



WILD CLASSROOM

Conservation in the Classroom

Our Relationships and Role in an Ecosystem

November 17, 2021

12:30 pm EST

Suggested grade level: 2–6

Watch live on [Conservation in the Classroom](#)

View recording on the [Wild Classroom YouTube channel](#)

Monica Rattling Hawk is a Native Nations liaison for WWF-US and a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation. Through her work with WWF, she facilitates Indigenous-led conservation efforts and works to bring the will of her people to the management of their land. During this unique, interactive presentation, Monica will share her story and connection to the Northern Great Plains and will explain to students how they can view their connection to nature from a different perspective, encouraging a sense of empathy.

The presenter



Monica Rattling Hawk

Native Nations liaison

Northern Great Plains program

WWF-US

BELL-RINGERS

Help prepare your learners by introducing the topic with these warm-up questions.

Research

Visit the webpage native-land.ca to discover the historical Indigenous territories of your region.

I live in _____ (city, state), which is the home of the _____ people.

Explain

Water is referred to as “the first medicine” by the Lakota people. Explain; why do you think that is?

Interpret

View the map and answer the questions below:



Source: [2021 Native Nations Partnership Report](#)

1) Name the five US states that the grasslands of the Northern Great Plains encompass:

2) WWF is working to restore what two species in the Northern Great Plains?



Planning to watch the event live? Write your question(s) for the presenter here:

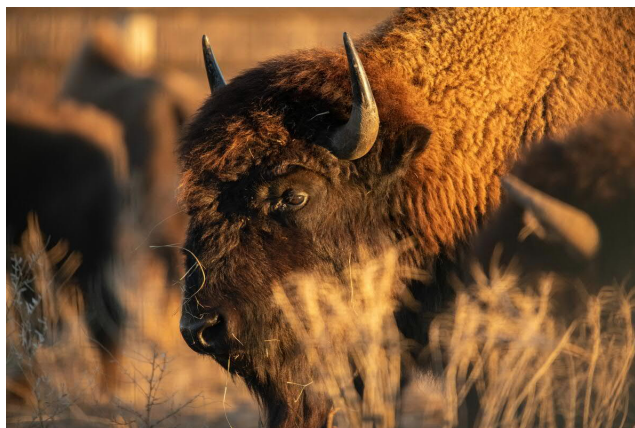
INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES

Use these web articles and videos to provide background information to your learners on climate change and its impacts on wildlife.

- Web page: [Northern Great Plains](#)
- Video: [The Path Back](#)
- Video: [Welcome home! Bison released into new territory in Badlands National Park](#)
- Video: [Introducing the Northern Great Plains](#)
- Video: [Bison released onto the Wolakota Buffalo Range in South Dakota](#)
- Video: [Fort Peck Bison Restoration](#)
- Web article: [The return of a relative: tribal communities in the Northern Great Plains rally around bison restoration](#)
- Web article: [Our Home, Our Story](#)
- Web story: [Buffalo People Unite](#)
- Web publication: [2021 Native Nations Partnership Report](#)

HOW TO HELP

- Web page: [One Square Foot](#)
- Web page: [3 Things You Can Do to Help Your Local Pollinators](#)
- Web article: [Fight climate change by preventing food waste](#)
- Web article: [Green Tips](#)



ACTIVITIES

Check out these lesson plans to supplement the content from the event.

[The Roles We Play science activity](#)

Learn about the living and nonliving members of an ecosystem and how they all depend on one another using the Northern Great Plains as an example in this role-playing activity.

Grades 6–8



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[Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains discussion questions](#)

Use these questions about ecosystem relationships, adaptations, biodiversity, and human impact to shape discussions and complement activities within the Grasslands of the Northern Great Plains content pack.

Grades 3–8

[Don't Treat Soil Like Dirt! science activity](#)

Learn the value of healthy soil and its impacts on the surrounding ecosystem in this lab activity from our monarch butterfly toolkit.

Grades 3–5



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ASSESSMENTS

Conclude your teaching of relationships with nature with these resources and fun assessment tools.

[Wild Classroom “Habitat spotlight: Grasslands” collection on Kahoot!](#)

- What are grasslands?
- The buzz on pollinators
- Explore the Northern Great Plains

***Our Relationships and Role in an Ecosystem* worksheet and writing prompts**

Use the worksheet and writing prompts on the following page as an assignment or a quiz following the viewing of the *Conservation in the Classroom* event.

Answer key (for questions on the next page):

- 1) d
- 2) a and c
- 3) true

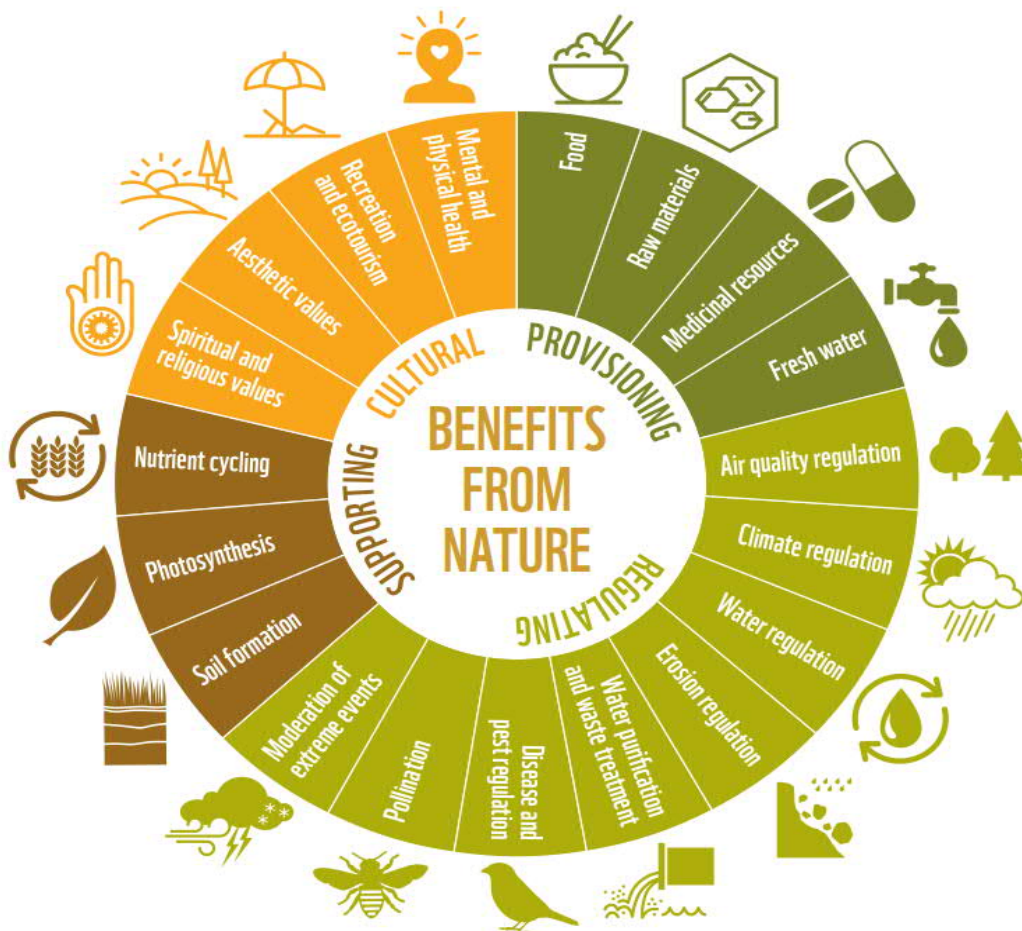




Our Relationships and Role in an Ecosystem

Answer the following questions after learning how we are all connected with nature. Some questions require you to circle the correct answer, while others ask you to write your answer(s).

1. What did buffalo provide for people?
 - a. Shelter
 - b. Clothing
 - c. Food
 - d. All of the above
2. What happened around 1889 that impacted buffalo populations? (2 answers)
 - a. Western expansion of settlers
 - b. Invention of cars
 - c. Growth of railroad industry
 - d. The Great Depression
3. True or False: The tribal communities of Fort Peck believe that if buffalo are brought back to the region, the health and wellbeing of the people will also improve.
4. The Northern Great Plains ecosystem provides many benefits to humans, which is part of the reason why we need to protect the land and the wildlife that lives there. View the chart below, which shows different ecosystem services. Select three that the Northern Great Plains provides and explain.



1.

2.

3.

Writing prompts:

- ❖ We need to rethink and repair our relationship with nature in order to make sure that wildlife and wild places thrive for years to come. How would you suggest people reconnect with nature? How do we get people to care?

- ❖ Indigenous people have a deep connection to the land. Explain why it is important and beneficial to include them in decisions about how the land is cared for.

- ❖ Monica Rattling Hawk describes her relationship to the Northern Great Plains ecosystem as:

I am of the grass, plants, and trees, the root nation that sways in the winds of the prairie of the Northern Great Plains, storing carbon and returning oxygen to the world above. I am of the soil, that holds the very footprints and knowledge of my ancestors and provides life and vision for me. (Source: [Our Home, Our Story](#))



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Compose a statement or short poem of your own that represents your connection to nature. Think of things from your own ecosystem and incorporate them into the statement/poem. The first line has been started for you.

I am _____
