

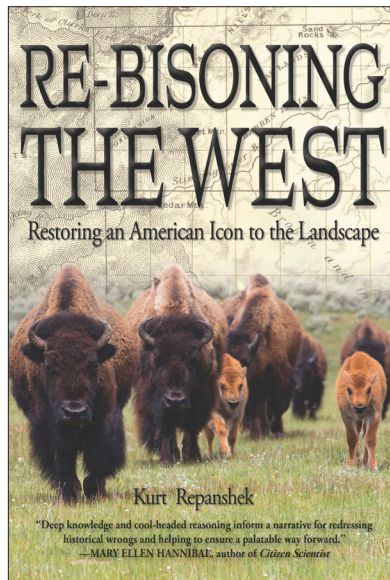
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:



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Announcing the September 2019 publication of
RE-BISONING THE WEST

RESTORING AN AMERICAN ICON TO THE LANDSCAPE
BY KURT REPANSHEK



Millions of majestic bison once roamed territory stretching from Alaska to Mexico. This keystone species of the Great Plains plays a crucial role in maintaining the health of ecosystems and is of immeasurable cultural importance to certain Native American communities. Their unmistakable profiles and impressive size have captured the hearts and imaginations of artists and writers worldwide. Historically, bison have been revered—and they have been slaughtered. Now, measures are being taken to revitalize bison populations around the country. With a forward-thinking approach, award-winning journalist Kurt Repanshek explores these and many other facets of bison in *Re-Bisoning the West: Restoring an American Icon to the Landscape*.

Recently designated the National Mammal of the United States, bison have come close to extinction, and great effort is needed to preserve this awe-inspiring species for future generations. Repanshek traces the history of bison from their Ice Age ancestors to present-day endeavors to bring them back to the landscape—and the biological, political, and cultural hurdles confronting these efforts.

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EARLY PRAISE FOR *RE-BISONING THE WEST*

"A fascinating perspective . . . *Re-Bisoning the West* demonstrates the complex relationships the species maintains with the earth and humanity itself."

—FOREWORD REVIEWS

"Repanshek paints evocative scenes . . . he describes efforts, in the early 20th century, to protect the last remnants of bison, including through interbreeding with domestic cattle, and he addresses their conservation status today."

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

"Impressively informative and exceptionally well written . . . an extraordinary and detailed history of species restoration of paramount importance for community and academic library collections, as well as the personal reading lists of the non-specialist general readers with an interest in the subject."

—MIDWEST BOOK REVIEW

"The bison is an icon, but it is also a living beast with a fraught future. Co-evolving with myriad species in the West, herds once spread to the horizon and fundamentally supported Native American life. Both populations were vastly reduced by genocide and extirpation, not only marking our moral souls but reducing landscape resilience. Kurt Repanshek eloquently lays out the case for how we might bring bison back in sufficient numbers to restore vibrant life on the land. Deep knowledge and cool-headed reasoning inform a narrative for redressing historical wrongs and helping to ensure a palatable way forward."

—MARY ELLEN HANNIBAL, author of *Citizen Scientist: Searching for Heroes and Hope in an Age of Extinction*

"An interesting and thought-provoking presentation of America's animal—the bison."

—JESSICA HALL, Country Bookshelf

"A timely book . . . essential reading to those concerned about the future of our historic landscapes and wildlife, and probably more essential to those who aren't."

—CHRIS LA TRAY, Fact & Fiction Bookstore

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Award-winning journalist Kurt Repanshek's writing has appeared in *Smithsonian*, *Audubon*, *National Geographic Traveler*, and numerous other periodicals. He is the founder and editor in chief of National Parks Traveler, the only editorially independent media organization dedicated to daily coverage of national parks and protected areas. He lives in Park City, Utah.



A FEW QUESTIONS FOR KURT REPANSHEK

What drew you to research and write about bison?

I was inspired to write this book after doing a series of articles on bison in the National Park System. It started out with a story focused on Yellowstone National Park's bison, then expanded as I looked into efforts by the Interior Department to return bison to some of their native lands. Research showed that this subject hasn't received significant attention, and noting the high popularity of bison in national parks, as well as the fact that it recently was designated the National Mammal, I could sense great appeal for such a book.

What's been the most enjoyable and/or difficult part about writing your book?

Getting out onto the landscape has been one of the best aspects of this project. Seeing bison in the wild and talking to those who are working to ensure the species has a strong role in conservation of the landscape has been great. I've driven nearly three thousand miles to walk the grounds where the early twentieth-century bison recovery program got a boost, and to examine a twenty-first-century landscape conservation effort with a goal of preserving 3.5 million acres, complete with ten thousand bison.

Hands down, the most difficult aspect has been shifting gears from "journalist" to "writer." It's not easily done, certainly not overnight. To my chagrin, after turning in my first draft I bought a copy of John McPhee's latest book, *Draft No. 4*, a wonderful book on his writing process.

The future of bison is uncertain and efforts to restore them to the landscape are constantly evolving. What questions are you asking after writing *Re-Bisoning the West*?

Will Montana's opposition to Yellowstone bison impede efforts to expand bison herds? How will Native American interests build bison herds? There currently are efforts by the Blackfeet Nation to expand bison herds near Glacier National Park, and the Fort Peck Reservation wants to act as a middleman of sorts between Yellowstone bison and other entities interested in building herds.

Who are a few of your role models, literary and otherwise?

John McPhee is perhaps the best storyteller I've encountered. Rick Bass and David Quammen have literary skills I can only learn from, and Nathaniel Philbrick and Caroline Alexander are incredible researchers who transform what they've uncovered into great reads. Ed Abbey brought strong emotion to his books, and trying to capture the same tone when applicable is a challenge.



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VOICES FOR THE LAND

Torrey House Press is an independent nonprofit publisher promoting environmental conservation through literature. We believe that culture is changed through conversation and that lively, contemporary literature is the cutting edge of social change. We strive to identify exceptional writers, nurture their work, and engage the widest possible audience; to publish diverse voices with transformative stories that illuminate important facets of our ever-changing planet; to develop literary resources for the conservation movement, educating and entertaining readers, inspiring action.