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Chadrad Communications, Inc.
226 Bordeaux St - Chadron, NE 69337
308-432-5545 fax 308-432-5601
E-mail: kcsr@chadrad.com



(S.D.)-Caution Advised When Traveling Through Wind Cave Park



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 11/08/2012 03:31 PM

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK, SD – Poor visibility and vehicle speeds too high for winter driving conditions can lead to accidents involving wildlife at Wind Cave National Park. Park officials remind drivers to use caution and obey the speed limit when traveling through the park. “This time of year, with so many people driving at night or in poor weather conditions, it can be difficult to see a bison or elk in the road in time to safely stop,” said park superintendent Vidal Davila. “Occasionally even driving the posted speed limit is too fast for conditions and people need to slow down.” During winter months, especially in snowy conditions, wildlife patterns change. It is not uncommon to find bison along the highways licking salt used on roads outside the park and deposited inside the park by passing vehicles. Areas of particular concern are entrances into the park because of their speed limit change and cattle guards that tend to shake loose snow and salt from vehicles entering the park. Accidents involving large wildlife, even when traveling at posted speed limits, have the potential to cause serious injuries to drivers and their passengers. Studies show the best way to reduce these types of accidents is for drivers to slow down. Davila added, “So far this year we’ve lost five bison, three deer, and one pronghorn antelope due to vehicle collisions. One of these accidents occurred last summer during the Sturgis Rally. A minivan hit a bison and shoved it across the road into the path of a biker. He was okay, but the bike wasn’t drivable and the bison died.” The park protects around 450 bison.