**“Bison Babies Broadcast” Script – Part Two**

In our second “Bison Babies Broadcast” sponsored by [Friends of Nachusa Grasslands](https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/), we will share information about safely viewing bison at Nachusa.

During and after the video, you will have the opportunity to support the Friends’ science research program through your donations. You can also ask questions in the comments, and we will try to answer them.

Many folks wonder where they can see bison at Nachusa Grasslands. Unfortunately, bison encounters can never be guaranteed. The animals roam across 1,500 acres of rolling land in no particular pattern and at no predictable times and are often not visible from the Visitor Center or roadsides.

Before this year’s calving season, we had about 100 animals in our herd, 40 bulls and 60 cows. Typically, 20 to 30 calves are born each year. Exact numbers are difficult to determine, so we will have to wait for our fall roundup to figure out this year’s birth rate.

We have learned that our herd’s social structure is complex and always changing. Matriarchal bands of cows and juveniles, bachelor groups of younger bulls, and solo or pairs of older bulls are often observed at Nachusa.

[Here are a few tips for viewing our bison as well as some safety pointers](https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/bison-viewing.html). First, keep in mind that the animals can be only seen from outside the fenced bison units unless you are accompanied by a trained volunteer or staff member.

**Always stay 100 feet from the bison at all times, even when separated by a fence.** Cows are extremely protective of their calves and defend them at all costs. Bison can quickly accelerate to 35 miles per hour and jump 6 feet vertically. When a bison begins to raise its tail, it is stressed and agitated. Our steel fence is very strong, but it may not protect you from a charging animal.

If possible, bring binoculars and a camera with a long lens for close-up views. The photos and videos you are seeing in this presentation are captured by professionals with special gear, safety equipment, training, and access permissions. Also, The Nature Conservancy only allows drones over Nachusa Grasslands that have been authorized for special purposes.

From the [Visitor Center](https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/visitor-center.html) on Lowden Road, look out across the prairie. Near the pavilion, you can enjoy a short prairie trail walking loop that takes you near a stretch of fencing. The bison are especially fond of the wetlands to the north of the overflow parking lot, but they could be anywhere in the area.

When driving on the roads surrounding the bison unit, look west from Lowden Road, north from Naylor Road, and north and south from Stone Barn Road. A tunnel under Stone Barn connects the two fenced units, and the animals frequently use it.

If you are fortunate enough to spot some animals while traveling around the preserve perimeter, please use the provided pull-offs to view the herd. Do not block traffic or park in front of any gates. Turn on your car's hazard flashers and close all car doors if you exit your vehicle. Please don’t climb or lean on the fence at any time. When bison are within 100 feet of the fence, stay off the roadside grass.

Our third and final installment of this program will focus on [scientific research supported by Friends of Nachusa Grasslands](https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/science-grants-2020.html), especially ones related to our bison herd.

To support the Friends of Nachusa Grasslands’ science program, click on the [link](https://www.nachusagrasslands.org/2020-campaign.html) in the video caption. Everyone who donates by the end of the fundraising campaign will receive a beautiful 5X7 photograph of Nachusa’s bison taken by Dee Hudson. In addition, new ongoing monthly donors will receive an 8X10 bison photo, and all first-time donations will be matched by a local foundation.