

## UXO Where The Buffalo Roam

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**Plzen Region, Czech Republic** The National Park Sumava (NPS) is a 263 sq. mile area, the largest protected area of its kind in Central Europe, along the border with Germany and Austria.

For many years now, there have been debates among environmental groups and park management officials over the future of the park. Issues such as logging, the use of insecticides, and potential development have been areas of contention.

Complicating the issues at the NPS is the presence of UXO across hundreds of acres. The UXO is a result of Czechoslovak military training that took place between 1957 and 1991 in NPS's west Bohemian section. The UXO areas of the park have been marked with signs banning tourists from entry.

A recent study of the area concluded that thousands of rounds of ammunition exist in the area. The UXO includes various tank and artillery as well as other munitions including pyrotechnics. The results of the study reportedly shocked park officials in terms of the enormous amount of UXO potentially present in the area. The reported cited military documents which stated that the area should not be entered for 80 to 100 years.

The report recommends that the area be cleared, and of course that comes with a steep price tag. For now, NPS officials are trying to use subsidies to build an enclosure to the area, so that it can be used for a zoological study area where species such as bison can roam and tourist can admire from afar.