



Media Release

Bison on the Edge

Conference June 8-10, 2010

Big River, Saskatchewan: February 26, 2010

The Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards are pleased to announce an upcoming international conference on plains bison to be held in Big River, June 8-10, 2010. The conference, called *Bison on the Edge*, brings together local, national and international expertise on plains bison and on the management of large wildlife in the agricultural/wildlands interface.

“The Sturgeon River plains bison are unique and significant,” said Clint Panter, Vice-President of the Bison Stewards. “No other population of plains bison in Canada is roaming free within its traditional range. With this conference, we will bring the body of knowledge and research that has been accumulating about this population, to the attention of area residents. We see this conference as just the beginning. It will set the stage for continuing the development of a management plan for the Sturgeon River plains bison”.

Presentations will include the historical and cultural context for plains bison as well as Aboriginal perspectives on bison. International speakers will include Dawn Montanye with the Northern Great Plains Program of the World Wildlife Fund; Keith Aune, with the Wildlife Conservation Society in Montana; and Steven Neki, from Uganda, with a presentation on gorilla and elephant conservation in Bwindi National Park, adjacent to communities and agricultural lands. Dr. Daniel Fortin from Laval University will present the results of several years of research on the Sturgeon River plains bison. Dr. Cormack Gates, of the University of Calgary and co-chair of the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) Bison Specialist Group and Parks Canada will provide overviews and background on the history of bison in North America. Speakers will also address local landowners’ experiences and perspectives, and will discuss wildlife viewing and other tourism opportunities and potential.

The conference is being hosted by the Sturgeon River Plains Bison Stewards, a non-government organization created to act as a liaison among the jurisdictions and stakeholders within the bison range. The Bison Stewards promote education, awareness and environmental and bison stewardship, and undertake management initiatives to reduce the impacts of bison on local farmers.

“We look forward to welcoming all the delegates,” said Brian Brownfield, Mayor of Big River. “This is an exciting event for our town and we are really happy to be able to show so many people what a great place this is to visit and to do business.”

Confirmed conference sponsors so far include Parks Canada, the Wildlife Conservation Society, the National Wildlife Refuge Association, and the Prince Albert Model Forest.



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The conference name was chosen to reflect several meanings: the bison live on the edge of both agricultural lands and Prince Albert National Park. They are also on the edge ecologically: survivors of a once-abundant species, they are the iconic mammals of a prairie ecosystem that has now nearly vanished from North America.

For further information, the conference agenda, or to register for the conference, visit the *Bison on the Edge* conference website at www.bisonstewards.ca.

For media enquiries please contact:

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- 30 -