



## Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch

### What is the Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch?

- The award-winning Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch is a joint venture between Syncrude Canada Ltd. and the Fort McKay First Nation.
- For the past 22 years, a herd of over 300 wood bison has been growing and thriving on over 450 hectares of reclaimed grassland.

### When was the ranch established?

- In 1993, talk of reclaiming some of the land utilized by Syncrude's past mining operations evolved into the idea of introducing large mammals to test the land's sustainability.
- Both cattle and elk were considered before it was suggested that Syncrude reintroduce an animal that had once roamed Alberta's boreal forest - the wood bison.
- A total of six mature cows, 15 male calves and nine female calves arrived at Syncrude on February 16th, 1993, relocated from Elk Island National Park near Edmonton.

### Where is the ranch?

- The Beaver Creek Wood Bison Ranch is located about 50 kilometers north of Fort McMurray and is part of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

### Why is the ranch important?

- The bison is a symbol of strength and has significant cultural importance to First Nation and Metis communities – where the animal provided food, shelter and tools for thousands of years.
- When settlers from Europe came in search of land, bison populations were depleted in massive numbers.
- Nursing the bison population back to health symbolizes an important part of rekindling First Nations culture in Canada.
- With the bison returned to their ancestral land, the relationship between Syncrude and the Fort McKay First Nation has strengthened.
- The ranch also proved that the reclaimed land was sustainable, capable of supporting the same plants and animals that existed long before anyone began extracting Alberta's oil.



**Who is involved with the ranch?**

- For over 20 years, Brad Ramstead, who is the ranch manager and a senior reclamation scientist - oversees the ranch on behalf of the Fort McKay Environment LP.
- Ramstead began doing reclamation work for Syncrude in 1991.
- In 1993, Ramstead was part of the team that helped create the ranch.
- The ranch also offers employment opportunities for nearby residents, including the construction and maintenance of fences surrounding the bison's spacious pasture.

**How is the ranch doing presently?**

- The wood bison on the ranch regularly earn livestock awards and accolades from across the country.
- The herd is valued because of its disease-free status and excellent health.
- The bison are so healthy that the Calgary Zoo is interested in storing their genetic material, since Syncrude keeps detailed records of pedigree. The herd is an important part of the genetic preservation effort of the wood buffalo species.

The ranch will continue to provide a safe and healthy environment for years to come - nurturing the growth and development of this once threatened species.