Fort Peck Buffalo Connections Project: Story Poles Prototypes Development and Installation Planning
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Project Abstract: Since the reintroduction of ancestral buffalo to Fort Peck Reservation lands in 2012 and 2014, faculty and staff of MSU have been engaged with Fort Peck community partners to exchange and apply knowledge and resources to improve the physical, mental and spiritual health of the Fort Peck Indigenous people and communities. Key milestones in this Buffalo Connections Project collaboration have included: 1) Collaborative research on ways the return of buffalo to Fort Peck can improve individual and community health resiliency; 2) A Fort Peck “Buffalo People Summit” during Native American Week in September 2015; 3) A summer 2015 survey to understand what the people of Fort Peck want from their buffalo herds’ management, and how it can be improved; and most recently, 4) an MSU Architecture Design Studio enabling a Master’s students team to collaborate with Fort Peck stakeholders on the design of buffalo-honoring and educational sites identified as needs by the Pté Group partners. Proposed funds will enable Story Poles prototype development and installation planning as the first phase for realizing the team’s designs that have been widely vetted with Pté partners. This phase will also include major fundraising efforts to build the desired envisioned infrastructure.