

Bison in Colorado:

Northwest Bison Working Group



Parks and Wildlife Commission:
January 11th, 2024

Why are we here?

- **Bison moving into Colorado from Utah**
- **August 2021 - Citizen's Petition to reclassify bison as big game was heard and denied by CPW Commission**
 - **Bison are currently only classified as domestic animals/livestock in Colorado**
 - **Several states have bison listed as dual-classification status, classified as both livestock and wildlife**
- **March 2022 - CPW Staff agreed to put together a local outreach effort and working group**

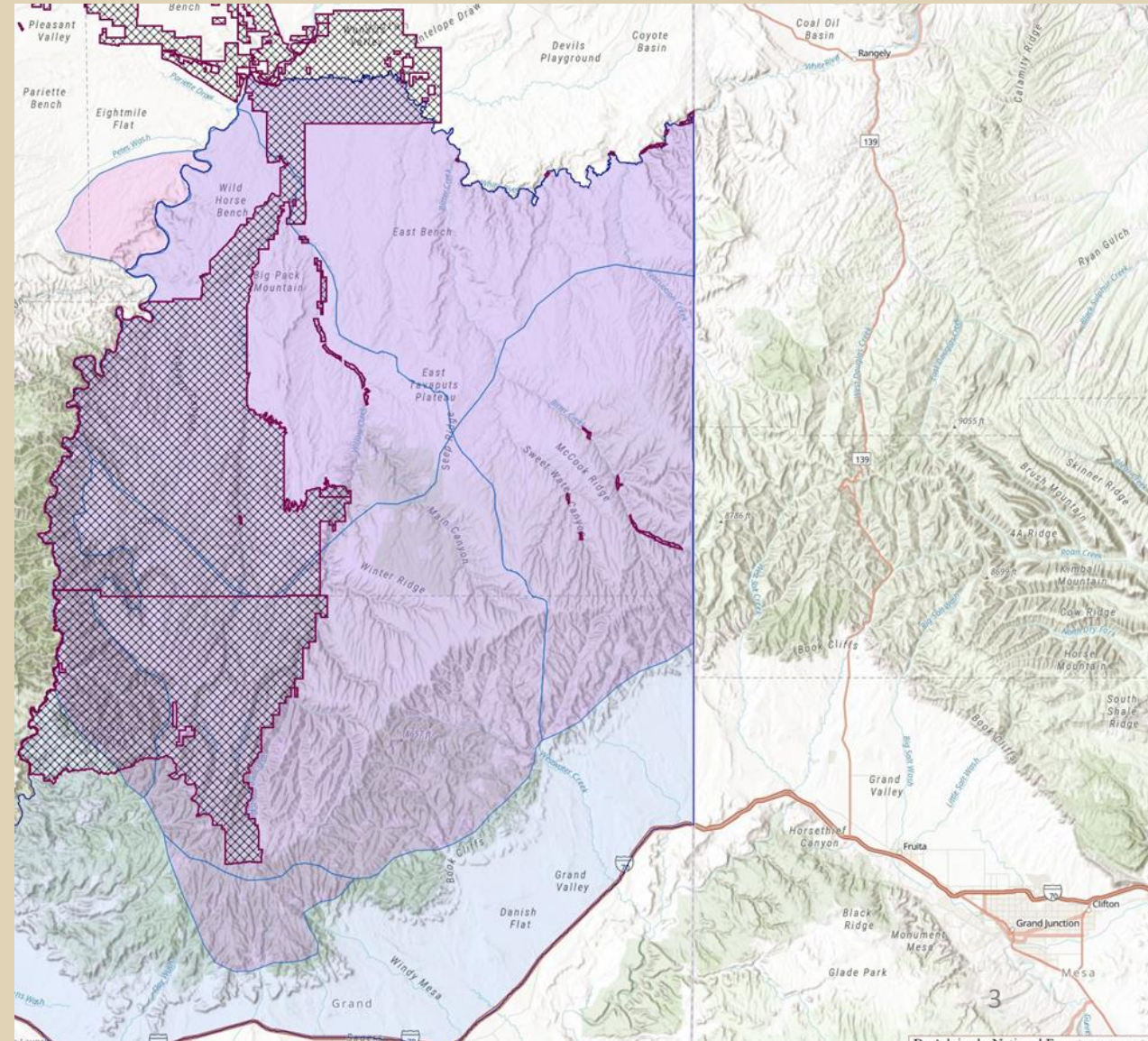


UT/CO Stateline Area Map

Map shows:

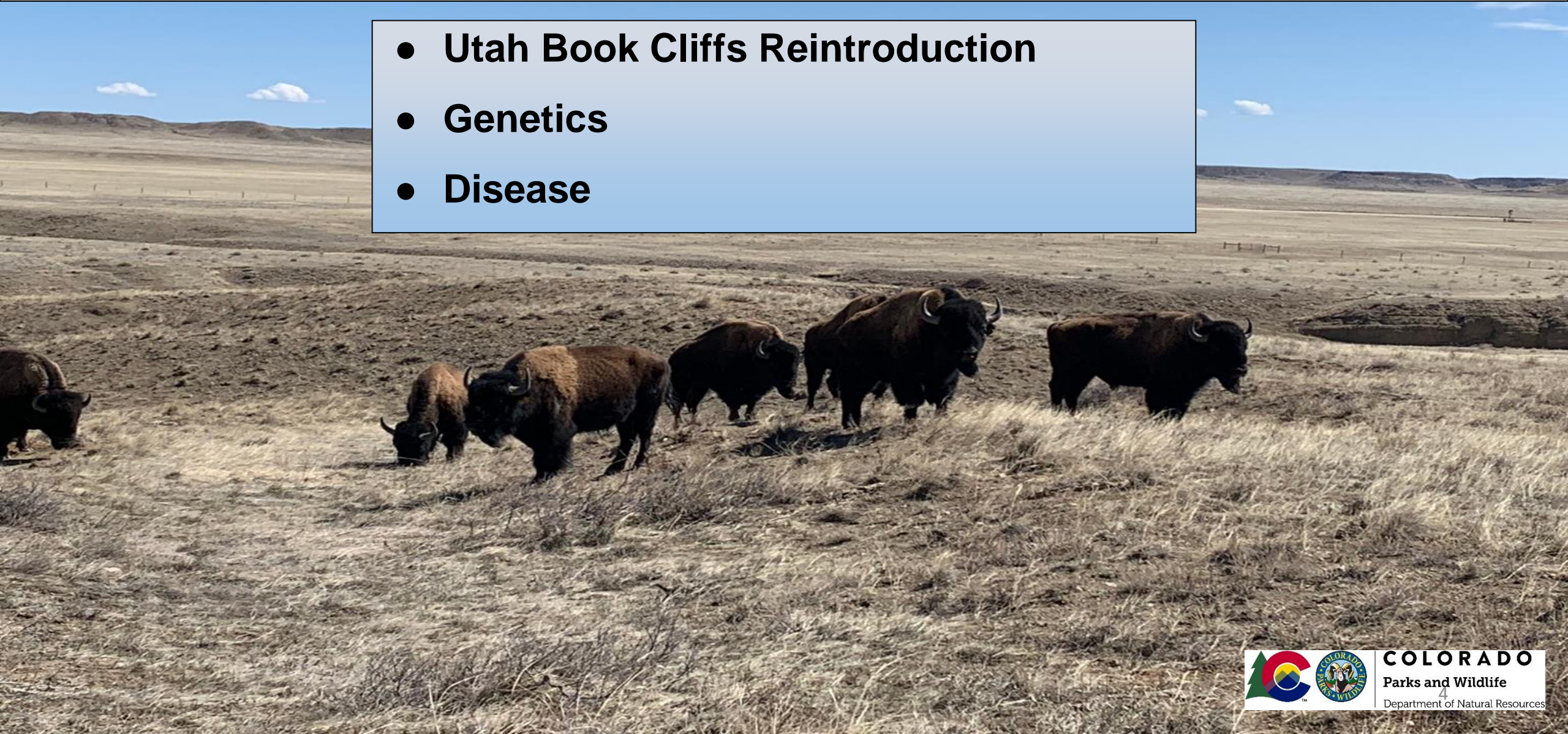
- **Bison overall range (purple)**
- **Uintah and Ouray Tribal lands (crosshatched)**
 - The lands between the tribal boundary and state line are largely owned by the State of Utah and BLM

(Courtesy of UTDWR hunt planner tool)



Utah Book Cliffs Bison Herd History

- **Utah Book Cliffs Reintroduction**
- **Genetics**
- **Disease**

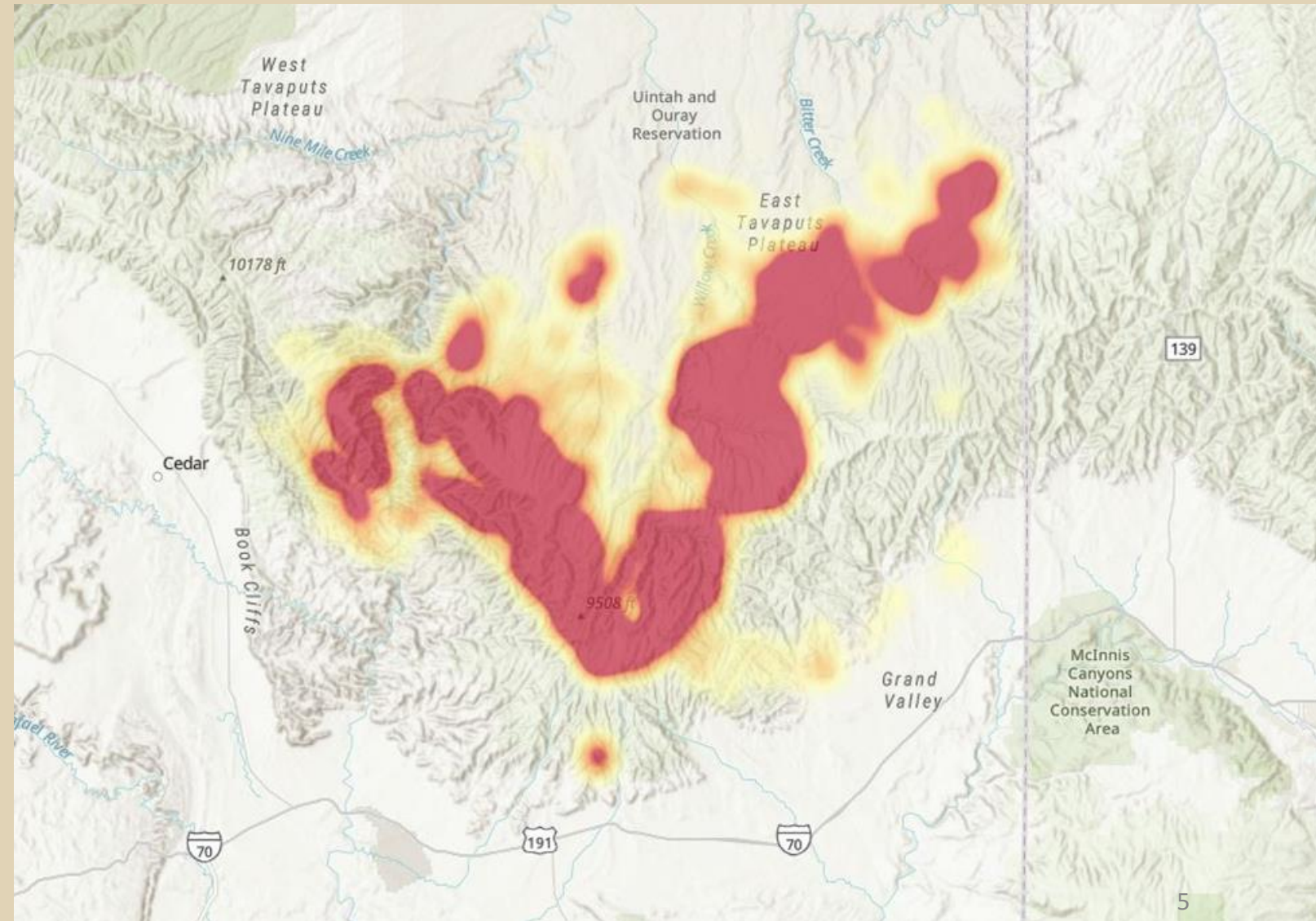


Book Cliffs Bison Habitat Use Map

Map shows:

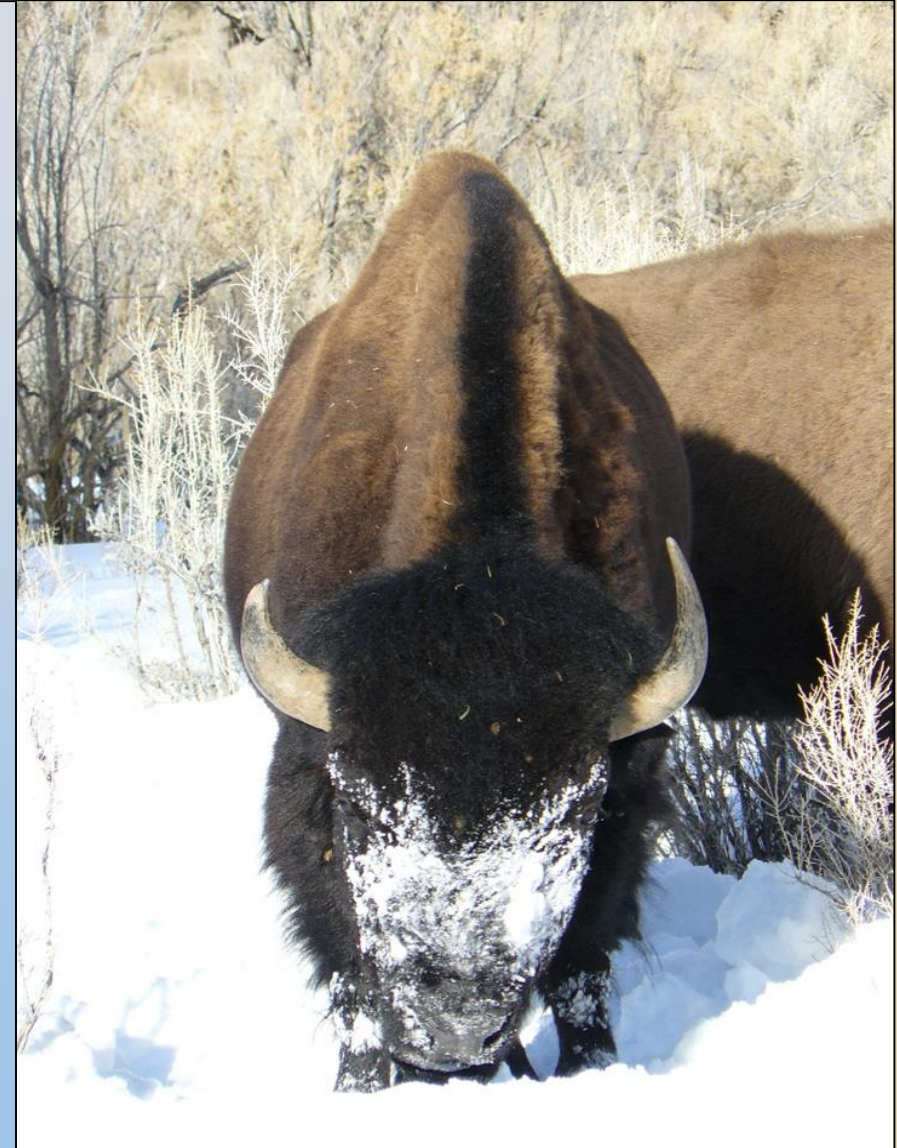
- High habitat use areas from GPS satellite collared bison on UT side of state line

(Courtesy of UTDWR)



Primary Considerations with Bison Management

- Forage competition
- Range conditions and drought
- Fence damage
- Disease



Northwest Bison Working Group Update

- **August 2023 - CPW Staff hosts first outreach meeting with local stakeholders to explain the effort and identify local representation to serve on a local Northwest Colorado Bison Working Group (BWG)**
- **November 9, 2023 - BWG convened and held 1st meeting**
- **November 27, 2023 - CPW Staff met with Colorado DNR's Tribal Liaison Stacy Coleman.**
- **December 4, 2023 - BWG held 2nd meeting**
- **January 3, 2024 - CPW held local public outreach meeting in Rangely**

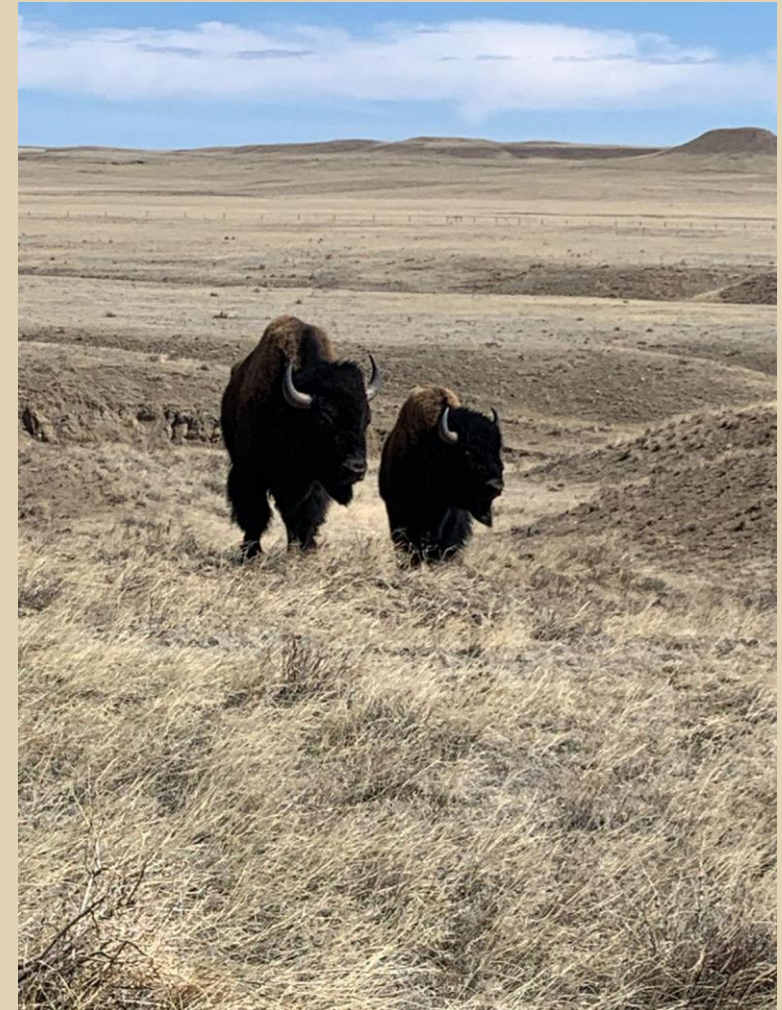
BWG Meeting #1

- **GOAL - Determine a recommendation for the active management status of wild free-ranging bison in Colorado through regulatory designations by the CPW Commission**
- **GOAL - Collaborate with CDA regarding joint status management of bison as livestock and wildlife**
- **Goal - Identify most supported bison management designation**



Bison Management Designations - 3 Options:

- **Option #1 - Big Game Designation**
- **Option #2 - Non-game Designation**
- **Option #3 - Status Quo**



BWG Meeting #2

- **Update BWG with any new updates**
 - DNR Tribal Liaison introduced
 - CDA Ag/Wildlife Program Manager introduced
- **Discuss BWG's concerns with recommending a regulatory designation of bison by CPW Commission**
 - Consensus for CPW to hold local public outreach meeting



Local Public Outreach Meeting:

- **Presentation about history and where we are now**
- **Management designation alternatives**
- **Addressed questions and listened to comments**
- **Stakeholder concerns:**
 - Forage conflict with livestock, deer, and elk
 - Public allotments and on private lands
 - Poor habitat condition
 - Prolonged drought, wild horses, severe winter 2022/23
 - Competition for water



Local stakeholder concerns continued:

- Disease transmission
- Fence damage and ability to fence bison out
- Genetics - hybridization with domestic cattle
- Private land rights
- Concern for outside influences affecting local community
- What would population objective be if managed as big game?
- What research has been done about bison impacts on landscape?
- Economic and social impact studies





Questions and Discussion