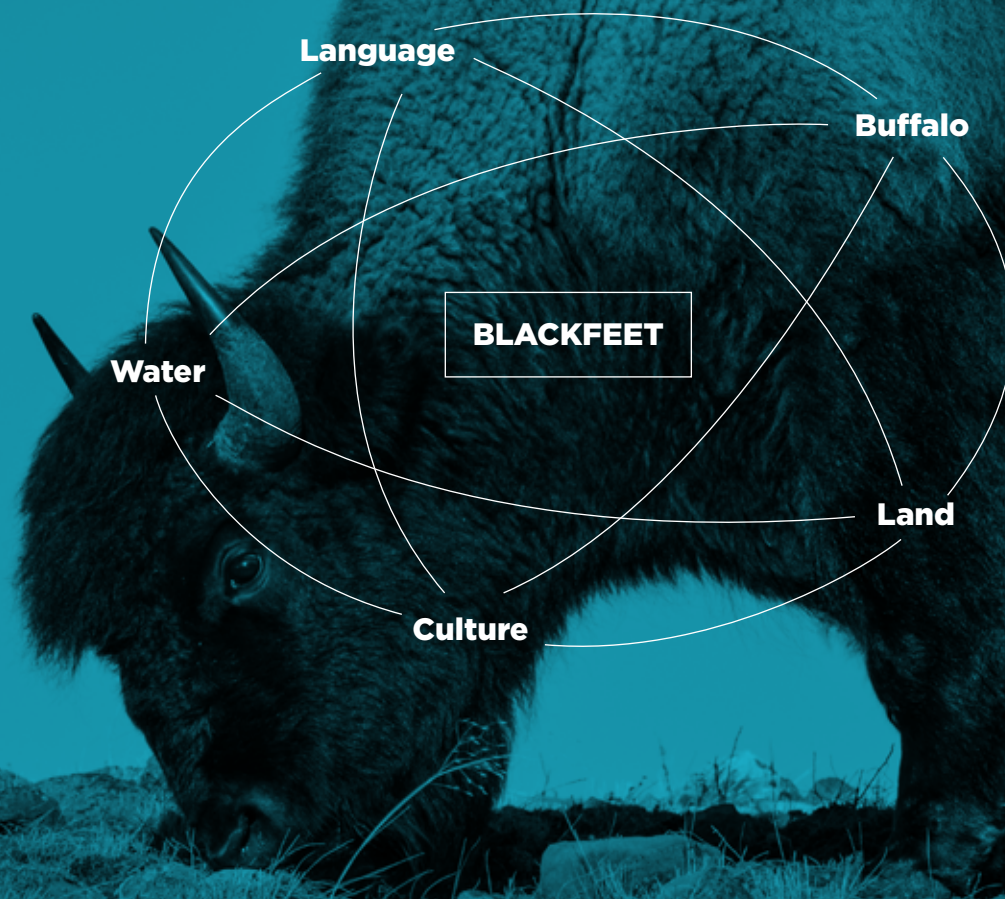




**linnii**  
BUFFALO SPIRIT CENTER



# RESTORING BALANCE

The Blackfeet people are keepers of the sacred medicine pipe bundles and caretakers of the *innii*. They are inseparable and forever interconnected through songs, stories, traditions, and ceremonies entrusted to select families and individuals who continue to reside on Blackfeet homelands. The Blackfeet people believe that when the ancient buffalo return to their homeland, so too will the Blackfeet language and culture.

Like the returning buffalo, the ***innii*-Buffalo Spirit Center** represents the strengthening of Blackfeet people, as well as the balanced ecosystem that defines our homelands.

# CARETAKERS OF THE LINNII

The Blackfeet people have occupied the lands in and around Montana's Rocky Mountain Front since the beginning of time. Today, most of the tribe's 17,000+ tribal members live on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation at the headwaters of the Missouri River and bordering the federally protected lands of Glacier National Park, Bob Marshall Wilderness Complex, and Badger-Two Medicine—home of Blackfeet's creation story.

For thousands of years, more than 30 million buffalo roamed freely within these lands, but populations neared extinction in the 1870s and 1880s due to the slaughter of wild buffalo by settlers.

The Blackfeet people and the buffalo are persevering.

Every year, the Blackfeet honor the buffalo through the Sun Dance Ceremony. **The Blackfeet's story with the buffalo needs a place—linnii-Buffalo Spirit Center—to be preserved, celebrated, and sustained for current and future generations.**

*"For thousands of years the buffalo has provided food, clothing, and shelter to the Blackfeet people. Our daily lives and our existence was because of this majestic animal. We must now take care of linnii and memorialize the true story of the Blackfeet and buffalo. We look to our friends in this journey."*

—HARRY BARNES, CHAIRMAN OF BLACKFEET NATION

## A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

In 2009, the **linnii Initiative** was launched by leaders of the four tribes that make up the Blackfoot Confederacy (Blackfeet Nation, Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, and Siksika Nation) to conserve traditional lands, protect Blackfeet culture, and create a home for the buffalo to return to.

Through extraordinary efforts and partnerships with Oakland Zoo, Wildlife Conservation Society, Inter-tribal Buffalo Council, Blackfeet Community College, and American Bison Society, 88 linnii were reintroduced to Blackfeet lands in 2016.





## WE ENVISION...

The Iinnii–Buffalo Spirit Center will be a place to share the story of how the people, buffalo, land, air, water, mountains, and the Blackfeet night sky and day sky stories are interwoven.

The Iinnii–Buffalo Spirit Center, planned to be located near the east entrance of Glacier National Park, will celebrate, preserve, and perpetuate the culture, language, and traditions of the Blackfeet people. It will also attract visitors who will learn about the preservation of lands, animals, cultures, and indigenous communities.

# A CENTER FOR ALL

The Innnii–Buffalo Spirit Center will include:

- **Archives and repository resource center** for public education and research, and the preservation, protection, and repatriation of cultural artifacts, including stories, songs, and ceremonies.
- **Teaching program center** to share the story of the Blackfeet people with visitors from all over the world who visit Glacier National Park and Blackfeet country.
- **Educational center** to teach children and community members about Blackfeet culture and language through traditional and non-traditional learning environments, including elder storytelling and interactive exhibits.
- **Auditorium** for speakers, scholars, elders, and contemporary and traditional dance troupes to perform, as well as a comfortable setting for concerts, film festivals, and other audio and visual presentations.
- **Cultural tourism** to showcase authentic traditional and contemporary Blackfeet visual arts, fine arts, and cultural arts that will strengthen the Blackfeet economy.
- **Ceremonial lodge** to serve the need for cultural and spiritual leaders to conduct ceremonies in a secure and conducive setting to perpetuate Blackfeet cultural practices.



“Our Blackfeet stories about who we are, about the buffalo and other land and water animals, plants, the stars, and about our songs, dances, and other sacred knowledge need to be safeguarded and carried on. We need a place to keep them. We need a space to teach our children and visitors who visit our sacred mountains. We can’t wait any longer, we need to act now!”

—TYSON RUNNING WOLF, BLACKFEET TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBER

# OUR NATION

In recent years, the Blackfeet have been successful in protecting our lands, animals, waters, and traditions.

Along with the reintroduction of buffalo to traditional lands in April 2016, tribal members voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Blackfeet Water Compact, reaffirming the Tribe's water rights.

The Blackfeet Nation spearheaded the cancellation of the last remaining oil and gas leases in the Badger-Two Medicine area, which threatened the land, water, animals, and the region at the center of the Blackfeet people's creation story.

Badger-Two Medicine is an expanse of mountains, ridges, river valleys, and wetlands. Because of its pristine conditions, the Blackfeet Nation recently announced plans to reintroduce buffalo to this sacred area.





# WE NEED YOUR HELP TO BUILD THE IINNII-BUFFALO SPIRIT CENTER

Your investment expands beyond the preservation and promotion of the buffalo, it's perpetuating Blackfeet culture for future generations and promoting the preservation of lands and wildlife.

**Your donation will help us build the Iinnii-Buffalo Spirit Center and make our vision a reality.**

Your donation will designate you as a member of the Iinnii-Buffalo Spirit Center's *Medicine Lodge Honor Circle*, which will in turn help us in our fundraising endeavors with additional community support and potential matching gift appeals.

The Iinnii-Buffalo Spirit Center campaign will honor planned gifts through charitable bequests and other such gifting instruments. Including the Iinnii-Buffalo Spirit Center in your will as a planned gift will ensure that future generations will enjoy learning about how the Blackfeet and the Buffalo are inseparable.



BLACKFEET NATION

## IF WE ARE ABLE TO BRING BACK THE BLACKFEET CULTURE AND LANGUAGE, WHAT MORE CAN WE ACCOMPLISH?

**For questions or more information, contact:**

**Ferlin Clark, Ph.D.**, Campaign Manager  
fclark@blackfeetnation.com  
406.338.7521 ext. 2322

**Kendall Edmo**, Campaign Associate  
kedmo@blackfeetnation.com  
406.338.7521 ext. 2304

“Giving and supporting one another with food, tobacco, prayers, songs, time, energy, and meditation for the purpose of healing and making one whole is at the heart of our traditional practices and ceremonies. This practice is our traditional philanthropy.”

—JOHN MURRAY, BLACKFEET ELDER