



Restoring the Circle

Restoring the Partnership Between
Tribes and Buffalo as the Original
Climate Regulators through the
Partnership for Climate Smart
Commodities Program

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Louise Johns – Blackfeet Nation Buffalo

From the beginning of time, buffalo have been the original climate regular on this continent



Louise Johns – Blackfeet Nation Buffalo

Native people, whose stories all vary, all have a similar connection to the buffalo
It provided food, shelter, tools, clothing, weapons, and more importantly, a way of life



Louise Johns – Blackfeet Nation Buffalo

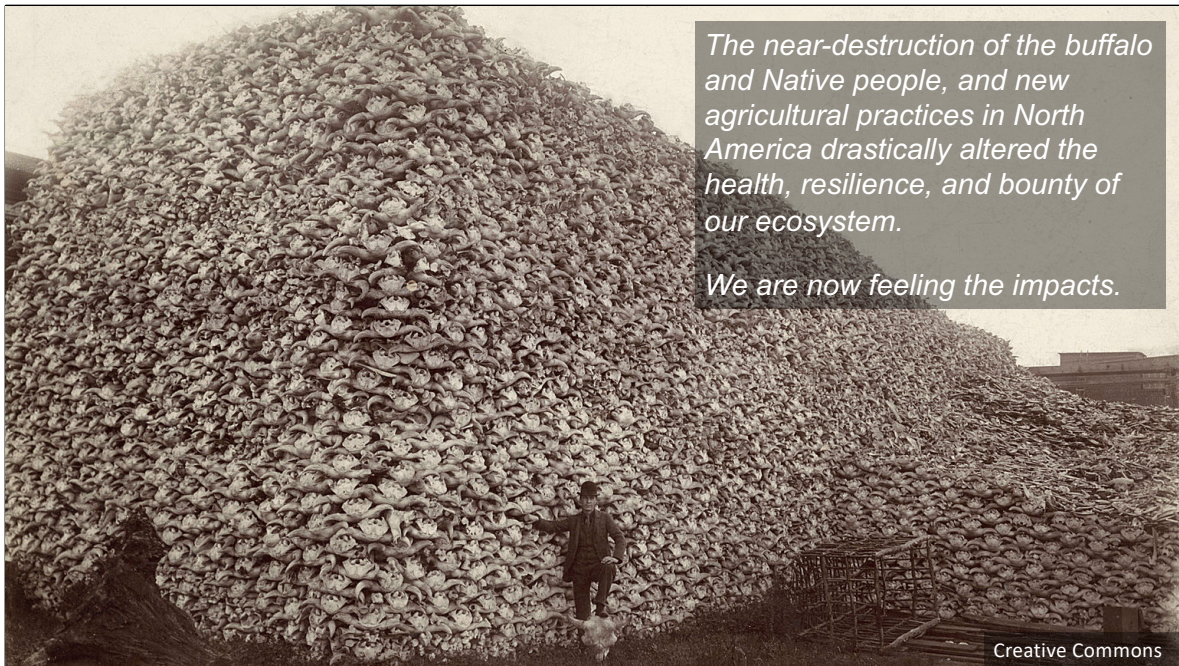
As the vast herds of buffalo moved across the continent, regenerating soil with their nutrient rich droppings, removing encroaching woody brush to keep grasslands healthy, creating vital habitat and diversity with their wallows, and pushing seeds into the soil and stampeding them to life



Their grazing simulates plant growth - They even have an enzyme which stimulates grass growth in their saliva, and leave behind a wave of greenup –



buffalo literally are the bringers of spring – thus each year, renewing the carbon cycle and restoring health and resilience to the ecosystem.



When that dynamic changed....

- Near-destruction of the buffalo (political) coincided with lots of harmful ag practices (tilling, row-cropping, petroleum-based chemical additions)
- Our entire ecosystem has changed with these two massive impacts – no buffalo, conversion to monoculture row crops

we are ALL now paying for those effects –so what can we do?



Though we may never have 30 million buffalo roaming from Mexico to Canada again, there are places where buffalo can regenerate our soils, reestablish native grasses, and remediate both the causes AND impacts of climate change

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Who is ITBC?

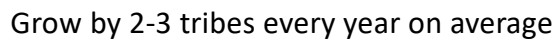


- 30 Years Serving Tribal and Buffalo Nations - began in 1992 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
- In 2009, it became a federally chartered Indian Organization under Section 17 of the IRA, becoming *InterTribal Buffalo Council*
- Headquartered in Rapid City, SD

Mission: "Restoring buffalo to Indian Country to preserve our historical, cultural, traditional and spiritual relationship for future generations."

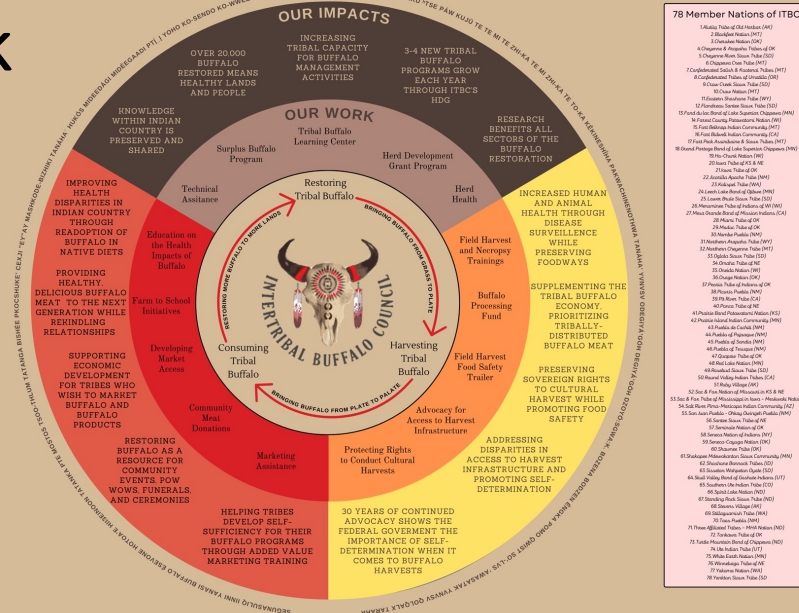


And growing!!



Our Work

1. Technical Assistance – Direct Services to Member-Tribes
2. Herd Development Grants – Funding for Member-Tribes
3. Surplus Buffalo Program
4. Supporting Economic Development and Marketing
5. Supporting Food Sovereignty and Health
6. Partnerships
7. Policy Work





Tribes began restoring buffalo to their lands through ITBC's assistance in 1992 – despite resources being limited.

There has never



It looked different in the beginning – resembling existing agricultural programs more than highlighting and restoring the unique impacts buffalo have on the landscape and the unique knowledge Tribes hold



The Problem: Federal programs have not caught up with recognizing buffalo as climate-smart and built the appropriate supports to incentivize this type of agriculture



*"Recognizing
the Role of
Buffalo
Production as a
Climate-Smart
Commodity"*



PARTNERSHIPS FOR
CLIMATE-SMART
COMMODITIES



This Project:

1. Articulates the ways in which buffalo are inherently climate-smart, and ways in which producers can move TOWARDS more of these practices
2. Develops an incentives program and technical assistance program for supporting the adoption of these practices
3. Develops a Tribal Buffalo Marketing Initiative which assists by supporting the reestablishment of the Tribal Buffalo Economy and markets buffalo as a climate-smart commodity







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