



THE STATE OF TEXAS ANNIVERSARY REMEMBRANCE DAY FOUNDATION

THE TEXAS BISON STUDENT STUDY GROUP JOURNAL

***“Caprock Canyons State Park
Expects to See More Than 100,000
Visitors This Year”***

By

Caprock Canyons State Park Superintendent Donald Beard



“I noticed our first group of baby prairie dog pups have emerged from their den this past weekend too. If you look closely, you can see our newest residents of our Honey Flat prairie dog town scampering around during the afternoon hours! If you are lucky, you might even spot our pair of Burrowing owls that moved into the neighborhood just a couple of weeks ago! Now that we have confirmation of a new species entering the park, means that our prairie dog re-introduction is a huge success!”....Caprock Canyons State Park superintendent Donald Beard

Here at Caprock Canyons State Park we have officially begun our bust season. I am sure you have noticed an increase in out of town traffic passing through Quitaque during the last few weeks. Even though we are now considered to be in our busy season, we really have not seen much of a slow season this year! During the first 6 months of this fiscal year (September-February), we have already seen 33,550 visitors drive through town and spend time at the park. For reference, that almost exactly equals the total number of visitors this park saw during the entire fiscal year of 2011!

Last month alone, which included spring break and kicked off our busy season, the park had a total of 14,508 visitors, an increase of over 10,000 visitors from March 2011. Needless to say, our facilities and our staff have been extremely taxed with this increase. The park has not seen an increase of staffing levels in a number of years, but the great group of people that we have working here at the park have been able to keep up with this increase in visitation and continue to provide quality customer service and a great visitor experience. I can't begin to thank the staff enough for their hard work and dedication to making Caprock Canyons State Park such a huge success!

If we keep the pace we are on, we are looking to break the 100,000 visitor mark for the first time ever and end up somewhere around 110,000 visitors for this year! That is an average of almost 10,000 visitors a month who are on vacation and looking to spend money.

With that many visitors, there absolutely is a need for activities outside the park. I think the time is right for people with an entrepreneurial spirit to start thinking of tourism related businesses for our community. I can see the future of our great town and it looks promising...All it takes is for a few people to start the ball rolling and soon we could have a

thriving business community catering to a clientele of over 100,000 out of towners who specifically drive to this area to see the wonderful landscape, dotted with the only “free ranging” public bison herd in Texas.

Speaking of bison, so far as of last week, we have a total of 19 new baby bison calves that we know of! What a sight to see! In addition, I noticed our first group of baby prairie dog pups have emerged from their den this past weekend too. If you look closely, you can see our newest residents of our Honey Flat prairie dog town scampering around during the afternoon hours! If you are lucky, you might even spot our pair of Burrowing owls that moved into the neighborhood just a couple weeks ago! Now that we have confirmation of a new species entering the park, means that our prairie dog re-introduction is a huge success!

Don't forget fishing! Just about a week ago, a gentleman from Canyon caught (and released) an awesome Large-mouth bass that weighed about 8 pounds here at Lake Theo! The fishing season has begun! Lake Theo is home Rainbow trout (winter and early spring), Largemouth bass, a few species of catfish, Crappie, Saugeye, Walleye and plenty of small sunfish providing for great day or night of fishing! All you have to do is pay your entry fee of \$4 per person/\$2 for Texas resident seniors over 65, kids 13 and under are free! Check with the office for bag and length limits.

I invite each of you to come visit your state park, one of the most beautiful parks in the great state of Texas, and take some time to see what we have to offer. Make sure you stop by the office, pay your entry fees and shop in our great park store! Better yet, purchase a park pass and come often to enjoy Caprock Canyons State Park!

Thanks to the best park staff in the state, our great line up of park hosts and volunteers, and Caprock Partners Foundation for all of the hard work in making Caprock Canyons State Park such an awesome place to visit-and work!

Lastly, in the case you haven't hear the big news...Robert Earl Keen will be headlining our 6th Annual Bison Festival on September 17, 2016! How awesome is that?? Tickets will go on sale early this summer so keep checking our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/caprock.canyons), for details! And as always, call us or come see us if you have any questions!

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