



*Sioux Indians Hunting Buffalo*, 1835. Painting by George Catlin. Courtesy of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Gift of Mrs. Joseph Harrison, Jr. 1985.66.411

The American bison, commonly referred to as the buffalo, has always held great meaning and importance for the histories, cultures, religions, and ways of life of Native people and Northern Great Plains Nations. The buffalo is a food source and is used to make tipi covers, clothing, tools, medicine, weapons, and more. The buffalo is also considered a relative and is honored in songs, dances, and prayers. The buffalo was and remains a critical link between people of the northern Great Plains and their homelands.