



**Tootinaowaziibeeng
Treaty Reserve**

Dear TTR Members:

As many of you are aware, TTR would like to be part of an action plan to bring the bison back to the prairies; and so, a few years ago, the Niibin Mashkode-biz project was identified to bring back the bison to our people and community. This initiative consists of developing a sustainable process for a bison operation that included the following three phases:

Phase One:

Research/Planning & Business Planning (Completed)

Phase Two:

Development of a small (20-head) bison operation on reserve (pending)

Phase Three:

Expansion (pending)

Although a business plan was completed in 2021, it has been identified that moving forward with the project's subsequent phases will require more consultation and discussion with TTR's members as this undertaking requires a strong community commitment.

To continue with the capacity-building efforts, and as a result of funding available through the **SARA Consultation, Cooperation, and Accommodation Project of the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources**, TTR is now able to share more detailed information about the Wood and Plain Bison as the species-at-risk that we have identified as a priority.

Our first information session was completed at the Community Hall on October 28th, 2022. During this meeting, we had the opportunity to share information with community members and youth about the bison's history, its traditional uses, and the current state of bison in Canada.

Please note that a copy of the presentation and the videos shared during this information session are now available at the TTR website:

<https://ttr292.ca/index.php/ttr-summer-buffalo-project/>

We also invite you to participate in our next information meeting, which will take place this coming February 2023, where we will continue to share information and get your feedback about this amazing animal that has been vital to our people since time immemorial. Please also note that transportation and lunch will be offered to all participants. We will also have door prizes!!

As we approach this meeting, we will confirm the date, time, and location and let everyone know via social media, posters and flyers.

Please stay connected for more news and activities regarding this program.

Don Clarke

Sharing Information about
Species-at-Risk in TTR



Sharing Information about Species-at-Risk in TTR,
October 28th, 2022

BISON TODAY

In Canada, there are only three free-ranging herds of plains bison, with a total of approximately 700 in British Columbia and Saskatchewan, preferring meadows and grasslands.

Wood bison are more northern, with approximately free-ranging 3,000 bison in Alberta, Manitoba, British Columbia, Yukon, and Northwest Territories, preferring open boreal and aspen forests with large wet meadows.

The Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) lists these wild populations as:

- Plains bison as threatened (wild populations are likely to become endangered if nothing is done to reverse the factors leading to their destruction or extinction);
- Wood bison as a special concern (wild populations may become threatened or endangered because of a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats).

It is estimated that there were
60 million bison
in North America in 1800
and by 1899 there were
fewer than 1,000

Regina's original name was "Pile o' Bones." Bone picking was so profitable that when the number of bones decreased, pickers would burn the prairie to make finding them easier or raid indigenous graves. It is said that the indigenous did not participate in the bone-picking industry out of respect for the bison. By the early 1890s, the prairies had been picked clean, and the \$40 million industry collapsed.

The hunt that had once supported such vast and complex development had exhausted itself, and desperate indigenous communities accepted treaty terms from an opportunistic and unscrupulous Canadian government.



Do you want to know how the bison was saved from extinction? Our history will continue in our next bulletin...

Wait, so what happened to the Bison Population?

We know that bison was the basis of the Plain's way of life. Meat provided nutrition, sinew and bone became tools, and hides became clothing and shelter for our people!

During the late 1800s, the increased hunting capacity, combined with the introduction of cross-country railways in the United States and Canada, and American policies that advocated for the extermination of the bison.

In Canada, fur traders, and white hunters, helped slaughter about four million buffalo. When Canadian settlers started farming, the first cash crop for some was bison bones, sold by the ton for fertilizer.

Eventually, bison skeletons covered the prairies. It became profitable to collect the bones and ship them by railway box cars to fertilizer plants for their phosphorous or sugar refining plants that baked and ground them to filter sugar during processing.

Do you know the traditional uses of Bison?

