



AT THE BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST | 1.30.2026 - 1.30.2028



Greetings & Salutations.

Throughout the past decade, you have been among the most generous and loyal supporters of the Buffalo Bill Center of the West. I write today with an update, a commitment to more consistently and fully engage you in the life of the Center, and to once again challenge your philanthropic leadership. The Center is on the cusp of a significant milestone, with an opportunity to transform the visitor experience with the installation of modern technology features.

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is synonymous with the legendary stories, values, and conservation ethos of the American West and Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem. Our five accredited museums: the Whitney Western Art Museum, Buffalo Bill Museum, Plains Indian Museum, Draper Natural History Museum, and Cody Firearms Museum – along with the McCracken Research Library and exemplary Education Program – welcome a broad audience of devoted friends and visitors, many destined to explore the wilderness of Yellowstone National Park.

As our nation prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary in 2026, the Center is planning one of the most ambitious and engaging exhibitions in its history: Buffalo Nation. This experience will permeate every corner of the Center while engaging our audience in new and exciting ways.

- » Each of the five museums and McCracken Research Library will feature special **Spotlight Exhibits** celebrating Buffalo Nation.
- » The **Anne and Charles Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery** will showcase significant objects from Center collections, interactive storyteller video segments, and dramatic photography from acclaimed Yellowstone ecosystem artists.
- » The **John Bunker Sands Photography Gallery** will highlight Riders of the Buffalo Nations (Native American rodeo) images by Doug Hancock, and an exhibit by iconic Yellowstone photographer Tom Murphy.
- » The entry to the Center will be transformed into a hub of activity and home to new technology, with a large high-definition screen and audio broadcasting bison film footage.



» A video narrated by Ken Burns, with footage from **The American Buffalo**, will be featured.

The budget for Buffalo Nation is \$1.4M and the Center will invest another \$1.5M in new technology – a total project budget of \$2.9M. Thanks to the leadership of three Trustees, \$1.45M in new gifts and commitments have been secured toward this total and is the basis for a 1:1 challenge. The time is now. I invite you to join us in meeting this \$1.45M challenge and transforming the visitor experience at the Center.

Please reach out to **Steve Mount** (stevem@centerofthewest.org, **307-578-4013**) or me to discuss the impact your philanthropic leadership will have on **Buffalo Nation**, this technology transformation, and how we engage visitors at the Center of the West. Enclosed are an exhibition precis, sponsorship levels for **Buffalo Nation**, and a menu of tech improvements to be made at the Center. Your leadership will prove impactful and make all the difference.

With appreciation – and the hope we have an opportunity to welcome you back to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West soon.

All best regards,



REBECCA WEST
Executive Director



Photograph (c) Tom Murphy

PRECIS

Imagine gazing over vast grasslands stretching as far as the eye can see. Countless buffalo lumber, wallow, and graze as dust rises around the enormous animals, and the scent of sagebrush hangs in the air. Deep bellows echo through the herd, mixing with birdsong in a scene that defies time.

Buffalo once numbered 30 to 60 million across North America. Within 100 years of signing the Declaration of Independence in 1776, they faced extinction. Today, bison once again have a growing presence, but what does the future hold for the buffalo?

The Buffalo Bill Center of the West welcomes you to *Buffalo Nation*, a special immersive exhibition recognizing America's 250th anniversary. The exhibition will surround you with an exciting sensory experience revealing the buffalo's significance. This mighty creature survived the expansion and building of the Nation and bears witness to cultural and ecological change. Its persistence is symbolic and significant for America's future.

Buffalo Nation opens in early 2026 with six Spotlight Exhibitions featuring



Robert Martinez (Northern Arapaho/Chicano). **Buffalo Bull (Heeneecée)**, 2020. Acrylic and oil on linen. Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Gift of The Alexander Bodini Foundation in memory of Alexander Bodini. NA. 705.10B



James Prosek. **American Bison**, 2014. Watercolor, gouache & colored pencil on tea-stained paper. BBCW. William E. Weiss Memorial Fund Purchase. 3.16.2

exceptional objects from the Center of the West's collections. Artifacts, works of fine art, photography, firearms, natural history specimens, archival treasures, and digital content will illuminate various aspects of human-buffalo interaction across time and consider our shared future from multiple perspectives. In the spring, the entry to the Center will be transformed into a hub of activity with innovative technology and compelling audio-visuals showcasing bison at larger-than-life scale. The captivating primary exhibition – occupying 450 square feet within and beyond the Anne & Charles Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery – opens summer 2026.

EXHIBITION THEMES

The exhibition is centered on four main themes:

- » The buffalo is the **past, present, and future of the West**. Its story precedes but was profoundly shaped by nation-building.
- » The buffalo has **significance to diverse peoples** and universal meanings among many cultures.
- » The buffalo's **story is tied to place** and deeply rooted in the American West.
- » **Buffalo persist** as a physical presence on American lands as a powerful symbol in stories, legends, and belief systems.

In 2016, the U.S. Department of the Interior chose the buffalo as the national mammal of the United States, citing its representation of “unity, resilience, and health.” America’s 250th anniversary offers a timely occasion to celebrate the species and dig deeper into the various meanings humans have conferred upon the animal. *Buffalo Nation* will relay strong, resonant messages about topics of great relevance to citizens of the West and the world as we celebrate America’s founding and its place in a global society.

A headlining experience amid nationwide celebrations in 2026, the exhibition’s impact extends well beyond the anniversary with timeless content relevant and exciting to audiences everywhere. *Buffalo Nation* will move and inspire, catalyzing emotional connections to key issues in ecological, species, and cultural preservation. Principally, this project will encourage dialogue around the buffalo restoration efforts of regional tribes, celebrating the enduring connections to bison among Native Peoples today.

Through science, art, oral and written histories, film, museum collections, and dynamic interactivity, *Buffalo Nation* brings the distinct and varied significances of the buffalo into focus and shines new light on its iconic presence on western lands, the epicenter of its saga.

KEY VISITOR EXPERIENCES

A suite of Spotlight Exhibitions will kick off the *Buffalo Nation* exhibition experience. Located throughout the Center of the West’s campus, these **six Spotlight**



Ken Blackbird (Assiniboin Sioux). **Buffalo Shadows, Crow Country near Fort Smith, MT**, 1999. Photograph on Fujichrome film. BBCW, MS 426 Ken Blackbird Collection. P.426.05367

Exhibitions will be presented in each of the institution’s museums and the library. Each Spotlight will be unique, offering entry points into the bison’s story through the Center of the West’s interdisciplinary collections and inviting visitors to find surprising and meaningful connections to the exhibition’s themes.

Beginning in late summer 2026, the Spotlight Exhibitions will point to the larger, primary presentation of **Buffalo Nation in the Anne & Charles Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery**. Visitors will be

greeted by a **welcoming video featuring**

Ken Burns. The entire space will be filled with hands-on activities, games, compelling object displays, engaging interpretation, and opportunities for reflection. The immersive exhibit design will transport visitors to the bison’s habitat through floor-to-ceiling photographic murals featuring the work of renowned Yellowstone photographer Tom Murphy, and a combination of cutting-edge technologies and tactile opportunities, from touch screens to touchable bison hide, horn, and bones. A beanbag-filled **Bison Wallow** invites visitors to relax, play, and learn about these prairie features, and a segmented model of a bison chip (bison scat) will offer an amusing entry point for studying the animal’s diet and the surprisingly significant role manure plays in the environment.

Four Storyteller Modules encourage visitors to learn more about bison from different perspectives through video kiosks that simulate conversations with an on-screen Storyteller. Visitors can “ask” a question and hear responses in a “Choose your Own Adventure” format. **Storytellers include:**

- » A linguist / cultural preservationist / education consultant from the Wind River Indian Reservation (Eastern Shoshone)
- » A Wyoming-based bison rancher
- » The Executive Director of a tribal non-profit from the Wind River Indian Reservation (Northern Arapaho/Northern Paiute)
- » Yellowstone National Park’s lead bison biologist



Photograph (c) Tom Murphy



Ken Blackbird. **Indian Cowboy at Buffalo Roundup near Fort Smith, MT**, 1999. BBCW, P.426.02646



Buffalo Bill and Bison, BBCW, P.69.1002



John Hitchcock (left) adds a dragonfly to *Buffalo, Deer, Bird*, 2025.

The momentum of *Buffalo Nation* is underway with two inaugural **summer 2025 artist residencies**. A stunning new mural in the Center of the West's Plains Indian Museum by John Hitchcock (Kiowa/Comanche) and Emily Arthur is titled *Buffalo, Deer, Bird*. Installed collaboratively with community members, the artwork celebrates the deep bonds between land, people, and buffalo.



Draper Natural History Museum Curator Corey Anco (right) and Assistant Curator Amy Phillips (left) with Lee "the Boneman" Post and the partially reconstructed bison skeleton.

A second residency with Lee "the Boneman" Post resulted in an articulated bison skeleton, which will be displayed in the Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery. The specimen was transferred from Yellowstone National Park and prepared by the Center of the West's Draper Natural History Museum staff with volunteers over two weeks. It provides a fascinating glimpse at the anatomy of this magnificent creature.



John Isaiah Pepion (Blackfeet). *When the Buffalo Came Back*, 2018. Collage. BBCW. Gift of The Alexander Bodini Foundation in memory of Alexander Bodini. NA.705.1

Both installations celebrate the energy and unique significance of the bison and will be major highlights of the *Buffalo Nation* exhibition.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

The Center of the West will host an exciting lineup of public programs and educational activities that will extend through the exhibition's run and complement Wyoming's state and community commemorations of America's semi-quicentennial.

Popular program formats like the Draper Natural History Museum's Lunchtime Expedition series, school and summer programs, member and community programs, and artist-in-residency programs will focus on the exhibition themes.

The Center of the West's Interpretive Education department will continue to build its extensive bison-related resources, lesson plans, and guided experiences. Many of these offerings are designed to help K-12 teachers and students meet Montana and Wyoming's Indian Education for All Social Studies standards. New field trip offerings (virtual and in-person) will include herd visits and other buffalo-focused topics for children and adults alike.

Special events tailored to *Buffalo Nation* may include film and documentary

screenings, innovative speaker series and round table sessions, cultural events celebrating Indigenous music and dance, buffalo-themed culinary events, and more.

COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Outside partners have provided integral help in developing *Buffalo Nation* and continue to lend their valuable expertise and resources. In addition to those named above, partners include:

» An Exhibition Advisory Council including selected representatives from the Center of the West's Trustee and Advisor rosters working alongside others from a well-balanced mix of industries and backgrounds

» Wyoming Indian Middle School students and faculty, who will create a special display for *Buffalo Nation* in the Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery based on a year-long bison-focused project

» Photographer Tom Murphy and Yellowstone National Park senior bison biologist Chris Geremia as authors of a new publication on bison (to be released August 2026) with a special edition for *Buffalo Nation* that includes a foreword by Center of the West trustee and UC Berkeley-based wildlife ecologist, Arthur D. Middleton



COLLABORATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS CONTINUED

- » Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative and Antlers Ranch as site hosts for filming new video content for *Buffalo Nation*
- » Many other voices from across our region who will contribute to written and audio-visual content in gallery and online, and as providers or hosts of special programs
- » AVI-SPL, a global, award-winning audio-visual integrator
- » Fire Tribe, LLC, a leading video production and marketing company

EVALUATION

Because we value our audiences and stakeholders, beginning summer 2024, we conducted front-end evaluation among in-person visitors at the Center of the West. This type of early evaluation was exploratory and helped to guide major decisions. We conducted in-depth verbal surveys with individuals and small groups as well as informal data-gathering activities, like voting stations. The exhibition Advisory Council provides active and direct evaluation of exhibition components throughout the project.

Evaluation will continue throughout the project to ensure the best experience and delivery of accurate information. It may include online visitor surveys, feedback stations, and one-to-one contact to gather impressions from on- and off-site visitors.



Left: Cotsiogo (Sosore). **Painted Hide**. Museum purchase, Mary Jester Allen Collection. NA.702.31. Right: Humped Wolf (Apsálooke). Inset: **Shield**. The Paul Dyck Plains Indian Buffalo Culture Collection. NA.108.136. Both Buffalo Bill Center of the West.

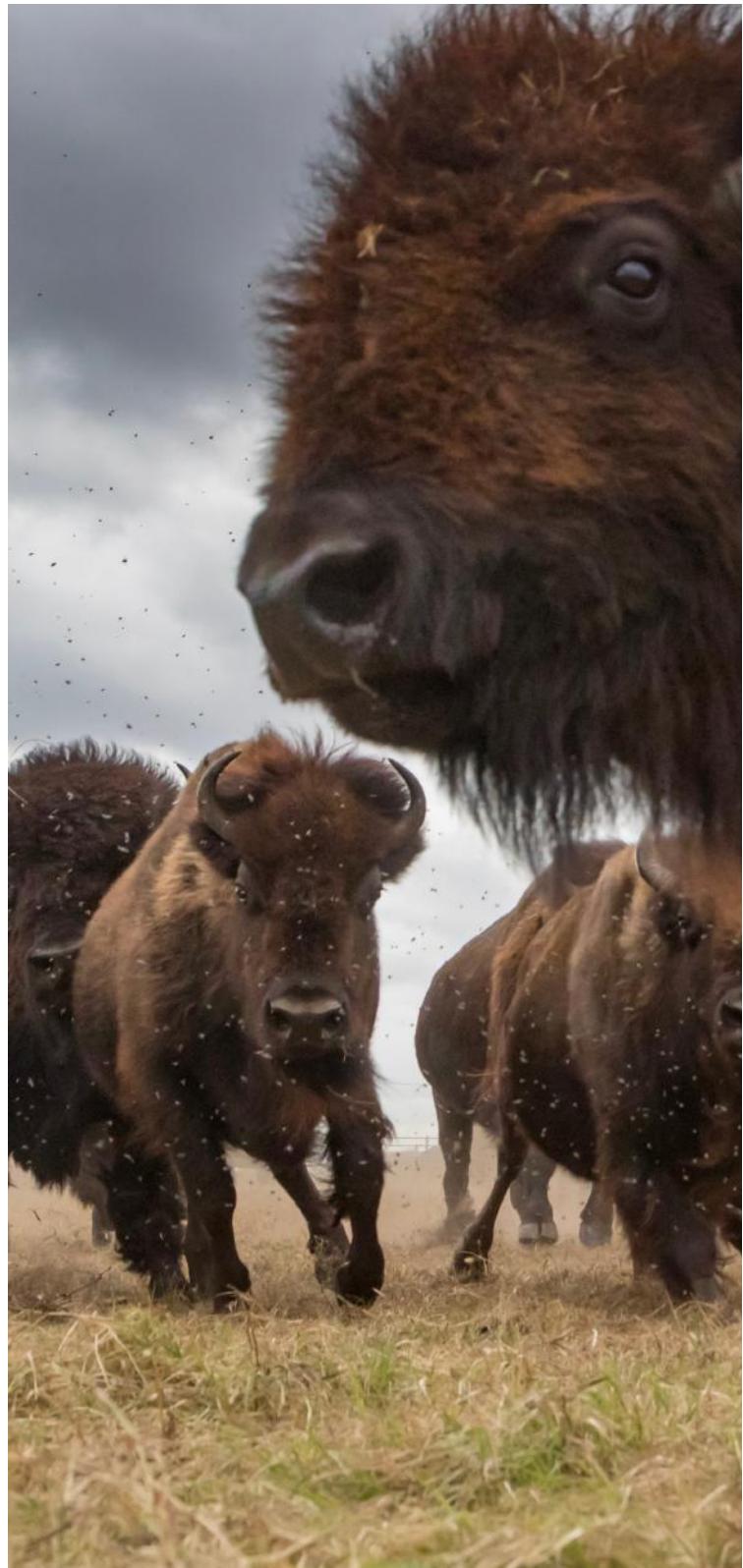
SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Buffalo Bill Center is a leading authority on the American West, dedicated to preserving and sharing the region's rich history, arts and cultures, and enduring values. As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary, we are preparing for a special exhibition and transformative experience: *Buffalo Nation*.

The American Bison is synonymous with the West and once canvassed the landscape. Imagine gazing over vast grasslands with countless buffalo lumbering, wallowing, and grazing in a haze of dust – their deep bellows echoing through the herd. Buffalo roamed the western American plains long before our nation was founded, narrowly survived its expansion, and bore witness to significant cultural and ecological change. *Buffalo Nation* will prove a captivating experience, with a presence throughout the Center's museums and library, helping to explore the question: what does the future hold for this iconic species?

Central to the visitor experience is new immersive technology in *Collier Rendezvous Hall*, which will engage visitors upon arrival. In the *Duncan Special Exhibition Gallery*, visitors will meet four storytellers through interactive videos and learn more about bison through displays of Center collections and special features. Throughout the Center's permanent galleries, six unique and focused spotlight exhibits will illuminate even more about bison. This groundbreaking exhibition will engage numerous special partners – including Tribal communities and Yellowstone National Park, will attract a broad and diverse audience over its two-year run, and will include a series of special events and educational programs for audiences of all ages. Sponsorship of *Buffalo Nation* is essential to exhibit development and success. All sponsors will be celebrated on-site, at special events and programs, and in printed materials – acknowledgment for bringing the *Buffalo Nation* experience to life.

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION
AND GENEROSITY.**



SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

» SIGNATURE SPONSOR: \$500,000

Buffalo Nation is a world-class exhibit designed to celebrate our nation's 250th year while amplifying the Center's voice and transforming the visitor experience. The leadership of one *Signature Sponsor* will help strengthen our understanding of the American Bison and broadcast the stories of the Indigenous Peoples whose cultural identities are so closely tied to this species.

» PREMIERE SPONSORS: \$250,000 (multiple available)

Buffalo Nation is unlike any exhibit ever presented at the Center of the West, revolutionary in its presence across museums and in how it embraces technology to engage audiences. *Premiere Sponsors* are leading the effort to engage our community in new and exciting ways.

» RENDEZVOUS HALL SPONSOR: \$150,000

The *Rendezvous Hall Sponsor* will connect *Buffalo Nation* elements found throughout the Center and its museums - utilizing multimedia elements to enhance our guests' experience and featuring a video narrated by Ken Burns, with footage from *The American Buffalo*.

» GATEWAY SPONSOR: \$125,000

The *Gateway Sponsor* will help generate excitement for *Buffalo Nation* where our community, visitors, and the Center intersect - building anticipation for this unique experience with exhibit elements outside our walls.

» STORYTELLER SPONSOR: \$100,000 (four available)

The voices and stories of those with a personal or cultural connection to the American Bison matter. Our *Storyteller Sponsors* will help share the importance of buffalo to Indigenous Peoples, Yellowstone National Park, and local ranchers.

» BUFFALO WALLOW SPONSOR: \$75,000

Modern museum exhibits are often defined by their use of technology - but all visitors continue to benefit and learn from tactile experiences. The *Buffalo Wallow Sponsor* will support an area specifically designed for children, with associated tactile experiences throughout the *Buffalo Nation* exhibit.

» CULTURAL REFLECTIONS SPONSOR: \$50,000

Buffalo Nation will prove an educational and engaging experience for Center guests. The *Cultural Reflections Sponsor* will support areas for guests to reflect and share thoughts on this experience, enhancing the exhibit in real time while informing program evaluation.

» GALLERY SPONSOR: \$50,000 (six available)

Buffalo Nation will have a presence in every corner of the Center, with *Gallery Sponsors* connecting museum objects and interpretive elements found throughout the Center's museums and its research library to themes featured in this groundbreaking exhibit.

» YELLOWSTONE ICON SPONSOR: \$50,000

Tom Murphy, an internationally acclaimed photographer based in Montana, has made Yellowstone his home. His award-winning nature and wildlife photography will be prominently featured as wall murals in *Buffalo Nation* – and celebrated in a solo show running January - December 2027.

» VIP OPENING SPONSOR: \$50,000

» SPEAKER SERIES SPONSOR: \$50,000

» EXHIBIT MARKETING SPONSOR: \$50,000

» PUBLIC OPENING SPONSOR: \$25,000

» CODY BUSINESS PARTNERS: \$25,000

» RIDERS OF THE BUFFALO NATIONS: \$25,000

Riders of the Buffalo Nations (April-December 2026) is a photography exhibition featuring Indigenous youth and communities, through the lens of Native American Rodeo, by Amsterdam-based Doug Hancock. Buffalo Riders were highly skilled horsemen who rode alongside buffalo during the hunt. Buffalo Nations are tribes who maintain their cultural connections to the American Bison.

To discuss your non-profit partnership of *Buffalo Nation* at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, please contact Steve Mount, Director of Philanthropy, at stevem@centerofthewest.org or (307) 578-4013.

REIMAGINING THE CENTER INVESTING IN NEW TECHNOLOGY

Buffalo Nation is a special exhibition which will be hosted by the Buffalo Bill Center of the West (Cody, WY), from 2026-2028 honoring our nation's 250th anniversary, while exploring what the future holds for this iconic species.

To coincide with this special exhibition, the Center of the West will invest significantly in technology and the visitor experience – driving interest in the exhibit and Center programs more broadly while ensuring guests have a modern and memorable museum experience.



❖ **Skyline Lighting – \$130k**

Forty (40) exterior LED accent fixtures, integrated with control to Horizon Display, will accent the exterior of the Center of the West, attracting attention and new audiences.



❖ **Horizon Display – \$970k**

This large format 1.8mm LED display will encircle and transform the entry to the Center of the West, featuring cinema quality film capturing visitor attention upon arrival while broadening our ability to promote and host special programs.



❖ **Digital Art Wall – \$125k**

Five (5) screens of varying size will feature digital art displays as you enter the Center, coordinated to feature rotating digital art content and new acquisitions.



❖ **Familiar Figures – \$145k**

These transparent 3.9mm LED screens, in the entry windows at the Center of the West, will provide an opportunity to feature images related to museum programs, such as *Buffalo Nation*, or figures associated with the museums or library, such as Buffalo Bill Cody and Annie Oakley.



» **Living Artifact Case – \$205k**

Four (4) digital artifact cases with transparent touch OLED displays and audio features will allow guests to explore Center collections in an entirely new way – rotating, examining, and understanding objects in new and unique ways.



» **Storybook Projections – \$65k**

These five (5) short throw projectors, mounted to the ceiling near the entrance of each museum, will feature looping and interactive content, welcoming guests into each museum.

» **Donor Wall – \$70k**

Good stewardship – acknowledging our donors in an effective and meaningful manner – is essential to the Center. These four (4) vertical strip 1.8mm LED displays will be an extension of the Horizon Display and allow for a proper THANK YOU.

» **Exterior LED Banners – \$200k**

Two (2) exterior 6.8mm LED banner screens, with custom mounting and trim, will connect guests upon arrival with current Center activities and programs.

» **Media Servers & Rack Equipment – \$440k**

It can't all be sexy. The nuts and bolts of this new technology, this server system will be responsible for hosting all content at the Center – the Horizon display, Familiar Figures, Exterior LED Banners, and Skyline Lighting.

» **Audio Reinforcement – \$110k**

Six (6) full range column array speakers will provide audio coverage to the entire Center entrance area, primarily supporting the Horizon Display and ideal for special events and announcements.

To discuss your leadership support of new technology at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, please contact Steve Mount, Director of Philanthropy, at stevem@centerofthewest.org or (307) 578-4013.

Thank you for your consideration!

BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST

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Cody, Wyoming

