

March
2024

Wild Connections Climate Planning



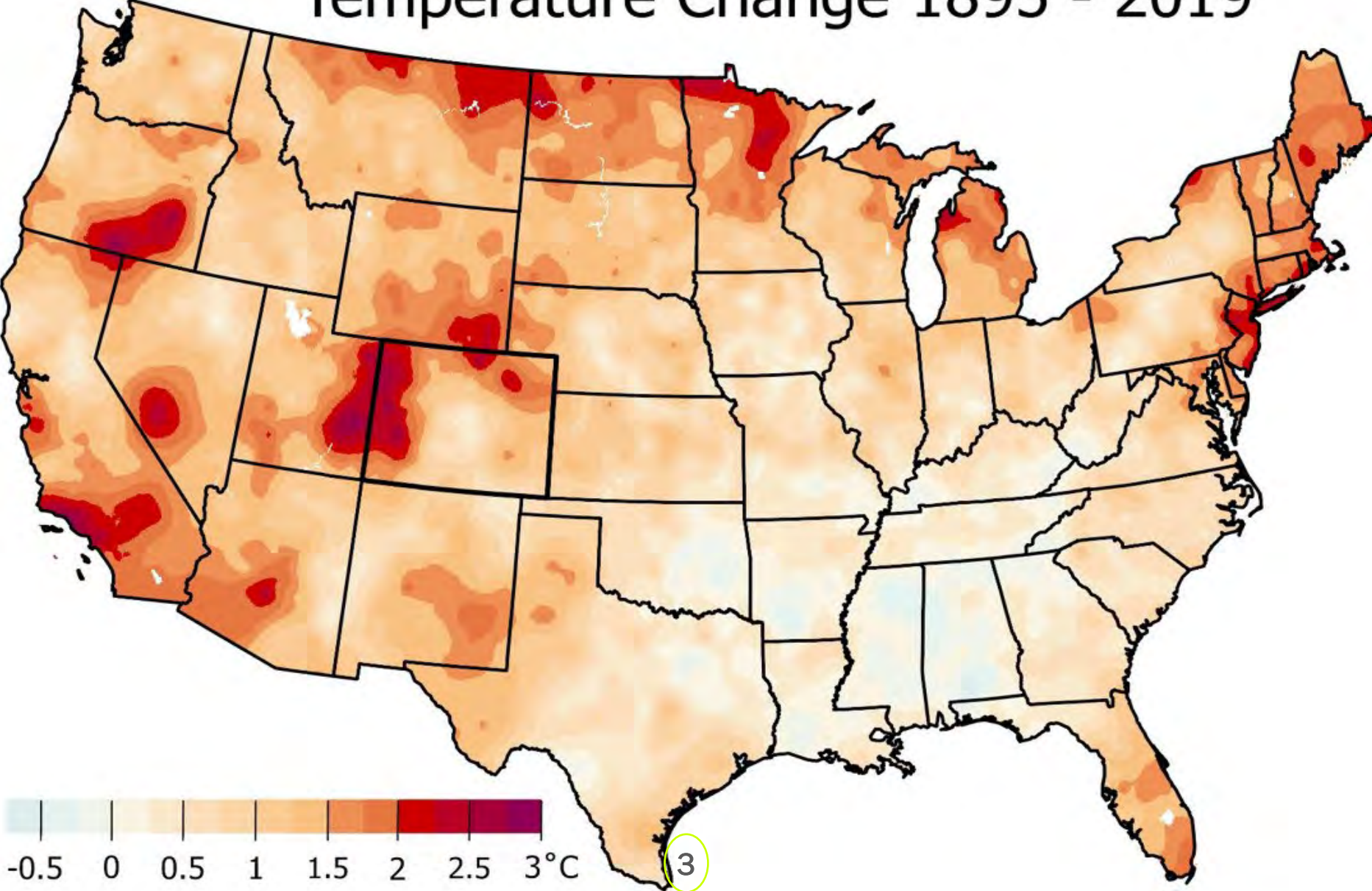
Central Colorado Climate Resilience Project

Identify and protect places in Central Colorado where biodiversity will continue to thrive under changing climate conditions.

Inspired by the work of Dr. Karl Ford.
Collaboration between Wild Connections
and Rocky Mountain Wild



Temperature Change 1895 - 2019



What is Climate Resilience?

Climate resilience is “the capacity of social, economic and ecosystems to cope with a hazardous event or trend or disturbance, responding or reorganising in ways that maintain their essential function, identity and structure as well as biodiversity in case of ecosystems...”

IPPC Sixth Assessment Report



Biodiversity

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DIFFERENT WAYS TO MEASURE BIODIVERSITY

1 SPECIES RICHNESS (ENTIRE REGION)
total number of species within the area



2 GENETIC DIVERSITY 
total variety of genes
within a single species

3 ENDEMIC SPECIES
species that occur here
and nowhere else in the world

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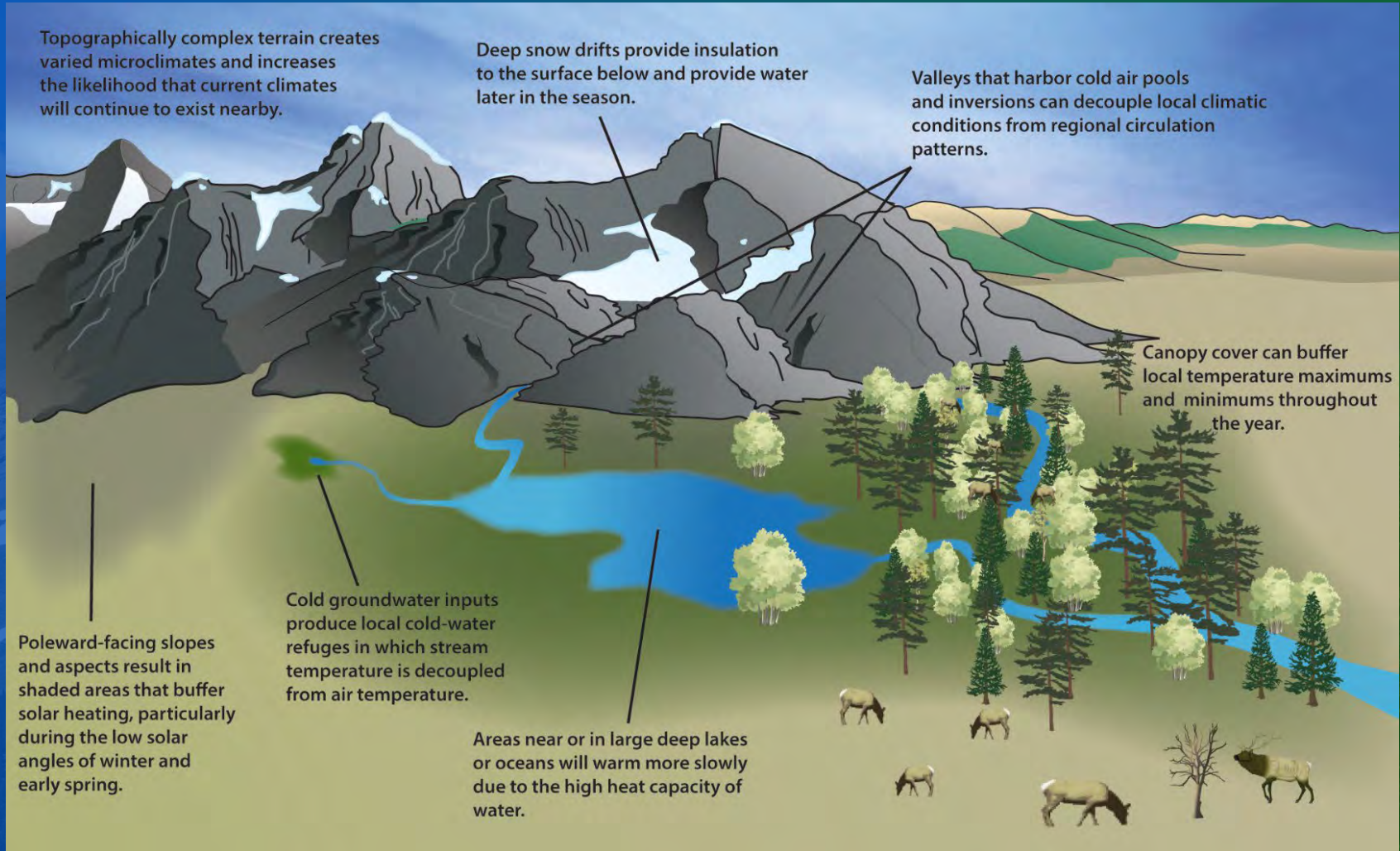
ECOSYSTEM DIVERSITY
total number of ecosystems
in the region

UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS
ecosystems that occur here
and nowhere else in the world
(an aspect of ecosystem diversity)

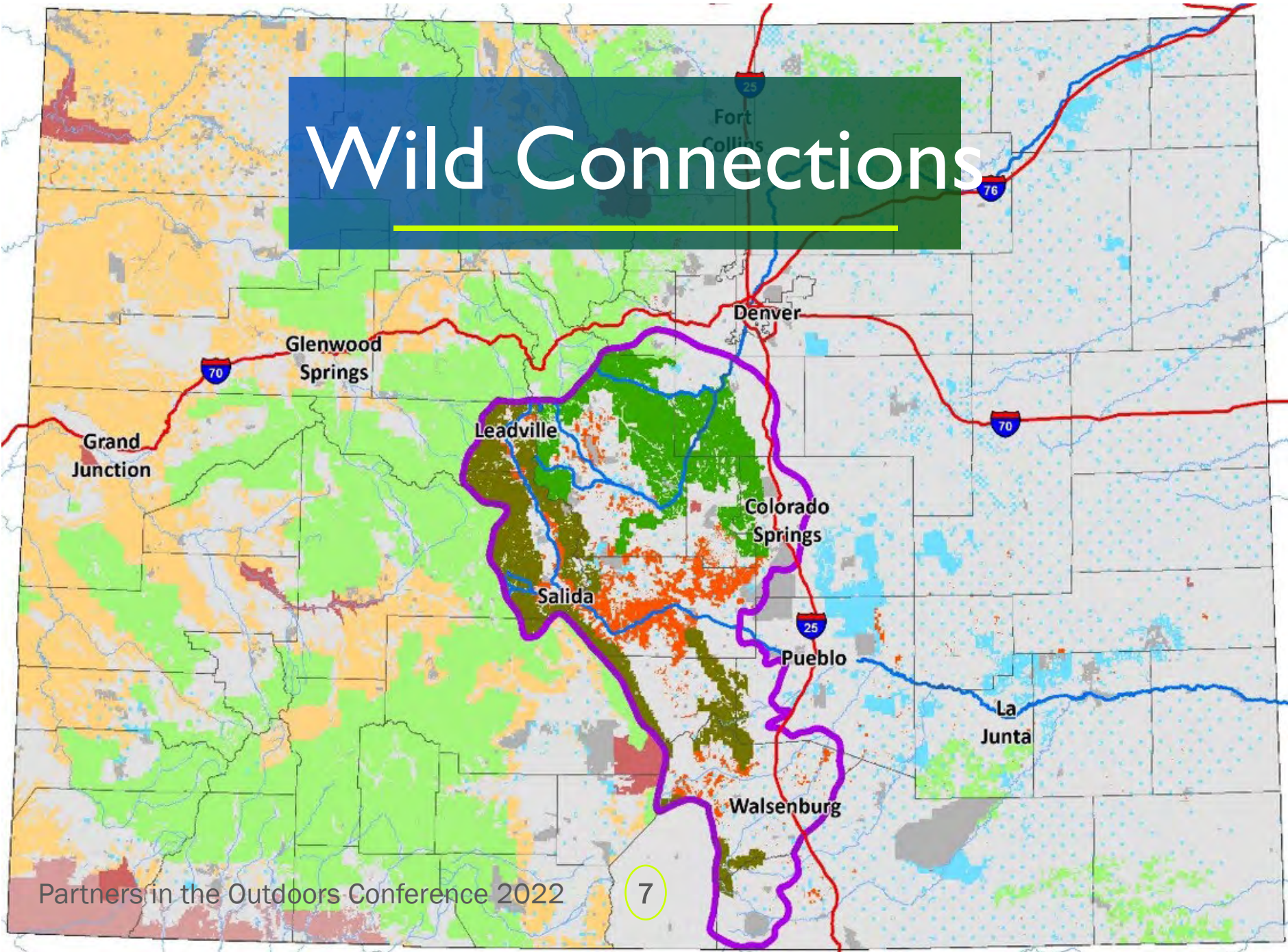
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Climate Refugia



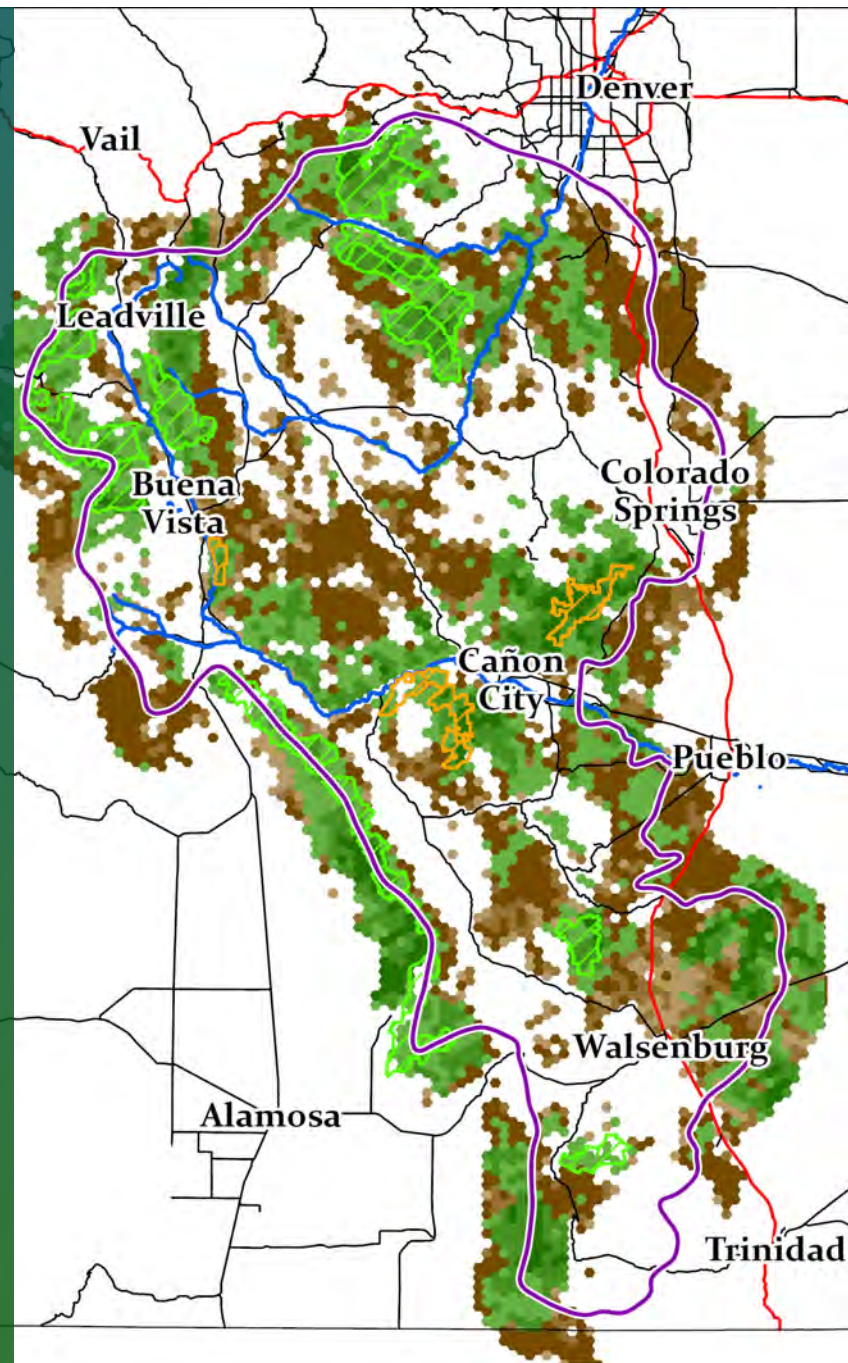
Wild Connections



Geospatial Modeling

Combines data and models approaches at different scales

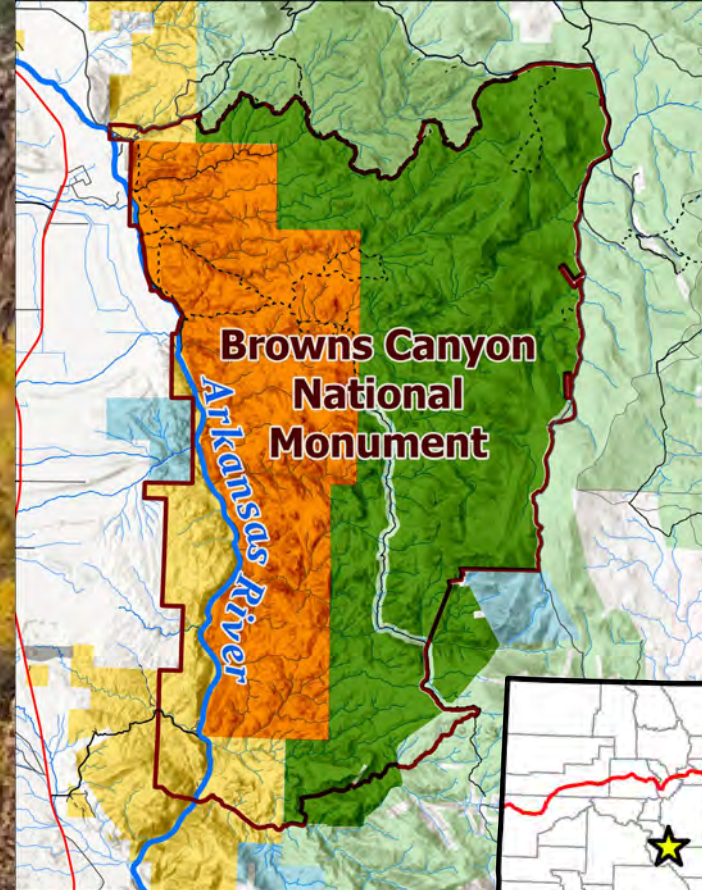
- **Climate Resilience:** The Nature Conservancy Climate Resilient Sites
- **Ecological Connectivity:** TNC Connectivity and Climate Flow and Colorado Parks and Wildlife Big Game Migration Corridors
- **Current Biodiversity:** CPW High Priority Habitat, Colorado Natural Heritage Program Potential Conservation Areas, US Fish and Wildlife Service Critical Habitat
- **Intact Natural Landscape:** CNHP Landscape Disturbance Index, Wilderness Characteristics Inventories of Federal Lands



Case Study: Browns Canyon

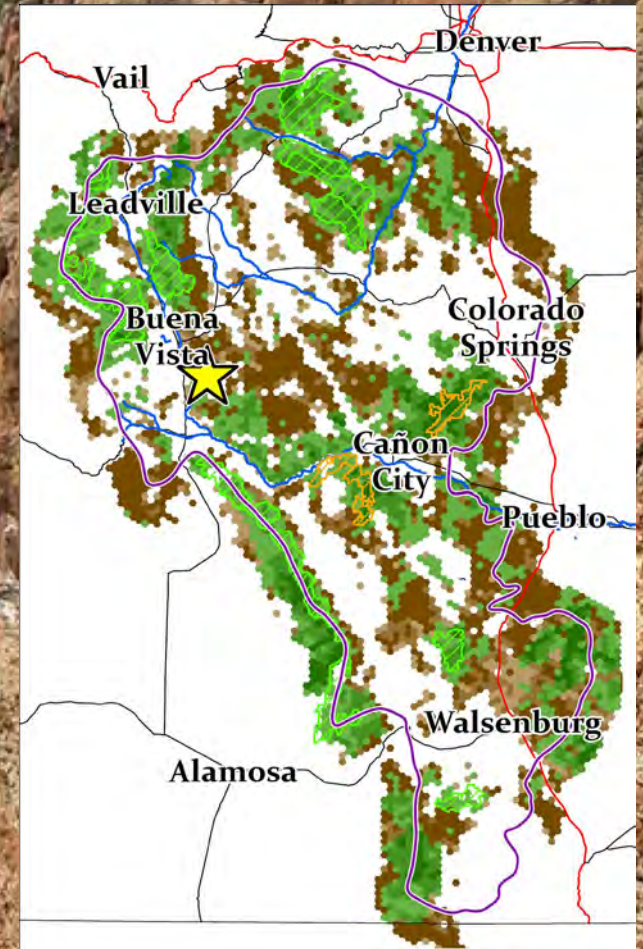
Case Study: Browns Canyon

- Between Salida and Buena Vista
- National Monument: 21,586 acres
- Wilderness Study Area (WSA): 7,451 acres
- Forest Service Aspen Ridge Roadless Area: 12,104 acres
- WSA and Roadless area Proposed Wilderness Colorado Wilderness Act
- Bighorn sheep, elk, mule deer, rare plant communities



Case Study: Browns Canyon

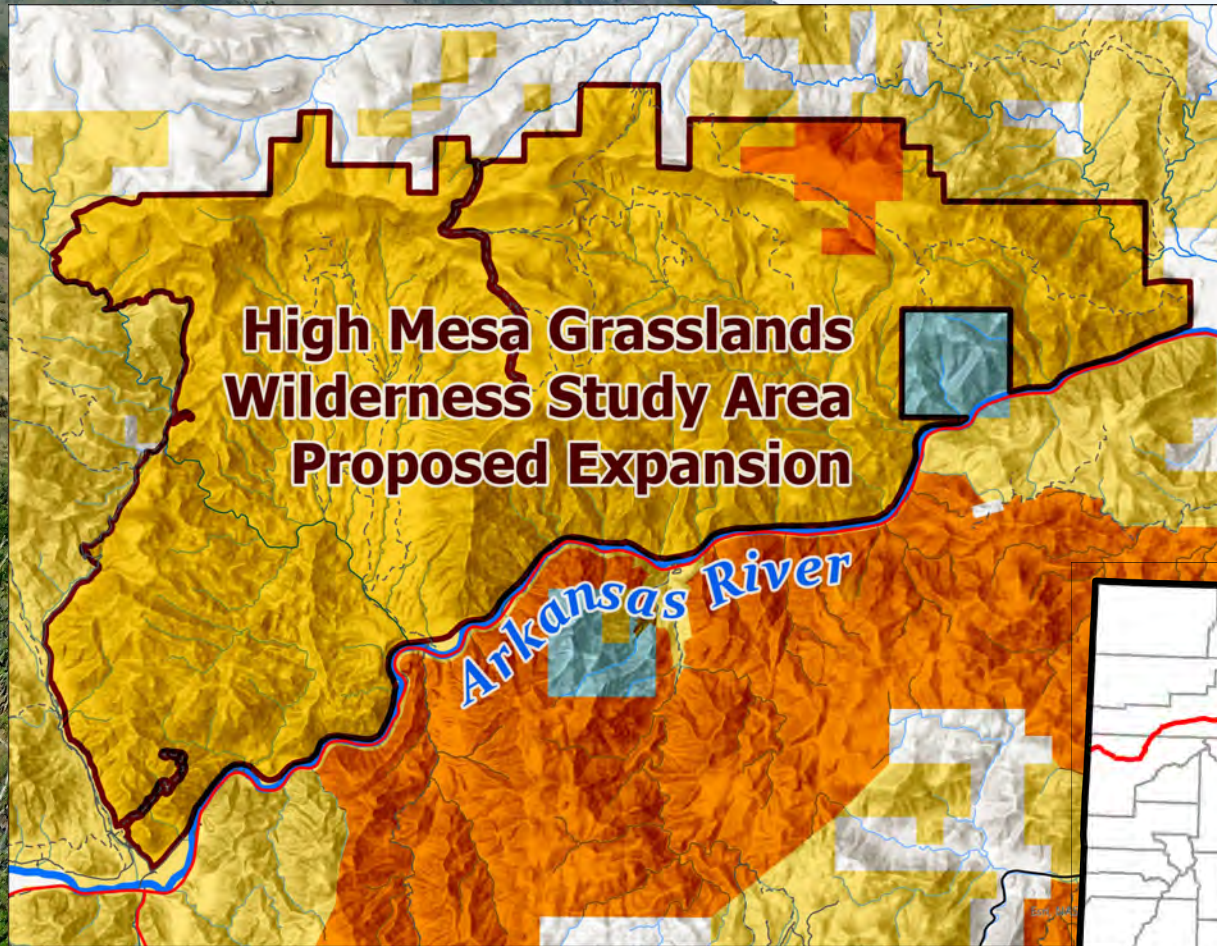
- WSA Better Climate Refugia
 - Climate Resilience: **Better**
 - Ecological Connectivity: **Better**
 - Natural Landscape: **Fair**
 - Current Biodiversity: **Best**
- Aspen Ridge Best Ecological Connectivity
 - Climate Refugia: **Good**
 - Climate Resilience: **Good**
 - Natural Landscape: **Fair**
 - Current Biodiversity: **Fair**



Case Study: High Mesa Grasslands

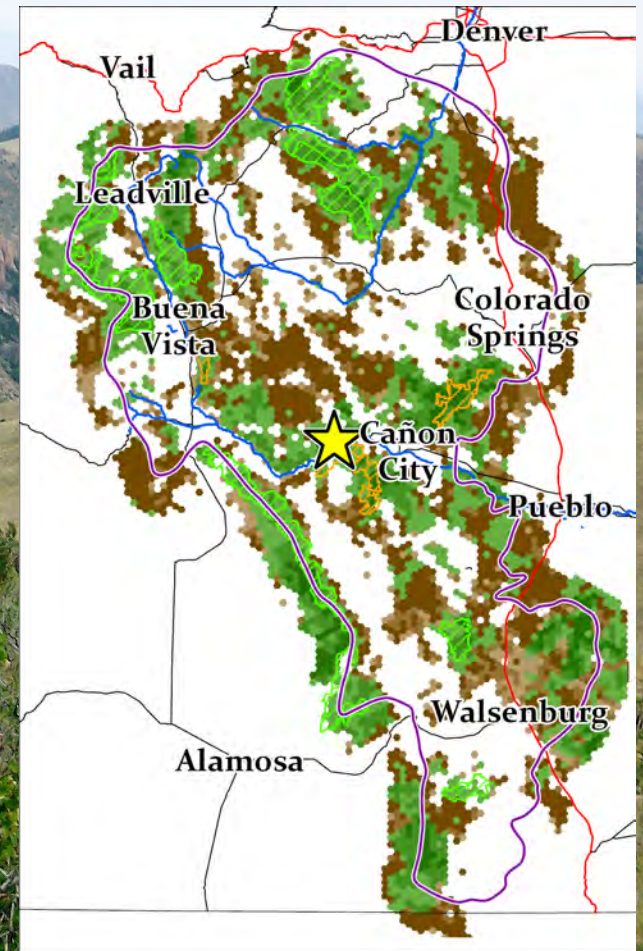


Case Study: High Mesa Grasslands



Case Study: High Mesa Grasslands

- Table Mountain area between Royal Gorge and Salida
- North of McIntyre Hills WSA
- Lands with Wilderness Characteristics: 23,559 acres
- Significantly expands 683-acre High Mesa Grasslands WSA
- **Good Climate Refugia and Ecological Connectivity**
 - Climate Resilience: **Good**
 - Natural Landscape: **Better**
 - Current Biodiversity: **Better**



Wild Connections Climate Planning Project Status

Geospatial Modeling is Complete!

- The results are being used to evaluate locations for climate resilience
 - Climate Education Hikes
 - Proposed Wilderness Study Area and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern
- Next steps
 - Advocate for protecting climate resilient lands
 - Present the results to land management agencies



THANK YOU!

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