

In 2026, the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History will have several tentpole initiatives to commemorate the nation's anniversary along with the tenth anniversary of the bison's status as our national mammal. To celebrate we will welcome the public along with government leaders, members of tribal communities, partner organizations and other friends to participate in the below opportunities.

Bronze Bison Sculptures: Due to the extraordinary generosity of Naoma Tate and the Family of Hal Tate, two bronze bison sculptures will be installed on the upper plinths of the mall side entrance of NMNH. The bronzes are being created by sculptor Gary Staab and will be 125% sized monumental bronzes and refer to the bison that were opened to the public in Arts and Industries Building in 1888. The bull sculpture represents the bull that William Hornaday shot in Montana in December 1886. This bull was on the 1901 Lewis and Centennial \$10 bill, 1937 seal of the Department of Interior and 1923 US Stamp. The second will be a cow and calf; the latter of which will be a representation of the calf Sandy that lived on the National Mall in 1886.

The Smithsonian Bison National Road Trip: The bronzes are being fabricated in a foundry in Loveland, Colorado. We expect them to be transported on an open flatbed from Loveland to Washington D.C. beginning around March 11 and arriving by March 20. Since they will be visible as they travel, we are presently developing a plan to have them stop at a few places along the way to build anticipation and to celebrate the former range of the wild bison. These stops may include programming featuring NMNH Director Kirk Johnson, sculptor Gary Staab and other bison experts along with a public celebratory send off including NMNH bison ambassadors to education and excite the crowd. At present, those stops will include:

Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Denver, Colorado (The last five wild bison that were shot in CO are located at NMNS including the last one that was just discovered at the BBCW gift shop and returned to DMNS in 2025.)

University of Nebraska Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska (Four of the bison that were transported to live at the Smithsonian in 1887 came from Nebraska.)

The Field Museum in Chicago, Illinois (The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago included 2 of the bison that were collected by Hornaday in 1886.)

The final schedule including planned stops will be available in January 2026.

Bronze Bison Dedication: On April 2, Smithsonian and the National Museum of Natural History will dedicate our bronze bison upon their successful installation in their new permanent home on the Mall entrance of the Museum. The dedication will feature meaningful connections to the Bison from multiple community stakeholders including tribal communities, government, museum and non-profit partners. The museum will also offer special bison related programming throughout the day including activating our Bison Base Camp providing fun and educational activities for all ages. More information regarding the dedication celebration will be available in early 2026.

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives Bison: Imagining the National Mammal: Opening on May 22, *Bison: Imagining the National Mammal* will occupy two Libraries cases in the Evans Gallery on the ground level of the Natural History Building. The cases will showcase illustrative examples of the interwoven ways bison are part of the American story including close ties to the Native people and role as the face of the species conservation movement highlight the bison as a rich symbol of strength, resilience, and the necessity of habitat preservation. The material traces the ways we have imaged bison over time and collaboratively envisioned a more sustainable future of the national mammal.

Bison: Standing Strong Exhibition: *Stories of survival, stewardship and science centered on the National Mammal*

The story of the national mammal is uniquely, deeply American. *Bison: Standing Strong*, a new exhibition opening in May 2026, will invite millions of visitors to explore and understand the complex tale of this remarkable species from ancient times to the present, and the ways in which its past, present and future are woven together in the effort to protect and restore this beating heart of American grasslands.

The exhibition will have evocative and immersive visuals as well as natural and cultural objects. *Bison: Standing Strong* will highlight the roles that indigenous knowledge, museum collections, and Smithsonian and partner led efforts are playing in restoring a prairie giant for future generations.

Through generous support of the Lilly Foundation, we are also conducting scientific research sequencing DNA of museum bison specimens to better understand historic herd genetic diversity that will inform conservation of contemporary bison populations and build scientific capacity with Great Plains tribal partners.

Educational programming will complement the exhibition's content to further engage the public from school-age students, visiting families and life-long learners.

From These Lands Exhibition: *Sharing Our Natural and Cultural Heritage*

From These Lands: Sharing Our Natural and Cultural Heritage will celebrate the incredible diversity of our country and connect millions of annual visitors with nature and objects from their own home regions.

The exhibition, opening in June 2026, will feature awe-inspiring objects from each of the 50 states and occupied territories revealing unexpected connections and sparking conversations among visitors who will see themselves reflected in this exhibition. A suite of educational programs and national outreach for the public, teachers, and students will complement the exhibition.

For more information on NMNH's plans around bison in 2026, please contact Christine Huber at huberc@si.edu or (202) 203-9227.