

FORT WASHAKIE SCHOOL

THE OFFICE OF
INDIAN EDUCATION



MANIKIT BOZHAN DAVAY

Five Buffalo Days

TSANGU TESUNHANIGANDE

Having Positive Thoughts

MAY 2026

LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF INDIAN
EDUCATION



May 15, 2026
Tsan Davay

The Office of Indian Education is pleased to bring Manikit Bozhan Davay (Five Buffalo Days) to students at Fort Washakie School. My name is Randy Nagitsy, and I am the Indian Education Shoshone Coordinator. In my first year in this role, I set a goal to reintroduce Manikit Bozhan Davay to our community and school. Planning for this week-long event, scheduled for May 4 to May 8, 2026, began in September 2025. OIE Co-Coordiators attended the Wind River Buffalo Initiative strategic planning meeting from September 3 to 5, 2025, where they reviewed the organization's history, developed a vision, identified challenges, set strategic directions, and established an implementation calendar and task teams.

As a result of the WRTBI strategic planning meeting, we scheduled Five Buffalo Days at Fort Washakie School in partnership with our collaborators and met our initial deadline by forming a planning group in November 2025. Since then, we have engaged the community to build support and confirmed the event date with school leadership. Achieving this milestone is important to OIE as it reflects Fort Washakie School's core values and strengthens our connection to the community.

The event included cultural rotations such as cedar roll-making, traditional games, dosa cough-drop-making, drum demonstrations, frybread contests, ancestral food knowledge, and a Shoshone Indian Day Queen informational booth. Additional sessions focused on dosa cough-drop-making and distribution. These activities were made possible through collaboration with principals and staff, who guided students through the stations and schedule. OIE also partnered with MMIR307, a local Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives organization, to organize a walk for students and invite the community to raise awareness about Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives.

The event opened with a cedar ceremony and a walk, offering three routes for PK-2, 3-5, and 6-12th grades. Rose Brockie, 5th-grade teacher, coordinated a fashion show in which students wore traditional regalia, with their families cheering. Michelle Oberly, a fourth-grade teacher, organized a campus parade led by the Arapaho Warriors Legion Post 96. Lisa Moss from FWES arranged a "day at the museum" for students to share family artifacts with peers, staff, and the community. FWHS partnered with organizations to host an outdoor expo, giving students opportunities to visit stations and participate in various activities.

We concluded the week with a powwow to celebrate and mark the end of our festivities. Dosa Hill served as the head young man dancer, and Falyn Tidzump as the head young lady dancer. American Legion Richard Pogue Post #81 led the grand entry and posting of the colors. OIE also partnered with Doya Natsu to conduct Qualtrics surveys for students and community members to gather feedback for planning the 2027 Manikit Bozhan Davay. The Office of Indian Education is honored to provide this opportunity, which would not have been possible without the collaboration of the following tribal programs/organizations. Huwiiyhu for helping make Manikit Bozhan Davay a success!



Usen Taka,
Randy Nagitsy
Randy Nagitsy, OIE Shoshone Coordinator



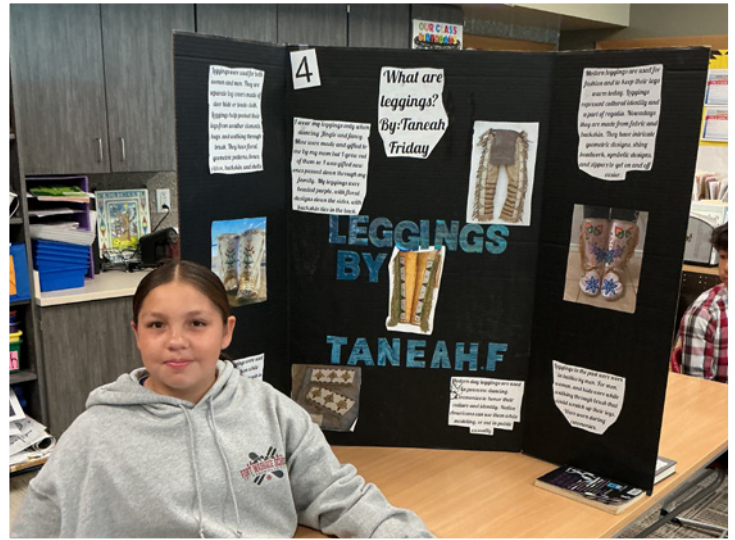
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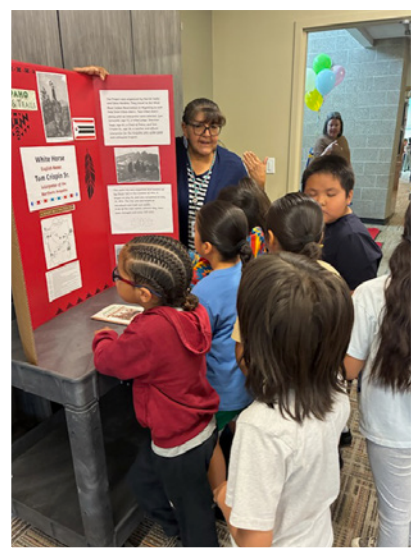
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This report was prepared for Fort Washakie Schools in partnership with Doya Natsu Healing Center and Allyson Kelley & Associates PLLC. Information contained in this report was created, curated, and presented for the good of all- to live a good life and to be inspired by young people, culture, and community that heals.



"My early memories of 5 Buffalo days was my grandma rushing around the house...gathering dishes and supplies just to jump in to help. The community effort was a lot different with that generation of people."
- Randy Nagitsy, 2026 Indian Relay Podcast





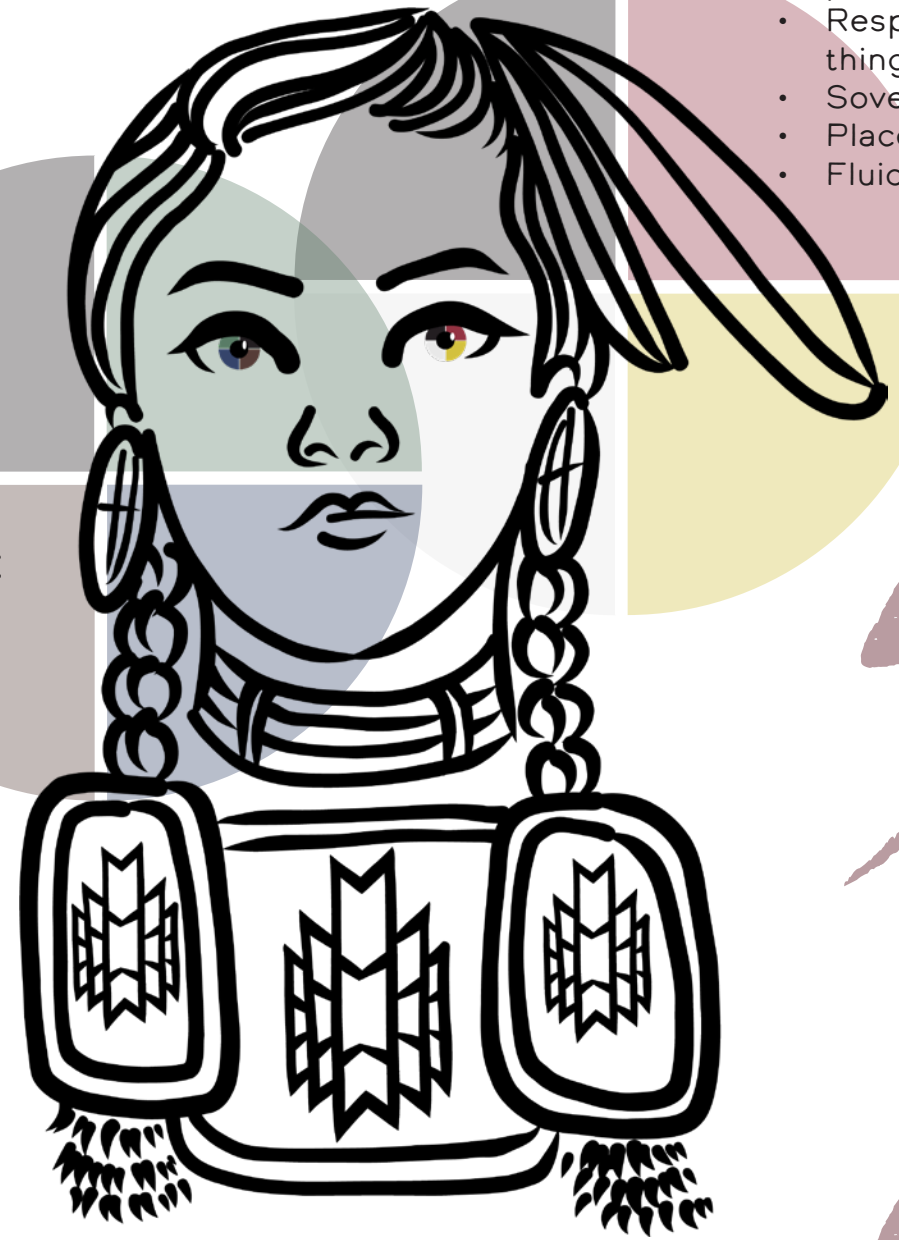
TWO-EYED SEEING

INDIGENOUS SCIENCE

- Subjectivity
- Holistic- for the benefit of Eastern Shoshone people place
- Respect for all things
- Sovereignty
- Place based
- Fluid

WESTERN SCIENCE

- Objectivity
- Individualistic & reductionist
- Respect based on conditions
- Scientific Method
- Dependence
- Discipline Based
- Time Limited



WE USE A TWO-EYED SEEING APPROACH TO DOCUMENT

WHAT IS HAPPENING,

WHAT WE ARE LEARNING IN OUR COMMUNITY,

AND WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE.

We asked students to complete a survey about the event using Qualtrics, an online survey platform. Here is what they shared.

ELEMENTARY
STUDENT SURVEY
RESULTS

66 elementary school students completed the survey about their experiences with the “Five Buffalo Days” event hosted by Fort Washakie Schools. Students ranged in age from 6 to 11, representing Kindergarten to 5th grades; most students were 3rd (38%) and 4th (35%) graders. All but one student reported being American Indian; Tribes represented included Northern Arapaho, Eastern Shoshone, Cheyenne, Blackfoot, Lakota, and Sioux.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS’
FAVORITE ACTIVITIES

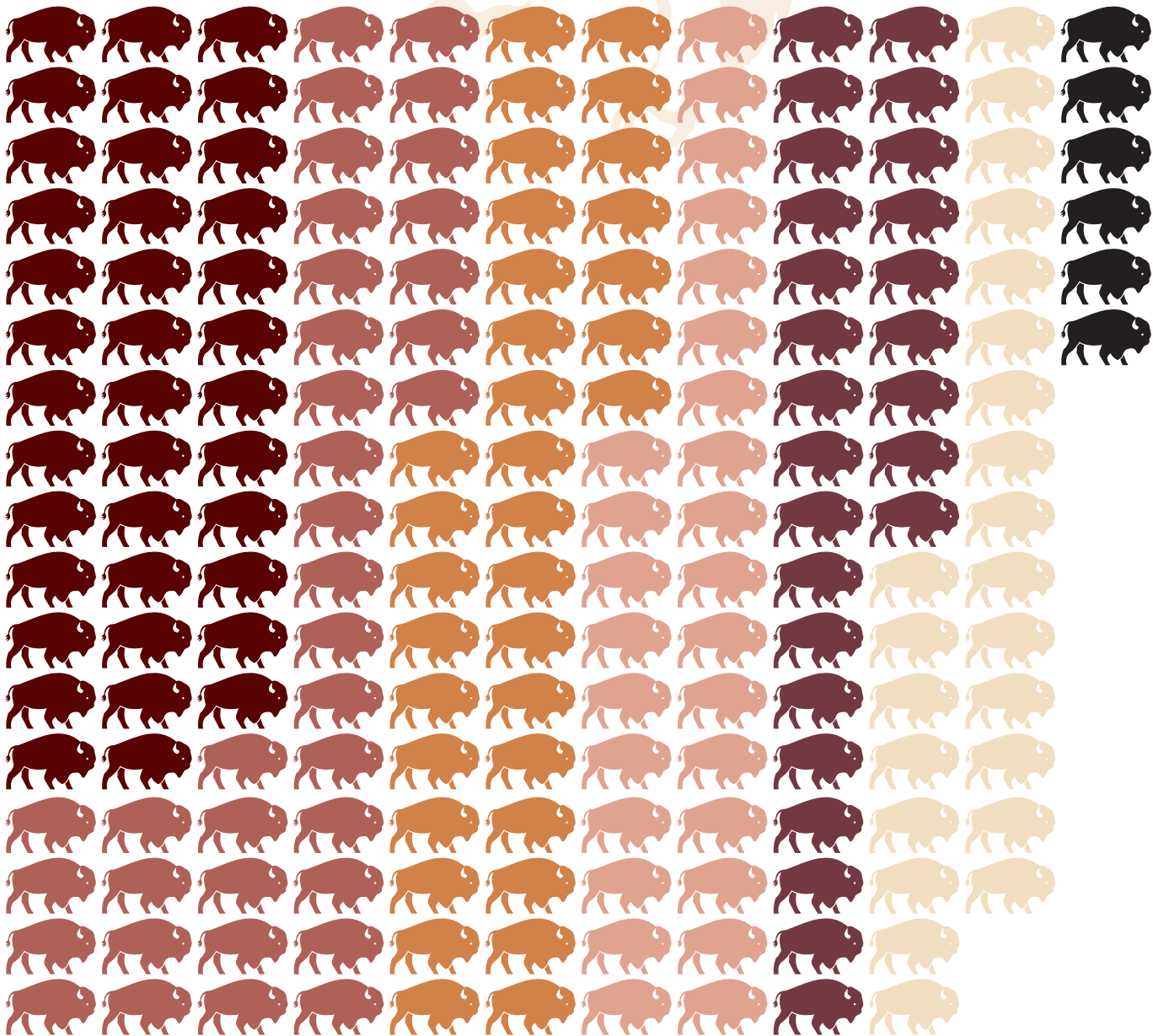
*32% of students reported additional favorite activities, including “Hiding the Buffalo,” playing other games, and playing sports with friends.



ELEMENTARY STUDENTS ENJOYED EVENTS

Among the events offered this week for the elementary school, students were asked if they enjoyed the following events (yes/no). The Fort Washakie School Social Pow Wow had 38 students (58% of total responses) report that they enjoyed this event. The Outdoor Expo (56%) and Cultural Activities (50%) closely followed this.

- FWS Social Pow Wow = 38 (58%)
- Outdoor Expo = 37 (56%)
- Cultural Activities = 33 (50%)
- Fashion Show = 27 (41%)
- Museum Display = 26 (39%)
- Buffalo Camp = 23 (35%)
- Buffalo Jump = 6 (10%)



88%

Learned about their culture.

"I learned how they cut the skin off the buffalo and harvested it"

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS LEARNED

Elementary school students were also asked what they learned during the Five Buffalo Days week of events. Most students (88%) reported learning about their culture and learning about their health (85%). They also reported learning about their spirit, their strengths, and healthy choices (79%).

85%

Learned about their health.

ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WILL REMEMBER

Elementary school students were asked to report what they will remember most about this week of events. This item was open-ended and students typed in their most memorable moments. The most popular responses included experiences with the Buffalo (11).

79%

Learned about their spirit, strengths, and healthy choices.

"About all of the fun and laughter and greatness I felt and how amazing it was and I will truly remember every activity and games and real fun! I will never forget those amazing days in the summer."

Students reported that they would also most likely remember the Pow Wow (10) noting they would remember "Dancing at the Pow Wow," and "learning about drums." Similarly, students mentioned that the Outdoor Expo (10) was most memorable, noting "I will remember the baskets, games, and the outdoor expo," "I will not forget about the Expo and the projects and the parade," and they liked the "outdoor expo and making frybread." Some students noted that they will remember the joy and fun they had at the Five Buffalo Days (9). Students also reported additional memories including learning about Native Culture (8), the food (7), the Fashion Show (6), activities and games provided (5), and learning about health and medicine (3).



FORT WASHAKIE COMMUNITY MEMBER SURVEY RESULTS¹

32 community members (ranging in age from 24 to 73) completed the survey about their experiences with the Five Buffalo Days event hosted by Fort Washakie Schools.

COMMUNITY MEMBER WELLBEING

Using the Medicine Wheel domains, these community members were asked to rate their overall level of health (rated poor, fair, good, very good, excellent):

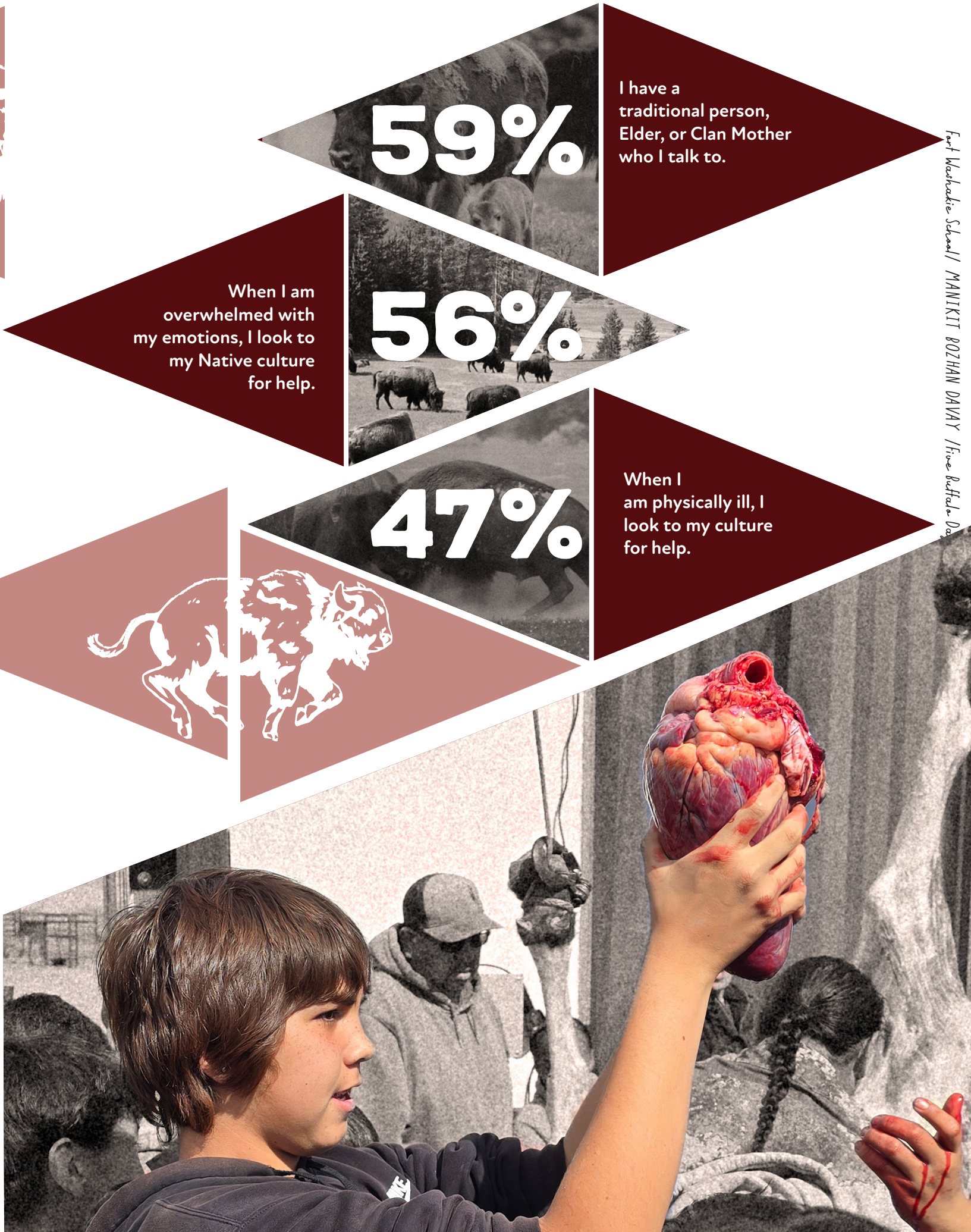
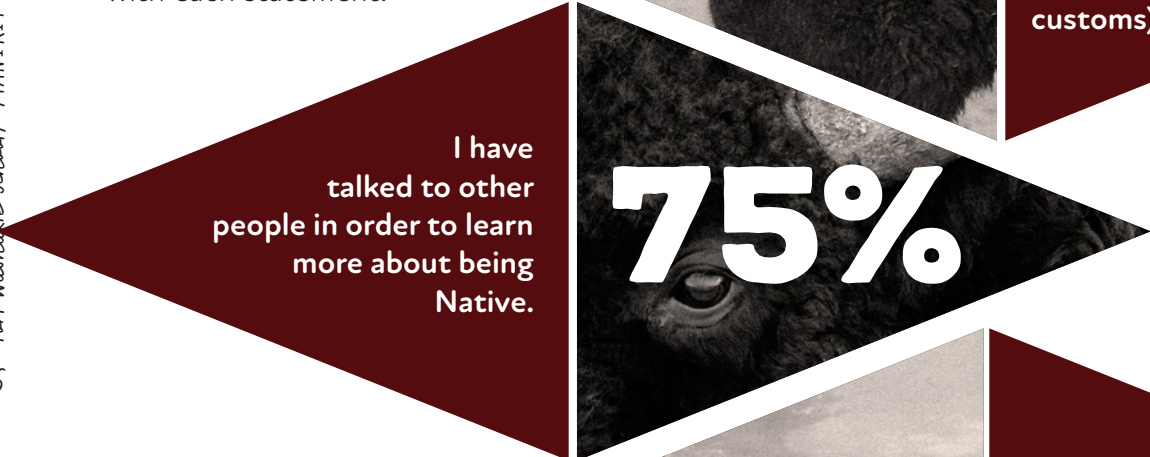


COMMUNITY MEMBER EVENT RATINGS

Community members were also asked to rate the various events from the Five Buffalo Days week of events (rated poor, average, excellent, or not applicable). These are the number of participants who rated the event as "Excellent."

COMMUNITY MEMBER
CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

Community members were asked about their cultural connectedness, rating how much they agreed with provided statements (strongly agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree). The following percentages represent community members who agreed (strongly or somewhat) with each statement:



COMMUNITY MEMBER'S FAVORITE THINGS ABOUT THE WEEK

Community members were asked to report on their favorite part of attending the Five Buffalo Days events this week. Responses were open-ended and included a number of themes. Two top themes emerged as favorite parts of the week for community members.

First, community members reported that student engagement (9) with the weeks' events were their favorite part. They noted, "The students were highly engaged throughout the week, showing a strong eagerness to learn more about their culture and interact with the presenters. I noticed that many of the kids dressed up throughout the week. they seemed to really enjoy the fashion show; it was adorable to see them so eager to be models. They also looked like they had a great time participating in their powwow. Additionally, it was wonderful to see the kids' drum group, which was truly amazing, and to see the next generation of drum singers."

Community members also stated that the Pow Wow (9) was their favorite part of attending this week- "The social Powwow was cute; it was so fun seeing them go out there to dance, regardless of whether they had regalia on or not. As well as seeing the next generation of drum group singers, it was so amazing to see these kids sing." Community members also said that they enjoyed the Fashion Show (6), the planning of the events (5), and the Buffalo harvesting (3).





COMMUNITY MEMBERS WANT TO LEARN MORE

Community members were asked what they would like to learn more about at future events. The most popular response included learning more about traditional culture and teachings (6) including traditional foods, Native culture, social dances, music, and homemade items. Responses also included learning more about medicinal plants, Native medicine, and herbs (5), more about Native Languages (4), providing more opportunities for children to learn about their culture (4), and learning more about the Buffalo (2). Two additional responses requested having the lower elementary school grades participate in the Buffalo Ranch and learning more “how students can be involved with more community activities outside of school.”

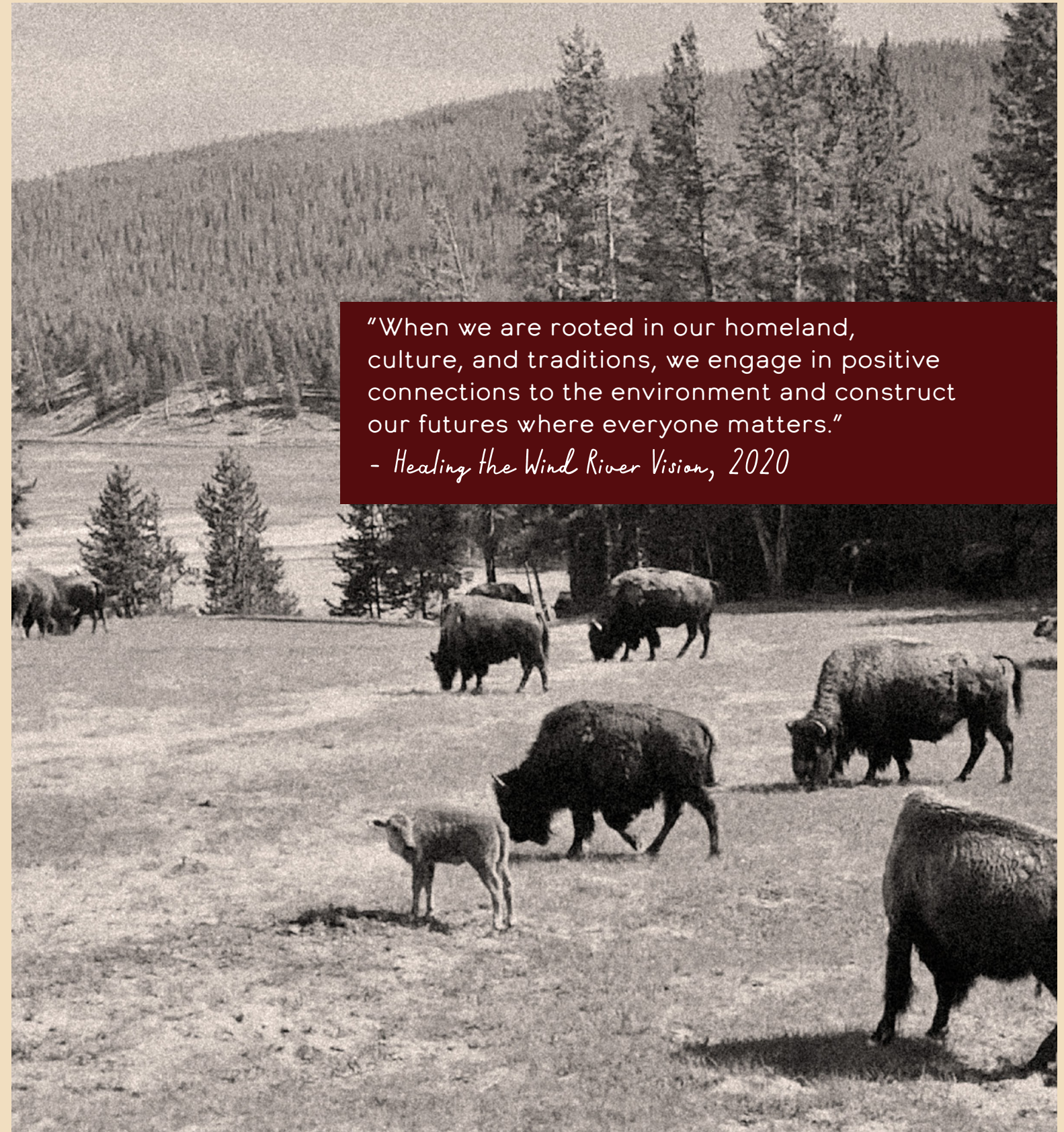
COMMUNITY MEMBER RECOMMENDATIONS

Community members were asked if they had any suggestions for how this event could have been a better experience for them. A number of community members reported that this event was wonderful (4), and they “wished we could have more events throughout the year.” The most notable suggestion involved the scheduling of events (8). Community members stated that the event could have benefited from having more time for the sessions, and having more time to do rotations, as it “felt a bit rushed.” They also noted that the event should occur at the end of the school year, as many students treated it like the final week of school and have subsequently “stopped working or coming to school.” Suggestions regarding the logistics (5) of the events included involving the younger students with the Buffalo events, allowing all grades to make cough drops, shortening the Fashion Show (“it was difficult to help the Littles maintain their behavior and focus the whole time”), and closing the gate during the parade to prevent cars from entering during the event. Additional suggestions included better communication in advance, considering a new location for the parade (“so the elders can enjoy watching the kids”), and having “more community involvement.” One participant also commented that there were a few “hiccups” regarding the demeanor of some of the staff and students during the event and had hopes that next time would see improvements in attitudes and boundaries.



CARRYING THE WISDOM FORWARD

The MANIKIT BOZHAN DAVAY honors the wisdom, teaching, and cultural practices of our ancestors, who walked on this Earth more than 12,000 years ago. Although many events have happened since this time, including mass relocation/reservations, cultural genocide, boarding schools, abuse, and forced assimilation, the Eastern Shoshone remain connected to their culture and land. The buffalo and culture continue to be cornerstones of their survival.



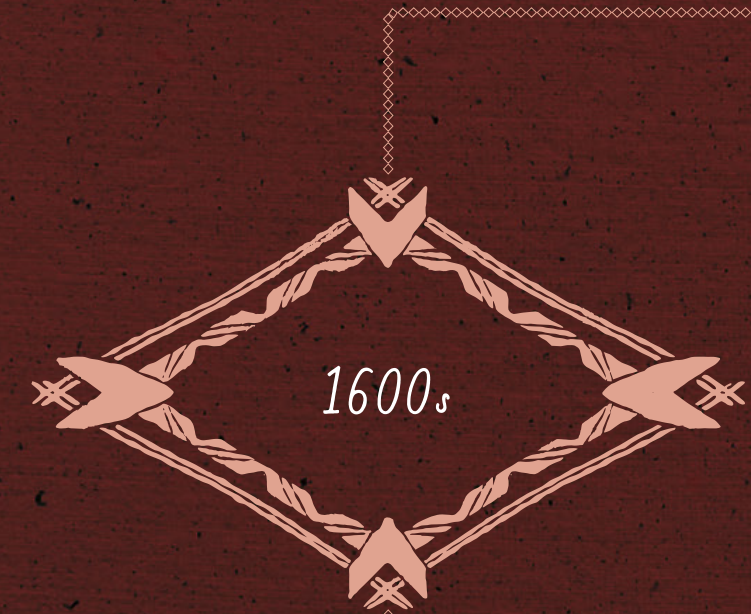
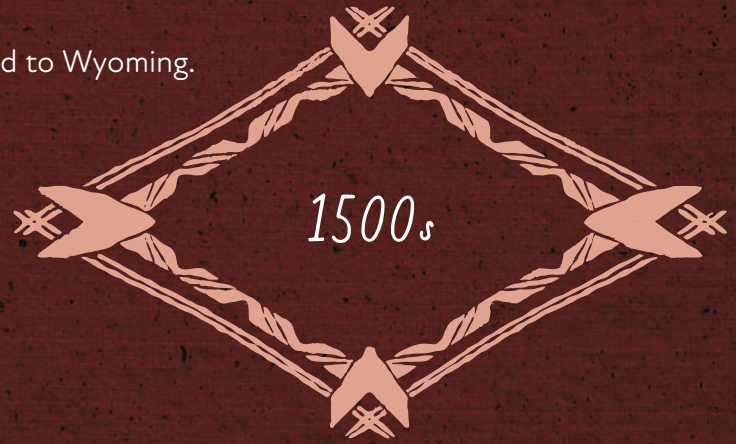
“When we are rooted in our homeland, culture, and traditions, we engage in positive connections to the environment and construct our futures where everyone matters.”
- *Healing the Wind River Vision, 2020*

OUR HISTORY



Eastern Shoshone lived on traditional homelands for more than 12,000 years. The Eastern Shoshone originally inhabited areas spanning present-day Wyoming, Montana, Idaho, and Utah.

Eastern Shoshone moved to Wyoming.



Horse riding integrated into culture; first contact with European settlers. Shoshone tribe lands were taken over by Spanish invaders. A Shoshone woman named Sacagawea, from a band of the Northern group called the Lemhi, joined the Lewis and Clark expedition. Sacagawea was married to a French-Canadian fur trader, and on this expedition, she served as a guide and translator for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Eastern Shoshone established in the region around the Wind River Basin, lifestyle integrated with the environment. Relied heavily on hunting, fishing, and foraging for sustenance. Bison is the cornerstone of diet and culture.



Eastern Shoshone signs first two treaties with the US government at Fort Bridger, Wyoming, protecting the Union Pacific Railroad.

First Native students attend Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania, the country's first off-reservation boarding school designed to assimilate Native students.

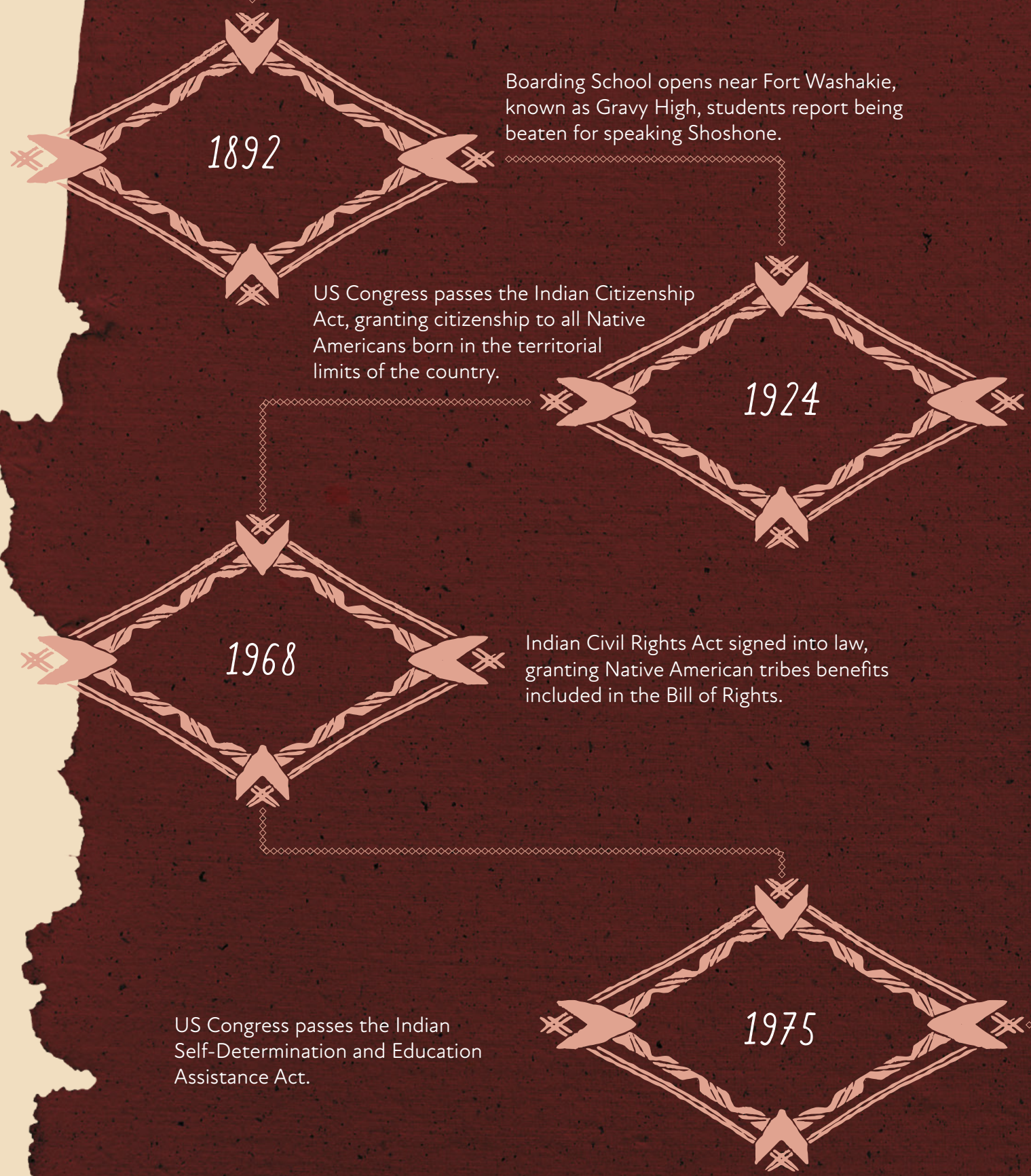


Treaty of Fort Bridger established the Wind River Reservation, led by Chief Washakie.

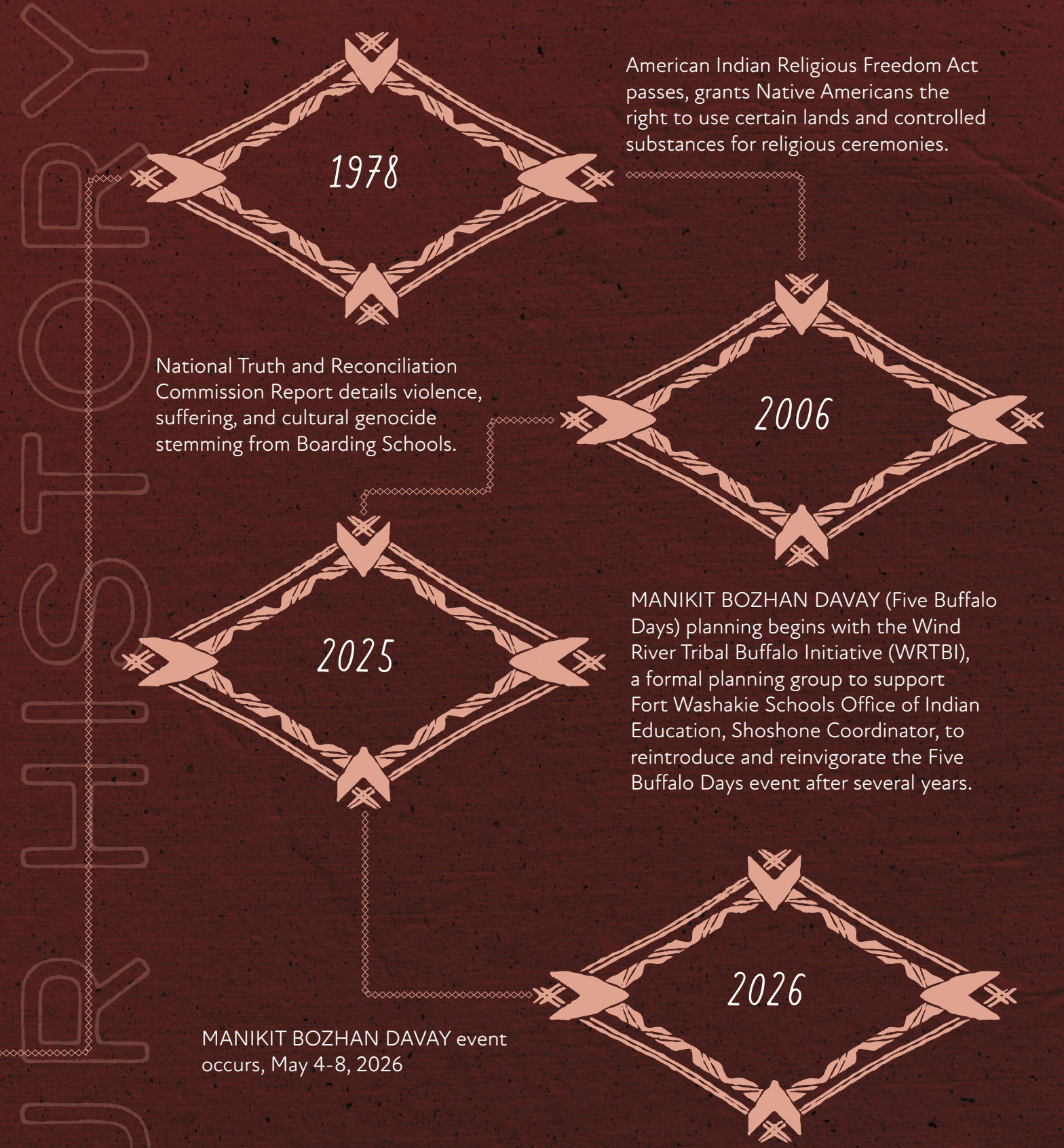
Boarding Schools begin on the Wind River Reservation.



Dawes Act divides Indian lands in reservations to individuals.



Note historical information from <https://warmvalley.health/history> and <https://easternshoshone.org/about/> and <https://www.wyohistory.org/encyclopedia/coming-wind-river-eastern-shoshone-treaties-1863-and-1868> and <https://www.wyohistory.org/blog/indian-boarding-schools-wind-river-and-pope>



This report highlights the photos, people, places, culture, and messages (documented and inferred) of the event. Photos taken by the Office of Indian Education show the resilience and strengths of the Eastern Shoshone Tribe and the students at Fort Washakie School. Photos tell stories that words and numbers never will. Look at the photos first. What do you see? How do you feel? What do the faces and places tell you about the Fort Washakie people and culture that you did not know before reading this?

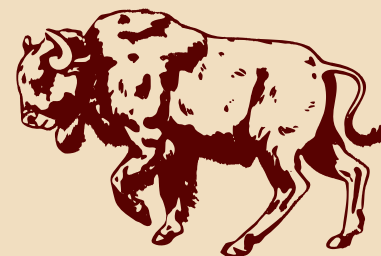
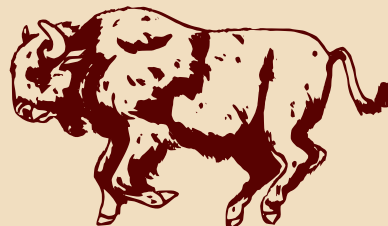
FOR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT THIS REPORT,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Randy Nagitsy,
Office of Indian Education Coordinator at
Fort Washakie School,
rnagitsy@fortwashakieschool.com

Check out the Indian Relay Podcast
interview about 5 Buffalo Days:
[https://indianrelaypodcast.com/
good-medicine-randy-nagitsy-on-
five-buffalo-days-culture-and-
community-responsibility/](https://indianrelaypodcast.com/good-medicine-randy-nagitsy-on-five-buffalo-days-culture-and-community-responsibility/)

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Scan here for all event photos:



Click here: <https://bit.ly/42OtMxG>