

Wyoming



1. Unassigned Tribal leases exist south of the Shoshone and Morton properties that can potentially be included with the growing enclosure. With support of both councils, BIA can designate these lands for the buffalo program.
2. The ~70k acre expansion area is bound by two highways and two rivers, 132 and 287 on the east and west, and the Big Wind and Little Wind rivers on the north and south, respectively. Under the auspices of the Wind River Agricultural Resource Management Plan being implemented by the Office of the Tribal Water Engineer, retiring grazing permits and range units from cattle grazing and changing land use to buffalo habitat prioritizes ecological integrity, which is more aligned with traditional ecological knowledge and values.
3. The Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes successfully manage 6 of the 7 historic ungulate wildlife species, including predators like wolves and bears that are protected under Tribal Law. The habitat exists to manage bison on ~400K acres in the Wind River Mountains on the reservation.



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A WILDLIFE TRAGEDY AFFECTS A WAY OF LIFE.

RESTORING BUFFALO TO TRIBAL LANDS

The restoration of buffalo to Tribal lands is critical to not only return this keystone wildlife species to its former habitat, but to rectify historic environmental and socio-economic injustices. Such an effort would forge a pathway for the revitalization of Tribal communities, bring economic security, food sovereignty, youth engagement, and environmental justice, while building Tribal power and creating a platform to address many other injustices. Done thoughtfully, with Tribal values and priorities at the forefront, this vision would form the cornerstone of a movement for Tribal revitalization, self-determination, and prosperity.

HOW THE NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION HELPS

Over decades, the National Wildlife Federation's Tribal Partnerships Program has made significant strides in advancing collaborative efforts to restore buffalo to Tribal lands, through partnerships with the Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), individual tribes and advocacy from Yellowstone to Washington D.C. Building on this foundation, NWF will launch a strategy built with and for Tribal partners to develop a national network and system that builds power for Tribes to restore buffalo to their lands.

OUR STRATEGY

The cornerstone of this strategy will be deeper partnerships to leverage and amplify Tribal buffalo restoration work that is already in place. Working with

Successfully accomplishing the above work on the Wind River Reservation would result in models, best practices, capacity, and extensive resources that can then be applied to Tribal buffalo conservation efforts across the country.

- the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes on the Wind River Reservation, we will create a network of Tribal buffalo restoration that will amplify, and support work being done by the ITBC and the Fort Peck Tribes. By building a complementary initiative that adds capacity and value to existing efforts, this strategy will result in more buffalo on Tribal lands for Tribal communities. The 4 pillar goals of this effort are:
- Bring Buffalo Back – Restore buffalo from other locales to the Wind River Reservation.
- Repatriate Tribal Lands – Reacquire ancestral Tribal lands lost to colonial settlement as means to marry buffalo restoration and land reparation.
- Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative – Engage and educate Tribal youth and community members to be the advocates and leaders for the restoration of cultural and ecological connections to buffalo.
- Build Partnership Support – Through the development of a feature-length documentary film, engage and inspire people from across American and around the world to support Tribal buffalo restoration.

RESTORING MORE THAN A WAY OF LIFE

That is creating a sustainable engine for buffalo restoration on Tribal lands

That restores cultural ties that engages youth, supports economies, demonstrates sovereignty, produces sustainable food sources, and rights historic injustices.

A shining example of wildlife and people thriving together

Learn more and donate at givetobuffalo.nwf.org

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Tribal Partnerships Program

Bringing Buffalo Back to Tribal Lands

In 1804, 30 to 60 million buffalo roamed the U.S. By 1902, there were less than 100 wild buffalo in the U.S. restricted to Yellowstone National Park. The systematic destruction of millions of buffalo had drastic consequences for Indigenous peoples and the landscape.

When Lewis and Clark ventured west on the Corps of Discovery in 1804, they witnessed and described 30 to 60 million buffalo. By 1902, there were less than 100 wild buffalo in the U.S. restricted to Yellowstone National Park, with most buffalo relegated to private lands.

As Native Americans were subjugated to reservations and buffalo were eliminated to make way for cattle and the agricultural industry, colonization seemingly justified the removal of lands and resources from Native Americans.

For Tribes whose survival, culture, and communities were dependent on buffalo, such as the Eastern band of Shoshone who were known as the Gweechoon Deka, the buffalo eaters, the loss of buffalo was much more than a wildlife tragedy, it was a fundamental dismantling of their ways of life.

