

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

# Sullys Hill

*National Game Preserve*



*Sullys Hill National Game Preserve is renowned as a regional conservation learning center - greeting families, students, and outdoor enthusiasts of all abilities.*

**Welcome to  
Sullys Hill  
National Game  
Preserve**



*This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.*

Sullys Hill National Game Preserve (NGP) offers unique opportunities to view wild bison, elk, and many varieties of birds and other wildlife. Scenic overlooks provide panoramic views of Devils Lake, and a network of nature trails and the auto tour route offer ways to explore the Refuge by foot and vehicle.

Sullys Hill NGP is one of more than 548 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System – a network of lands set aside and managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is a living heritage, conserving wildlife and habitat for people today and for generations to come.

**Origins of Names**

Sullys Hill is named for General Alfred Sully, who led an expedition to this area in 1865. Two years later, the Army established nearby Fort Totten on the south shore of Devils Lake. The original fort was built with timber cut on Sullys Hill. Years later, clay from Sullys Hill was used to make bricks for buildings at the fort. Many of these buildings are still standing today.

The Dakota Sioux, who live in the area, use the name "Paha Tanka" for Sullys Hill which means "Big Hill."

## Why was the Preserve Established?

President Theodore Roosevelt established Sullys Hill as a national park in 1904. In 1914, Congress designated it as a big game preserve to conserve two of North America's most majestic species: American bison and elk. Sullys Hill NGP was transferred from the National Park Service to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1931 to be administered "as a big game preserve, refuge, and a breeding ground for wild animals and birds..."

### *American Bison*

In the early 19th century, tens of millions of bison roamed the prairies of North America. By the late 1880s, there were less than 30 free-roaming bison in the United States largely due to unrestricted market hunting and the introduction of exotic diseases. In 1918, six bison were re-introduced to Sullys Hill from Portland, Oregon. The bison herd at Sullys Hill NGP is a living reminder of the great herds that once stretched as far as the eye could see.

### *Elk*

Elk are the second largest members of the deer species in North America and historically ranged from coast to coast. By 1900, habitat loss and unregulated hunting had reduced elk from much of their native range, including North Dakota. In 1917, 15 elk were re-introduced to Sullys Hill from Yellowstone National Park. Habitat restoration and conservation, in concert with regulated hunting, have helped elk populations recover nationwide.



*Sullys Hill wetland*

## Sullys Hill National Game Preserve



USFWS

*Dragonfly*

At Sullys Hill NGP, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focuses on wildlife-dependent recreation activities and on preserving wildlife and their habitats. The staff provides conservation education to schools and a variety of public groups, working in partnership to foster wildlife conservation.

The Sullys Hill NGP Education and Visitor Center serves as regional conservation learning center offering a wide array of environmental education opportunities including interpretive displays, a 180-gallon aquarium of native fish, a birding garden, and a bookstore. A curriculum specifically developed for the Refuge and other educational resources are available for use by educators. Two classrooms can be reserved for educational meetings and school groups. Please call, and schedule your event in advance.

The Refuge contains 1,674 acres and is comprised of a big game unit, hay unit, and native prairie tract. The rolling forests of basswood, bur oak, and green ash dramatically contrast with the surrounding mixed grass prairies. This unique terrain was formed by the geologic process of "ice-thrusting" in which the glacier cut an enormous gouge in the land, and then lifted and immediately deposited the material. The gouge became present day Devils Lake, and the mass of deposited material is now the range of hills which holds Sullys Hill NGP. The hills of the Refuge rise to an elevation of 1,735 feet, which is over 330 feet above Devils Lake. Sullys Hill is a great place to see wildlife "up close and personal."

USFWS

# Sullys Hill

National Game Preserve

-  Refuge Boundary
-  Big Game Enclosure
-  State Highway
-  Road
-  Auto Tour
-  Nature Trail
-  Ski Trail
-  Information and Fee Station
-  Visitor Center
-  Restrooms
-  Outdoor Classroom
-  Amphitheater
-  Overlook
-  Accessible Site



Devils Lake

Main Entrance

Fee Station ?

Devils Lake Vista

Wetland Overlook

Sully Hill Observation Overlook

Devils Lake Vista Loop  
(Closed in Winter)

Winter Feedground

Prairie Dog Town

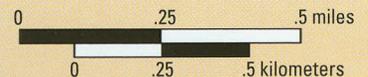
Sullys Hill Overlook Loop  
(Closed in Winter)

Fort Totten Bay

Sweetwater Lake

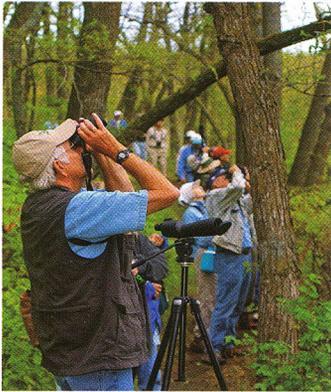
Fort Totten

Fort Totten State Historic Site



## Wildlife Viewing

Sullys Hill NGP is one of five national wildlife refuges which are managed to preserve American bison. In addition to bison, visitors can observe elk and white-tailed deer. In 1975, black-tailed prairie dogs were introduced at Sullys Hill NGP as a reminder of the prairie dog colonies originally found west of the Missouri River in North Dakota. The colony can be viewed at a stop along the auto tour route that also contains an observation platform, interpretive panels, and a viewing scope. Coyotes, woodchucks, beaver, and other small mammals can also be seen throughout the Refuge.



Visitors enjoying bird watching

The Refuge's unique habitat mix of prairie, forest, and wetland is a destination for birds and birders alike. The Refuge is home to 270 species of migratory and resident birds. Many species unusual to North Dakota can be seen here including pileated woodpeckers, warblers, ovenbirds, flycatchers, and northern water thrushes. Many species of waterbirds, especially wood ducks, belted kingfishers, and American white pelicans, can be seen on Sweetwater Lake, which is a short hike from the Visitor Center. During annual migrations, majestic golden and bald eagles frequent the Refuge.



Scott Ralston / USFWS

### Interpretive Auto Tour Route



*Above: Flowing stream; Below: Showy lady's slipper*

Travel the 4-mile auto tour to view bison and elk, and visit the prairie dog town. The auto tour route is open from May to October. The auto tour route is open to buses, but is closed to larger towed vehicles due to steep hills and sharp curves. There is a small fee to enter the Refuge which helps to support visitor services, conservation education, and wildlife management. Access to the Visitor Center is maintained year-round.



Cami Dixon / USFWS

## An Invitation to Explore



Take the 1.5-mile, self-guided nature trail along a wooded stream and through the forested hills of the Refuge, and watch for white-tailed deer, wood ducks, and warblers. This national recreation trail also has a short paved section near the Visitor Center. In the winter, several miles of the trail are intermittently maintained for snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.



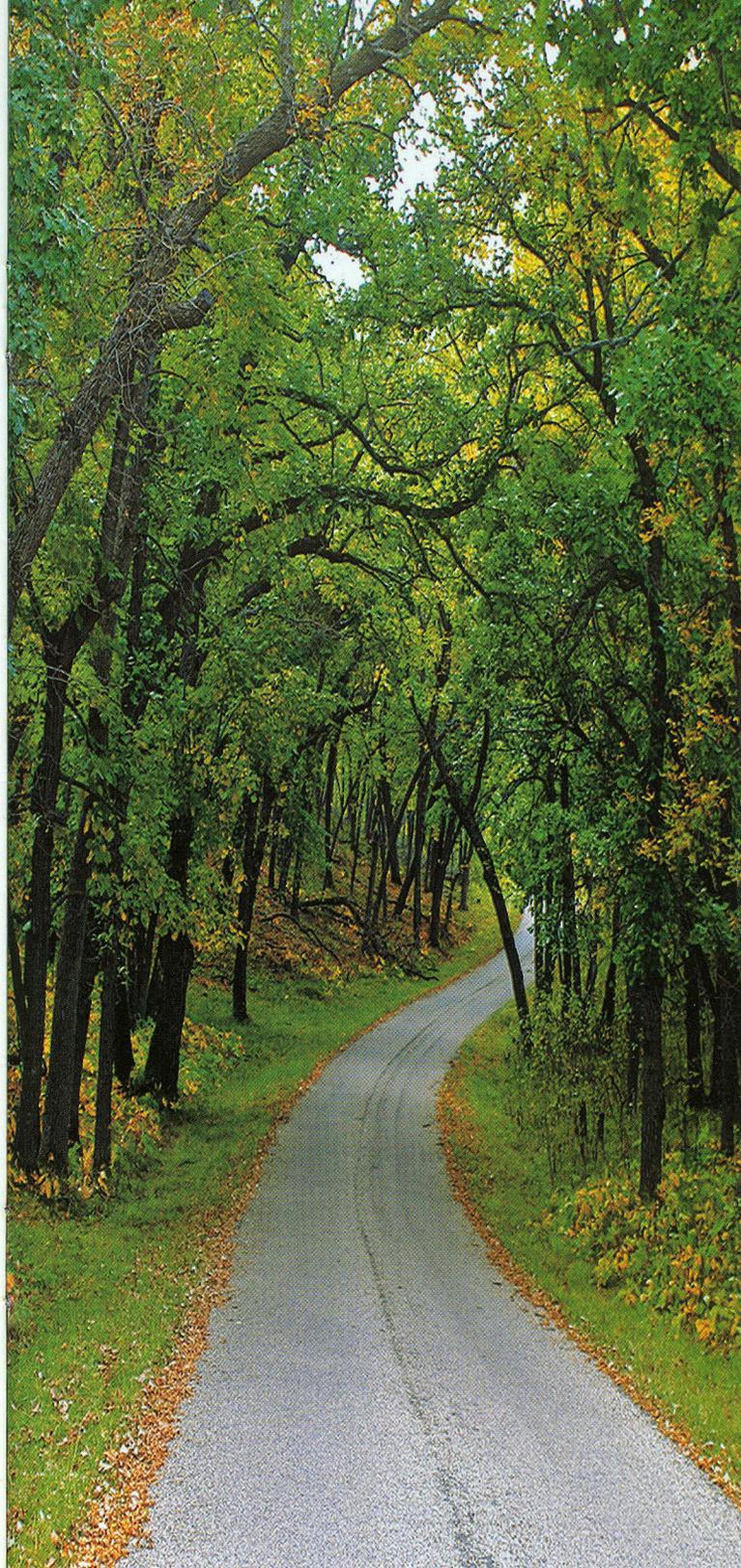
Bird watchers and photographers will find bird species not normally seen on the surrounding prairies including American redstarts, yellow warblers, red-eyed vireos, osprey, and eastern bluebirds. The best viewing is during spring migration and early breeding season. A bird checklist is available at the Visitor Center.

*Yellow warbler*

Entertaining and educational programs focusing on wildlife conservation and history are scheduled throughout the summer at the Visitor Center and the amphitheater. Enjoy your visit, and contact the Visitor Center staff to learn more about activities at the Refuge.

## Accessibility Information

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs and activities of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is available to all individuals regardless of physical or mental ability. Dial 711 for a free connection to the State relay service for TTY and voice calls to and from the speech and hearing impaired. For more information or to address accessibility needs, please contact the Refuge staff at 701 / 766 4272, or the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Equal Opportunity, 1849 C Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20240.



**Sullys Hill National Game Preserve**

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**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

**<http://www.fws.gov>**

**For Refuge Information**

**1 800 / 344 WILD**

**June 2009**



**Bull elk**  
**Scott Ralston / USFWS**