

National Geographic Channel to showcase Malta area in 'American Serengeti'

April 20, 2010

MALTA — National Geographic conjures images of giraffes and gazelles, of lions hiding behind tall tawny grasses and birds streaking across a sunset sky.

But soon people around the world will see America has its own Serengeti — right in Montana.

The National Geographic Channel was in the Malta area last year, filming an hourlong feature about the American Prairie Foundation's efforts to create the largest wildlife reserve in the continental United States.

The documentary "American Serengeti" is scheduled to premiere on Earth Day on the National Geographic Channel, Bresnan channel 273 or 796 f or high definition. The show airs at 8 p.m. and 11 p.m. Thursday, 10 a.m. Sunday and 4 p.m. Thursday, April 29.

So far, the nonprofit foundation has spent roughly \$8 million buying 11 ranches to create the country's biggest free-roaming buffalo range and a home to hundreds of other creatures. Combined with the 1.1 million acres in the Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge, the prairie reserve spans 125 miles from east to west.

Eventually, the wildlife reserve could top 3.5 million acres, dwarfing the nation's largest national park, Yellowstone, which is 2.21 million acres.

Though prairie once dominated America's landscape, now only 1 percent of the once 142 million acres of grassland remain. The American Prairie Foundation hopes to recreate an entire ecosystem, restoring animal populations and native grasses.

An infant compared to the neighboring Rockies, the prairie formed 8,000 years ago and became home to numerous species of animals and plants.

The documentary tracks biologists who have already found at least 180 bird species, 40 mammals, 15 reptiles and amphibians and 285 plants.

Some of the film stars are golden eagles, elk, bison, long-billed curlew and, naturally, prairie dogs.

CHINOOK — Residents will get a glimpse of royalty this week — not of the tea-sipping, tiara-toting variety, but rather the hip-swaying, "Heartbreak Hotel" singing kind.

Widely regarded as one of the world's best Elvis tribute artists, Ryan Pelton will perform at the Chinook High School gym Wednesday as a fundraiser for the Blaine County Arts.

Pelton is the only tribute artist booked to perform at Elvis Presley's home of Graceland in Memphis, Tenn. He's also appeared as the King of Rock 'n' Roll in commercials and in the movie "Hound Dog" with child star Dakota Fanning.

The concert follows Elvis' career chronologically, both in tunes and costumes.

By attending the concert, the community ensures many more quality concerts in the future, board member Kasie McIntosh said.

Advertisement

