

## National Bison Range Complex Field Trip Tips for Teachers



The National Bison Range Complex is happy to have you and your students visit us and we thank you for scheduling in advance so that we may better serve you and so groups will not interfere with each other's' activities. The Complex offers programs, talks, demonstrations, teacher workshops and field kits to help you conduct your outdoor learning activities.

We suggest that a few safety tips be considered when bringing students to any units of the National Bison Range Complex:

- ♥ Wildlife, particularly large ones like bison, elk and deer, can be dangerous. When watching them, do so from a distance or from the safety of your bus or vehicle. Wildlife can be unpredictable but females with young are especially dangerous during spring months and males are most aggressive during the breeding season (as early as July and August for bison, September for elk, November for deer). Even delicate looking deer will defend their young. So keep a respectful distance. Animals that are unafraid are not tame. They have only lost their fear of people and can, therefore, be even more dangerous. Give them space and do not allow students to approach them.
- ♥ While a rare occurrence, you and your students may be lucky enough to encounter mountain lions or bears. Keeping younger students together in a group and supervised at all times by an adult will reduce potential confrontations.
- ♥ When conducting activities in areas near water and along streams and ponds, remind students about safety near water. Mission Creek, at the National Bison Range, is especially swift and has deep holes. Children could very easily be swept off their feet and into deep water. Low water at Ninepipe NWR will produce muddy areas which can catch students unaware. Do not allow young children to be unsupervised when near the water's edge.
- ♥ When traveling the Bison Range roads, you may get out of your vehicle but stay near it and on the road. This is not only for your safety but also for the preservation of grasslands and wildlife. It will also be less disturbing to animals, which do not mind vehicles. Be aware of area closures at Ninepipe and Pablo NWRs, which are in place to protect nesting and migrating birds.
- ♥ There could be rattlesnakes in the dryer areas. Snakes are usually not aggressive and only react in self-defense. But please be cautious about surprising them. Snakes, other than garter snakes, do not usually frequent the Day Use Area or the Nature Trail at the Bison Range but it is wise to be alert in very dry seasons.
- ♥ Caution students to be careful when walking on, or across, the paved roads near the Bison Range Visitor Center and Day Use Area. Please walk along the side of the roadways and look both ways before crossing it. This is especially important in high traffic areas between the Visitor Center, the Nature Trail, and in the Day Use Area where students are apt to run across without looking.
- ♥ Students should bring hearty lunches and plenty to drink. There are numerous picnic tables at the Bison Range in the Day Use Area and safe drinking water is available here from May to October. There are no facilities or amenities at Ninepipe or Pablo NWRs. Caution students to bring lunch items that will not spoil if it is hot. Also, during cold or rainy weather, extra fuel from snacks will help keep them warm. Suggest appropriate clothing and sturdy shoes for changeable mountain weather and for the activities you plan. Please pick up and pack out you litter.
- ♥ Check if your students have any particular medical problems or allergies that you need to be aware of before departing. Be sure those allergic to bee stings have their epinephrine kits with them.

**BISON RANGE STAFF HAS FIRST AID TRAINING AND SUPPLIES. IF YOU ARE NEARBY, CONTACT THEM IN AN EMERGENCY.**