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"Travois"

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History Bits**



"Travois" by Julie Buffalohead Credit: Sheila Regan

Artist Julie Buffalohead uses abstraction and realism to send her message New exhibition called "Travois" mixes personal narrative with mythology while delivering a distinctive point of view.

At an exhibition called "Travois," featuring work by Julie Buffalohead at Dreamsong gallery in Northeast Minneapolis, I kept thinking about Luigi Mangione as I gazed at a painting called "[She who strews the ground with a long line of slain men](#)" (2025).

The painting depicts a young Native woman holding a stick, surrounded by a group of monkeys and a raccoon playfully engaging themselves with dollar bills apparently stolen from several slain businessmen in suits and ties lying on the ground behind them. In the distance, a dog sniffs at one of the dead men and another animal — perhaps a coyote — stoically looks on at the scene.

It's a bleak, violent scene — especially in contrast with the revelry of the animals dancing around with the dead men's money. It reminded me a bit of the [outpouring of glee](#) that happened on the internet after Mangione allegedly murdered Brian Thompson, the CEO of UnitedHealthcare, in New York City. Buffalohead's piece doesn't necessarily point to any of her characters as the murderers of the businessmen, per se. But it does tap into a morbid celebration that I recognized from that news item.

In a video Dreamsong shared with me of Buffalohead talking about the work, she described the female character as a woman warrior, who stands above rich fat-cat types “who care more about money than they do about human beings,” she said.

Beyond the dark humor, I was drawn to the hypnotic textures. Buffalohead's paintings often bring abstraction and realism into dialogue with one another. Her backgrounds are lushly layered with expressive brushstrokes that echo the narrative themes of stories populated by both humans and allegorical animals. In “She who strews the ground with a long line of slain men,” Buffalohead explores the tension between these abstract and illustrative elements, where the abstracted background itself holds hidden figurative moments — a face here, an animal there — if you look the right way. As I gazed at the painting from the side, the light hit in such a way that I could see a faint outline of a second coyote ominously present.

To me, this barely visible animal served as an unseen protector of the cheerful (and dark) rebellion shown in the painting. It hinted at a theme Buffalohead addresses more directly in the exhibition: the idea that ancestors act as guides in the present.

In fact, the title of a central work in the show, “Ancestral (Honga)” (2025), takes its name from a Ponca word — hongá — that can both mean ancestor as well as leader. The work is a magnificent hand-sewn trade cloth dress with three-quarter sleeves and mirrored plates sewn into the skirt in angled rows. On four of the rows, Buffalohead has attached the names of Ponca tribal members recorded in a census prior to the Ponca Trail of Tears in 1877, when the U.S. military forcibly removed them from their home in Northern Nebraska to what is now Oklahoma.



“Ancestral” by Julie Buffalohead Credit: Sheila Regan

Where the census didn't have a name recorded — just a number, Buffalohead has left the plate blank. She's also made additional rows of plates covered in a blue color to represent the women tribal members, whose names were also not recorded. At the bottom of the dress, she has sewn cones with red ribbons strung through them to represent the children of the tribe.

The remarkable piece is stunning — not only in its craftsmanship and bold, regal colors — but in its presence. The work has a way of bringing the names of the people who died many years ago — some during the forced march — into the present day. It's an act of time travel, evoking individuals not just through a work of art, but through something designed to be worn.

The exhibition title, "Travois," refers to a type of sled used by a number of Plains tribes, where a horse or dog pulls its cargo with the use of two joined poles. Buffalohead also titles a painting "Travois," where a lean but heroic dog pulls a sleigh full of pillows, turtles, rabbits, a raccoon and a monkey.

Rebecca Heidenberg, a partner at Dreamsong, shared with me that the dog in the painting recalls a pet that once belonged to Buffalohead's father, Roger Buffalohead. He was the first chair of the first American Indian Studies department in the country, at the University of Minnesota.

There's a warm intimacy to the piece. The trusty dog carries its beloved family as if playing around the house. But I think the scene symbolizes other layers as well. There might be an allusion to the Ponca Trail of Tears itself — where family members took all their belongings as they were forced from their home. Further, I think the dog could be an ancestral symbol — perhaps Roger Buffalohead himself — carrying not only his family forward into the future but, through his academic work, also Native scholarship, history and cultural preservation.

In the back room of the gallery are two paintings featuring reclining figures, with animals again acting as instigators to the scene. In "Ishtinike" (2025), Buffalohead again makes a series of monkeys a prominent focal point. Heidenberg told me they represent Ishtinike, a trickster figure from Ponca mythology. In the painting, a woman lies on a couch asleep as the Ishtinike/monkeys lean toward her mischievously — one even scratching her skin by her calf. A small black dog stands guard — another protector — while a sign reading "family" hangs in the distance. Buffalohead captures the natural light shining through a window beautifully, creating a peaceful scene, amid the distractions surrounding the sleeping figure.

"Ishtinike" by Julie Buffalohead Credit: Sheila Regan

Interestingly, this figure is more fully rendered than the reclining figure in another painting, "Oblivious" (2025), where a young woman lounges with headphones while a pair of armadillos and a cat attempt — futilely — to get her attention. The outlines of the woman and the animals are pronounced, and the paint is translucent, allowing the red underpainting to show through. These visible marks contribute to the sense of improvisation — almost as if the viewer sees the process of the painting unfolding. The result is a dreamlike, floating quality.



“Oblivious” by Julie Buffalohead Credit: Sheila Regan

Besides Buffalohead’s textile piece and painting, she also shows a number of sculptural works that evoke female reproductive anatomy while also referencing gaping holes — both in the earth and sky — present in Native origin stories. Each of the works features an outer layer made from animal skin that has been molded, with pink and red used for the opening, which Buffalohead adorns with porcupine quills, beads and shells. The sculptures pay homage to the power of motherhood, particularly in matrilineal tribes, and are meticulously crafted.

I’ve followed Buffalohead’s painting, mixed-media work and printmaking for many years, but this was my first experience with her sculptural and textile work. I recognized her love of deep hues and her tendency to mix personal narrative with mythology, all delivered with a razor-sharp point of view. What surprised me most about her three-dimensional pieces was the sheer exquisiteness of her craftsmanship. She clearly has expertise in beading and sewing, though I haven’t seen her show these skills in a gallery context in recent years. I was thrilled to encounter these works, and I look forward to seeing more of this exploration in the future.

“Julie Buffalohead: Travois” is on view Wednesdays through Saturdays, 12 p.m. to 5 p.m., through July 5 at 1237 4th Street NE (free). [More information here.](https://www.minnpost.com/artscape/2025/06/artist-julie-buffalohead-uses-abstract-and-realism-to-send-her-message/)

For more pics: <https://www.minnpost.com/artscape/2025/06/artist-julie-buffalohead-uses-abstract-and-realism-to-send-her-message/>

Contentious public lands sale axed from Congress’ ‘Big, Beautiful Bill’

An official determined it violated the Byrd Rule, meant to prevent unnecessary additions to the reconciliation process.

We’re thrilled to share some great news: The dangerous public land sales provision proposed by Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT) has been officially withdrawn from the budget reconciliation bill, meaning that millions of acres of land managed by the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management will remain in the hands of the American public. This outcome is a direct result of broad bipartisan opposition and thousands of constituents like you who raised your voices to protect America’s shared natural heritage.

Your advocacy made the difference, and we thank you.

But while we celebrate this victory, another threat to the scenic beauty and character of our communities remains—one that will make it very difficult for communities to oppose the development of data centers in scenic areas.

Buried in the bill is a provision that would withhold federal broadband funding from any state or locality that seeks to regulate artificial intelligence, including the siting of ugly data centers. The Senate will vote on this early tomorrow morning, and if passed, this language would strip away local control and open the door to unchecked industrial development in scenic, rural, and residential areas alike. While the building of data centers is inevitable, we want to be sure they are built in the right places and not in your neighborhood or in scenic areas. We are supporting a bipartisan amendment offered by Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) that would strip this language out of the bill and protect our landscapes.

We know that our supporters come from many backgrounds, viewpoints, and parties. Whether you love or hate other parts of this legislation, our job is to make sure that our shared priorities of scenic beauty are put forth, and we will continue to do everything we can to make sure that mission is upheld.

Scenic beauty and community character must not be sacrificed in the name of corporate convenience. Together, we can protect the places we all call home.

Sincerely, Scenic America

TAKE ACTION

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**More archives: - St. Catherine Indian School, Santa Fe, N.M.**

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|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Collection  | <a href="#">jamestanisreligiouspostcards</a> ; <a href="#">Princeton</a> ; <a href="#">americana</a> |                                   |                 |
| Contributor | James Tanis                                                                                          | Language: <a href="#">English</a> | Item Size : 2.9 |

This Edward O'Brien mural in St. Catherine's original building (1887) highlights Native American, Spanish and Catholic history in the America. O'Brien painted it in the 1960's, assisted by Robert Kie of Laguna Pueblo. Tours of St. Catherine's are available during the school year by calling (505) 982-6257.

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## Indigenous kayakers traverse 6 dam sites on the Klamath River and head for the ocean

By [Jessie Sears](#) (OPB) June 26, 2025



*On June 22, Hoopa Valley Tribal member Julian Rogers, 16, kayaks through class 3 and 4 rapids at Kikacéki Canyon where the Copco 1 and Copco 2 dams have been removed. Anna Lueck/OPB*

A group of young Indigenous kayakers is headed to the mouth of the Klamath River in free-flowing water after portaging around two dams and paddling through four former dam sites.

They [launched into the Klamath River headwaters](#) two weeks ago and are now more than halfway through a momentous 30-day journey. So far, they've paddled through waves on a treacherous lake, portaged around the two remaining dams on the river, plunged into canyons with class 3, 4 and 5 rapids, and paddled through four former dam sites where removal operations wrapped up last fall.

The nonprofit [Rios to Rivers](#) organized the event, which is the first source-to-sea descent of the Klamath since dam removal. Their [Paddle Tribal Waters](#) team aims to reach the mouth of the river by July 11 and celebrate the removal of J.C. Boyle, Copco 1, Copco 2 and Iron Gate dams.

“The Klamath River source-to-sea descent is a historic opportunity to promote not only the healing of our waters, but also the healing of our people,” said Paddle Tribal Waters staff member Danielle Rey Frank, who has Hupa and Yurok ancestry.

“As we reconnect our water, we are also reconnecting our communities from up and down the basin.”

Participants in the source-to-sea descent say the 300-mile journey is about a lot more than just kayaking. The Indigenous paddlers are honoring more than a century that their ancestors spent fighting against dams on the Klamath and advocating for a healthy river.

**Related:** [Dam removal has allowed salmon to return to the Klamath in Oregon](#)

At the headwaters on day one, community members and tribal elders prayed and cheered on the riverbank to support the kayakers before they pushed into the water. Indigenous leaders from the headwaters to the estuary attended the launch, including Klamath Tribal Chairman William Ray

Jr., Klamath tribal member Jeff Mitchell, Klamath Modoc council members, and Sue Masten and Amy Cordalis of the Yurok Tribe.

Together, they all acknowledged the hard work and dedication it took to get the dams removed. They celebrated and asked the youth to continue the path forward.

“I just want to say I’m so proud of all of you to take this journey. But learn from it, because you’re going to be the future leaders of our tribes,” Chairman Ray Jr. told the group. “I’m just filled with so much hope and joy.”

The descent began with 15 youth and about 8 staff members from Paddle Tribal Waters, with more planning to join along the way. Before they hopped into their kayaks, Mitchell sang two songs calling for their safe return home.

From there, the group settled into their kayaks and pushed into the clear blue water where Taylor Tupper and Norma Cummings from the Klamath Tribes burned sage to pray over their boats.

“We’re going to send them off in a good way,” Tupper said.

Once all of the kayakers were in the water, they gathered around for a song sung by Yurok tribal member Keeya Wiki. They formed a circle in their boats, wrapping their arms around each other’s shoulders before breaking off for what they call “the first descent.” The group paddled 7 miles that first day, mostly pushing through flat water that quickly turned from clear blue to murky brown as it flowed through agricultural fields.



*Tasia Linwood, who has Karuk ancestry, kayaks the Klamath River on June 22 where the Iron Gate Dam once stood.*  
*Anna Lueck for OPB*

That night, everyone sat around a campfire reviewing the highlights of the day.

“My favorite part was seeing all the people come out for us, and telling us about their experience fighting against the dams,” said 16-year-old Hoopa tribal member Julian Rogers.

On day two, they paddled 16 miles downriver and to Agency Lake near Chiloquin. The water was mostly flat, resulting in a long day trying to get to the lake.

“I have no clue how many miles we’ve gone and how much time has passed. I’m delusional and delirious,” Rogers said while he ate a sandwich from his kayak. “But other than that it’s going pretty good.”

With no lake in sight, the group had to navigate many obstacles. The first one was a small, metal diversion dam that the group had to swiftly paddle under. After that, they faced a couple low bridges that forced them to get out and portage around.

By the time they reached the lake, many kayakers showed excitement to be almost done as they expected the remaining few miles to be quick. However, Agency Lake was full of waves so big that some paddlers compared it to an ocean, making the journey not so easy.

“That was terrible. The lake ... was horrid. This is a hard birthday,” said Quartz Valley tribal member and Karuk person Ruby Williams. It was June 13, her 18th birthday, and she celebrated the rest of the afternoon after Paddle Tribal Waters staff member Cole Moore told her that was the hardest day of the whole trip.



*Ruby Williams of the Quartz Valley and Karuk tribes (left), uses a zinc sunscreen stick on ‘A:de’ts-Nikya:w Rogers (right) of the Hoopa Valley Tribe on June 22 in Northern California alongside a dam deconstruction site.*  
Anna Lueck for OPB / OPB

After crossing Agency Lake and Upper Klamath Lake they entered the Klamath River. Then, they had to portage around Link River Dam, one of the [two remaining dams](#) on the Klamath River. Next, they picked up their kayaks and carried them around Keno Dam. Then, they got to paddle through the J.C. Boyle Dam site, where the river now runs freely.

Two days later, they approached the most anticipated rapids: Big Bend, Hell’s Corner and the Copco Dam sites. While not all of the student paddlers were cleared to kayak the class 4 and 5 rapids, a few paddled through rough white water and around rocks, demonstrating their years of training.

“To get through class 5, you’ll have to have the skills and be able to paddle some pretty hard whitewater,” said 15-year-old To’nehwan Jayden Dauz from the Hoopa Valley Tribe. He was one of the few who were cleared to kayak the heavy white water.

Dauz, Julian Rogers and his older brother 'A:de'ts-Nikya:w Rogers were the only students to paddle Big Bend, the stretch of class 4 and 5 whitewater.



*On June 22, To'nehwan Jayden Dauz from the Hoopa Valley Tribe kayaks class 3 and 4 rapids where the Copco 1 and 2 dams once stood. Anna Lueck for OPB / OPB*

The following day they reached what's known as Hell's Corner, a section of the river that is class 3 and 4, with three more paddlers cleared to join.

By Sunday, the group was in for a big day. They had reached the section of the river where Copco 1, Copco 2 and Iron Gate dams used to be. The first section, Kikacéki Canyon (previously known as Wards Canyon), included class 3 and 4 rapids. Most of the paddlers got through on rafts before hopping back into their kayaks for the calmer stretches of the river.

"Seeing the undammed section of river from the water was like a dream come true," said Frank.

"I've spent dozens of days standing at the lookouts dreaming with our youth and community members about the day we looked down at a free-flowing river. Paddling through Iron Gate and the other reservoirs was truly living that dream."



In this screenshot from drone footage taken on June 22, the Paddle Tribal Waters group of kayakers paddle through the Iron Gate Dam site in Northern California. Jessie Sears / OPB

Kikacéki Canyon was previously dewatered and inaccessible because of the dams, and it has now been revitalized after the removal of Copco 1 and 2.

"It's kind of crazy to think about," said Tasia Linwood who has Karuk, Okanagan, Ojibwe, Wampanoag ancestry. "The first two dam sites are still there. And we had to portage around them, and I saw the dams. And now we're going through them, and you can see on the edges where the dams were. There used to be this ginormous structure right here and I'm just going right through it. It's really awesome."



The group has roughly 117 miles left to go before they reach the estuary, where the river empties into the ocean in Northern California.

Sunday afternoon, Julian Rogers lounged around the campsite, with thick zinc sunscreen still on his face.

“I’m feeling burnt. I’m feeling burnt out and tired,” he said. “But I’m also feeling fulfilled because we’re officially past the dam sites, which has been amazing. I’m feeling fulfilled and ready for the rest of the river.”

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Federal funding cut could silence tribal, rural radio stations many in Minnesota consider vital

[https://www.startribune.com/federal-funding-cut-could-silence-tribal-rural-radio-stations-many-in-minnesota-consider-vital/601372507?](https://www.startribune.com/federal-funding-cut-could-silence-tribal-rural-radio-stations-many-in-minnesota-consider-vital/601372507?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=best_of_the_week&utm_term=Best%20Of%20The%20Week?utm_source=gift_email)

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## **History Bits**

- 1775 Jul 1**     The Continental Congress resolved “ the colonies ought to avail themselves of an Alliance with such Indian Nations as will enter into the same to oppose such British troops and their Indian Allies (most tribes passed that chance and allied with the Brits).
  
- 1834 Jul 30**     The Department of Indian Affairs, organized under the Indian Trade and Intercourse Act.
  
- 1849 Jul 2**     General Assembly of the State of Deseret, with jurisdiction over present-day NV, UT and portion of NM, ID & WY, convenes for first time, memorializing Congress to admit them as a state.
  
- 1875 Jul 3**     Land selected by Inspector Vandever for Pai-Ute Indians approved.
  
- 1879 Jul 1**     The Nevada Supreme Court ruled against some whites who were fishing Pyramid Lake despite a prohibition against it and who argued that the lake was not within a valid tribal reservation.
  
- 1891 Jul 4**     **Geronimo** killed.
  
- 1894 Jul 5**     James and Charles Mooney recorded Piute, Arapaho and Kiowa songs including the ghost dance and a mescal piece that are now in the Library of Congress.
  
- 1898 Jul 4**     Sponsored by US Rep Francis Newlands (NV), Congress approved legislation seizing the Hawaiian Islands where the monarchy had been overthrown in 1893

- 1909 Jul 1** The Philadelphia mint began processing a new penny with Lincoln replacing the Native American. Theodore Roosevelt regarded the addition of Lincoln to the penny as one of his major contributions to civil rights.
- 1910 Jul 1** Addition of land to Duck Valley.
- 1917 Jun 17** Newspapers were make a fuss over **William Teller**, Duck Valley Shoshone, because he purchased a liberty (war) bond.
- 1932 Jun 28** Indians made subject by congressional act to local laws for major crimes.
- 1933 Jul 6** Former Carnegie Museum fossil expert found a burial site of Pliocene era mammals (including camels and humpless camels) north of Las Vegas and shipped thousand pounds of fossilized bones to the American Museum of Natural History in New York.
- 1933 Jul 6** Due to falling levels of the Truckee River, users with water rights dating after 1900 were cut off for any purposes other than watering stock.
- 1937 Jun 29** The U.S. goverment took action to recover land it granted to the Santa Fe Railroad in 1866 on the grounds that the land alread belonged to the Hualapi tribe and thus had not been the government's to give away.
- 1970 Jul 3** In the 8th month of Alcatraz Occupation, the Hartford Fire Insurance Company revoked insurance coverage for the boat that had been running supplies to the island.
- 1970 Jul 5** NSJ reported state Native Americans were angry with Senators Howard Cannon and Alan Bible for cosponsoring legislation that would take money earned by tribes and hold it in "trust" accounts.



A yellow butterfly lands on a bright sunflower. ( Julie Castillo) (do enlarge)