
HISTORIC DISTRIBUTION AND ABUNDANCE OF BISON IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS OF THE UNITED STATES (POSTER)

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Scant public awareness of the early distribution and abundance of bison (*Bison bison*) in the Rocky Mountains of the United States inhibits discussion of possible restoration of wild bison. A review of written evidence, largely from 1805-1845, indicates bison were widely distributed in intermountain valleys, with a major regional concentration spanning parts of Idaho, Montana, and Wyoming. However, several interacting factors caused large spatial and temporal variation in bison abundance. Native American predation was likely a major influence on bison distribution and abundance during and shortly before 1805-1845. The area where bison were observed by early explorers underestimates the area where restoring productive herds of wild bison is possible.