

**“BISON ON THE EDGE” CONFERENCE**  
*“Sturgeon River Plains Bison – Successes and Challenges”*  
*Canada’s only free-ranging plains bison on their historic range*

**Big River, Saskatchewan**  
**Big River Community Centre**  
**June 8 – 10, 2010**

**CONFERENCE AGENDA**

**TUESDAY – JUNE 8, 2010**

6:30 PM – 10:00 PM

- Registration /Refreshments /Cash Bar
- Viewing of Displays
- Entertainment – “Gumby and the Pokeys”

**WEDNESDAY – JUNE 9, 2010**

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

- Late Registration
- Coffee Service

8:30 – 9:00 AM

**Conference Opening**

- **Welcome**
  - **Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards** – Conference Hosts
    - Gord Vaadeland – Executive Director
  - **Town of Big River**
    - Mayor Brian Brownfield
  - **Big River First Nation**
    - Brian Scribe – Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations
  - **Rural Municipality of Big River No. 555**
    - Doug Panter - Reeve
  - **Rural Municipality of Canwood No. 494**
    - Bruce Harper – Deputy Reeve
- **Conference Blessing** – Tom Bear – Elder (Big River First Nation)
- **Opening Remarks**
  - **Clint Panter** – Vice –President; Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards
  - **Alan Fehr** – Field Unit Superintendent - Northern Prairies Field Unit; Superintendent - Prince Albert National Park
  - **Todd Olexson** – Acting Director Lands Branch - Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment

*[Facilitator: Seth Cherry – Ecosystem Scientist – Prince Albert National Park]*

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM

- ***Blood Tribe First Nation: A Prairie Peoples’ Commitment to Conservation***
  - **Paulette Fox** – Manager of the Environmental Protection Division - Blood Tribe First Nation; Stand Off, Alberta
- ***Plains Bison – Local Aboriginal Perspectives and Experiences***
  - **Alex Ahenakew** – Ahtahkakoop First Nation

9:45 AM – 10:00 AM

- ***Successes and Challenges of Canada’s Bison Recovery Herds and Elk Island National Park – “A National and Global Perspective”***
  - **Archie Handel** – Resource Management and Public Safety Specialist - Elk Island National Park, Alberta.

10:00 AM – 10:30 AM

- Mid-morning nutrition break

10:30 AM – 11:00 AM

- ***The Sturgeon River Plains Bison – An Unfinished Story: Early Development and Management Strategies of a Free-Ranging Plains Bison Population***
  - **Dan Frandsen** – Manager Resource Conservation (Parks Canada – Western Arctic Field Unit); formerly Ecosystem Scientist (Prince Albert National Park)

11:00 AM – 12:30 PM

- ***Sturgeon River Plains Bison – Research Synthesis: “What Have We Learned?”***  
*(Question & Answer Break)*
- ***Sturgeon River Plains Bison - Linking Research and Management”***
  - **Daniel Fortin, Ph.D.** – Associate Professor - Department of Biology, Université Laval – Quebec City, Quebec.

### **Conference Field Trip**

*[Facilitator: Joanne Reimer – Field Technician - Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards]*

12:30 PM – 1:00 PM

- Conference participants pick up boxed lunches and board transportation for field trip.

1:00 PM – 6:00 PM

- **Field Trip Itinerary**

- Site visit in RM of Canwood to view selected management actions of Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards to reduce bison excursions onto agricultural lands.
- Visit to Prince Albert National Park's west side and the core range of the Sturgeon River Plains Bison population. Participants will be divided into two groups, each group rotating through the activities. These include a 6 km trip on horse-drawn wagons and a 2.5 km hike through key bison habitat, a field research demonstration lead by Dr. Daniel Fortin and Université Laval field staff, and a visit to the Sturgeon Crossing Station – Parks Canada's headquarters on the west side of Prince Albert National Park.

6:30 PM – 10:00 PM

- **Barbecue Supper and Social Evening at Ladder Valley Hall**

**Complementary Conference Activities at the Big River Community Centre**

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

- Educational group tours of conference displays and interactive interpretive activities.

7:00 PM – 9:00 PM

- Community open house at the conference facility. Tours of displays and other interpretive activities.

**Thursday – June 10, 2010**

*[Facilitator: Rhys Beaulieu – Regional Wildlife Ecologist, Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment - Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan]*

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM

- Coffee Service

8:30 AM – 8:45 AM

- Welcome / housekeeping

8:45 AM – 9:45 AM

- ***The Status and Conservation Guidelines for North American Bison***

- **Cormack Gates, Ph.D.** – Professor of Environmental Science and Planning, Co-Chair (North America) IUCN Bison Specialist Group, Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary – Calgary, Alberta

- ***Case Studies of Bison Conservation Programs***
  - **Keith Aune** - Senior Conservation Scientist, Wildlife Conservation Society, North America Program- Bozeman Montana

9:45 AM – 10:15 AM

- Mid-morning nutrition break

10:15 AM – 10:45 AM

- ***Plains Bison: Disease Issues and Risk Management***
  - **Trent Bollinger** – Western Canada College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan – Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

- ***New Directions for the Prairie Economy of the Northern Great Plains in the U.S.***
  - **Dawn Montanye** – Manager of Conservation Economics – Northern Great Plains Program (World Wildlife Fund) – Bozeman, Montana)
- ***The New Naturalists: Who are the wildlife viewing public and what are they looking for on holidays?***
  - **Tim Ouellette** – Tourism Consultant, Tourism Saskatchewan; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
- ***Local Perspectives***
  - **Jack Hills** – Big River Economic Development Committee, Big River, Saskatchewan

12:15 PM – 1:15 PM

- Lunch

*[Facilitator: Joanne Reimer – Field Technician - Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards]*

1:15 PM – 2:45 PM

- ***Beyond Boundaries: African and North American Perspectives and Experiences in Managing Wildlife Refuges and Human / Wildlife Conflicts on Adjacent Lands***
  - **David Houghton** - Conservation Biologist on Landscape Conservation Issues; National Wildlife Refuge Association; Washington, D.C.
- ***Socio-economic Impacts on First Nations from Reintroduced Wood Bison in the Yukon***
  - **Douglas Clark** – School of Environment and Sustainability - at the University of Saskatchewan.
- ***The American Prairie Reserve***
  - **Bryce Christensen** – Manager of Field Operations; American Prairie Foundation, Bozeman, Montana

- ***Forty Years of Landscape Change in the Prince Albert Greater Ecosystem: What Does This Mean for Boreal Woodland Caribou?***
  - **Paul Galpern**; Natural Resources Institute (University of Manitoba), Winnipeg, Manitoba.

2:45 – 3:15 PM

- Energy Break!!!

3:15 PM – 3:30 PM

- ***Sturgeon River Plains Bison: Wildlife Management at the Public/Private Interface***
  - **Jason Kelly** – Wildlife Resource Consulting Service; Winnipeg, Manitoba

3:30 PM – 3:45 PM

- ***From the Ground Up: Local Landowners Experiences and Perspectives on the Sturgeon River Plains Bison***
  - **Doug Panter** – Reeve; RM of Big River; Big River, Saskatchewan
  - **Irvin Amundson** – Local landowner and musician; Big River, Saskatchewan

3:45 PM – 4:30 PM

- ***Moving Forward: Towards a Management Plan for the Sturgeon River Plains Bison***
  - **Moderator**
    - **David Houghton** – Conservation Biologist on Landscape Conservation Issues; National Wildlife Refuge Association; Washington, D.C.
  - **Panel Participants**
    - Canadian Bison Association – **Mark Silzer**; Humboldt, Saskatchewan
    - First Nations – **Howard Morin**; Big River First Nation
    - Nature Conservancy Canada – **Larry Gabruch**; Saskatoon Saskatchewan
    - Parks Canada – **Seth Cherry**; Prince Albert National Park – Waskesiu Lake, Saskatchewan
    - Rural Municipality of Canwood – **Bruce Harper**; Canwood, Saskatchewan
    - Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment – **Rhys Beaulieu**; Meadow Lake, Saskatchewan
    - Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards – **Gord Vaadeland**; Big River, Saskatchewan
    - Wildlife Conservation Society – **Keith Aune**; Bozeman, Montana
    - World Wildlife Fund - **Dawn Montanye** – Bozeman, Montana
    - Université Laval – **Daniel Fortin**; Quebec City, Quebec

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM

- Cash Bar / Socialization

6:30 PM – 10:00 PM

- **Closing banquet and program**
- Program
  - Master of Ceremonies: **Richard Bintner** – Director; Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards
  - Blessing: **Tom Bear** – Elder (Big River First Nation)
  - Meal
  - After Supper Program
    - ***Greetings from the Government of Saskatchewan*** by **Nadine Wilson** – Member of the Legislative Assembly for the constituency of Saskatchewan Rivers
    - A reading from ***“Prairie: A Natural History”*** by **Candace Savage** – award winning author, and a member of the Nature Conservancy of Canada and the Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards; Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
    - ***“The Ecological Role of Bison on the Landscape”***
      - **Wes Olson** – Bison specialist, author and artist; Val Marie, Saskatchewan
    - **Whitefish Drum Group – Big River First Nation**