

# YELLOWSTONE BISON SUCCESS STORY



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Old Harbor Alliance Inc.





# SITKALIDAK ISLAND BISON HERD

## Old Harbor Alliance Inc.

Non-Profit Organization Founding  
Members

- Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor
- Old Harbor Native Corporation
- City of Old Harbor

## Sitkalidak Bison Working Group

- Members from Owner Organizations
- ADFG Wildlife Biologists
- NRCS
- ITBC Technical Services Dpt.
- Local Ranchers





# ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SITKALIDAK ISLAND BISON HERD

- **Historical Harvesting**
  - Ancestral Trade Routes
  - Dorrman, Bishop & Burton Bison Herds on Kodiak Island
- **Need for Food Security**
  - Access to Healthy Protein Source \$\$\$\$
  - Reduction of food mile
  - Connection between food source and people
- **Cultural Benefits**
  - Connection between bison & our people
  - Cross Cultural Connections
- **Economical Benefits**
  - Hunting Guides, Transporters, Processing, Elders & Youth Programs
  - Sales from hunts & meat products





# HERD HISTORY

- 1980 Bill Burton of Narrow Cape purchased 38 bison from Wyoming and shipped to AK via ferry
- 1990 Jim Van Oss of Homer purchase 10 bison (1 bull/9 cows) from Burtons and shipped via ferry
- 2000 Charlie Dorman purchased 50 bison from VanOss and transported them to Saltery Cove via barge
- 2017 Old Harbor Alliance purchased 43 bison from the Dorman family and relocated them to Sitkalidak Island via barge
- 2020 InterTribal Buffalo Council awarded the Alutiiq Tribe of Old Harbor 3 bulls from Yellowstone National Park. These were trucked, flown, and barged to Sitkalidak Island
- April 2022 Relocating 66 head from Narrow Cape to Sitkalidak Island



# 2017 ESTABLISHMENT OF SITKALIDAK ISLAND BISON HERD



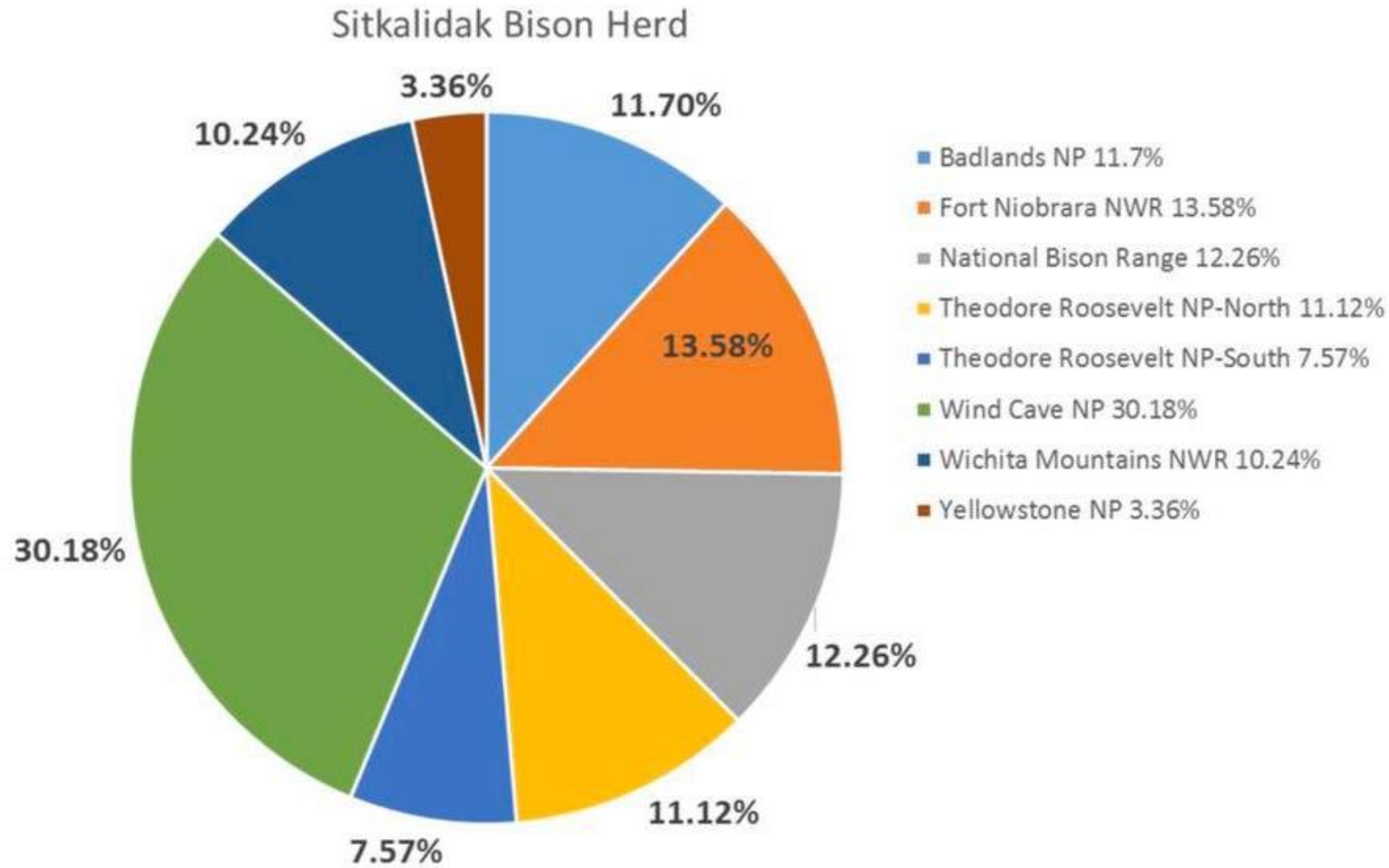
# BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES & TESTING



# BIOLOGICAL SAMPLE RESULTS

## 35 Bison Sampled

- None of the animals tested have domestic cattle mitochondrial DNA
- 23/35 bison have low level of heterozygosity associated with inbreeding depression
- Low level of genetic diversity, not preferable for long term herd survival
- Need for integrating new animals for overall herd health established



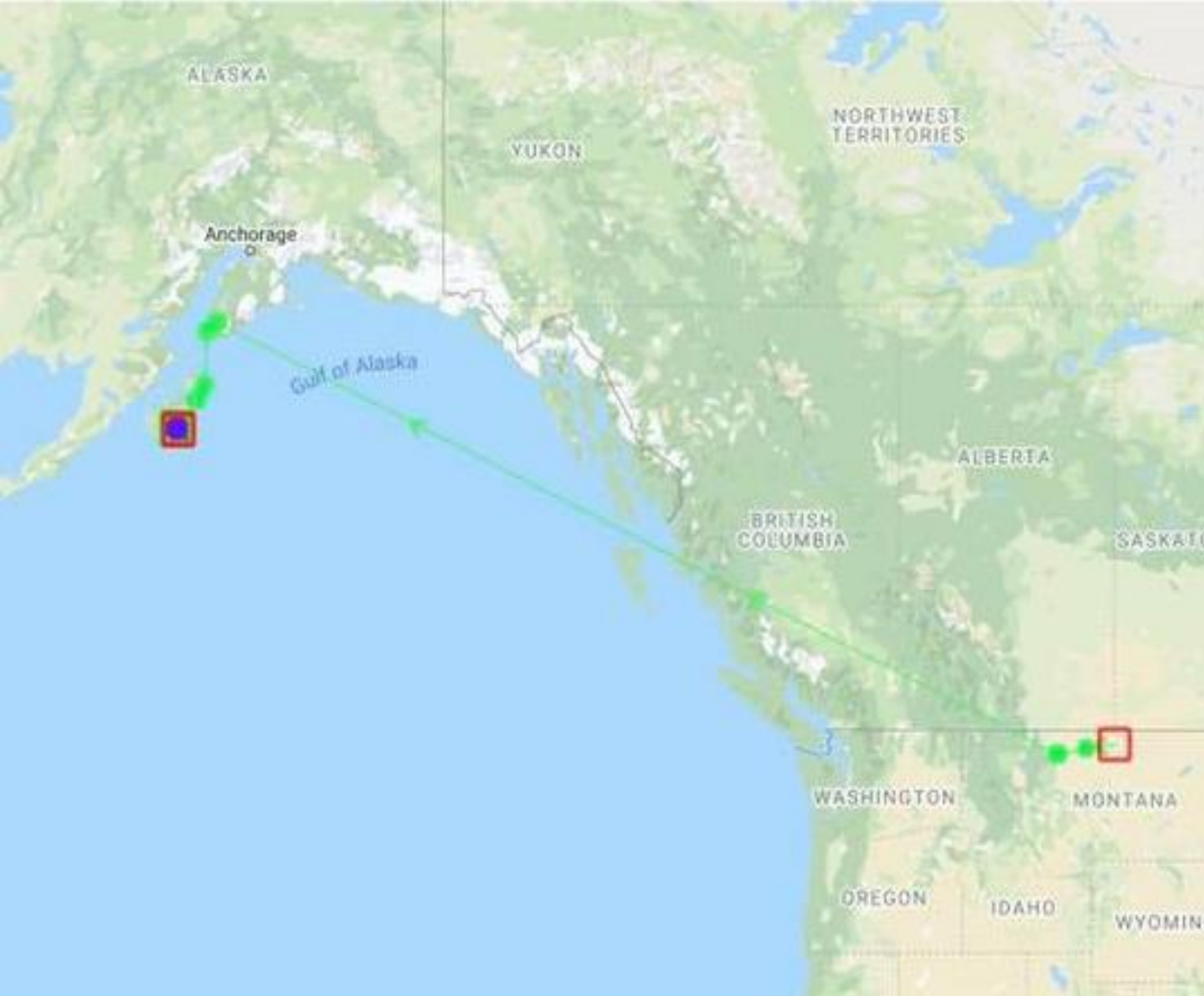


# GPS/VHF COLLARING PROJECT

- **Resource Use**
  - Comparison with 2016 Ecological Site Survey
  - Monitor Seasonal Use
  - Long-term Dietary Study
- **Membership Educational Outreach**
  - Youth Involvement
  - Outreach at Cultural Camps
  - Cultural Hunts & Meat Distribution
- **Real Time Locations**
  - Allow management to intervene if risk of going off island
  - Regular monitoring and assessment of predation risk to the herd.
- **Monitor Individual Animals**
  - Health, Growth, & Wellbeing







# 2020 OPERATION BUFFALO WINGS

Fort Peck Reservation to  
Sitkalidak Island via  
Land, Air and Sea

- ITBC Application Process & Awards to Tribes
- Logistical Planning
- Licensing & Permitting Required for Transport
- Tribal Support for Food Security & Longevity of the Herd





# LOGISTICS FOR TRANSLOCATING LIVE BISON

FAA Live Animal Shipping  
Standards

- ITBC Technical Service DPT Resources
- Blackfeet Tribal Member Support
- Professionalism of Fr. Peck Tribal Staff and Team





## **GPS COLLARING & BIO SAMPLING AT FT. PECK**

- Fit with GPS/VHF Tracking Collar
- Blood Samples
- Hair Samples
- Tissue Samples
- Weights
- Measurements





# RECEIVING BISON AT FEDEX IN SEATTLE, WA

- Background Check on Shippers
- Must accompany animals & monitor during flight for wellbeing





# *Operation Buffalo Wings*

## **THE JOURNEY OF SIDUUQ, HAROLD AND MONTANA**

<https://vimeo.com/699024928>





# LIFE ON SITKALIDAK ISLAND

- Well established
- Integrated into herd and breeding
- Ongoing monitoring





# BRANDING PROJECT

- Identifiable at a distance
- Clearly marked off-limits for harvest
- Youth education & outreach





# RESULTS OF A SUCCESSFUL BISON PROGRAM

- **Heard Health for long-term sustainability**
- **Food Security**
  - Remove monetary barriers to healthy food sources
  - Harvesting Opportunities for our people
  - Provide for Elders & Youth Programs
- **Self Determination and Pride**
  - Respect for our land and resources
  - Healing of our people
- **Economic Benefits**
  - Future sales of meat products for the benefit of our cultural programs





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