

Ranger Rick's ADVENTURES

STORY BY GERRY BISHOP; ART BY THE CHARACTERSHOP

Oh give me a home where the buffalo roam, where the deer and the antelope play....

RANGER RICK RACCOON, SCARLETT FOX, AND BOOMER BADGER ARE IN THE PRAIRIE LANDS OF MONTANA. BOOMER'S COUSIN BLAKE HAS INVITED THEM TO WATCH "A GREAT EVENT."



Glad that's over. My ears need a break!

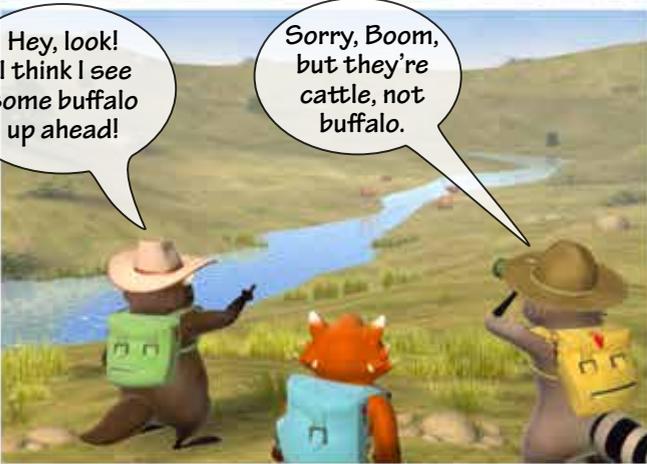
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word, and the skies are not cloudy all day.



Sorry for these discouraging words, Boomer, but still no buffalo, deer, OR antelope in sight.

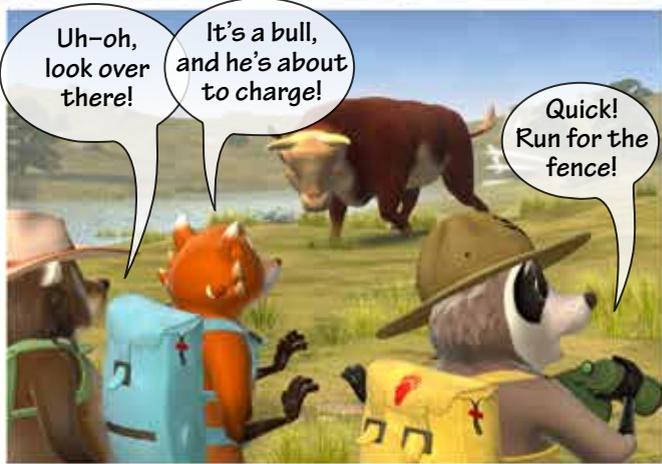
Well, at least the sky isn't cloudy!

There's a stream over there. Let's follow it. Maybe we'll spot some wildlife.



Hey, look! I think I see some buffalo up ahead!

Sorry, Boom, but they're cattle, not buffalo.



Uh-oh, look over there!

It's a bull, and he's about to charge!

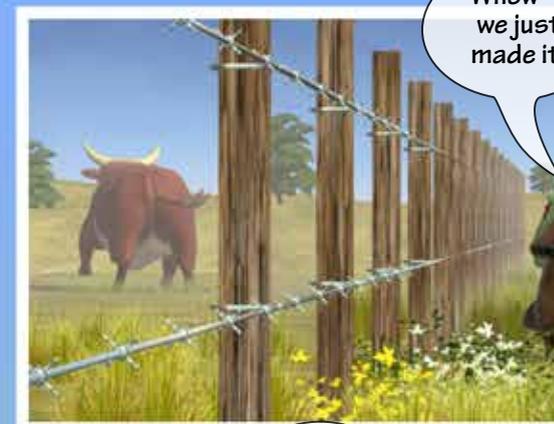
Quick! Run for the fence!



Hurry!



Ouch! You're hitting a lot of wrong notes, Boomer!



Whew—we just made it!

And what a beautiful place we made it to—thick grasses, wildflowers...

Now, THIS is what I call a prairie!



And this is what I call HOME!

Huh?



Hey, Blake—good to see you again!



Glad you all could make it! Welcome to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation!

Indian reservation? You mean American Indians live here?



Sure thing, Boomer. It's the home of the Gros Ventre and Assiniboine peoples.

What a beautiful place!

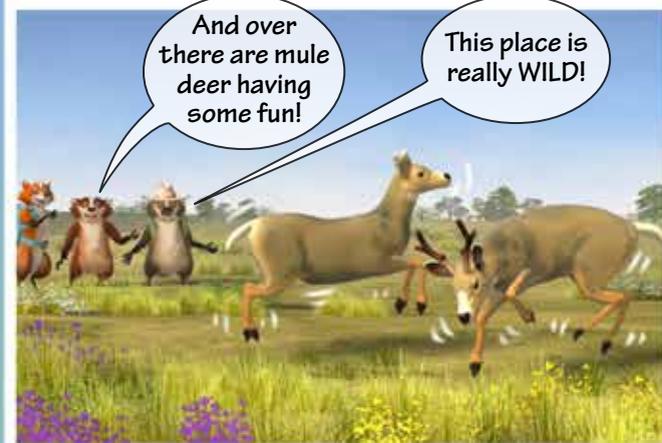


Yep, this is the way the prairie used to be everywhere.

And—look over there!

Wow—those pronghorn antelope are racing each other!

They're the fastest runners in North America, and there are lots of them here.



And over there are mule deer having some fun!

This place is really WILD!



You haven't seen anything yet. Come on—follow me!



A BIT LATER...

Look down there. What's going on?

That's the "great event" I wanted you to see!



Wahooo, hoo, hoo!

Yip, yip, yeow!

Eeeee, eeee, eeee!

Those people are really getting excited.



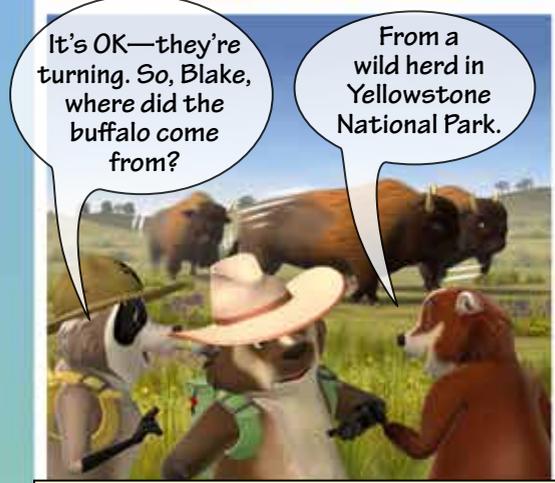
And for good reason. These are the first truly wild American buffalo to set foot here in nearly 150 years!

BLAKE EXPLAINS THAT MILLIONS OF WILD BUFFALO ONCE LIVED IN NORTH AMERICA. BUT DURING THE 1800s, NEARLY ALL OF THEM WERE WIPED OUT. LUCKILY, RANCHERS AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SAVED A FEW, AND TODAY THERE ARE NEARLY 300,000 BUFFALO LIVING ON RANCHES AND IN PRESERVES. BUT MOST OF THOSE HAVE BEEN BRED WITH CATTLE OVER THE YEARS AND ARE NOT TRULY WILD BUFFALO LIKE THE ONES FROM THE PAST.



Whoa—they're running right toward us!

Oh, NO—not again!



It's OK—they're turning. So, Blake, where did the buffalo come from?

From a wild herd in Yellowstone National Park.



So, you're saying these buffalo are just like the ones that once roamed here in huge herds for thousands of years?

You got it, Rick.

BLAKE GOES ON TO SAY THAT THE GROS VENTRE AND ASSINIBOINE PEOPLES LIVED WITH—AND DEPENDED ON—WILD BUFFALO FOR MANY CENTURIES. NOW, WITH THE COMING OF THESE WILD BUFFALO, THEY CAN BETTER RE-CONNECT WITH THEIR PAST—AND WITH NATURE.



That's such great news that I think we should celebrate somehow!

How about starting off with a song?



Oh, give me a home...

No, no, PLEASE!

Come on, everyone, let's drown him out!



...where the buffalo roam, where the deer and the antelope play, where seldom is heard a discouraging word, and the sky is not cloudy all DAY!

MORE FACTS

- The "buffalo" that live in North America are only distant cousins of Asian water buffalo and African buffalo. For that reason, some people say "American bison" is a better name. But other people think it's OK to use the name "buffalo."
- Same thing for the "antelope" that live in North America. They're not related to the true antelopes of Africa, so they should be called just "pronghorns" instead.

- The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) and other groups have been working hard to bring pure buffalo back to Fort Belknap and other places in the West. They're also trying to save the natural prairies that still survive and to establish new ones.

- For more about how NWF is trying to bring buffalo back to other parts of the West, ask your parents to visit nwf.org/tribalbison online.

