



RETURNING SOON:
THE AMERICAN PLAINS
BISON

Dakota County is reintroducing the American plains bison to land it once called home.

Prior to European immigrant settlement, the land that would become Dakota County contained about 300,000 acres of prairie and oak savanna — roughly 80 percent of the county. Bison were an important part of these natural communities.

The county is reintroducing bison to help restore, manage and diversify roughly 160 acres of prairie in Spring Lake Park Reserve. Bison graze primarily on grasses, allowing wildflowers to thrive. Their grazing also works native seeds into the soil and contributes to new plant growth.

The first bison will arrive at Spring Lake Park Reserve in fall 2022. The maximum herd size will be 15 bison.

Funding from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund and approved by the Minnesota Legislature will support fencing and other infrastructure to create safe spaces for the bison to roam and for the public to view the animals.

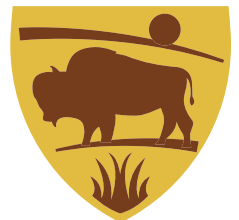
Bison have a strong historical and cultural connection to Indigenous populations. The

www.dakotacounty.us/parks, search **bison**

Tribal Historical Preservation Office of the Upper Sioux Community (Pezihutazizi Oyate) was consulted during both design and pre-construction archaeological surveys. The Upper Sioux Community and several other local Indigenous communities have expressed their supportive interest in the project. Recognition of the native homeland for the Indigenous people who once lived here and their relationship to the bison will be honored through park programming and interpretation.

Park visitors can look forward to opportunities to view and learn about the bison in the park.

Dakota County will be partnering with the Minnesota Bison Conservation Herd, led by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Zoo, in its effort to establish a herd of 500 animals with no detectable cattle genes.



Funding for this project was provided by the Minnesota Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as recommended by the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR).