**HOST: A rare white bison calf was born in Yellowstone National Park last summer. Now, a resolution to protect such animals has strong support from tribal communities. The Mountain West News Bureau’s Hanna Merzbach [HA-nuh rhymes with banana, MURZ-bock] tells us why.**

Phil White Eagle is Sicangu Lakota. He believes the white bison calf - even rarer because it has a black nose and eyes -  fulfilled a tribal prophecy. It could be both a blessing and an opportunity to reflect on our relationship with nature.

**TWO EAGLE\_07: We need to get ready for something that's coming…it means that we need to pray.**

And Two Eagle believes more white animals could be born around the world. So, tribes and conservation leaders have banded together to get the animals recognized as sacred internationally. A resolution at the United Nations biodiversity conference could do that in the coming years.

**TWO EAGLE\_06: The white animal is a messenger of some type**

A Lakota spiritual leader has dubbed the Yellowstone bison Wakan Gli - which means Return Sacred.

**HOST: Many states are turning to DENTAL THERAPISTS to serve tribes. But, some aren’t so sure adding another mid-level position is the way to tackle dental care deserts. The Mountain West News Bureau’s Hanna Merzbach [HA-nuh rhymes with banana, MURZ-bock] reports.**

Dental therapists are a relatively new position. They can do things like cleanings, fluoride treatments and even simple fillings - says dentist and researcher Donald Chi.

**CHI\_07: put out small fires in a community with lots of dental care needs, and so then the dentist can come in and put out the big fires**

He says dental therapists are often focused on tribes, since about half of Indigenous people live in areas without enough dentists. Initiatives have been particularly successful in Alaska, but there are few training programs for dental therapists in the lower 48. And Tanna Nagy [NAY-gee] with the Wyoming Dental Association says she’d rather see resources go toward existing programs for dentists, hygienists and assistants.

**NAGY\_07: instead of trying to find faculty for new programs, which is just hard to find already.**

She says states could also encourage reaching unserved populations by reducing dental workers’ student loan debt. SOC