



NARRATED BY ACADEMY AWARD NOMINEE  
**LILY GLADSTONE**

A TALE OF RESILIENCE, HOPE AND SURVIVAL



# BRING THEM HOME

*AISKÓTÁHKAPIYAYA*

THUNDERHEART FILMS PRESENTS "BRING THEM HOME: AISKÓTÁHKAPIYAYA" BY BOGER SUEN PRODUCED BY ZANE CLAMPETT, KIER ATHERTON AND DANIEL GLICK EDITOR TYSON RUNNINGWOLF  
COSTUME DESIGNER ERVIN CARLSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LILY GLADSTONE, SARAH CLARKE, MELISSA GORDHAUS, MARY CAULKINS, AMY BATCHELOR AND BRAD FEED PRODUCED BY ERVIN CARLSON  
PRODUCED BY DANIEL GLICK, IVAN MACDONALD AND SARAH CLARKE DIRECTED BY IVAN MACDONALD AND DANIEL GLICK PRODUCED BY IVAN MACDONALD, IVY MACDONALD AND DANIEL GLICK



Made Possible in Part by  
The Big Sky Film Grant



GENRE	
ITEM	INFORMATION
Genre	Documentary Film
Suggested Grade Levels	Grades* 6-8, 9-10, 11-16+ *Bring Them Home is suitable for most audiences and features young children. Teachers showing the film to younger audiences should <i>be aware of strong language</i> and mention of genocide. See examples throughout this guide where lessons can be adapted to multiple grades.
Communities and Groups Indigenous to the Americas	The Blackfoot Confederacy: <b>amsskaapipikani</b> (Southern band in Montana), <b>kainai</b> (Many Leaders or Blood), <b>Siksika</b> (Northern Blackfoot) and <b>apatohsipikani</b> (Southern band in Alberta, Canada).
Locations	Blackfeet Nation (Montana), Blood Reserve (Alberta), Elk Island National Park (Alberta), Flathead Nation (Montana)

This guide includes **BRING THEM HOME / aiskótáhkapiyaaya** information from the filmmakers and links to websites.

See References and Appendices sections for more resources.

Designed and written by Yellow Woman Design for Thunderheart Films (2025)



## ANCHOR TEXT

### **BRING THEM HOME / aiskótáhkapiyaaya**

Documentary Feature – 85 minutes

Thunderheart Films

#### **Directors**

Ivan Macdonald, Ivy MacDonald and  
Daniel Glick

#### **Writers**

Ivan Macdonald, Daniel Glick

#### **Producers**

Daniel Glick, Sarah Clarke, Ivan  
Macdonald

#### **Executive Producers**

Lily Gladstone, Sarah Clarke, Melissa  
Grumhaus, Mary Caulkins, Amy  
Batchelor, Brad Feld, Four Points  
Family Foundation

#### **Co-Executive Producers**

The Redford Center, Tracy Rector,  
Wildlife Protection Solutions

#### **Consulting Producer**

Ervin Carlson

#### **Associate Producer**

Tyson Running Wolf

#### **Narrator**

Lily Gladstone

#### **Directors of Photography**

Zane Clampett, Kier Atherton,  
Daniel Glick

#### **Editor**

Daniel Glick

#### **Sound Design**

Bob Edwards, Andrew Pals, Chris  
Manning

#### **Production**

a THUNDERHEART FILMS production

#### **Advisors**

Ervin Carlson, Blackfeet Buffalo  
Program

Paulette Fox, Environmental Consultant  
and Kainai Tribal member

John Murray, Blackfeet Tribal Historical  
Preservation Officer

Helen Carlson, Blackfeet Community  
College

#### **Institutional/Organizational**

##### **Funders**

The Redford Center

Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies

Wildlife Protection Solutions

Montana Film Office

## AISKÓTÁHKAPIYAAYA



***“It was not just about subsistence. There was a much deeper relationship with the Buffalo. When we’re talking about Buffalo, we’re talking about our relations, our relative... they’re all my relatives.”***

*Leroy Little Bear in Bring Them Home*



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## OVERVIEW

### INTRODUCTION

**Bring Them Home, aiskótáhkapiyaaya** chronicles a decades-long initiative by members of the Blackfoot Confederacy to bring wild Buffalo, **iinnii**<sup>1</sup> back to the Blackfeet Nation. A thriving Buffalo population will reconnect **nitsitapiksi**, Real People (translation) with a central part of their heritage, spirituality and identity, and provide economic opportunities and healing for the community.

**Bring Them Home, aiskótáhkapiyaaya** examines the deeply meaningful role that Bison<sup>2</sup> played in **nitsitapiksi** life prior to the arrival of settlers who nearly eradicated wild Buffalo to eradicate the Blackfeet people. For the Blackfoot Confederacy<sup>3</sup>, Buffalo are seen not only as fundamental to a healthy ecosystem, but as spiritual relatives. Their removal from the land meant the loss of traditional lifeways, leaving intergenerational grief and trauma that continues to reverberate throughout Indigenous communities today.

**Bring Them Home, aiskótáhkapiyaaya** follows a small band of Blackfeet whose mission is twofold: to return Bison to Blackfeet homelands by establishing a thriving Bison herd on the Blackfeet Nation, and to release a free roaming Bison herd into the Rocky Mountains of Glacier National Park<sup>4</sup> and the Badger-Two Medicine.<sup>5</sup> The film focuses on the lives of the people who work most intimately with the animals, following the **nitsitapiksi**, or Real People<sup>6</sup> journey as they strive to grow their domestic herd and restore wild, free-roaming Buffalo to the Rocky Mountains and the American West.

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<sup>1</sup> The Sun Came Down, Bullchild (55, 1985) writes the true name Creator gave to the people's "first-flesh food" is pronounced *eye-i-in-nawhw* and translates to *shall be peeled* pertaining to the first step taken after the animal is killed before its flesh can be eaten.

<sup>2</sup> Western European explorers erroneously called Bison "Buffalo," the term that came into common usage throughout North America. Both terms are used interchangeably throughout this guide.

<sup>3</sup> The Blackfoot Confederacy includes three First Nations in southern Alberta – the Blood Tribe, also known as the Kainai First Nation, Piikani Nation and Siksika Nation. As of 2017, these Nations have approximately 25,000 members (Alberta Native News, 2017). The amskapipikuni-Blackfeet Nation in Montana is home to over 17,000 members, one of the ten largest tribes in the U.S. and was established by Treaty in 1855 (Blackfeet Nation, 2023).

<sup>4</sup> Glacier National Park (GNP) was formally established in 1910. Like in the Yellowstone, evidence of several different Native American Tribes using, traveling through and spending seasons living in the region dates to over 10,000 years. *Our Mountains Are Our Pillows* (Reeves & Peacock, 2001) outlines an ethnohistorical and ethnological overview of the area now known as GNP.

<sup>5</sup> *Our Last Refuge* (Glick, 2018) tells the story of the Badger Two Medicine and the decades long battle to protect it. This wild and sacred area within the homelands of the Blackfeet Nation has been under threat for years from industrial development, specifically oil and gas exploration.

<sup>6</sup> *Nitsitapiisinni: The Story of the Blackfeet People* by The Glenbow Museum (2001) chronicles important aspects of history, philosophy and lifeways of the Blackfoot Confederacy. Blackfoot Elders and spiritual leaders collaborated in this documentation, which includes a brief glossary of terms according to the Blackfoot Language. One of the names they called themselves, Nitsitapiksi, translates to Real People.

In a healthy grassland ecosystem, Bison are a keystone species, vital to ecosystem health across the Great Plains. Like most wild animals and plants, Bison create distinct impacts on the environments in which they live. Communities in the Blackfoot Confederacy value the Bison for many of the same reasons. Throughout this guide, students will explore concepts of Indigenous philosophies centered around topics like Traditional Environmental Knowledge, Local Knowledge Systems and their connections to Bison, Bison Ecology and land management systems.

No one really knows how many Bison once roamed The Great Plains. Estimates range between fifteen and seventy-five million, with thirty million considered a realistic assessment. There is no evidence of the Bison population declining due to at least twelve thousand years of subsistence hunting by perhaps tens of thousands of Indigenous groups across North America.<sup>7</sup>

## THUNDERHEART FILMS MISSION

The official mission of Thunderheart Films is broad. Thunderheart aims to create and distribute films and videos that are designed to foster **healing, tolerance and unity** and to **reduce prejudice and discrimination**. Their first projects focus on the Bison living on the Blackfeet Nation Homelands and the people most directly involved with these animals.

Spend enough time around Bison and the focus of the mission becomes evident. Bison are a force of nature. Bison are a symbol of **recovery and resilience**. Bison bring people together. They break down barriers, help people heal from trauma, and they have the capacity to rejuvenate cultures and environments.

With the stories their films tell, Thunderheart Media would like to achieve what the Bison achieve *simply by being*. **Iinii are ni tais ksi ni mats toh kiks** (my teachers). We hope to learn from them and give back to them *in a good way*, through film.



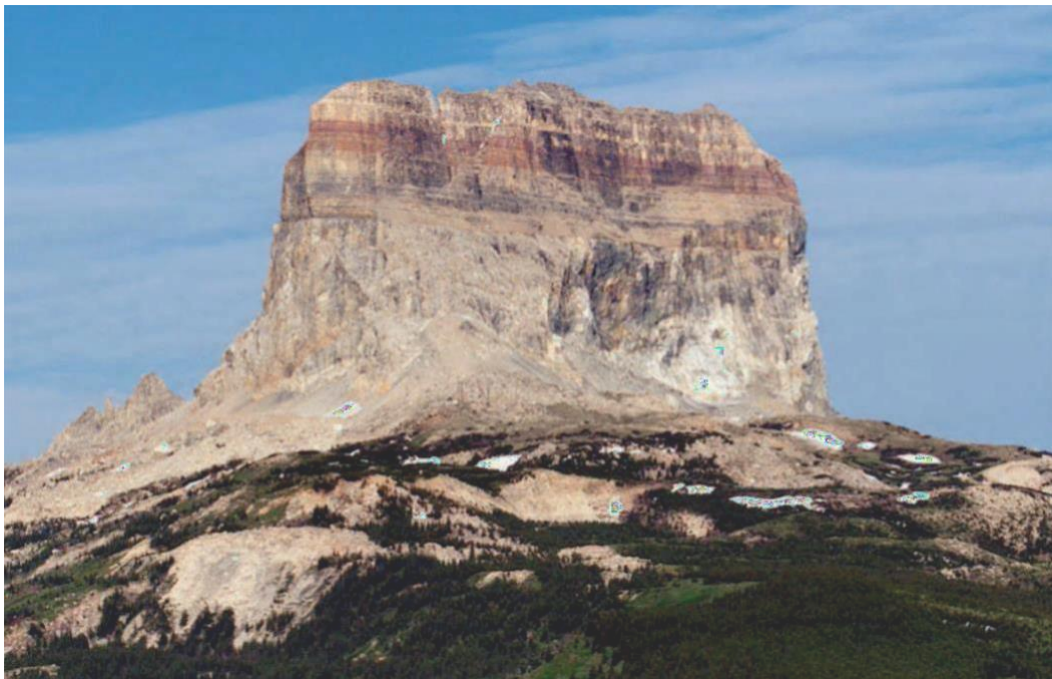
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<sup>7</sup> In Head Smashed In: Aboriginal Buffalo Hunting on the Northern Plains (34, 2008), Jack W. Brink says evidence from Buffalo bones recovered at many different-aged archaeological sites suggest even with tens of thousands of Aboriginal people hunting them, Bison populations increased through time.



## INDIGENOUS LANDS ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- We recognize Indigenous Peoples and communities as original stewards of all the ancestral lands now occupied by diverse populations<sup>8</sup> throughout the Americas.
- We acknowledge Indigenous Peoples' presence and are grateful for their guidance.
- We accept the responsibility we have to Indigenous Peoples and to our ancestors to care for the lands, the waters, the earth and all its creatures, animate and inanimate.
- We honor the knowledges of Indigenous Peoples and those of all two-legged, four-legged, and winged animals large and small, all of whom we learn from and impact.
- We honor the teachings of the landscape and what grows in it, as we express our gratitude for the foods, medicines and healing properties it provides.
- We are motivated by a genuine respect and commitment to supporting Indigenous communities. We hope speaking and listening to land acknowledgements guides us on our path toward greater understanding and accountability as we form enriching alliances.
- We intend for this recognition to go beyond increasing cultural awareness so that people can further support one another in our common causes.



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<sup>8</sup> National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Native Knowledge 360°. Throughout the long span of Indigenous history, centuries of forced relocation, displacement, and dispossession make acknowledging lands a complex issue. Lands may have been home to several different Native communities over time and the lands' original inhabitants are no longer living on the lands they used to occupy.

## RATIONALE

For thousands of years, Blackfeet existence depended almost entirely on Bison. Bison were their main source of food, clothing and shelter. Bison provided several useful tools, utensils, toys and teachings. Before colonization of the Americas, the Blackfeet economy depended on Bison. Dating back nearly 500 years ago to the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, the “Doctrine of Discovery” justified the taking of Indigenous lands<sup>9</sup>.

Much later, the Indian Removal Act of 1830 authorized the president of the United States (US) to convince Indigenous communities in the east to give up their lands in exchange for lands in the west. The US Army consequently forced removal of the eastern tribes to West of the Mississippi River <sup>10</sup>. All Native Americans were colonized and subject to generations of horrific actions on the part of the colonizers. Native Americans were displaced and dispossessed of their homelands.

Many Tribal communities including the Blackfeet were nearly wiped out by settlers and the American government. Federal Indian policy<sup>11</sup> had destructive consequences. Tribes lost their deep, meaningful connection with their way of life and with life-sustaining Buffalo. As settlers interrupted Blackfoot traditions, they simultaneously hunted the very animal that had been the lifeblood of the Indigenous community, slaughtering Bison to near extinction.

Westward expansion led to environmental degradation, extreme cultural upheaval and genocide. Native Americans found not only their numbers rapidly diminishing but that they were precipitously becoming fenced-in on smaller areas of what had once been expansive life-giving landscapes.

One hundred and twenty years later, the Blackfeet and Bison are returning from the verge of complete extermination. The two-legged and four-legged victims of genocide ultimately survived and are now in a process of recovery. This resurgence is celebrated

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<sup>9</sup> Issued in 1493 by Pope Alexander VI, the decree played a central role in conquest of the Americas by Spain, giving exclusive rights to the lands “*not inhabited by Christians*” that Christopher Columbus encountered in 1492 on his fateful voyage. This Doctrine became the basis of all Western European claims in the Americas and led to the concept of Manifest Destiny, the basis for westward expansion and settler colonialism that later swept from east to west across North America (Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, 2025).

<sup>10</sup> The Indian Removal Act of 1830 (IRA) followed the 1781 Articles of Confederation declaring the federal government’s authority over “Indian Affairs.” The IRA preceded the 1838 *Cherokee Trail of Tears*, the 1862 *Homestead Act* and over one-hundred years later, the *Battle of the Little Big Horn* in 1876. (American Indian History Timeline, Indian Land Tenure Foundation, 2025).

<sup>11</sup> The rush for gold after 1849, the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska Act and the passage of the Homestead Act in 1862 increased encroachment and violent conflict. The Dawes General Allotment Act of 1887 further severed land into parcels.

and embraced beyond the borders of the Blackfoot Confederacy. It empowers the natural world. It empowers the people. It empowers the Bison.

It's the beginning of a Buffalo renaissance. All around the country ranchers are raising Bison and there are more than 59 tribes<sup>12</sup> returning Bison to their lands. Bison conservation efforts are gaining exponential traction.

In 2016, the Buffalo was named the national mammal of the US.<sup>13</sup> Public lands managed by the US Department of the Interior support 17 Bison herds, made up of approximately 10,000 head. Despite all of this, there remains hostility toward and skepticism about Bison's future in the US and across North America.

**Bring Them Home, Aiskótáhkapiyaaya** is relevant because it gives individuals a glimpse of American History and Indigenous histories while connecting the past, present and future. The film features challenges of a large, years-long, collective campaign that is subtly righting historical wrongs and fighting centuries of injustice. At the same time, the film also illustrates small campaigns of personal accomplishment, private struggles and individual sacrifice.

**Bring Them Home, Aiskótáhkapiyaaya** is relevant because Blackfeet homelands are conveyed in stunning beauty and detail, as is the passion people have - to do whatever it takes to fiercely protect a relative, a relationship, a knowledge system, and a way of living and being and seeing in the world. It is important Indigenous lands and people are shown in this positive, beautiful, non-stereotypical way.

**Bring Them Home, Aiskótáhkapiyaaya** is relevant because it is an intimate look at the only Tribal-led Bison drive in North America by Tribal members. The film exemplifies a rare ritual of stewardship that brings hope for a modern-day cultural rebirth.

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<sup>12</sup>Since 2020, several organizations and partnerships including The Nature Conservancy, the Intertribal Bison Council, the Tanka Fund and Native American Tribes have been facilitating the return and transfer of growing Bison herds to several states throughout the country, honoring cultural heritage, reinforcing a commitment to sustainable ecological practices, healing land, supporting local economies and the workforce, and preserving Indigenous knowledges for the future generations (The Nature Conservancy, 2025).

<sup>13</sup>Joining the ranks of the Bald Eagle as America's national symbol, American Bison are one of the great conservation success stories whose history is "inextricably intertwined" with Indigenous communities (US Department of the Interior, 2025).

## Producers' Note

The histories of the Blackfeet and Buffalo are a shared experience of near extinction, genocide and forced removal founded on the everlasting effects of colonization. Blackfeet culture, spirituality, and livelihoods are inextricably connected to Buffalo, as are the grasslands. Without Bison roaming there is no healthy prairie, and the Blackfeet, the original stewards of the land, will be forever without an important piece of their history.

Through a mix of Indigenous and western storytelling, **Bring Them Home** shows what it means through the eyes of Indigenous Peoples to live in relationship with animals and with the land, to appreciate Bison as wildlife, and educates all audiences about the importance of rewilding Bison and Indigenous-led efforts of conservation.

Blackfeet and Bison are not separate in Indigenous worldviews. Bringing Bison back to their original homelands is critical to cultural, spiritual and economic well-being. The Blackfeet **iinii** initiative, supported by the Wildlife Conservation Society and the Oakland Zoo was created to conserve traditional lands, protect Blackfeet culture and return Bison to their ancestral homelands.

The **aiskótáhkapiyaaya iinii** impact campaign follows the Blackfeet Medicine Wheel, and is centered on *advocacy, reciprocity, action and education*, with a vision of long-term sustainability.





## INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN

### Suggested Timeline

This unit has been organized into segments by length and topic to allow flexibility for instructors to adjust for available time, curriculum, student age-groups and ability. If film is viewed by chapters, lessons can be divided into one class period for each chapter.

### Materials

Bring Them Home documentary film DVD. Total running time 85 minutes [01:25:33]

Student Journals (a ruled notebook specific to each journal entry works well)

Student Sketch books with blank pages

Supplementary Resources – 1 copy per student dependent on lessons, such as graphic organizers and templates for:

Venn Diagrams

Timeline Templates

Cause & Effect Anchor Charts with Visuals and Text

I Notice and I Wonder charts

These types of resources provide:

- a clear, visual way to show relationships between two or more sets of data
- a way to highlight similarities and differences
- visual comparison and contrasting of complex concepts
- ways to list events chronologically, structuring sequencing
- a way to make connections between different disciplines or topics
- an understanding of relationships between events
- sequencing of events or a process that led to an outcome
- organizing and visualizing of thoughts and recognition of patterns
- a tactile way of recording observations, making inferences and formulating questions
- critical thinking and comprehension skills

Image of the front cover of the DVD or film poster to show students

A copy or digital access to Primary Source Documents in Appendix G

- Andrew Jackson on Indian Removal
- The 1887 Dawes Allotment Act
- US Dept. of Interior Bureau of Land Management Land Description Diagram
- 1855 Treaty with the Blackfoot
- 1896 Agreement with the Blackfeet Indians of the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana
- 1999 Montana Legislature House Bill No. 528

## Teaching and Learning Objectives

- Make connections between the past and the present to learn how certain events and time-honored communal activities have evolved and changed over time and are still relevant.
- Identify ways Indigenous cultures in North America are influenced and impacted by history, the environment and land use.
- Compare and contrast traditional subsistence methods with modern-day diets and health and wellness of Indigenous communities.
- Create Buffalo Partnerships and build alliances with Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), nurturing Buffalo regeneration and highlighting the importance of continental-scale land restoration.
- Explore traditional land-use management and present-day impacts.
- Consider how implementation of Montana Indian Education For All (IEFA), incorporation of IEFA Essential Understandings Regarding Montana's Indians (EUs), and approaches to interdisciplinary and multicultural education supports knowledge systems.

## Guiding Questions

**Bison subsistence practices** are a relevant, time-honored event for the aamsskáápipikani (southern band of Blackfeet) and several Indigenous communities across North America.

- *What events in the distant past (75-100 years ago) directly impacted Bison subsistence practices?*
- *What events in the more recent past (25-50 years ago) directly impacted Bison subsistence practices?*
- *What are some current events directly impacting Bison subsistence practices?*

**Federal Indian Policies** were numerous and influential.

- *What are some of the ways they impacted Indigenous communities and cultures?*
- *What are some of the ways they impacted Bison and the environment?*
- *What are some of the ways they influenced how Indigenous people lived on the land?*

What is **food sovereignty** and how is it connected to **health and wellness**?

Why is it important to *create* **Buffalo Partnerships**, *build* **Alliances** and/or *nurture* **Buffalo regeneration**?

## SECTION ONE: SETTING THE STAGE

### Building Background Knowledge

Bison face various challenges in our modern landscape. Many cattle ranchers are fearful of Bison due to a perceived threat of brucellosis that Bison can carry and the competition Bison pose for grazing land. Established alongside the cattle industry, laws forbid free-roaming Bison. Federal and state governments have imposed dozens of rules and regulations about Buffalo transport and sales.

The Blackfeet also have challenges when neighbors leave fences open. Large fines are imposed on Bison whenever they graze on non-tribal lands and create constant headaches for the Buffalo Program workers. Both large and small challenges are relevant not only for the Blackfeet but for nearly anyone working with Bison nationwide. Bison work revolves around the question: *How can we overcome these roadblocks so that we can grow our herd?* Bison work also involves getting to know Bison, reacquainting ourselves with them, rebuilding close relationships with them, and learning from them.

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Teachers should familiarize themselves with the working definitions. They are divided into sections for younger grades and older students. Teachers should emphasize the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists among Indigenous people across North America and within Montana, so students are not under the impression that all Indigenous communities share a single culture, history, language or traditions.

It should also be noted that until 1924, Indigenous people in the United States (US) were not considered universally to be citizens of the US, thus they were *not American Indians or Native Americans*, but were citizens of their own Indigenous Nations. Citizenship was directly tied to the Dawes Allotment Act and the land.

Citizenship for Indigenous people in the US was contingent on whether individuals accepted land allotted to them and whether the allottees that accepted allotments were competent and capable of a different type of management of their newly allotted lands than what they and their ancestors had been previously familiar with.

Individual allotments would remain in trust for twenty-five years, after which landholders were issued a fee patent for their allotment, granted American citizenship, and were made subject to “*the laws, both civil and criminal, of the State or Territory in which they may reside.*”

Forced fee patents led to the loss of land parcels through tax foreclosure sales.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the Dawes Act stipulated that after eligible Indians had received their allotments, all

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<sup>14</sup> In a US legal context, it is more correct to say people have obtained rights to inhabit and use land. Rather than looking at land as a physical object, it is a series of “rights.” Lands within reservation boundaries may be in several different types of *ownership status*, whether the lands are held by non-Natives or Indians, a mix of the two, and/or a combination of trust and fee lands. For a glossary of terms surrounding Indigenous land allotment, ownership and management, see the Indian Land Tenure Foundation online here: <https://iltf.org/resources/other-resources/>

remaining “surplus” lands on the reservations were available for purchase by the government and open to non-Native settlement.

Preparing and presenting background knowledge before watching *Bring Them Home* will provide an opportunity for students to learn about significant issues and events that inspired the making of the film and open discussions about students’ prior knowledge and experiences, and their individual or collective histories.

**Some students may find some of these topics disconcerting. Teachers can preface assignments with discussion to ensure students feel safe talking or writing about difficult topics.**

For younger students, a copy of the *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians* (EUs) should be displayed prominently in the classroom in a large format for reference. For older students, copies of the EUs should be distributed ahead of time for students to keep and refer to for the activities and for their future use.

Prior to engaging in activities, the EUs should be read aloud and addressed together for group discussion. Before teachers introduce individual lessons, students can be asked which EU (one or more) they might learn about during the lesson or in this unit that focuses on the documentary film *Bring Them Home*.

### Introductory Prompts

Introduce students to the journals they will be using throughout this unit. As an introductory pre-viewing activity, have students answer the following prompts:

- What do you know about Bison?
- What do you think Bison habitat looks like?
- Why is preservation of Bison habitat important?
- What do Bison need to survive?
- What do Bison need to thrive?
- Besides being a main food source, what were some other uses of Bison?

For students’ post-viewing journaling activity, ask your own questions for them to expand upon that are relevant to the film *Overview, Mission, Land Acknowledgements*<sup>15</sup> or additional concepts related to the following:

- What are some of the reasons *Bring Them Home* is RELEVANT?
- Is *Bring Them Home* about RELATIONSHIP BUILDING? How so?
- Reflect on the terms RESILIENCE and RECIPROCITY in connection to Bison Ecology

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<sup>15</sup> The Blackfoot Confederacy’s traditional territory stretched from ponokasisahta, literally the Elk River (North Saskatchewan River) in Canada to otahkoitahtayi, (Yellowstone River), east to omahkskispatsikoyii (Great Sand Hills in Saskatchewan), and they lived for thousands of years all along the mistákis, mountains (Backbone of the World or Rocky Mountain Front), which was their western boundary. An article re: [Land Acknowledgments](https://www.montanakaimin.com/news/um-instructors-staff-weigh-in-on-land-acknowledgements/article_c45844d6-7801-11ed-b1b7-5bddcd43ec74.html) [URL: [https://www.montanakaimin.com/news/um-instructors-staff-weigh-in-on-land-acknowledgements/article\\_c45844d6-7801-11ed-b1b7-5bddcd43ec74.html](https://www.montanakaimin.com/news/um-instructors-staff-weigh-in-on-land-acknowledgements/article_c45844d6-7801-11ed-b1b7-5bddcd43ec74.html)] and additional information on Blackfoot Territory: [Alberta and Blackfoot Confederacy](https://www.albertanativenews.com/alberta-and-blackfoot-confederacy-sign-historic-agreement/) [URL: <https://www.albertanativenews.com/alberta-and-blackfoot-confederacy-sign-historic-agreement/>] Sign Historic Agreement, The [Niitsitapi](https://gladue.usask.ca/Blackfoot_Confederacy/) [URL: [https://gladue.usask.ca/Blackfoot\\_Confederacy/](https://gladue.usask.ca/Blackfoot_Confederacy/)] (Blackfoot Confederacy), and [Blackfoot population](https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/blackfoot-population) [URL: <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/blackfoot-population>] and territory from the Canadian Encyclopedia.



## SECTION TWO: MEDIA LITERACY

### Previewing the Film Poster - Activities and Analysis

Have students preview the film poster. Embed the following questions in discussions within the lessons for each chapter if viewing by chapters or - use as an anticipatory lesson about assumptions - or use as a summative lesson to review important media literacy observations.

- 1) What do you learn about the film from analyzing the film **poster**?
- 2) The film is a documentary. What does that mean? (connotation and denotation)
- 3) What *assumptions* do we make about documentaries?
- 4) What are the *obligations* of a producer of a documentary?
- 5) What could you *infer* about the film from any **logos** and/or **photos** on the poster?
- 6) Based on the title of the film, what would you *predict* about this documentary?
- 7) Write a definition of \_\_\_\_\_ as you understand it. Discuss your definition with other students in the class. Words can be varied like those below or other words can be inserted. (HOME, FAMILY, RELATIVE, JUSTICE, IDENTITY, SUSTAINABLE, etc.)

### Viewing the Film

When viewing the documentary by chapters, assign the following questions in advance to students assigned to smaller groups. Students will answer the questions and share to the larger group by preparing a presentation that communicates their collective responses and collaborative conclusions to one or more questions.

This media literacy activity may be applied repeatedly after students view each chapter (approximately ten-minutes each), for example, during one class period each day for several days – or during viewing of the entire film for an extended period.

- 1) What music and instruments play in the background in different portions of the film? What is the effect of the choice of music on you as the viewer and how does the music affect you as you watch and listen? Revisit this question after viewing the film.
- 2) What kinds of photos and images are shown while a person is speaking?
- 3) How do some of the image's support what the speaker is saying? Find examples through the segment or film where the images support or contradict the speakers' comments and create *irony*.
- 4) Make notes of the featured speakers or teacher can assign specific speakers in each chapter to different students for analysis.
  - Who are they and what are their backgrounds (or titles listed in the film)?
  - How might this person's background, job, and experience influence what the person says?
  - What is the point of view of each speaker regarding **Bison restoration** and the challenges, positive or negative impacts and/or other surrounding issues?

- Why have the film producers chosen these speakers or specifically, the film narrator? (Who is Lily Gladstone)
- 5) How is the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, *allotted lands*, and/or the people who live on them portrayed in the documentary?
    - What do you see?
    - What don't you see? Why?
  - 6) How do the images portrayed throughout the chapter or film affect your understanding of the events in the film? (people, landscapes, Bison, etc.)

### SECTION THREE: VIEWING BY CHAPTERS

When viewing by chapters, teachers can show approximately ten-minute sections of the film at a time and allow for class discussion and activities in between. Students can focus on the following themes and central ideas while they answer questions to interpret content, determine meaning, and develop vocabulary around one or more themes identified.

- Bison Ecology
- Keystone Species
- Resilience & Relationship
- Montana and Indian History
- Federal Indian Policies
- Indian Land Tenure
- Cultural & Personal Loss
- Subsistence Practices
- Media & Critical Literacy
- Differing Worldviews and Conflicting Perspectives

Once students determine a theme and/or central ideas after viewing each chapter, they can identify specific details (evidence) and answer questions for each chapter. The questions will serve as a *study guide* for students to perform a close reading of the film's content and draw inferences from it. Students can cite evidence from the film to support their answers to the questions (conclusion). The quotes listed from each chapter can also serve as themes.

- To define a **THEME** (noun or phrase), give students an opportunity to fill in the blank from this prompt:

*"When I finished watching this chapter, I determined that \_\_\_\_\_ was an important topic."*

- To establish a **CENTRAL IDEA** (a complete sentence), have students complete the following sentence:

*"When I finished watching this chapter, I understood \_\_\_\_\_ to be the larger picture."*

Examples of central ideas in **BRING THEM HOME** might include:

- There are several benefits as well as challenges to Bison restoration
- Certain events have evolved and changed over time and are still relevant today
- Indigenous cultures were and are influenced and impacted by history
- The environment and land use are impacted by people and animals
- There is value and honor in collaboration and persistence against adversity

Interpretive-level questions require students to determine the broader or underlying meaning, distinguishing what is directly stated from what may be intended.

As students respond individually or collectively (in small groups) using Reading and Writing Strategies, they may ask their own interpretive-level questions that begin with HOW or WHY.

### **Guidelines for collaborative discussion groups:**

1. Follow the teacher's direction for groups
  2. Select a scribe to record the group's information
  3. Select a speaker to present the information to the larger group or class
  4. Respect your neighbor's right to learn and ask questions
- 

## **CHAPTER SUMMARIES**

Use the reading and writing strategies following these chapter summaries collectively with students in collaborative groups or with individual students for viewing the film by chapters or in its entirety.

Each chapter provides vocabulary, questions and content *as examples* of various activities for students to focus on. Incorporation of quotes, language, and assessment is optional. Activities align with educational standards. See Appendix G for more on standards, interdisciplinary programs of study and indigenizing educational curriculum.

Teachers are encouraged to incorporate Blackfeet language and base lessons on students' maturity level and ability.

Multicultural curriculum, including "Doing Native Science"<sup>16</sup> involves *centering* Indigenous worldviews so that Indigenous ways of being and Indigenous knowledges are understood, valued, and viewed as "*alive and active*." Tribally specific knowledge systems reaffirm Indigenous student's identity and reinforce tribal sovereignty. Teaching about the importance of Indigenous communities' relationships to the land and specific *place* is imperative.

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<sup>16</sup> "Since time immemorial, Indigenous Peoples' processes of living in relationship with the land and natural world developed into dynamic systems of knowledge, referenced as Native Science. (Writer & Valdez, 2021). In this worldview, knowledge acquisition and comprehension need to be "*enacted and experienced*," through action that is acted upon for "*personal and collective meaning-making*."

## CHAPTER ONE: “*No Such Thing as Inanimate*” [04:53 – 06:30]

**Summary:** Introduction to the Blackfoot people, their worldview, and iinnii, the Buffalo, the main link to Blackfoot history, culture and identity: a bond *generation’s deep* and a relationship that was about much more than just subsistence. Genocide and near extinction of Bison was a result of European entitlement, colonization, and conflicting perspectives.

For younger students: Define AMERICAN BISON, CONSERVATION or KEYSTONE SPECIES. It is said that there are over 500 *purposes* for the Buffalo. Have students draw a picture of Bison, list as many purposes as they can and/or write a vocabulary word definition in their own words to accompany their drawing.

For older students: Establish theme/s and a central idea. Expand upon them with writing. Define and discuss the term ANIMISM or compare it with the word SPIRIT.

- Is the literal/direct meaning different from what the word *implies*?
- How might differing perspectives or worldviews impact understanding of these words?
- Create a map of original Blackfoot Territory and a timeline to accompany its reduction

## CHAPTER TWO: “*Too Many Fences*” [10:10 – 14:14]

**Summary:** Paulette decided to make it her mission to bring Buffalo home. She knew they would face many challenges along the way. The Buffalo *spoke* to her. She wondered how their experiences shaped them. In the meantime, the Blackfeet Reservation got their first herd of Buffalo, but no one could control them. They were *wild* animals (according to whom?).

For younger students: Define CULTURE, ECOLOGICAL ROLE or HERBIVORE. Design a word map or word cluster with the word CULTURE or use another word like HOME. Cluster for 10-15 minutes, using sensory nouns and verbs. Include images from your personal experiences and write an extended definition or poem of “HOME” for you. Do the same for other words, like MATRIARCH. Compare as a class. How do your experiences shape you?

Select a poem from *Birthright: Born to Poetry – A Collection of Montana Indian Poetry* and repeat this exercise with similar words from the film, like INDIGENOUS or JUSTICE.

For older students: Describe or explain a dream or a goal you have for yourself. How or when did that dream occur? What will it take for the dream to come true or for you to realize the goal? What inspires you to attain the goal or instills hope in you? What are some of the ways you can overcome challenges?

- List some of the challenges or reasons that Bison were not initially accepted/acceptable.
- List ways returning Buffalo to Blackfoot homelands would help heal the people from their shared trauma.
- Who was the one government *hack* and how did he *fracture* the community? Discuss this section in smaller groups and design a report to share your findings.
- Using a graphic organizer or Venn Diagram, compare how the terms ASSIMILATION and PATERNALISM are related in the context of the 1887 Dawes Allotment Act. Contrast MATRIARCHY and PATERNALISM in the same context.



### CHAPTER THREE: “*The Heart of Who We Are*” [22:39 - 27:35]

**Summary:** Paulette was back on the Blood Reserve in Canada and realized a grassroots approach driven by individuals might work better to bring the Buffalo back. Back at Blackfeet, Terry’s student observed the Bison’s social structure and saw how Bison behavior helped her to reconnect with herself...to get on a better path. Leroy started the Buffalo Dialogues to better understand *through the language*, the importance of the people’s long relationship with iinnii, which brought about more awareness and a *Buffalo Consciousness*.

For younger students: Return to the students’ definitions of KEYSTONE SPECIES and ECOLOGICAL ROLE. Define WALLOW. Use the vocabulary words in a story to describe the many benefits Buffalo provide to the ecosystem, adding to what the film says about *Buffalo wallows*. What does it mean to restore the “whole ecological health” of the land? What does it say? What might it mean? Why does it matter?

For older students: Define KEYSTONE SPECIES, ECOLOGICAL ROLE, HERBIVORE and CONSERVATION. Use the words to describe the many benefits Buffalo provide to the ecosystem, adding to what the film says about *Buffalo wallows*.

- What does it mean to restore the “whole ecological health” of the land?
- What does it mean when Keith says Buffalo *exploit* the grassland and the forestland?
- What are the ways Bison live and move through the landscape that benefits other animals? *What does it say? What might it mean? Why does it matter?*
- How has it changed over time and why?

### CHAPTER FOUR: “*A Return to Ourselves*” [30:00 – 37:20]

**Summary:** Gathering momentum from both Native and non-Native partners, elders and community members, it was finally determined the best place to release wild Bison was on the Blackfeet Reservation, bordering Glacier National Park. Inspired by the Buffalo Dialogues and the Iinnii Initiative, the plan was “flipped.” Healing would be for the land and for everyone, not just for the Blackfoot Confederacy. Paulette’s vision returned to her and was realized...Buffalo were returned in a *loving, gentle way*.

For younger students: Revisit Essential Understanding #5 and list some of the impacts of federal Indian policies. Define the words RESERVATION and TREATY. Working individually or in small groups, design a timeline to align the policies with the impacts. Write an argument for and against Bison restoration or for and against individual property ownership versus collective property ownership/management. Describe “*a return to ourselves*.”

For older students: Return to students’ definitions and discussion on ANIMISM and SPIRIT. Use R.A.F.T.S. to write a paper or essay incorporating these words with other related words and phrases, such as NATIVE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES, WORLTVIEWS, TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE or NATIVE SCIENCE.

- Have students write to *persuade, analyze, defend or describe* the terms in the context of Bison restoration and its importance. Compare with Western European views.
- Do they believe everything was created for the benefit of man?
- Investigate the GREEN WORLD HYPOTHESIS

## CHAPTER FIVE: “*Up Close and Personal*” [40:00 – 50:00]

**Summary:** Management of wild Bison requires working closely with them and taking care of their needs, managing them in today’s world “the way we know how” with other animals. They must be vaccinated, sorted, and healthy, for example, and share the land of the cattle-dominated reservation. The Blackfeet Buffalo Program had to do the work *on the ground*. They lobbied the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, the end decision-maker. Cattlemen were still in opposition and the Buffalo conflicted with cattle for the main resource, grass. The Blackfeet community was living in a constant state of crisis, as Willow says, “there’s always so many little fires that need immediate attention.”

For younger students: Compare PERSPECTIVE, NATIVE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES and ASSIMILATION. Revisit Essential Understanding #6 “*History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.*”

- Write a comparative paragraph or essay how Native perspectives differ from Western European perspectives. How have these impacted the land or Bison?
- Tell (or write) a story *from your perspective* that conflicts with a story “mainstream historians tell.” What have you learned and what do you still *wonder* about?
- Base your story on insights you’ve gained about Buffalo or Bison management and restoration, as well as the people living on the land.
- How have your perspectives toward Buffalo changed since watching the film?

For older students: In this section, Lily says, “colonization was the barrier to the Elk Island herd’s freedom,” and that a “seismic shift in the status quo” was required to create space for the wild herd and continue to reconnect the community with the Buffalo. Read or review one of the primary source documents listed below for their historical and literary significance. Pay close attention to themes, purposes and the language.

List the impacts these “Acts” had on the Buffalo and the Blackfoot Confederacy as you reflect on the words FREEDOM and STATUS QUO. Analyze, Evaluate and Interpret information.

- *President Andrew Jackson’s Message to Congress ‘On Indian Removal’ (1830).*
- *Dawes Act (1887).*
- *Records Relating to the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) or Wheeler-Howard Act.*

## CHAPTER SIX: “*Renewal of Relationship*” [51:14 – 57:00]

**Summary:** Eco-balance with all things brings about our continued existence. The world is in constant motion, and all life requires ideal conditions. Community events are held to share knowledge and pass it down through the generations so people can reconnect with Buffalo “face-to-face” as a relative and renew life-sustaining relationships. Reconnection with Buffalo provides healing and a sense of identity for the community and in some cases, offers exhilarating, life-changing experiences reminiscent of the past.

For younger students: Leroy says humans live in a “very narrow gap” and if the conditions aren’t in equal balance, our very existence is threatened. We all have a role to play and must *renew relationship* with the things that give us life.

- List some of the things you need to not only survive but thrive.

- What are some ways to renew relationship with these things? (earth, plants, animals, water, air, etc.)
- Create a piece of art based on this concept. Begin by drawing a picture with you at the center, surrounded by all the things that sustain you and give life.
- How would you draw the concept of *renewal of relationships*?

For older students: Create a piece of art, a poem or story based on the following concepts.

- What are some ways to renew relationship with what you need to live a healthy life?
- How is renewal of relationship sharing knowledge?
- How is reenactment of a Buffalo drive renewal of relationship?
- How does reconnection with Buffalo as a relative provide healing?
- What is your role and how can you put it into action?

## CHAPTER SEVEN: “*A New Jar of Honey*” [57:00 – 01:09:27]

**Summary:** Eventually, more people, young and old, from all walks of life and demographics wanted to volunteer and help with the Buffalo. There was more involvement from the community with the Bison drives and the Bison got used to being moved to different areas of the reservation. At first, leaders showed the way, some in vehicles, some on four-wheelers and some on horses. After the first few times, the Buffalo learned to go from “gate-to-gate” by themselves, without being led. The people could sit in their trucks and watch. Engaging more closely with the Buffalo changed people’s perspectives. The community was renewing its connection and relationship with their relative, iinnii.

For younger students: Define METAPHOR. Have students practice writing a few sentences that contain metaphors or symbolism using the content and imagery from this section of the film. Have a group discussion or debate on what these QUOTES from this section mean. Do they have *multiple* meanings or deeper meanings? Can they be taken *literally*?

- “We kind of [like] opened up a new jar of honey” (Sheldon)
- “You can’t be out on the landscape and be a part of it anymore” (Ervin)
- “As long as we can see Chief Mountain, we’re home” (Paulette)
- “Seeing Buffalo coming into the territory up here would be a great victory” (Tyson)

For older students: Have a group discussion or debate on what these QUOTES from this section mean. Do they have *multiple* meanings or deeper meanings? Can they be taken *literally*? Write a paragraph or design a presentation to detail a different story behind each one. Describe what perspectives might be held by the person who has said them and why.

- “Things we had to go through as Indian people; [the] Buffalo went through the same thing” (Ervin)
- “Our spirit’s going to finally catch up with our humanness” (Tyson)
- “We have something known as ‘Indian time’” (Lily)
- “Like Buffalo in a blizzard, we turned into them.” (Lily)

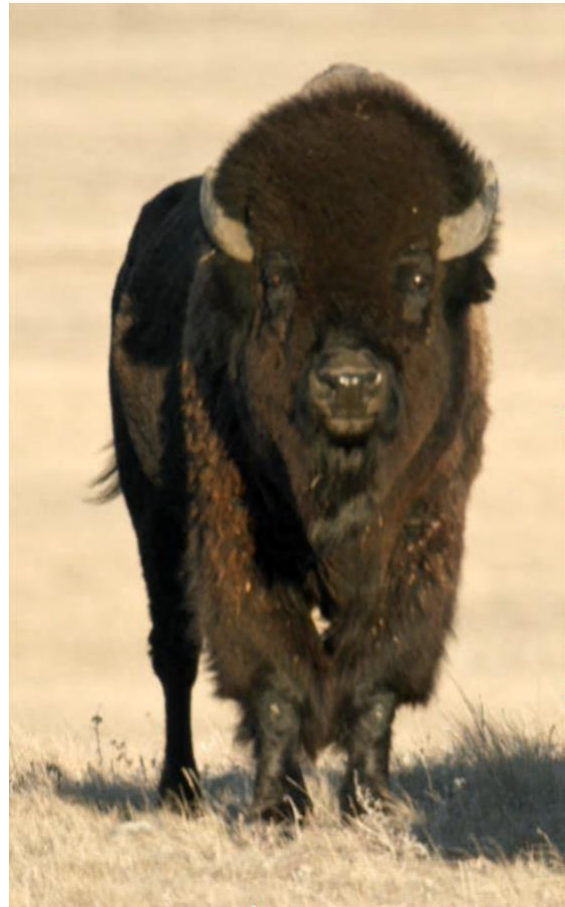
CHAPTER EIGHT: “***Come Charging Home***” [01:10:00 – 01:20:35+] end

**Summary:** The community chose resilience in the face of relentless obstacles and kept moving forward until the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (BTBC) made the decision to temporarily set aside all the cattle leases at Chief Mountain, opening a “golden opportunity.” The BTBC met with representatives from Glacier and Waterton National Parks and decided to *Bring Them Home*. On June 26, 2023, the Blackfeet released 49 Buffalo from the Elk Island herd into the wild. “Back to where they belong,” they ran without stopping deep into the backcountry...

For students: Return to the Introductory Prompts. Revisit pre-viewing questions and answers. Expand upon what you have learned *after viewing* the entire film. Reflect on the music featured at the end of **Bring Them Home** by the Blackfeet and Salish Hip Hop artist, Shadow Devereau, also known as FORESHADOW 406. Students can review his website here: <https://www.foreshadow406.com/>

Watch the **Bring Them Home** [official music video](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77s3kyUOlBs) on YouTube featuring ksa’staak’iinna. [URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77s3kyUOlBs>]

How does the artist’s blending themes of ***struggle, resilience and positivity*** with the Blackfeet language affect you after watching the film? Is it effective in this context? Follow up with other song lyrics and how and why you might relate to them.





## Epilogue

Iinnii Initiative continues to offer community events like Iinnii Days.

Ervin still leads the Blackfeet Buffalo Program and serves as President of the Intertribal Buffalo Council helping return Buffalo to Tribal Nations across North America.

Paulette stays engaged with her community and is committed to creating a continental scale version of the Iinnii Initiative.

Willow left the Iinnii initiative and is pursuing a degree in Green Architecture.

Sheldon and his wife Helen started their own Buffalo herd which they plan on using for education and serving the community.

Steve retired from the Buffalo Program to return to cattle ranching but not before adopting a Buffalo calf. She immediately made friends with one of Steve's cows.

Leroy cofounded the Buffalo Treaty, a commitment to bring Buffalo home across North America. To date, over 38 tribes have signed.

In 2021, the Blood Reserve started its own tribal herd of Buffalo. The animals also came from Elk Island National Park.

In 2023, the Blackfeet Tribal Council allocated more range land for the tribal herd, which continues to prosper. They now have more than 15,000 acres to roam on the reservation.

The Blackfeet community marked the return of the wild Buffalo with a celebration at Chief Mountain. There they created a monument to the Buffalo that will last for generations to come.

Over the summer, 32 of the wild Buffalo went roaming back toward the remaining Elk Island herd in the center of the reservation. The other 17 stayed in the backcountry where they are monitored and watched by **Blackfeet Protectors**.

To learn more about how you can help protect and grow the wild Blackfeet Buffalo herd and other efforts to return wild Buffalo to North America visit:

<https://www.thunderheartfilms.com/bring-them-home>



## SECTION FOUR: READING and WRITING STRATEGIES

### Reading and Writing Strategies for Chapters

- A. Have students read a phrase or paragraph from the film or related article or document and respond to specific questions, such as:
  - What is the main meaning or idea?
  - Why or how did you reach this conclusion?
  - What else is there that supports your conclusion?
  - Is your conclusion consistent with a literal definition or the author's intent?
- B. Share dialogue or an image from the film or a paragraph from a related article or document and have students respond using the **D.I.C. E.** prompt:
  - What **DISTURBS** them about the image or the writing?
  - What **INTERESTS** or **INTRIGUES** them?
  - What **CONFUSES** them or is **COMPLICATED**?
  - What **ENLIGHTENS** and **EDUCATES**?
- C. Have students respond to specific phrases or sentences that leave matters uncertain or ambiguous – to determine **implicit** (implied, figurative, unspoken) and **explicit** (specific, literal, clear) meaning.
  - Why does it matter?
  - How does meaning affect authentic, accurate information?
  - How do different perspectives influence meaning and understanding?
- D. To help students understand **conflict and resolution** to a challenge or problem that is presented to them (or in the film), ask these types of questions:
  - What is the problem or issue and how do you know?
  - What are some possible solutions presented or maybe not yet thought of?
  - Do you have enough information to support or verify your conclusion?
- E. To help students uncover the **significance of an event** or situation, ask these types of questions:
  - What is the situation and how do you know?
  - What are the causes of the situation and what evidence do you have of them?
  - What are the effects of the situation and what evidence supports this?
  - Do you have enough information to support or verify your conclusion?
- F. To explore **change and constancy**, ask these types of questions:
  - What has changed and what evidence leads to this conclusion?
  - What has stayed the same? What evidence leads to this conclusion?
  - Why and how do you know this? What is it within and outside of the film/text that leads you to this conclusion?
- G. **R.A.F.T.S.**- [Read, Write, Think Strategy](#) is for students to experiment with various perspectives in their writing, help them to understand their role as a writer,

communicate their ideas more clearly and develop a sense of audience and purpose in their writing. [URL: <https://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/using-raft-writing-strategy>]

- **ROLE:** helps the writer decide on point of view and voice.
- **AUDIENCE:** reminds the writer that they must communicate ideas to someone else, which helps the writer determine content and style.
- **FORMAT:** helps the writer organize ideas and use the conventions of format, such as letters, informal explanations, interviews, or speeches.
- **TOPIC:** helps the writer focus on main ideas.
- **STRONG VERB:** directs the writer to the writing purpose to: *persuade, analyze, create, predict, compare, defend, evaluate, describe, inform*, etc.

**Text dependent questions** help students get at a deeper meaning and greater understanding of the content. In this context, the *text* is the film's narration, dialogue, imagery and music, with some actual text on the screen or at the film ending.

Typical text dependent questions ask students to - **analyze** paragraphs of text or, in this context, sections/chapters of the film; **investigate** altered meanings and definitions of key vocabulary and authors/producers' choice of words; **examine** arguments in persuasive texts, **explore** ideas in informational texts, or **review** details in literary texts such as poems, stories, or plays; **examine** shifts in argument directions and impact of shifts; **assess** patterns of writing and **consider** uncertainties in text.

### Using Traditional Education Frameworks

When pre-viewing the film, viewing by chapters or post-viewing, **Socratic Circles** are another way of engaging students in structured, student-led discussion groups. Socratic style-seminars can be adapted to multiple grade levels. In this teaching technique, teachers encourage group dialogue, but students facilitate the discussions. Students work together to help each other co-construct knowledge and collaborate to understand the ideas, issues and values reflected in a text or in the film's content. Students practice listening to one another and find common ground while gaining new insights through dialogue and critical inquiry.

A debate component can be added to group discussion where students are assigned opposite sides of an issue, for example, the challenges and positive impacts of bison restoration to lands grazed for years by cattle. Teachers can use primary source documents, articles or case studies that show the complexity of issues to debate. Choose topics relevant to the film, everything from natural resource management, species restoration and protection, to environmental conservation, ecosystem regeneration, ethnobotany and food sovereignty.

## SECTION FIVE: EXTENDING LEARNING – POST VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### **Making Connections to Self:**

Have students further investigate these excerpts of Essential Understandings (EU) #2 and EU#5. *“There is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by entities, organizations and people,”* and *federal policies put into place throughout American history...continue to shape Indian people today.*

Key concepts of these are, there is *no universally accepted rule* for establishing an individual’s identity as Indian. Generally, an individual with biological ancestry to a Tribal group is recognized as such. Assimilation efforts worked to destroy cultures, languages and identities. Have students write in response to one or more of the following prompts:

- What contributes to your IDENTITY?
- Of all the speakers featured in the film, who do you admire the most and why?
- Create a family tree. Research your name and your ancestor’s Blackfoot names.
- How is identity related to relationship? Or family, community, and culture?
- What “*really makes for a Blackfoot person,*” and what does it have to do with events?
- Compare terms: Native American, American Indian, First Nations, Indigenous, Aboriginal

### **Reading and Writing Arguments:**

To provide opportunities for students to extend their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, students will dig deeper to cite strong evidence to support their opinions. For related articles, have students identify:

- Where the evidence is relevant or irrelevant and accurate or inaccurate.
- Identify the purpose for the writing, the point of view and ways that the author distinguishes their point of view from those of others.
- Answer: What does the text say? What inferences regarding American Indians (their past, present, and future) may the reader draw from the text?
- Write a letter in response to one of the articles. Make a credible argument with claims supported by reasons and evidence about what you have learned from your readings and discussion following viewing of the film.

### **Reading Texts and Writing Informational Essays:**

After establishing the “*one government hack*” from the film, have students trace and evaluate the impacts using supportive evidence in the film. Were the impacts mostly positive or negative? Using the film and additional resources here, list conflicts or impacts of allotment on those living on traditional Blackfoot homelands both in Montana and Alberta, Canada.

Address the following:

- Compare worldviews and perspectives about land, place and the environment, such as nature and the natural world versus agriculture and resource management.
- Compare worldviews and perspectives about property ownership, land stewardship, natural resource development, and land conservation methods.
- Compare traditional knowledge systems, religious renewal practices, customs and ceremonies versus predominant Euro-American cultures, lifestyles and values.
- Compare Native languages historically passed down orally and via American Indian sign language versus the written and spoken English language.
- Consider treaties, speeches, books and primary source documents or reports written in the English language by representatives of the federal government, past and present.

Students may apply the reading and writing strategies to the above or create Venn diagrams to compare impacts or conflicts and write about ways the film portrays them, or complete the following: “When I finished watching the film and completed activities, I believe \_\_\_\_\_ is a *most significant theme*, because \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Reading and Writing Narratives:**

Read articles or related books (or book chapters) to specifically analyze for their historical and literary significance, paying close attention to themes, purpose, rhetoric, language, and possible impacts on the Blackfoot Confederacy. See additional resources section for articles. Write an objective summary.

### **Partnerships: Advocacy, Activism, Education and Service**

By coordinating the right alliances, BRING THEM HOME can rekindle understanding of the importance of Buffalo to continental-scale land regeneration. *Everyone has to play a part.* Buffalo education can be an “open door” for nurturing strong environmental movements and understanding at both two-year and four-year colleges.

- Subscribe to an online newsletter, blog or podcast that focuses on topics relevant to the film, such as positive impacts or challenges of Bison restoration, Indigenous practices, worldviews and perspectives, or outside “forces” impacting Native communities.
- Write a film review for BRING THEM HOME and send it to your local newspaper.
- Interview one of the film’s producers, directors or speakers for a local paper or blog.
- Sponsor an information dissemination session at your school, in your community, or on social media that supports an issue you care about from the film.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper in support of Bison restoration work or other topic/s relevant to the film, such as Buffalo and climate change.
- Volunteer with a nonprofit organization that focuses on Bison restoration, land stewardship, food sovereignty, conservation or natural resource management.
- Assist Buffalo sanctuaries with specific projects designed for remote work based on what you learned about challenges to Bison management from the film.
- Donate to a local charity or help support a local nonprofit organization with their fundraising campaign. Focus on Bison restoration or land stewardship. See a list of local organizations to support at the end of this guide.
- Enter a competition to share publicly your original creative works relevant to film themes. Demonstrate the importance of land or sense of place (or Bison restoration) through visual art, poetry, song/music, photography, storytelling through short film, and fiction or nonfiction writing. Incorporate realism or graphic design, literal, metaphorical, or symbolic elements or ideas and past or current events, feelings and emotions from pre and post viewing of the film.
- Visit a Buffalo-partner site and design a project to benefit the site and fulfill site-specific needs. For example, projects for a variety of grade-levels and ages can be remote and field-based, centered around data interpretation for a variety of topics.
- Projects can focus on federal Indian law and policy, visual imaging and mapping, archival studies, Bison and plant regeneration and restoration. Business courses might include a focus on nonprofits and funding, or statistics and advanced mathematics courses could demonstrate carbon sequestration or food security potential.



### **Incorporating Research:**

Recognize that research is an ongoing cooperative effort or mutual “*tending to*,” rather than “one-and-done” projects. Questions of ownership and access are crucial to supporting grassroots projects and Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs). When engaging in research projects, it’s important to ask:

- ⇒ What do we mean by research?
- ⇒ Who are we going to do research with?
- ⇒ Who is going to be storing the data?
- ⇒ Who is going to be accessing the data?
- ⇒ Is the research stemming from the community?
- ⇒ Is the research going to be beneficial to the community?

Create mechanisms so that research projects are done with the individuals and Indigenous community’s input and assistance, allowing the community to set the expectations for projects they want assistance with, so the collaborations between Buffalo projects and research partners are *meaningful and productive* to all parties – engaging in *reciprocity*, respectful, reciprocal processes that are representational of the community’s *voice*.

Buffalo research isn’t just the “animals” but the whole picture, animals bringing balance and abundance *holistically* to water systems, soil systems, air systems, plant systems, etc.

Teachers are encouraged to have students conduct research on topics portrayed in the film. See word definitions, incorporate facts, ethnobotany, language, oral history, storytelling, art or published articles and additional resources for the basis of the research. Use the following random facts or have students investigate their own from post-viewing discussions.

- *Innnii* was considered a gift from the creator, and a relative, *ikso’kowa*.
- The *pisskan* or Buffalo jump communal method of securing food across North America’s Great Plains was ingenious and the most productive method ever devised. It was adapted over millions of years. It required ingenuity in site selection and an intimate knowledge of complex landscape requirements.
- Hunting and securing Bison for food, tools and other materials required special rites and ceremony. It was steeped in spiritual beliefs, had deep meaning and symbolism.
- Bison were used by several Plains Tribes. The hunt employed men, women and children of all ages in multiple roles – sharing in a common goal of maximizing return of their efforts.
- Indigenous peoples’ dependence on wild game for survival, including the Buffalo, meant the people had complete and intimate understanding *generations-long* of animals, animal behavior, biology and ecology.
- American Indian Reservations in the U.S. and First Nations Reserves in Canada are similar in that, while they were set aside from traditional territories for Indigenous peoples, they both represent colonialism and assimilation.
- American Indian Reservations and First Nations Reserves serve as places of importance for creating awareness to Indigenous peoples’ issues and experiences.
- Bioenergetics is the study of how animals operate in response to growth, development and biological processes, i.e., Bison lowering their metabolism in colder weather.

## SECTION SIX: ORAL HISTORY & STORYTELLING

### Incorporate Blackfeet Language:

Prior to European colonization of North America, there were approximately 500 distinct Native languages spoken. What happens when languages die, are lost or unspoken?

- Investigate how some Blackfoot words may contain multiple meanings
- Determine whether words can be translated into an English equivalent (literally or figuratively). Are they based on an action or a description?
- How does meaning change in different contexts?
- Why are there multiple ways to say something?

aiskótáhkapiyaaya – “*they are being brought home*”

aapátóhsipikani - northern Piegan

amskaapipikani - southern Piegan

kainai - many chiefs, Blood

siksika – Blackfoot

piikani – far off spotted robes

nitsitapiksi – real people

ikso’kowa - relative

nínaiistáko – chief mountain

or mountain chief

miistákis – mountains

iinníi – Buffalo

iinííksii – Buffalo, plural

iinísskimm - Buffalo (*calling*) stone

pisskan – Buffalo jump

otsiikin – Buffalo bean golden banner, (*Thermopsis rhombifolia*)

apssí – white Buffalo berry, “fig”

sipátsimo – sweet grass

(*Hierochloa odorata*)

mi’ksiníttsiim – Buffalo berry, bull berry, Buffalo bull berry (*Shepherdia argentea*)

máoto’kiiksi – Buffalo women’s society (plays an important role in preparation of ookààn)

ookààn – sun dance (the primary religious/renewal ceremony associated with tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy)

ksááhkoom - (earth *personified*)

### Miscellaneous Blackfoot words for **BEAR**:

paksi’koyi – slobbering or drooling mouth

sinoto’toni – narrow paw

sin’kokyiyo - black bear

oto’ko’kyiyo – yellow bear

a’pokyiyo – white bear

kyi’yo or kyááyo – bear

ootsimiohkiaayo – brown or “sorrel” bear

otahkoissksisi – grizzly bear (brown-nosed bear)

iso’toyimi – frost collar

nayasta’maiapsi – white on both sides

o’mukkitsisi – big bobtail

o’muksimska – big pile of food

tsiisii – bear (any animal with a cropped or short tail)

From the song at the end of the film (spelling and pronunciation may vary):

iinnii mááhkaan, pikuni ksááhkoom – Buffalo traveling on Blackfeet land

kitso’kowa oonapsai - your relatives get ready

kii tsti tsti tstimatstsin yaakai’pakaipaia - we thankfully welcome you, come charging home

For more on language, see the Reservations, Tribal Lands and Territories section, Blackfoot Dictionary of Stems, Roots, and Affixes (Frantz & Russell, 1989), When Languages Die (K.D. Harrison, 2007), references and additional resources.

## Engage in Ethnobotany:

Combine ethnobotany lessons with hunting and gathering. Allow students to put their field experiences into other hands-on activities, such as cooking a traditional recipe. Ask questions like: What happens when crucial parts of regeneration, i.e., perennial plants and grasses, are destroyed? What does this have to do with food sovereignty and/or sustainability?

**BUFFALO BERRY:** mi' ksinittsiim or mi' ksinittsiimiksi *literally* means buffalo berry. Buffalo berries are said to be a favorite of Buffalo, hence the name. They are also called bull berries, buffalo bull berries, or among Canada's Blackfoot Confederacy, "high bush," after an actual location on the landscape and traditional picking spot along the Old Man River, near the Porcupine Hills region on the wild prairies of southwestern Alberta.

Buffalo berries can be eaten fresh or dried, or stored for winter use. Buffaloberries have the consistency of a raisin when dried. They are sweeter after the first frost, and are usually collected in a blanket by beating bushes with a stick late fall, mid-September to October. A lot of Buffalo Berries indicate a hard winter ahead, while a sparse yield means it will be a mild winter season. Medicinal uses may include eating as a laxative. Buffalo berries contain SAPONIN, a soap-like foam the berries produce when shaken or mixed with beaters with water, also called *Indian ice cream* in this form.

In Blackfoot history, according to the Old Man and frequent trickster Napi, bull berries must be beaten off the bushes with a stick because Napi was tricked by their reflection in a river. He fell into the deep water and nearly drowned while trying to get the berries for himself, so he punished them and gave them long, hard, sharp thorns. This much is true, bull berries cannot be picked in the usual way. A blanket or tarp must be spread out on the ground to catch the berries and leather gloves are recommended. If they are ripe, they fall more easily off the thorny bushes when the branches are gently hit.

According to Business Insider (D. Spector, 2013) and a study published in the [Journal of Food Science](https://ift.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1750-3841.12265) [URL: <https://ift.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1750-3841.12265>] Buffalo Berry could be the world's next *superfruit*. Researchers who collected wild buffaloberries found them to be rich in lycopene — an antioxidant that appears to lower the risk of certain cancers as well as containing an acidic compound called methyl-lycopenoate, a type of pigment called *carotenoids* that give fruits and vegetables their red or orange color. The berries are also a good source of other phenolic antioxidants, compounds responsible for tartness generally thought to play a role in slowing cellular aging.

Buffalo berry is native to North America and is found growing on many Indigenous lands, even on land that is unsuitable for other crops. The hardy bushes grow in dry environments and less than optimal soil. Scientific name: *Shepherdia canadensis* (Canadian) and *Shepherdia argentea* (thorny Buffalo Berry).

**BUFFALO BEAN:** otsiikin is also known as golden banner, wet tooth or Buffalo flower. Although considered poisonous to humans, Buffalo bean was traditionally used to dye skins, bags or arrows yellow. Check out the website: [Nitsitapiisinni: Stories and Spaces](https://galileo.org/kainai/) - *Exploring Kainai Plants and Culture*. [URL: <https://galileo.org/kainai/>]

Have students research Buffalo Berry, Buffalo Bean or other sacred plants, healing herbs, and natural foods and medicines found in traditional Blackfeet Territory.

For more on plants see references, additional resources and:  
Reeves & Peacock (2001), Peacock, S. (1995) and Hellson, J.C. (1974).

## Arts, Music and Quotes:

Watch the official [music video for Bring Them Home](https://youtu.be/77s3kyUOlBs?si=4oRPjNKw_Be-4BZc) by Foreshadow. Describe in writing how it makes you feel. Can you recognize any of the words that are translated from Blackfeet? Reflect on how the combination of music, lyrics and visuals expresses culture, worldviews and perceptions of people, plants, animals, land and place.

[URL: [https://youtu.be/77s3kyUOlBs?si=4oRPjNKw\\_Be-4BZc](https://youtu.be/77s3kyUOlBs?si=4oRPjNKw_Be-4BZc)]

*“Call it perfect timing, better now than never though, it feel incredible to have the iinnii back at home, the future never set in stone, piikani land we let ‘em roam, this the pinnacle put iinnii on a pedestal, they tried to erase ‘em but our people they felt vacant, we never became complacent, natoos’i told us be patient, we are strong because of them, they are strong because of us, \_\_\_(Blackfeet words)\_\_\_ iinnii mááhkaa, pikuni ksááhkoom (Buffalo traveling on Blackfeet land) kitso’kowa oonapsai (your relatives get ready)”*

*“We brought ‘em home now Chief has the missing keys, hooves on the ground, we’ve returned what our spirit’s need, they run the plains, we feel the breeze, overcome the pain, we heal when we see them freed, we won the battle but still had to fight the war, restoration of all/our cultures what we’re fighting for, everyone has to play a part and it starts with you, for our wishes to come true we have to see it through, iinnii mááhkaan, pikuni ksááhkoom (Buffalo traveling on Blackfeet land) kitso’kowa oonapsai (your relatives get ready) kii tsti tsti tstimatstin yaakai’pakaipaia (we thankfully welcome you, come charging home)”*

Watch the official music video for the song [Sunshine by Foreshadow](https://youtu.be/ALSCFCrupE8?si=RXO-vfc494OgCQG6) and repeat the above exercise. Have students use quotes or pictures for writing or discussion prompts, or to design their own creative works (visual art, poetry, music and lyrics, short video, etc.)

[URL: <https://youtu.be/ALSCFCrupE8?si=RXO-vfc494OgCQG6>]

## Quotes from Bring Them Home:

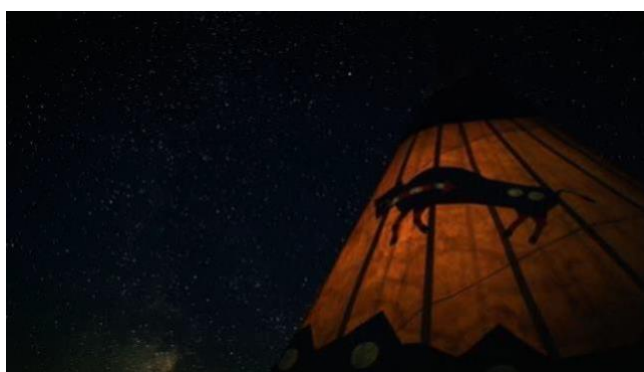
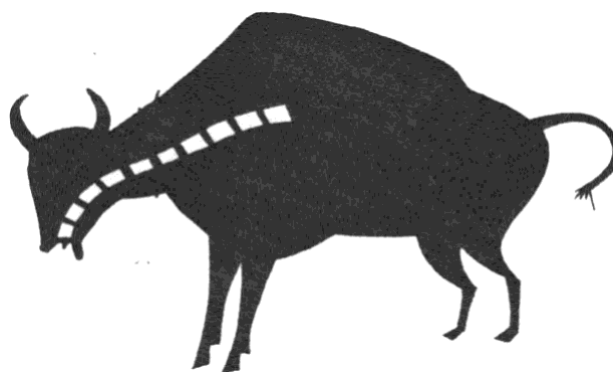
- *There’s always this notion of entitlement...we’re entitled to the resources*
- *Children were stolen from our families...a campaign of terror*
- *They [Buffalo] were saying, we’re coming home...prepare for us to come home*
- *Ranchers didn’t see their relatives, they saw competition*
- *These animals gave them [people] a sense of belonging or a sense of who they are*
- *Buffalo awareness-buffalo consciousness...was bringing so much courage back*
- *When we think about restoring Bison....we restore whole ecological function*
- *Bison graze in a patch-quilt way*
- *It’s healing the land and settler-colonial-Indigenous relations*
- *There was a big celebration down at the winter camp*
- *There’s always so many little fires that need immediate attention*
- *They would shine a light on the world that we almost lost*
- *It’s important to get our youth...thinking and seeing it*

## Mapping:

Introduce and define Arc-GIS. Share with students that it is an important tool for gathering information in the form of data to give us a sense of what’s happening, where it’s happening and why it’s happening. It is flexible in its application. For example, it can be used to measure ecosystem restoration or wildlife migration and provides us with a *factual* story to tell about what is being measured. Raw data is transformed into actionable plans for interested individuals and organizations.

Have students pair some of the following vocabulary words with images from the film (or other visuals).

DICHOTOMY, PARADIGM, SENTIENCE, SYMBIOTIC, GENOCIDE, CULTURE





## Call for Coalition:

Form partnerships with other local nonprofit organizations, mainstream institutions and TCUs. Enlist students and volunteers from environmental studies programs, natural resources departments, conservation and management programs, art departments, humanities programs, sciences courses, and Native American studies programs.

Central themes to partnerships and important reminders to partner institutions:

- *Where we assert our rights, biodiversity is thriving.*

80% of biodiversity is on lands governed by Indigenous peoples. It's important to protect the continuity of those traditional practices that are ecologically-sound.

- *Reverse destructive research histories into regenerative ones.*

In a colonial sense, past research has done a lot of damage in and to Indigenous communities. It's important to realize that traditional modalities and sciences anchor around ancestral knowledge, research practices, and listening to land cycles.

- *Communities want to (and must) own their data.*

Indigenous communities want their own students from that community to be put in positions to excel and blossom - with a focus on filling capacity gaps. Grassroots ventures and TCU projects have a range of capacities. Needs assessment can be a central part of strategizing on what partnerships to pursue and in what manner, asking: what are the research expectations, protections and protocols?

Building understanding continent-wide is a massive win in building coalitions, where non-Native communities can see the importance of Bison's return to landscapes and sacred spaces across countries.



## SECTION SEVEN: WORKING DEFINITIONS

### VOCABULARY FOR YOUNGER GRADES

**American Bison-** (*Bison bison*) North America's largest land animal, characterized by a hump over the front shoulders, a single set of short, sharply pointed hollow horns, with a thick coat of long dark hair on the front part of the body and thinner, shorter hair on the back part of the body; typically lives and migrates in herds.

**American Indian Studies-** instruction\* pertaining to the history, traditions, customs, values, beliefs, ethics and contemporary affairs of American Indians. In this instance, particularly American Indian or Indigenous tribal groups in Montana.

**Animism-** a concept and a way of relating to the world, attributing sentience or the quality of being 'animated' to a wide array of beings in the world, i.e., animals, plants, spirits, the environment and forces of nature, such as the wind, the sun or the moon (Swancutt, 2019). Cajete (2000) says the term animism has "become steeped in western scientific and cultural bias," although it is a "basic human trait" common to all humans.

**Approximate (or To-Scale)-** with all the map features the right size in relation to each other or just drawn in such a way that features aren't completely accurate or correct in relation to one another.

**Assimilation-** the simplified definition is to *become like* something else whether by adapting to something new, adopting a new custom or attitude, or conforming to a new situation. In the cultural context, assimilation refers to when a minority group is absorbed or fully integrated into a dominant groups culture, including languages, experiences, social norms, and traditions.

**Conservation-** protecting, preserving and/or taking care of and maintaining natural resources and all those things found in nature or the natural environment, such as water, air, soil, animals, and plants. Conservation can be practiced by adhering to the "three Rs:" reduce, reuse and recycle.

**Culture-** Culture includes systems of language, governance, economics, religion and ceremony, education, defense (health and political), ways of defining identity, ways of manipulating space and time and giving them meaning, forms of recreation, and value systems surrounding truth, faith, justice, love and beauty.

According to the late, great Darrell Robes Kipp, a Harvard-educated poet and Native American Language activist who co-founded the Piegan Institute and started the Real Speak schools for Blackfeet language immersion, "*never use the word culture...it's too vague, too consuming, and too volatile...Use the word 'language.'* The culture comes from the language." (Kipp, 2000).

**Ecological Role-** the role an animal or organism plays in its environment, how it contributes to the overall health of the ecosystem, such as providing habitat. Bison are a Keystone Species with an important ecological role. Bison contribute to the ecosystem's overall health in several ways, such as the film, *Bring Them Home* highlights. For example, Bison wallows create areas for water retention where other species thrive, including birds, insects, plants, and amphibians.

**Herbivore-** an animal that gets their energy and nutrients from eating primarily plants, including grasses, leaves, fruits and other foliage. Buffalo, cattle, deer, elk, sheep and even rabbits are examples of herbivores, which have specialized digestive tracts and play an essential role in the control of plant populations. They are *primary consumers* of plants.

**Indigenous-** of or relating to the earliest known inhabitants of a place and especially of a place that was colonized by a now-dominant group (e.g. Native American).

**Keystone Species-** a species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend, such that if it were removed from the ecosystem, the ecosystem would change drastically.

**Matriarch-** a woman who is specifically the *head* of her family, as opposed to patriarch, which is a man who rules or dominates a family, tribe, or societal group.

**Matriarchy-** is when a group of women rule or govern a society. Aspects of matriarchy were stronger in some Indigenous societies than in western European societies. Among Nations of the Blackfoot Confederacy, some groups followed a **matrilineal** system where men generally left their biological family to join their wife's family, while some followed a **patrilineal** system, where daughters left their families to go and live with their husband's family.

In traditional Blackfoot societies, there was “greater social equality” than in Western European societies, although the degree of equality varied among individual Bands and groups.<sup>17</sup>

**Metaphor-** a figure of speech or figurative language where a word or a phrase, an abstract idea, concept, object, expression, or activity, is applied to the word, phrase, idea or concept that is not applicable *literally*, to suggest a likeness or analogy between them. Unlike a simile, which uses *like* or *as*, a metaphor compares two unrelated things by stating one is the other. Metaphors symbolize something else, in literature, music, poetry, and speech. They help to shape our perspectives, evoke imagery and add depth to communication.

**Paternalism-** when institutions or people in positions of power or authority restrict other people's freedom of choice and responsibilities because those in the position of power believe it is in the best interest of the person or group paternalism is being imposed upon. Paternalism is making decisions for people like *historically underrepresented groups* rather than letting them make their own decisions. Contrast paternalism with autonomy, where each person is an individual with their own voice and in charge of making their own decisions.

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<sup>17</sup> According to “Walking Together,” Excerpts from *Aboriginal Perspectives* in (NEL, 2004), First Nations, Metis and Inuit people worked together through a culture of sharing and mutual support to satisfy the requirements of attaining food, clothing and shelter while moving across expansive geographic areas to ensure resources for their survival were harvested and distributed equally. Although roles were flexible, all members contributed to the whole.

**Perspective-** the way things in general or something in particular are viewed, seen, observed, thought about, understood, regarded, and/or looked at; a person's "point of view" which influences our impressions, understandings, and attitudes. From Essential Understanding #6, *"History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell."*

**Native Philosophical Perspectives-** In many Native philosophies or worldviews, the earth is alive and nurturing to life, everything is related and equal with equal say, spaces and places are sacred - with a history of *ways of relationship* between the people, plants, animals and all things in nature and the world (Cajete, 2000). Everything in the universe has an evolutionary path or "direction to it" and every created being has a part to play in creation (Peat, 1944:43 as paraphrased in Cajete, 2000) whereas,

**Native Science-** reflects a celebration of renewal, responsibilities and mutual reciprocity with the natural world, in which humans care for, sustain and respect the rights of other living beings, things and places in the environments in which they live (Cajete, 2000).

**Reciprocity-** Intentional giving back and forth or "give and take" but not necessarily expecting to be given something in return when you give or share something in a good, genuine and respectful way. Reciprocity is an action of exchange for mutual benefit or privilege. There are practices of reciprocity where equal responsibility is provided for relationship building and where resources are considered gifts.<sup>18</sup>

**Reservation-** A reservation is a territory reserved by American Indians (or Native Americans) as a permanent homeland. Some reservations were created through treaties, while others were created by statutes or executive orders. They were not "given." For more on reservations, see Essential Understanding Regarding Montana Indians #5.

**Traditional Environmental Knowledge (TEK)-** specific Indigenous groups' *local* knowledge and teachings about the environment, passed down for generations through oral history and storytelling. TEK is also referred to as ancient knowledge, native science, ecological knowledge, and/or local knowledge.

In Sacred Ecology, Fikret Berkes defines TEK as a "cumulative body of knowledge, practice and belief...evolving by adaptive processes [and] handed down...by *cultural transmission* about the relationship of living beings, including humans, with one another and with their environment" (2012, p. 7).

In Look to the Mountain (1994), TEK is "spiritual ecology," a series of metaphorical and symbolic pathways and life-seeking orientations leading to "completeness" and a perspective where Cajete says, *"traditional learning begins and ends with the spirit (69)."*

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<sup>18</sup> Reciprocity is one of the Six Rs used in academia as part of a framework for decolonizing research methods, providing positive alternatives to the systemic inequities and biases Indigenous students and researchers face in higher education. For more on these concepts, see The Six Rs of Indigenous Research in the Tribal College Journal. <https://tribalcollegejournal.org/the-six-rs-of-indigenous-research/>

**Treaty-** an agreement or contract in writing between two or more political entities, such as states or sovereign nations, formally signed by authorized representatives usually ratified by the lawmaking authority.

Treaties made between Indigenous Nations and state, provincial and federal governments did not always clearly delineate human rights like they did physical boundaries. Vandervelder reveals that, of the 800 treaties made between the U.S. government and sovereign Indian Nations, the government ignored 400 treaties and violated the provisions in 300 of them (238).

**Wallow-** to lay about or roll around on the earth, relaxed, in an enjoyable way, in water, mud, dirt, grass, dust, or sand. Wallowing is a way for large mammals to keep cool. People wallow when they indulge in something that makes them feel good in a relaxing sort of way. Wallow can also be used to describe a *sinking-type* feeling.

**Worldview-** Worldview is the underlying set of beliefs that define your sense of the world and your place in it. It is the way you interpret events such as time, space, happiness, wellbeing, what is good, what is important, what is sacred, etc. Worldview is shaped by one's culture and values and in turn, shapes your relationship to your surroundings, other living beings, the natural environment, and events. In summary, worldview is *our perspective* about the world around us, including attitudes, values, stories, and expectations.

## VOCABULARY FOR OLDER STUDENTS

**Arc-GIS-** Arc is a curve or part of a line segment. On a map it can be straight or curved and is defined by a series of connected coordinate pairs known as “x” and “y.” Arcs are *topologically\** linked, and one line feature may contain several arcs. **GIS** stands for:

**Geographic-** in relation to geography, which is the study of the earth's physical features. In this context refers to the spatial location and mapping of places, where things exist.

**Information-** includes data, and details that are processed or stored with a location.

**System-** the interconnected set of tools designed to work together for all of the above.<sup>19</sup>

**Decolonization-** a *process* of deconstructing colonial ideologies of the superiority and privilege of western thought and approaches; dismantling structures that perpetuate the status quo, while consciously valuing, revitalizing and incorporating Indigenous methods, knowledge systems, and approaches (Cull et al., 2018).

**Dichotomy-** a contrast between two things that are in opposition or opposed to each other; drawing a clear distinction between two things; duality or contradiction.

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<sup>19</sup> Arc-GIS was designed by the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI). It is a comprehensive software platform used in various industries, including science and technology, environmental management, urban planning and agriculture. It allows people to create, manage, analyze and map geographic data. It is flexible in its application, allowing users to collaborate and integrate location-based data into cloud storage and other databases. In this context for example, it can be used to measure ecosystem restoration or wildlife migrations and provide information of what's happening on the ground, and where and why it's happening. <https://www.esri.com/en-us/about/about-esri/overview>

**Entitlement-** rights, benefits, provisions, an *amount*, or specific privileges that a person or group has because of laws, contracts, government programs or agreements (like treaties) or situations. An unjustified assumption, feeling or belief that one has that they are deserving or eligible of certain privileges, preferential treatment or advantages.

**Fractionation-** a process of separation into fractions. In this context, when trust land is owned by more than one individual Indian as undivided interest that resulted from the land once held in common was divided again and again into smaller sections and *fractioned* or fragmented. Trust land is land that is owned by an individual Indian or a tribe, usually on an Indian reservation, where title to the land is held in trust by the federal government.

Fractionation basically renders the land useless, making it extremely difficult for any individual owner with an interest in the land to use the land for any purpose such as for agricultural uses like farming and ranching, building a home on or starting a business.

**Genocide-** is not only killing members of a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, it includes causing serious bodily harm or mental harm, imposing birth preventative measures and forcibly transferring children from one group to another, with INTENT. It was first coined in 1944 (what was going on in the world at this time?). Genocide is from the Greek prefix *genos* for race or tribe and the Latin suffix *cide* for killing. Genocide was first recognized as a crime under international law in 1946 and later ratified by 153 states in 2022.

**Indigenization-** a collaborative process of naturalizing Indigenous intent, interactions, and processes to transform spaces, places, perspectives, values, understandings, and approaches, and to make them evident, impactful and informative (Cull et al., 2018).

**linísskimm-** Buffalo stone (fossilized ammonite), looks like a small rock but is believed to possess special power. This sacred gift from Creator to the Blackfeet holds great significance and was used as a powerful spirit to “call the buffalo” and make for a successful hunt (2019, MTPR). See also M. Scriver, 2004 in additional resources.

**\*Instruction-** a formal course of study or class developed *with the advice and assistance* of Indigenous people, tribal education departments, tribal communities or colleges, Indian education resource specialists and/or educators of Indian descent, that is offered separately or that is integrated into an existing course or class.

**Paradigm-** a clear or typical example (or a *framework* in western science dictionary definition). In Native Science, according to Little Bear (Cajete, 2000, x), the Native American paradigm is “made up of and includes ideas of constant motion and flux; energy waves constitute existence; interrelationships...space/place, and renewal.” In this view, all things are animate. All things are instilled with spirit and interrelated.

Little Bear goes on to say that “renewal is an important aspect of the Native American paradigm.” Creation is a continuous process. Human existence depends on maintaining and renewing the events, patterns, cycles and happenings “observed on and from the land,” although with observation over thousands of years, even regular patterns can fluctuate – thereby *change* is the only constant.



**Respect-** is valuing and appreciating others. It is being considerate of another's feelings, wishes, rights, traditions, ideas, and well-being. When you treat someone with kindness and courtesy or honor them, you are showing them respect. Respect recognizes interconnectedness among people as well as between people and place.

If we look at Indigenous communities' traditional ways of teaching and knowing where information was primarily passed down orally and modeled daily, "*actions and teachings are embodied in the Six R's.*"<sup>20</sup> Respect can also be given to the Earth, the environment and the elements of the natural world.

**Restore or Restoration-** to bring back into existence, put back into use, or to return or renew to a former, *better* condition. Both words imply renewal, reestablishment or reinstating back to an original state after something has been lost, depleted, and/or diminished in some way. In this context, wild Buffalo are being restored to the landscape after wanton slaughter and near extinction.

**Sentience-** to *perceive* or feel; the capacity of an individual to think, to have awareness and to be able to experience various emotional reactions, e.g., pain, pleasure, suffering, fear, love, or joy. Sentience has also been described as a vital life force or energy; a spirit or soul; fire and wind; consciousness and motivation; sacred spaces, or "*places imbued with memory*" (Swancutt, 2019).

There are different fields of thought on the term sentience. Some human groups consider animals, plants, land, water and other things in their environments to be sentient beings. Scientific research on animal sentience informs approaches to environmental ethics, ethical harvests, animal rights and plant or animal wellbeing.

**Symbiotic-** living in or being in a close, physical association, as a cooperative and interdependent relationship. A symbiotic relationship involves two types of biological species, such as plants or animals in which each one provides conditions that benefit the other or helps the other to continue living. For example, see the photo of the "cowbirds" on the backs of Buffalo. Why are they there and how is one helping out the other? There are many examples in nature.<sup>21</sup>

**\*Topographically-** in relation to *topography*, details the physical appearance of the natural forms and features of the land, usually on a map or a chart to assist in understanding how landforms are shaped and arranged, and their relationship to each other. When things are drawn *topographically*, they may include contours and approximate altitude shown with curving lines, detailing a three-dimensional picture on a two-dimensional surface. Topography combines the words "top" and "graph," stemming from the root word meaning to "write" or "describe." Topographical maps are often used by surveyors, hikers, and engineers.

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<sup>20</sup> Based on previous works that recognized a need for the Four Rs in American Indian Education, the Six Rs Guiding Principles and Conceptual Framework was developed for use within research focused on Indigenous research methodologies. *Respect, relationship, relevance, reciprocity, responsibility, and representation* make up the Six Rs. In this view, a person's ethical development is tied to an individual's community where it is "common and rational" to have evolving, **respectful** relationships with plants and animals to acquire knowledge. For more on these concepts, see The Six Rs of Indigenous Research in the Tribal College Journal. <https://tribalcollegejournal.org/the-six-rs-of-indigenous-research/>

<sup>21</sup> In the PBS article, The Green Planet (2022), not all symbiotic relationships are mutualistic, or beneficial to each other. Some symbiotic relationships are parasitic, where one species benefit and the other is harmed. <https://www.pbs.org/articles/what-is-symbiosis#:~:text=%7C%20Credit%3A%20BBC,while%20the%20other%20is%20harmful>.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A

#### Indian Education For All

In 1999, House Bill No. 528, commonly referred to as Indian Education For All (IEFA) was introduced into the Montana Legislature. In part HB528 reads,

*“An Act implementing Article X, section 1(2) of the Montana Constitution regarding the State of Montana’s recognition of the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and the State’s commitment to establish educational goals that will preserve the cultural integrity of American Indians...”*

In 1972, Montana rewrote its constitution. The constitutional delegates wrote, in Article X, Section 1(2), “The state **recognizes** the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and **is committed** in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural integrity.” The 1999 Montana Legislature passed House Bill 528 into law, which codified the constitutional intent as MCA 20-1-501. This law is known as Indian Education for All and [the law was recently updated during the 2025 legislative session](#) to include **more accountability** with IEFA funding and reporting.

[URL: [https://bills.legmt.gov/#/laws/bill/2/LC1350?open\\_tab=bill](https://bills.legmt.gov/#/laws/bill/2/LC1350?open_tab=bill)]

"20-1-501" MCA. **Recognition of American Indian cultural heritage -- legislative intent. (1)** It is the constitutionally declared policy of this state to recognize the distinct and unique cultural heritage of American Indians and to be committed in its educational goals to the preservation of their cultural heritage. **(2)** It is the intent of the legislature that in accordance with Article X, section 1(2), of the Montana Constitution: (a) **every Montanan**, whether Indian or non-Indian, learn about the distinct and unique heritage of American Indians in a culturally responsive manner; and (b) every educational agency work in consultation with Montana tribes or those tribes that are in close proximity, when providing instruction or when implementing an educational goal or adopting a rule related to the education of each Montana citizen, to include information specific to the cultural heritage and contemporary contributions of American Indians, with particular emphasis on Montana Indian tribal groups and governments. **(3)** It is also the intent of this part, predicated on the belief that all school personnel should have an understanding and awareness of Indian tribes to help them relate effectively with Indian students and parents, that educational **agencies provide means** by which school personnel will gain an understanding of and appreciation for the American Indian people."

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Background Information for Essential Understandings**

Montana currently has seven *Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians*, which were developed by Indigenous educators and representatives from each Montana Tribe. Although the concepts of American Indian rights and sovereignty are complex and difficult to understand, the Essential Understandings (EUs) represent broad concepts and major issues shared by each Tribal Nation in Montana.

The EUs provide an entry point and increase understanding of the rich histories, cultures, and diverse perspectives of each of Montana's tribal groups. Tribal histories, historians, elders, scholars, knowledge keepers, and Tribal communities today continue to shape the social and political landscape of Montana. EU #5 lists major federal policy periods, which have fluctuated greatly over the years.

The following provides a summary of the EUs. See the Additional Resources page for a link to the more detailed thirty-two-page online document with key concepts for each essential understanding available through the Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) Indian Education For All Division.

### **Acknowledgements for Essential Understandings**

This revised version of the EUs was updated with educators from across Montana, including several of the original participants from 1999 who convened after the 1972 Montana Constitution was rewritten and House Bill 528 was passed by the Montana Legislature into Law. Special thanks go to Norma Bixby (Northern Cheyenne), Julie Cajune (Salish), and Joyce Silverthorne (Salish), members of the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education and Dr. Heather Cahoon (Pend d' Oreille).

### **Publication Note for Essential Understandings**

The terms Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and American Indian are appropriate terms to use when referring to Indigenous Peoples of Alaska, Hawaii, and the 48 contiguous states of the US. The term "Native American" came into usage in the 1960s and the term "Indigenous" has more recently come into common usage. The best approach to using these terms is to be as tribally specific as possible with correct identification of Indigenous Peoples. Multiple terms are used here and relevant tribally specific references.

## **Seven Essential Understandings (EUs) Regarding Montana Indians**

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 1**

There is great diversity among the twelve sovereign tribes of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each tribe has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 2**

Just as there is great diversity among tribal nations, there is great diversity among individual American Indians as identity is developed, defined, and redefined by entities, organizations, and people. There is no generic American Indian.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 3**

The ideologies of Native traditional beliefs and spirituality persist into modern day life as tribal cultures, traditions, and languages are still practiced by many American Indian people and are incorporated into how tribes govern and manage their affairs. Additionally, each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the "discovery" of North America.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 4**

Though there have been tribal peoples living successfully on the North American landscape for millennia, reservations are lands that have been reserved by or for tribes for their exclusive use as permanent homelands. Some were created through treaties, while others were created by statutes and executive orders. The principle that land should be acquired from tribes only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions: Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers; Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land, and acquisition of American Indian lands was solely a government matter not to be left to individual colonists or states.

### **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 5**

There were many federal policies put into place throughout American history that have affected Indian people in the past and continue to shape who they are today. American Indians are the most federally regulated population in the US. Many of these laws, policies and statutes conflicted with one another. *Much of Indian history can be related through several major federal policy periods:*

- **Colonization/ Colonial Period (1492 - 1800s)**

From the time of Christopher Columbus' first expedition in 1492 to the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown, Virginia in 1607, Europeans devised implements to justify the taking of lands that were occupied by non-Christians – through conquest, war, purchase, treaties and the Doctrine of Discovery.

The French and Indian War ended in 1763 where England claimed land east of the Mississippi and France claimed land west of the Mississippi. The American Revolution ended with colonial independence in 1776 and at this time, most American Indian Tribes aligned themselves with Great Britain.

– **Treaty-Making and Removal Period (1778 - 1871)**

After America's Declaration of Independence, the US signed their first treaty with the Delaware Indians in 1778. Often, the US didn't enforce its treaty obligations and there was constant conflict. Ultimately, the US enacted the Trade and Intercourse Acts to establish boundaries for "Indian Country" and *allowed* only the US government to regulate trade with American Indians and to acquire lands historically occupied by American Indians.

In 1830, US President Andrew Jackson signed the Indian Removal Act (IRA) to remove American Indians in the east to west of the Mississippi River, despite protests and the IRA's treaty violations. Between 1883-1839, approximately 4000 Natives died on the Cherokee "Trail of Tears." During the winter of 1883-1884, nearly 600 Blackfeet died of starvation directly caused by wanton slaughter of the Buffalo (West, 1959).

– **Reservation Period - Allotment and Assimilation (1887 - 1934)**

Treaty-making resulted in hundreds of tribes ceding much of their lands to the US. During this period, American Indians were not allowed to leave the reservations without permission, having become *wards* of the federal government. Along with the loss of the Bison and prohibition of Native languages, cultural practices and religious rituals like the Sun Dance and other annual renewal ceremonies, widespread poverty, poor health, and disease ensued.

Assimilation efforts included the passing of the 1887 Dawes Allotment Act and mandatory education for American Indian children at Christian missions and "church-run" boarding schools both on and off reservations. Children were forbidden to speak their Native languages, forced to perform manual labor for the institutions, and couldn't leave during the long school year. Many students who tried to leave the schools were severely punished.

– **Tribal Reorganization Period (1934 - 1953)**

Numerous studies during the 1920's, including the most influential Meriam Report, brought reform to Indian Country and exposed several "problems" of the federal government's ongoing assimilation efforts. The Meriam Report's appalling findings led to the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) in 1934.

The IRA dramatically changed the federal government's existing Indian Policy, attempting to bring about positive change with limited self-governance in Indian Country, ironically providing Indians a means to buy back lands that had been lost in the Dawes Act allotment system ([historylink.org](http://historylink.org), 2016).

Under the IRA, allotment ended. Reservation allotments were put into permanent "trust" status to be managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Tribal governments were restructured, constitutions and charters were instituted, and many tribal business councils were established, modeled after the BIA. The IRA did not give Tribes complete autonomy. Many American Indian Tribes did not vote to implement it. Fifteen years later, Congress intended to end the federal-trust relationship and encourage Indians' full assimilation into society.

### **- Termination and Relocation Period (1953 - 1968)**

In 1953, with the passage of several resolutions, acts and laws targeting specific Tribes, 109 Tribal governments were terminated. More Indian lands were sold, state legislation and taxation were imposed, federal programs were discontinued, some reservations were dissolved, and Tribes' sovereign authority was terminated. This period proved to be very detrimental to Tribes and although Congress restored some Tribe's sovereign status, many tribal assets remained unrecoverable.

The Indian Relocation Act of 1956 attempted to again assimilate American Indians by providing them financial assistance, access to employment, job training, and housing to relocate to off-reservation cities like Los Angeles or Seattle. This led to large populations of American Indians who were unemployed and impoverished.

Public Law 83-280 granted certain states criminal jurisdiction over American Indians on reservations and allowed state courts to manage civil litigation that had been under tribal or federal jurisdiction but did not give states regulatory power over tribes or lands the tribes held in trust. This law also did not federally guarantee tribal hunting and fishing rights, basic tribal government functions, the ability for tribes to impose taxes or to regulate environmental control, land use, gambling and licenses on the reservations.

### **- Self Determination Period (1975 - Present)**

Federal termination policies prior to the 1970's had been huge failures across Indian Country. Consequently, 1975 saw the passage of the Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act intended to give tribes more control over their affairs and self-governance and enter into federal contracts for programs serving their reservation communities - which had been previously managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA).

Fiscal mismanagement and corruption within the BIA caused the Self Determination Act to be amended in 1988, allowing some tribes to manage and redesign multiple federal programs in their communities and reallocate funds for their efforts. Success of these projects led to another amendment of the Act in 1994 establishing Tribal Self Governance as permanent under the Department of the Interior (DOI) in the Health and Human Services Department (DHHS) in 2000.

## **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 6**

History is a story most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. With the inclusion of more and varied voices, histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from American Indian perspectives frequently conflicts with the stories mainstream historians tell.

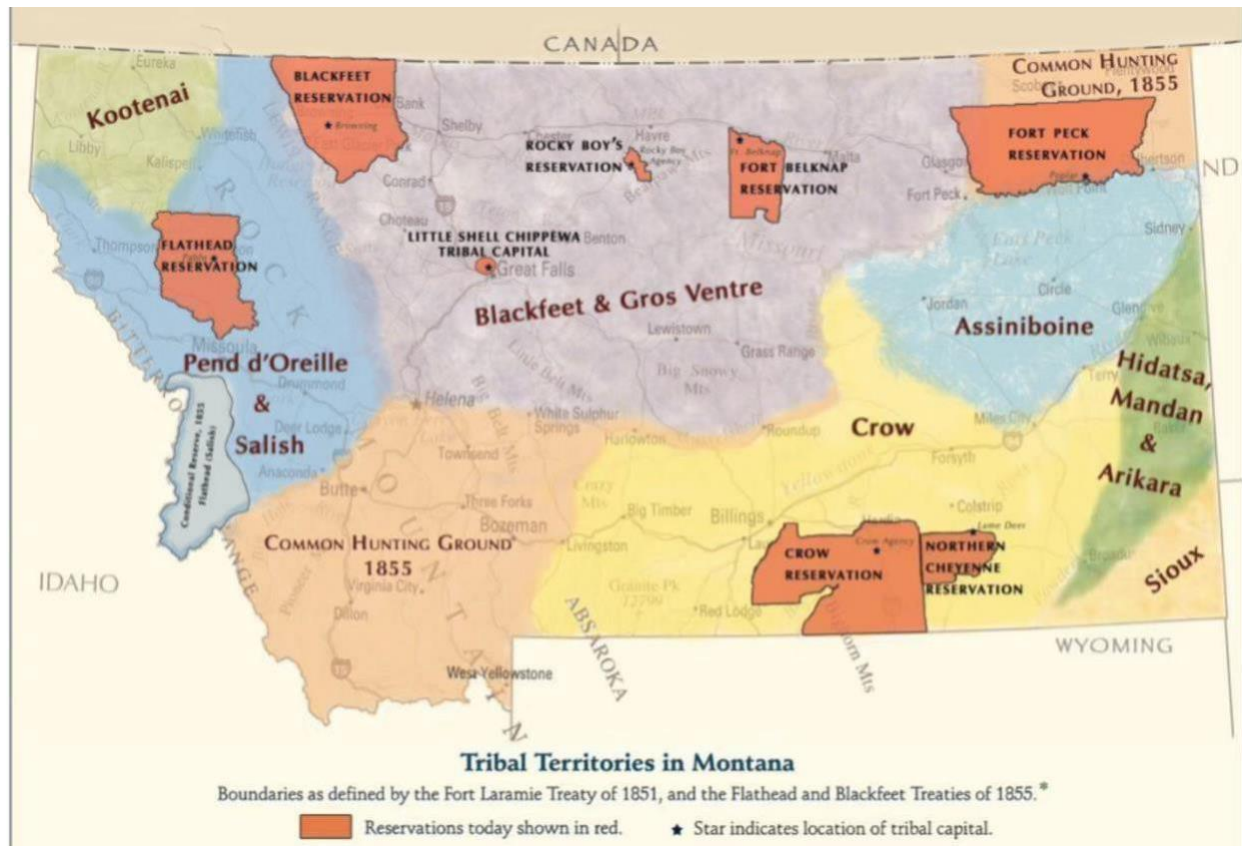
## **ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDING 7**

American Indian Tribal Nations are inherent sovereign nations, and they possess sovereign powers, separate and independent from the federal and state governments. However, under the American legal system, the extent and breadth of self-governing powers are not the same for each tribe.



## APPENDIX C

## Map of Montana Tribal Territories



Montana is currently home to twelve Tribal Nations and seven Native American reservations. See the following charts and pronunciation guide.

**Montana Tribes:** Assiniboiné (Nakoda), Blackfeet (Pikuni), Chippewa (Anishinaabe), Cree (nayeowahn), Crow (Apsáalooke), People of the White Clay or Gros Ventre (A'aninin), Kootenai (Ktunaxa-Ksanka), Little Shell Chippewa (Anishinaabe), Northern Cheyenne (tsetsehesestahase), Pend d' Oreille (Qlispé or Kalispel), Confederated Bitterroot Salish, (Séliš), and Sioux (Lakota & Dakota).

**Montana Reservations:** Blackfeet, Crow, Fort Belknap, Fort Peck, Northern Cheyenne, Rocky Boy, and Flathead, where the Séliš (Confederated Bitterroot Salish), Qlispé or Kalispel (Pend d'Orielle) and Ktunaxa-Ksanka (Kootenai) now reside. The Little Shell Chippewa do not have a reservation but gained federal recognition in 2019.

The Séliš, Qlispé and Ktunaxa-Ksanka historically inhabited an expansive region between the Cascade Mountains and the Rocky Mountains, including western Montana, northern Idaho and southern Canada. Montana Tribes belong to a much larger group who have traditionally occupied the Missouri River Basin, including nookhooseiineno (Northern Arapaho), sahnish

(Arikara), mesquaki Fox), Iowa (of Kansas & Nebraska), kicwigapawa (Kickapoo), Mandan, umonhon (Omaha), Ponca, potawatamink (Potowatomi), asakiwaki (Sac, newe (Eastern Shoshone), Lakota, Nakoda, Dakota (Sioux), and ho-chunk (Winnebago).

Allotment between 1887 and 1934 resulted in the loss of nearly one hundred million acres of Indian lands, down to approximately forty-eight million acres (MT-OPI). Every reservation in Montana except Rocky Boy, which wasn't created until 1916, was allotted. Fort Belknap and Northern Cheyenne were not subject to non-Native homesteaders.

Several federal revisions to the treaties that established them resulted in decreased sizes of the reservations, including those at Crow and Blackfeet. An Executive Order in 1873 diminished Blackfeet lands from the 1851 and 1855 Treaties and included the Gros Ventre, Assiniboine and "Siouan" bands for the same reservation.

An 1874 Executive Order changed the southern boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation north from the Sun River back to the Marias River. In 1896, a 20-mile-wide strip of the Blackfeet Reservation was ceded by the federal government, which the Blackfeet understood to be under only a 99-year lease, although they've never gotten these lands back (MT-OPI).

Article 11 of the Hellgate Treaty of 1855 also did not allow non-Native settlement to the Bitterroot Valley, but stipulated conditions that were dependent on a government survey, which was never conducted and resulted in an influx of non-Native settlers. In 1891, the U.S. Army forcibly removed the Bitterroot Salish to the current Flathead Reservation (MT-OPI).

**CREATION-DATE OF MONTANA RESERVATIONS**

Includes the method by which it was created and the resulting acres of reservation lands

RESERVATION	YEAR OF CREATION	METHOD OF CREATION	TOTAL ACREAGE
Blackfeet	1855	Treaty	1.5 million
Crow	1868	Treaty	2.2 million
Flathead	1855	Treaty	1.3 million
Fort Belknap	1888	Congressional Statute	698,000
Fort Peck	1886	Executive Order	2.1 million
Little Shell No Reservation	2019 Federal Recognition	Congressional Statute	Approx. +/- 800 in Gt. Falls
Northern Cheyenne	1884	Executive Order	445,000
Rocky Boy	1916	Congressional Statute	122,000

## TRIBAL NATION'S LOCATIONS & PRONUNCIATION GUIDE

Educators should familiarize themselves with the correct pronunciation and location of each of the Montana Tribes until they are comfortable referencing them according to the *names they call themselves*.

Names They Call Themselves	Current Names Given to Them	Pronunciation	Location in Montana	Other Names
<b>A'aninin</b> (white clay people)	<b>Gros Ventre</b>	ah ah knee nin ah knee	Fort Belknap: North-central MT, 40 miles south of the Canadian border	White Clay People
<b>Annishinabe</b> (the people) <b>Annishinabeg</b> (plural)	<b>Chippewa / Ojibwe</b>	ah nish nah bay ah nish nah beg	Rocky Boy: North- central MT, 90 miles south of the Canadian border	Stone Child evolved to "Rocky Boy"
<b>Annishinabeg /</b> (the people) <b>Metis</b> (mixed)	<b>Little Shell Chippewa</b>	ah nish nah bay may tea	Great Falls, MT : Centrally located on the Missouri River	Little Shell Metis = mixed
<b>Apsaalooké</b> (children of the ravens)	<b>Crow</b> (3 Bands)	abs all oo gah	Crow Agency: South-central MT, borders Wyoming on south & Northern Cheyenne on the east	River Crow, Mountain Crow, and Kicked in the Bellies
<b>Ktunaxa / Ksanka</b> (Lake Indians)	<b>Kootenai</b>	koot en nah hah	Flathead Reservation: Northwestern MT, west of the Continental Divide	"Standing Arrow" (a traditional war technique) "Fish trap people"
<b>Lakota / Dakota</b> (ally, friend)	<b>Teton (Sioux) Santee (Sioux)</b>	lah coat ah dah coat ah	Ft. Peck Reservation: Northeast MT, 40 miles south of Canadian border and 60 miles west of North Dakota border	Friend, Ally, kindred "Alliance of friends" Sioux = Snake (derogatory)
<b>Nakoda</b> (ally, friend)	<b>Assiniboine</b>	nah coat ah	Ft. Peck Reservation and Fort Belknap Reservation	Stoney Indians (or "one who cooks with stone")
<b>Neiyahwahk</b> (four-bodied people)	<b>Plains Cree</b>	knee hin oh wog	Rocky Boy Reservation	Stone Child evolved to "Rocky Boy"

<b>Niitsitapiiksi/ Pikuni</b> (real people) (far-off spotted robes)	<b>Blackfeet</b> (4 Bands)	neat seat ah bee neat seat ah beak see bee gah knee	Blackfeet Reservation Northwestern MT, borders Alberta, Canada on the north	Amskaapipikuni Southern Piegan or Pikuni Blackfeet Blackfoot
<b>Qlispé</b> (see “other names” column)	<b>Pend d’Orielle</b>	cull lee speh pond or ray	Flathead Reservation: Northwestern MT, west of the Continental Divide	“hanging ear,” French for shell earrings “Kalispel” = Camas or “People of Broad Water” or “Flat Land Above the Lake”
<b>Séliš</b> (Giver of the Water)	<b>Salish</b> (4 Interior Salish languages)	say lish	Flathead Reservation: Northwestern MT, west of the Continental Divide	Bitterroot Salish “Giver of the Water”
<b>Tsetsehesestahase / So’taahe</b> (see “other names” column)	<b>Northern Cheyenne</b>	Tseat sis tuss nah (or “tsis tsis’tas”) sit eye yo	Southeastern MT, borders Crow Reservation on the east	Morning Star People “People of the Sacred Mountain”

### More on Reservations, Tribal Lands and Territories

#### Blackfeet Reservation:

- The *furthest north* in the state, on the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, bordering Alberta, Canada on the north and Glacier National Park on the west
- BROWNING is the tribal headquarters
- Other communities: East Glacier Park, St. Mary, Babb, Starr School, Heart Butte
- Glacier and Pondera Counties
- Clark Range, Lewis Range and Livingston Range of the Rocky Mountains
- Two Medicine River, Marias River, Cut Bank Creek, Birch Creek - southern border
- At the intersection of Highways 2 and 89
- Population includes: amskaapipikani (Southern Piegan), aapátohsipikani (Northern Piegan), kainai (Many Chiefs, Blood), and siksika (Blackfoot)

The Blackfoot Confederacy’s traditional territory stretched from *ponokasisahta*, literally the Elk River (North Saskatchewan River) in Canada to *otahkoitahtayi*, (Yellowstone River – also called the Elk River), east to *omahkskispatsikoyii* (Great Sand Hills in Saskatchewan).

They lived for thousands of years along the *mistákis*, mountains (Backbone of the World or Rocky Mountain Front), their western boundary. See Reference section for additional maps and links to relevant articles.

### **Crow Reservation**

- Located on Montana's southern border, borders Wyoming and Northern Cheyenne Reservation
- CROW AGENCY is the tribal headquarters
- Districts: Reno, Lodge Grass, Pryor, Big Horn, Wyola, and Black Lodge
- Big Horn and Yellowstone Counties
- Big Horn Mountains, Pryor Mountains, Wolf Mountains
- Big Horn River, Little Big Horn River, Pryor Creek
- Highways 313 and 418, Interstate 90
- Population includes: *apsalooké* (historically: Mountain Crow, River Crow, Kicked in the Bellies)

### **Flathead Reservation:**

- The *furthest west* in the state, west of the Continental Divide
- PABLO is the tribal headquarters
- Other communities: Ronan, St. Ignatius, Polson, Arlee, Hot Springs
- Flathead, Sanders, Missoula and Lake Counties
- Mission Range of the Rocky Mountains
- Flathead River, Jocko River, Little Bitterroot River, Flathead Lake
- Highways 93 and 200
- Population includes: *séliš* (Salish), *q̓lispé* (Pend d'Orielle), and *ktunaxa* (Kootenai)

The *Sqelixw* or *Séliš* (Bitterroot Salish) reside with the *Q̓lispé*, (Pend d'Orielle or Kalispel) and *Ktunaxa-Ksanka* (Kootenai). *Séliš* territory includes the entire area around Flathead Lake and throughout much of the Northwest to the coast and into British Columbia. *Ktunaxa-Ksanka* traditional territory was further north and west of the Continental Divide.

### **Fort Belknap Reservation:**

- *North-central Montana*, east and south of Rocky Boy, about 40 miles from Canadian border
- FORT BELKNAP AGENCY is the tribal headquarters
- Other communities: Hays, Harlem, Dodson, Zortman
- Blaine and Phillips Counties
- "Fur Caps" (Little Rocky Mountains)
- Milk River, Snake Butte Reservoir
- Highways 2 and 66
- Population includes: *nakoda* (Assiniboine), *a'aninin* (White Clay People), "*Fort Belknap Gros Ventre*"

### **Fort Peck Reservation:** (the second largest in terms of land area)

- The *furthest east* in the state, about 40 miles west of North Dakota & 50 miles south of Canada
- POPLAR is the tribal headquarters
- Other communities: Brockton, Wolf Point, Frazer, Nashua (Williston ND 75 miles east of Poplar)
- Daniels, Valley, Roosevelt and Sheridan Counties

- Turtle Mountain public domain lands, various Buttes (Lookout, Rocky, Round)
- Ft. Peck Reservoir (Mt's largest body of water), Missouri River, Porcupine Creek, Big Muddy Creek
- Highways 2 and 13, secondary 438 and 251
- Population includes: nakoda (Ft. Peck Assiniboine), lakota and dakota (Teton and Santee Sioux)

**Rocky Boy Reservation:** (the smallest reservation and the last to be established)

- *Centrally located*, near the northern “highline” part of the state
- ROCKY BOY is the tribal headquarters
- Nearby communities: Havre, Big Sandy, Box Elder
- Hill and Choteau Counties
- Bear Paw Mountains, MT Baldy, MT Centennial, Haystack Mountain
- Beaver Creek, Big Sandy Creek, Box Elder Creek, Milk River
- Highway 87
- Population includes: anishinabe (Chippewa/Ojibwe) and neiyahwahk (Plains Cree)

**Northern Cheyenne Reservation:**

- *Near the southern border* of the state, borders the Crow Reservation, 2<sup>nd</sup> smallest, next to Rocky Boy
- LAME DEER is the Tribal headquarters
- Other communities: Busby, Ashland, Birney, Muddy (Colstrip 25 miles north)
- In Big Horn and Rosebud Counties
- Turtle Mountain public domain lands
- Tongue River, Tongue River Reservoir, Otter Creek
- Highway 212 and 39 secondary (Interstate 90 runs through Crow Reservation to the east)
- Population includes: sis tsis'tas and so'taahe (Northern Cheyenne) and apsalooké (Crow)

**Little Shell Tribe:**

- Located primarily in the city of Great Falls (urban area) – Federal and State recognized
- GREAT FALLS is their Tribal headquarters (100 miles south of Canadian border)
- Other communities: “Hill 57” in Black Eagle, Sun Prairie, Vaughn, Cascade, Belt, Ulm, Fort Shaw
- In Cascade County
- Rocky Mountain Front to the west, Little Belts, Highwood Mountains, First People's Buffalo Jump State Park (the Ulm pisskan – pronounced “pish kin” for Buffalo jump)
- Missouri River, Sun River
- Highways 87 and 89, Interstate 15
- Population includes: annishinabeg (Chippewa/Ojibwe), Metis and neiyahwahk (Plains Cree)



## APPENDIX D

### Indigenizing Education and Standards

Indigenizing education includes interdisciplinary programming. Research has shown interdisciplinary programs (Newell, 1990) of study demonstrate students' appreciation of another's perspectives of similar situations, increased confidence in their abilities to write on a range of subjects, receptivity to new ideas, and feelings of empowerment to examine complex issues. Based on long term studies, students in interdisciplinary learning programs are:

- more sensitive to ethical issues, bias, humility, and listening
- move beyond tolerance of others' views to celebrating diversity
- have a more holistic understanding of subject matter
- have expanded perspectives and more creative, original thinking

In Yi's article, *Cartographies of the Voice: Storying the Land as Survivance in Native American Oral Traditions* (2016), "*manifestations of the oral tradition in multiple forms are examined to demonstrate that through storytelling, the land itself becomes a repository of the oral tradition.*" Multiple forms include poetry, interviews, fiction, photography, and film.

### K-12 Education Standards

Core Standards for [English Language Arts and Reading](#) define what students should understand and be able to do by the end of each grade. Here, they correspond to College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards and provide both broad and specific skills students should demonstrate. [URL: <https://www.thecorestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/CCRA/R/>]

This site includes standards for key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas, and range of reading and level of text complexity. Students are expected to read from a "*broad range of increasingly challenging literary and informational texts.*" Montana's Office of Public Instruction (OPI) oversees [Montana Content Standards](#) and instruction for all academic areas and best practices for students and educators to guide instruction and prepare students for beyond the classroom. This site includes K-12 content standards and additional resources for all subjects, including science, art, social studies and technical education. [URL: <https://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/K-12-Content-Standards>]

### A Sampling of Media Arts Content Standards for Grades 9-12

For [Montana Media Arts Content Standards](#) [URL: <https://mt-satchel.commongoodlt.com/31b3bcfa-f5c3-11e9-8df2-0242c0a83003/>], each student will:

- Integrate ideas, develop artistic goals and problem solve in media arts creation
- Apply criteria in developing and refining artistic ideas, plans, prototypes and production processes
- Enhance and modify media artworks, honing aesthetic quality
- Synthesize various art forms and themes into media artwork productions considering the reaction and interaction of the audience
- Demonstrate a progression of skills by fulfilling specific roles in production of a variety of media arts presentations
- Evaluate impact and implement improvements in presenting media artworks
- Analyze intent, meanings and reception of a variety of media artworks, focusing on personal and cultural contexts
- Demonstrate the use of media artworks to synthesize new meaning and knowledge

## **A Sampling of Southern Blackfeet Standards**

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 100.A.1 and 100.A.3:**

1. 100.A: Culture-based educators have culturally appropriate ways of disseminating information and knowledge in all education institutions and programs on the Blackfeet Indian reservation.
2. Recognize and appreciate the importance of speaking the Blackfeet language and using sign language, with benchmarks for various grade levels from beginning to proficient levels.
3. Provide the opportunity and the time for students to learn through observation and hands-on activities where cultural knowledge and skills are being presented.

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 100.B.1 and 100.B.3:**

1. 100.B: Culture-based educators use the local environment and community resources on a regular basis to link what they are teaching to the everyday lives of the students.
2. Engage students in culturally appropriate projects and experiential learning activities.
3. Provide integrated learning activities across all teaching areas organized around themes of Blackfeet culture and history.

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 200.C.2:**

1. 200.C: Culturally responsive educational programs and institutions provide students opportunities to learn the Blackfeet language.
2. Offer courses that acquaint all students with the Blackfeet environment, history, culture, language, and contemporary status.

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 300.B.1 and 300.B.3:**

1. 300.B: A culturally responsive community supports and encourages the use of the Blackfeet language.
2. Include the Blackfeet language in all teachings of cultural knowledge and traditions.
3. Encourage the use of the Blackfeet language and everyday affairs and printed materials.

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 400.A.4:**

1. 400.A: Culture-based students have a strong foundation in cultural heritage and traditions of their community.
2. Honor and respect knowledge that has been derived from a variety of traditional and contemporary cultural traditions.

### **Blackfeet Cultural Standards 400.D.2, 400.D.3 and 400.D.5:**

1. 400.D: Culture-based students demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the relationships and processes of all elements in the world around them.
2. Recognize the traditional science of ecology, geography, and other facets that affect the world they live in.
3. Recognize how and why some beliefs and traditional ways change over time.
4. Determine how cultural values and beliefs influence the interaction of people from different cultural backgrounds.

## **A Sampling of Kainai, Alberta Social Studies Standards**

### **5.2 : Histories and Stories of Ways of Life in Canada - General Outcome**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the people and the stories of Canada and their ways of life over time and appreciate the diversity of Canada's heritage.

Stories: Stories provide a vital opportunity to bring history to life. Through stories, people share information, values and attitudes about history, culture and heritage. Stories are communicated through legends, myths, creation stories, narratives, oral traditions, songs, music, dance, literature, visual and dramatic arts, traditions, and celebrations. They can include or be supported by biographies, autobiographies, archives, news items, novels or short stories.

In social studies, stories provide students with opportunities to understand the dynamics of peoples, cultures, places, issues and events that are integral to Canada's history and contemporary society.

#### **Specific Outcomes - *Values and Attitudes***

Students will:

##### **5.2.1 : Appreciate the complexity of identity in the Canadian context:**

Recognize how an understanding of Canadian history and the stories of its peoples contribute to their sense of identity.

Acknowledge oral traditions, narratives and stories as valid sources of knowledge about the land and diverse Aboriginal cultures and history.

Acknowledge the contributions made by diverse cultural groups to the evolution of Canada  
Recognize how changes in society can affect identity.

#### **Specific Outcomes – *Knowledge and Understanding***

5.2.2 : Critically examine the ways of life of Aboriginal peoples in Canada by exploring and reflecting upon the following questions and issues: What do the stories of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples tell us about their beliefs regarding the relationship between people and the land?

How are the Aboriginal cultures and ways of life unique in each of the western, northern, central and eastern regions of Canada?

How were the natural environment and geography of each area of Canada determining factors of the diversity among Aboriginal groups (e.g., languages, symbolism)?

In what ways do anthropology and archaeology contribute to our understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples?

4.3.3: Critically examine Alberta's changing cultural and social dynamics: In what ways have Aboriginal peoples and communities changed over time? How do geographic names reflect the origin of people who inhabited them? In what ways have music, art, narratives and literature contributed to the vitality of culture, language and identity of diverse Alberta communities over time?

## APPENDIX E

### Rubric for Short Informative/Arguments Essay Response

#### CRITERION #1 (*check one*)

- \_\_3 points** The first sentence provides a clear and engaging one-sentence answer to the question or prompt (claim) that reveals the author's purpose with this essay response.
- \_\_2 points** The first sentence is clear, but it may not incorporate the question in the answer.
- \_\_0 points** the first sentence does not reveal the writer's intent in this essay response.

#### CRITERION #2 (*check one*)

- \_\_10 points** Ideas and content: The examples that the writer presents to explain the reasons behind his/her opinions are developed, specific, clear, with solid evidence from the text. They relate to the writer's intent, as introduced in the first sentence.
- \_\_8 points** Ideas and content: The writer begins to define the topic, even though development is basic or general.  
The reader is left with questions and more information is needed. Ideas are clear but not detailed.
- \_\_6 points** Ideas and content: The writer has completed the required response, but examples used seem arbitrary or disconnected from any unifying purpose.

#### CRITERION #3 (*check one*)

- \_\_10 points** Organization: The order or presentation of information is compelling, and it logically moves the reader through the text.
- \_\_8 points** Organization: The writer uses appropriate paragraph breaks but lacks necessary transitions between sentences. The conclusion may not tie up all loose ends.
- \_\_7 points** Organization: The writer has completed the required response, but it rambles and adds information without purpose, lacks useful transitions and paragraph breaks.

#### CRITERION #4 (*check one*)

- \_\_5 points** Word choice: The words are precise and engaging, and the paper maintains a consistent point-of-view with no slang.
- \_\_4 points** Word choice: The writing relies on generalizations, although at times it might have some specific color and interest.
- \_\_3 points** Word choice: The words are not specific; point of view shifts from first to second person to third person, and the writer relies on slang.

#### CRITERION #5 (*check one*)

- \_\_2 points** Conventions: The writer demonstrates a good grasp of standard writing conventions (spelling, punctuation, and grammar, usage)
- \_\_1 points** Conventions: The writer makes many spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors.

**Total Points** \_\_\_\_ /30

## APPENDIX F

### Meet the Film Producers



**Ivy MacDonald**

Ivy MacDonald (Amskapipikuni-Blackfeet) is a director, producer, screenplay writer and cinematographer based in Montana. Ivy won an Emmy for her producing work on **“Blackfeet Boxing: Not Invisible”** for ESPN. Her first docuseries **“Murder in Big Horn,”** which she produced, premiered at 2023 Sundance Film Festival and broadcast nationally on Showtime. Ivy was a part of the Fourth World Media Fellow for Tracey Rector’s Indigenous Filmmaker program and is currently a part of the Firelight Media Documentary Lab.



**Ivan MacDonald**

Ivan MacDonald (Amskapipikuni-Blackfeet) is a director, producer and writer. He is an Emmy winning filmmaker based in Montana. Ivan’s most recent project **“Murder in Big Horn,”** premiered at 2023 Sundance Film Festival and aired nationally on Showtime. Murder in Big Horn was recently nominated for an Independent Spirit Award. Ivan is an Inaugural Fellow for the Netflix and **illuminative** Producers Fellowship, an inaugural recipient of the Hulu and Firelight Kindling Fund, and a 2024 **LUCE** Indigenous Knowledge Fellow.



**Lily Gladstone**

Lily Gladstone (Kainawa, Amskapipikuni-Blackfeet, Nimi’iipu) is an Academy Award nominated and Golden Globe winning actor who was raised on the Blackfeet Nation in Montana. Lily’s acting film credits include Martin Scorsese’s **“Killers of the Flower Moon,”** Kelly Reichardt’s “Certain Women” and “First Cow,” Alex and Andrew Smith’s **“Winter in the Blood”** (based on the book written by James Welch), and HBO’s “Room 104.”



**Daniel Glick**

Daniel Glick is a writer, producer and director. Daniel has directed and produced a wide range of narrative and documentary shorts, commercials, web series and more. His first feature documentary film **“A Place to Stand”** (2016), the true story of poet Jimmy Santiago Baca, has been called “inspiring” (Booklist), “gutsy” (Library Journal) and “compelling” (Santa Fe New Mexican). In 2016, Daniel completed **“Our Last Refuge,”** which tells the story of the Badger Two Medicine, the sacred homeland of the Amskapipikuni-Blackfeet and the 35-year struggle to protect it from oil and gas exploration.



**Sarah Clarke**

Sarah Clarke is an award-winning tv and film actress (**Bosch, 24, Twilight**) whose lifelong passion for wildlife preservation and environmental protection led her to Thunderheart Films. A founding member of the company, Sarah has spent the last year producing and developing three projects - **Iniskim, Buffalo Resurrection**, and one other unannounced film. Throughout her career onscreen Sarah has supported and worked with various environmental agencies including the NRDC, **Earthjustice** and Arts Earth Partnership. Her Thunderheart work has become an extension of that passion.



**Melissa Grumhaus**

Melissa Grumhaus is a philanthropy professional in service of wildlife, people, and nature. After spending more than 20 years at **The Nature Conservancy**, she now works on Indigenous-led and nature and climate-based projects and organizations, as well as with individuals and family foundations. Working with the Blackfeet Community has been a highlight of her career and personal life. Melissa has served on non-profit boards including **Friends School** and **The Liv Project**, a creative collective focused on turning the tide on youth suicide through fearless conversation. She is a graduate of **Humanity First**, an embodied leadership and mindfulness program.



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## Film Subjects

G.G. Kipp	Adrian Costel
Bob Burns	Sheldon Carlson
Leonard Bastien	Dan & Cindy Barcus
Theda New Breast	Robbie & Joan Wellman
Leroy Little Bear	William Gladstone
Ervin Carlson	Latrice Tatsey
Paulette Fox	Willow Kipp
Truman "Mouse" Hall	Patrick Armstrong
"Buzz" Cobell	Lyle Rutherford
Terry Tatsey	Brandon Kittson
Keith Aune	Brad Romanik
Mark Magee	Tyson Running Wolf
Chazz Racine	

## List of awards as of June 2025

**Big Sky Award** - Big Sky International Film Festival

**Best of Fest** - Palm Springs International Film Festival

**Audience Choice** - San Diego International Film Festival

**Kumeyaay Award** - San Diego International Film Festival

**Climate Justice Award** - Blackstar Film Festival

**Best Musical Score** - Nevada City Film Festival

**Best Documentary Feature** - Weyauwega International Film Festival

**Best Documentary Feature** - Montana International Film Festival

**Best of Fest** - Colorado Environmental Film Festival



## APPENDIX G

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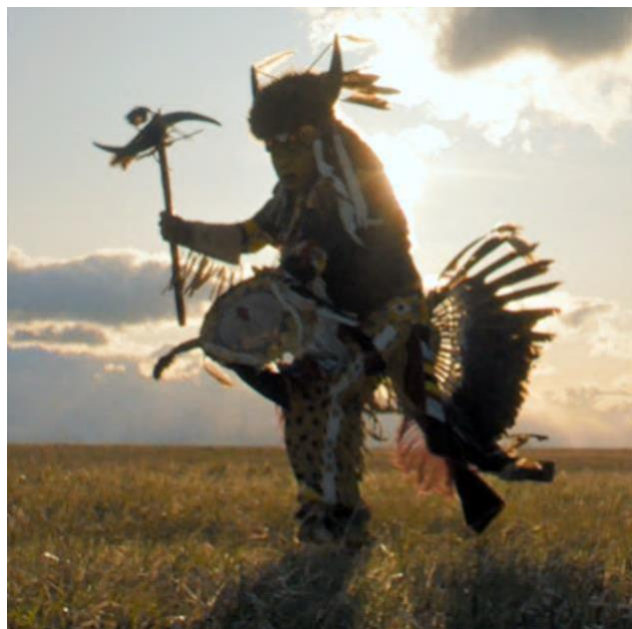
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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES And Links to Primary Source Documents

Big Sky Documentary Film Festival Native Filmmaker Initiative Film Club, Virtual Youth Education Outreach Program: film trailers, past film discussion guides and film viewing resources.

[https://bigskyfilmfest.org/film\\_institute2/native\\_filmmaker\\_initiative/nfi\\_film\\_club/](https://bigskyfilmfest.org/film_institute2/native_filmmaker_initiative/nfi_film_club/)

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## APPENDIX L

### How To Support

To support the film, go to **Thunderheart films** and donate here:

<https://www.thunderheartfilms.com/bring-them-home>

Help build the Iinnii-Buffalo Spirit Center with a donation to the **Iinnii Initiative**:

[https://blackfeetnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Iinnii\\_CaseStatement\\_single-page.pdf](https://blackfeetnation.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Iinnii_CaseStatement_single-page.pdf)

Give to the **Blackfeet Nation** to help build the Blackfeet Buffalo Program:

<https://blackfeetnation.com/iinnii-buffalo-spirit-center/>

The **Blackfeet Buffalo Program** Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/BlackfeetBuffalo/>

Give to the **Blackfeet Community College**, helping prepare students for higher education:

<https://bfcc.edu/>

Sponsor a **Blackfeet Eco Knowledge** event and uphold Blackfeet teachings:

<https://www.blackfeetecoknowledge.org/projects>

Help revive the Blackfeet Language with your donation to the Piegan Institute:

<https://www.pieganinstitute.org/our-schools>

Pikuni Lodge Health Institute works holistically to promote health & well being:

<https://www.piikanilodge.org/>

Give to the Blackfeet Indian Land Conservation Trust Corporation (website pending)

<https://members.mtnonprofit.org/directory/18743>

Support the **Yellow Bird Woman Sanctuary**:

<https://www.montana.edu/nativeland/otkwaipiiksaakii.html>

Defend the Badger Two Medicine by supporting the **Glacier Two Medicine Alliance**:

<https://www.montana.edu/nativeland/otkwaipiiksaakii.html>



### Dedicated to Truman "Mouse" Hall

The Blackfeet Tribe's first *Buffalo Wrangler* and Cowboy Extraordinaire

[April 27, 1940 ~ April 14, 2025]

Designed and written by Yellow Woman Design – Anne D. Grant  
for Thunderheart Films (2025)