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- Integrity
- Lakota Spirit



# LAKOTA TIMES

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## Tanka Fund restores Bison

JAMES GIAGO DAVIES  
LT CONTRIBUTOR

RAPID CITY—A partnership between three Native non-profits, Makoce, Wanbli Ska and Tanka Fund, with critical funding from NDN Collective, may produce a cooperation model that will greatly increase the impact and scope of all such partnerships in the future. This partnership focuses on bison, on sustaining and developing herds for Native

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## Wounded Knee Medals Reviewed

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## Court rules against Cheyenne River

JAMES GIAGO DAVIES  
LT CONTRIBUTOR

EAGLE BUTTE—Many times federal courts express their sympathy for a tribe, and acknowledge the merit of the tribe's case, but still rule against the tribe for a variety of legal reasons. This happened to the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (CRST) last week in the Federal Court of Claims, where Judge David A. Tapp ruled against

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## Keeping Time

This is our Week 9 (August 16-30) "dispatch" from an infamous 1874 expedition to find gold in Paha Sapa that took place exactly one hundred and fifty years ago. We mine the rich archive of documentary records that it produced to ask what it reveals about the region's Native inhabitants. To follow along online, go to <https://tinyurl.com/rwaffkbk>.

The expedition camped near a prominent landmark on August 26. It was called "Young Men's Butte" by William Ludlow, the expedition's engineer and cartographer. But the expedition's geologist, Newton Winchell, wrote that it was more properly

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Rain In The Face, photographed by Orlando Goff at Fort Abraham Lincoln in 1874 while he was unjustly imprisoned there.]

## Rosebud Selects 2 Women to Lead

VI WALN  
LT CONTRIBUTOR

ROSEBUD – The Siscangu Oyate elected Lakota women Kathleen Wooden Knife (President) and Lisa White Pipe (Vice-President) as their new leaders to serve Rosebud Sioux Tribal government.

Wooden Knife has served nearly 3 terms on the tribal council. She made history as the first woman ever elected as tribal president. She was currently serving as the Soldier Creek tribal

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Kathleen Wooden Knife of Soldier Creek will serve as the first woman President of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. Photo from Facebook.



## 120 candidates for certification

TOM CRASH  
LT CONTRIBUTOR

PINE RIDGE - The deadline for submitting a completed petition was Friday, August 23 at 4:30pm; 111 candidates turned their petitions in for 21 tribal council positions across nine districts on Pine Ridge Reservation including 18 incumbents and 17 past council representatives. There were six candidates for OST President and three for OST Vice President. Candidates are set to be certified on September sixth.

Current OST President Frank Star Comes Out has taken out a petition for another term, Tyler Yellow Boy, council representative from Oglala district and chair of the Finance and Ed-

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TANKA FUND RESTORES BISON

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ranchers, on developing processing plants for the meat, hides and skulls, on developing a Native workforce to work this industry, and on creating and expanding markets for bison related product.

Co-owned and co-operated by these three nonprofits, Sacred Storm is a bison meat processing facility in Rapid Valley which began operations back on July 27. Now ten years old, Tanka Fund works mainly on the ranching and marketing aspects of bison restoration, although Dawn Sherman, Executive Director, has extensive experience in the processing aspect as well. Born and raised in Rapid City, Sherman describes herself as “an AIMster baby, my mom and dad met during the Wounded Knee Occupation. I went to school on the North side, lived in Lakota Homes my whole life.”

Sherman began working with Tanka Bar, and when Covid negatively impacted that operation, she transitioned into Tanka Fund, which is a completely separate organization with a separate mission.

From the Tanka Fund website: “In an effort to starve Native Americans into submission, the U.S. government initiated the policy of removal, and along with it launched an all-out attack on Buffalo to destroy this mainstay of Native American life. The impact of the destruction of some 50 million Buffalo can still be felt today on reservation community lives. Tanka Fund seeks to reverse those effects through its mission to repopulate Native lands with Buffalo and re-establish a sustainable Buffalo economy for our people.”

Tanka Fund’s mission is divided into three areas: to provide bison and

funding for private Native ranchers; to supply technical assistance; to help develop markets for bison related product. Last year they returned 356 buffalo to Native homelands, added seven new ranchers for a total of 19 ranchers in “the Tanka Fund family,” and provided \$718,000 in grants and technical assistance to these ranchers.

In pre-Columbian times it is estimated as many as 75 million bison roamed North America. Today there are only about 30,000 bison in the wild, but 400,000 on ranches and wildlife refuges. Bison sustained the Lakota people, and when they were nearly wiped out in the 1870’s, the people lost the ability to feed their loved ones, and since that time every tribe has been slowly rebuilding their relationship and connection with the bison.

“Every year ranchers can apply for grant funding,” Sherman said, “and depending on how much money we raise we’ll write the checks for those ranchers. It’s direct funding to help them with their infrastructure, general operation, anything that they need for their ranch. The second part of that is the buffalo surplus, which is getting buffalo on the land, which is a partnership we have with the nature conservancy, donate their buffalo to Tanka Fund and then we disperse those buffalo to our ranchers.”

Tanka Fund focuses on private Native ranchers, not tribally owned and directed operations.

“They don’t have to be on their tribal land but they do need to be Native, a private rancher,” Sherman said. “For the most part our main goal are the private ranchers and the community and small co-ops, the ones that

don’t get the funding like the tribal herds do.”

Although located in Rapid City, Sherman said, “Most of our team is remote, because they are on the road a lot, we have ranchers in South Dakota, North Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas, and Arkansas.”

Besides Sherman, Tanka Fund has Arnell Abold, Oglala, Chief of Operations; Jennifer Malaterre, Chippewa, Senior Technical Assistant; Philip Gaudon, Mi’ kamaq, Assistant Director of Marketing; Zintkala Eiring, Oglala, Range Ecologist; and Janet Moore, Assistant Range Ecologist.

“We have a small staff,” Sherman said. “About once a quarter we want to touch base with all of our ranchers, so our girls schedule those visits, and the visits range from just coming to visit or they need technical assistance, to fill out an application for something, or they are doing regenerative agriculture, doing a burn or planting or harvesting, or something like that.”

Tanka Fund differs from many similar organizations in that its main focus is on developing an actual profit making, Native owned, bison processing network, from supplying the bison, sustaining the ranchers, and marketing the product.

“Currently we now have about 1100 animals in our network,” Sherman said. “We’re going to be adding close to another three to four hundred this year. Our goal is to increase our rancher network, and the bison obviously, and our support to them.”

Tanka Fund does not stop there. “We want to provide access to markets,” Sherman said. “And it’s not just the meat; we have the artists, we have the people that want the

hides, the skulls, and the community that comes to get the guts when we are harvesting them. We have in our model, our culture, our ways in mind when we do our support with the ranchers, because in the white world we’ve got to sell the meat, but in our world there’s that full carcass utilization, and that whole animal usage, and so we are very aware of those needs too.”

Finally, working with Wanbli Ska, a “model workforce is being developed, where these kids can go in and learn skills anywhere within the industry, and get mentorships, and actually get careers, and be able to move on and go other places. These kids are at risk young men, whether they are coming from a bad family situation or jail, or whatever, so this is an opportunity for them to come in and learn a trade and have a positive impact on the community.”

Sherman sums it up by saying, “These are urban kids, and Sacred Storm, Wanbli Ska and Tanka Fund, with that partnership, are building a bridge from the urban to the reservation. It’s about the kids, the animals, our land, and our ranchers. We are trying to create a model that can be taken to other places. When we say community we mean every Native nation across the country, because we didn’t have borders, there was lots of inter-tribal trading, having three non-profits working together, it creates that support. Tanka Fund couldn’t have done this by ourselves.”

(James Giago Davies is an enrolled member of OST. Contact him at skindiesel@msn.com)

KEEPING TIME

Continued from A1

called “Spring Butte” due to the “beautiful springs of water” there.

Young Men’s Butte suggests a more interesting story, and we were able to find two versions. The earliest, published in *North Dakota: A Guide to the Northern Prairie State*, was written by the Federal Writers’ Project of the Works Progress Administration and published in 1938. It refers

to a time when the Arikarians lived along the Grand River in what is now South Dakota. The legend says that a group of the Arikarians “separated from the tribe and set out toward the northwest to seek a new home. Two young men in the party, however, grew lonesome for the sweethearts they had left behind, and when they reached this butte they decided to return

to their old home. The remainder of the party continued on the journey, and was never heard from again.”

The later version is by Louis Pfaller, and it was published in *Stark County Heritage and Destiny* in 1978. In it, Pfaller attributes a story to Rain-In-The-Face, a renowned Lakotan warrior. It is about a time when Lakotans killed 106 Crowans who were hunting in the area. One of the Crowans, the sole survivor, escaped to the top of the butte, where he sang and danced and shouted that “no La-

kotan would ever kill him.” Then he stabbed himself to death. The Lakotans admired his courage, so they buried him with honor and named the place Young Man’s Butte.

Ludlow recorded the location of Young Men’s Butte as 46 degrees, 52 minutes, and 20 seconds latitude, and 102 degrees, 15 minutes, and 49 seconds longitude.

At around 4 o’clock the next morning, August 27, the full moon was setting as the expedition prepared to continue its march toward

Fort Lincoln. According to Ludlow, they broke camp at 4:45 AM. He was able to record this information because he had taken “two chronometers” with him. These were very accurate clocks that enabled him to determine, using the sun and stars, the exact latitude and longitude so he could precisely plot sites, such as Young Men’s Butte, and the route of the expedition. Without them, the expedition could only navigate by dead reckoning, and the only time that they could have been sure of was

noon on a clear day.

Ludlow and Winchell wrote nothing of the full moon that morning. It was irrelevant in their method of time keeping. But to Lakotans, each full moon was the beginning of a new month. The Lakotan year began with the full moon closest to when the ducks returned from their winter homes in the south. In 1874, that full moon was either March 2 or, more likely, April 1. If that was the case, then the full moon on August 27 was the sixth of that Lakotan year.

The names of the full moons were not standardized like the names of the Gregorian months. And the years were named, not numbered. For instance, the Gregorian year 1874 was “A Dakota kills one Ree” on The Flame winter count, “The Oglalas at Red Cloud Agency cut up the flagpole” on the American Horse winter count, “The Ute’s stole all the Brule’s horses” on the Cloud Shield winter count, and “They killed many Pawnee” on the Rosebud winter count.

In that Lakotan world, they navigated their vast treaty lands and beyond with stories and experience. They didn’t need a chronometer to know where they were at or how to get to where they were going. Time and place were communal, not universal.

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The Center for American Indian Research and Native Studies (CAIRNS) is an Indian-controlled nonprofit research and education center founded in 2004 and located in the Lacreek District of Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota.

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**Vote NOW online or by mail – or in person at the annual meeting**

For the first time, Golden West Telecommunications Cooperative members may vote in the 2024 Board of Directors election online or by mail through September 24.

Members who do not vote in advance may cast a ballot in person at the annual meeting at 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 28, at the community center in Wall, SD. Voting options and the process used depend on whether the member is an individual (single or joint) member or a non-individual entity (businesses, churches, school districts, towns, etc.).

Letters sent mid-August detail voting options for members along with instructions. For more information about the election, voting, or the annual meeting, visit [goldenwest.com/annualmeeting](http://goldenwest.com/annualmeeting).

Scan for more info.

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5:30 PM	Complimentary Meal and Prizes

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Find schedule updates at [stjo.org/powwow](http://stjo.org/powwow).

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