

## OSAGE RANCHING TRADITIONS & BLUESTEM RANCH - FACT SHEET

### RANCHING TRADITIONS

After allotment in 1906, many Osage **leased the pastures** on their allotments to area ranchers.

Others **became ranchers and grazed cattle** on their own, accumulating additional parcels of land and building up sizeable ranches - aided by their Osage cultural tradition of **skilled horsemanship**.

The rich tallgrass prairie pastures of the Flint Hills eco-region are famous as some of the best cattle-grazing land in the world (Burns 388).



### BLUESTEM RANCH - RE-ACQUISITION OF LANDS

The most dominant grass of the tallgrass prairie is the **Big Bluestem**, and “Bluestem Ranch” is the name of the 43,000 acre ranch in the southern part of the Reservation purchased in 2016 by the Osage Nation.

This purchase is part of the commitment to “bringing back the land to the Osage Nation” - through the **re-acquisition (buying back)** of some of the 96% of Osage Nation lands lost through allotment and sales.

At the Bluestem Ranch dedication, **Chief Geoffrey Standing Bear** shared his **vision** of the Bluestem ranch’s potential in the future “as a refuge for our sacred **bison**, a **classroom** for our people, especially our young, a place where Osage companies and individuals will conduct profitable **cattle** operations and a place for well-regulated **hunting and fishing** recreation” (Polacca, *Osage News*).



The ranch operation is currently being organized and managed by the **Bluestem Board LLC** with the **mission** to create and stimulate the Osage Nation economy, generate profits, and create employment opportunities for tribal members.

The Board states that Bluestem Ranch is part of a “revitalized determination to reclaim its land, and to create a lasting legacy to the tribe’s cultural and agricultural history. Bluestem Ranch is a part of reclaiming the proud past as it seeks to build a successful livestock operation.”

Sources: Burns, Louis F. *History of the Osage People*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004. Polacca, Benny, “Osage Nation Celebrates Purchase of Bluestem Ranch,” *Osage News* 8-26-2016. Bluestem Ranch webpage: <http://www.tallgrass-osage.com/bluestem-ranch-3/> Compiled 2018.