

# SANDSAGE BISON RANGE

The Sandsage Bison Range & Wildlife Area is located approximately 0.5 mi. south of Garden City on the west side of

Business Hwy 83. This 3,670 acre area provides visitors a unique opportunity to view the sandsage prairie ecosystem of southwest

Kansas. Not only is the area noted for its unique plant community, but it is also home to the oldest publicly owned bison herd in Kansas.

## HUNTING

Hunting is allowed on the area by posted notice only. Although more restrictive than most public hunting areas, the range provides excellent hunting opportunities. In particular, both bobwhite and scaled quail are present in huntable numbers, as well as dove, deer, pheasant and rab-

bit. Hunters have also had good success taking coyotes. Pay close attention to all posted regulations. Individual pastures may have additional restrictions (i.e. pasture open to shotgun and archery only). Further hunting information may be obtained from the area office.

## HISTORY

### PROPERTY

The Bison Range was established in 1916 when President Woodrow Wilson granted 3,021 acres of the Kansas National Forest holdings to the State of Kansas for use as a game preserve. Another 649 acres has been added to the original land grant bringing the property to its current size of 3,760 acres.

### SANDSAGE PRAIRIE

Located in the sandsage prairie, the bison range remains one of the few tracts of native sandsage prairie not converted to irrigated cropland. The presence of several tall grass species (i.e. sand bluestem, giant sandsage and sand lovegrass) and sand sagebrush makes this southern plains ecosystem truly unique. Interesting critters that call the sandsage prairie home include the lesser prairie chicken, spotted ground squirrel, kangaroo rat, scaled quail, black-tailed jack rabbit, mule deer, and western hognose snake.

### BISON HERD

While the property has seen many changes in its nearly 100 yrs of existence, the bison have remained the primary attraction for visitors. Bison were first re-introduced on the range in October 1924 when one bull and two cows arrived from the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in Oklahoma. Records indicate a bull from the Beatty Ranch near Lakin, KS was added the following year and another ten head originating from

the Charles Goodnight herd were added in 1929. Herd numbers have fluctuated over the years; however, the herd size has been maintained at approximately 80 - 100 animals since the mid 1980's.

### NATIONAL FOREST

Prior to state ownership the bison range was included in the federally owned and operated Kansas National Forest. The Kansas National Forest project began in 1905 as a 30,000 acre public reservation called the Garden City Forest Reserve. The reserve was established on a five year trial basis with the purpose of providing a place for experimental tree planting to determine which species of trees were most suitable for propagation in the Great Plains.

In 1908 another 272,387 acres of sandsage prairie located south of the Arkansas River and west to the Kansas-Colorado border were added to the reserve. With the additional acreage, the reserve's name was changed to the Kansas National Forest. By 1915 more than 800,000 seedlings had been planted on approximately 1,000 acres of the National Forest property.

Although the project was considered a failure, a small portion of the original forest can still be seen in the north-west corner of our middle pasture. At this location, a few surviving trees planted by the work crews of the early 1900's remain as a reminder of the Kansas National Forest.

## FISHING

Limited fishing opportunities exist at the sand pit located in the north portion of the range. When sufficient water is present Channel Catfish and Rainbow Trout are stocked on a seasonal basis. To find the sand pit, follow Sagebrush Road west approx. 0.5 mi. from Business Hwy 83.

## TOURS

Guided tours to see the bison and other attractions are available by reservation. Tours are scheduled in advance by contacting the Friends of Sandsage Bison Range & WA at (620) 276-9400. Self-guided tours are not available at this time.

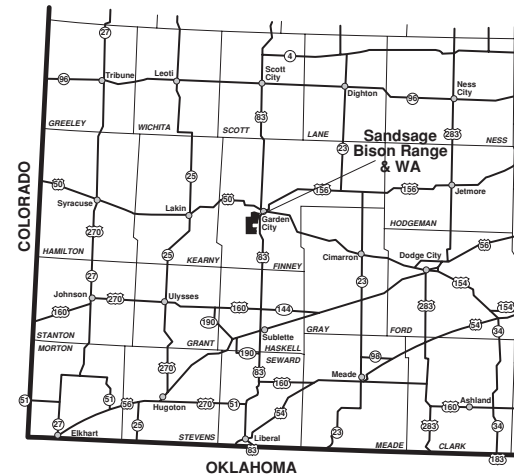
## SPECIAL REGS & NOTICES

The bison are fenced in with a high voltage short duration electric fence. Visitors are urged not to come into contact with the fence at any time as contact may cause personal injury.

Access the property only through established parking areas and gates. Do not crawl over or through fences.

Vehicles are allowed in designated parking areas only. No camping is permitted.

Consult area information boards or the area manager for additional information concerning rules and regulations.



General Area Map

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs described herein is available to all individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or handicap. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to Office of the Secretary, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, 1020 S Kansas Ave. Suite 200, Topeka, KS 66612-1327 3/05

# Sandsage Bison Range & Wildlife Area



Sandsage Bison Range  
785 S Hwy 83  
Garden City, KS 67846  
(620) 276-8886 (Area Office)  
(620) 227-8609 (Regional Office)

Department Website:  
[www.kdwp.state.ks.us](http://www.kdwp.state.ks.us)

Friends Website:  
[www.fosbr.com](http://www.fosbr.com)

# SANDSAGE BISON RANGE & WILDLIFE AREA

