



The Huckleberry Hound

~~Don't~~ Feed The Animals!

Springdale, WA site of newest agritourism destination

WinTur Bison Farm opens for tours mid-May

By Victoria Caudle
Managing Editor

Although the American buffalo epitomizes the symbolism of a strong and brave America, most people know few facts about this national treasure. Widely recognized as the representative of the American frontier, Bison were an essential element in Native American survival. They still play a vital part in native culture. However, few areas still exist in America where bison thrive unencumbered. Seeing a live bison is a rare treat for the majority; and, spotting a bison in a field from the highway triggers a special reaction in most anyone who sees one.

In an effort to preserve a vital piece of American heritage, WinTur Bison Farm owners, Drew Winter and Jessie Turney, will be opening their farm for guided tours beginning May 16 through the end of September to provide visitors an up close and personal experience with bison. Visitors will be allowed to interact with bison, experiencing what a magnificent phenomenon of nature these creatures are.

There are two surviving species of bison in the world today: the American bison - found only in North America - and the European bison. There are two subspecies of the American bison: the plains bison and the wood bison.^[1]

Bison are the largest indigenous terrestrial animals in North America and Europe. It is no wonder millions of bison thrived and thundered across

the plains of America. Bison are strong swimmers and nomadic grazers. Few obstacles could slow or stop this powerful member of the bovine family when it roamed freely on the plains. However, bison were hunted close to extinction during the 19th and 20th centuries. The herd at WinTur Bison Farm is comprised of American plains bison. Because of a handful of caring farmers and ranchers like Jessie and Drew who dedicate their lives to stewarding the species, the American plains bison numbers have rebounded. The wood bison still remains on the endangered species list in neighboring Canada.^[2]

The WinTur Bison Farm dream is fueled by Jessie's determination to continue her mother's legacy. WinTur Bison Farm operates in the memory of Jessie's mother, Georgia Derrick, who owned and operated a 350- to 400- head bison ranch in Wisconsin. The endeavor is supported by husband Drew's dedication to fulfill his wife's dream. The foundation stock at the farm is a remnant of the Derrick herd. Jessie and Drew work a labor of love caring for the herd 24/7, 365 days a year. Visitors can tour and meet the herd and know full well each member of the herd has a special place on Jessie and Drew's farm.

"You say bison, I say buffalo!" While the official common name of these bovine is "bison," according to Jessie, the more widely used term "buffalo" comes from the French noun, "le boeuf," meaning "beef."

However, according to herd boss, Jessie, "Buffalo are still wild animals." She continued, "Although we've worked with this herd since they were babies, a mature bull can weigh in at about 2,000 pounds. We've bottle fed most of them, but you want to pay attention every moment you're in their space and keep in mind they are not fully domesticated. They can tend to not fear you, and mamma bison are very protective of their young."

With a chuckle, Jessie also shared Drew's talent in working safely around the herd, "Drew was a natural from the beginning," Jessie proudly explained. "He knows all the important stuff, like when to move in, when to back off, and when to run like hell."

With winter coats shedded and as many as six new baby calves expected, May through September is an optimal time to visit the herd. Visitors will be able to meet and interact personally with the stars of the herd, bulls "Dude" and "Dodge" (behind the safety of buffalo-proof fencing), and with the diva cows and their calves. Be sure to bring your camera to get as many "selfies" as possible with the herd.

Following an informative slide presentation, the tour guides host a Q&A session before engaging visitors to meet and greet the herd. Visitors will have the opportunity to hand-feed treats to the buffalo.

As a fourth-generation seamstress, Jessie delights in fashioning gifts crafted from buffalo hide. Affordable gifts

along with other souvenirs, pet toys, and art pieces are offered for sale at the farm's store starting at only \$1.00. You can see a sampling of Jessie's crafts at the farm's Facebook page facebook.com/WinTurBison.

Tours will be offered every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday on the hour from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m. beginning May 16, 2014 through the end of September. Admission is \$5.00 for Adults and \$4.00 for Kids and Seniors, cash or checks only, please. Visitors will want to note there are no public restrooms at the farm. It's advisable to make a "pit stop" before your arrival. Large groups are welcome by reservation by calling 509-258-6717 or e-mailing RunsWithBuffalo@gmail.com.

WinTur Bison Farm is located on the "Whiskey Flats" stretch on the west side of State Highway 231 seven miles south of Springdale, WA. You can visit the farm online at www.WinTurBisonFarm.com and at their Facebook page facebook.com/WinTurBison. Dodge has his own page at facebook.com/buffalododge. Huck and Dodge are already BFFs!

One may not be able to "rollerskate in a buffalo herd," but Jessie and Drew will make sure visitors will leave WinTur Bison Farm knowing more about bison. Their deep appreciation and personal love for the buffalo will have young and old feeling proud these amazing creatures are indeed an important part of the American heritage. WinTur Bison Farm invites you to partake in the newest and most unique agritourism destination in Stevens County.

[1] Brink, Jack W. (2008). *Imagining Head-Smashed-In: Aboriginal Buffalo Hunting on the Northern Plains*. Athabasca University Press. ISBN 978-1-897425-09-1.

[2] "U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Species Report". Retrieved 2009-06-03.



It's okay to feed the animals, in fact, it's encouraged! One of the biggest delights of the WinTur Bison Farm tour is interacting with "Dodge," the top dog in the herd. Big-as-a-truck "Dodge" is a pussycat when it comes to charming anyone he can for a treat. Owner, Jessie Turney, makes the one-ton giant work hard for his treats. Dodge recently turned 13 years old and has his own Facebook page at Facebook.com/BufaloDodge. It's easy to become a Dodge Fan! Photo: The Huckleberry Press



"Dude" is not to be outdone by anyone in the handsome buffalo hunk department. Come out and see Dude and the rest of the herd. There are yearling calves, and newborns are expected any day.

Photo: The Huckleberry Press



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WINTUR
BISON FARM

BUFFALO TOURS!
Hwy 231, 7 miles south of Springdale, WA
May 16th through September 2014
Fridays - Saturdays - Sundays
12:00-4:00 p.m. On the Hour
\$5 Adults - \$4 Seniors & Kids • Gift Shop!
THE SCOOP: (509) 258-6717
WinTurBisonFarm.com • facebook.com/WinTurBison