

February 21, 2023

Bison for the backcountry: supporting grassland habitat across Daniels Park and Highlands Ranch BWA

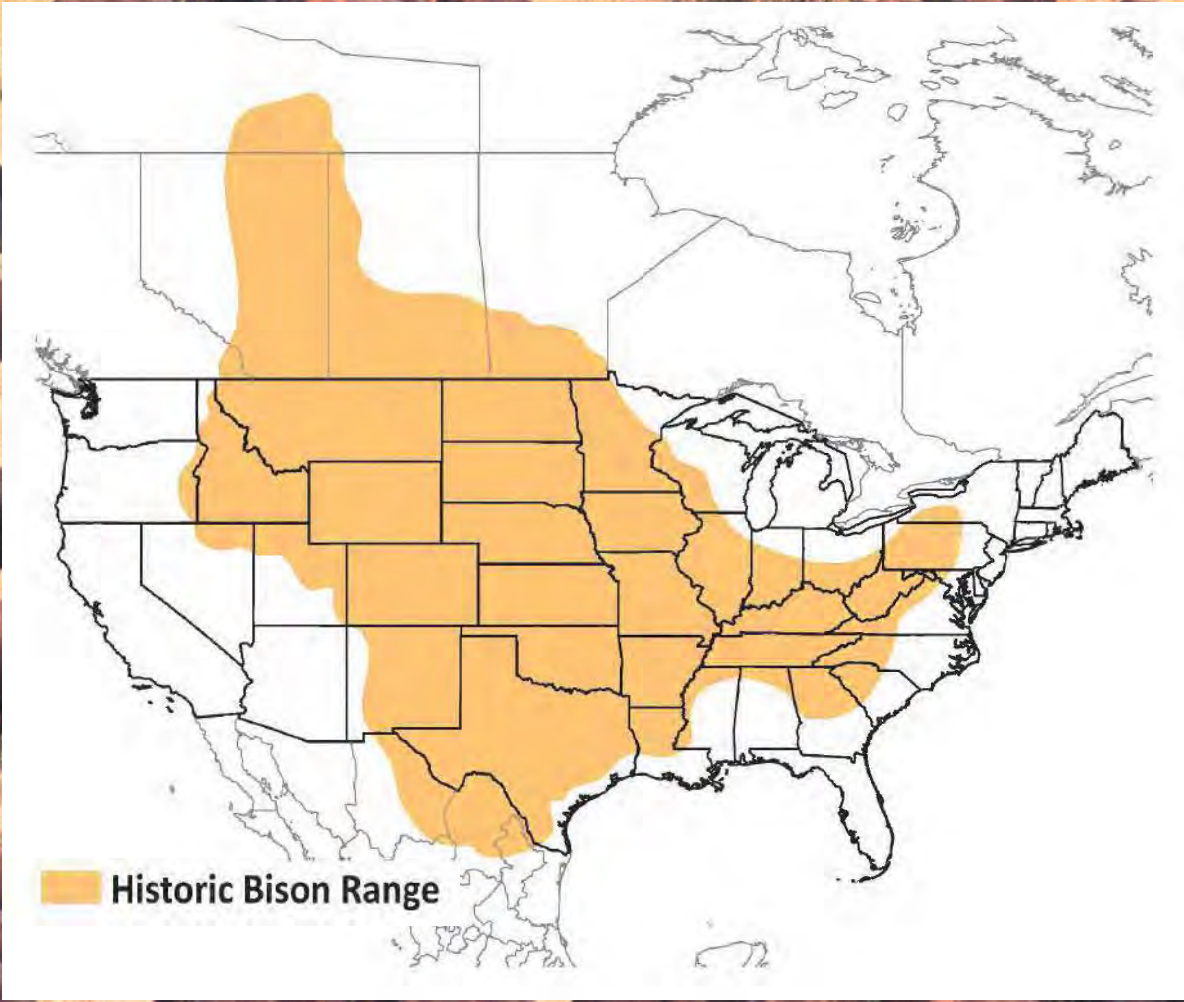
Kate Wilkins, PhD & Stefan Ekernas, PhD
Denver Zoological Foundation





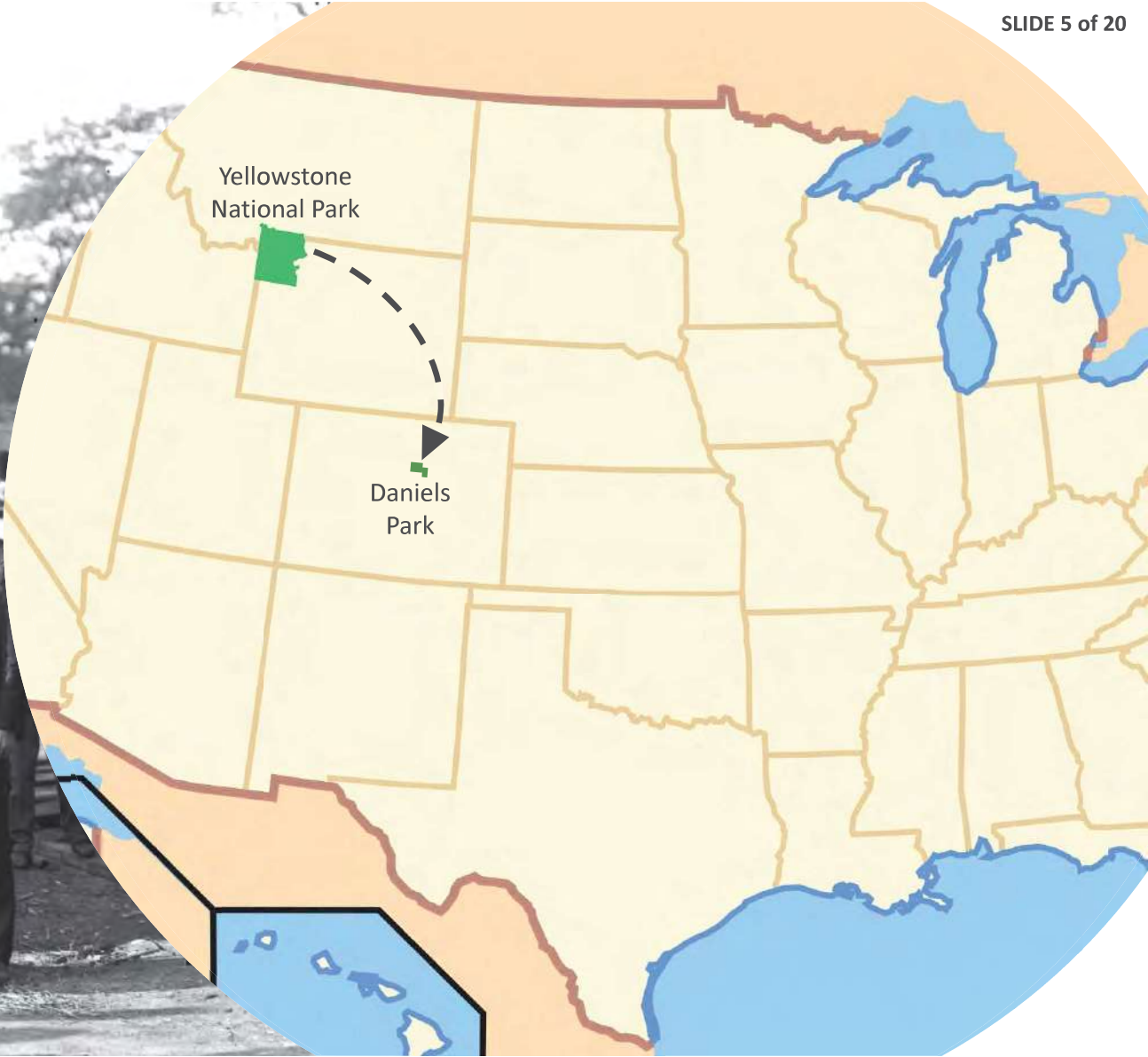
Background





Bison are critical for grassland and human health







Bison management



Invasive plant control



Gambel oak removal



Erosion mitigation



Conservation education



Community engagement

Education and community engagement

Hosted ~300 volunteers in 2022:

- Middle school students
- Undergraduates from local universities
- Corporate volunteers





Bison enrich landscapes





CPR News SIGN IN NPR S

MUSIC PODCASTS & SHOWS SEARCH

NATIONAL

Denver Returns 14 Bison To Tribal Land In Reparations, Conservation Effort

April 14, 2021 • 2:57 PM ET

ANNA SIRIANNI

2-Minute Listen + PLAY







Proposed reintroduction site

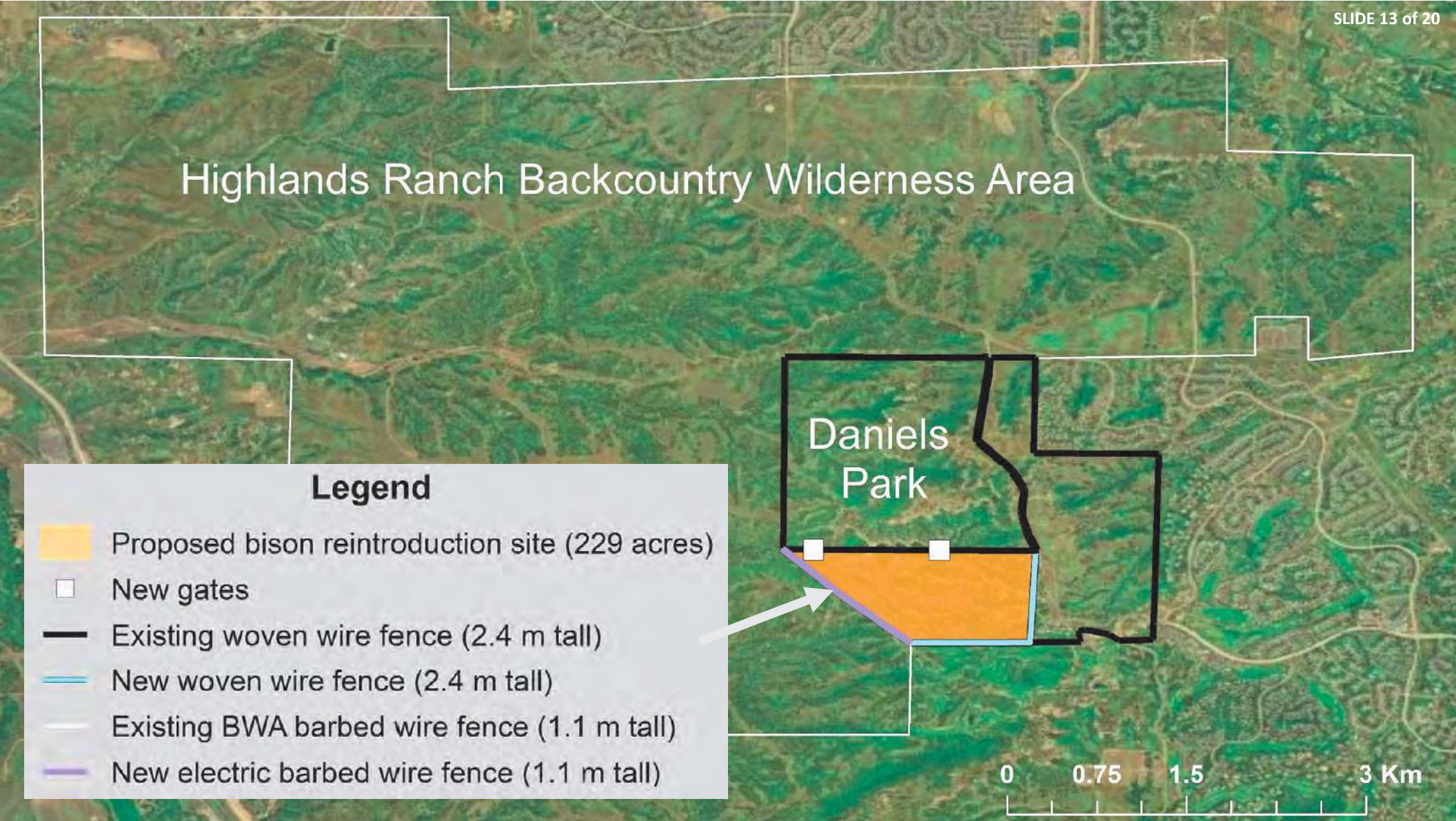


Highlands Ranch Backcountry Wilderness Area

Daniels Park

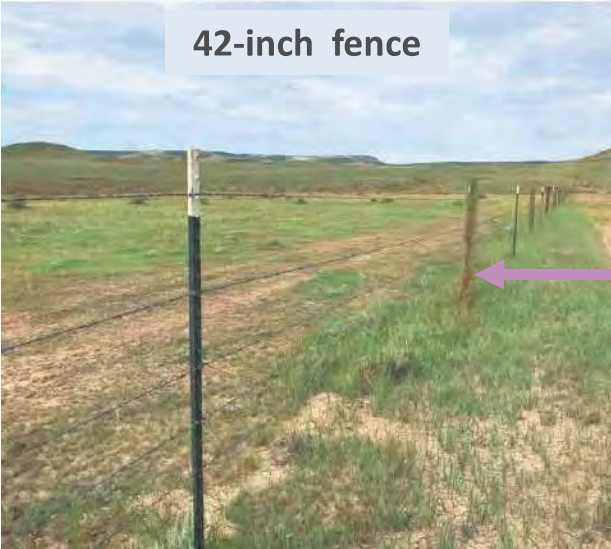
Legend

- Proposed bison reintroduction site (229 acres)
- New gates
- Existing woven wire fence (2.4 m tall)
- New woven wire fence (2.4 m tall)
- Existing BWA barbed wire fence (1.1 m tall)
- New electric barbed wire fence (1.1 m tall)

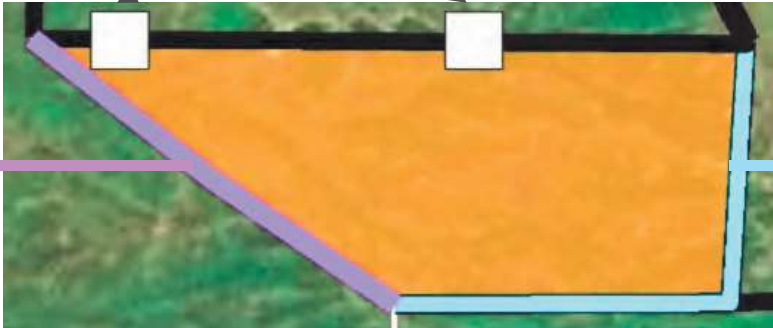


Fencing materials

42-inch fence

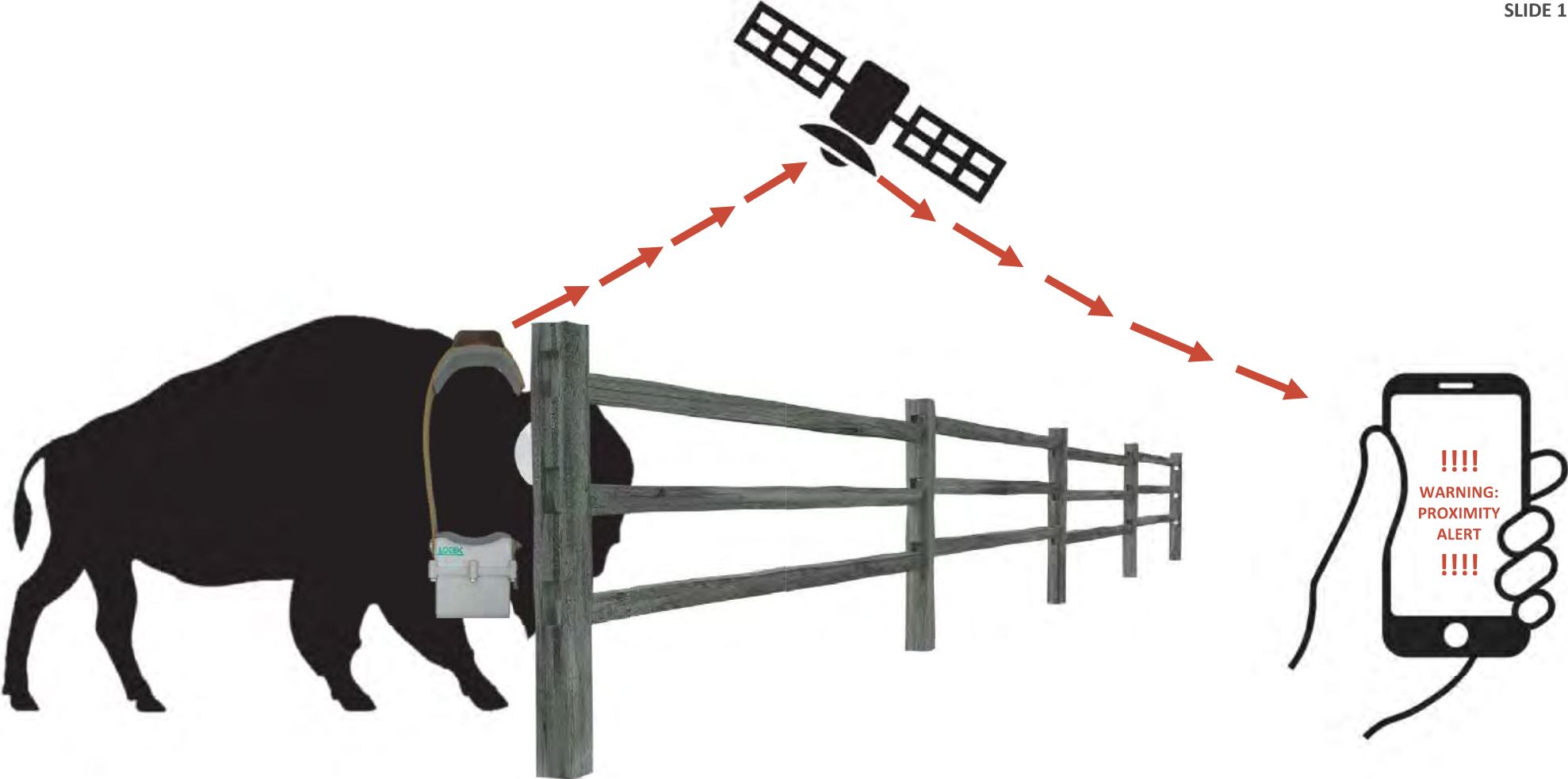


Gates



8-foot fence







Finances



Funding

- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant
 - Denver Mountain Parks and HRCA working on insurance
 - Pursuing other potential funding sources
- 



Bison management



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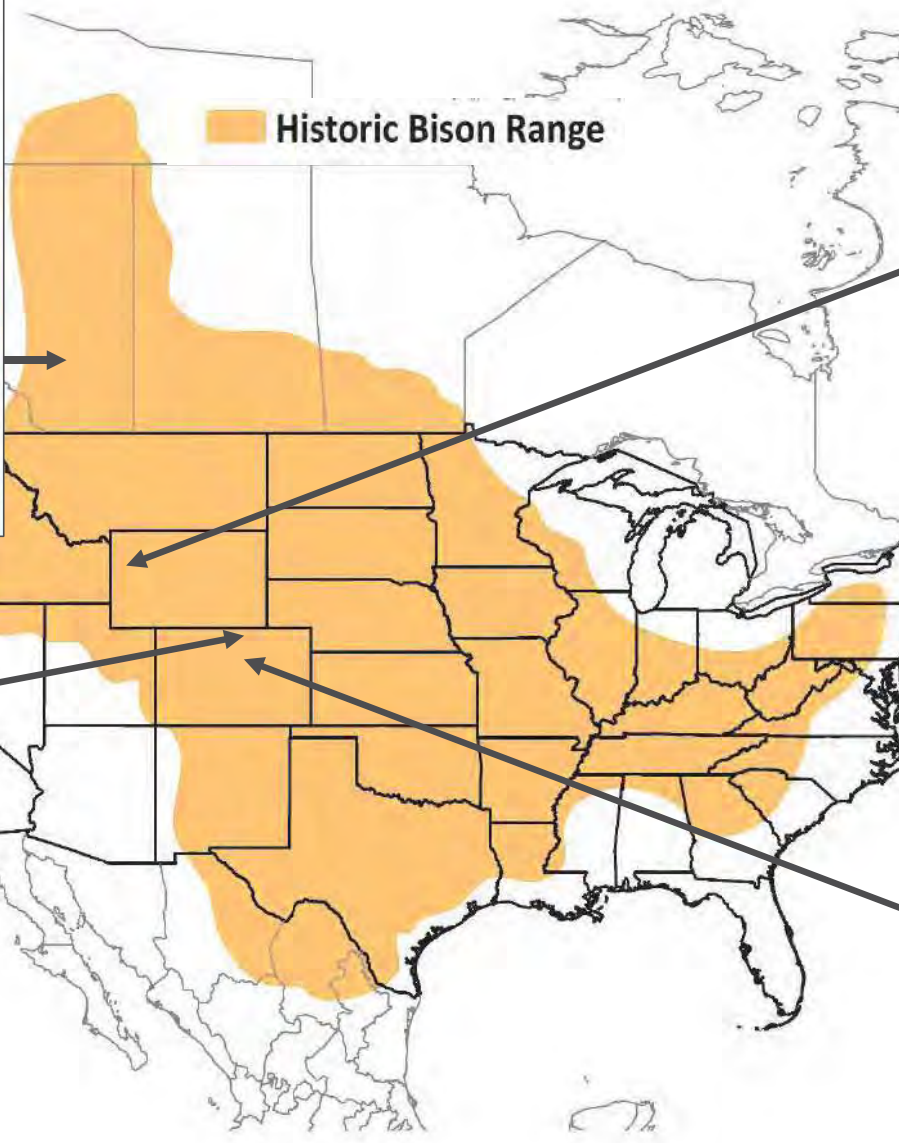
Conservation education



Community engagement

Bringing bison back to Banff will have immediate effect on birds, bugs: Expert

COLLETTA DERWORTH, CALGARY HERALD
More from [Ecology](#) | [Calgary Herald](#)
Published on May 26, 2016 | Last Updated: May 26, 2016 9:04 AM MDT



SNAPPED: Bison roam in Grand Teton

By [Michael S. Salt](#)
January 15, 2023



Two bison from a herd roam into the snow in Grand Teton National Park, where wild bison have thrived.

Restored bison near Fort Collins bolt to prairie open space



Urban Bison: The Comeback of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Continues

By [Eric Peterson](#) | Wednesday, August 16, 2017



Thank you!


For more information on getting involved with our Daniels Park restoration efforts, please contact Kate Wilkins:

KWilkins@denverzoo.org





Extra slides



**Bison grazing increases
grassland plant diversity
more than twice as much
as cattle grazing**

Ratajczak et al. 2022

CBS/AP / May 9, 2016, 4:17 PM

U.S. names bison national mammal



A bison grazes in Yellowstone National Park near Gardiner, Mont., in this March 9, 2016 photo. **MATTHEW BROWN, AP**