

# Newborn Added to Caprock Canyons State Park Bison Herd

QUITAQUE — The first of what is expected to be a healthy crop of baby bison was born recently and up to 25 more of the shaggy critters will likely join the historic herd at Caprock Canyons State Park this spring.

The growing bison herd, which now numbers 85, has almost doubled visitation to the sprawling Texas Panhandle park, where the Western icon can be viewed up close, according to Superintendent Donald Beard, who hopes to expand the bison range to all but 2,500 of its 15,000 acres later this year.

“We’ve seen our annual visitation increase from 38,000 in FY 2012 when the bison were released to roam more freely in the upland portion of the park to 68,000 last year,” Beard says. “Visitation is already up 10 percent this year compared to the same time last year.”

In the fall of 2011, the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department released the state bison herd from a 300-acre area of Caprock Canyons State Park to roam more than 700 acres of restored native grass prairie near the Visitor Center and Theo Lake.

TPWD has been raising funds for additional fencing, mesquite eradication and prairie restoration the past couple of years by sponsoring public events at the park and in nearby Quitaque, including a music festival headlined by Asleep at the Wheel.

The Caprock Canyons bison descend from the legendary Charles Goodnight herd that saved the Southern bison from extinction in the 19th century and supplied wild stock for Yellowstone National Park and some of the nation’s largest zoos and ranches.

Caprock Canyons State Park is located about 50 miles northeast of Plainview on FM 1065 approximately 4 miles north of State Highway 86. For more information, call (806) 455-1492 or visit the TPWD Website.

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Written by Texas Outdoors

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