



Photo from Sheridan Moss

Summeri Bass, a member of the Northern Cheyenne tribe with roots among the Crow and Lakota, has found her niche at Central Wyoming College.

"College is genuinely hard, but when you find your niche you start to flourish," she said.

Bass is the current Aldinger Fellow at CWC. The Aldinger Fellowship was created by a donor interested in assisting female-identifying American Indian students studying science, technology, engineering, or math (STEM).

"Through this program, students develop research and critical thinking skills by working on a project under the mentorship of a faculty member," said Coralina Daly, CWC Vice President of Student Affairs.

Bass is studying Expedition Science and Native American Indigenous Studies while living at the Alpine Science Institute in Lander's Sinks Canyon. Her project is the creation of an indigenized map of the Bozeman trail that incorporates both Western historical and traditional tribal narratives. She was inspired by her two internships this summer.

First, she worked at the Medicine Wheel in the Big Horn forest and then she worked at the Fort Phil Kearny historic site. Her work during both opportunities was to help with the missing indigenous voice as part of the interpretation of those sites. While at Fort Phil Kearny she presented "Caring for our land and our communities," with a focus on reciprocity.

The Medicine Wheel, Bass said, is an "intertribal site; a physical representation of indigenous relationality with the land." At Fort Phil Kearny many people come to learn about the Army's history there, but it

Student Spotlight

Summeri Bass

is right along a path used by many tribes. Bass is excited to be bringing back Native history into the narrative.

"It is really important for people to learn all of our history; it connects us to our past and what our future could possibly be," she said.

In addition to her passion for history is her passion for the outdoors. She loved being at work outside in both environments and hopes one day to help Native youth enjoy the outdoors in new ways.

"Before, it was about survival; we followed the weather, the buffalo," she said, emphasizing how important it is to maintain ties to the land. "Each living thing has a spirit to it," she said.

After college, Bass plans to travel before finding her path to contributing to the community.

"Summeri is inquisitive, passionate, curious, and hardworking. I have appreciated seeing how she brings her own Indigenous perspective and stories to research and have enjoyed learning from her. In her research process, we have discussed the ways that mapping, GIS, and science are often biased towards White and colonial perspectives and we have been brainstorming ways to re-represent places through maps that acknowledges the complexities of land and the many people who carry stories and understanding of it."

Mara Gans

"Summeri is a distinguished student who proudly represents her family, the Crow and Cheyenne Nations of Montana, and Central Wyoming College. Her research and collaboration with GIST and Native American and Indigenous Studies are groundbreaking, offering meaningful contributions to Indigenous communities. As an Aldinger Fellow, she attended the 2025 NIEA Conference in Palm Springs, CA, to further her research for CWC. In the summer of 2024, she worked with the American Indian College program at Fort Phil Kearny and Medicine Wheel in Wyoming. Summeri's leadership as an Indigenous woman in STEM is vital, bringing a unique research perspective deeply rooted in reciprocity. Her work not only empowers Indigenous communities but also promotes the representation of Native women in the science and technology sectors." **Eric Bennett**