

Re-Bisoning the West: Restoring an American Icon to the Landscape

Kurt Repanshek

Torrey House Press (Sep 24, 2019)

Softcover \$18.95 (200pp)

978-1-937226-98-5

Intertwined with American history, the bison has long been a symbol of the American West. Kurt Repanshek's *Re-Bisoning the West* traces the development of the prehistoric animal whose existence has been both threatened and protected by human beings.

Excellent and journalistic, the book forwards a fascinating perspective on the bison. It lays out the species' chronology from its earliest days to the present. Revered by Native Americans, the bison was hunted almost to extinction in the early twentieth century for its meat and hide, but herds proved resilient and survived.

Interesting as it calls attention to less known but fascinating facts about the bison's importance in nature's cycle, the book notes that, when bison roll on the ground, their weight creates large depressions that become rain-filled water holes for other animals. So too, do the bison's grazing habits assist prairie dogs and birds and even stimulate the growth of vegetation.

A significant chapter concerns the revival of the species, recounting the efforts of conservationists including Charles "Buffalo" Jones, William Temple Hornaday, and Theodore Roosevelt, who advocated for the bison and lobbied for federal government protection. Through their efforts, along with those of the American Bison Society, federally protected herds of bison have refreshed the population and guaranteed the bison's permanence on the American landscape. Still, the bison shares a dual status as wildlife and livestock—not just left to roam free, but also raised for their meat.

Re-Bisoning the West relates the story of the American bison, demonstrating the complex relationships the species maintains with the earth and humanity itself.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (September / October 2019)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.