



# Frontier Fragments

The official newspaper of  
Theodore Roosevelt National Park  
Spring 2009 - Spring 2010



Little Missouri River

## Welcome to the National Parks in North Dakota!

Let Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, and Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site launch your Dakota adventure.

In Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the majority of visitors drive through the colorful badlands of the South Unit, but there is much more to see and do in the park. The North Unit provides outstanding scenery, wilderness, wildlife, and solitude. The small, remote Elkhorn Ranch Unit preserves the beautiful setting along the Little Missouri River where Theodore Roosevelt's home once stood. I encourage you to get off the beaten path and explore the park in more detail. Take a horseback ride or an extended hike. Spend a night in a campground or in the backcountry.

Wade in the river. Count bison. Search for elk in the South Unit or bighorn sheep in the North Unit. Identify plants. Wander through a prairie dog town. Enjoy watching the behavior of the feral horses. The more time you spend away from your car, the more you will appreciate the wonders of the North Dakota badlands.

After stopping at the visitor center and the reconstructed earth lodge at Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, take a walk to one of the village sites, or a longer hike through a hardwood forest. Explore the area near the confluence of the Knife and Missouri Rivers. Take time to watch birds or contemplate the peaceful setting. Knife River has been a special place to people for hundreds of years. I hope you will take the time to truly experience this treasure.

The partially reconstructed fort at Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site provides many opportunities to learn about the history of the fur trade. Take time to explore what was once the grandest fort on the Upper Missouri. But don't stop there. Ask at the visitor center about hiking to the Bodmer Overlook near the site where famous Swiss artist, Karl Bodmer, painted his famous painting of Fort Union in 1833.

There is much to see and do in the area. I hope you will have an adventure to remember. There are many wondrous experiences waiting for you in the national parks in North Dakota. Enjoy!

Valerie Naylor  
Superintendent



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*"Life is an adventure...accept it in such a spirit."* ~Theodore Roosevelt, 1911

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# What to do in the Park

Visitors to Theodore Roosevelt National Park have many options to help them discover and enjoy the beauty of the badlands. Initially the landscape may appear inhospitable and desolate, but a closer look will reveal panoramic vistas and a bounty of plant and animal life. The park is divided into three units; all offer wonderful opportunities. The park has three visitor centers: one at the South Unit entrance in Medora, one at Painted Canyon on I-94, and one at the entrance to the North Unit just off of Hwy 85. Start your visit at one of the visitor centers to obtain information and maps, view exhibits, and watch a short film about the park. Then, begin an adventure in Theodore Roosevelt National Park. The following information will help plan a visit that fits your time, interests, and abilities.

## ELKHORN RANCH UNIT

To stand where Roosevelt stood and to see the badlands as he saw them can be an incredibly moving experience. This small section of the park preserves the site of Roosevelt's "home ranch," the Elkhorn. Although no structures remain, foundation blocks mark the outline of the original ranch house. Please inquire at one of the park visitor centers for detailed instructions on how to reach this unit and for current road conditions. Allow at least a half day to make the trip and plan on a 2-3 mile (round trip) hike once you arrive at the parking area. All roads to the Elkhorn Ranch are dirt and can be slippery or impassable when wet.

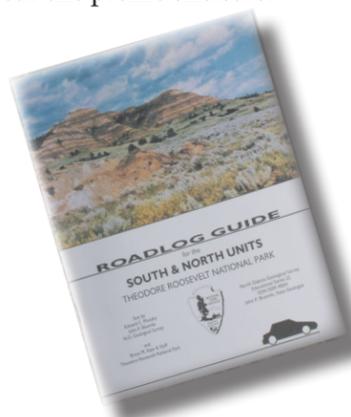
## SOUTH UNIT

Driving the 36-mile Scenic Loop Drive is the best way to see the South Unit. The drive takes about two hours. Wildlife including prairie dogs, bison, feral horses, mule deer and white-tailed deer are commonly seen along the route. The drive also allows visitors to experience a variety of habitats including river bottoms, grasslands, and forested slopes and draws as the road traverses the broken badlands topography. Stop at the Badlands and Boicourt Overlooks or walk to the top of Buck Hill for dramatic views. If time allows, include several short hikes along your drive. The Wind Canyon and Ridgeline Nature Trails are good choices. Both are less than a mile and offer outstanding views. If you want a longer hike, Jones Creek, Lower Paddock Creek, and the Petrified Forest trails are all excellent choices. Stop at the visitor center for route descriptions and maps or for information on other hiking options. Don't leave the Medora area without a stop at Painted Canyon, at Exit 32 on I-94. This overlook offers a magnificent panoramic view of the badlands. It is also the best place to view the soft glow on the badlands hills at either sunrise or sunset. Visitors who want to stretch their legs can include a short walk along the rim or a more strenuous hike on the one mile loop trail that drops into the canyon. The trailhead is located near the picnic shelters.

## NORTH UNIT

Allow at least 1 ½ hours to complete the 28-mile round trip North Unit Scenic Drive. Along the way, one can see unique geologic formations called "cannonball concretions," drive through grasslands, peer into canyons, enjoy great views of the Little Missouri River, and maybe spot a longhorn steer or a bighorn sheep. The River Bend Overlook with its beautiful shelter built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and Oxbow Overlook offer the best views. For those who want to include a short walk, the 1.1 mile Little Mo Nature Trail begins at the campground. For a longer hike, the Caprock Coulee Nature Trail, 1.6 miles round trip, is a good choice, or combine it with the Upper Caprock Coulee Trail for a 4.3 mile loop. Stop at the visitor center to inquire about other hiking options.

**Road work will continue on the North Unit Scenic Drive in 2009. The road will be closed intermittently to travel starting at the Caprock Coulee trailhead, and, occasionally, at the visitor center throughout the spring and possibly during the summer. Watch for flaggers, construction vehicles, and road crew workers. Expect delays.**



**A roadlog guide may be purchased at park visitor centers and provides an orientation to geology and other features along the North and South Unit Scenic Drives.**

**Other free handouts are also available. Inquire at the information Desk.**

**Shadow Country Outfitters, Inc.**  
at  
Historic Peaceful Valley Ranch

**Trail rides & horse boarding**



Phone 701-623-4568

P.O. Box 308 Medora, ND 58645

Shadow Country Outfitters is authorized by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, to serve the public in Theodore Roosevelt National Park.



## Junior Ranger

If you are 6 or older, you can become a Junior Ranger! It's free, fun, and an easy way to learn more about Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Pick up the Junior Ranger booklet at the visitor center. Complete the activities in the booklet, attend a ranger-guided program, and hike a trail. Once you've finished all the activities, present your completed booklet to a ranger in the visitor center to receive your Junior Ranger badge. You can also leave a note to other kids about your experience on our bulletin board in the South Unit Visitor Center.

By learning about plants, animals, geology and history, you can help protect the park and help others understand how important park resources are.

**Become a Web Ranger at [www.nps.gov/webrangers](http://www.nps.gov/webrangers)**

## Family Fun Packs



Borrow a Family Fun Pack for the day. The pack includes field guides, binoculars, hand lenses and activities to help families enhance their visit and sense of discovery. Available only at the South Unit Visitor Center. Inquire at the visitor center desk.

# Visitor Services and Activities



## South Unit

### Visitor Centers

**Medora:** Open daily 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (MT)  
Extended hours during summer months.  
Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day.

**Painted Canyon:** Open daily April 1 - Nov. 11,  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. (MT) with extended hours during  
summer months. Hours of operation may vary during  
shoulder seasons. Closed in winter.

### Interpretive programs\*

Guided tours of Roosevelt's Maltese Cross Cabin are offered  
daily during summer months. Check the current activity  
schedule for times. Self-guided tours are available during the  
off-season.

Evening Programs at Cottonwood Campground and a  
variety of other ranger-guided activities are offered mid-June  
through early September. Check at the visitor center or park  
bulletin boards for the current activity schedule.

### Campgrounds

**Cottonwood:** \$10/night, \$5 with Senior or Access Pass;  
78 sites; first-come, first-served; group campsite available by  
reservation only.

**Roundup Horse Camp:** Available by reservation only.

## North Unit

### Visitor Center

Open daily, early April through September, 9:00 a.m. to  
5:30 p.m. (CT). Open Friday, Saturday, and Sunday the rest of  
the year. Closed Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's  
Day.

### Interpretive programs\*

Evening Programs are offered at Juniper Campground,  
mid-June through early September. Additional programs  
are offered during the summer. Check at the visitor center  
or park bulletin boards for the current activity schedule.

### Campground

**Juniper:** \$10/night, \$5 with Senior or Access Pass; 50 sites;  
first-come, first-served; group camp available by reservation  
only.

 **\*All listed activities, with the exception of some  
guided hikes, are wheelchair accessible.**

### Backcountry

Ninety-five miles of backcountry trails are available in  
Theodore Roosevelt National Park. Hikers, horseback  
riders, and boaters who wish to camp overnight in  
the backcountry must obtain a free backcountry permit at  
either the South or North Unit visitor center. A free  
backcountry trail guide is available.

### Fires

Fire grills are provided at each campsite and in the picnic  
areas. Self-contained campstoves are also permitted and may  
be used in the backcountry. There may be fire restrictions  
when wildfire danger is high.

### Water

Drinking water is available in the campgrounds, picnic  
areas, and visitor centers. Water sources in the backcountry  
are minimal and must be treated. Carry water!

### Pets

Pets must be on a leash at all times. They are not permitted  
on hiking trails or in the backcountry.

### Restrooms

Restrooms are located in the visitor centers, picnic areas, and  
campgrounds.

## Superintendent

Valerie Naylor

## Theodore Roosevelt National Park

P.O. Box 7  
Medora, ND 58645

701-623-4466

## Park Web Site

[www.nps.gov/thro](http://www.nps.gov/thro)

## E-mail

[thro\\_interpretation@nps.gov](mailto:thro_interpretation@nps.gov)

## Employment with the National Park Service

[www.usajobs.opm.gov](http://www.usajobs.opm.gov)  
[www.theSCA.org](http://www.theSCA.org)

## Emergencies Call 911



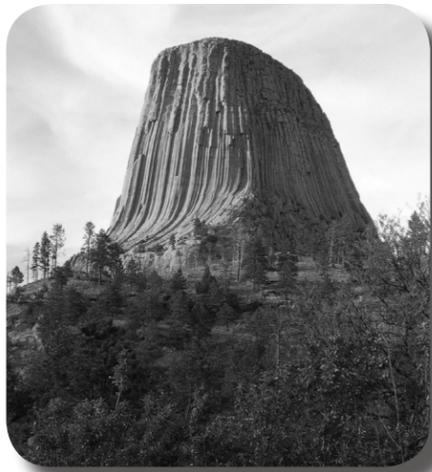
This issue of Frontier Fragments is made possible by funding from the Theodore Roosevelt Nature and History Association, a National Park Service Cooperating Association. TRNHA, formed in 1951, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promote and support the historical, scientific and educational activities of Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, and Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge.



# The Making of a Park

Today, the 70,447-acre Theodore Roosevelt National Park preserves the life and legacy of our country's first conservation president. The park is also home to a great mix of plants and animals and protects the last vestiges of wilderness in the Northern Great Plains.

Even though Theodore Roosevelt spent only a short time in Dakota Territory, the land had a profound impact on his life and career. Roosevelt heartily asserted that interacting with nature would add immeasurably to one's "sum of enjoyment in life."



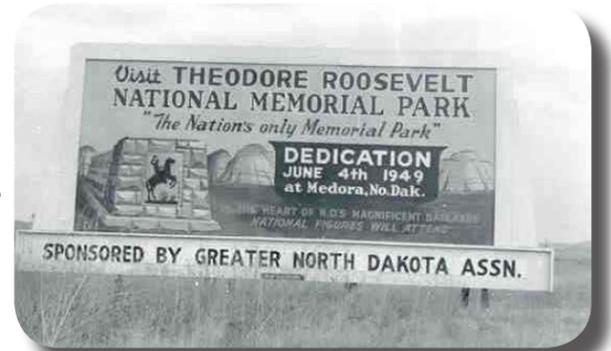
With the passage of the Antiquities Act of 1906 and other pieces of legislation, President Roosevelt's safeguarding of millions of acres as parks, forests, and wildlife refuges became legendary. Roosevelt established the nation's first national monument, Devils Tower, on September 24, 1906.

Federal relief programs established during the 1930s by TR's fifth cousin Franklin D. Roosevelt provided the groundwork of roads, picnic shelters and campgrounds for a future park.



Handiwork by the CCC, WPA and ERA can be viewed in both the North and South Units.

Interest in honoring Theodore Roosevelt picked up in earnest after WWII, and Congress obliged by establishing Theodore Roosevelt National Memorial Park in April of 1947. One year later Congress added the North Unit. The park was dedicated in 1949 to a large, "dee-lighted" gathering.



In an effort to restore the natural ecosystem, bison, which had been extirpated from the badlands, were re-introduced in the South Unit in 1956 and the North Unit in 1962.

In recognition of its diverse cultural and natural resources, the national memorial park gained national park status on November 10, 1978. At the same time, almost 30,000 acres of the park were designated as wilderness.



*"There can be nothing in the world more beautiful than the Yosemite, the grove of the giant sequoias and redwoods, the Canyon of the Colorado, the Canyon of the Yellowstone, the Three Tetons; and our people should see to it that they are preserved for their children and their children's children forever, with their majestic beauty all unmarred."* ~Theodore Roosevelt, 1905

# Theodore Roosevelt National Park is preserved because...



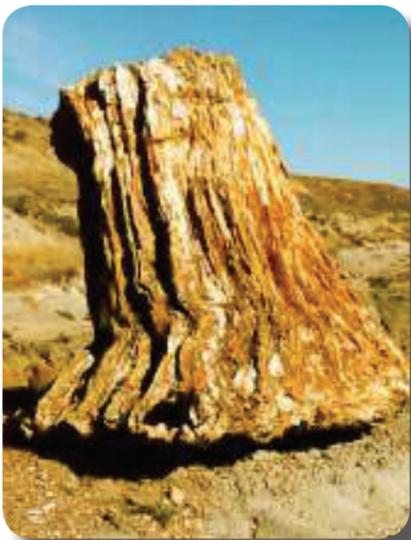
The park offers visitors the freedom to enjoy panoramic vistas and a sense of solitude, inspiration, and timelessness similar to Theodore Roosevelt's experience in Dakota Territory in the 1880s as well as the opportunity to learn about an environment and way of life that helped shape Theodore Roosevelt's attitudes and philosophy regarding conservation.

On-going geological processes create spectacular examples of badlands topography and provide opportunities for visual interpretation of erosional activities.



The colorful North Dakota badlands provides the scenic backdrop to the park which memorializes the 26th president for his enduring contributions to the conservation of our nation's resources.

The park is designated as a Class I air quality area providing for clean air, clear day and night skies, and outstanding examples of a relatively unpolluted environment.



The park has one of the largest petrified wood areas in the country and extensive paleontological deposits from the Paleocene era that provide outstanding examples for visitor viewing.

The park contains one of the few islands of designated wilderness in the Northern Great Plains.



The Little Missouri River has shaped the land that is home to a variety of prairie plants and animals including bison, prairie dogs, pronghorn, and elk. A park experience is created by the interplay of natural forces including weather, vegetation, wildlife, vistas, smells, color and shape of landforms, air quality, natural silence, varied light and seasons.

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*"In utilizing and conserving the natural resources of the Nation, the one characteristic more essential than any other is foresight."*

~Theodore Roosevelt, 1907

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# Elkhorn Ranch: A Conservation Ethic is Born

by Jen Whitcomb, Park Volunteer



Photo of Elkhorn Ranch House taken by Theodore Roosevelt, 1886

From his early youth, Theodore Roosevelt was an ardent naturalist. Although he was a sickly child who was home schooled, his physical limitations could not keep him from the great outdoors; his every spare moment was spent wandering through the woods, often with a small bottle of arsenic for collecting specimens or a drawing pad for sketching birds. At the age of eight he created the “Roosevelt Natural History Museum” in the second floor parlor of his parents’ home in New York City. At the age of 18, Theodore embarked upon a hunting trip to Maine – the first of many similar backcountry excursions. In the Maine wilderness, TR proved to be full of ambition and grit - despite his ill health. When he entered Harvard University, he intended to become a naturalist, but changed his mind once he learned that he would be stuck in a laboratory examining things under a microscope. He felt deeply that naturalists should study directly from nature, and needed to be fully immersed in the outdoors to hone their craft. While he eventually decided to enter into politics, it is clear that these interests in all things wild and natural stayed with Theodore for the rest of his life. Indeed, they became more important to him with time, as he was later to become our greatest conservation President.

In September of 1883, Theodore Roosevelt stepped off the train at the town of Little Missouri. He had been invited to hunt bison, and although his partner dropped out at the last minute, TR decided to forge ahead alone. For the next ten days, he and his guide hunted throughout the rugged badlands on horseback, sometimes for 18 hours a day. The weather was enough to deter any man; the unrelenting rain beat down on them continuously, turning the fine clay soil into slick mud. But the weather could not dampen TR’s happiness. He fell in love with this strenuous lifestyle - sitting in the saddle from sun up till sundown, bouncing across the uneven and broken terrain, and sleeping in puddles. By the time he had successfully shot and killed his bison, TR had made up his mind about this place and the men who lived and worked here – he was going to buy into a ranching operation, the Maltese Cross Ranch.

On Valentine’s Day in 1884, TR suffered a tremendous personal tragedy when his wife and mother both died. In his journal he simply penned a big, black X; underneath he wrote, “The light has gone out of my life.” Any other man in his situation might have faltered at that very moment, never to recover, and surely Theodore wondered if indeed he ever would. He left New York and returned to Dakota Territory. He needed solitude and a strenuous existence to cure him of his pain and doubt. By the fall of 1884, TR had recruited two of his old hunting partners from Maine, Bill Sewall and Wilmot Dow, to come to the badlands and build a ranch house for him. TR handpicked the site, thirty-five miles downriver

from Medora, on a flat, grassy plain surrounded by cottonwood trees. With the high buttes towering above to the west, and the bend of the Little Missouri carving a border to the east with still more buttes beyond, the place had a soothing sense of privacy and isolation. This was exactly what TR wanted. The Maltese Cross was located on a busy stage coach road and he yearned for peace and tranquility; the Elkhorn would give him the opportunity to read and write again.

It was at the Elkhorn that TR truly experienced the deep satisfaction of living a rancher’s life. He and his ranch hands worked hard from sun up to sun down, slept soundly, and hunted the vast prairie surrounding them. The house’s veranda was shaded by a row of tall cottonwood trees and looked directly out onto the Little Missouri River. On the veranda, TR would sit in his rocking chair, listening to bird song and the sound of animals rustling through the sage brush, and watching the cattle drinking from the river. He later wrote, “throughout June the thickets and groves about the ranch house are loud with bird music from before dawn till long after sunrise. . . now and then we hear the wilder voices of the wilderness, from animals that in the hours of darkness do not fear the neighborhood of man: the coyotes wail like dismal ventriloquists, or the silence may be broken by the strident challenge of a lynx, or by the snorting and stamping of a deer that has come to the edge of the open.”

The fresh air, strenuous lifestyle, and solitude worked wonders on TR. By the time he left for New York in the fall of 1886, the Elkhorn Ranch had changed him forever. It not only allowed him to live the rough and uncomplicated lifestyle by which he came to terms with his grief, it also provided him with the necessary inspiration and tools to develop a conservation ethic. It was in Dakota Territory that his progressive ideas about conservation began to take shape. With his own eyes he witnessed the end of the Western Frontier. The last great Native American hunting ground had been settled. Overgrazing by cattle had begun to affect the land. He watched as the American bison were extirpated from this area and knew that elk and other big game would soon follow. Extinction seemed imminent for many of the great western game species. The Elkhorn Ranch could not keep him from the rest of the world forever. Soon, he would be compelled to return to politics.

During the terrible winter of 1886-87, TR lost 60% of his cattle herd. He described his attitude as “bluer than Indigo.” TR never actively ranched in the badlands again; his only visits thereafter were for short hunting trips. His ranching days were over, but his romance with the badlands endured for the rest of his life. Throughout his presidency, he used his experiences in the West as the foundation for his conservation policies. By the end of his presidency in 1909, Theodore Roosevelt had placed 230 million acres of land under public protection. He created 150 National Forests, 51 Federal Bird Reservations, 4 National Game Preserves, 5 National Parks, and 18 National Monuments.

Today, visitors can stand on the very site of the Elkhorn Ranch. They can contemplate the western wilderness, interpret bird song, and be lulled by the rhythmic Little Missouri River. They can smell the aromatic sage brush and breathe in the pure, fresh air. They can be surrounded by the sights and sounds of the badlands just as Theodore Roosevelt was. It was at this site that the seeds of conservation were planted in the mind of Theodore Roosevelt. And it was at this site that he realized the urgent need to protect America’s natural resources, for the benefit of future generations, before it was too late.

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*“The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem of our national life.”* ~Theodore Roosevelt, 1907

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# Resource Concerns



## Return of the Elkhorn

by Bill Whitworth, Chief of Resource Management

Visitors to the Elkhorn Ranch Unit may feel like they are on a secluded island. At first glance, the site looks natural enough, but what did the Elkhorn site look like during Roosevelt's time? Funding from the National Park Service Centennial Challenge Program allowed the park to initiate and complete a study on this topic that will aid in management of this historic property. Some changes from Roosevelt's Elkhorn are obvious. Some are not. The Little Missouri River has meandered into a new channel, now a considerable distance from the site of Roosevelt's cabin porch. Many of the majestic cottonwood trees that provided him shade have succumbed to old age, while young cottonwoods have regenerated along the river bank. More subtle are the invasive exotic weed species that have slowly become established over the years, to the detriment of native species characteristic of the Badlands.

In 2008, the first large-scale invasive weed species treatment project in many years took place at the Elkhorn Ranch site. Funding for this project was made possible through the Centennial Challenge, which allowed the park to contract conservation crews to assist the park's Resource Management staff. Approximately 25% of the Elkhorn Ranch Unit was found to be infested with two problematic noxious weeds. Thirty-six acres of leafy spurge and 13 acres of Canada thistle were treated with herbicides found to be effective in controlling these weeds with minimal impacts on the native, non-target species. Follow-up herbicide treatments are planned for 2009 and beyond.

Based on Roosevelt-era photos, it is evident that significantly fewer junipers were present at or near the Elkhorn Ranch. Juniper is a native species in the Badlands, but in the absence of periodic fire, it can "take over" a site and reduce biological diversity. Early settlers often suppressed fire, but they frequently cut juniper for firewood and fence posts. Along with intense cattle grazing, these activities effectively took the place of fire. Since Roosevelt's time, juniper at the Elkhorn site have significantly increased due to the lack of fire or trees being used for other purposes. Approximately 25 acres of open prairie are scheduled to be burned under prescription in the Elkhorn Ranch Unit in 2009. Burning at the correct time and intensity will increase the effectiveness of invasive weed control actions, reduce the density of juniper trees to more natural levels, and will help to maintain a vigorous and healthy grasslands habitat.

How do we know if proposed activities will be effective? Pre-treatment vegetation monitoring plots were established in 2008 to determine plant community health, to evaluate the effectiveness of herbicide applications, and to track the efficacy of prescribed fire for reducing non-native plants. In addition to ecological health, other recent and proposed improvements to the Elkhorn Ranch Unit concern its infrastructure. A large portion of the barbed-wire fence surrounding the site will be repaired or moved a short distance to better reflect the actual boundary administered by the National Park Service. Returning visitors will be pleased to see that new interpretive panels have been installed. The addition of a few log benches along the path encourage one to rest and enjoy communing with the natural world as Roosevelt did.

Park staff will continue to provide critical review of development proposals near the Elkhorn Ranch Unit to eliminate or reduce adverse impacts to its resources or values. Over the next several years, expect to see a gradual change in the Elkhorn landscape as habitat is restored and native species are protected, producing an image that more closely resembles that which was reflected in Roosevelt's eyes.



Elkhorn Weed Crew, 2008

## Exotic Plant Management

by Ellen Waldhart, Biological Science Technician

Most exotic plant species were transported to this country from Europe during the 1700 and 1800s. Settlers brought them for various reasons including consumption, medicinal, ornamental, or cultural purposes. The spread of exotic plants continues today with growing human populations, increased international travel, and continuing growth of international trade. Some of these plant species, such as potatoes, wheat, and oats, have become major staples of the agricultural industry and the American diet. Others are threatening natural ecosystems, including those at Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Exotic plant species are simply plants that do not belong to a certain ecosystem. Several of the exotic plant species found in Theodore Roosevelt National Park were introduced when settlers moved to North Dakota and developed homesteads on lands that are now part of the park. The main issue with exotic plants is that they naturalize themselves into a certain ecosystem and replace native species; for each exotic plant, one native plant is lost.

Common exotic plants in the park are crested wheatgrass, smooth brome grass, Kentucky bluegrass, leafy spurge, Canada thistle, Russian knapweed, and Russian olive. The 2008 North Dakota Noxious Weeds List listed leafy spurge, Canada thistle, and Russian knapweed as major threats to the ecosystem of the State of North Dakota and Theodore Roosevelt National Park. These plants are considered major threats because preventing introduction can be very difficult and they can overrun an ecosystem quickly and destroy the native flora. Rough badlands terrain, lack of roads, and weather make weed control a difficult task. To control the spread of exotics, biological, mechanical, cultural and chemical methods are employed.

The most common method of control used in the park is chemical. Pesticides that are registered by the Environmental Protection Agency are applied by crews from Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Northern Great Plains Exotic Plant Management Team, Montana Conservation Corps, and Minnesota Conservation Corps. During the summer of 2008, pesticide applications took place throughout the park to control the spread of leafy spurge and Canada thistle with applications focused along the Little Missouri River corridor, roadsides, prairie dog towns, park boundaries, and campgrounds. At the Elkhorn Ranch Unit, crews treated 13 acres of Canada thistle and 35 acres of leafy spurge. Treatments will continue over the next few years to eliminate exotic plant species completely. Early detection is the key to the removal of exotic plants. If you find an exotic plant species while exploring the park, let a ranger know the location and what type was discovered.



## SAFETY FIRST...

Don't let your visit be spoiled by misfortune. Please help protect park resources and ensure a safe, enjoyable visit by observing these regulations and warnings:

**Wear your seat belt.** All vehicle occupants are required to wear seat belts.

**Observe speed limits.** Park speed limits range from a maximum of 35 mph (56 kph) to a minimum of 15 mph (25 kph). Use caution! Wildlife may unexpectedly enter the roadway.

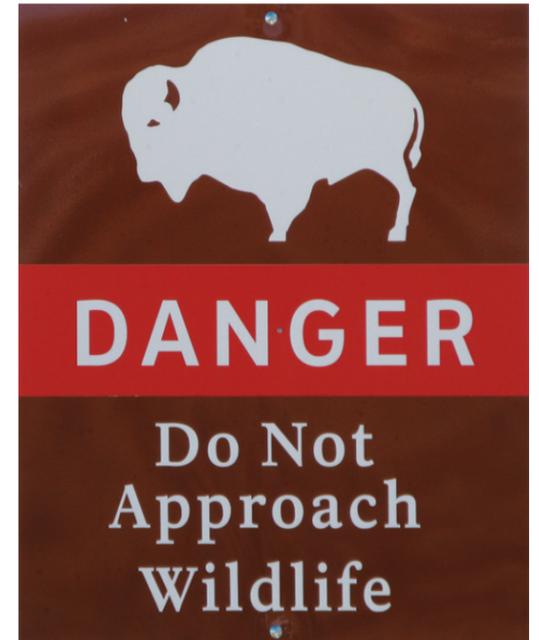
**Report all wildfires and unsafe visitor fire practices.** During periods of extreme fire danger, restrictions are placed on smoking, cooking fires and campfires.

**Carry water, wear a hat, and use sunscreen.** There are no approved drinking water sources in the backcountry.

**Watch your footing.** Trails may be rocky with uneven surfaces. During wet or freezing conditions trails will be slippery. Use caution near cliff edges.

**When hiking, be alert.** Watch for bison, prairie rattlesnakes, ticks, prickly pear cactus, and poison ivy.

**Do not feed or harass prairie dogs or other wildlife.** Help keep wildlife "wild" by not feeding them. Even small animals can inflict painful bites and some animals may carry diseases. All animals in the park are wild including the feral horses. Always watch animals from a distance. Keep dogs under control; wild animals are often nervous when dogs are nearby and bison may charge if dogs are too noisy or too close.



**REMEMBER ...**  
WILDLIFE CAN BE  
UNPREDICTABLE &  
DANGEROUS.  
**VIEW AND PHOTOGRAPH  
FROM A DISTANCE**

### Your Fee Dollars at Work

Do you ever wonder where the money goes when you buy a park pass or pay an entrance fee at a national park? In the past, fee monies went to the U.S. Treasury and only a small portion was reallocated back to the parks. Under the old system, busier parks usually received much more money than less-visited park areas. This changed in 1996 and again in 2005 when Congress passed laws that now allow NPS sites to keep a large percentage of the fees they collect for use at their park. This means that the entrance and campground fees you pay benefit the specific parks you visit.

Fees collected at Theodore Roosevelt National Park are used for direct upkeep of visitor facilities such as campgrounds, picnic areas, visitor centers, and roads. Fee money also helps fund projects that may enhance your park experience such as rehabilitating trails, creating and updating roadside exhibits, upgrading audio visual equipment in the campgrounds and visitor centers, replacing amphitheater lights and seating, and adding new animals to the longhorn steer herd in the North Unit.

Do you have an idea for a project that would enhance your park experience? Share your thoughts with the park superintendent by filling out a comment form at the visitor center.

### Firewood Alert

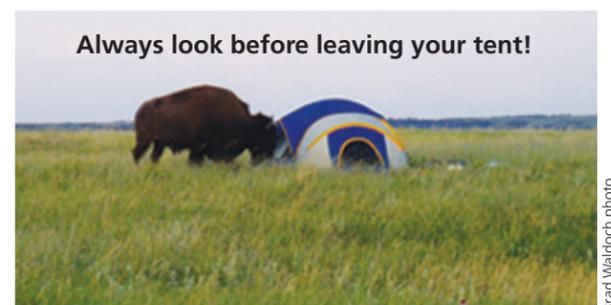
Help stop the spread of exotic pests. Don't bring firewood into North Dakota.



Exotic insects like Emerald Ash Borer are a major threat to North Dakota's trees. Such pests are easily spread to new areas when infested firewood is brought from other states. If you or someone you know is planning to visit North Dakota, please follow these steps:

- If you already brought firewood into the state, do not leave it in the park or take it with you - **burn it immediately.**
- Don't bring firewood from out of state.
- Use North Dakota sources of firewood. Firewood may be available for purchase at the park visitor centers; inquire at the information desk or ask a ranger.

For more information, contact the ND Dept. of Agriculture at 701-239-7295 or the US Forest Service at 701-231-5936.



# Wildlife in the Park

by Nathan King, Park Ranger



Theodore Roosevelt National Park is a great place to view wildlife. It is fitting that the park's namesake enjoyed a strong bond with animals and their natural environment. When Theodore Roosevelt lived and hunted in the area during the 1880s, he talked with other hunters, collected stories, and compiled his own observations into two books, *Hunting Trips of a Ranchman* and *The Wilderness Hunter*. Most of the animals Roosevelt knew and wrote about with such interest can still be found in the park today.

There are many ways to enjoy wildlife viewing in the park. Driving the park roads is the best way to cover a lot of ground and spot larger animals such as bison, wild feral horses, elk and deer. Hikers are likely to notice details such as scat, tracks, and sounds that will help them find animals. Bird spotting is easiest on foot or while stationary when one can hear their calls. Campers will find that plenty of wildlife, large and small, feathered or furry, will appear throughout the day and night. What animals will you find during your visit in the park?

Roosevelt saw the bison population quickly drop from millions to the brink of extinction. Today, the park is a sanctuary for bison; about 500 roam the park's North and South Units. For most of the year, herds generally consist of cows and younger animals while bulls tend to be in small groups or alone. Bison graze in the open year-round. View them from a distance.

Prairie dogs live in large "towns" on flat land and are active year-round. They can be easily observed from the South Unit's Scenic Loop Drive and along many hiking trails. Watch for coyotes, badgers, burrowing owls, and prairie rattlesnakes in the towns and hawks or golden eagles flying above.

Both white-tailed and mule deer are found in the park. The best places to see white-tails are the park campgrounds and along the river bottoms. Mule deer are common throughout the park. The tail is the most obvious and easiest way to differentiate between the two species. White-tails have broad, V-shaped tails with a white underside that flips up as a warning flag when they run. Mule deer have narrow white tails with a black tip. Deer are most visible at dawn and dusk.

Pronghorn prefer open, flat, grassy areas where they can run at high speeds to avoid danger. The best place to see pronghorn is along the northern portion of the South Unit's Scenic Loop Drive. Look for their striking coloration of a tan back, white underside, and white stripes on the throat.

The North and South Units each have some unique species: feral horses and elk in the South and bighorn sheep and longhorn steers in the North. Horses may be found anywhere along the South Unit's Scenic Loop Drive. Elk are more elusive but are often seen at dawn and dusk. Look for them on the badlands slopes near the vegetation line. Bighorn sheep prefer steep, rugged terrain. They are often spotted near the end of the Scenic Drive in the North Unit. The longhorn steers are often spotted from the Longhorn Pullout just a few miles past the North Unit Visitor Center.

Birds are a diverse and colorful component of the park's wildlife. Nearly 200 species may be found in the park throughout the year, from tiny warblers to eagles. With so many birds to find, where should one look? The best place to see a variety of bird life is in the park campgrounds, which have a balance of trees, grasslands, and riparian habitat. Such habitat diversity offers a variety of food sources and easy access to water, two components that attract a greater number of birds.

Bookstores in the park visitor centers offer a variety of field guides which are an indispensable resource for locating, identifying, and understanding wildlife of all types. Park staff at the visitor center can help answer any questions you may have.

## How Many Animals?

The effects of the westward expansion movement were profound. Some species were hunted to extinction. Others were eliminated in North Dakota by the 20th century. Some have been reintroduced and provide much enjoyment to keen observers. Today, Theodore Roosevelt National Park exists as an "island" of wilderness, providing necessary habitats for many wildlife species. Here are population estimates for hoofed species within the park. These estimates are for 2009 before the young are born:

Species	North Unit	South Unit
Bighorn Sheep	30-35	occasional
Bison	220	245
Elk	occasional	900
Feral Horses	-	139
Longhorn Steers	8	-

Mule deer, white-tailed deer, and pronghorn numbers are variable.



*"I doubt if any man can judge dispassionately the bird songs of his own country; he cannot disassociate them from the sights and sounds of the land that is so dear to him."*

~Theodore Roosevelt



# Supporting the National Parks

Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association was organized in 1951 by a group of park enthusiasts to promote and support the historical, scientific and educational activities of Theodore Roosevelt National Park. This commitment has broadened to offer support to Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site, and Upper Souris National Wildlife Refuge.

The Association is a non-federal, nonprofit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors. To accomplish its goals, the Association is authorized by the National Park Service to sell publications, maps, interpretive learning tools, and theme-related items. From its inception, the Association has donated more than \$820,000 from the sale of these materials to the National

Park Service and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service areas in North Dakota. This money has been used to support interpretive and visitor service activities such as trail guides, exhibits, informational handouts, new site-specific publications and this newspaper, *Frontier Fragments*. The Association has also paid for housing volunteers, sponsored scientific research, funded Student Conservation Association positions, and many other projects.

You are invited to enjoy the visitor centers that house our bookstores. All purchases will directly support the parks. The association takes great pride in its ability to provide assistance to natural areas throughout North Dakota. Enjoy the adventure!



The Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association publishes quality products about the park areas it serves. These interpretive publications unravel the parks' stories, and are an extension of the interpretive activities offered by the National Park Service. In addition to books, this organization offers a variety of theme-related items: maps, posters, custom t-shirts, postcards, and American Indian crafts. These items can be purchased at park visitor centers, online, or by mail.

## Theodore Roosevelt Nature & History Association MEMBERSHIP

### Membership benefits include:

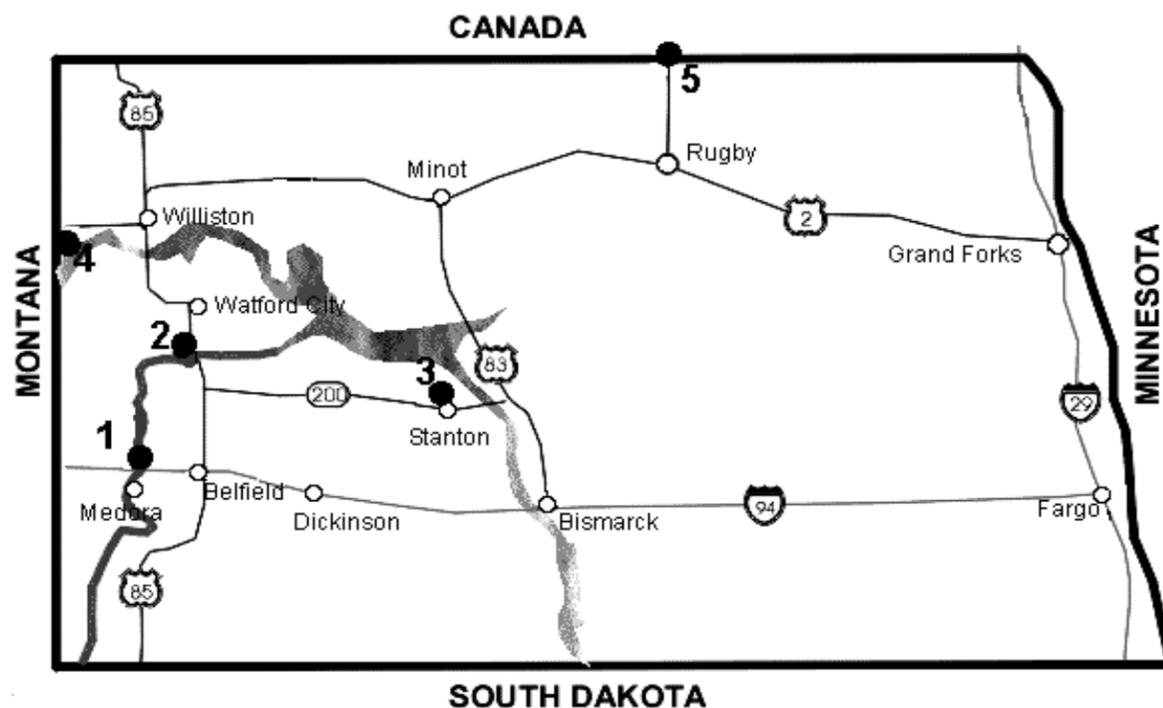
- A 15% discount at all TRNHA bookstores
- A discount on items purchased at other National Park Cooperating Association bookstores
- Newsletter and program announcements on the activities of the Association and areas it serves
- The pleasure of knowing that your membership contributes to the support of park and refuge sites in North Dakota

<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$ 30.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$ 75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$250.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_  
 State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to:  
 THEODORE ROOSEVELT NATURE  
 & HISTORY ASSOCIATION (TRNHA)  
 PO BOX 167  
 MEDORA, ND 58645  
 701-623-4884 [www.trnha.org](http://www.trnha.org)

## National Park Service Sites in North Dakota



1. Theodore Roosevelt National Park South Unit via Interstate 94: 17 miles west of Belfield (exit 27) or 25 miles east of Beach (exit 24).
2. Theodore Roosevelt National Park North Unit via Highway 85: 15 miles south of Watford City.
3. Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site: 1/2 mile from Stanton on County Road 37.
4. Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site: 24 miles southwest of Williston or 21 miles north of Sidney, MT.
5. International Peace Garden (affiliated site) 13 miles north of Dunseith, ND on Hwy 3.

# FORT UNION TRADING POST

## NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE



### Fort Union Rendezvous

by Randy Kane, Park Ranger



Rendezvous

Fort Union Trading Post hosts its 27th annual Rendezvous, Thursday through Sunday, June 18-21, 2009. Mark the dates on your calendar, and come and participate in the upper Missouri's finest fur trade fair at one of the West's most imposing historic sites.

Dr. Jerome Tweton will headline the event this year and give daily presentations on John Jacob Astor, founder and managing owner of the American Fur Company. Dr. Tweton will give both first person portrayals and general presentations on Astor's role in the 19th century American fur trade. Dr. Tweton is Distinguished Professor of History, emeritus, from the University of North Dakota, and is senior consultant to the North Dakota Humanities Council. Between 2002 and 2006 he interpreted John Jacob Astor for the Great Plains Chautauqua Society.

Traders and campers in period dress will set up just outside of Fort Union's north wall, with trader's row extending northward from the back gate. The traders will have their usual array of furs and handcrafted items available. Each day will feature a variety of speakers and demonstrations including blacksmithing, canoes of the fur trade, sign language, flint knapping, period cloth, finger weaving, weapon firing, beaver skinning, brain tanning and pottery making. Bagpipers will perform Sunday afternoon from 12:30-3:30 pm CDT. A special daily presentation will be done on the use of cameras and photography during the 19th century.

An array of trade goods will also be presented in the trade house. The American Fur Company traded beads, cloth, blankets, knives, guns, tobacco, and cooking kettles in exchange for buffalo robes and other furs from the Assiniboine, Crow, Cree, Ojibway, Blackfeet, and Hidatsa tribes. Taken from the clerk's ledger lists of 1848-51, exact replicas of more than 200 trade items are available for purchase today.

### Cultural Program Series

by Loren Yellow Bird, Park Ranger

During historic times, trading and interacting with as many as nine northern plains tribes on the upper Missouri was the focus of Fort Union Trading Post. Contact will continue with five of these tribes throughout the summer as Fort Union Trading Post NHS sponsors their 2009 Cultural Program Series. Groups from the Arikara, Assiniboine, Hidatsa, Mandan and Dakota tribes will come to the fort and interpret their history, language and culture on Saturday and Sunday at 10am CDT on selected weekends. These interpretive programs will provide visitors with a variety of opportunities to learn about the various tribes who came here. Visitors, families, and groups attending these programs will learn what life was like for many of these tribes before modern times and what cultural history and language preservation work is currently being done. Contact the fort for a list of the programs being offered this summer or any questions you might have regarding the programs. All programs and entrance to the park are free of charge.



Culture Program Series presentation 2008

### Special Events:

#### June 18-21 Fort Union Rendezvous

A 19th century fur trade fair

#### August 1-2 Indian Arts Showcase

Traditional crafts and music

#### August 15-16 Fort Buford Encampment

Commemorates frontier military post

#### Sept 5-7 Living History Weekend

Reenactors portray fur trade employees

## Visitor Services and Activities

Fort Union Trading Post National Historic Site is located 66 miles northwest of Theodore Roosevelt National Park's North Unit, 25 miles southwest of Williston or 24 miles north of Sidney, MT.

### ? Bourgeois House Visitor Center

Open daily, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. CT. Open daily remainder of year, except winter holidays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

### Indian Trade House

Open daily during warm weather months, 9:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. CT.

### Living History Activities

Daily, 9:45 a.m. to 5:45 p.m. CT Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day.

### Fort Tours

Ranger tours available from 12:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. CT daily, Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day; self-guiding the rest of the year. Group tours may be arranged by contacting the park.

 Listed facilities and activities are wheelchair accessible.

### Hiking

Bodmer Overlook Trail is open May through October. Ask for details at the Visitor Center.

**For more information:**  
**Fort Union Trading Post NHS**  
**15550 HWY 1804**  
**Williston, ND 58801**

**701-572-9083**  
**[www.nps.gov/fous](http://www.nps.gov/fous)**



# Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site

## Hidatsa Footsteps

Whether watching thousands of geese on the Missouri River or wandering through centuries old villages, Knife River Indian Villages NHS provides a myriad of exciting experiences. Enjoy both the cultural and natural history of the park while traveling the trails. Hike past villages that were occupied for hundreds of years, native prairie, forest, and awe inspiring views of the Knife and Missouri Rivers.



A beautiful sunset welcomes winter hikers

Experience the quiet and become lost in the breath-taking beauty when you visit the Awatixa Xi'e (Lower Hidatsa) Site. A leisurely hike could reveal pieces of Knife River flint. Remains of at least 51 earthlodge depressions indicate former homes for a population of 500-660 people. The village survived for about 250 years until the smallpox epidemic of 1780-1781 after which the site was abandoned.

Listen. You can almost hear children playing and dogs barking at the Awatixa Village (Sakakawea Site), located on the Villages Trail beyond the Awatixa Xi'e Village. Eroded earthlodge depressions along the edge of the Knife River offer a glimpse of archeological treasures hinting at visions explorers like Lewis and Clark or George Catlin experienced. With valuable flint for trade, an active trade community flourished as far south as St. Louis and as far north as Hudson Bay. Look carefully, that curious spot on the ground could be a bead, an arrowhead or some pottery shards. Look, learn and observe while leaving the artifact in place for future archaeologists and historians.

Enhance your village experience by driving north to County Road 18 to visit the North Forest Trail and the Big Hidatsa Site. Life in the Hidatsa Village was rich as evidenced by the foot trails leading to winter homes, deep horse trails out of the village, and the remnants of 113 earthlodge depressions. An earthlodge was more than a home. It was alive and had a spirit.

Gaze over the village and picture 800 to 1200 people talking, laughing and living among their sacred dwellings. Stop to enjoy the spectacular views of the Missouri River Valley enjoyed by the Hidatsa.

Enjoy your hikes at Knife River Indian Villages NHS and please remember to bring your camera and to leave the artifacts in place.

## Special Events

April 25: National Jr. Ranger Day

May 16: Sixth Annual Knife River Bird Watching Event

May 16: Second Annual Spring in-the-Field Photography Workshop

Tuesdays in July: Kids's Camp

July 25-26: Northern Great Plains Culture Fest

September 12: Fall in-the-Field Photography Workshop

September 15, 16, & 17: Lifeways of the Northern Great Plains

October 26: 35th Anniversary of Designation of Knife River Indian Villages NHS



North Prairie overlooking the Missouri River

## Visitor Services and Activities

The park is located 1/2 mile north of Stanton, ND via County Road 37.



### Visitor Center

Open daily, Memorial Day through Labor Day, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. MT; rest of year, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. MT. Closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. A museum and orientation film (closed captioned) interprets life in the villages before and after Euro-American contact. No admission fee.



### Programs

Ranger-guided programs are offered throughout the day, Memorial Day through Labor Day. Program schedules are posted daily. Group tours may be arranged by contacting the park.



The Visitor Center is wheelchair accessible. Some activities and trails are also accessible.



### Hiking

Consisting of almost 1,800 acres of prairie and woodland, the park offers a wealth of hiking opportunities. Beginning at the Visitor Center, a 1.5 mile trail leads to two prominent village sites. Fifteen miles of unimproved trails meander through prairie and woodland ecosystems. Ten miles of trail are available for backcountry skiing during the winter months.

### For more information:

**Knife River Indian Villages NHS**  
**PO Box 9**  
**Stanton, ND 58571**

**701-745-3300**  
**[www.nps.gov/knri](http://www.nps.gov/knri)**