditions permitting. Closing times vary seasonally and are posted at the entrance gate and at the visitor center.

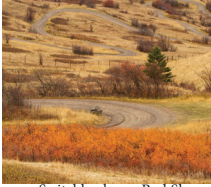
### *Wildlife Drives*

The primary means of experiencing the Bison Range is by motor vehicle. The wildlife is accustomed to vehicles, so cars serve as an excellent observation and photography blind (commercial photographers must obtain a photography permit at the visitor center). Walking away from vehicles is prohibited except along designated trails or the fishing access area.



Crossing Mission Creek.. Photo by David Rockwell

The West Loop and Prairie Drives are short drives in relatively flat land and are open year-round.



Switchbacks on Red Sleep Mountain Drive.  
Photo by David Fitzpatrick

Large vehicles (over 30 feet long) and vehicles towing trailers are not permitted on any of the Bison Range drives. Trailers can be left at the visitor center parking lot.

Red Sleep Mountain Drive is a 19-mile, one-way loop road that gains 2,000 feet in elevation. It is typically open mid-May to mid-October. There are many switchbacks and steep, ten-percent grades along the drive. Allow at least two hours.

### *Trails and Walks*

Located next to the Day Use Area, the one-mile Nature Trail and 1/4-mile Grassland Trail are ways to experience the Bison Range on foot. During the summer season, visitors along Red Sleep Mountain Drive can also walk the 1/2-mile Bitterroot Trail or hike to the highest point of the Bison Range (4,885 feet in elevation) along the High Point Trail, which is a one-mile round-trip.

## **Protecting the Refuge**

For your safety and the protection of resources, please follow all regulations.

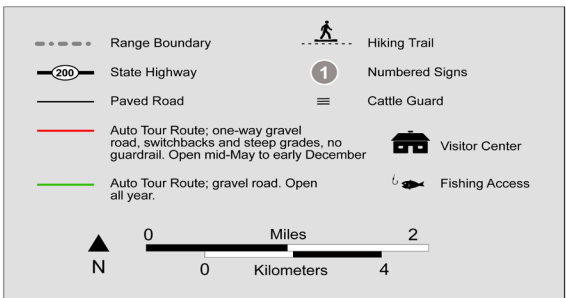
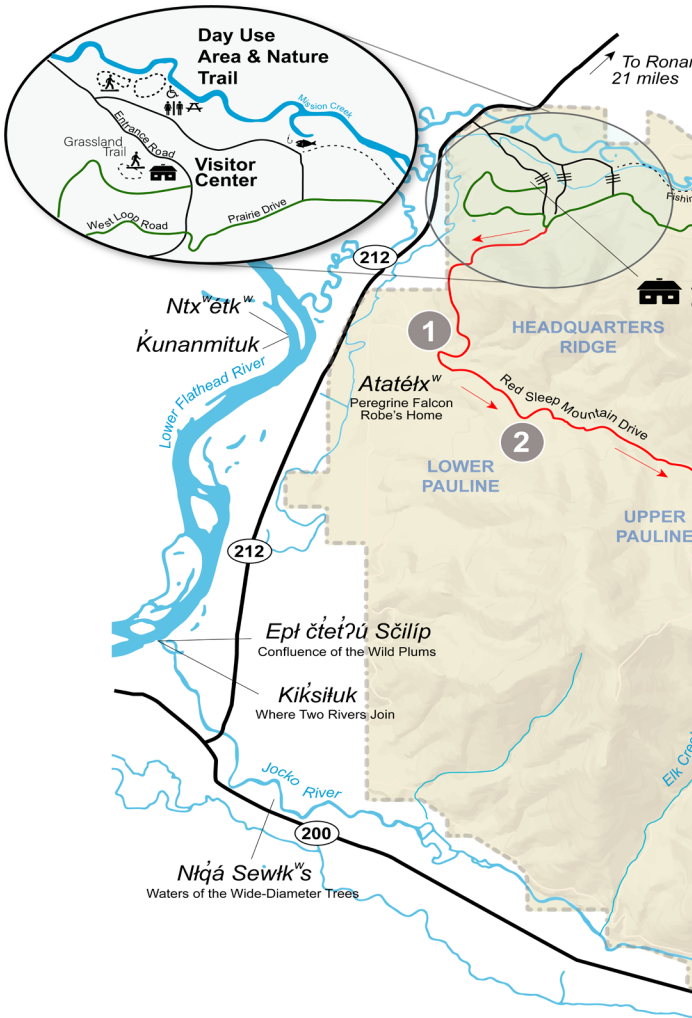
### *Safety and Other Regulations*



View wildlife from your car.  
Photo by David Fitzpatrick

- Remain inside your vehicle while on the road unless you are hiking a designated trail. If you need to get out on the roads, you must be able to touch your vehicle at all times.
- Never approach animals. The animals at the Bison Range are wild and unpredictable, no matter how calm they appear to be. View wildlife from inside or at your car. Always stay at least 100 yards (91 m) away from bears and wolves, and at least 25 yards (23 m) away from all other animals, including bison, deer, and elk.
- To protect wildlife and visitors, pets must be on a leash and under control at all times.
- Collection or disturbance of natural objects such as plants, animals, feathers, and antlers is not allowed, except by special permit.





*Snyel'mn Nšiyetk'w*

Place-Where-You-Surround-Something Creek

*'A·kikq'at'atukpti'it*

*'A·kn'uxu'nuk*



# THE BISON RANGE

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
of the Flathead Reservation