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AMERICAN PRAIRIE SEES RECORD VISITATION FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR
Online lodging reservation system to open February 11

American Prairie recorded its busiest year ever in 2021, with more people visiting and staying overnight at its facilities than any other previous year.

Overnight reservations last year more than doubled compared to 2020. American Prairie offers three huts and two campgrounds and 1,401 reservations were recorded at those facilities in 2021. In comparison, there were 665 reservations recorded in 2020. A reservation is defined as a group reserving one unit of lodging (campsite, hut or cabin), and not a count of individual visitors. American Prairie's Director of Public Access and Recreation Mike Kautz says each reservation had an average group size of four people.

According to American Prairie's visitor use data, Montana residents account for the majority of visits to their lands and facilities. In 2021, more than 76% of the reservations for American Prairie's hut system and nearly 49% of reservations for the campgrounds came from state residents.

Kautz says while the ongoing pandemic has no doubt played a role in the surge in visitation the past three years, he anticipates interest by Montanans and out-of-staters alike will continue to grow as more people learn about the prairie and seek outdoor adventures in less crowded parts of Montana.

"There is no better way to experience the prairie than using our public facilities as basecamps for exploring this vast landscape," said Kautz. "With our year over year visitation continuing to double, I'd highly recommend visitors make reservations early to secure their hut, cabin or campsite."

Interest in American Prairie is also expected to grow in 2022 with the recent opening of the National Discovery Center in downtown Lewistown. This new visitor facility will serve as a jumping off point for adventures and as an interactive educational center to teach visitors about the significance of Montana's prairie ecosystem. The National Discovery Center is free to the public and features interactive exhibits, community meeting spaces, and the immersive Ken Burns American Heritage Theater.



2022 Booking Now Open

Supporters of the Montana-based nonprofit will receive an early booking access benefit starting on February 11, 2022. Every supporter who has donated at any level in the past year will gain access to that early booking window and receive a 20 percent discount on lodging.

“As interest grows in visiting the prairie, giving supporters early access to making reservations is an easy way for us to say thank you,” said Kautz.

Reservations for American Prairie’s 2022 visitation season will open to the general public on February 26. Interested members of the public are invited to begin planning their upcoming trips to the prairie by visiting www.americanprairie.org/visit.

Kautz points out that online reservations are by no means a requirement to explore American Prairie’s properties.

“Dispersed tent camping on public lands and on our deeded lands is free of charge and anyone is welcome to enjoy it,” said Kautz. “However, we encourage all visitors to read the safety considerations on our website and prepare adequately whether they make reservations or rough it with dispersed camping.”

Lodging Amenities

Visitors have the option of reserving a variety of accommodations for families and groups to stage adventures into the prairie grasslands for wildlife watching, stargazing, hiking, biking, boating, fishing, hunting, and everything else under the prairie sky.

That includes a hut system intended to provide affordable lodging options for larger families or groups of friends. There are now three huts available on American Prairie’s PN unit, located in the Upper Missouri River Breaks National Monument. Each hut costs \$150 per night, can host up to 8-9 people and offer kitchens, bedrooms and an outhouse.

American Prairie also has two campgrounds, Buffalo Camp and Antelope Creek Campground, featuring RV sites with full hookups, rental cabins, tent platforms, and potable water. At Antelope Creek Campground, cabins can be reserved for \$62 per night, tent sites for \$16 per night, and RV sites for \$33 per night. At Buffalo Camp, tent sites are \$11 per night and RV sites are \$16 per night.

Sharing the prairie with the public is a cornerstone of American Prairie, and the nonprofit provides access to thousands of acres of its private land in addition to thousands of acres of landlocked public land within its borders.

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About American Prairie

American Prairie's vision is to create a vast and collaboratively-managed prairie destination that serves as a fully functioning ecosystem for wildlife, and offers visitors permanent access to the landscape that shaped our nation's character. Already open to the public for recreation including camping and hunting, American Prairie offers visitors an opportunity to connect with nature on a truly grand scale. Learn more at americanprairie.org