

On Oct 10th, 2023 the Upper Yellowstone Watershed's Fish, Wildlife & Recreation Working Group held its bi-annual rendezvous to collaborate on 10 local conservation projects...led by locals...run by locals.

Due to overwhelming interest, the facility could not accommodate all South Park County residents (Livingston, the "real" Paradise Valley, Gardiner and Cooke City) who expressed interest; hence, this recording. To learn more, go to www.upperyellowstone.org/fwr

FISH, WILDLIFE & RECREATION

To understand and conserve the Upper Yellowstone watershed, including its agriculture, open space, rural character, wildlife, fisheries, natural resources, and sustainable recreational use while respecting private property rights.



<https://www.upperyellowstone.org/>

Paradise Valley dropped as a Priority Area

Hanauska-Brown, Lauri <L.Hanauska-Brown@mt.gov>
To: Jeff Reed
Cc: Yarnall, Michael; Yoshioka, Marina; Braske Shifrin; Charles D'Amal; Arthur Middleton; Scott Christensen; Matt Cuzzocrea; Blakely Aldrin; whinnyc@icloud.com; daniel@thecommongroundproject.us; mlfouandersonramrez@gmail.com; casey@visionhawkfilms.com; evan@yellowstonewildlifeagency.com; Cmi; kristie@pccmt.org; +15 others
You replied to this message on 10/17/2022 11:21 AM.

Mon 10/17/2022 10:50 AM

Reply Reply All Forward

Hello Mr. Reed and stakeholders,

I'm reaching out from the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks office in Helena where I work as a bureau coordinator for the Wildlife Division. One of my tasks for the Division is the coordination of work to promote wildlife movement and migration. As such I facilitated and co-authored the recent update to the Montana Action Plan for Implementation of SO3362. As noted in your recent communication to Marina Yoshioka and Michael Yarnall, the Paradise Valley (Priority Area B) has been dropped as a SO3362 priority area in this update. The replacement of the Paradise Valley with the new priority area, Bighorn River to Little Missouri River, was a purposeful, Division-vetted decision based on a variety of factors. The first of those factors is the Department of Interior guidance for these plans to identify five or fewer priority areas. Within priority areas A, C, D, and E much work has been done with SO3362 funding and much more is on the docket. No work has been supported within the Paradise Valley with SO3362 funds, in part due to lack of landowner and community coordination for any large-scale project. While much good work is underway in the Paradise Valley it was our assessment that none of it was in line or in need of immediate SO3362 funding.

Substantial turnover in the FWP Region 3 office and Helena have admittedly slowed coordination in the valley from our end but know that we are working diligently to build the relationships necessary to coordinate large scale projects for big game movement. A number of the project ideas you mention in your message are important to FWP but are actually outside the scope of SO3362 and thus do not need to be in a priority area for funding, e.g., grizzly bear movement corridors and brucellosis mitigation work. FWP intends to work on wildlife priority issues such as these in the Paradise Valley regardless of whether the Paradise Valley is identified as a priority area under SO3362.


While our decision to change priority areas was an internal one, we did discuss it with members of the Montana Migration Coalition to include representatives from several conservation organizations including Heart of the Rockies, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Center for Large Landscape Conservation, and many others. No other public vetting of our decision was required nor again, does this one decision slow efforts of the community or tourism industry to conserve wildlife. We applaud and support those efforts; we have simply removed one funding source for them. That funding source can be made available in the future if there are eligible projects, with a plan update.

In summary, it is our belief that further community organization and coordination is needed within the Paradise Valley. Nothing prevents us from adding the Paradise Valley back in as a priority area during the next plan update and it is likely that within the next year or two one of the other priority areas will have reached a logical point to pause meaning it can come out and the Paradise Valley can go back in. It is important to note that the likelihood of us prioritizing the area will increase if there are landowner and community supported project proposals ready for funding.

Please feel free to reach out to me, Michael or Marina for further discussion.

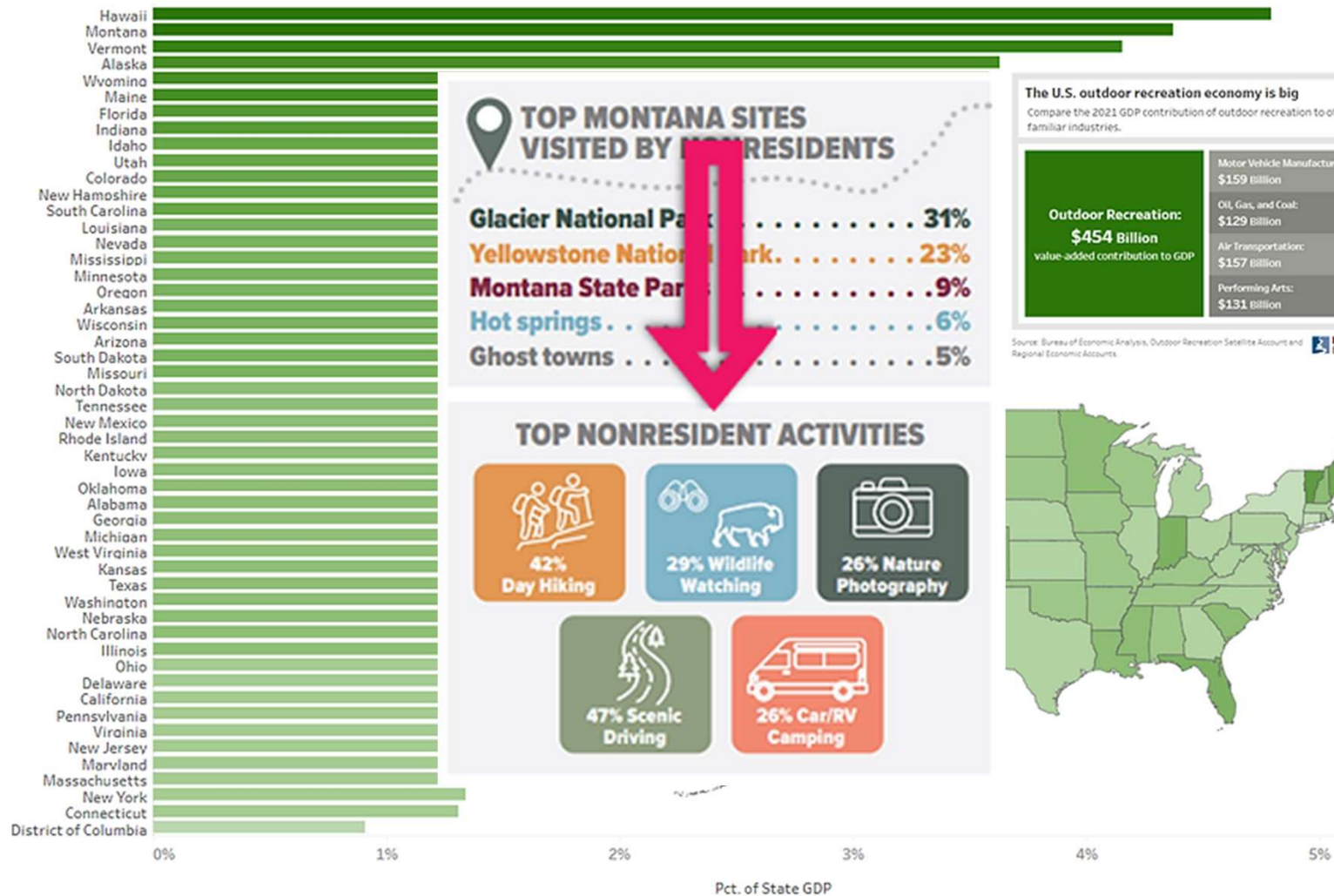
Lauri Hanauska-Brown
Wildlife Division
Special Projects/Bureau Coordinator
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

P.O. Box 200701
Helena, MT 59620-0701
Ph: (406) 444-5672
fwp.mt.gov

 THE OUTSIDE IS IN US ALL.

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Jeff Reed <Jeff@reedfly.com>









“Our record of...fish...taken from the Yellowstone River, four hundred and eighty-nine trout, running from two and a half to four and a half pounds.”

General Strong 1875

“...at this time we find large herds of...Elk, White tailed deer, black tailed deer, & antelope, all of which are roaming over the prairie unmolested by white men or Indians.”

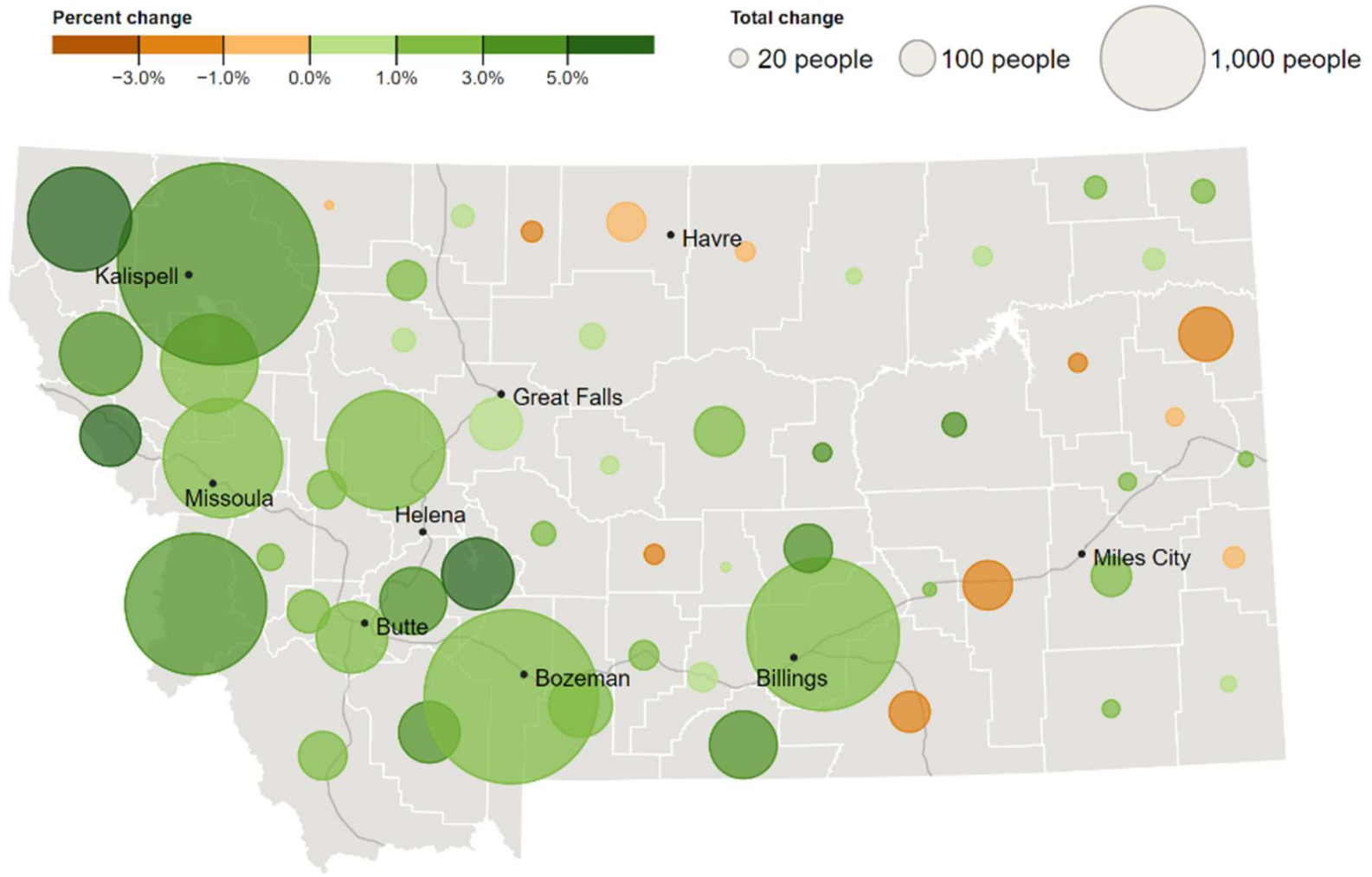
Bart Henderson 1894

“...the mournful cadence of [the wolf's howl] adds to our sense of solitude. The roar of the mountain lion awakens the sleeping echoes of the adjacent cliffs and we hear elk whistling in every direction.”

Folsom-Cook-Peterson Party 1869

“...established their camp near the ‘upper canyon’ on the main river and were quite successful in catching beaver, otter, mink and martin.”

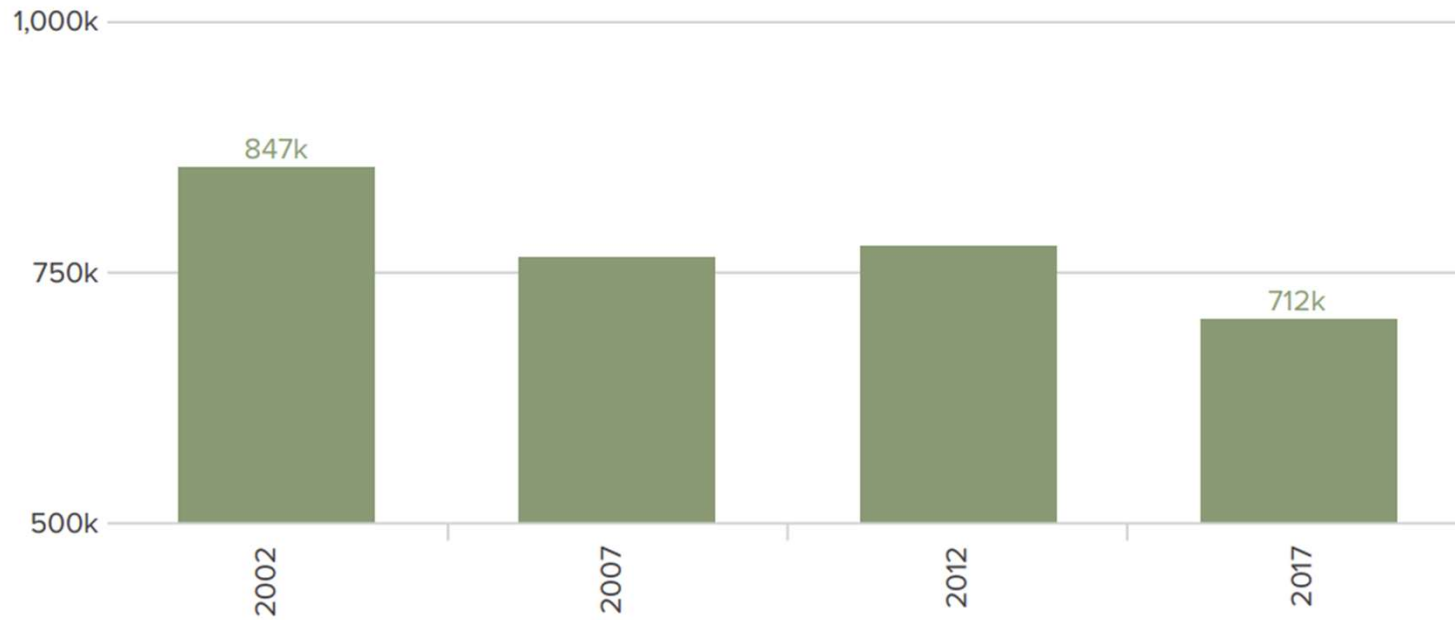
Unnamed hunters 1868




135K ACRES LESS IN AG LAND SINCE 2002

NUMBER OF ACRES IN AGRICULTURAL LAND

Source: USDA Census of Agriculture





*To understand and conserve the
Upper Yellowstone watershed,
including its agriculture, open
space, rural character, wildlife,
fisheries, natural resources,
sustainable recreational use, while
respecting private property rights.*

AGENDA

- Fishery
 - Upper Yellowstone River Restoration Project Prioritization Plan - Wendy Weaver (10 mins)
 - Trout Focused Projects - Ashley Brubaker (10 mins)
 - UYRAC & Drought Plan - Ashley Lowrey (10 mins)
- Wildlife
 - Yellowstone Safe Passages - Daniel Anderson (10 mins)
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 - Recreational Use Study (10 mins)
- Lunch & Community Conversations





MONTANA
**FRESHWATER
PARTNERS**

Watershed Health: Flood/drought resiliency in the Upper Yellowstone and Shields

Two year project prioritization process that has included private landowners, NGO partners and agencies

- 3 public meetings in Emigrant, Wilsall and Livingston
- 20+ one on one meetings w/local partners
- 15+ landowner and site visits
- Resulted in 50+ projects identified and vetted through ranking team
- Intended to be living, ongoing process – actively pursuing funding for implementation

Give Back to the Yellowstone



- River Clean up in September (1600 #garbage and flood debris)
- Two native riparian planting projects
- 7 signage sites in partnership w/ City, Park County, Forest Service, private landowners
- Implementation of low tech process based restoration project



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Yellowstone Cutthroat Can't Catch a Break

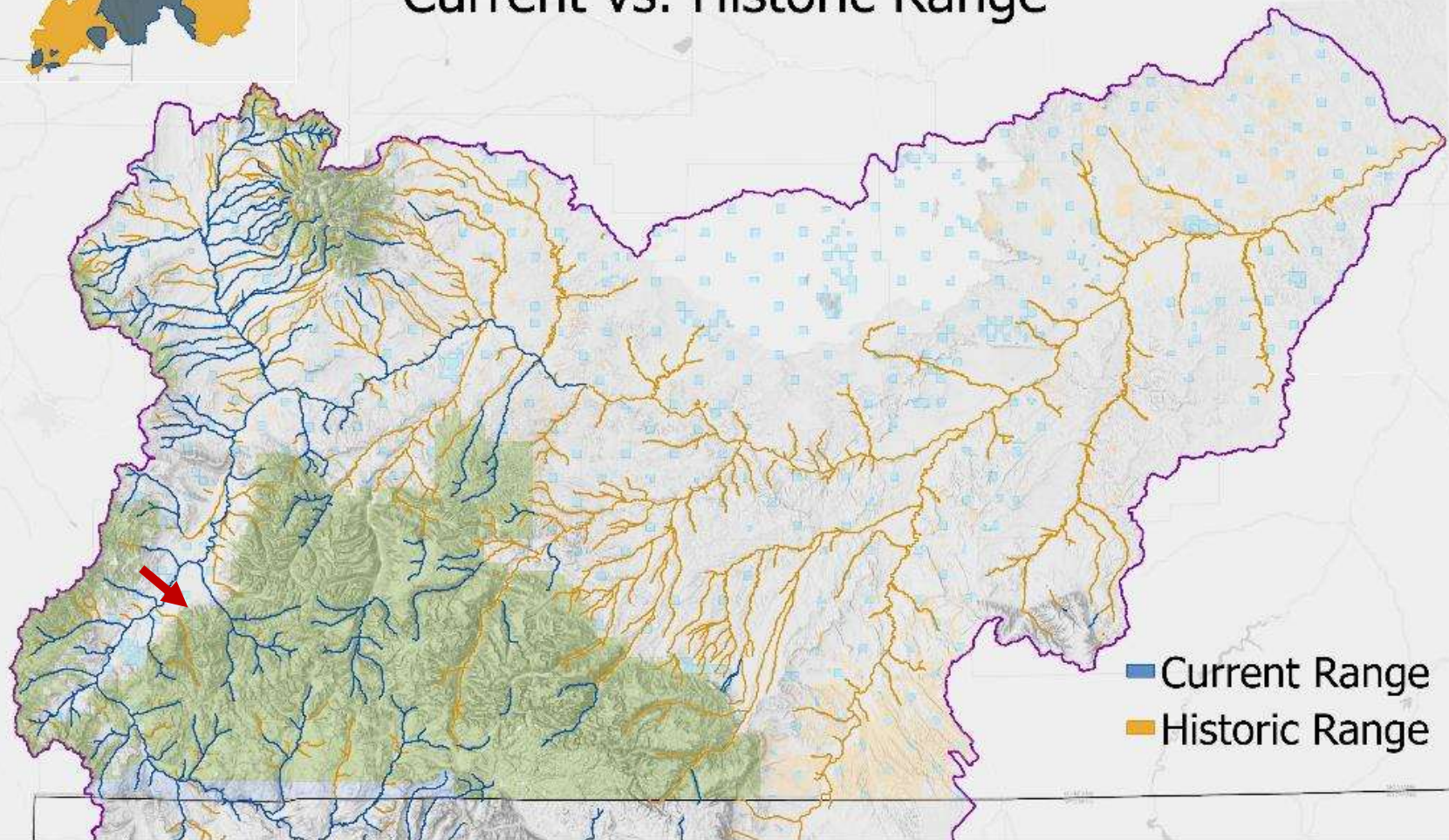
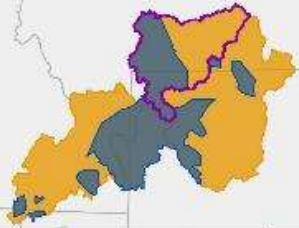


Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Conservation in the Upper
Yellowstone Watershed, Specifically Mill Creek

Ashley Brubaker, Trout Unlimited



Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Current vs. Historic Range

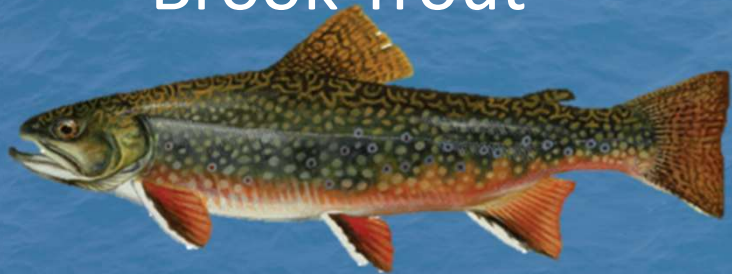


- Current Range
- Historic Range

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout



Brook Trout



Competition

Brown Trout



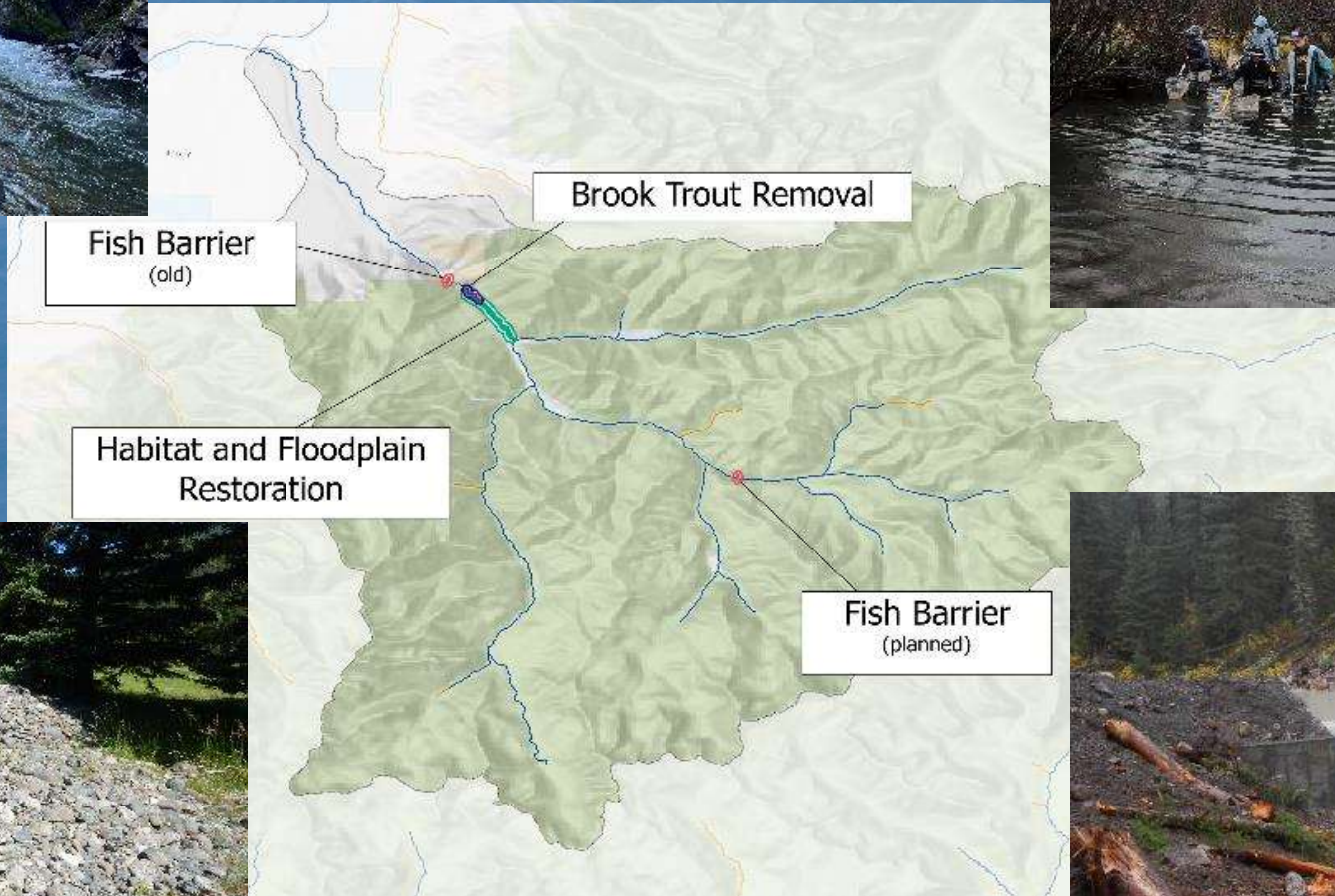
Stress

Rainbow Trout



Hybridization

Mill Creek Sub-Basin





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Drought Planning: Drought Focus Group



1) Engage the community

- ID and reach out to key stakeholders
- ID roles and responsibilities (water/wastewater operators, city/county, irrigators, etc.)

Drought Planning: Drought Focus Group



1) Engage your community

- ID key stakeholders
- ID roles and responsibilities (water/wastewater operators, city council, customers, etc.)

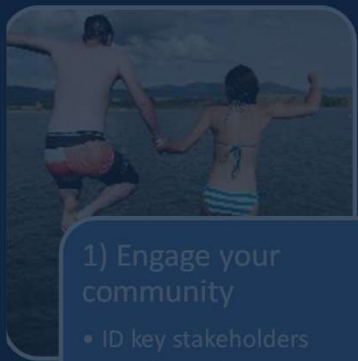


2) Understand water, climate & drought in our community

- Look at historic drought/impacts
- Compile information: existing watershed characteristics & data



Drought Planning



1) Engage your community

- ID key stakeholders
- ID roles and responsibilities (water/wastewater operators, city council, customers, etc.)



2) Understand water, climate and drought in your area

- Look at historic drought/impacts
- Monitor (snowpack, precipitation, streamflow, soil moisture, well levels)



3) Identify vulnerabilities

- And associated impacts
- Focus on drought impacts to each sector (recreation, agriculture, recreation, tourism, etc.)



Drought Planning

Monitor, Communicate, Educate



1) Engage the community: Drought Focus Group

- ID and reach out to key stakeholders
- ID roles and responsibilities (water/wastewater operators, city/county, irrigators, etc.)



2) Understand water, climate & drought in our community

- Look at historic drought/impacts
- Compile information: existing watershed characteristics & data



3) Identify drought impacts & vulnerabilities

- Focus on drought impacts to each sector (recreation, agriculture, recreation, tourism, etc.)



4) Develop a Response plan and ID long-term mitigation actions/adaptation strategies

Upper Yellowstone River Assessment Committee (UYRAC)

A technical advisory council – response to 2022 flooding

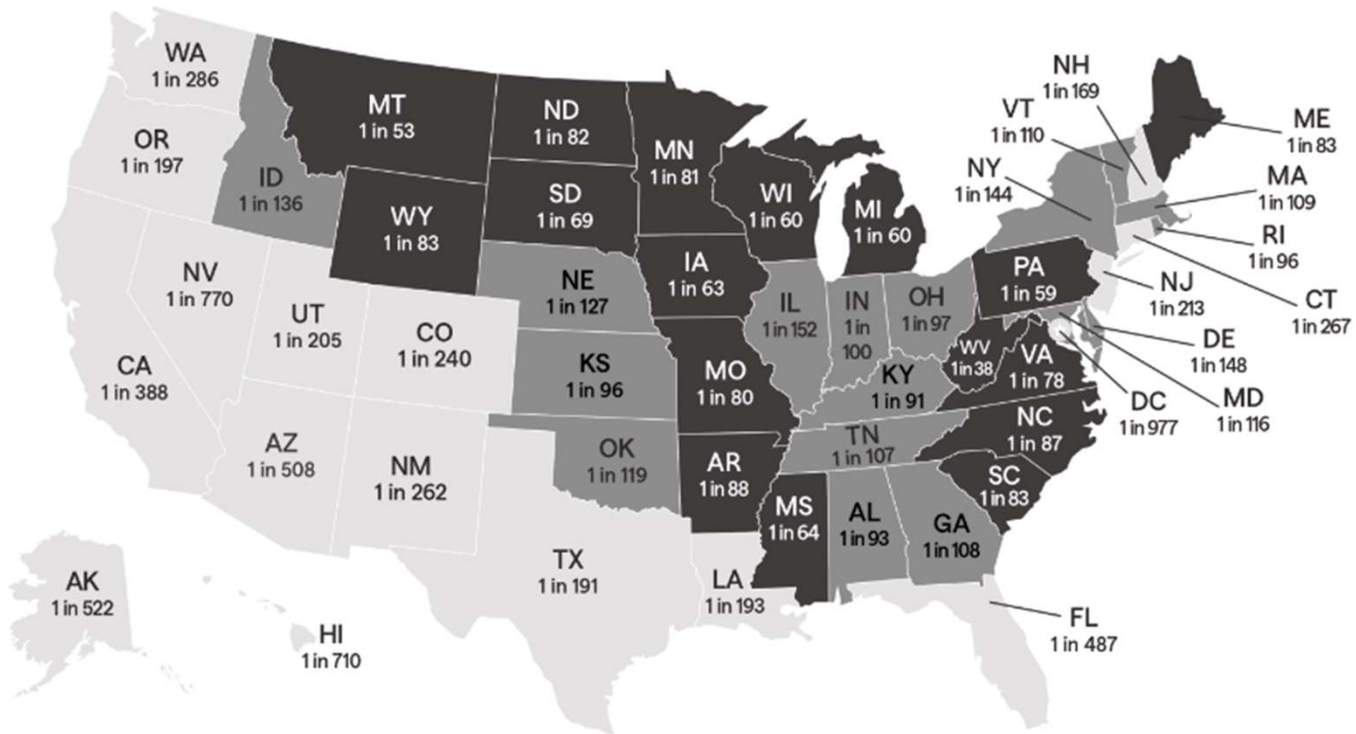
- **Interagency/landowner coordination**
 - Technical assistance
 - Permitting
- **Outreach and education**
 - Post-Flood Yellowstone River: Recovery Basics
Helpful information on river geomorphology and post-flood Best Management Practices (BMPs).
 - Dissemination of information
- **Efforts focused on floodplain resiliency**
 - CMZ mapping
- **Identifying holes/needs for flood response**
 - Stream permitting panel

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2022-23 Animal Collision Likelihood by State



July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023

High Risk States
 Medium Risk States
 Low Risk States





YELLOWSTONE
SAFE PASSAGES

A refined perspective of wildlife-vehicle conflicts on US 89



The Facts

**50% of all reported accidents
on US89 are wildlife related**

**Compared to 5% nationally
and 10% statewide**



The Facts

\$32 million

estimated direct cost of WVCs in the
Upper Yellowstone Watershed
between 2012-2023



The Facts

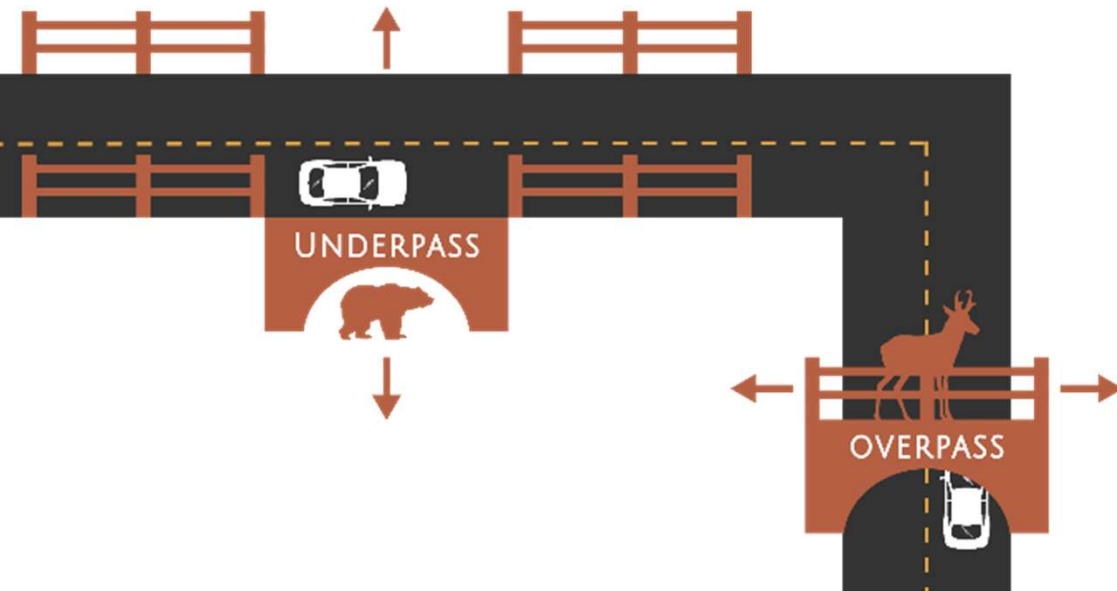
Recorded incidence and cost of Wildlife-Vehicle Conflict on Highway 89 S (2012-2023)

	SPECIES TOTALS	DIRECT COST*
ELK	270	\$12,270,150
MULE DEER	651	\$9,123,114
WHITETAIL DEER	652	\$9,137,128
UNKNOWN DEER	79	\$1,107,106
BIGHORN SHEEP	2	\$28,028
MOUNTAIN LION	3	\$42,042
PRONGHORN	8	\$112,112
GRIZZLY BEAR	6	\$84,084
BLACK BEAR	4	\$56,056
MOOSE	7	\$578,522
BISON	3	\$42,042
SUM	1685	\$32,580,384



Effective solutions

Solutions to WVCs include wildlife overpasses, underpasses, and diversion fencing that guides wildlife to the crossing structures.



According to studies by the Western Transportation Institute, when crossing structures are constructed in the correct locations with diversion fencing, they can **reduce WVCs by up to 97%.**



Collaboration



CINNABAR
FOUNDATION



THE ARTHUR M. BLANK
FAMILY FOUNDATION

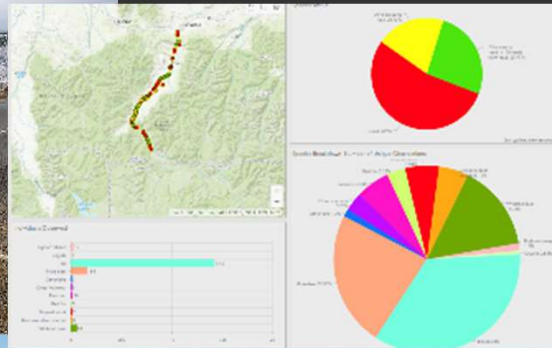


Dr. Shane Doyle
Native American Cultural Consultant

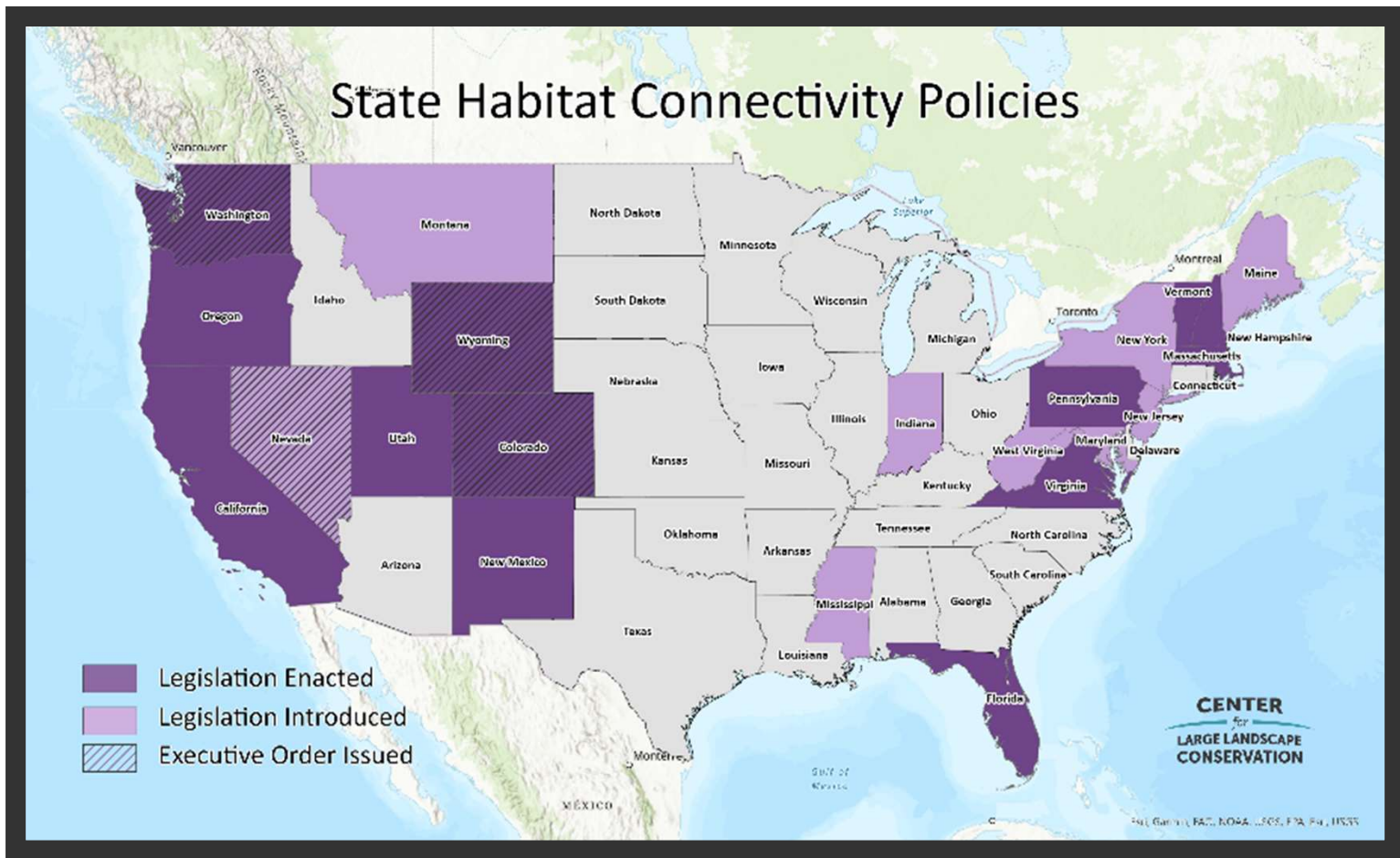
PARK COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION



Community engagement



Policy efforts





The road ahead





Stay connected

Learn more by visiting us at
www.yellowstonesafepassages.org

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Elk in Paradise: Conserving Migratory Wildlife & Working Lands in Montana's Paradise Valley

Brian
Yablonski, CEO

Whitney Tilt,
Paradise Valley
Coordinator



JULY 2020

ELK IN PARADISE

Conserving Migratory Wildlife and Working
Lands in Montana's Paradise Valley

BY WHITNEY TILT



Survey Summary

- Landowners reported high use by elk
- 81% suffered economic impact from elk
- Additional stress from disease transmission risk



Paradise Valley Working Lands Group



JULY 2020

ELK IN PARADISE

Conserving Migratory Wildlife and Working Lands in Montana's Paradise Valley

BY WHITNEY TILT



RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDOWNER COORDINATION AND OUTREACH

1. Establish a Paradise Valley Working Lands Group
2. Tell the story of ranching and recognize its benefits to community and wildlife
3. Engage landowners as full shareholders in wildlife management decisions
4. Change the message and the messenger

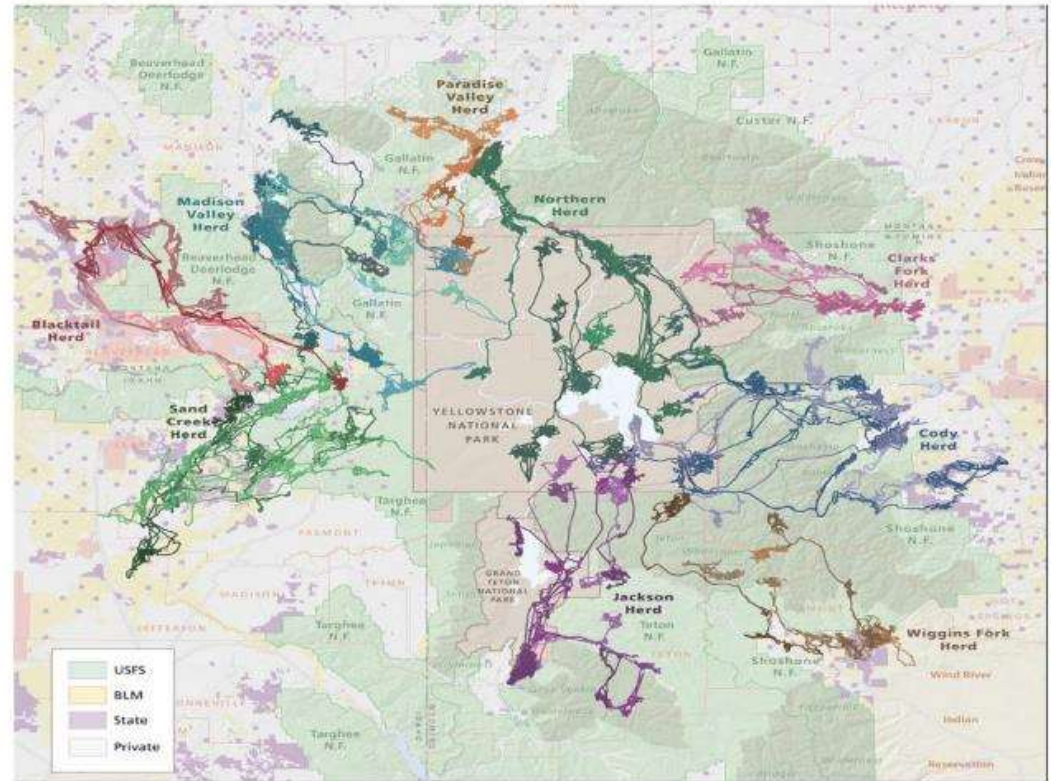
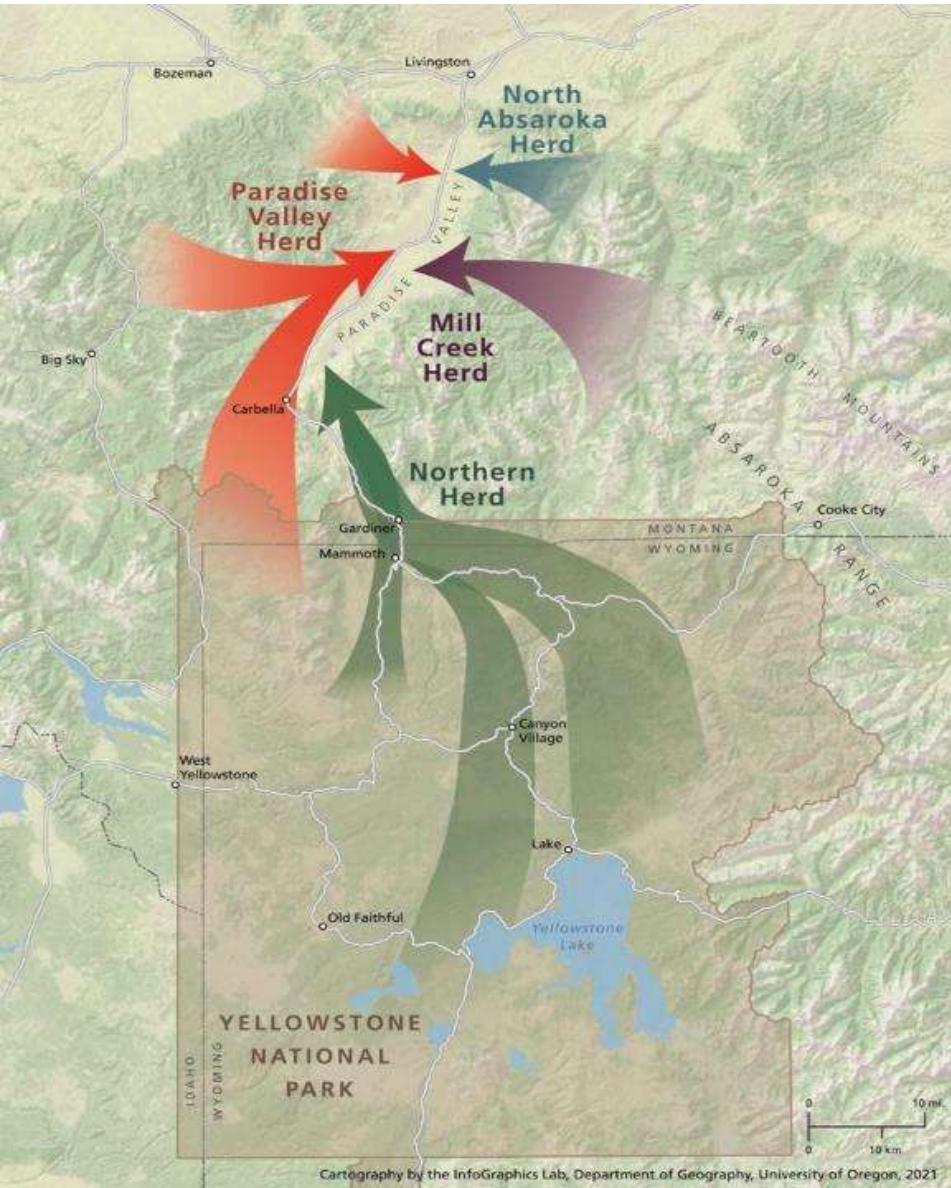
FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

5. Work to develop a brucellosis risk-transfer tool
6. Enter into wildlife-use agreements, or "elk rents"
7. Establish an elk compensation fund
8. Offer priority or transferable hunting tags to landowners who provide wildlife habitat
9. Develop new funding sources to support wildlife conservation on working lands
10. Increase the amount of private lands available for public access through negotiation

RESEARCH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

11. Engage MSU Extension, FWP, and others in generating applied research, citizen science, and best practices that help landowners live with wildlife
12. Integrate landowners' knowledge or citizen science into research and data
13. Provide regulatory and management flexibility

Elk Migrations of Paradise Valley





**“If we improve habitat [for elk]
we’re basically shooting
ourselves in the foot because of
the increased brucellosis risk.”
– Paradise Valley Rancher**

Brucellosis

- Limited to GYE
- Elk are vectors
- Bison are the store
- Risks to working landowners





Brucellosis Compensation Fund

- **Fund Size:** \$100,000-\$150,000 to cover 50 to 75% of the cost of quarantine event
- **Partners:** Greater Yellowstone Coalition, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Spruance, Credova
- **Payouts:** Per head/Per month: 75% of estimated hay costs
- **Maximum Payout:** 50% of initial fund size for any one quarantine event
- **Operational Period:** 3 years, beginning Jan. 2023



Elk Occupancy Agreement

- **A first for Montana:** Conserves and improves 500 acres of winter range for migrating elk
- **Process:** PERC and partners paid for the construction of a fence to separate wildlife and livestock
- **Partners:** Greater Yellowstone Coalition, PERC, and local ranching family
- **Payouts:** Demonstrates how we can privately conserve vital habitat and recognize the importance of working lands



Payment for Presence

- **Approach:** Use game cameras to determine elk days
- **Agreement:** PERC and partners compensate landowner based on elk days
- **Partners:** PERC, and ranching family

**“Conservation will ultimately
boil down to rewarding the
private landowner who
conserves the public
interest.”**

— Aldo Leopold



Thank You

Questions?

Whitney Tilt

wtilt@perc.org

406-223-8972

Brian Yablonski

brian@perc.org

850-510-8514



Because incentives matter
for conservation.

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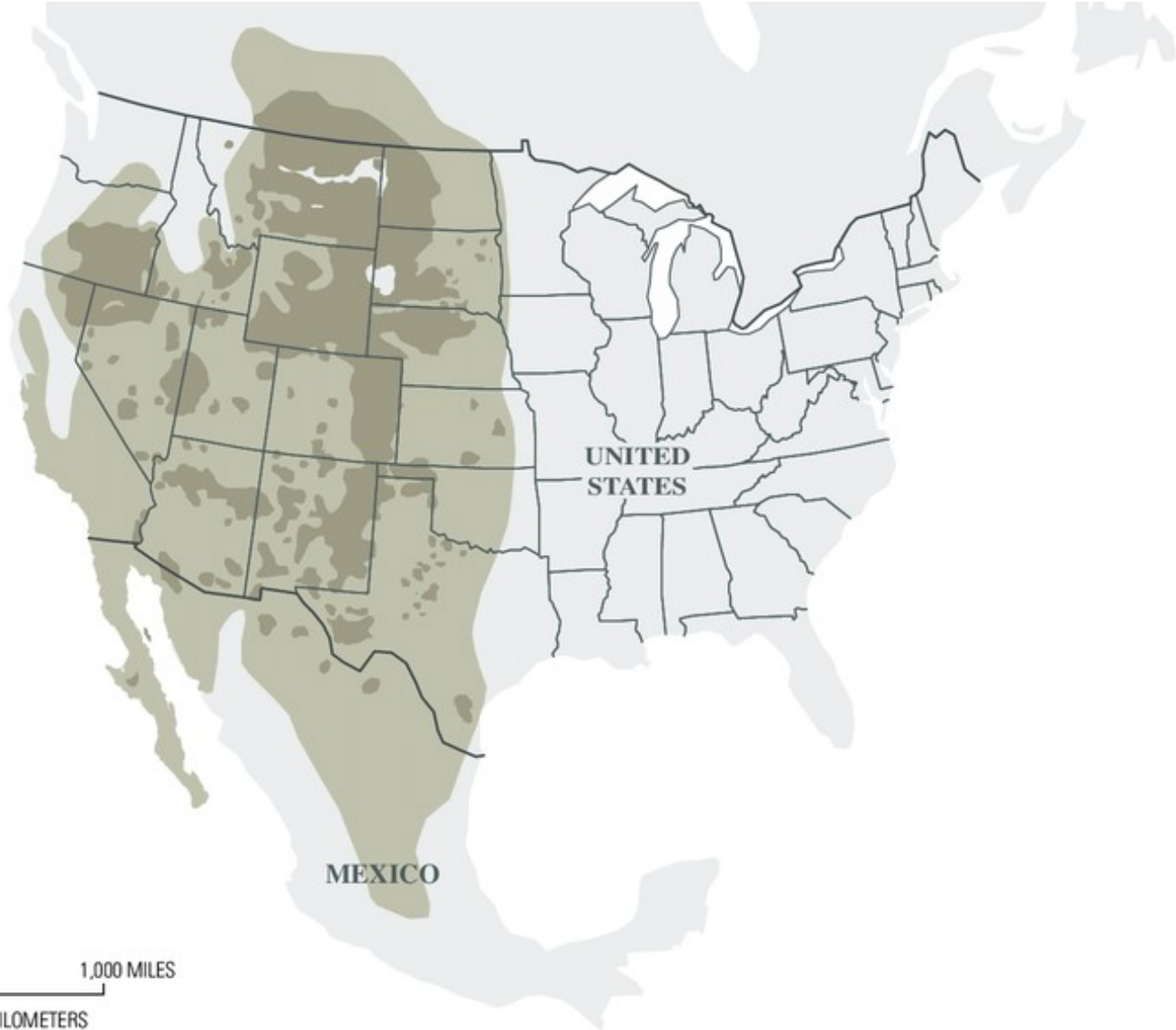


National Parks Conservation Association

PRONGHORN PROGRAM UPDATE

OCTOBER 10th, 2023

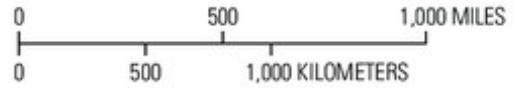


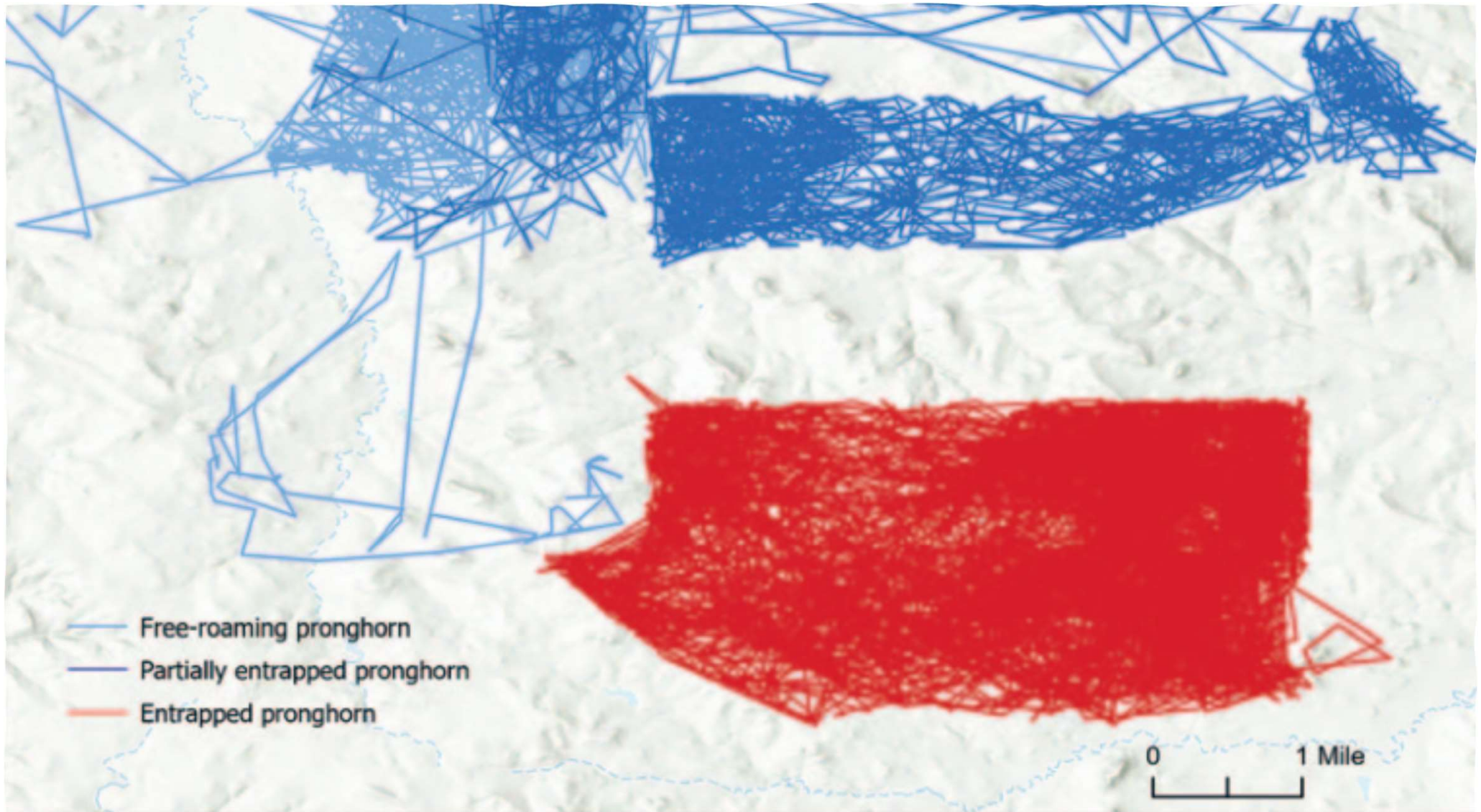


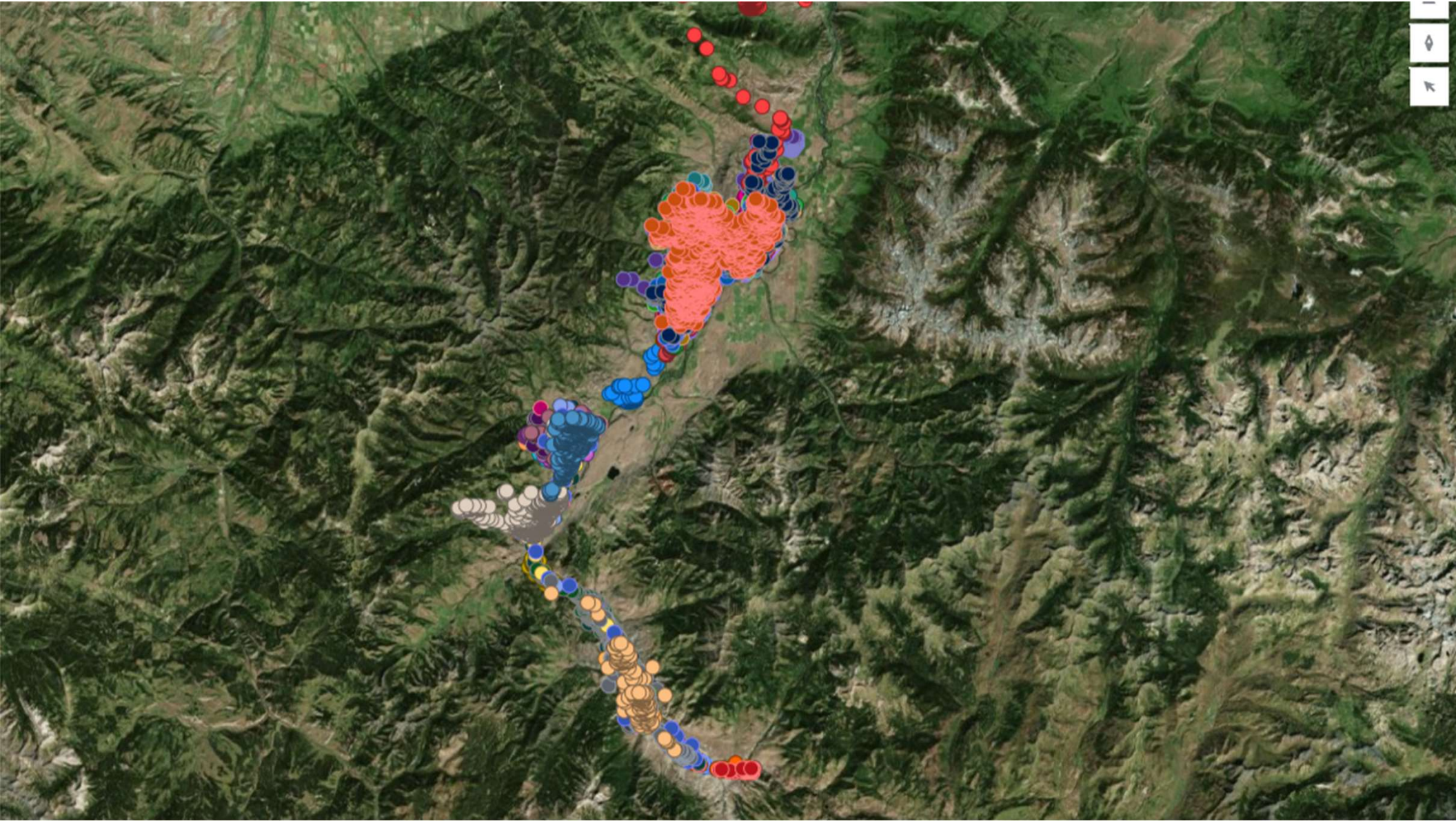
EXPLANATION

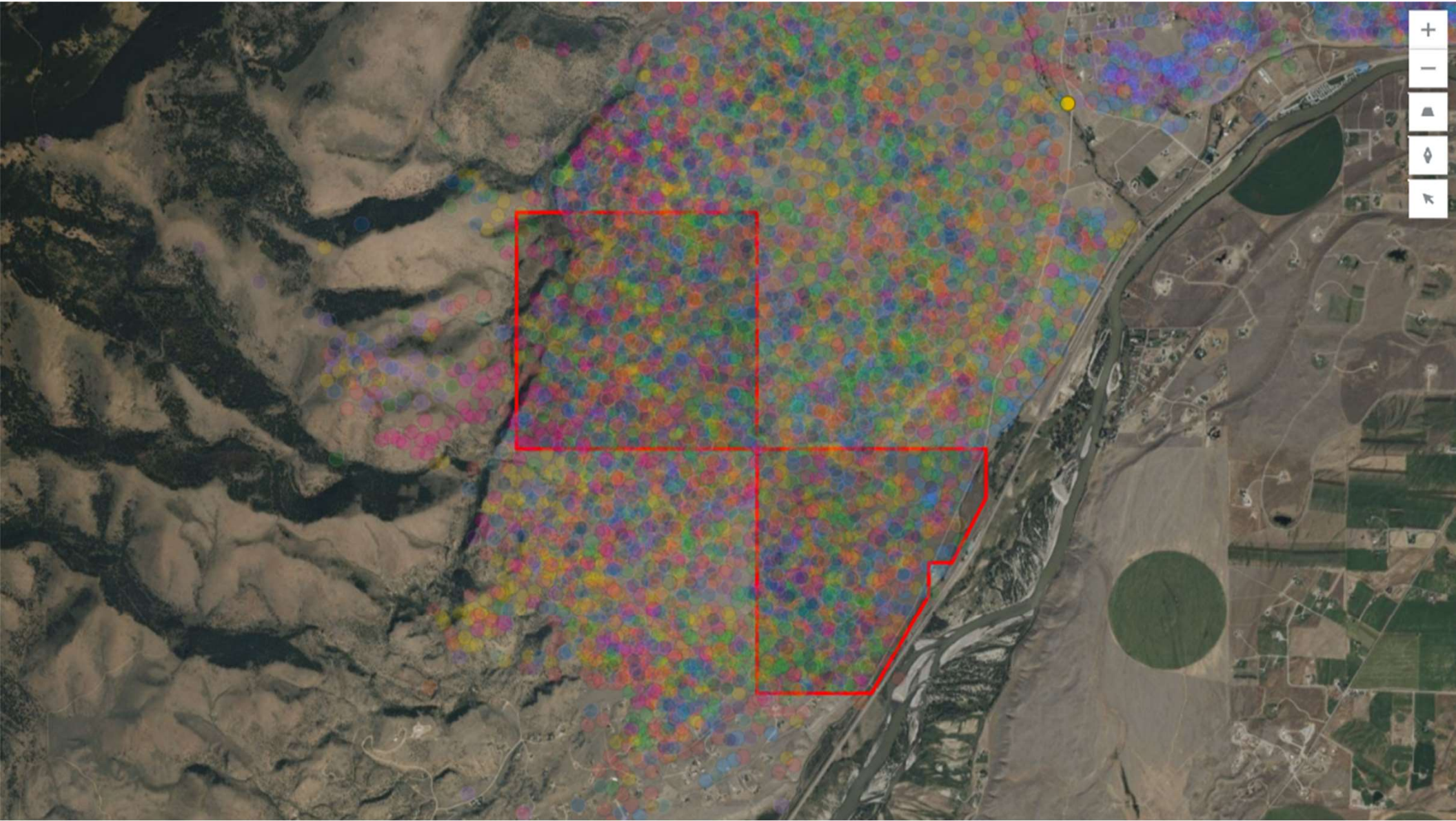
Pronghorn range

- Current
- Historic

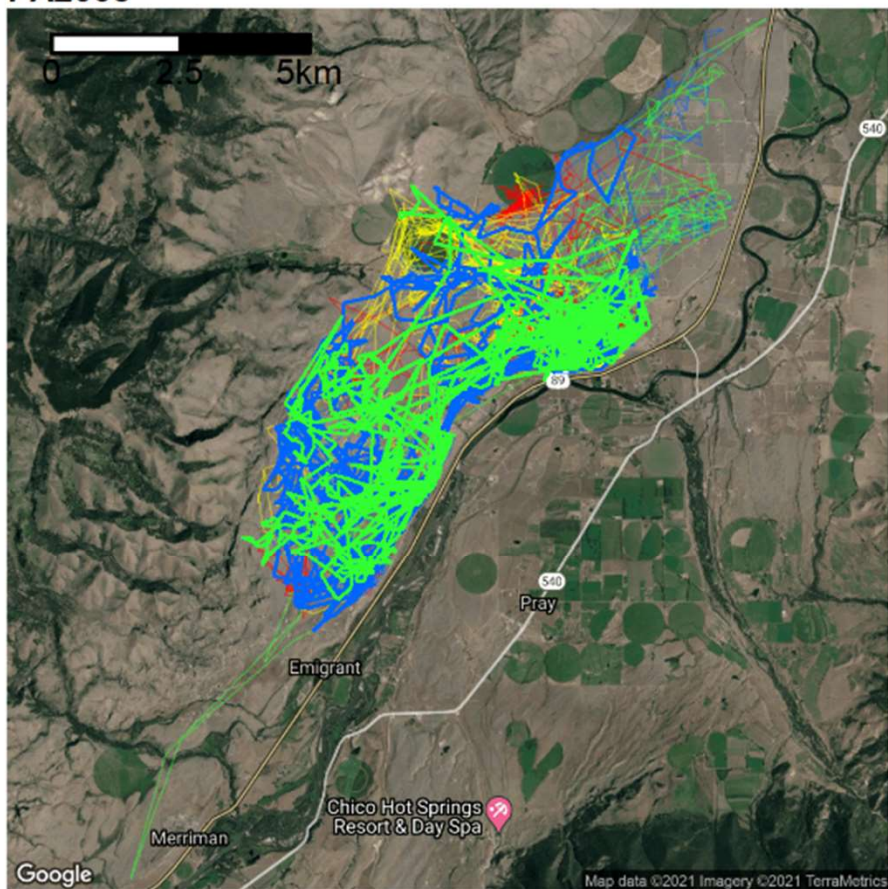








PA2005



— Winter — Spring — Summer — Fall

Current year (full color, thick line)

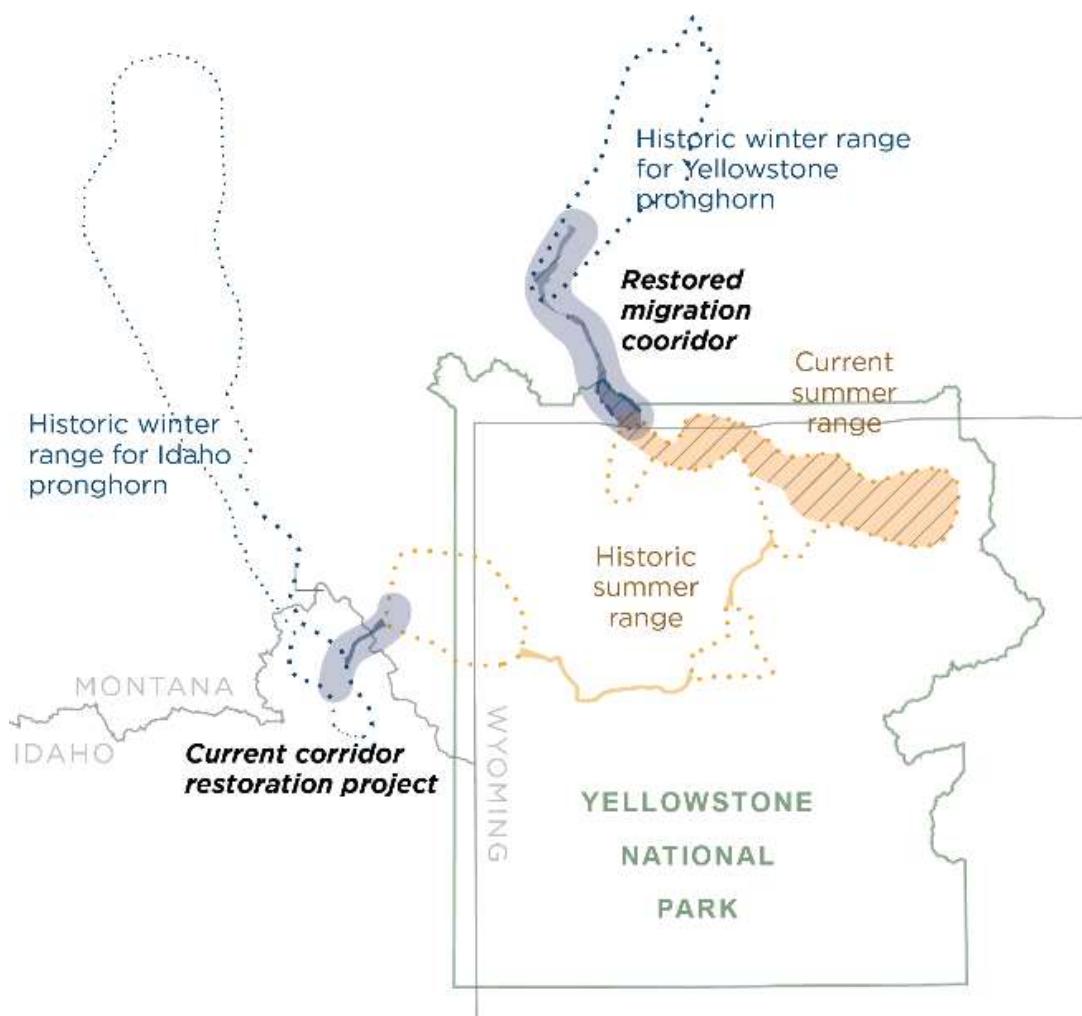
Prior years (transparent, thin line)

Center of map: 45.4066 , -110.7039



AnimalID	FirstGPSLoc	LastGPSLoc	Days	NoLocs	Fate	MortalityDate	MortCause
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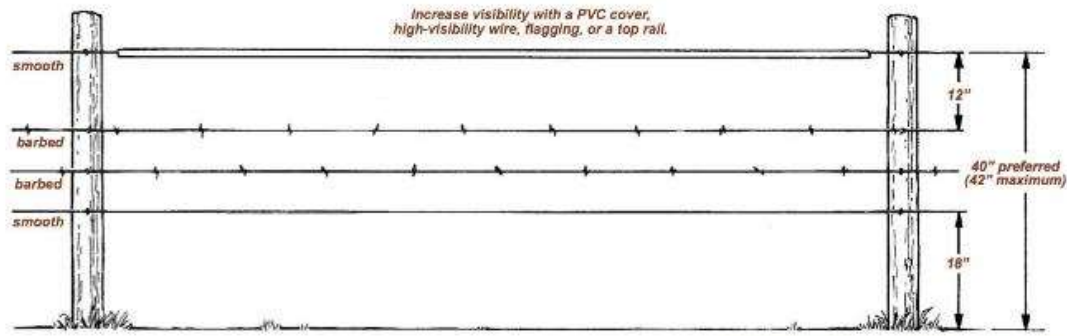


What is the Yellowstone Pronghorn Program?

To create connectivity across private and public lands for migratory wildlife in the Northern Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.

Private landowners and agricultural producers safeguard essential migration pathways for wildlife by protecting open space and maintaining traditional ranching culture.

IDEAL WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FENCE



The friendliest fences are very visible and allow wild animals to easily jump over or slip under the wires or rails.

This field season

18

Field Days

At 9 locations across the Paradise and Madison Valleys

6.25

Miles

Of fence removed, modified, or rebuilt.

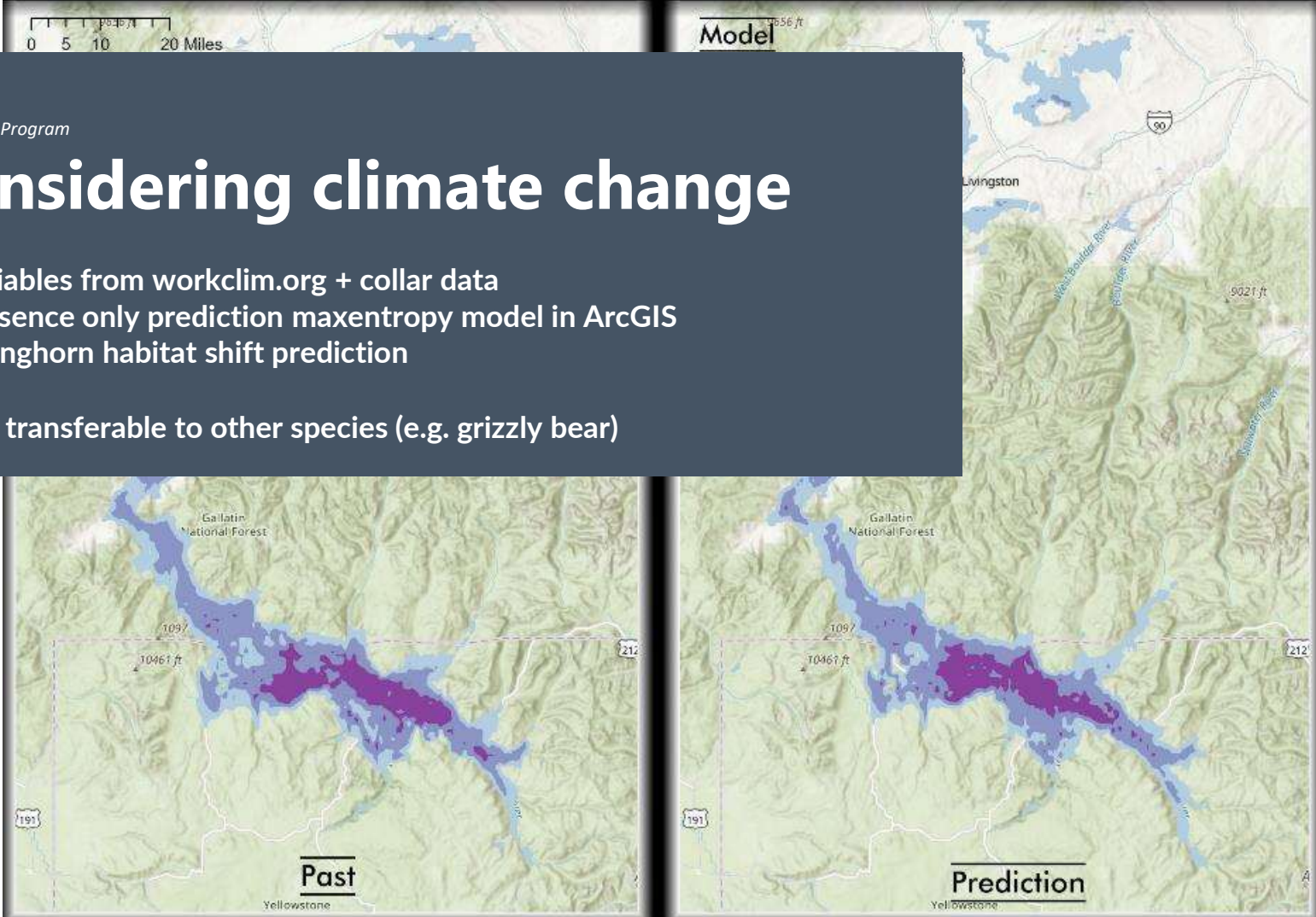
132

Volunteers

Made this work possible.



Paradise Valley Pronghorn Presence



Pronghorn Program

Considering climate change

19 variables from workclim.org + collar data

→ presence only prediction maxentropy model in ArcGIS

→ pronghorn habitat shift prediction

Model transferable to other species (e.g. grizzly bear)



National Parks Conservation Association

Thank You

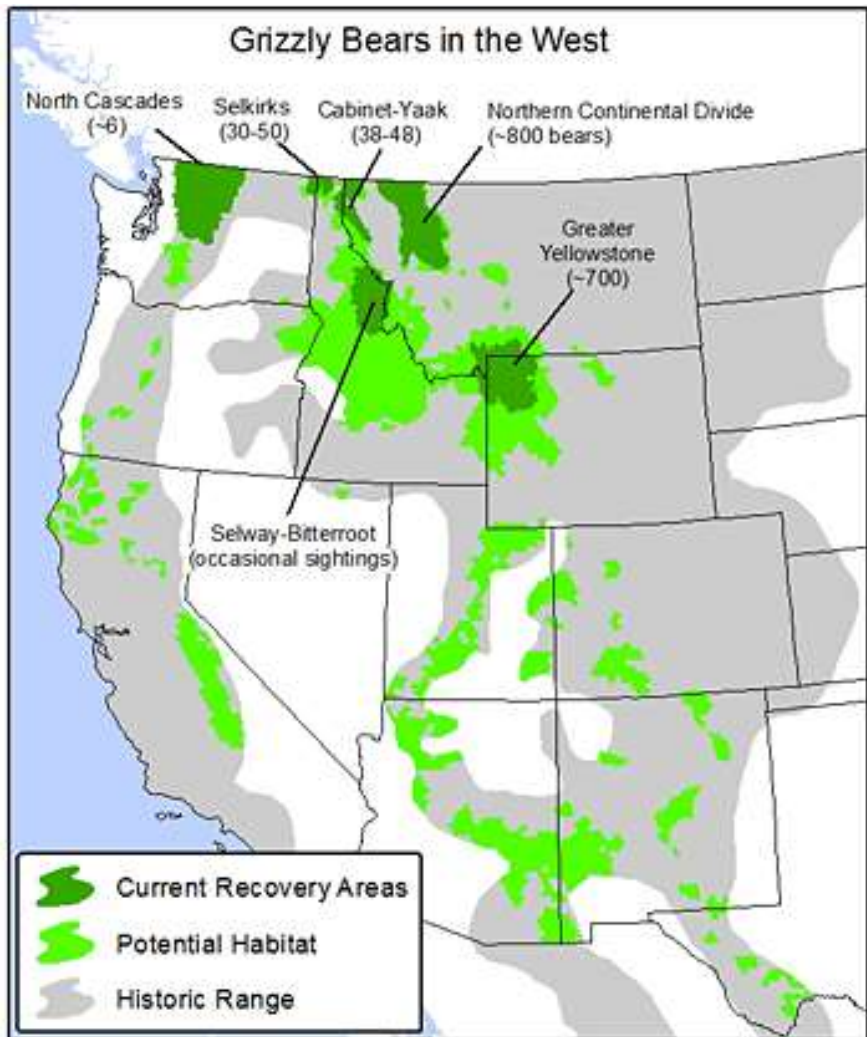
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Bear Conflict Prevention in the Upper Yellowstone

A close-up photograph of a brown bear's face and upper body, partially obscured by the dark green needles and branches of a pine tree. The bear is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a dense forest of similar trees, creating a textured, natural setting.

Evan Stout (*Bear Awareness Gardiner*)

evan@yellowstonewildlifeguidecompany.com

Blakeley Adkins (*Greater Yellowstone Coalition*)

badkins@greateryellowstone.org

Bear Awareness Gardiner Update

- **Trash Cans / Cost Shares**
- **Grease Traps**
- **Apple Picking**
- **Electric Fencing**
- **Education and Outreach**
- **Bear Spray**
- **Community Hazard Assessment / Program Development**



*** 70+ Trash Cans distributed to Gardiner Residents**

*** 15 Cost shares with local businesses**

*** \$30,000+ in Cans & Cost shared solutions**

*** Securing apple trees and other attractants by picking apples and electric fencing loan out program**

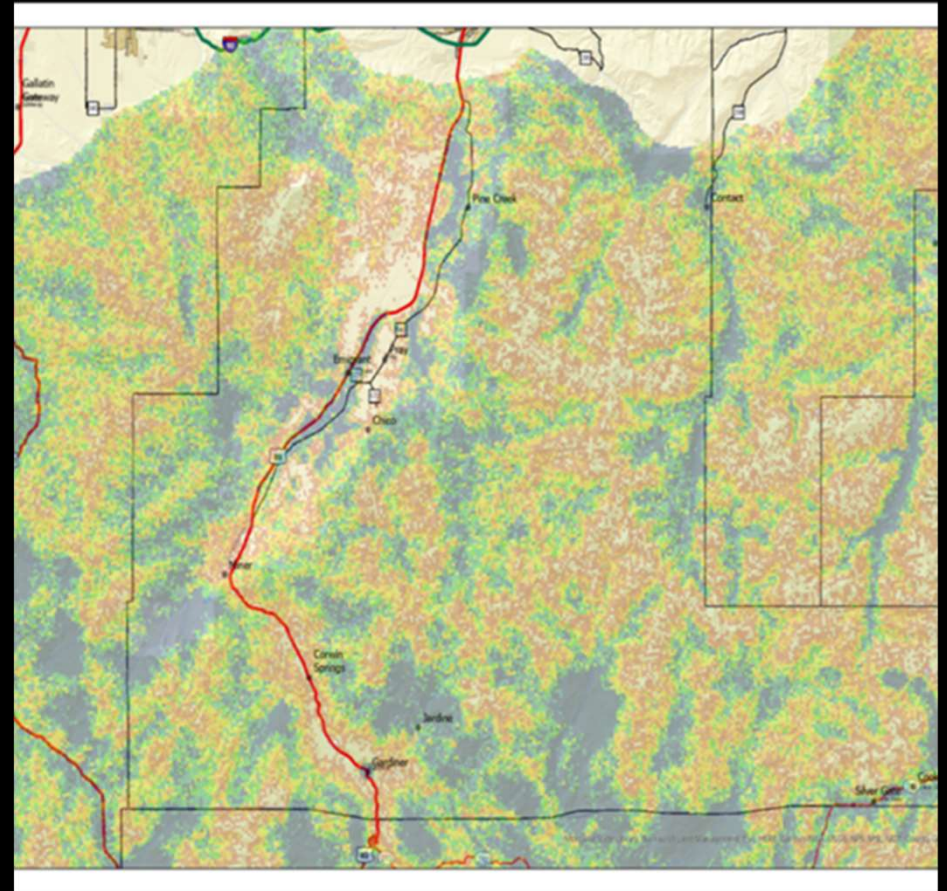
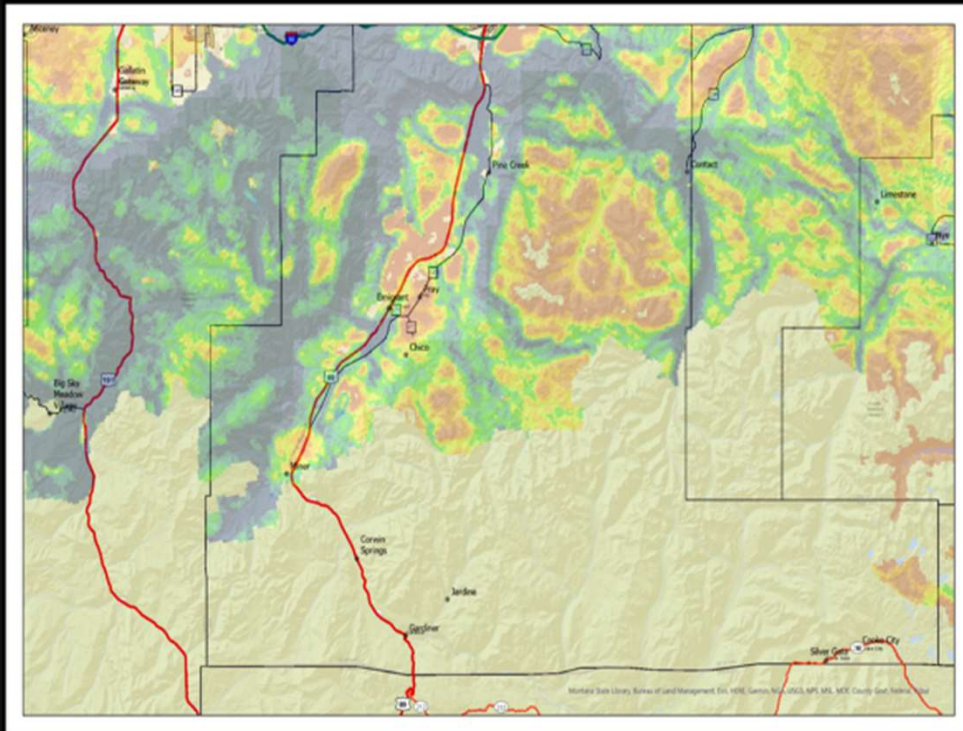
*** Gardiner has experienced a large turn over in the population in the last 10 years, and educating the locals on how to co-exist with bears is paramount to successfully reaching our goals**



Why is Conflict Prevention Important?

- **Human safety**
- Grizzly range is expanding, and conflicts are increasing.
- **There are proven solutions which have worked in countless other places:**
 - **Securing garbage and other attractants**
 - **Electric fencing and mats**
 - **Carcass composting**
 - **Gleaning fruit and replacing fruit trees**
 - **Range riding**
- Funding and resources are available (state and federal bear specialists, local NGOs, various grants...).

Connectivity and Habitat Models for Park County

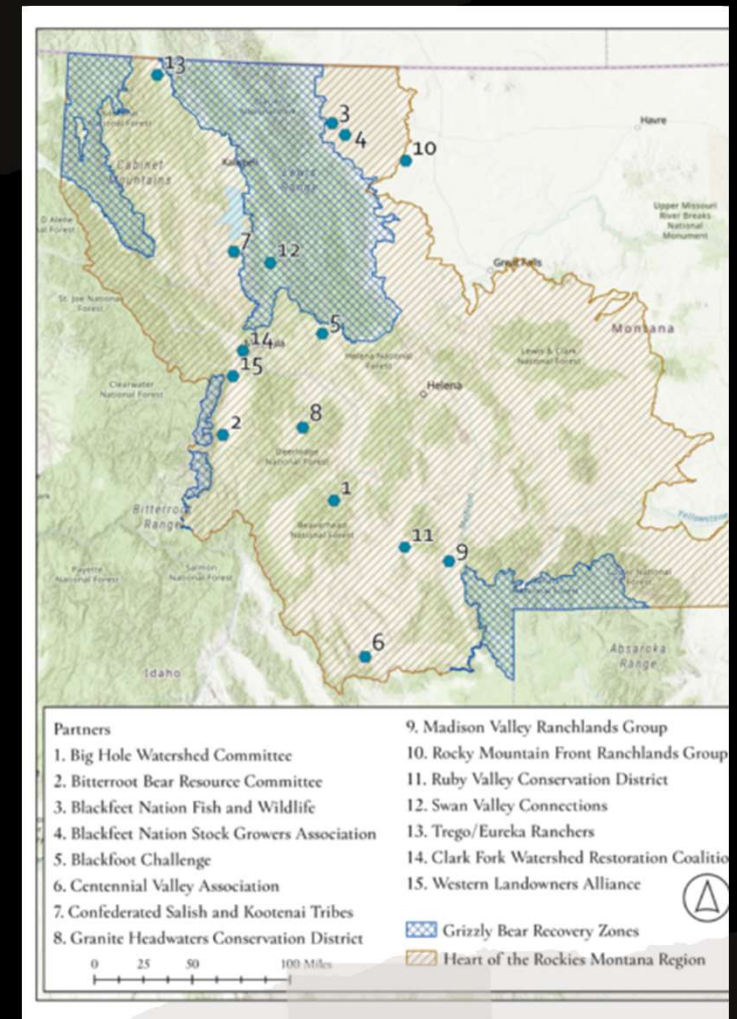


Maps from: *Predicted Connectivity Pathways Between Grizzly Bear Ecosystems in Western Montana* by Sarah Sells et al.

Vision and Next Steps

- How do we expand the successful conflict prevention efforts of Gardiner to the Paradise Valley under the leadership of the UYWG and others?
- Effective conflict prevention efforts in Montana have almost always been landowner/ watershed group led.
- Private dollars are available for communities doing this work not individual landowners.
- We want to hear from you!
 - What are your values?
 - What are your concerns/ fears?
 - What are your priorities?
 - What is your level of tolerance for bears?
 - What are you willing to do?

Map credit: Heart of the Rockies

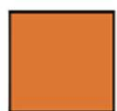


AGENDA

- Fishery
 - Upper Yellowstone River Restoration Project Prioritization Plan - Wendy Weaver (10 mins)
 - Trout Focused Projects - Ashley Brubaker (10 mins)
 - UYRAC & Drought Plan - Ashley Lowrey (10 mins)
- Wildlife
 - Yellowstone Safe Passages - Daniel Anderson (10 mins)
 - Brucellosis Fund, Elk Occupancy Agreements and Payment for Presence - Brian Yablonski & Whitney Tilt (10 mins)
 - Pronghorn Migration Project - Pat Todd & Jeff Reed (10 mins)
 - Grizzly Bear Conflict Prevention - Blakeley Adkins and Evan Stout (10 mins)
 - Mountain Lion Quota Management - Casey Anderson & Justin Duffy & Brad Schultz (10 mins)
- Recreation:
 - Recreational Use Study (10 mins)
- Lunch & Community Conversations



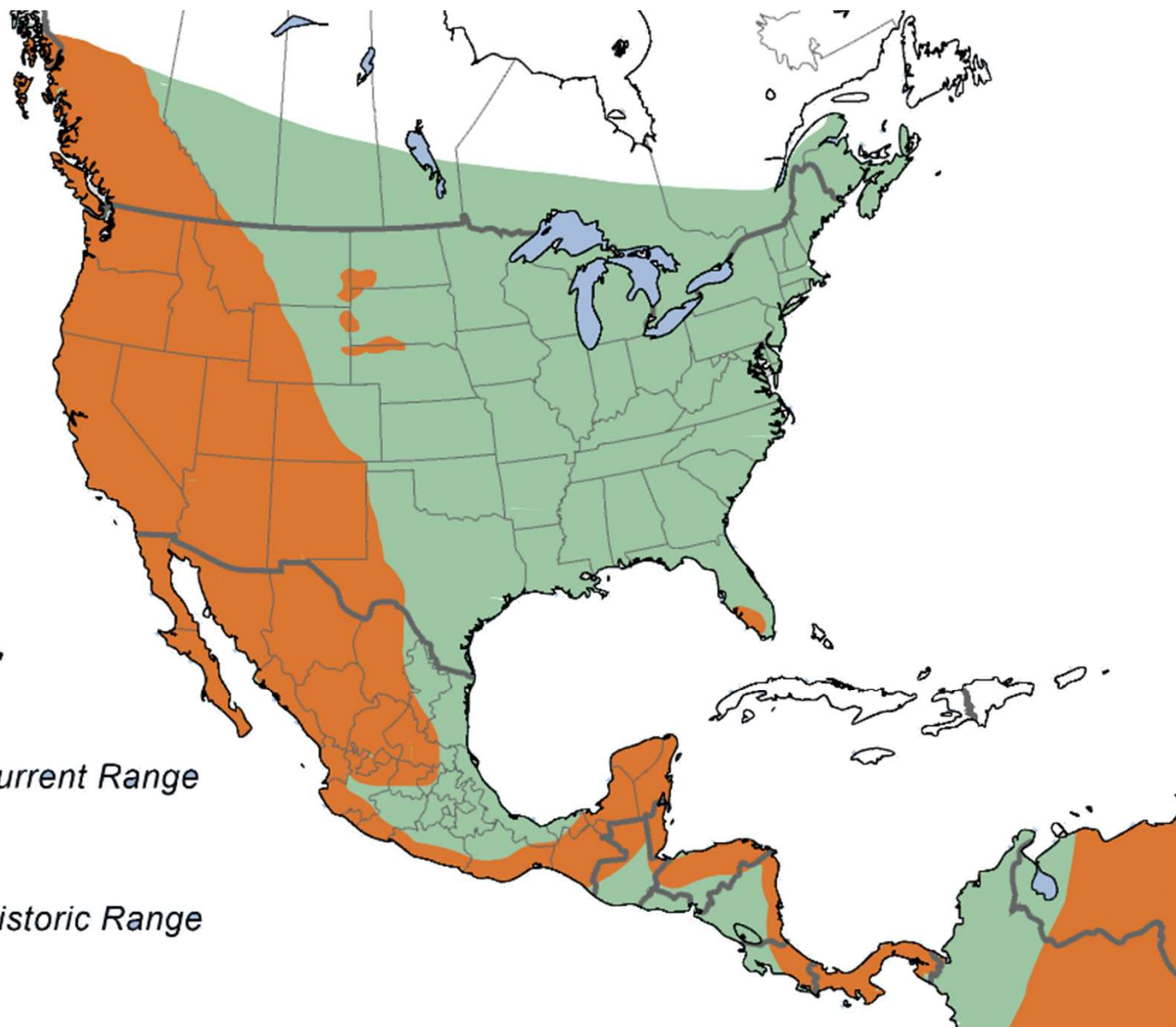
Cougar

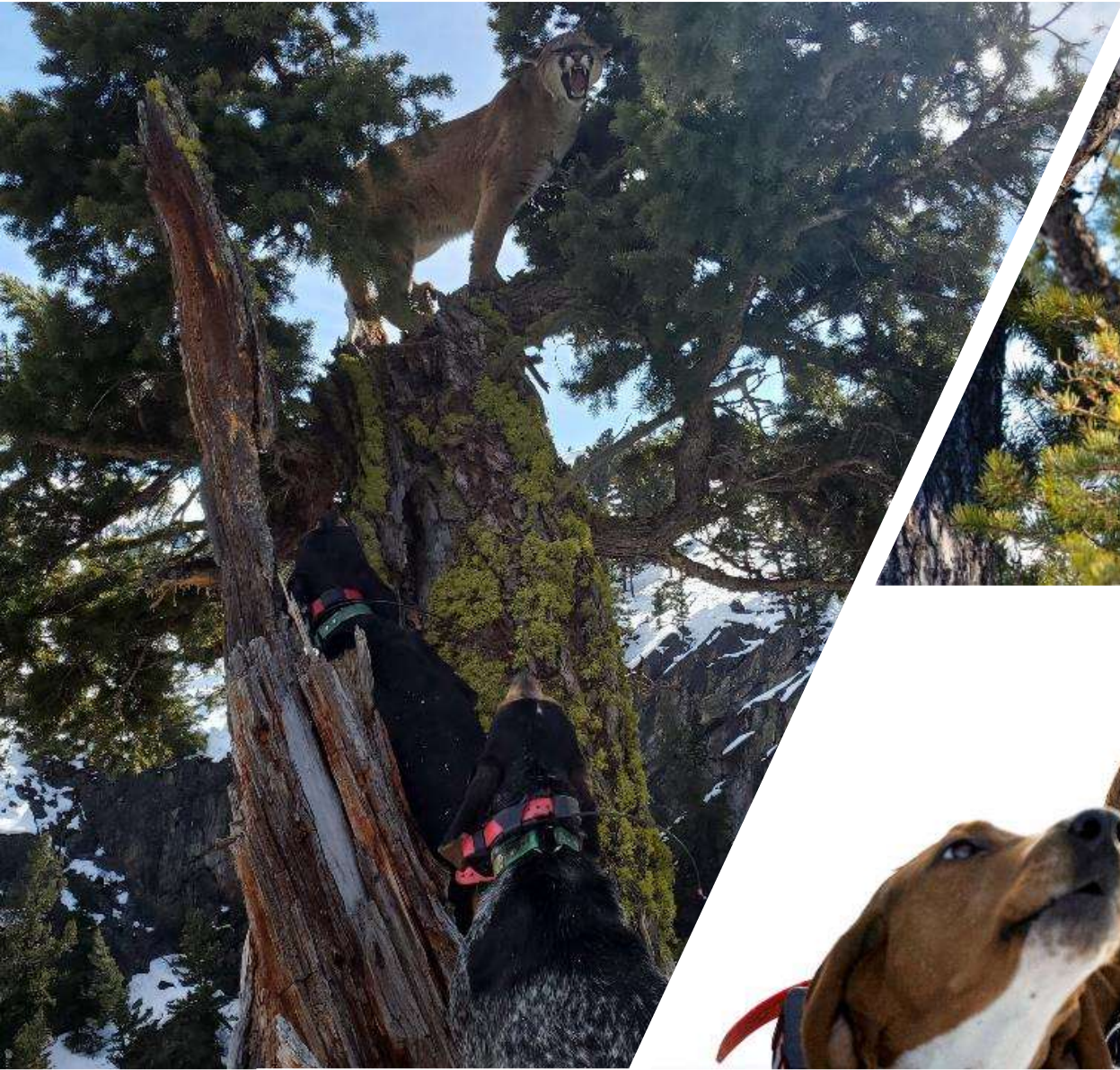


Current Range



Historic Range





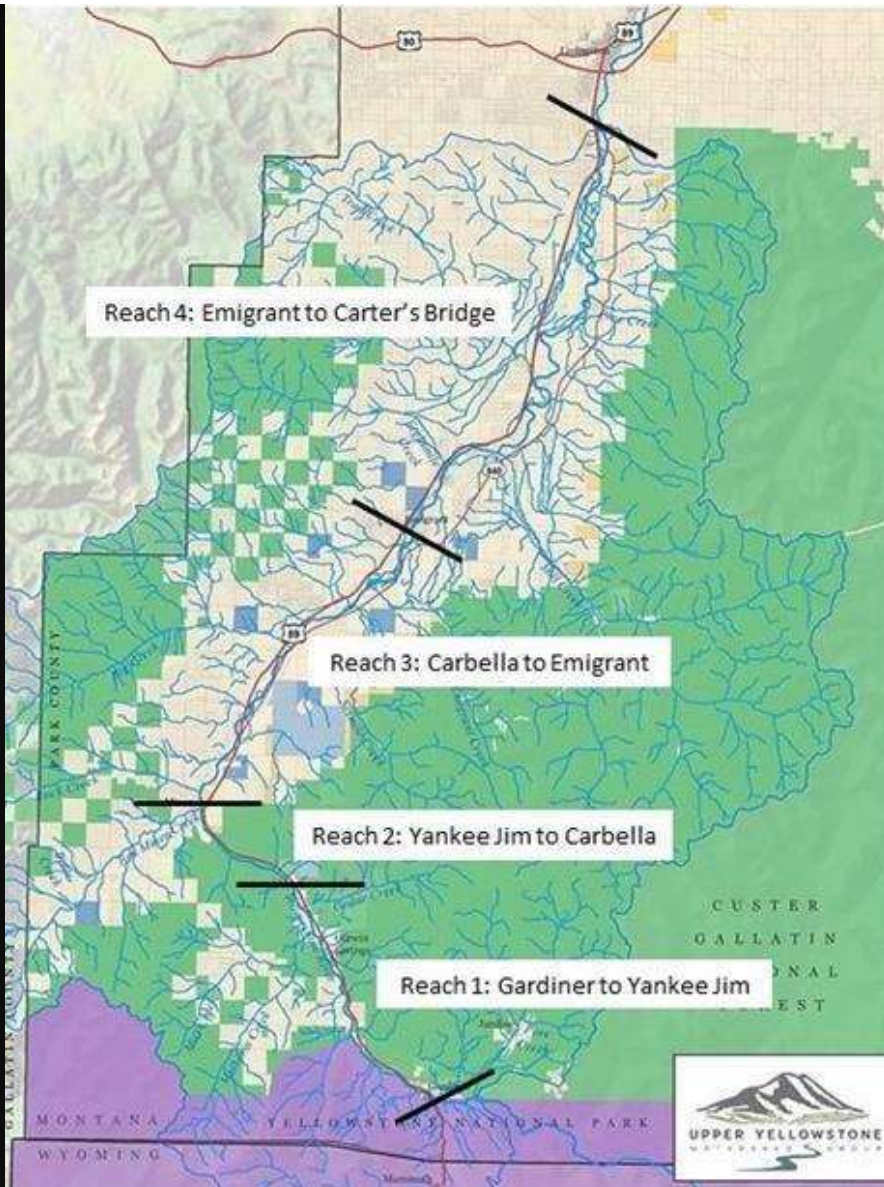
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Upper Yellowstone River Recreation Study, 2020-2023



Data Collection

1. Conduct surveys of river users & landowners
 - 1,300 interviews in 2020 and 2023
 - 78 riparian landowner survey respondents
2. Establish a baseline of recreational use
 - 6-9 cameras deployed
 - Average of 3,360 images/camera/day
 - AI coming, but currently hand counted
3. Measure use/capacity of River Access Sites
 - 125 “sweeps” conducted.
4. Work with communities of place & interest
 - Ongoing outreach, presentations, stakeholder conversations

River use is highly variable, depending on day of week, weather, water conditions, water temps, etc.

Day of Week	Date	# Drift & Rafts	# Personal Watercraft	# of People	# Boats Fishing	UR Comm Rafts/People
Saturday	7/17/2021	559	431	2,691	171	86/643
Saturday	8/7/2021	322	282	1,766	34	69/537
Saturday	8/14/2021	432	388	2,049	90	59/468
Wednesday	8/18/2021	72	4	327	31	23/178
Saturday	8/21/2021	104	17	422	38	21/147
Saturday	8/28/2021	262	52	1,013	141	21/166

Conditions
Hot, slight smoke, clear
Cool, breezy, muddy
Hot, calm, clear
Cold, rainy, off-color
Cool, mostly cloudy, muddy
Warm, calm, clear

Getting updated use charts from MSU by 10/10

Summary of access site performance at high demand

River Access Site	High Demand Rating	When High Use Might be Expected	Notes
McConnell	Yellow	Salmonfly hatch	Rough access road, overflow vehicles parked along access road shoulder
Brogan's	Red	Height of commercial whitewater season	Site was destroyed in June 2022 flood
Cinnabar*	Yellow	Post-flood	Site needs new ramp. Anticipate higher use with loss of Brogan's immediately upstream
Yankee Jim	Green	Good whitewater conditions	Flood deposited large amount of sand and silt, but site overall meets high demand
Carbella	Green	Throughout season	Following renovations, good parking, ramp access
Point of Rocks (Hookum)	Yellow	Throughout season	Adequate parking but ramp traffic easily backed up during high demand due to configuration
Mile 26	Red	Throughout season	Traditional used to break up long drift. Potential as a new FAS site needs priority attention
Emigrant	Red	Throughout season, especially August-early Sept.	High demand meets limited parking, esp. for trailers with overflow across bridge
Grey Owl	Yellow	Throughout season especially August-early Sept.	Put-in site for popular "bird float," experiences backups at ramp; adequate parking
Mill Creek	Yellow	Late summer	Informal bridge crossing access. Popular during heavy river use. Erosion and trespass concerns
Loch Leven	Yellow	Throughout season, especially August-early Sept.	Adequate parking but ramp traffic easily backed up during high demand; dust/speed issues
Mallard's Rest*	Green	Throughout season, especially August-early Sept.	Take-out site for popular "bird float," experiences backups at ramp; adequate parking
Pine Creek	Green	Throughout season, especially August-early Sept.	Adequate parking with some ramp congestion during high demand
Carter's Bridge	Red	Throughout season, especially August-early Sept.	Extremely popular site for river access and shore use. Parking commonly overflows across bridge

*Assumes that 2022 flood related damages addressed.



Science of

No, reduce his use!

Reduce her use!

User A

User B



Managing Use

Science of



User A

User B

As if, my use is non-consumptive!

She's the problem. I'm righteous.

Managing Use

River Access Sites



Some potential actions to address access

Large Infrastructure

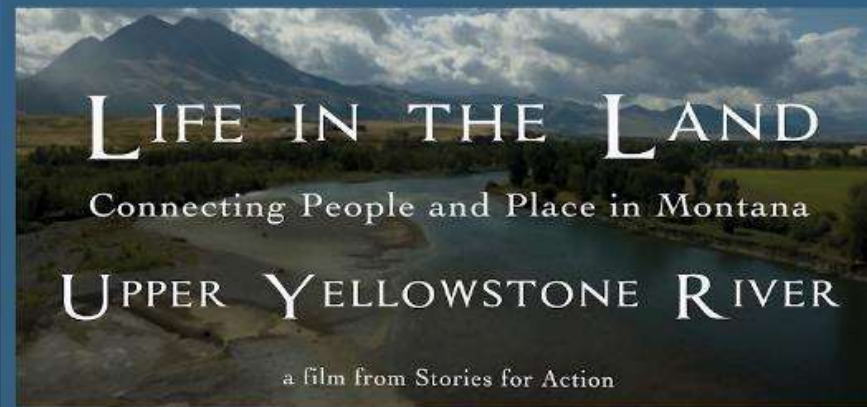
- Repair (e.g., Mallards Rest)
- Redesign (e.g., Emigrant FAS)
- Construct (e.g., Mile 26)

Design & Layout

- Highway safety (signage, turning lanes, speed limits)
- Clear ramp approach and parking signage
- Improved shore use (i.e., picnic tables)
- Creation of hand launch sites

User Information

- Informational messaging on best practices for fishing, respecting other users, private property, etc.



Join us for a
FREE FILM & conversation...

on how local voices & the river itself can guide the
work for greater resiliency of people & place.

OCTOBER 24th

5pm - Doors Open & Refreshments

5:30pm - Film Screening

6:30pm - Interactive Discussion

at THE SHANE CENTER

415 E Lewis St.

LIVINGSTON, MT

RSVP at LifeintheLand.org or at QR Code:



Our vision is to serve as a trusted voice, and a forum
for robust, collaborative engagement



Goals:

1. Preserve production agriculture and the open space it provides by promoting a stewardship approach to watershed management.
2. Protect and respect private property rights.
3. Provide dependable and accessible information through collection and dissemination of scientifically sound monitoring and assessment data.
4. Maintain and preserve the overall health of the watershed by developing best practices, seeking innovative solutions, and working to improve drought response and preparedness.
5. Lead community education and outreach efforts on watershed-related issues.
6. Provide a collective 'voice for the watershed' through the exchange of ideas and response to issues.



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