

## Council Priority Funds – Application

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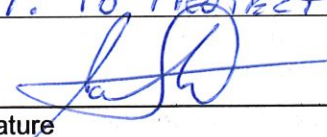
## PRIORITY FUND INFORMATION – Completed by Applicant

Organization Name ANCESTRAL BISON CONSERVATION SOCIETYAddress #290, 52249 RGE. RD. 233 CHARENK ESTATES  
Street and number Subdivision if ruralCity or town SHERWOOD PARK Province AB. Postal code T8B1C7Contact person JOHN A. VROLIJKTelephone 780 905-5599Email address (optional) jaavrolijk@gmail.comProject Type ☐ Event ☐ Project ☐ ExpenseAmount Requested \$ 10,000.00

Brief description of request

ANCESTRAL BISON CONSERVATION SOCIETY WAS FORMED IN JANUARY, 2018 FOR THE EXPLICIT PURPOSE TO RECOGNIZE ELK ISLAND NATIONAL PARK AND TO NOMINATE THE PARK TO UNESCO TO BE NAMED AND RECOGNIZES AS A "WORLD HERITAGE STATUS".

WE HAVE ATTACHED A "BACKGROUNDER" WRITTEN BY LAUREN MARKEWICZ THAT SETS OUT THE INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION OF E.I.N.P. TO PROTECT THE BISON SPECIES

JOHN A. VROLIJK  
Print name  
SignatureApril 26, 2019  
Date

Please remember to attach a proposed budget and request letter to this request.

Number of attached pages \_\_\_\_\_

## Collection and use of personal information

Personal information is collected under the authority of section 33(c) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* and will be used to manage and administer Council Priority Funds. Please be aware that information provided may be made public. If you have questions regarding the collection, use or disclosure of this information, contact Vicky Cushman at 780-464-8098.

Strathcona County  
Office of the Elected Officials  
2001 Sherwood Drive  
Sherwood Park, Ab.  
T8A 3W7

17/04/2019

We are a committee of individuals as follows, John A Vrolijk, Wes Olson, Johane Janele, Alan Babb, Bob Weller, Lauren Markewicz, Liz Watts, and Wade Cummings that are active under the Society name of Ancestral Bison Conservation Society to recognize the significance of Elk Island National Park by way of nominating the Park to become a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Although we could name numerous reasons why Elk Island should have World Heritage Status, the following are the 4 principal reasons!

- 1, Elk Island National Park has been responsible for the protection of both species of bison (buffalo) Wood Bison and Plains Bison for in excess of 100 years!
- 2, Elk Island National Park has been primarily responsible for the repopulation of North America and other areas of the world including Russia of the Wood Buffalo and Prairie Bison, in 2017 there were more Bison in Elk Island National Park than were left existent in all of North America!
- 3, Elk Island National park has been the source of all genetically pure Bison (buffalo) since 1906, that have repopulated the existing populations of Bison that we have today.
- 4, Other issue that are significant and contribute to the invaluable worth of Elk Island National park are the important contribution to Tourism to the County of Strathcona and in fact all of the Central Alberta region, the conservation of all species in Elk island, the Educational programs carried out within Elk Island, the Ecological, Environmental Policies that work to the well being of our world today!

We have included a Backgrounder written by Lauren Markewicz (an employee of Parks Canada) that sets out the history and present work that is carried out in Elk Island that has and is contributing to the preservation of Bison.

Our interim budget for the work that will be required is as follows,

Contribution to UNESCO,		\$5,000.00*
Website, Development,	\$3,000.00	
Hosting, 36 mo. @\$50.00	\$1,800.00	
Total		\$4,800.00
Printing, Cards, Brochure, Letterhead,		\$2,000.00
Travel Expense,		\$5,000.00
Administration,		\$3,000.00
Miscellaneous, (unforeseen)		\$2,000.00
Total,		\$21,800.00

We request an amount of \$10,000.00 from the Council Priority Funds!

Respectfully,  
John A Vrolijk, Chairman

Ancestral Bison  
Conservation

# 290 52249 Rge. RD. 233 Sherwood Park Alberta T8B 1C7

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December 2017

## **Elk Island Bison Backgrounder**

By Lauren Markewicz

Elk Island National Park has been protecting bison for over 110 years and has played a key role in bringing back the species from the brink of extinction. Bison from Elk Island have founded or contributed to over 40 other conservation herds all across North America. Elk Island's herds have been essential to the continuing recovery of bison.

Bison are an iconic species of North America and are essential to life on the prairies. They are a keystone species, helping other animals and plants in these ecosystems thrive through their actions. To name only a few examples, their fur is used by birds to line their nests to help their chicks live on cold spring nights, their dung fertilizes plants and incubates insects, and of course they serve as a food source for predators and many scavengers. Protecting bison protects critically endangered habitats and the biological diversity of the species within them.

Bison were essential to human life on the prairies as well. First Nations like the Cree and Blackfoot depended upon bison for survival. Bison provided food, shelter, and tools. Many Indigenous ceremonies and sacred societies even today continue to feature the bison as a central figure. Indigenous groups were responsible for saving some of the bison in the first place and many continue to protect bison today. Signatories of the modern Buffalo Treaty (2014), in which various First Nations have vowed to work to return bison to traditional territory, see bison as essential to the physical health and the cultural well-being of their people today. Living bison are literal ties between modern Indigenous cultures and the rites and ways of being of their ancestors.

Bison were once one of the most numerous megafauna on the planet, but over the course of a single human lifetime an estimated 30 million bison were slaughtered until less than a thousand individuals remained in small scattered herds across the North American continent. Bison were nearly lost forever.

The herd that would come to Elk Island National Park had its origins with an Indigenous man named Samuel Walking Coyote, who captured four orphaned plains bison calves in Montana during one of the last great bison hunts of the 1870s. After a decade, he sold his small but growing herd of bison to a pair of mixed-blood Indigenous men, Michel Pablo and Charles Allard. Pablo and Allard purchased bison from Charles "Buffalo" Jones, who had bison stock from Saskatchewan, Kansas, and Texas, making the Pablo-Allard herd the largest and most genetically diverse bison herd in the world by the year 1900. Researchers estimate that 80% of plains bison extant in the world today trace their ancestry back to the Pablo-Allard herd.

Elk Island National Park became the guardians of the Pablo-Allard herd starting in 1907. Michel Pablo sold his bison to the Canadian government as he had lost the right to graze his bison on Indian Reservation land due to the racist policies of the American Dawes Act, which broke up "surplus" land on Indian Reservations and opened them up to white settlement. After a dramatic five-year roundup, these plains bison were sent north to Elk Island. For over 110 years, Elk Island has safeguarded the Pablo-Allard herd and used its bison to help repopulate the continent.

Elk Island National Park is the only place in the world that maintains conservation herds of both North American subspecies: plains bison and wood bison. The larger and rarer wood bison, once found only in the wilds of the continent's northwest, were also hunted to the brink of extinction

December 2017

in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1965, a small group of wood bison from Wood Buffalo National Park were sent to Elk Island to protect them from disease and hybridization with plains bison. All wood bison conservation herds since that time have been founded by stock from Elk Island.

Because of the disease-free status of Elk Island's bison and their genetic diversity, Elk Island's bison have been the source stock for bison repopulation efforts at conservation projects all across North America. Over 2,500 wood and plains bison have been sent from Elk Island to other conservation sites over the past 100 years. Most bison in Canada can trace their ancestry through Elk Island and the park has contributed to conservation projects across the United States, most recently the American Prairie Reserve and the Blackfeet Indian Nation, both of Montana.

Bison are of outstanding ecological and cultural value to the continent and Elk Island's bison herds have played an essential role in the preservation of this iconic species. Bison populations are growing in number across North America because of these seed herds that Elk Island has been protecting for generations.