



Indigenous Kinship Circle

The Indigenous Kinship Circle (IKC) is a cross-boundary community of practice for Indigenous people and allies working to advance the wellbeing of our communities across the Central Grasslands of Turtle Island.

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**Elevating Indigenous Voices & Priorities,
Braiding Ecological Knowledge
& Bridging Across Nations**

17 April 2024
National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration



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The Central Grasslands Roadmap

Guiding us toward resilient & sustainable grasslands & human communities

CENTRAL GRASSLANDS ROADMAP



Our Vision

Indigenous communities are happy, healthy, and thriving as we embody our lifeways and ancestral kinships, nurturing our relationships with each other, our relatives, and Mother Earth.



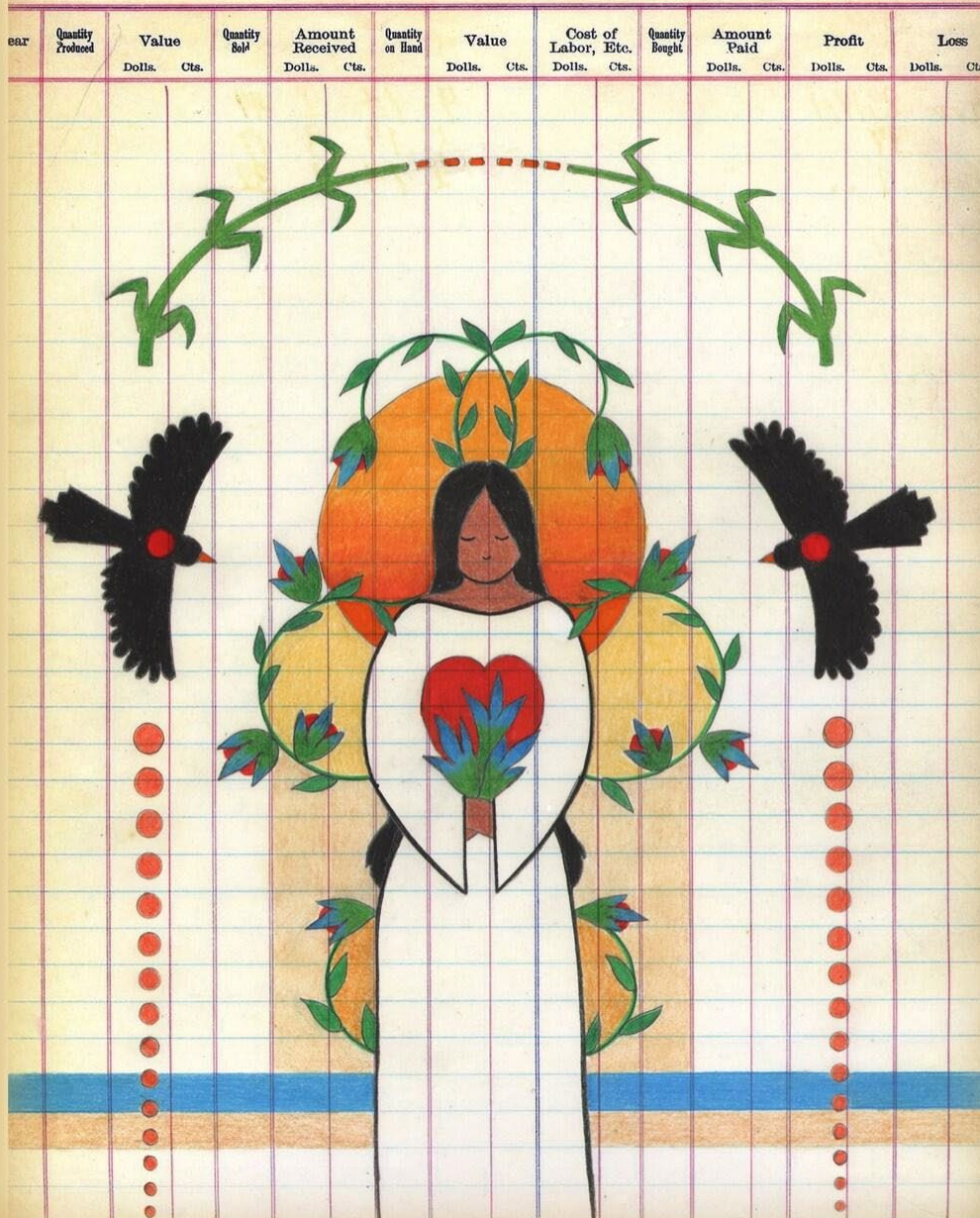
"Time with the Old Ones"
by Bobby Von Martin (Choctaw)

Indigenous Worldview

With respect and reverence for our ancestors, we hold sacred the places where we live and the kincentric ecological systems on which we depend for our identities, lifeways, nourishment, and well-being. We accept the responsibility of being good stewards in reciprocal relationships with all beings and work together to facilitate healing, connectivity, and redistribution of knowledge, time, and resources within our communities. We are guided by the seven sacred teachings – love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility, and truth – in collaboration towards the restoration of cultural values, beliefs, practices, and relationships that were disrupted by historical and ongoing acts of colonization.



Yearly Egg Account.

Year	Quantity Produced	Value		Quantity Sold	Amount Received		Quantity on Hand	Value		Cost of Labor, Etc.		Quantity Bought	Amount Paid		Profit		Loss	
		Dolls.	Cts.		Dolls.	Cts.		Dolls.	Cts.	Dolls.	Cts.		Dolls.	Cts.	Dolls.	Cts.	Dolls.	Cts.
																		

Shared Values

- ❖ Relationship ~ kinship obligation
 - ❖ Responsibility ~ community obligation
 - ❖ Reciprocity ~ cyclical obligation
 - ❖ Redistribution ~ sharing obligation
-
- Restoring ancestral connections and kinship routes
 - Shared sustenance ~ three sisters: corn, beans, squash

Choctaw Corn Legend by Karen Clarkson (Choctaw)
Clarksonart.com

Indigenous Social-Ecological Systems

Indigenous people have actively participated in the kincentric ecological systems on which we depend for identity, culture, nourishment, and well-being since time immemorial.



- ❖ Management of disturbance regimes through cultural fire and bison grazing
- ❖ Caring for prairies allowed bison and birds to thrive along with our people
- ❖ Food sovereignty

Through social-ecological relationships and Indigenous Science, knowledge is acquired and shared and contributes to the establishment of practices to contribute to ecosystem health and resiliency.

<https://www.nps.gov/wica/learn/nature/bison-buffalo-bison-bison.htm>

Map of the population density and territories of indigenous peoples of North America at the beginning of the 21st century

Portion of the indigenous sections of the population covered to national Census regions

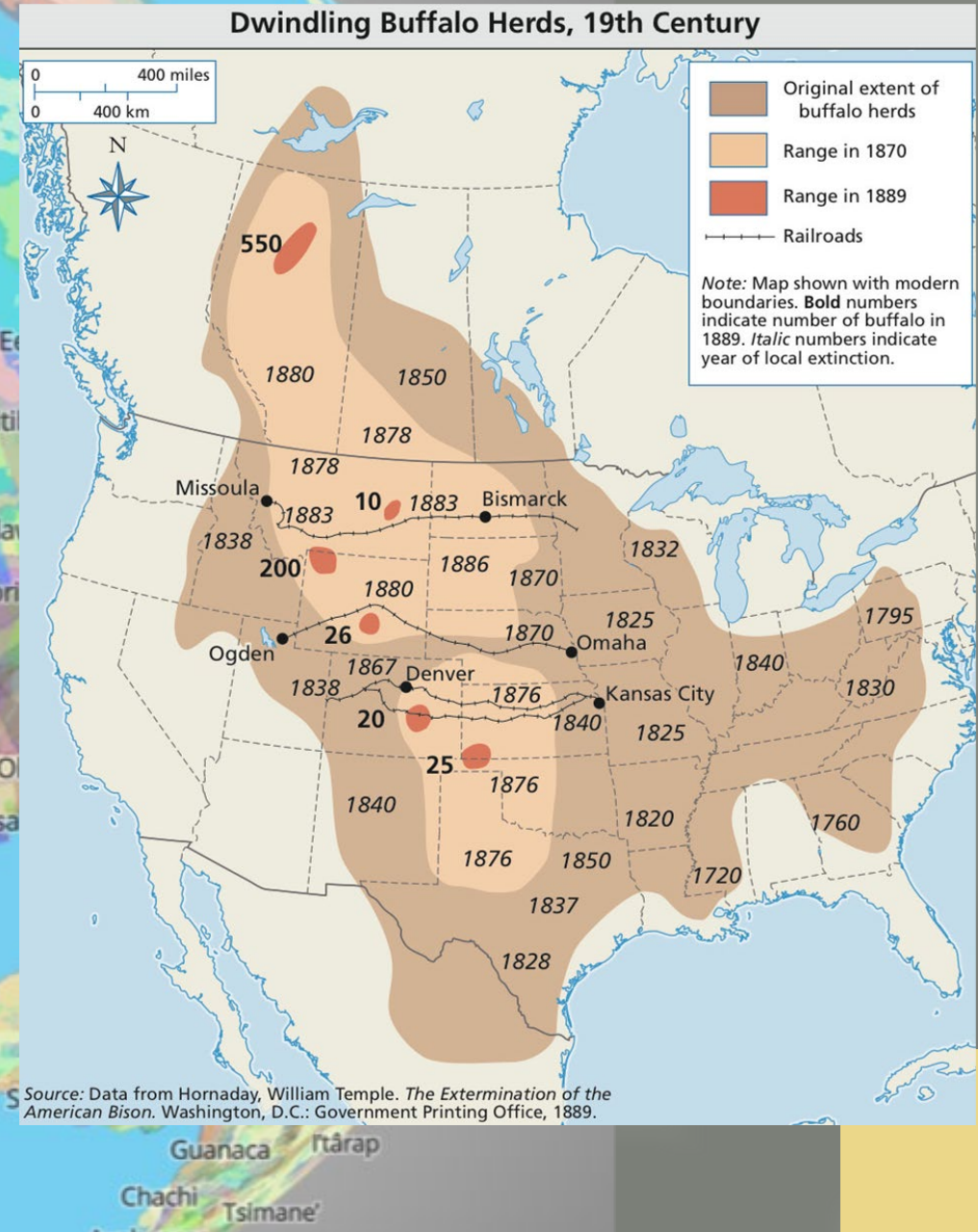
- >90 %
- 61-80 %
- 36-50 %
- 20-35 %
- 16-25 %
- 6-15 %
- 1-5 %
- <1 %

From the respective countries approved indigenous territories

- Landed property under private law
- Autonomous regions (with namings)
- Indian reservations (according to representable surface size)
- Ethnic groups with >10.000 members / the majority in a region / very big spreading
- unfit for habitation

Map Labels: Yukon Agreements, Sahtu-Dene u. Métis, Tlicho, Nisga'a, Sliammon, Sechelt, Tsawwassen, Okanagan, Gwich'in, Inuvialuit, Nunavut, Nunavik, Nunatsiavut, Kalaallit Nunaat (DK), Sioux Valley Dakota, Kativik, Eeyou Istchee, RAAN, RAAS, Nodda-Bugla, Guna Yala, Wargandi, Madugandi, Embera.

Fährtenleser 2016



Source: Data from Hornaday, William Temple. *The Extirpation of the American Bison*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1889.

Grass

72
MILLI

GRASSLAND
LOST SINCE

-53

POPULATION
IN GRASS
BIRDS SINCE

Courtesy of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology



Indigenous Lifeways & Social-Ecological Resilience

- ❖ Resilience is needed for all communities
- ❖ Western worldview held up as the standard at the expense of the Indigenous worldview
- ❖ Indigenous social-ecological relationships were intentionally disrupted
- ❖ Indigenous people and lifeways persist



<https://www.hipcamp.com/en-US/land/south-dakota-lakota-youth-development-88lh9oqn?adults=1&children=0>

Allowing Indigenous communities to thrive and reconnect with our homelands and ancestral kinships will increase resilience for all of us. Reconciliation is needed for this to happen.

Our Approach: Bridging & Braiding

- ❖ Redefining what conservation is through an Indigenous kincentric perspective
- ❖ Helping make connections
- ❖ Recognizing that everything in the natural world is interconnected
- ❖ Breaking down the walls and silos



Bridging & Braiding

- ❖ Bridging between two worlds
- ❖ Many moving parts across multiple scales and boundaries
- ❖ Community Conversations
- ❖ Braiding Indigenous knowledge & Western knowledge
- ❖ Work with others, collaborate, educate be good partners





On the Ground

- ❖ Community climate change adaptation planning
- ❖ Cultural burning
- ❖ Working with Tribal Colleges on culturally appropriate learning and education
- ❖ Supporting revitalization of Indigenous languages and how they shape our relationships with our environment
- ❖ Native plant propagation
- ❖ Rangeland management
- ❖ Studying and enhancing food sovereignty for Indigenous Nations and people
- ❖ Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance
- ❖ Enhancing the Reintroduction of Plains Bison in Banff National Park Through Cultural Monitoring and Traditional Knowledge



Enhancing the Reintroduction of Plains Bison in Banff National Park Through Cultural Monitoring and Traditional Knowledge

Bill Snow, Acting Director of
Consultation
Stoney Tribal Administration

Photo: “Eyarhey Tatanga Woweyahgey Wakân” or Sacred Buffalo
Guardian Mountain translated into English as “Sacred Buffalo Guardian
Mountain.”

Indigenous Practices

- ❖ Interconnected priorities
- ❖ Guided by ancestral wisdom
- ❖ **“Indigenous existence is rooted in the connection to all beings of the world, including rocks, water, wind, plants, and animals”- Makawi**
- ❖ Indigenous peoples protect 80% of the Earth's biodiversity
- ❖ Continue to survive and thrive in spite of the ongoing legacy of colonialism



By William Snow

Equitable Collaboration

- ❖ Indigenous Nations represent themselves in decision-making
- ❖ Support Indigenous priorities and include Indigenous people from start to finish
- ❖ Barrier reduction: money, language, education
- ❖ Capacity building: co-learning
- ❖ Support Indigenous-led initiatives and studies
- ❖ Integrate Indigenous science, practices, and approaches
- ❖ Recognize role of Indigenous people in shaping environments
- ❖ Build long-term and trusting relationships



<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/fire/indigenous-fire-practices-shape-our-land.htm>



Decolonizing Methodologies

RESEARCH AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Linda Tuhiwai Smith



Indigenous Leadership

- ❖ Prevent erasure and appropriation
- ❖ Ownership over ancestral practices
- ❖ Effectively apply Indigenous practices
- ❖ Equitable collaboration
- ❖ Free, Prior & Informed Consent

The continual leadership of Indigenous people will help address the historical disparities that jeopardize the social-ecological resilience of grasslands.



ABC Conservation & Justice Fellowship

- ❖ Katia Carranza, 2022-2023
- ❖ New cohort in 2024
- ❖ Sonoran Joint Venture is sponsoring a fellow in 2024-2025

Rekindling Southern Kinships ~ Chihuahua, Mexico











<https://nativesolutionscenter.com/talking-circles>

Our Work

- ❖ Community Conversations
- ❖ Rekindling Southern Kinships
- ❖ Recommendations to the Central Grasslands Roadmap
- ❖ Education and collaborations
- ❖ Website:
www.indigenousskinshipcircle.com
- ❖ **Ways to support:** educate, fund, and collaborate

The resilience of Indigenous Peoples is essential to the resilience of grasslands.



Yakoke

www.indigenousskinshipcircle.com

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