

# ***Bear River State Park: Evanston's spot for rest, recreation, wildlife and scenic beauty***

*Posted: Friday, Aug 14th, 2009*

BY: BECKY CRUM, Herald Reporter

Hundreds of thousands of people visit Evanston every year. Well, to be specific, they stop at Bear River State Park.

An estimated 200,000 people stop in Bear River Park each year, said Wade Henderson, the park's superintendent. About 150,000 stop at the travel information center. The travel center is open seven days a week and supplies information on the entire state of Wyoming, he said.

Bear River State Park is approximately 336 acres comprised of a recreation area along the Bear River, plus the travel information center. Both locations have restroom facilities and playgrounds.

The travel center is closed on winter holidays. However, the park is open daily for day use only.

The park is pet-friendly. There is a leash law, so people are welcome to bring their pets as long as they are confined to a leash to avoid dangers to the pets or others in the park.

Henderson has been superintendent of Bear River State Park since April 2006.

Henderson said the travel center opened in 1986, and the main park area was constructed and opened in 1992.

He said they have one or two seasonal employees, depending on budgets and summer workload.

"The main attractions are the bison and the elk," Henderson said. "We also have a lot of people utilize the walking trails along the river and picnic in the shelter or the tables along the trail."

Henderson said the park used to be grazed by the state hospital.

The hospital raised its own beef and used the park to graze them.

"When the travel information center was built, it was decided to build a state park," Henderson said. "This was an ideal spot for a park with the land and by the river. Since the state hospital was getting out of agriculture, they built the park here."

Henderson said communities send information so that I-80 travelers will know what is going on in their area. He said the travel center has a theater that is used to view videos of Wyoming.

"We have a list of videos people can choose from," Henderson said. "They can browse through the list and, if they see a video they would like to watch, they can ask for it at the counter."

Henderson said the bulk of visitors at the travel center are people who pass along I-80 or are going to Yellowstone National Park.

"We get a lot of tourists wanting to know what there is to see and do along I-80 and on the way to Yellowstone," Henderson said. "Every two or three years we conduct a visitor survey to gather information about where our visitors are coming from, how long they stay in the state, where they are going."

Bear River State Park is located at 601 Bear River Drive. The travel information center can be reached at 789-6540, and the park information center at 789-6547.

*For the complete article see the 08-14-2009 issue.*