

Bison (Buffalo)



Female Bison skull found in Banff National Park in the 1990's

Archaeologists have located the remains of prehistoric bison (buffalo) that once ranged throughout the Ya Ha Tinda ranch area and into what is now Banff National Park. Bison disappeared from the valley in the late 1800s; however, evidence of their previous existence is marked by the numerous buffalo wallows found throughout the valley. Bison skulls, some of which are on display in the Historic Display, have been found on the ranch in along Scalp Creek, Bighorn Creek, Red Deer River and in coulees. Well worn terraced grazing trails can be seen on the steep grassy slopes in the valley and serve as reminders of how great the numbers may have been during the winter months when bison grazed on sedges, grasses and willows their preferred forage in winter months.

The skull shown above was found on Bighorn Pass in Banff National Park. The skull was partially buried in permafrost, thus preserving the hair and hide which is still intact on the face. This bison skull is on display in the Historic Display at the Ya Ha Tinda Ranch buildings.

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