

# Temporary Capture Facility

## Why now:

- **Help facilitate greater bison distribution across the landscape and improve harvest efficacy and distribution before capturing bison**
- **ROD indicated capture locations in Zone 2 would be considered once hunting in Montana was emphasized to control bison abundance and distribution**

# Events

- **April IBMP Meeting**
  - Partners agreed to explore temporary trap locations
  - Partner representatives were assigned
- **June 6 Phone Call**
  - Discussed background and purpose
  - Identified concerns and opportunities
  - Discussed that the upcoming season is opportunity to provide more information on how bison use the landscape, given potential for less need for trapping, depending on how the hunt is conducted
  - Discussed roles and responsibilities

# Discussion of Concerns

- Money and staffing (Operations/Security)
- Wildlife disturbance (habitat and migration impacts)
- Recreation conflicts and restrictions
- Road access
- Visibility of facility and operations from road
- How hunt is conducted has limited bison distribution past Beattie Gulch
- Trap location and operation in Zone 3 is not allowed under current management plan

# Discussion of Opportunities

- More effective protection of Zone 3?
- Potential for greater bison distribution if coupled with dispersed hunt pressure
- Improve harvest and safety issues near park boundary if bison are more widely distributed within the tolerance area
- Opportunity for tribal participation?
- Role for terminal pasture concept?
- Private landowner leasing for capture facility

# Roles and Responsibilities

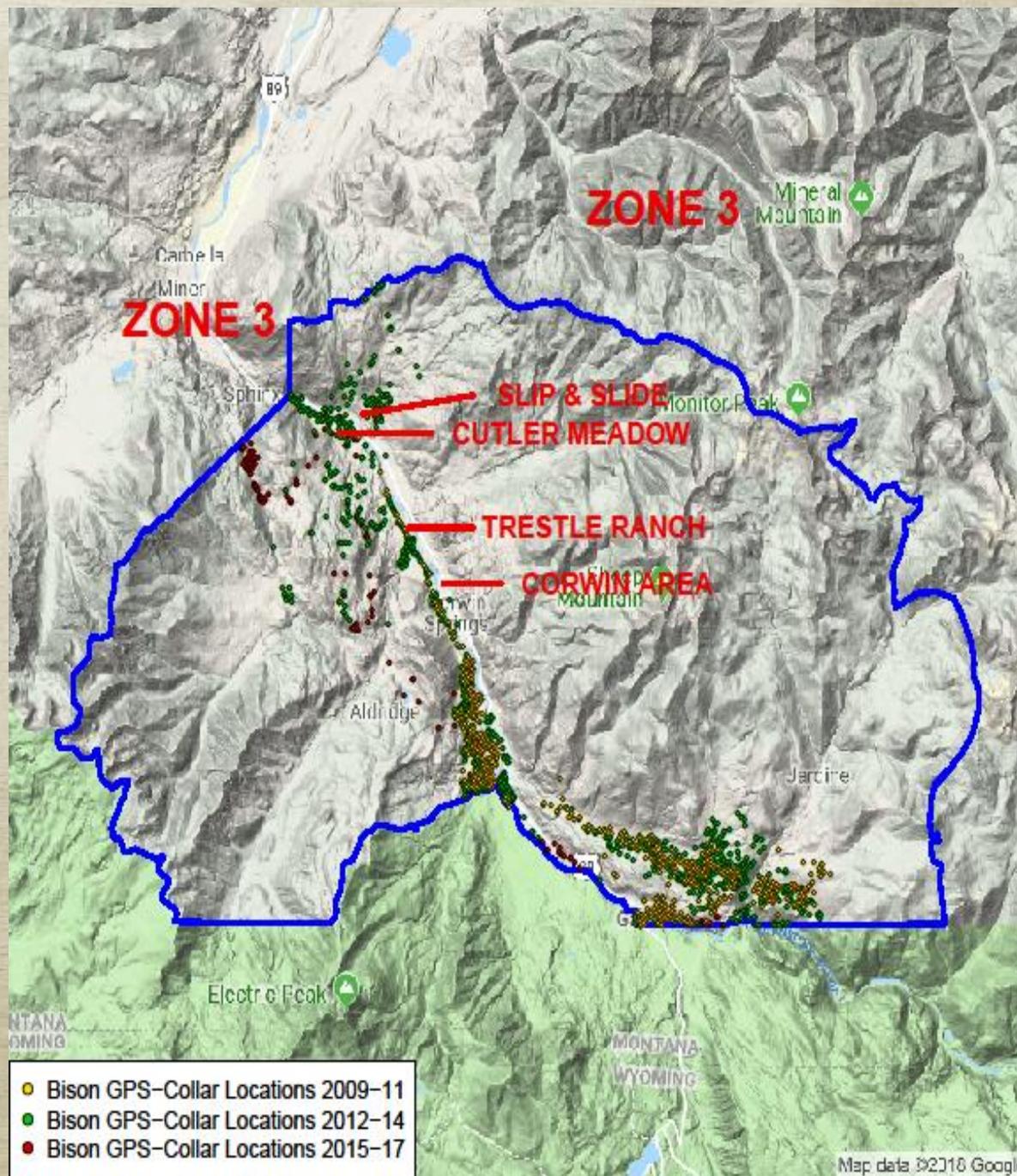
- Who does what?
  - MT DOL is lead agency for bison operations outside the park
  - MT FWP is lead agency for property damage issues, treaty hunt liaising, and state hunt
  - USFS is lead agency for any NEPA and permitting on their lands
  - Assistance for facility operation can be requested from all partners

# Locating the Capture Facility

- **Topography**
  - Where landscape naturally focuses or limits bison movements
- **Bison Use**
  - How bison were distributed last several years
- **Irrespective of land ownership**
  - Simply what the landscape offers

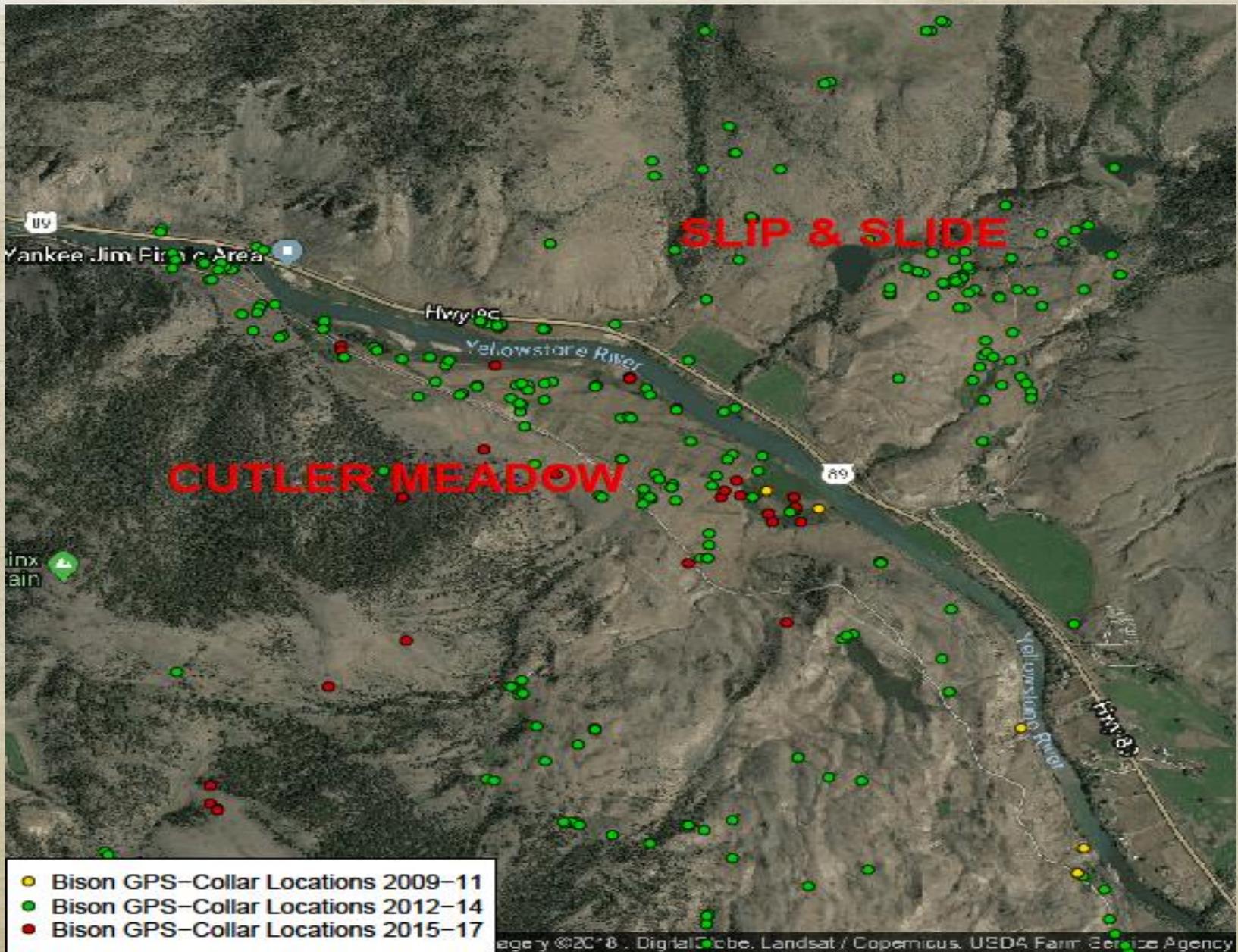
# Potential Areas Noted During Site Visit

- **July 18 Site Visit**
    - Vines MT DOL, Thom USFS, Reid NPS
  - **Identified 5 Potential Areas**
    - Colloquial names used
    - Identified as simply points where topography and bison align
1. **Corwin Area**
  2. **Trestle Area**
  3. **Cutler Meadows**
  4. **Slip n Slide Area**
  5. **Zone 3 – Old Yell Trail area (not auth under current plan)**



- Bison GPS-Collar Locations 2009-11
- Bison GPS-Collar Locations 2012-14
- Bison GPS-Collar Locations 2015-17





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# SITE VISIT DISCUSSIONS

**Note:** Comments common to all include potential impacts to wildlife habitat, migration, recreation and the relationship between bison distribution and hunt activities/trapping ops.

- **Corwin** - Public/Private, close to road (+/-), wildlife, potential to hinder full distribution.
- **Trestle area** - Public/Private, good road access, better situated for distribution.
- **Cutler Meadows** - Public, road access bad, best situated relative to Zone boundary/bison movements, bison infrequently make it this far.
- **Slip n Slide** - Pending public ownership, front pastures viable with roads, visible, majority of bison movement on W side of river.
- **Zone 3/Old Yell Trail** - Non-viable for state, not authorized under current management plan, topography and access favorable.

# SUMMARY

**SPRING IBMP 2018: “Future removals to stabilize population growth could be one-half of what was necessary to reduce the population size (i.e., 400-600 instead of 1,000 – 1,200)”**

- **Positioned to learn how effective hunt can be and how bison will use landscape, assuming distribution-oriented hunt structure and notwithstanding 2018/19 winter severity.**
- **Capture capacity at north end of north management area was envisioned in 2000 ROD as a logical outcome of progressing through IBMP steps (greater tolerance of bison; presence/emphasis of hunting).**
- **Discussion/Next steps**
  - **Maximize use of upcoming ops/hunting season to cooperatively monitor/learn how bison will use the landscape and inform trap location?**