

# Montana Indians Their History and Location

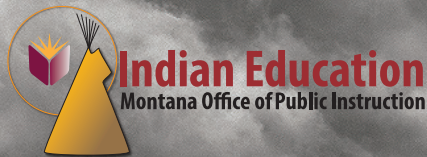
Division of Indian Education  
Montana Office of Public Instruction





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# Introduction

This publication is intended as a brief introduction to the tribal nations in Montana. We have organized the material by reservations even though, in some cases, more than one tribe is located on a reservation. It includes a section on Montana “Landless” Indians, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa, as well as a section on “urban” Indians, those who do not currently reside on a reservation. Some Montana Indians reside on reservations other than their own.

## General Background Information

Eleven of the twelve American Indian tribes in Montana are recognized as nations by the United States. This recognition is evident in the treaties and executive orders that established the seven reservations in our state. The Little Shell Chippewa Tribe, which has no reservation in Montana, is recognized by the state and is currently seeking federal recognition. Montana is also home to many Indians of other tribes living on and off the reservations. Each of these tribal nations has its own culture, language, identity, and history which continue to be important to their individual and collective identity today despite many changes over the last two centuries.



Legally and politically, an American Indian is a member of a tribe. Each tribe creates its own membership requirements to determine whether an individual is eligible for enrollment. In order to be politically and legally recognized as an American Indian, a political connection between the tribe and the individual must exist, as it is that connection that determines whether the individual American Indian can access rights established by treaties between the tribe and the U.S. government. Additionally, a tribe must be federally recognized for both the tribe and the individual American Indian to access protections and services established by those treaties.

“Federal recognition” is a legal term indicating that the United States formally acknowledges a government-to-government relationship between itself and a tribe and considers that tribe as a distinct political entity, defined by the Supreme Court as a “domestic dependent nation.” A federally recognized tribe is one that was in existence at the time of original contact with Europeans or one that evolved as a successor to such a tribe.

The relationship between individual tribes and the United States is that of one sovereign government to another sovereign government. This principle—which provides a basis for historical and current dealings between the federal government, the states, and the tribes—is evident in the Constitution of the United States. The US Supreme Court, through many cases, has established the US Constitution Commerce Clause, Article I, Section 8, as the basis of the tribal-federal relationship. The Commerce Clause states: “The Congress shall have the power To . . . regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the American Indian Tribes”. The US government entered into treaties with tribal governments that exchanged tribal lands for federal protection and services. These treaties still form the legal foundation of the tribal-federal relationship.

Federally recognized tribes possess certain inherent rights of self-government and entitlement to certain federal benefits, services, and protections because of treaties and the subsequent federal trust duty. The federal Indian trust responsibility is a legal obligation under which the United States has charged itself with moral obligations

of the highest responsibility and trust toward American Indian tribes (*Seminole Nation v. United States*, 1942; *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia*, 1831). Over the years, the trust doctrine has been the center of numerous other Supreme Court cases and it is one of the most important principles in federal American Indian law. The federal Indian trust responsibility holds the United States legally responsible for the protection of tribal lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights. The Supreme Court suggests that the federal Indian trust responsibility includes legal duties, moral obligations, and the fulfillment of understandings and expectations that have arisen over the entire course of dealings between the United States and the tribes.

## Population Statistics

Montana is home to approximately 78,000 people of American Indian heritage, or 6.5 percent of the state's total population. The majority of this population comes from Montana's twelve tribal nations: Assiniboine, Blackfeet, Chippewa, Cree, Crow, Gros Ventre, Kootenai, Little Shell Chippewa, Northern Cheyenne, Pend d'Oreille, Salish and Sioux. Most of Montana American Indians reside on one of the seven Indian reservations, while others live in urban areas such as Missoula, Billings, Great Falls, Butte, Helena, and Miles City. The state's American Indian population has grown steadily and significantly: the US Census Bureau indicated an 18 percent increase in Montana between 2000 and 2010.

Children compose a large portion of Montana American Indian population as reflected in student demographics. In the 2013—2014 school year, there were 19,761 American Indian/Alaska Native students in Montana out of a total of 144,129 students enrolled in the state's K-12 public schools (13.7 percent of the total student population).

## Acknowledgements

Individuals who assisted with the most recent update of this publication were nominated by their respective representatives from Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education. The Office of Public Instruction would like to thank the following individuals for their help with this publication:

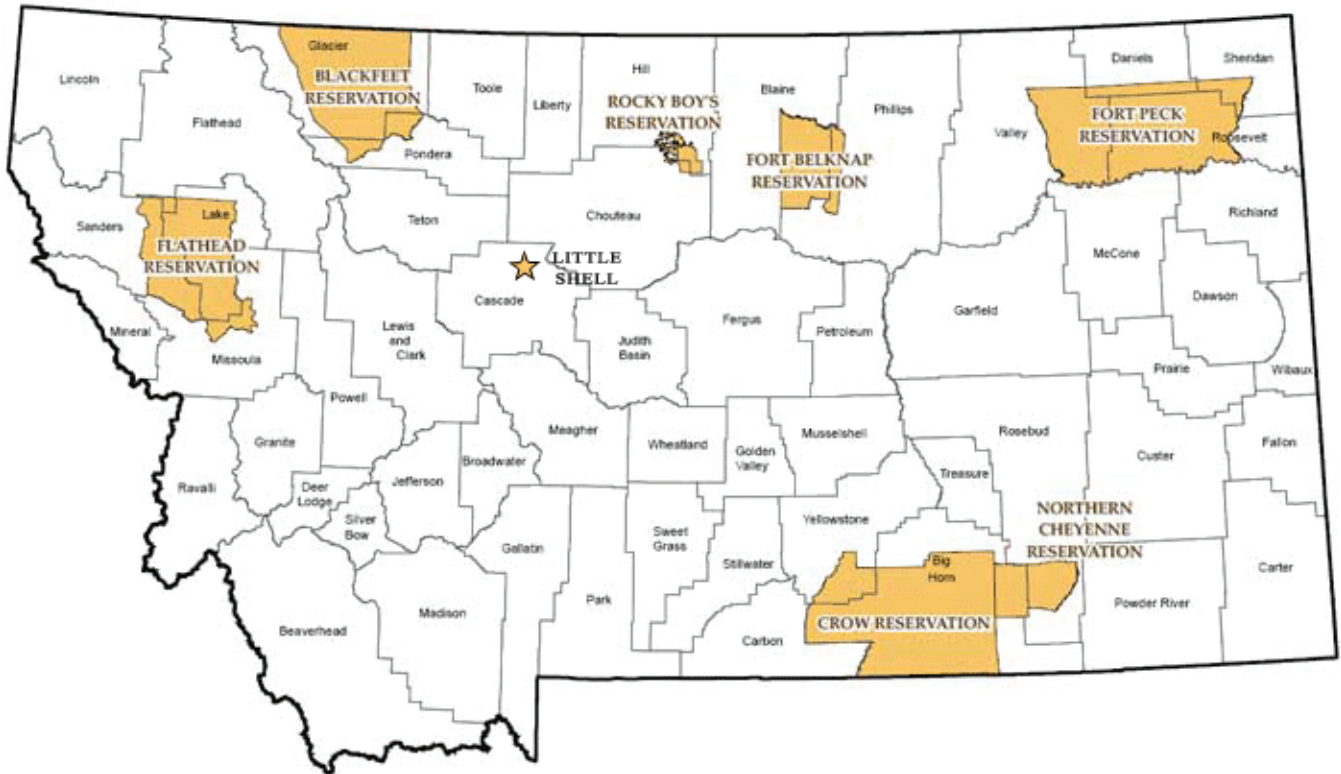
Harold Dusty Bull - Blackfeet Reservation  
Analia Pianca - Crow Reservation  
Bill Swaney - Flathead Reservation  
William Main and Brad Shields - Fort Belknap Reservation  
Neil Taylor - Fort Peck Reservation  
John Gilbert - Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa  
Mina Seminole - Northern Cheyenne Reservation  
Russell Gopher (text), Garrett Cheen (photography)—Rocky Boy's Reservation  
Mike Jetty – Urban Indians

*Unless otherwise indicated photographs not provided by tribal representatives are by Teresa Heil, Marina Weatherly, OPI Indian Education Division staff or are stock photos.*

Please be advised that the information in this booklet is not meant to be comprehensive, but should be used merely as a guide. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Indian Education Division of the Office of Public Instruction in Helena at (406) 444-3694, or view the website at <http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/IndianEd/Index.html> for clarification. You may also check with local tribal authorities or tribal Indian education committees.



# Montana Indian Reservations



(Map provided courtesy of Governor's American Indian Nations (GAIN) Council)

*Seals used with permission of the individual tribes. Permission to use in any other manner must be secured from the individual tribe(s).*

## Montana Tribal Information

*The following is written in their own words (SIC):*



# Blackfeet Reservation

## Location

The Blackfeet Reservation is located in Northwestern Montana along the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. It is bounded on the north by the United States-Canadian boundary and extends 52 miles south to Birch Creek. The foothills of the Rockies form the western boundary and the eastern boundary approximates an imaginary line which starts near the junction of Cut Bank Creek and the Marias River and extends northward. Within these boundaries, the land is mainly high, rolling prairies interspersed with rivers and creeks. The mountains found along the western border range in altitude between 4,400 to 9,600 feet.

Browning, the gateway to Glacier National Park, is an incorporated town on the reservation. It has been the headquarters of the Blackfeet Indian Agency since 1894 and is the principal shopping center on the reservation. Other communities located throughout the reservation include East Glacier, Babb, St. Mary, Starr School, Heart Butte, and Seville.

## Population

Enrolled Members living on or near the Blackfeet Reservation	9,585
Enrolled Members living off the Blackfeet Reservation	7,665
Total number of enrolled Tribal Members	17,250



## The Creation

Chewing Black Bones, a respected Blackfeet elder, told Ella E. Clark the following creation myth in 1953. Clark later published the account in her book, *Indian Legends from the Northern Rockies*.

“ Old Man came from the south, making the mountains, the prairies, and the forests as he passed along, making the birds and the animals also. He traveled northward making things as he went, putting red paint in the ground here and there-arranging the world as we see it today.

He made the Milk River and crossed it; being tired, he went up on a little hill and lay down to rest. As he lay on his back, stretched out on the grass with his arms extended, he marked his figure with stones. You can see those rocks today; they show shape of his body, legs, arms and hair.

Going on north after he had rested, he stumbled over a knoll and fell down on his knees. He said aloud, “you are a bad thing to make me stumble so.” Then he raised up two large buttes there and named them the Knees. They are called the Knees to this day. He went on farther north, and with some of the rocks he carried with him he built the Sweet Grass Hills. Old Man covered the plains with grass for the animals to feed on. He marked off a piece of ground and in it made all kinds of roots and berries to grow; camas, carrots, turnips, bitterroot, serviceberries, bull-berries, cherries, plums, and rosebuds. He planted trees, and he put all kinds of animals on the ground.

When he created the bighorn sheep with its big head and horns, he made it out on the prairie. But it did not travel easily on the prairie; it was awkward and could not go fast. So Old Man took it by its horns, led it up into the mountain, and turned it loose. There the bighorn skipped about among the rocks and went up fearful places with ease. So Old Man said to it, “This is the kind of place that suits you; this is what you are fitted for, the rocks, and the mountains.”

While he was in the mountains, he made the antelope out of dirt and turned it loose to see how it would do. It ran so fast that it fell over some rocks and hurt itself. Seeing that the mountains were not the place for it, Old Man took the antelope down to the prairie and turned it loose. When he saw it running away fast and gracefully, he said, "This is what you are suited to, the broad prairie."

One day Old man decided that he would make a woman and a child. So he formed them both of clay, the woman and the child, her son.

After he had molded the clay in human shape, he said to it, "You must be people." And then he covered it up and went away. The next morning he went to the place, took off the covering, looked at the images, and said "Arise and walk," They did so. They walked down to the river with their Maker, and then he told them that his name was Napi, Old Man.

This is how we came to be people. It is he who made us.

The first people were poor and naked, and they did not know how to do anything for themselves. Old Man showed them the roots and berries and said, "You can eat these." Then he pointed to certain trees, "When the bark of these trees is young and tender, it is good. Then you can peel it off and eat it."

He told the people that the animals also should be their food. "These are herds," he said. "All these little animals that live on the ground—squirrels, rabbits, skunks, beavers, are good to eat. You need not fear to eat their flesh. All the birds that fly, these too, I have made for you, so that you can eat of their flesh.

Old man took the first people over the prairies and through the forests, then the swamps to show them the different plants he had created. He told them what herbs were good for sicknesses, saying often, "The root of this herb or the leaf if gathered in a certain month of the year, is good for certain sickness." In that way the people learned the power of all the herbs. Then he showed them how to make weapons with which to kill the animals for their food. First, he went out and cut some serviceberry shoots, brought them in, and peeled the bark off them. He took one of the larger shoots, flattened it, tied a string to it, and thus made a bow. Then he caught one of the birds he had made, took feathers from its wing, split them, and tied them to a shaft of wood.

At first he tied four feathers along the shaft, and with this bow sent the arrow toward its mark. But he found that it did not fly well. When he used only three feathers, it went straight to the mark. Then he went out and began to break sharp pieces off the stones. When he tied them at the ends of his arrows, he found that the black flint stones, and some white flint, made the best arrow points.

When the people had learned to make bow and arrows, Old Man taught them how to shoot animals and birds. Because it is not healthful to eat animals' flesh raw, he showed the first people how to make fire. He gathered soft, dry rotten driftwood and made a punk of it. Then he found a piece of hardwood and drilled a hole in it with an arrow point. He gave the first man a pointed piece of hardwood and showed him how to roll it between his hands until sparks came out and the punk caught fire. Then he showed the people how to cook the meat of the animals they had killed and how to eat it. He told them to get a certain kind of stone that was on the land, while he found a harder stone. With the hard stone he had them hollow out the softer one and so make a kettle. Thus, they made their dishes.

Old Man told the first people how to get spirit power: "Go away by yourself and go to sleep. Something will come to you in your dream that will help you. It may be some animal. Whatever this animal tells you in your sleep you

must do. Obey it. Be guided by it. If later you want help, if you are traveling alone and cry aloud for help, your prayer will be answered. It may be by an eagle, perhaps by a buffalo, perhaps by a bear. Whatever animal hears your prayer you must listen to it.”

That was how the first people got along in the world by the power given to them in their dreams. After this, Old Man kept on traveling north. Many of the animals that he had created followed him. They understood when he spoke to them, and they were his servants. When he got to the north point of the Porcupine Mountains, he made some more mud images of people, blew his breath upon them, and they became people, men and women. They asked him, “What do we eat?”

By way of answer, Old Man made many images of clay in the form of buffalo. Then he blew breath upon them and they stood up. When he made signs to them, they started to run. Then he said to the people, “Those animals-buffalo-are your food.”

“But how can we kill them?” the people asked.

“I will show you.” He answered.

He took them to a cliff and told them to build rock piles: “Now hide behind these piles of rocks,” he said. “I will lead the buffalo this way. When they are opposite you, rise up.”



After telling them what to do, he started toward the herd of buffalo. When he called the animals, they started to run toward him, and they followed him until they were inside the piles of rock. Then Old Man dropped back. As the people rose up, the buffalo ran in a straight line and jumped over the cliff.

“Go down and take the flesh of those animals.” said Old Man. The people tried to tear the limbs apart, but they could not. Old Man went to the edge of the cliff, broke off some pieces with sharp edges, and told the people to cut the flesh with these rocks. They obeyed him. When they had skinned the buffalo, they set up some poles and put the hides on them. Thus they made a shelter to sleep under.

After Old Man taught the people all these things, he started off again, traveling north until he came to where the Bow and Elbow Rivers meet. There he made some more people and taught them the same things. From there he went farther north. When he had gone almost to the Red Deer River, he was so tired that he lay down on a hill. The form of his body can be seen there yet, on the top of the hill where he rested. When he awoke from his sleep, he traveled farther north until he came to a high hill. He climbed to the top of it and there he sat down to rest. As he gazed over the country, he was greatly pleased by it. Looking at the steep hill below him, he said to himself, “This is a fine place for sliding. I will have some fun.” And he began to slide down the hill. The marks where he slid are to be seen yet, and the place is known to all the Blackfeet Tribes as ‘Old Man’s Sliding Ground.’”

Old Man can never die. Long ago he left the Blackfeet and went away toward the west, disappearing in the mountains. Before he started, he said to the people, “I will always take care of you, and someday I will return.”

Even today some people think that he spoke the truth and that when he comes back he will bring with him the buffalo, which they believe the white men have hidden. Others remember that before he left them he said that when he returned he would find them a different people. They would be living in a different world, he said, from that which he had created for them and had taught them to live in.”

## Land Status

Total acres within the Reservation's Boundary	1,534,619 acres
Individually allotted lands	649,187 acres
Tribally owned lands	316,840 acres
Government lands	9,187 acres
Fee title or state lands	559,405 acres

Presently, the land is used for ranching, farming, oil and gas development, and harvesting timber. The principal crops are wheat, barley, and hay.

It is believed that traditional territorial lands of the Blackfoot Confederacy extended from the North Saskatchewan River south to Yellowstone Park, their western boundary being the Rocky Mountains and extending to the eastern boundary of Montana following the Missouri River.

## Historical Background

The present day Blackfeet are descended from tribes known as the Blackfeet (Siksika), Kainah or Bloods, and Piegans, all of Algonquin linguistic stock. These three tribes shared a common culture, spoke the same language, and held a common territory. Members of these tribes lived in the present Province of Saskatchewan until 1730, when they started to move southwestward where the buffalo and other game were more abundant. Although there is some controversy over the origin of their name, "Blackfeet" is thought to refer to the characteristic black color of their moccasins, possibly painted by the Indians themselves or darkened by fire ashes.

Prior to the 1800s the Blackfeet had little opportunity to engage in conflicts with either the white man or other Indians. The location of their territory was such that the Blackfeet were relatively isolated and, thus, they encountered the white man later than most tribes. During the first half of the 19th century, white settlers began entering the Blackfeet territory bringing with them items for trade.

The Blackfeet were indirectly introduced to a great variety of trade material through Cree and Assiniboine traders who traded furs and buffalo hides to traders of the Hudson's Bay Company in the northeast. Realizing the efficiency of the white man's metal tools, utensils, and weapons, the Indians were eager to trade for wares that made life easier.

The horse and gun soon revolutionized the Blackfeet culture. The white man's guns offered a formidable new defense against their enemies. Competition for the better hunting territories and the desire to acquire horses led to intertribal warfare. The Blackfeet quickly established their reputation as warriors and demanded the respect of other Indian tribes and the white man alike.

Although they were not officially represented or even consulted, a vast area was set-aside for the Blackfeet Tribes by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851. In 1855, the government made a treaty with the Blackfeet and several of their neighboring tribes, which provided for use of a large portion of the original reservation as a common hunting territory.

In 1865 and 1868, treaties were negotiated for their lands south of the Missouri, but were not ratified by Congress. In 1873 and 1874, the Blackfeet southern boundary was moved 200 miles north by Presidential orders and Congressional Acts. The land to the south was opened to settlement. During the winters of 1883 and 1884, the

Blackfeet experienced unsuccessful buffalo hunts. After the disappearance of the buffalo, the Blackfeet faced starvation and were forced to accept reservation living and dependence upon rationing for survival.

In 1888, additional lands were ceded and separate boundaries established for the Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Fort Peck Reservations. In 1896 an agreement was once again made between the United States government and the Blackfeet Tribe. This time the United States government was asking for the sale of the Rocky Mountains, which bordered the reservation to the west.

It was believed that there were valuable minerals there. A commission was sent out to negotiate and heated disagreements ensued with tribal members over how much land and money this agreement would involve. The end result was a cession of land that now makes up Glacier National Park and the Lewis and Clark National Forest. Today this agreement is still in dispute over how much land and money was agreed upon. The Blackfeet Tribe still holds some rights in Glacier National Park and in the Lewis and Clark National Forest. As long as the people continue to appreciate what the Creator gave them, there will continue to be disagreement over stewardship of the land once occupied by this great nation.

## **Organizational Structure**

The Blackfeet Indian Tribe was organized in 1935 under the Reorganization Act. It exists both as a political entity and a business corporation. All tribal members are shareholders in the corporation. The Blackfeet Tribal Business Council is made up of nine members, selected from four districts on the reservation: Browning, Seville, Heart Butte, and Old Agency. The nine Blackfeet Tribal Business Council members conduct both the political and business affairs of the tribe and corporation. The councilmen are elected by secret ballot of eligible tribal members and served staggered four year terms. The tribal council elects and appoints its own officers and hires its own staff. In the past, the Council has been granted broad political powers. Today the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council oversees several tribal programs and departments, and is one of the major employers on the reservation.

## **Blackfeet Tribal Programs and Departments**

- Blackfeet Tribal Business Council
- Council Staff
- Finance Department
- Legal Department
- Human Resources/Personnel Department
- Enrollment Department
- Planning and Economic Development
- Commerce Department
- Documents Department
- Self-Insurance Department
- Tribal Security
- Procurement Department
- Land Department
- Forestry Department
- Forest Development Department
- Tribal Employment Rights Office – TERO
- Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program
- Agriculture Department
- Veteran's Program

- Johnson O'Malley Program - JOM
- Higher Education Program
- Community Services/Hardship Program
- Facility Management/Maintenance Department
- Glenn Heavy Runner Memorial Swimming Pool
- Nurturing Center
- Commodity Program
- WIC Program
- Medicine Bear Shelter
- Buffalo Program
- Heart Butte Senior Citizens Center
- Oil & Gas Department
- Southern Piegan Diabetes Program
- Indian Health Service Security
- EMS Program
- Tribal Health Program
- Community Health Representatives Program
- Chemical Dependency Program
- Minerals Management Program
- Water Resources Program
- Domestic Water Department
- Fish & Wildlife Program
- Transportation Planning Program
- Home Improvement Program – HIP
- Law Enforcement Services
- Juvenile Program
- Tribal Credit
- Tribal Court
- Geographic Information Systems Program – GIS
- Chief Mountain Hot Shots
- Welfare Reform Program
- Family Services Program
- Social Services
- Indian Child Welfare Act Program – ICWA
- Environment Program – EPA
- Welfare to Work Program
- Eagle Shields Center
- Personal Care Attendant Program – PCA
- Blackfeet Transit
- Head Start Program
- Blackfeet Care Center



## Bureau Operated Programs:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs Blackfeet Agency office is located on the edge of Browning, coming in from the east on Highway 89.

- Executive Direction – Superintendent
- Administrative Services
- Natural Resources
- Real Estate Services (Realty)
- Facility Management

## Housing

The Blackfeet Indian Housing Authority was created in the 1960s in order to address the need for affordable housing on the reservation. Currently the Blackfeet Housing Authority manages 935 units. The units are either rentals or home ownership. Home ownership programs have made it possible for families to have decent, safe, and affordable housing. Due to the large unemployment rate on the reservation



and the continuous population growth, affordable housing is an issue that the staff of the Blackfeet Housing continues to strive for. The Blackfeet Tribe and Blackfeet Housing are committed to provide decent, safe, sanitary, and affordable housing.

## Education

In contrast to half a century ago, a great percentage of Blackfeet today are fluent English speakers. Several of the modern schools on the reservation are administered by a locally elected school board, under the Board of Public Education, and subject to compulsory school laws.

Elementary and high school students attend public schools located in Browning, Heart Butte, East Glacier, Babb, and Croff Wren. In addition, the Blackfeet Boarding Dormitories are operated to provide homes during the school year for elementary children from isolated districts.

Another option for elementary students is the Nizipuhwahsin (Real Speak) schools created in 1994. They offer K-8 education taught in the Blackfoot Language. Approximately 60 students attend the school during the standard academic year. The Piegan Institute operates the schools. The Piegan Institute is a private non-profit organization. The Nizipuhwahsin schools are located in Browning.

Also located in Browning is the De La Salle Blackfeet School, which offers grades 4-8. The De La Salle Blackfeet School is committed to providing a quality, innovative, and faith-based education to empower its students to become successful learners and able participants in the shaping of their community.

Students and community members have the opportunity to further their education by attending the Blackfeet Community College. The college is a two-year higher education institution fully accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges.

## Employment and Income

Unemployment is a major problem on the Blackfeet Reservation. Currently the unemployment rate ranges between 60 and 80 percent. Much of the labor force depends on firefighting and other seasonal type jobs. In order to bring the high employment rate down, 3,000 new jobs must be created.

In recent years all agencies on the Blackfeet Reservation have pulled together to address the unemployment issue. In 1999 the Tribe formed an economic development corporation to establish enterprises that will create jobs and boost the economy. Currently Siyeh Development Corporation has started several enterprises which employs over 200 people. The enterprises include Glacier Peaks Casino, Little Peaks Casino, Glacier Family Food Store, Starlink Cable, Oki Communications, and Blackfeet Heritage Center.

Other tribally affiliated businesses include Two Medicine Water Company which provides water to the towns of East Glacier and Browning. The other is the newly built Holiday Inn Express and Suites, which has 86 rooms, 16 suites, a pool and waterslide, as well as a fitness center.

Income for tribal members is derived from agriculture, livestock production, timber, light industry, tourism, and construction. The leading job providers on the reservation are Indian Health Service, School District No. 9, Blackfeet Tribe, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Local craftsmen supplement their income by selling arts and crafts to the summer tourists and at locally sponsored events such as North American Indian Days.

## Recreation

The Blackfeet Tribe continues to address the development of tourist trade on the Blackfeet Reservation. The potential for outdoor recreational development on the reservation has always been exceptional. Over 175 miles of rivers and streams and eight major lakes offer some of Montana's best fishing. The possibilities are greatly enhanced by virtue of the reservation's close proximity to Glacier National Park.

The town of Browning is the center of activity on the Blackfeet Reservation. The major businesses are located in Browning; Blackfeet Tribal Business Office, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian health Service, Blackfeet Housing, Browning Public Schools, and Blackfeet Community College.

Opened in 1941, a principal attraction on the Blackfeet Reservation is the Museum of the Plains Indians operated under the direction of the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. The museum also features Native American artists and their work throughout the year.

A camping facility owned by the Blackfeet Tribe called Chewing Blackbones is located on the eastern shore of Lower St. Mary's Lake, which opened in 1978. It is situated near the entrance to Glacier National Park on U.S. Highway 89 near St. Mary's and four miles south of Babb. Facilities include camping grounds with full hookups, picnic kiosks, and a boat launching area. Visitors are welcome to camp at most of the lakes located on the Blackfeet Reservation, however, most are without facilities.

Also available through the Tribe is Sleeping Wolf Campground, which is located  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a mile west of Browning on Hwy 89 and offers full hookups, showers, and laundry. One mile northeast of East Glacier is Two Medicine Lodges Campground which has an unbelievable view of the Rocky Mountains to the west, as well as the Bob Marshall Wilderness to the south and east.

## Other Things To Do:

- Play at Glacier Peaks Casino or Little Peaks Casino
- Fishing
- Guided Driving Tours
- Self Guided Tours – Blackfeet Trail
- Rodeos
- Hiking and Camping
- Horseback Riding/Trail Rides
- Cross Country Skiing
- Boating
- Pow Wows

## Visit:

- Blackfeet Heritage Center
- Duck Lake Campground
- Holiday Inn Express and Suites
- Glacier Family Foods



## Annual Festivities

Throughout the year there are many celebrations and other activities taking place on the Blackfeet Reservation. These are events that allow communities to come together and celebrate, visit, and enjoy. The largest of the celebrations takes place the second week of July, the North American Indian Days Celebration. The celebration includes youth activities such as a kid's rodeo and 4H activities, dancing, singing, drumming, special dance contest, feast, stick games, give-a-ways, and a parade. Other activities include Indian Relays at the Blackfeet Stampede Park, flat track racing, running of the horses, and occasional other community sponsored activities.

## Community Sponsored Events:

- Baker Massacre Memorial
- Blackfeet Community College Pow Wow
- Blackfeet Days
- Thanksgiving Pow Wow
- Christmas Pow Wow
- New Year's Pow Wow
- Head Start Mini Pow Wow
- Heart Butte Society Celebration
- Man Power Pow Wow and Stick Game Tournament
- The Flood of 1964 Memorial
- School Sponsored Events
- Native American Heritage Week
- Eagle Claw Society Inductions
- Homecoming Parade/Dance
- Red Ribbon Week
- Prom Dance
- Graduation Commencement

## Resources About the Blackfeet Tribe for Students/Educators

### Books

*The Blackfeet: An Annotated Bibliography.* Bryan Johnson. Garland Publishing, 1965.

*Blackfeet and Buffalo: Memories of Life Among the Indians.* James Willard Schultz, University of Oklahoma Press, Reprinted 1981.

*Blackfeet Indian Stories.* George Bird Grinnell, C. Scribner's Sons, 1913.

*Blackfoot Lodge Tales; The Story of Prairie People.* George Bird Grinnell, University of Nebraska, 1892.

*The Blackfeet Raiders of the Northwestern Plains.* John Canfield Ewers, University of Oklahoma Press, 1967.

*Crowfoot, Chief of the Blackfeet.* Hugh Aylmer Dempsey, University of Oklahoma Press.

*A Dictionary of Blackfeet.* Donald Frantz and Norma Jean Russell, University of Toronto Press.

*Mythology of the Blackfoot Indians.* Clark Wissler and D.C. Duvall, University of Nebraska Press, 1908.

*The Sun Came Down.* Percy Bull Child, Harper & Row Publishers.

*The Ways of My Grandmothers.* Beverly Hungry Wolf, 1980, New York, N.Y.

### Web Sites

Blackfeet Country <http://www.blackfeetcountry.com>

Browning Public Schools <http://www.bps.k12.mt.us/>

Bureau of Indian Affairs <http://doi.gov/bureau-indian-affairs.html>



# Crow Reservation

## Location

The Crow Indian Reservation encompasses 2.2 million acres, mainly in Big Horn County, in south central Montana. The reservation is bordered by Wyoming to the south. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation borders the reservation to the east. The Crow Reservation is divided into six districts for cultural and Crow governmental purposes: 1) Reno (also known as Center Lodge), 2) Lodge Grass (the Valley of the Chiefs), 3) Pryor (Baapua or Arrow Creek), 4) Big Horn (Valley of the Giveaway), 5) Wyola (Mighty Few) and 6) the Black Lodge (AshShipte) districts. Historically tribal members are divided into three subgroups: Mountain Crow, River Crow and Kicked in the Bellies.

The Crow Reservation has three mountainous areas: the Big Horn Mountains and the Pryor Mountains in the south central and southwest respectively and the Wolf Mountains in the southeast. In addition to the high mountains (elevation 7,000 feet), valleys, rolling plains (elevation 4,500 feet) and flat alluvial floodplains (elevation 3,000), the reservation includes gravelly or stony slopes, broad hilltops with soils generally capable of supporting and maintaining excellent vegetative cover, level and productive irrigated valleys along the Big Horn Rivers and Pryor Creek, deep canyons and extensive areas of rolling plateaus. Much of the western portion of the reservation is difficult to traverse as the hills that climb from the plains are dissected by a labyrinth of coulees and canyons. There are three major drainage systems on the reservation: the Bighorn River; the Little Bighorn River; and Pryor Creek.



The climate is relatively moderate for its latitude. The warm Chinook winds that blow from the western mountains melt most snow accumulations. The mean annual temperature is 45.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Extreme temperatures range from 110 degrees Fahrenheit in the summer to -40 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter. Depending on the elevation, annual precipitation ranges between 12 to 18 inches.

Lodge Grass has a gas station and a grocery store; Crow Agency has a gas station and two small grocery stores; however, the nearest service center is Hardin, Montana, immediately adjacent to the reservation's northern boundary where restaurants, shops and motels are available. The biggest retail and business center for the Crow Tribe is Billings, located 59 miles north of Crow Agency, Montana.

## Population

Tribal members living on or near the Crow Reservation	10,000
Tribal members living off the Crow Reservation	5,000
Total number of enrolled Tribal Members	14,500*

\*(not all members have enrolled)

The growth rate is approximately 4.1% per year.

Gender ratio: 50.1% females; 48.9% males.

Median age: 27.

Age distribution: 9.9% of the population is under five years old; 6.5% are sixty-five or older.

Education\*: 28.6% have no high school diploma; 38.2% are high school graduates; 17% have a bachelor's degree or higher (\*2011 U.S. Census Bureau).

## Land

Of the 2.2 million acres which comprise the Crow Reservation, 1.425 million acres are held in trust by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) for the Crow Nation. The Crow Tribes owns 18% of the reservation while 50% of the acreage is owned by individual allottees who are tribal members. Although rare, some tribal members own fee lands. Roughly 700,000 acres or 32% of the reservation are in fee status and owned by non-Indians. As a result of the individual allotments from the 1920 Crow Allotment Act, the Crow land base is characterized by a significant “checker boarding” of Indian and non-Indian land ownership. In an effort to reclaim the sold allotments and other non-tribally owned property within the exterior boundary of the Crow Reservation, the tribe has established a fund to purchase fee lands as they become available.

## Land Use and Housing

Within the reservation, Crow Agency is the largest community with approximately 3,245 residents. The majority of BIA, Indian Health Services (IHS) and tribal housing is located in Crow Agency. Crow Agency is the seat of the tribal government and located in the Center Lodge district.

Lodge Grass is the second largest community with approximately 2,125 residents. An IHS Clinic which also serves Wyola is located in Lodge Grass. This clinic is supported with limited IHS housing. Lodge Grass has the second largest tribal housing site.

Pryor is the third largest community with 1,108 residents. It is located 69 miles northwest of Crow Agency and 30 minutes from Billings, Montana. Pryor also has an IHS Clinic with limited IHS housing and support. Tribal housing encompasses a large portion of the community.

Wyola, the fourth largest community with 215 residents, is located 13 miles south of Lodge Grass. Wyola also has a tribal housing site.

St. Xavier is the smallest community with approximately 83 residents. It is also a tribal housing site. Fort Smith, also known as Yellowtail is located in this Big Horn district. The National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management provides housing for its employees. There are no tribal housing developments in the Big Horn and Black Lodge districts.

Throughout the four communities, the tribe owns, manages and maintains 200 single-family housing units. The Black Lodge district does not have a collective community. Most Black Lodge residents live on 2.5 acre home sites scattered between Hardin, Crow Agency and towards St. Xavier.

In addition to the tribal housing developments in Crow Agency, Lodge Grass, Pryor and Wyola, an additional 300 single-family mutual-help housing units are scattered throughout the reservation. Mutual-help housing units are rent-to-own units with a 30 year life located on private property on individual allotments. After the maturity of the mutual-help housing units, the tribe conveys these units to the homebuyer and they become private property.

Housing conditions on the Crow Reservation continue to be poor. Many housing units, 60%, are substandard. Overcrowding is a serious problem with two to three generations of families living in one small home. More than 1,000 housing units need to be built.

## Land Use Control

Land use on the reservation is proscribed by the Crow Tribal Council. The main component of the council is the Crow Tribal Legislature. The legislature enacts resolutions designating tribal land use.

Although the tribe has a land use plan in place, it does not have a zoning ordinance to enforce its land use plan. Non-Indian residents living on private parcels located within the exterior boundaries of the tribe are not subject to the tribal authority. This further complicates enforcement of tribal codes and ordinances.

## Historical Background

The ancestors of the Crow Indians came from a “land of many lakes,” probably in the headwaters of the Mississippi or further north in the Winnipeg Lake region. They eventually settled along the Missouri River in what are now the states of North and South Dakota. The people lived in semi-permanent villages of lodges covered with earth. They became known as the “people who lived in earthen lodges.”

Nearly 400 years ago the people divided into two factions. One group, the Hidatsa, remained along the Missouri. The other group, the Apsaalooké or Biilooke, migrated westward and eventually claimed most of what is now eastern Montana and northern Wyoming as homeland. At the time of the breakup, this latter group, numbering about 500, was made up of several families. Its population reached about 8,000 before the small pox epidemic of the middle 1800s. At that time, the Apsaalooké or Crow Tribe traveled in two or three groups or bands, the Mountain Crow, the River Crow and the Kicked in the Bellies.

The Apsaalooké chiefs entered into their first treaty, a friendship treaty, with the United States in 1825. In 1851, Crow Nation entered into the first Fort Laramie Treaty allocating 33 million acres of land to the Crow people. That land was located in the Montana, Wyoming, and Dakota Territories. The second Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 reduced the Crow Indian Reservation to eight million acres in South-Central Montana Territory. <sup>(1)</sup>

An 1882 Act of Congress further reduced the land base. In compensation for taking the land, the U.S. government committed to buy livestock and build houses. By this time, the tribe had been settled within the boundaries of the reservation for about ten years. In 1890 yet more land was ceded for \$946,000. In 1905 the last major land cession was made, leaving approximately three million acres of land for the tribe.

The Crow have always felt that the U.S. government failed to give them adequate compensation for the land it acquired. The estimated value far exceeded the five cents per acre received. In 1904, the Crow Indian Nation first initiated legal proceedings for just compensation for lands taken. Almost six decades later, in 1962, the Court of Indian Claims awarded a \$10,242,984.70 judgment to the Crow.

Since 1905, further attempts have been made to reduce the Crow land base. Senator Dixon in 1910, Senator Meyers in 1915 and Senator Walsh in 1919 all sponsored legislation in Congress to open the balance of the Crow Reservation for settlement by the public. These attempts failed. An Act of Congress passed on June 4, 1920, sponsored by the tribe itself, divided the remainder of the reservation into tracts which were allotted to every enrolled member of the tribe. The titles to these lands are held in trust by the federal government and allottees may not dispose of their lands without the consent and approval of the government. The rough mountain areas were withheld from such allotment and remain in communal tribal ownership.

<sup>(1)</sup> <http://www.crow-nsn.gov/>



## Organizational Structure

On June 24, 1948 the Crow adopted a written Constitution, which was amended on December 18, 1961. Thus, the Crow Tribe chose not to organize under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934. Under the Crow Constitution, the governing body is the Crow Tribal General Council, which consists of three branches, the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches. The Executive Branch consists of the Chair, the Vice-Chair, the Secretary and the Vice-Secretary. The duties of the Chair include building beneficial relationships with other tribes as well as the State of Montana, and promoting economic and energy development interests.<sup>(2)</sup> Elections for all Executive Branch positions are held every four years in November with inauguration into office in December. In order to vote, one has to be at least 18 years old and be an enrolled member.

The Crow Nation Legislature, established by Article V of the Crow Constitution, is the law-making body of the Crow Nation Government. The legislature has 18 members elected by the voters of six reservation districts to staggered four-year terms.<sup>(3)</sup> Article X of the Crow Constitution established the judiciary branch. It consists of all courts established by the Crow Law and Order Code.<sup>(4)</sup>

The government has various departments such as housing, credit, education, enrollment, natural resources, business registration, social services, media, tourism, transit, water resources and wellness.<sup>(5)</sup>

## Current Issues

- Adequate and sufficient housing
- Balancing natural resource development with conservation for future generations
- Addressing the high unemployment with more sustainable job creation
- Addressing high school drop-outs
- Maintaining and preserving Crow language fluency as older Native speakers pass on

## Medical Facilities

The Crow/Northern Cheyenne (IHS) Hospital is a government-maintained facility with two satellite health clinics in Lodge Grass and Pryor.

## Education

The Tribe maintains the Little Big Horn College, a two year, fully accredited community college. The Crow Reservation has three high schools and eight elementary schools. School Districts 17H and 1 serve the northern sector with elementary schools (grades 1-5) in Crow Agency and Ft. Smith. The school districts are headquartered in Hardin, Montana. The school district also maintains two elementary schools, a middle school and a high school in Hardin, attended by a large number of tribal members mostly from the Center Lodge, Black Lodge and Big Horn districts.

Other school districts serving the Crow Reservation include the Wyola School District #29 (K-8), the Lodge Grass School Districts #27-2 (K-12), Pryor School Districts 2 and 3 (K-12) and two Catholic schools: Pretty Eagle Academy (K-12) in St. Xavier and the St. Charles Mission School (Preschool-8) in Pryor.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.crow-nsn.gov/chairman.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.crow-nsn.gov/legislature.html>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.crow-nsn.gov/courts.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.crow-nsn.gov/departments.html>

## Employment and Income

The largest employer on the reservation is the Crow Tribal Government, which is also the biggest taxpayer in Big Horn County. Twenty-four percent of the reservation’s tribal residents are employed by tribal, federal, state and county government entities and programs.

Employment by field:

- Agriculture (small farming and ranching) 6%
  - Manufacturing 4%
  - Mineral Extraction 4%
  - Retail 2%
  - Service Industry 2%
  - Education; Health Care; Judicial Services 6%
  - Unemployment rate: 52%
- 
- Median household income: \$44,000
  - Median family income: \$30,038
  - Per capita income: \$8,800

People below the poverty level in Bighorn County: 25%

## Recreational Activities

The Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area, which includes the Yellowtail Dam (height: 525 feet) and the Bighorn Reservoir, is a popular fishing, boating and camping destination. The reservoir encompasses 120,000 acres and draws up to 230,000 annual users. The Bighorn River is known for its trout.

The Hardin Community Activity Center is the only public swimming pool servicing the reservation and tribal members. It is owned by the school district and primarily benefits school activities. The public use is secondary to school events.

The Apsaalooke Center in Crow Agency has a gymnasium. The facility is used for high school sporting events by the area schools, adult basketball leagues and tribal community basketball tournaments. Cultural events such as Halloween masquerades, New Year’s dances and spring hand-game tournaments are also held here. Across the street from this center is a rodeo arena and horseracing track with stables. Nearby, on the I-90 Frontage Road, is an aesthetically pleasing, small Veteran’s Memorial Park, where President Barack Obama was officially adopted into the Crow Tribe.

## Annual Festivities

Around June 25 every year at Crow Agency Crow Native Days occurs; this celebrates the anniversary of the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The third week each August brings Crow Fair, the largest teepee encampment in the world, held in Crow Agency. It is a time of family gathering, Pow-Wow watching and visiting loved ones in adjacent camps. Each morning at 10:00 a.m. Friday –Sunday, there is a parade, where Crow members display their finest, hand-made regalia on riders atop horses and floats. Vendors sell frybread, jewelry, sweaters, music and more. Under the starlit skies one can occasionally hear “49er songs,” by roving bands of youth who sing from camp to camp. Family celebrations include birthdays, graduations and other special events with clan feeds with delicious buffalo meat stew and June-berry pudding. This event is open to the public.

## Points of Interest

**The Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument** features museum exhibits, an interpretive center and ranger-led programs at Crow Agency. The monument memorializes the Native victory over the Seventh Cavalry.

**Chief Plenty Coups State Park** in Pryor contains the home of the beloved Crow Chief Plenty Coups who was a visionary and a diplomat. One can visit the home and enjoy a picnic in the scenic picnic area.

**Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area and Yellowtail Dam**, in Fort Smith, Montana which includes two visitor centers and fish tackle shops for fishing and boating.

**Little Big Horn College, Crow Agency.** Contact the college for group or individual tours.

*Report Source: Dr. William Luke EnemyHunter, CEO of the Crow Indian Nation and other footnoted sources as indicated above.*



# Flathead Reservation

## Location

The Flathead Indian Reservation is located in northwestern Montana, west of the Continental Divide. The exterior boundaries of the reservation include portions of four counties — Flathead, Lake, Missoula, and Sanders. The Flathead Reservation land base consists of approximately 1,317,500 acres. The eastern border of the reservation follows the crest of the Mission Range of the Rocky Mountains; the south boundary borders the lower Blackfoot, Rattlesnake, and Ninemile drainages, northeast, north, and northwest of the city of Missoula; the western boundary borders the Paradise, Plains, and Thompson River country; and the northern boundary runs through the center of Flathead Lake. The reservation encompasses the west side of the Mission Range and the entire Mission Valley, the entire Jocko River system and Jocko Valley, the north side of the Reservation Divide, the lower Flathead River downstream almost to its confluence with the Clark Fork River, the Camas Prairie and Hot Springs areas, the Big Draw-Hog Heaven country west of Elmo, and the south half of Flathead Lake.



*A People of Vision*

## Tribes, Languages and Population

The three principal tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation are known in English, and in this document, as the Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai.

The Salish and Pend d’Oreille are the easternmost tribes of the Salish language family, which includes some 23 languages and about 53 dialects, reaching from Montana west to the Pacific Coast, mostly to the north of the Columbia River. The Salish and Pend d’Oreille dialects are very similar.

The term “Salish” is an English rendering of the name that the people of the tribe call themselves: *Séliš* (pronounced SEH-lish). From the early nineteenth century, the Salish have also been known to non-Indians by the misnomer “Flathead.” Sometimes the Salish are called the Bitterroot Salish, for their aboriginal homeland in the Bitterroot Valley.

The term “Pend d’Oreille” is French for earring, and is a name used by early fur traders in reference to the shell earrings traditionally worn by both men and women of the tribe. The tribe’s name in their language is *Qlispé* (pronounced Kah-lee-SPEH), usually rendered in English as Kalispel. This term refers to the tribe as a whole, encompassing the numerous bands that were traditionally based in certain areas from the Flathead Valley and Flathead Lake area all the way downstream to eastern Washington, where today the Kalispel Reservation is located. There were also names for all of those individual bands; for example, the name of the Pend d’Oreille band based in the area now within the Flathead Reservation is *Stq̓etkʷmsč̓iñt*, meaning People of the Broad Water, in reference to Flathead Lake. Today, the upstream tribe based on the Flathead Reservation is usually referred to in English as the Pend d’Oreille, while the downstream tribe based on the Kalispel Reservation is called the Kalispel.

There are two words in the Kootenai language, Ksanka and Ktunaxa, which refer to the Kootenai people and to our language. Montana Kootenai generally use the word Ksanka, which translates as “Standing Arrow,” which is a traditional warring technique. Ksanka is also the band name of the Kootenai residing on the Flathead Reservation in Montana. Ktunaxa is often used to describe the Kootenai sovereignty as a nation. The Kootenai language is considered by linguists to be an isolate, not clearly part of any other language family or group. A likely explanation for the isolate nature of the Kootenai language is that Kootenai people have been in their

mountainous Kootenai enclave for a least several millennia, while the evolution and movement of other language groups has swirled around them.

Beginning in 1910, the federal government opened large tracts of the Flathead Reservation to non-Indian homesteading and occupancy. As a result, since that time, the members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have constituted a minority population within their own reservation. There are also many Indian people from other tribes who live on the Flathead Reservation. Many are attending Salish Kootenai College or Kicking Horse Job Corps. Some have intermarried with tribal members and live among the community with their families. Salish Kootenai College and local K-12 public schools have identified over 71 different tribal nations represented within their student populations.

As of 2014, there are approximately 7,920 enrolled members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Of this population, about 5,000 live on the reservation.

### Land

The Hellgate Treaty of 1855, ratified by Congress and signed by the President in 1859, established the 1.3 million-acre Flathead Reservation as an area “set apart... for the exclusive use and benefit of said confederated tribes.” Due in part to translation problems during the negotiations, tribal leaders understood the reservation to be much larger than its written description in the treaty.



But even the treaty-defined reservation, as an “exclusive” tribal homeland, would soon be changed by the unilateral action of Congress. As described in greater detail below under “Recent History of the Confederated Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai Tribes,” with passage of the Allotment Act (Dawes Severalty Act) of 1887 and the Flathead Allotment Act of 1904, Congress forcibly broke up the traditional collective ownership of land, assigning individual tracts to tribal adults. The Act then provided for much of the remaining land to be declared “surplus,” and beginning in 1910, the government opened those lands to homesteaders. Non-Indians quickly took control of much of the most economically valuable agricultural ground within the reservation. In 1934, Congress put an end to the Allotment Act with passage of the Indian Reorganization Act. Since that time, the tribes have been gradually buying back land. In recent years, the CSKT have regained ownership of the majority of the reservation. As of 2014, the tribes control roughly 64 percent of the surface area, including water:

<u>Status</u>	<u>Area in Acres</u>
Tribal trust	714,354.96
Tribal fee	20,027.65
Individual trust	30,876.32
Water	76,843.91
Federal	22,982.63
State	36,941.60
<u>Fee (mostly non-Indian owned)</u>	<u>415,440.13</u>
Total Flathead Reservation acres:	1,317,467.20

Reservation lands are comprised of 451,000 acres of forest, in addition to high alpine country, extensive prairie habitats, and agricultural lands. In addition, the reservation is blessed with abundant, pristine water

resources, including the southern half of Flathead Lake, which is the largest natural freshwater lake in the United States west of the Mississippi River; the lower Flathead River (one of the largest rivers in Montana); numerous smaller rivers and streams, including the Jocko River, the many creeks issuing from the Mission Mountains, and the Little Bitterroot River; dozens of mountain lakes; and the unique kettle ponds of the central Mission Valley.

The CSKT's management of these vast natural resources is described below, under "Today's Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes."

## Traditional Cultures and Early History

### Salish and Pend d'Oreille

*Text provided by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee*

The Salish and Pend d'Oreille tell of having lived in what is now Montana from the time when Coyote killed off the *natisqelix*<sup>w</sup> — the monsters or, literally, people-eaters. The tribes' oral histories tell that the Salish and Pend d'Oreille were placed here in their aboriginal homelands. Their beginning and history in this place is a story of genesis, not of migration. The late Clarence Woodcock told this beginning:



Our story begins when the Creator put the animal people on this earth. He sent Coyote ahead as this world was full of evils and not yet fit for mankind. Coyote came with his brother Fox, to this big island, as the elders call this land, to free it of these evils. They were responsible for creating many geographical formations and providing good and special skills and knowledge for man to use. Coyote, however left many faults such as greed, jealousy, hunger, envy, and many other imperfections that we know of today.

Many of the Coyote stories contain uncanny descriptions of the geologic events and natural history of the last ice age: the extension of the glaciers down what is now Flathead Lake, the flooding of western Montana beneath a great lake, the final retreat of the bitter cold weather as the ice age came to an end, the disappearance of large animals like giant beaver and their replacement by the present-day smaller versions of those creatures. Tribal and non-Indian archaeologists have documented sites reflecting a continuous occupancy as far back as 12,600 years ago, shortly after the final retreat of the glaciers. Some of the stories even suggest that the ancestors were already here when the ice age began, some 40,000 years ago.

From that ancient beginning, the Salish and Pend d'Oreille people made their living off the land through a complex pattern of seasonal hunting, fishing, and gathering activities. The land provided all that the people needed. Elders say that life was hard, but good. Spring would yield a plentiful bitterroot harvest, followed by sweet camas bulbs in June.

The bloom of the wild rose signaled the people that the buffalo calves had been born and that it was time for the summer buffalo hunt. Throughout the rest of the summer, berries and fruits, including serviceberries, huckleberries, and chokecherries would be gathered, dried, and stored. The Salish and Pend d'Oreille regularly gathered hundreds of different plants for food and medicinal uses.

In the fall, hunting began in earnest. Men hunted for large game, which the women butchered, dried, and stored for winter. As the hunters brought home elk, deer, and moose, the women tanned hides for clothes and moccasins, and used tanned and raw hides for other items such as parfleches (a rawhide container used for storing things like dried foods and clothing).

Fishing was important throughout the year, providing a constant and plentiful source of protein. Both Salish and Pend d'Oreille usually located their winter camps at places known to have dependable fishing throughout the cold months, at sites such as the outlet of Flathead Lake (today's town of Polson) and along the Bitterroot River near the present-day town of Stevensville. Prior to the construction of dams and impacts from mining, logging, and agriculture, the abundance of fish in Salish-Pend d'Oreille territories was astonishing, and is remarked on in virtually every early written record. Important food fish included bull trout, cutthroat trout, mountain whitefish, northern pikeminnow, largescale suckers, and longnose suckers. People often traveled west for salmon. During spawning runs, people used weirs, fish traps, nets, and gaffing hooks to pull in great numbers that would be dried for future use. At other times, hook and line and other methods were used to provide good meals. Salish and Pend d'Oreille people often smoked or air-dried fish and stored them; when needed, they could then be boiled and eaten. The winter season involved trapping, ice fishing, and some hunting. Cold weather brought families inside and women made and repaired clothing while the men made and repaired tools and weapons. Coyote stories were brought out with the first snow. This was a sacred and happy time when ceremonial dances would be held.

Salish and Pend d'Oreille history tells that long ago the Salish-speaking people lived as one great nation. Many thousands of years ago, the tribe's population became too great to be sustained by hunting, fishing, and gathering foods in one central location. Tribal elders say that tribes moved from the Montana area toward the west, breaking into smaller tribal groups that could be more easily supported by the seasonal supply of foods.



In the centuries following the separation, the dispersed groups of Salishan peoples became increasingly distinct. Each developed its own language or dialect, and each held its own territory, in areas ranging from Montana all the way to the Pacific Coast, mostly north of the Columbia River. (Tribal territories often had overlapping, loosely defined boundaries.) The language branched into several sub-families, including Interior Salish, Central Salish, and Tsamosan. Within the sub-families there are languages, and within the languages, dialects. Interior Salish is the easternmost sub-family, and the easternmost language within Interior Salish is Kalispel, of which there are three dialects: "Flathead" (Seliš), "Kalispel" (Qlispé), and Spokane. Besides the Kalispel language, the Interior Salish sub-family includes Coeur d'Alene, Okanagon (within which there are six dialects, including Sanpoil-Nespelem, Colville, and Lakes), Columbian (one dialect of which is Wenatchi), Shuswap, Lillooet, and Thompson. The Central Salish and Tsamosan sub-families are located west of the Cascade Mountains, many of them along the Pacific coast.

This story of the original Salish nation and its dispersal explains why all through history and to the present day the Salish and Pend d'Oreille have kept close, friendly relations with the tribes of eastern Washington and northern Idaho. During the nineteenth century, these tribes often banded together during their buffalo hunting expeditions to the plains.

The Salish and Pend d'Oreille have always considered the Bitterroot Valley an important part of their homeland, although before the nineteenth century, there were major Salish bands based east of the Continental Divide (or adjacent to it), in such areas as the Big Hole Valley, the Butte area, the Helena area, and Three Forks. The Pend d'Oreille were centered primarily around the Flathead River, Flathead Lake, the Clark Fork River, Lake Pend Oreille, and the Pend Oreille River. However, a related Salish-speaking tribe called the Tuñáxn were, like the Salish, based east of the Continental Divide, in the Sun River-Dearborn River areas along the Rocky Mountain



Front. Salish place-names are still remembered for sites as far east as the Bighorn River, the Milk River, the Bear Paw Mountains, and the Musselshell River. In those times, the tribe that bordered the Salishan peoples on the east was the Plains Shoshone. It is said that after the Tuṇáḵn were wiped out in the late eighteenth century by enemy raids and disease, the Pend d'Oreille assumed a claim to the northern portion of Tuṇáḵn territory, and the Salish to the southern portion.

To the north, relations with the Ktunaxa or Kootenai, whose language is unrelated to Salish, were sometimes friendly, but not as close and familial as with tribes to the west. The Nez Perce lived directly west of the Bitterroot Valley, and despite the language difference, over time many intermarried with the Salish. To the south, relations with the Shoshone people were varied and shifted over time. At times these tribes raided each other. At other times they traded, intermarried, and gambled together. A site along the Nez Perce Fork of the Bitterroot River, known as Słeʔí, was traditionally a kind of neutral ground where the Salish and Shoshone would meet to play traditional gambling games.

To the east, inter-tribal relations were less friendly. Both the Salish and Pend d'Oreille have always had conflicts and skirmishes with tribes of the Plains, including the various Blackfoot tribes and bands, Gros Ventre, Crow, Cree, Assiniboine, Cheyenne, and Sioux. Yet the Salish and Pend d'Oreille also sometimes had amicable relations with eastern tribes, including trade and even occasional marriage.

Before the advent of guns, intertribal warfare resulted in relatively few deaths. Counting coup on the enemy was the most important aspect of warfare, which served to reaffirm longstanding boundaries between tribal territories and to establish the honor and bravery of men in their willingness to risk their lives in defense of their people. But during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, intertribal conflicts became more violent and deadly. As eastern tribes were pushed westward and western tribes saw a decline of game due to the fur trade, certain food sources — particularly bison — were subjected to more intensive harvesting. Perhaps for the first time in their history, tribes found themselves in direct competition for these resources. And during the same period, three powerful agents of European origin — horses, non-native diseases, and firearms — were introduced through intertribal contact. All three arrived well in advance of non-Indians themselves, and all brought profound changes to the tribes of the region.

Horses were acquired by the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, and other tribes in the northern Rockies by the early eighteenth century. Horses gave the people much greater mobility, and easier access to buffalo and other foods and materials. However, horses also made it easier and faster to travel into the territory of enemy tribes. And horses themselves were a newly mobile unit of wealth, prestige, and power. Once stolen, they not only could be transported quickly — they were the transportation. As a result, with horses came a dramatic increase in intertribal contact of all kinds — including conflict and warfare.

The introduction of horses was soon followed by devastating epidemics of non-native diseases, against which tribal people had little or no immunity. The deadliest of all the exotic viruses, smallpox, is documented in the written historical record to have struck the region in 1782, decimating many tribes. However, some archaeological evidence suggests that smallpox may have first swept through the Inland Northwest over two hundred years earlier, in the early-to-mid 1500s. In any case, it is clear that throughout the 1700s and 1800s, repeated epidemics of smallpox, measles, influenza, and other diseases struck the various tribes of the Plateau and High Plains regions. Researchers estimate that the epidemics of the 1780s took the lives of somewhere between one-third and three-quarters of the total population of Salish-speaking tribes, and similar percentages in neighboring non-Salishan tribes.

In addition to horses and disease, the introduction of firearms also changed the inter-tribal world. The Hudson's Bay Company and North West Company began establishing trading posts on the upper branches of the Saskatchewan River in the late eighteenth century, including Cumberland House in 1774, Pine Island Fort and Manchester House in 1786, Buckingham House in 1792, and Fort Edmonton in 1795. These posts provided ready access to firearms to northern Plains tribes, who were often in conflict with the Salish and Pend d'Oreille. The Blackfeet began aggressively expanding to the south and west. For the following 20 to 40 years, Salish and Pend d'Oreille and other tribes suffered heavy casualties from raids by the Blackfeet and other eastern tribes. It was not until 1807-1809, when Jaco (Jocko) Finley and David Thompson established trading posts in the Kootenai River and lower Clark Fork areas, that the western tribes obtained more regular access to guns and ammunition.

With the constant threat of Blackfeet raids, the Salish and Pend d'Oreille could no longer live permanently east of the mountains, but they never surrendered their claim to the old country, and continued to conduct buffalo hunting trips in those traditional tribal grounds, often twice per year. In the 1800s, they sometimes banded together with other western tribes, including the Kalispel, Spokane, Coeur d'Alene, Nez Perce, and/or Kootenai to form larger parties that could better defend against the Blackfeet and other tribes.

## **The Ksanka Band of Ktunaxa**

*Historic information provided by the Kootenai Culture Committee*

Ktunaxa history describes the evolution of The People from the time when the first sun rose in the sky and human beings were equal to the animals. From the beginning of time the Sun and the Moon were brothers and they produced the powerful life force for all earthly creations. The Sun and Moon transformed all beings who chose to live on this earth into physical forms and assigned them with a domain and complementary tools. The concept of interdependence that maintains the delicate balance of the natural world is intrinsic to Ktunaxa culture.

The aboriginal territory of the Ktunaxa Nation encompasses three major ecosystems: the Columbia River Basin, the Rocky Mountain Region, and the Northern Plains. Although an official census was never taken, ethnographic studies estimate an historical population in excess of 10,000 Kootenai people.

With a massive homeland to protect and keen environmental skills, the Ktunaxa chose to live in distinct bands to maintain their unique life cycles. The seven bands of the Ktunaxa Nation are distinguished by the location they inhabited throughout the winter months. The Ksanka or the Fish Trap People reside in the Dayton, Elmo, Big Arm, and Nairada communities of Montana. The Wood Land People of St. Mary's Band are in Cranbrook, British Columbia. The Two Lakes People of the Columbia Lake Band are at Windmere, BC. The People of the Place Where the Rock is Standing (the Lower Kootenai) reside in Creston, BC. The Meadow People live in Bonners Ferry, Idaho and the Tobacco Plains Band live in Grasmere, BC. The Not Shirt People (Upper Kootenai or Shushwap) live in Ivermere, BC.

Prior to reservation settlement, the Ktunaxa lived a bicultural life style, possessing cultural traits of both the Northern Plateau and Northern Plains tribal groups. Ktunaxa subsistence was based on seasonal migrations that followed plant and animal production cycles, and coincidentally served to prevent an environmental degradation of aboriginal lands. Food preservation was an integral part of the Ktunaxa life cycle. Seasonal migrations for hunting and harvesting began in the early spring when bitterroots ripened and fisheries were bountiful. In early summer, they traveled east of the Rockies to hunt buffalo, returning in mid-summer to process and store the meat. In summer, camas, huckleberries, serviceberries, chokecherries, and other plants were harvested. By fall, big game expeditions were organized and some of the hunters returned to the plains for more buffalo. The people preserved and processed food for the winter cache.

The Ktunaxa life cycle also depended on a commerce sector, which involved agriculture and aquaculture. The Ktunaxa cultivated a unique species of tobacco for personal use and trade with other tribes. They specialized in water, fisheries, bird hunting, trapping, and other aqua cultural activities that were ongoing in Kootenai society.

The most prominent distinction of the Ktunaxa is the isolated language they speak. While scientists classify most indigenous languages into family groups to determine origin and migratory patterns, the Kootenai language has never been likened to any other language in the world. It is an anomaly that effectively contradicts any migration theory for Ktunaxa. Other distinctions of the Ktunaxa include their portable, tulle styled summer lodges called Tanat. They also held the distinction of being avid canoeists, trappers, and anglers. They excelled in engineering light craft to expedite navigation on some of the most treacherous waterways in the Northwest. Their hunting and fishing techniques were superior even by modern standards. They developed and utilized devices to augment their technique. Traditional Kootenai fish weirs and bird traps were widely sought after for their utility.

Since time immemorial, the Ktunaxa have coexisted with Mother Earth's creations in their natural habitat. Kootenai stewardship prescribes the utmost respect and protection for all elements of the natural world. As guardians, Ktunaxa people believe that life has little value without a true appreciation for the environment and a genuine regard for all that is sacred.

## **Recent History of the Confederated Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Tribes**

*Text provided by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee*

In the years following the Lewis and Clark expedition, the fur trade exploded across the Northwest. It introduced to the region a new and alien economic system, and a set of cultural beliefs very different from those of Indian people. Where tribal people used animals directly for food or hides or other materials, the fur traders and trappers killed animals for money. The international fur industry offered a bottomless demand. Beginning in the 1810s, the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company harvested vast numbers of beaver and other fur-bearing species, as well as deer and other game, from many parts of tribal territories.

Indian people were still able to continue to live according to their traditional ways during this time. The Salish and Pend d'Oreille generally maintained peaceful relations with the trappers and traders. They intermarried with some, including Finan McDonald, Peter Skene Ogden, and Angus McDonald. Some Salish and Pend d'Oreille men engaged in trapping to meet their families' limited needs for market goods — most often firearms, ammunition, knives, pots or pans, or a few simple trade items. But most tribal people never showed much interest in abandoning the old way of life to work for Hudson's Bay, North West, or the American fur traders trying to make inroads into the Columbia drainage system. Some other tribes in the region mounted occasional armed resistance to the fur trade.

In 1821, Hudson's Bay absorbed the North West Company. Over the following decade, the company implemented a strategy to compete against American trappers who were coming into the Northern Rockies from the east and south. Hudson's Bay began intentionally trapping out the region, creating what they called a "fur desert," which they hoped would discourage the approaching American trappers. In the Northern Rockies, by 1830, so many animals were exterminated that the height of the fur trade had passed. Hudson's Bay's policy harmed tribal resources and affected the ability of tribal people to conduct their traditional mode of subsistence. As resources west of the mountains were depleted, western tribes had to conduct buffalo hunts east of the mountains with increasing frequency and for longer periods of time — and this led to more conflict with the Blackfeet and other eastern tribes.

Long before the coming of Lewis and Clark, a Salish man who came to be called Xallqs (Shining Shirt) had a vision in which he was told of the coming of men in black robes who would teach a new way of prayer. Decades later — during the 1810s — a group of Iroquois under Ignace Lamoose (also known as Big Ignace) reached the Salish country. Fur traders had hoped the Iroquois would help enlist Indian people of the Northern Rockies into the fur trade, but instead, Ignace and several of the Iroquois married into the Salish and Pend d’Oreille and joined their communities. The newcomers came from the Kahnawake Mohawk community on the St. Lawrence River in eastern Canada, where a Jesuit mission had been established in 1719. Ignace talked about the medicine of the Blackrobes, and the Salish recognized in these teachings the prophecies of Shining Shirt. In time, the tribe decided to seek the help of the Blackrobes. During the 1830s, four delegations were sent to St. Louis, looking for this new way of prayer. Eventually, the Jesuits dispatched Fr. Pierre-Jean De Smet. In 1841, the Salish helped him build St. Mary’s Mission adjacent to their main winter camp along the Bitterroot River — a place called Łqetmlš (Wide Cottonwood Trees), where non-Indians later established the town of Stevensville, Montana.

Through the 1840s, the Salish came to realize that the missionaries not only intended to bring their teachings to the people, but were also trying to eliminate and destroy traditional Salish spiritual practices. In addition, the Blackrobes had established a mission among the enemy Blackfeet. By 1849, the Salish decided they no longer wanted the missionaries. The Jesuits then abandoned St. Mary’s Mission, selling the buildings to a fur trader named John Owen, who turned it into a post called Fort Owen.

The Jesuits moved west to the Kalispel community along the Pend Oreille River, in what is now eastern Washington. There they established the first St. Ignatius Mission at Usk. That mission did not prove successful either, and in 1854, Pend d’Oreille leaders agreed to allow the Jesuits to move the St. Ignatius mission to its present location in Montana, a place the Pend d’Oreille called Snyełmn — Place Where You Surround Something. Oral historian Mose Chouteh said tribal leaders allowed the Jesuits to use that place for their mission in exchange for providing schools and instruction for any Indian children who desired the whiteman’s education. Through the late nineteenth century, the St. Ignatius Mission exerted considerable power and influence on the reservation. By the 1880s-1890s, the extensive Mission complex included the church, cemetery, separate boarding schools for boys and girls, orchards, a sawmill, a flour mill, agricultural buildings, a water tower, an irrigation and reservoir system, gardens, root cellars, pastures, and residences and other structures for Jesuits, Sisters of Providence, and Ursulines.

In July 1855, Isaac Stevens, the Governor and Superintendent of Indian Affairs for Washington Territory, met with leaders of the Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai at Council Grove, near present-day Missoula, Montana. The head chiefs then were X<sup>w</sup>ełxłcín (Many Horses or Victor) of the Salish, Tmłxłcín (No Horses or Alexander) of the Pend d’Oreille, and Michelle of the Kootenais. Tribal leaders had been told that Stevens wanted a peace treaty, so they assumed discussions would be centered on their problems with their encroaching enemies, the Blackfeet. But during the proceedings, the chiefs and headmen were surprised and angered to discover that Stevens’ primary purpose was to take formal ownership of Indian lands. Father Adrian Hoecken, a Jesuit observer at the treaty negotiations, wrote that tribal leaders asked Stevens, “ ‘What is the sense of making peace? Have we ever been at war with the Whites?’ They all show their hands unstained by blood.” Hoecken also reported that the official translators were so inept that “not a tenth of [what was said] was actually understood by either party.”

As in his treaty negotiations with other tribes in the Northwest, Stevens aimed to concentrate numerous tribes onto a single reservation, thereby clearing the way for non-Indian control and settlement of as much land as possible. But the Pend d’Oreille wished to retain their territories in the Jocko and Mission Valleys and the Flathead Lake area, and Chief Victor insisted that the Salish would never give up their homeland in the Bitterroot Valley. Stevens tried to pressure the tribal leaders, but they refused to change their minds.

The final treaty language stated that the tribes ceded to the United States ownership of most of the area we know today as western Montana. Stevens did not even recognize the vast territories that the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai traditionally held east of the Continental Divide — the rights to which the western tribes had been asserting for many decades, at considerable risk, against incursions by the Blackfeet and other tribes. Out of the roughly 14 million acres west of the Continental Divide that Stevens recognized as the territories of the Confederated Tribes, the treaty designated the 1.3 million-acre Flathead Reservation as land reserved from cession, set aside for “the exclusive use and benefit of said confederated tribes.” This area remained as the unceded, sovereign land of the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai nations. The tribes also reserved the right to hunt, gather, graze livestock, and fish on open and unclaimed lands across all of their ceded territories.

In many government documents from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many tribal leaders, including Nk'wálex'wencú (Sam Resurrection) and Qeyqeyší, said the reservation's boundaries, as they were interpreted to tribal leaders in 1855, were considerably bigger, particularly on the north, east, and west sides. They said that the northern boundary was supposed to be at or close to the Canadian line, and the eastern boundary was supposed to be the Continental Divide.

Because Chief Victor and the Salish refused Stevens' demands that they relinquish the Bitterroot Valley, Stevens was forced to insert into the Hellgate Treaty Article 11, which designated roughly 1.7 million acres in the Bitterroot as a second reservation. However, the fine print stated that a Presidentially-authorized survey would determine whether the Bitterroot Valley or the Flathead Reservation area was “better adapted to the wants of the Flathead tribe.” This complicated scenario set in motion the long struggle over the Bitterroot, as the Salish resisted being forced to abandon their ancestral home, and in the meanwhile, the proper survey was never conducted, and U.S. and Montana Territory officials failed to enforce Article 11's prohibition of non-Indian settlement in the valley until after the matter had been decided.

Following the death of Chief Victor in 1870, the Salish chose Victor's son, Słm̄xe Q'woxqeyš (Claw of the Small Grizzly Bear or Charlo), as their next chief. Non-Indian settlers and Montana's territorial delegate thought this transition in leadership provided an opportunity to force the Salish out of the Bitterroot. They got President Grant to falsely declare that the survey required by the treaty had been completed, and that it had determined that the Salish would be better off on the Jocko (or Flathead) Reservation. In 1872, Congress sent future president James Garfield west to “negotiate” the removal of the Salish. Chief Charlo flatly refused to sign. Garfield reported that he thought Chief Charlo would change his mind, and that the U.S. should “proceed with the work in the same manner as though Charlo, first chief, had signed the contract.” Although the original field copy of the agreement, which remains to this day in the National Archives, shows no “x” mark beside Charlo's name, the official copies of the agreement that were published for the Senate for the vote on ratification had an “x” mark printed beside Chief Charlo's name. This outrage only strengthened Chief Charlo's resolve, and he and the majority of the Salish refused to leave the Bitterroot for decades, despite steadily worsening conditions. But finally, in October 1891, the government and the army forced the Salish north to the Flathead Reservation on what some historians have called Montana's Trail of Tears.

Within the reservation, tribal people still maintained control over much of their lives and communities, a cultural environment in which Salish and Kootenai were the primary languages and tribal cultures shaped daily life. But in a number of ways, both the United States government and the Catholic Church were trying to force Indian people to abandon their old ways. The government not only failed to deliver provisions and services that were specified in the treaty, but also established a Court of Indian Offenses, which outlawed most tribal ceremonies and gatherings, and enforced it with a new system of Indian police, judges, and jail. At the same time, the church pursued its goals of religious and cultural conversion through the large educational complex around the St.

Ignatius Mission. The first school on the Flathead Reservation was a boarding school started by the Sisters of Providence of Charity in St. Ignatius in 1864. Ursuline nuns arrived in 1884, and opened a school for both boys and girls. In 1888, the Jesuits established a trade school for boys. All of the St. Ignatius schools were boarding schools, but also had non-boarding “day scholars.” Hundreds of Indian children attended these local Catholic boarding schools, and still others were sent away to government boarding schools throughout the country.

The educational experience of the Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai was similar to that of other Indian children around the country. Often children did much of the work that kept the schools running. Native languages were forbidden, as well as all other cultural traditions and customs. While some children attended the schools at the volition of their parents, many were forced to go due to a compulsory attendance law for Indian children, passed by Congress in 1893. Elders still relate stories of the Indian Agent coming to communities to “round up children.” Other parents sent their children because the reservation system had imposed such poverty upon the people that they felt compelled to send their children to schools where they would be fed.

The Ursulines’ Villa Ursula remained in operation until 1972, by which time it had changed over to a day school. Tribal members felt that if and when the schools closed, the lands that the tribes had allowed the church to use would revert to tribal ownership. The church, however, sold the lands, and the tribes were forced to accept a monetary settlement for them. In recent years, numerous tribal members have come forward to say that they were abused by priests and nuns when they were young students in the St. Ignatius schools, and the Catholic Church has paid substantial settlements to the victims and their families.

Confinement to the reservation made it difficult for people to provide for their families by hunting, fishing, and gathering, and at the same time, tribal parties encountered harassment and violence when trying to exercise their treaty rights to hunt, gather, fish, and pasture their animals on ceded lands outside the reservation.

Then, in 1887, Congress took direct aim at tribal economies across the nation with passage of the Dawes Severalty Act, also known as the General Allotment Act. This act established as federal policy the dismantling of tribal land through allotment of individual tracts to individual tribal members, and then opening remaining, unallotted lands to non-Indian homesteaders. The act was justified as helping Indians make the transition from hunting-fishing-gathering to agriculture. Its primary effect, however, was to transfer ownership of land from Indians to non-Indians. Over the following 47 years, the Allotment Act would reduce native lands across the United States by 65%, from 136,394,985 acres in 1887 to about 48 million acres in 1934.

In the years after 1887, Congress passed a number of bills that imposed the Allotment Act on specific reservations. In 1904, Montana Congressman Joseph Dixon pushed through Congress the Flathead Allotment Act. Congress passed the bill, and President Theodore Roosevelt signed it, despite near-unanimous opposition among tribal members and the vehement protests of tribal leaders. Chiefs and other prominent men wrote to officials repeatedly, and traveled to Washington to make the point that the act directly violated the Hellgate Treaty’s promise that the reservation would be forever set aside for the “exclusive use and benefit of said confederated tribes.” Officials dismissed their objections. Following the surveying of reservation lands and allotment to tribal members, the government opened the reservation to homesteaders in 1910. Very quickly, the tribes became a minority of the population within the reservation. Between 1910 and 1929, some 540,000 acres of Flathead Reservation lands were transferred to non-Indian ownership. (Some six decades later, in 1971, the U.S. Court of Claims ruled that the Flathead Allotment Act had indeed violated the Hellgate Treaty: “Plaintiff’s Reservation was opened to white settlement and entry in breach of treaty, and without the consent of the Tribes.”)

The next major impact on the tribes was the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), or Wheeler Howard Act, of 1934. The Act was an outgrowth of the Meriam Report, submitted to Secretary of the Interior Hubert Work in 1928. Findings of the survey “shocked the administration since it called for radical revisions in almost every phase of Indian affairs” (Deloria and Lytle, *American Indians, American Justice*, p. 12). Most importantly, it condemned the Allotment Act as having had a disastrous effect on Indian communities and economies. It was not until the New Deal Administration of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt that the Meriam Report’s recommendations were adopted as federal policy, under the leadership of Commissioner of Indian Affairs John Collier. The Indian Reorganization Act put an immediate end to the Allotment Act, and provided tribes with the opportunity to regain ownership of unallotted lands. The IRA also enabled tribes to reorganize their governmental structures and adopt a constitution and charter of incorporation. Participation under this legislation was left up to the decision of each tribe.

In 1935, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes became the first tribe in the nation to agree to incorporate under the terms of the IRA. Under the new Tribal Constitution and Corporate Charter, tribal government became formalized, creating an elected, ten-member Tribal Council, which at that time also included, as non-voting members, Salish Chief Martin Charlo and Kootenai Chief Eneas Paul Koostahtah. The IRA, however, in some ways furthered the marginalization of traditional people; the new charter not only failed to recognize the Pend d’Oreille head chief, Mose Michell, but also decreed that Charlo and Koostahtah would be the last chiefs to be officially recognized by the federal government. The Tribal Council would elect from its own ranks a Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, Secretary, and Treasurer.

From the inception of the reservation system until passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, Indian people had lost control over their own destiny. The administrators and policies of the Bureau of Indian Affairs controlled governance decisions for the tribes. The IRA began the slow transition back to tribal control over tribal affairs. Incorporation under this act allowed the tribes to again determine their own path. But it was a difficult journey, made more difficult by the reversals in federal policy during the 1950s, in what CSKT writer, historian, and activist D’Arcy McNickle called a “return to negation.” For well over a decade, Congress turned against the IRA and revived a strongly assimilationist policy, adopting a policy of “termination,” meaning the termination of federal relationships with tribes and the elimination of reservations. During that same period, Congress passed the Indian Relocation Act, which encouraged Indian people to leave reservations and assimilate more fully into non-Indian society.

The Flathead Reservation was the first target on Congress’s termination list, but tribal and non-Indian opposition defeated the effort. Termination was carried out against numerous other tribes, including the Menominee of Wisconsin, the Klamath of Oregon, numerous western Oregon tribes, numerous California “rancheria” tribes, and the Ponca of Nebraska. The implementation of termination slowed during the Kennedy Administration, and began to be reversed under Lyndon Johnson, whose administration starting developing a new federal direction of self-determination for tribal nations. In 1970, termination was finally renounced by President Richard M. Nixon. After that time, a number of tribes successfully sought reinstatement.

The anti-tribal direction embodied in the termination and relocation policies was officially reversed by Congress with passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. The Act gave tribes the opportunity to manage federal programs that had historically been under the direction and control of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Initially the tribes contracted programs, but a more recent amendment to the Self-Determination Act allows tribes to negotiate compacts with federal agencies on a government-to-government basis. Since President Clinton’s memorandum in 1994 and passage of the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996, many tribes have shifted from contracting federal programs to compacting them. The

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes have been among the most successful tribes in the nation in assuming management of federally funded programs.

## Government

Today, the CSKT have a large and sophisticated government, employing over 1,200 full-time staff, and about 600 part-time and seasonal workers. Departments and programs include Administration, Culture and Historic Preservation, Health and Human Services, Housing, Education, Forestry, Lands, Natural Resources, Legal, and Courts. The tribal government operates on an annual budget of \$133 million (2011), with a large majority of that funding coming from grants. The tribes also generate income from a number of activities and resources, including Kerr Dam, forestry, land leases, casinos, and other businesses. Tribal and CSKT-associated businesses and services include Mission Valley Power, S&K Technologies, S&K Electronics, S&K Holding Company, Eagle Bank, S&K Gaming LLC, and Energy Keepers, Inc.

All of these operations are overseen by the Tribal Council, who hold regular meetings to establish tribal policies and conduct tribal business. Presently, meetings are held every Tuesday and Thursday at the Tribal Complex in Pablo, Montana. Quarterly meetings are designated for the community to attend and address issues of concern. All council meetings are open to the public unless the council is meeting in executive session. Visits can be formally arranged by calling the Tribal Administrative Office at (406) 675-2700. Tribal Council members will visit classrooms upon request and as their schedules allow.

The Tribal Council is more than just a policy-making body. Unlike most legislative bodies, they are expected to deal with everything from fiscal management to assisting individuals in personal crisis. While the welfare of tribal members is the single-most influencing factor of Tribal Council decisions, other interests weigh heavily on the future of the tribes. At the forefront of tribal interests are future generations, preservation of tribal resources, tribal rights, environmental protection, fiscal management, legal issues, and community support. The Tribal Council depends on expert staff for accurate information to guide decisions on important issues.

Tribal membership is an example of such an important issue. At present, Tribal Ordinance 35A, as enacted by the Tribal Council in 1961, outlines the criteria for enrollment as a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. Formal enrollment procedures require application requesting enrollment; proof of the child's parental tribal membership, and evidence the child possesses one quarter or more blood of the Salish, Pend d'Oreille and/or Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation; and proof that the child is not enrolled on another reservation.

The Tribal Council also oversees many highly successful programs. The CSKT's commitment to cultural survival is reflected not only in their 38 years of continual support for the Salish-Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai Culture Committees, but also in the numerous other institutions and initiatives that have arisen in recent years, including the People's Center in Pablo, which includes a visitors center; the Nk'wusm Salish Immersion School in Arlee, which for ten years has taught the language to young tribal children; numerous courses and programs at Salish Kootenai College; teaching of language and culture in public schools across the reservation; and numerous other programs on the reservation.

Tribal Health and Human Services covers a wide range of essential services for tribal members, including direct provision of health care through several state-of-the-art clinics, attending to over 85,000 patient visits per year. The Salish and Kootenai Housing Authority, established in 1963 as a tribal entity independent from the tribal government, implements a budget of over \$6 million per year, managing and maintaining about 500 low-income



rental units, and dozens of ownership properties, trailer park lots, community water and sewer systems, and other infrastructure.

To care for and manage their vast and spectacular lands and waters, the CSKT have developed one of the most capable and accomplished natural resource departments of any local government in the nation, founded on the cultural value of respect expressed by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee:

“ The earth is our historian; it is made of our ancestor’s bones. It provides us with nourishment, medicine, and comfort. It is our source of our independence; it is our Mother. We do not dominate Her, but harmonize with Her.”

The Natural Resource Department includes the Division of Water, the Division of Environmental Protection, and the Division of Fish, Wildlife, Recreation and Conservation. The latter division has overseen the CSKT’s remarkable restoration of the Jocko River as vital trout habitat, their ongoing effort to protect and restore native fisheries in Flathead Lake and other waters, and the successful management and reintroduction of numerous threatened and endangered species, including trumpeter swans, grizzly bears, peregrine falcons, and gray wolves. The division also manages the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness, the first tribally designated wilderness area in the United States. The CSKT makes most reservation lands accessible to non-members for hiking and recreation with purchase of a tribal recreation permit. The CSKT does reserve certain areas, such as the South Fork Jocko and Lozeau-Mill Pocket primitive areas, for the exclusive use of tribal members and their families, for camping, hunting, fishing, gathering plants, ceremonial use, and solitude.

About 322,000 acres of forested tribal lands are considered commercial forest, and are overseen by the CSKT Forestry Department and the Division of Fire. Under a visionary Forest Plan, the Tribes manage the forests as a whole to emphasize ecological health, utilizing strategies that include reforestation, fire management, insect and disease control, timber harvest, and other sustainable economic opportunities for the tribes. Timber harvest generates several million dollars of income each year and supports about 65 jobs.

Visitors to the Flathead Reservation will immediately notice the unique signs along Highway 93 that display Salish and Kootenai place-names for towns and other sites along the road. The signage, a visible reminder of the special cultural landscape traversed by the highway, was part of the CSKT’s involvement in the reconstruction project over the past decade. In addition, the tribes and local environmental organizations successfully pushed for the incorporation of some 41 wildlife crossing structures into the new highway. These wildlife underpasses (and one overpass), along with an innovative design that maximizes safety while limiting the size of the highway and the number of lanes, have helped turn Highway 93 into a model for environmental stewardship and “context sensitive design” in rural transportation systems.

Another important natural resource issue on the Flathead Indian Reservation today concerns the National Bison Range, which was established by the federal government in 1909 near the center of the reservation on land that the United States unilaterally expropriated from the tribes. In 1994, the CSKT first proposed assuming management of the range under Indian self-determination laws. Some non-Indian groups and individuals opposed this, and for two decades the issue has been stuck in the courts and in negotiations. As of 2014, however, a new agreement between the CSKT and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was nearing completion.

## Education

Today there are eight school districts on the Flathead Reservation. Seven are public schools, and one is a Bureau of Indian Affairs Contract School, Two Eagle River School, established in 1979. Two Eagle River School (TERS) serves approximately 160 students in grades 7-12. All students that attend TERS take Salish or Kootenai language classes and Flathead Reservation History. The core curriculum is augmented with cultural and historic content.

In 1977 Salish Kootenai College was established. Located in Pablo, it has emerged as one of the flagship tribal colleges in the nation. SKC's mission is to provide quality postsecondary opportunities for Native Americans locally and throughout the United States. In addition, the college has from its inception had a central commitment to "perpetuate the cultures of Confederated Salish and Kootenai peoples." With a student count of 951 in 2012, SKC today offers five vocational programs, 18 associate degrees, and 14 different baccalaureate degrees. Financial aid and scholarships are available, and cultural classes are offered free to tribal members. Beyond providing postsecondary opportunities, SKC offers many other services to the local communities. Many cultural and educational activities scheduled throughout the school year are open to the public. The media center and library are available to all community members free of charge. The college also operates KSKC-TV, the only Class-A PBS television station based on an Indian reservation, broadcasting both national and local programming. And the college is home to SKC Press, which has published works in oral literature, history, and native language dictionaries.

## Economics

For decades, the tribes have been the largest employers on the reservation. Beyond the CSKT's own payroll of some 1,200 full-time employees and 600 seasonal employees, the K-12 school districts, where a large percentage of students are Indian, employ over 400, and Salish Kootenai College has a full-time staff and faculty of 178. SKC also houses the Tribal Business Assistance Center. This office provides workshops related to business management, creating a business infrastructure, and entrepreneurship. The Char-Koosta Loan Fund being developed by the center will offer loans of \$5,000 - \$35,000 to tribal members for entrepreneurial or business ventures.

In addition, there are numerous CSKT-affiliated businesses:

- S & K Electronics, incorporated under tribal and federal law in 1985, specializes in assembly of electronic and electro-mechanical components for the U.S. government and commercial industry. The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes are the sole shareholders of the company, but the company functions under its own board of directors. The company employs between 40 and 70 people depending on the amount and size of contracts it secures. In 2012, it had over \$17 million in sales.
- S & K Technologies is comprised of six small high-tech businesses with global operations and over \$20 million in annual revenue.
- Eagle Bank maintains over \$26 million in deposits and over \$12 million in loan accounts.
- Mission Valley Power, a CSKT-affiliated utility, provides power to all customers (Indian and non-Indian) on the Flathead Reservation, with annual revenue of over \$23 million, some 19,000 meters, and a staff of 82.
- S & K Holding Company has over \$200,000 in annual sales.
- S&K Gaming, LLC operates the Gray Wolf and KwaTaqNuk casinos, with \$5 million annual revenue.
- KwaTaqNuk Best Western Resort is a successful hotel, equipped to host conferences and meetings, located on the shore of Flathead Lake in Polson.

In 2015, the CSKT entered a new era in their economic history, and in their management of natural resources, when they assumed ownership and operation of Kerr Dam, a 188-megawatt hydroelectric facility on the lower Flathead River. The dam was built on tribal land in the 1930s by a jointly-owned subsidiary of the Montana Power Company and the Anaconda Copper Mining Company. Since that time, Montana Power and the dam's current owner, Pennsylvania Power and Light, have paid a rental fee to the CSKT for use of the site. When the 50-year license for the dam came up for renewal in the 1980s, the tribes petitioned the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) for control of the dam. FERC ruled that in 2015, the CSKT would have the option to acquire the dam and the license to operate it, and thereby control its considerable revenues — perhaps tens of millions of dollars per year. Through additional FERC negotiations and mediations in 2014, the CSKT completed the agreement on purchase of the facility. This economic resource could give the tribes far greater power to shape their destiny, and their reservation, on behalf of current and future generations.

## Contemporary Issues

- Native Language Restoration and Preservation
- Stewardship of Natural Resources
- Tribal Sovereignty
- Repatriation and Cultural Resource Protection
- Relationships with County and State Government
- Responsible Economic Development
- Improving the Education of Indian Children

## Calendar of Events

January	Jump Dances
April	Medicine Tree Trip
April/May	Bitterroot Feast
May	River Honoring Education Event
July	Arlee Celebration (powwow)
July	Standing Arrow Celebration (powwow)
September	Native American Week—The People's Center
September	Reservation Wide Teacher In-Service
September	Medicine Tree Trip
November	Kicking Horse Job Corps Celebration (powwow)

## Resources About the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

<a href="http://www.cskt.org">www.cskt.org</a>	Official website of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
<a href="http://www.salishaudio.org">www.salishaudio.org</a>	Salish language oral histories and other material from the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee, CSKT
<a href="http://www.skc.edu">www.skc.edu</a>	Salish Kootenai College
<a href="http://www.peoplescenter.org">www.peoplescenter.org</a>	Sqélix <sup>w</sup> / Aqłsmaknik Peoples Center
<a href="http://www.ninepipesmuseum.org">www.ninepipesmuseum.org</a>	Ninepipes Museum
<a href="http://www.salishworld.org">www.salishworld.org</a>	Nk <sup>w</sup> usm Salish Immersion School
<a href="http://www.charkoosta.com">www.charkoosta.com</a>	Char-Koosta News
<a href="http://www.thesalishinstitute.org">www.thesalishinstitute.org</a>	The Salish Institute (NGO)
<a href="http://therezweliveon.com">http://therezweliveon.com</a>	Myth-busting site for newcomers to CSKT

### Interactive DVDs:

- *Fire on the Land: Native Peoples and Fire in the Northern Rockies* (The University of Nebraska Press, 2007)
- *Explore the River: Bull Trout, Tribal People, and the Jocko River*, by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (Lincoln: The University of Nebraska Press, 2011)

### Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee publications

(406-745-4572, [sadiep@cskt.org](mailto:sadiep@cskt.org)):

- *The Salish People and the Lewis & Clark Expedition* (University of Nebraska Press, rev. ed., 2008)
- *A Brief History of the Flathead Tribes*
- *Eagle Feathers: the Highest Honor*
- *Buffalo of the Flathead*
- *Common Names in the Salish Language*
- *Stories From Our Elders*
- *Placename Signs on Highway 93* (CD and pamphlet)

### Salish Kootenai College Tribal History Project

- *čłqétk<sup>w</sup>ntx<sup>w</sup>étk<sup>w</sup>s / ʔ<sup>w</sup>kinmituk -- The Lower Flathead River, Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana: A Cultural, Historical, and Scientific Resource*

### Salish Kootenai College Press publications

([Bob\\_Bigart@skc.edu](mailto:Bob_Bigart@skc.edu)):

- "The Politics of Allotment"
- Coming Back Slow—Agnes Vanderburg Interview
- *Over a Century of Moving to the Drum*
- Coyote Stories of the Montana Salish Indians
- *In the Name of the Salish & Kootenai Nation: The Hellgate Treaty & The Origin of the Flathead Indian Reservation*
- *Challenge to Survive: Volume I and II* (history of the CSKT)

## Videos:

SKC Media Center — 406-675-4800

- The River Lives (stories about the Flathead River)
- Changing Visions (art on the Flathead Reservation)
- The Place of the Falling Waters (co-produced with the Native Voices Public Television Workshop, documentary history of the Flathead Reservation centered around the construction of Kerr Dam in the 1930s)

Native Voices — University of Washington — 206-543-9082

- *Without Reservations: Notes on Racism in Montana*

DeSmet Project, Washington State University

- *The People Today*
- *Seasons of the Salish*



# FORT BELKNAP INDIAN RESERVATION

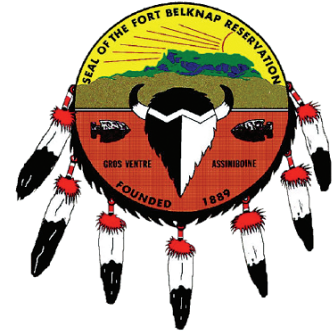
## HOME TO THE ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' AND NAKODA PEOPLE

(Commonly referred to as the Fort Belknap Gros Ventre and Fort Belknap Assiniboine Tribes)

### Location

The Fort Belknap Indian Reservation is located in north-central Montana about forty (40) miles from the Canadian border. The reservation takes pride in the fact that despite individual allotments given to eligible tribal members in 1921 ninety-seven percent (97%) of the 697,617 acres encompassing the reservation remains in tribal ownership. The reservation is about 40 miles long and 25 miles wide, with the Milk River forming the northern boundary; the Little Rocky Mountains, called the “Fur Caps” by the ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', are along the southern boundary, some 40 miles to the south. Blaine County is the non-tribal jurisdiction that overlaps most of the reservation; a small additional portion lies in Phillips County. The Fort Belknap Indian Community also owns 8,037 acres of fee patent land outside the reservation’s boundaries.

The northern portion of the Reservation is mainly glacial plains and alluvial bottomlands. The southern portion consists of hilly grasslands, the rugged terrain of the Missouri River Breaks and two principal mountain ranges, the Bear’s Paw and the Little Rockies, where some peaks are as high as 6,000 feet.



### History

Established in 1888, the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation was named after William W. Belknap, who was Secretary of War under President Ulysses S. Grant. One of many federal officials of dubious reputation to become involved in Indian country, Belknap was later impeached for corruption. Nowadays, Fort Belknap is the home of two Native nations. One is the Gros Ventre Tribe, who also refer to themselves as the ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', pronounced Āh āā nēē nin, which means the White Clay People. The other tribe is the Assiniboine, or Nakoda, also spelled Nakota, meaning the “Generous Ones” or “the Friendly People”. The two tribes have unique histories and cultures, but were placed together on the reservation by the federal government.

Before learning about the two tribes’ histories, we must remember that before the reservation era, which settled the first peoples of this land into fixed domiciles, they had full and complex lives. A people might have formed and dissolved allegiances with other groups and might have migrated across long distances in order to ensure that its members were safe and content. A large number of related people might have traveled together. Or, they may have broken up into smaller family or clan subsets, with the result that different parts of the same tribe had unique experiences and today have distinct oral histories.

As settlers began to sweep across the continent, the U.S. government made treaties with American Indians. In some cases—notably at Fort Belknap—mistranslated names, mistaken identities, misconstrued agreements, and the packing of more than one tribe onto one reservation caused lasting confusion. Today’s Fort Belknap residents deal continually with these misunderstandings in their ongoing effort to create a better life for their people and a brighter future for their children.

The historical record contains little about the ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' before the earliest known contact with Europeans in 1754. The ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' are related to the Algonquian-speaking Arapaho and Cheyenne people historically and culturally. Early French fur traders first contacted them between the north and south forks of the Saskatchewan River, in the present-day Canadian province of Saskatchewan.

The misunderstandings arose right away. The French communicated with Native people via a universal Plains Sign Talk. The ᑕᑕ'ᑕᑕ'niinen' were known by various forms of the Cree term pawistikowiniwak, or “People of the Rapids,” which references an area they inhabited between the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan River, which have frequent rapids on both sides of the area between the forks. When the ᑕᑕ'ᑕᑕ'niinen' indicated the sign for “waterfall”—a downward waving motion of the hands at waist level—the French traders mistakenly thought they were indicating a big belly. As a consequence, they called them “Gros Ventre,” meaning “large stomach” in French.

Although the Fort Belknap Gros Ventres are often confused with the Hidatsa, who were also called Gros Ventres, or Gros Ventres of the Missouri, on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation in North Dakota, this name for the Hidatsa also came from a misinterpretation of sign language. The sign for the Hidatsa's chest tattoos is a similar gesture on the torso. The two tribes may have been associated in late prehistoric or early protohistoric times; however, their languages are unrelated, and they have separate membership rolls and property rights.

The Nakoda were originally a part of an eastern branch of the Sioux called the Yanktonai. During the 17th century, the Nakoda split off from the Yanktonai and migrated westward onto the northern Plains. In their travels, they acquired a new name as well—and again, it appears that it was thanks to outsiders. Some historians say that “Assiniboine” is a name the Chippewas/Ojibwas gave the Nakoda, meaning “ones who cook with stones,” “stone boilers,” or perhaps even “stone enemy.”



Today, multiple Nakoda bands live in the United States (that is in Montana) and in Canada and are considered separate tribes by the government of the country in which they reside. They all speak similar dialects of the same Siouan language, but each tribe has a separate tribal membership roll and property rights. Montana has two Nakoda tribes, one on the Fort Belknap Reservation and another on the Fort Peck Reservation.

The Fort Belknap Indian Reservation is what remains of the vast territory established by the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty. It was the first treaty to define multi-tribe boundaries between the Missouri River and the Continental Divide. A tract identified as the “Blackfeet Territory,” for the Blackfeet Nation, included north-central and most of eastern Montana. For the purposes of this Treaty, the Blackfeet Nation was an alliance of tribes comprised of the Blackfeet themselves, as well as what are now the Fort Belknap Gros Ventres, the Piegan, and the Blood tribes. (Note: This is a subset of the Blackfoot Confederacy, which is a larger grouping of allies.) Another tract was identified as the “Assiniboine Territory,” which included a small part of eastern Montana and parts of western North Dakota. The total land base reserved for the “Blackfeet Nation” combined with that reserved for the “Assiniboine Nation” exceeded 22 million acres.

In 1855, the United States negotiated an additional treaty with the Blackfeet Nation, again describing it as composed of the Blackfeet, Gros Ventres, Piegans, and Bloods. The accord was an attempt to stop hostilities among tribes of the area. It affected a large group: each of those tribes had an estimated population of between 2,600 and 3,000 members at that time. They agreed to live in perpetual peace and friendship with each other and “Crows, Assiniboins, Crees, Snakes, Blackfeet, San Arcs, and Aunce-pa-pas band of Sioux and all other neighboring nations and tribes of Indians”. The 1855 Treaty also identified two small areas inside the “Blackfeet Territory” as “common hunting grounds.” This meant that the Assiniboine would be allowed to hunt in a small area in the northeastern part of the territory and tribes west of the continental divide would be allowed to hunt in a small area in southwestern part of the territory.



The 1855 treaty, as agreed, was expected to be enforced for 99 years. However, only a decade later, in 1865, then again in 1868, the federal government attempted, but failed, to enter into additional pacts that would diminish the 1851 and 1855 lands. Due to irreparable hostilities between the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and the Piegan, an agreement was reached to divide the territory. The ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ were of the understanding that the 1868 Treaty divided the Blackfoot Territory east from west at Sandy Creek just west of Havre, MT. The ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and their allies would remain on the east side and the remaining tribes identified as the Blackfoot Nation in the 1851 and 1855 treaties on the west. In 1868, the U.S. government established a trading post called Fort Browning near the mouth of Peoples Creek on the Milk River; it was abandoned five years later, in 1873, after a smallpox epidemic devastated the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ, killing nearly everyone in the camp. Just 300 souls—one-tenth of the tribe—survived. The Nakoda had suffered a similar calamity some decades earlier.

After the abandonment of Fort Browning, the government established another post on the south side of the Milk River, about one mile southwest of the present town site of Chinook, Montana. This post was originally named the Gros Ventre Agency but would later become Fort Belknap Agency. In 1873, President Grant issued an executive order that resurrected the diminished boundaries described in the failed 1865 and 1868 treaties. He also established the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation “for the Gros Ventre, Piegan, Blood, Blackfeet, River Crow, and other Indians.” Before this reservation was established, a number of Nakoda were camped with the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and had been for a long time. Fort Belknap and Fort Peck were established at the same time, and some Nakoda stayed with the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ, while others went to the Fort Peck Reservation. Eventually other Nakoda joined their brethren on both reservations, some of whom had migrated from Canada because of persecution there. Additional Indians originally mentioned in the decrees relating to establishment of the Fort Belknap Reservation moved elsewhere, as well. In the end, members of two tribes – ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and Nakoda – inhabit Ft. Belknap.



In 1876, the Fort Belknap Agency was discontinued, and the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and Nakoda receiving annuities at the post were instructed to go to the agency at Fort Peck and Wolf Point. The Nakoda did not object to going to Wolf Point and readily went about moving; but the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ refused to go. If they did, they would come into contact with the Sioux, with whom they could not ride together in peace. They forfeited their annuities rather than move to Fort Peck. In 1878, the Fort Belknap Agency was re-established, and the ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ and remaining Nakoda were again allowed to receive supplies there.

More executive orders and other actions removed more land. From 1873 to 1895, 17.5 million acres were lost. Meanwhile, Fort Belknap Agency was moved to its current location, and Indians who had made improvements to their plots of land near Chinook were forced to pick up and relocate. The ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ residing in that area did not want to relocate but when forced to they had what they called a “broken hearted” dance before leaving. Sits on High, a highly respected ᠳᠣᠰᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢ elder and warrior who had survived three smallpox epidemics, refused to leave his small cattle ranch in the Bear’s Paw Mountains. Area homesteaders did not bother him and even named some springs near his place after him.

In 1888, an act of Congress established the Fort Belknap Reservation at its current location. More land was lost in 1895 after gold was discovered in the Little Rocky Mountains. To accommodate the miners, another agreement was entered into “with the Indians of Fort Belknap.” This agreement removed 30,000 acres of reservation land. This tract would become known as the Grinnell Notch, after George Grinnell, one of the commissioners who arranged the taking of the land.

At the time, tribal members understood that the controversial deal was for lease of the land. However, the acreage was, in fact, removed from the reservation. The area taken, as well as just how it happened, has been in dispute since. Efforts to return the land have created more problems than they have solved and, so far, have collapsed. Several attempts to return lands that extend south into the Little Rocky Mountains and Charles M. Russell Wildlife Refuge or west into the Bear's Paw Mountains failed. However, in 1975 some 25,500 acres of rugged terrain in the Missouri River Breaks on the southwestern boundary, commonly referred to as “submarginal lands,” were returned.

## ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' (White Clay People)

The White Clay People, as they call themselves, are a small group of indigenous people now residing on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, in Montana. Since the first contact of this tribe with non-Indians many spellings of their name have emerged, including Ah-Ah-Ne-Nin, A'ani, A'a'nin, A'aniih, A'aninin, Aaninena, Ahahenlin, Ahe, Ananin, Haaninin.

Little is known about the history of the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' before their first documented encounter with Europeans in 1754. Many historians have written about the elusive past of this once powerful nation. However, as is the case with many Indian tribes, scholars can only speculate as to their origins and experiences. Before being understood as a unique tribe, the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' were often mistaken for other tribes, mostly the Blackfeet, when part of the tribe resided in the area at the forks between the North and South branches of the Saskatchewan River in the present day Canadian province of Saskatchewan. This misidentification was a result of ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' men typically being bilingual and communicating with the Blackfeet and the traders in the Blackfoot language. The language the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' speak is an extremely complex Algonquian dialect that members of other tribes would have been unlikely to have learned.



Like many tribes, the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' moved from one area to another for varying reasons. Some historians conjecture that 3,000 years ago they inhabited the western Great Lakes region, cultivating maize. Other stories and unpublished documents place them in the northeast, near the Atlantic Ocean, at one time. Some historians also speculate that from about 1100 to 1400, the tribe ranged through what are now known as Minnesota, North Dakota's Red River Valley, and the Duck Bay region of Canada's Manitoba province. After that, the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' appear to have migrated back to the Northwestern Plains of Canada and Montana. They adopted some customs and the lifestyle of other Plains Indians and would come to be described as a fierce, warlike equestrian tribe.

A very condensed version of how the ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' acquired horses is: the legend says that a man named “Starved to Death” received horses as a gift from the Creator after completing a vision quest where he fasted for 30 days and got stranded on a small island on a lake. After a water monster helped him get off the island and return to land, horses came out of the lake as a reward from the Creator for his suffering. He then distributed the horses to various ᠳᠣ'ᠰᠠᠳ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ' camps. They then became more mobile and could easily pack up their lodges and travel long distances in search for buffalo. The buffalo provided for much of their everyday needs—food, shelter, ceremonial items, and more. During this time, they also excelled in creating beautiful crafts, including quill work. After contact with European traders, they added beadwork to their repertoire.

The search for food determined exactly where they lived. At one point, a decline in the numbers of buffalo in the Montana area pushed the tribe north, where they began hunting caribou. Later, they decided to return south to their old hunting range. Upon their return, which took place during winter, they crossed a large body of frozen water. The ice broke, killing many and leaving some on one side and some on the other side of the water. No one knows exactly when this happened, as oral history provides no exact dates. The two ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ groups never reunited. Eventually bands would split, and the group moving farther east and then south would later become known as the Northern Arapaho. By then the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ controlled a vast area in present-day Montana and in Canada between branches of the Saskatchewan River. Their territory was expanded after pushing the Snake Indians, also known as Shoshoni, south of the Yellowstone River.

The group in north central Montana had its first awareness of non-Indians in the early 1800s, when they observed what one writer believes could have been members of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The non-Indians killed a buffalo with a rifle, the first time this group of ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ saw guns, which they called “thundersticks.” Lewis and Clark Expedition members often thought they were close to finding the “Atsina,” as they called them. If this was a fact, little did members of that expedition know that they were themselves being watched by the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ from a distance, as they crossed that portion of ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ territory. Later, according to some historians, Lewis mistakenly identified a group of Indians the expedition skirmished with in 1806 as Minnetarees of the Prairie, an alternate name for the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ; instead, say some historians, these were Blackfeet. No, say other historians, they really were Atsina, or ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ. Who knows? Many of the identifications in those days were done on the run (or in the midst of a pitched battle) by foreigners who had little experience of the first peoples of this continent and how they might be distinguished one from another. Perhaps the expedition skirmished with a combination of the two groups, who were allied at the time. One Lewis and Clark map identifies a band of “Paunch” Indians, yet another name for the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ on the White River near the Black Hills in South Dakota.



Much of the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ oral history, customs, religious beliefs, and language were lost over the last century and a quarter. This occurred after the near extinction of the tribe by war and disease, primarily smallpox. As a result of these catastrophes, many survivors converted to Catholicism and embraced a European-style education as an ongoing survival mechanism. However, remnants of the ancient culture still exist, and the oral stories place the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ on this planet since the time of creation. At that time, the Great Mystery gave them a sacred pipe, which they still possess, along with instructions on its use. For centuries, spirituality directed the daily lives of the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ, who received guidance via the pipe and other sacred items and ceremonies.

Some historians question the accuracy of the oral stories and unpublished documents because they do not conform to scholars' own histories and their theories. However, one must remember that most of the oral history predates any written documents. Very important as well: the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ were a large and complex group, and historians may erroneously assume that the experience of one fragment was the experience of all. Not only were there two major subgroups, but the Montana division was itself subdivided into twelve bands. According to Dan Sleeping Bear in 1934, when he was in his mid-seventies, “So large were the ᠳᠣᠪᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ camps, that the crier rode through the village on horseback with his news, announcements, and proclamations, and one man might not know another of his nation except for the sign of his clan.” These bands often went in different directions under their own leadership, either by themselves or along with other bands. As a result, each part of the tribe had myriad unique experiences that were not documented or known by other groups.

Nevertheless, some events were documented after the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' first encountered the French traders in Canada in the mid-1700s. At this time, they were allied with some of the Blackfoot tribes, and with them controlled a vast territory in present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan. As stated earlier, there was a miscommunication about the tribe's name based on the sign for "rapids".

More mistaken and/or mistranslated names include: Gros Ventres of the Prairie, Gros Ventres of Montana, Rapid Indians, Waterfall Indians, Falls Indians, Willow Indians, Minnetarees of the Prairie, Minnetarees of Fort de Prairie, Pahkee Indians, Paunch Indians, and Atsina. Aside from Gros Ventre the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' are most commonly referred to as Atsina a name given them by their one time ally the Piegan after parting company on unfriendly terms. According to the Piegan Institute, the contemporary Piegan name for the Gros Ventre is "Assinee," meaning "big bellies," which is similar to a falsely translated label applied by the French. The Arapaho brethren to the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' call them "Hitúněna" which in the original translation was honorable name. It meant "the person that takes" in reference to a shared creation story of "first man" who took mud from the turtle to make land at the time of creation. Some contemporary translations today change the meaning of the word to "beggars" or "hunger."

The ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' made their presence known on the Plains. In 1751, Canadian military man and explorer Jacques Legardeur de Saint-Pierre tried to find a route to the Pacific Ocean for the French. He remarked that the Gros Ventres were "an insurmountable obstacle" to his plans. From December 1 to 16, 1772, the Hudson's Bay Company's Matthew Cockings observed the Gros Ventres. He reported that they excel "not only at hunting buffalo, but in all their actions." He saw them as similar to Europeans and "cleanly in clothing and food."

In 1781, a devastating smallpox epidemic reached the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', killing an estimated two-thirds of the tribe, who were camped in the area of the South Saskatchewan River. The devastation wrought by smallpox epidemics meant many tribes formed or maintained alliances to protect themselves and their territory. In 1812, John C. Luttig, a writer for the Missouri Fur Company, reported an alliance among the Blackfeet, the Piegans, the Bloods, and the Gros Ventres. He also called the Gros Ventres "the most relentlessly hostile tribe ever encountered by the whites in any part of the west, if not in any part of America." The trapper always understood that to meet with one of these Indians meant an instant and deadly fight. "These Indians were well formed physically, fond of athletic sports, excellent horsemen, and great hunters."

The early 1800s saw much travel and splintering and reunions of the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ'. The Montana portion of the tribe remained closely allied with the Arapaho, some even joining them from 1818 to 1823, then returning to the main group of ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', which was camped in the area of the Milk and Missouri Rivers. A small band of Assiniboine joined the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' during this time and agreed to always live in peace with the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ'. The ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' in Canada destroyed several forts there, with the last one in 1826 being Chesterfield House, at present-day Empress, Alberta, after which they went south to briefly reunite with the Montana group. During the period of this reunion, German explorer and naturalist Prince Alexander Philipp Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied and the artist Karl Bodmer met the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' along the Missouri River, where Bodmer painted portraits of several tribal members.

Soon after, some ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' went south with the Arapaho and skirmished with the Mexican Army and others in the Cimarron area over an approximately five-year period. In 1829, they were hit by smallpox, losing about half of their people. After an argument with the Arapaho they had to battle their way back north. Along the way they got into what was rated as one of the worst encounters of Indians and traders in the west at a place called Pierre's Hole. By 1833, it is believed that most of the tribe was reunited. When smallpox hit area tribes again in the 1830s, it wreaked havoc on other tribes but not the ᠳᠠᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' who may have acquired immunity to that strain of smallpox during the 1829 epidemic.

By the time the 1851 Fort Laramie Treaty was signed, the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' had expanded their territory to the Yellowstone River. They sometimes were enemies of neighboring tribes like the Crows, Piegans, and Blackfeet, and at other times were allies. Non-Indians were amazed at how quickly these tribes could reconcile after serious fights—or decide they were enemies, as after the 1855 peace treaty among the tribes and the United States. In 1868, the U.S. government established a trading post called Fort Browning near the mouth of People's Creek on the Milk River. The ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', some Nakoda, and some Sioux received rations there. Soon though, the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' were nearly wiped out by a smallpox epidemic, during which ninety percent (90%) of their numbers died. The ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' claim this strain of the disease was intentionally given to them when some white men gave them a package and told them to call their people together as the “Great White Father” had sent it as a gift. Following the white men's instructions the package was opened several days after they left the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ'. To the amazement of the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' there was only pieces of cloth in the package which they passed around curiously viewing. Several days' later people began dying. After the epidemic the remaining headmen advised their people to break up into smaller groups and scatter to avoid being totally destroyed. Small pockets of ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' could be found throughout Montana and other areas of the northwest until most were brought back to Fort Belknap during the allotment era which began in 1921.

A legend had become reality, according to Dan Sleeping Bear. Handed down by generations of medicine men, the tale told of a time when a mighty people with fair hair and white skin would destroy the red man. Coming from the east, the story said, these strangers would take the Indian's land, kill their buffalo, and force them to adopt new ways of living. The writings of spirit men or little people, which could be read by only those greatly favored, also told of these things. Examples of these petroglyphs can be seen at Writing-On-Stone Provincial Park in southern Alberta, just north of the Sweetgrass Hills. Up the Missouri River and across the prairies the strangers came with their teams of oxen and great creaking wagons. They took without asking and doled out whisky, said Sleeping Bear. Wise old men and women, who had watched the white man since first he came among the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' shook their heads and mumbled the warning of the old legend.

Both smallpox and the destruction of the great buffalo herds caused great suffering. The last wild herd of buffalo in the continental United States roamed the lush Milk River valley, between the Bear's Paw Mountains and the Fur Caps. This area is smack in the middle of the area then—and now—occupied by the ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' and some Nakoda. Many called it the last frontier, which drew outsiders, both Indian and non-Indian alike, wanting to hold on to a dying way of life. The ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ', by now generally called the Gros Ventres, came to believe themselves accursed and deserted by their “man above.” The old tale of the conquering white race was retold, and the old men and women concluded that the destruction of the Indian was imminent if he did not abandon the ways of the teachings of their forefathers and cling fast to the strange new people.

“We had to overcome overwhelming odds just to be here today” are words that have been repeated by many ᠳᠠᠪᠠᠨᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' elders over the years.

### **Brief history of the Assiniboine “Nakoda” People**

In historic times, the Assiniboine people were assumed to be of the Yanktonai Sioux, although popular with modern historians of the time. The westward movement of the ancient tribes, bands and sub-bands of the Nakoda Peoples began in the 16-17th centuries, and the records throughout history reflect contradictory perspectives of not only Indian people, but also of the Europeans. The Assiniboine name, “one who cooks with stone” is a name given to them from their Cree allies. The Cree migrated and traded with the Assiniboine. European explorers used the name “Stoney” for the Assiniboine due to their technique of using fire-heated rocks to boil and cook meat.

“Pierre Jean Desmet, a French Jesuit missionary of the early 19th century, stated that the Assiniboine were once members of the Yanktonai band of Dakota (Sioux). The oral tradition of the Assiniboine, however, refutes that claim. According to oral history in all Assiniboine tribal bands, their origins are Algonquian. Scholars of Assiniboine descent have been involved in research in the area since the mid 1970s.

According to Wamakashka Doba Inazhi-Chief, Red Bottom Band of the Assiniboines

Our traditional history tells of our life east of the Great Lakes and our slow migration west as the non-Indian peoples settled the eastern seaboard. While we lived in the region east of the Great Lakes, our oral history tells us, some of our people met with white men who had red hair all over their faces and rode in boats that had cloth and furs hanging above them. These white men took some of our more adventurous people back to their country over a great body of water. After a few years some of our people were brought back. They said they were treated extremely well by these white men and taught many of their ways of life. Other stories tell of some of our people living where it was always snow. It is also told that some of our far-ranging people found a place where it is always summer and how the summer was finally brought to where our people lived (History of the Assiniboine People from the Oral Tradition - Nakodabi--The Assiniboine People 1992).

Nakoda dialect and language was similar to the Dakota and it was from this fact that many have assumed that they must be from the Sioux family stock. The Nakoda language spoken in Canada is significantly different than the one spoken in the United States. Most linguists consider them two distinct languages, Stoney (Canadian) and Assiniboine (American.) In recent times, the resurgence of the language usage among the young has increased. Both tribal colleges at Fort Belknap and Fort Peck offer Nakoda Language courses in the hopes of reviving the language before it disappears.

The buffalo was the main resource of food, and as the tribal population grew, they gradually migrated out of the eastern woodlands and boundary waters of Minnesota, Ontario, and the Missouri River Country. They moved north westerly toward Lake Winnipeg and began trading with both the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company near the Rocky Mountain Front.

During this time, there were two bands of Assiniboines living in the area, the woodland tribes of the north, and the Southern Band, who hunted and trapped furs for trade with the French and English. The Assiniboine, acting as intermediaries, traded goods back and forth with the Europeans, Ojibway and Cree Nations around the great lakes region. They traded for knives, tools, guns, powder, and bullets. There were three trade zones established (local, middle men, indirect) where the Assiniboine and western Cree trapped and transported furs. The southern plains Nations, who had less contact with Europeans - until later in the 18th, early 19th Centuries, remained without European contact until the time of the horse culture, which came to the Assiniboine.

Around 1818, The London Convention, enacted between the United States (U.S.) and Canadian (CA.) Governments established the 49th parallel. This treaty separated the two bands, Upper Assiniboine tribes and the Lower plains tribes. Families still roamed freely to visit relatives and to hunt and trap. Due to conflicts between these two countries, the Ashburton Treaty (1842) resolved the problems. Not wanting to go to war, Queen Victoria and President Tyler came to an agreement for the border between their countries. This disregarded the way of life of Indigenous Nations that had freely traversed over the now invisible line, separating families from each other and endangering cultural integrity.

Misguided Federal Indian Policy during this time period resulted in what is sometimes referred to as the American Indian Holocaust. A cultural genocide occurred with attempts to exterminate cultures, religions, and languages. The history of this starts with broken treaties, the forming of reservations, disease, starvation, relocation,

assimilation, massacres, warfare, boarding schools, Christianity, loss of culture, and land. The pre reservation era transformed the Assiniboine way of life, those born on the reservation had a new culture where as the old culture was seen as an aboriginal culture. The Euro-American civilization exhibited a sense of ethnocentrism and the government wanted to expand the country with the frontier being opened to settlers and new territories being occupied.

During this time, many began to settle on the reserve and developed a dependency on agriculture, ranching, and government annuities, which were promised and often not delivered. Many of the Assiniboine and Gros Ventre People perished due to inclement weather, starvation, and disease. The Assiniboine settled in the river valley area near the agency and in Lodge Pole, while the Gros Ventre lived in the Hays, Landusky, Zortman, and Agency areas. Reservation life became a reality with the slaughter of the last buffalo in the winter of 1884, and the old Nakoda economic culture was gone.

The first day of school at St. Paul's Catholic Mission was in 1866, the same day the church opened. The mission school and boarding schools were formed in an effort to stop the use of old culture and Indian languages, which were forbidden to use. Punishment for speaking Indian in the schools system was often strict. During the mid-1800s-early 1900s, the policy of "Kill the Indian, Save the Man" was another means of assimilation and the ceremonies changed over time. Feather hand-game bundles became the new means of Sundance culture when the government outlawed all ceremonies. Secret societies maintained the cultural ways, while some went north and kept the Sundance ceremonies alive until the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, when traditional religious practices were re-instated for all Native nations.

## **Organizational Structure**

Prior to 1935 the historical ᠳᠤᠪᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨᠠᠨ and Nakoda Tribes each managed their own affairs. In 1935 these two historical tribes adopted a Constitution and By-Laws pursuant to the Indian Reorganization Act, sometimes called the Wheeler Howard Act, on December 13, 1935. The newly adopted constitution created a tribe called the Fort Belknap Indian Community. A Federal Charter for the new tribe was adopted on August 25, 1937. This new organization would have an elected body known as the Fort Belknap Community Council. Currently the Community Council is comprised of eight (8) council members, a President, and a Vice-President. The President oversees daily administration through a Chief Administrative Officer, and the President appoints a Secretary/Treasurer.

The Community Council is also the Board of Directors for the federal corporation. There are two (2) six (6) member Treaty Committees, one for the Gros Ventre Tribe and one for the Assiniboine Tribe, elected by the membership of each respective tribe. These committees handle matters specific to the respective tribe they represent. These committee members are elected to lifetime terms.

## **Separation Of Powers**

Despite being molded after the United States Government the Fort Belknap Constitution did not contain a definite separation of powers. The Community Council has always been both the legislative and executive branches. A separate Judiciary was approved as a constitutional amendment in 2001. However, the Community Council still maintains control over the Judiciary by the appointment of judges and staff.

## **Tribal Sovereignty**

Protection of Tribal Sovereignty is always a major concern for any tribe and yet it is one of the most misunderstood concepts by many federal, state, and tribal lawmakers.

## Enrollment

Enrollment is a complex issue at Fort Belknap because multiple membership rolls and payment rolls exist making it extremely difficult to understand. When the Fort Belknap Indian Community was created as a tribe, the intent of the federal government officials was to destroy the identity of the historical ᠳᠤ'ᠪᠪ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ and Nakoda and replace them with simply Fort Belknap Indians. While that concept may have worked to a certain extent through intermarriage with other tribes and non-Indians, most tribal members still identify themselves as either ᠳᠤ'ᠪᠪ'ᠨᠢᠢᠨᠢᠨ or Nakoda. In fact, identifying with one tribe or the other is on the upswing due in part to revitalization of native culture, religion, and language beginning at a younger age. Children are being taught to be proud of who they are.

## Population

Enrolled members living on/ near the Fort Belknap Reservation	4,546
Enrolled members living off the Fort Belknap Reservation	2,826
Total enrolled members - Fort Belknap Indian Community	7,402

## Land Status/Allotment

The year 1921 marked the beginning of extremely controversial times for Fort Belknap. The adoption and implementation of the Dawes Act allowed eligible individuals approved by a three (3) member commission to receive land allotments. The process determined eligibility pursuant to criteria established by the commission. To prove eligibility for an allotment each resident Indian, or their parents in the case of children, were asked a series of questions such as what tribe they belonged to, where they were born, or have they ever received rations, if so, where? These statements were written down, witnessed by adults who knew the applicant, later typed, and are on file with the local BIA office. These statements were also used for enrollment into the tribes. Many people were denied allotments for a variety of reasons. Some people who were denied appealed the commission's decision, some won their appeals and others did not. Some individuals who lost their appeals were formally adopted by a majority vote of the tribal general membership. Ill feelings still linger to this day because of actions taken during the allotment era. In addition to individuals receiving allotments, lands were reserved for various tribal uses, churches, state schools, and federal government administrative purposes. To be enrolled today one must be a descendant of a person who originally received an allotment. Despite allotments to individuals 97% of the Fort Belknap's land base remains in Indian ownership.

## Fort Belknap Indian Community Land Buy-Back Program

The Cobell Settlement was formally approved on November 24, 2012. Part of the settlement provided for a \$1.9 billion Trust Land Consolidation Fund. The settlement charges the U.S. Department of the Interior with the responsibility to use the percentage of funds designated for the Fort Belknap reservation at Fair Market Value (FMV), fractional interests in allotted lands that individuals are willing to sell. Acquired interests will remain in trust or restricted status through transfer of tribes.

The Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations implements the land consolidation of the Cobell Settlement. The Program's goal is to create cultural, residential, governmental, and economic opportunities by consolidating fractioned lands into tribal trust ownership for the benefit of tribal communities.



## Medical Facilities

Through PL 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Assistance Act the Community Council contracts many services historically carried out by the Indian Health Service. Some of the major medical programs contracted are:

- Public Health Nursing
- Community Health Representatives
- Health Education
- Chemical Dependency
- Family Planning

## Diabetes Prevention And Education Programs

The Community Council also receives funding from the State of Montana Department of Health and Human Services for other health related programs such as Tobacco Prevention, Healthy Heart Project, Women, Infants and Children Program, and Personal Care Assistance Program.

The Indian Health Service operates two health facilities on the reservation with most of the contracted programs housed in those facilities. The Little River Health Center, a four bed Infirmary with a full service clinic, is located on the northern end of the reservation at Fort Belknap Agency. The Eagle Child Health facility, a full service clinic, is located in Hays on the southern end of the reservation. Recruitment of professional staff is an on-going problem due to the remoteness of the facilities.

## Schools

There are four public schools on or near the reservation. Some students attend Indian boarding schools as well. All schools offer varying levels of Native American culture, history, and language. The Community Council has provided pre-school services with funding from the Department of Health and Human Services since 1965. Currently there are Head Start services provided in three locations on the reservation, Lodge Pole, Hays, and Fort Belknap Agency.

## Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC)

ANC is an important and vital part of the Fort Belknap Reservation and surrounding area. ANC operates autonomously from the Fort Belknap Indian Community and is governed by a six (6) member Board of Directors appointed by the Fort Belknap Community Council. ANC is a two year accredited college with a staff of 58 serving an annual average of 143 both Indian and non-Indian students residing within commuting distance on and off the reservation.

KGVA Radio Station 88.1 FM is “the buckskin voice of the Aaniiih Nakoda Nations” and was established in 1996 and is licensed through the college. KGVA is an educational, non-commercial, public radio station serving the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and surrounding communities. KGVA’s mission is to “Get the Message Out,” by serving as a vital communications tool for the Native American and non-Native American communities within the station’s service area. The radio station provides programming that fulfills the cultural, educational, and entertainment needs of the community.

Tribal colleges are chartered by American Indian Nations. ANC recognizes the urgency of tribal language preservation and/or revitalization with its important role to the tribal nation cultures and social wellbeing. The White Clay language at one point had become nearly extinct. In 2001 ANC was among the first tribal colleges to open an American Indian language immersion school which is housed on the college campus. The school focuses on the White Clay people language (᠋ᠠᠨᠢᠢᠬᠢ ᠨᠠᠬᠣᠳᠤ) and relies heavily on Native knowledge bases and Native

ways of knowing and learning while incorporating non-native ways of learning to offer the students the best of both worlds and become positive and successful individuals.

## **Employment And Income**

The scarcity of jobs has caused Fort Belknap to have the highest unemployment rate of all reservations in Montana soaring as high as 80% at certain times of the year. The Fort Belknap Indian Reservation also suffers from a drastic shortage of affordable housing. The Tribe, federal agencies, the college, and school districts are the largest employers. Due to the limited number of jobs available on the reservation, many tribal members must leave to provide for their families. Many move to neighboring communities; however, with the recent boom in economic activity in the Bakken many members have relocated to eastern Montana or North Dakota for higher paying jobs. Some members work at seasonal jobs such as firefighting and various construction related projects. Others are self-employed entrepreneurs mainly in agriculture or acting as guides for bird or big game hunters. While others may work for local Indian or non-Indian farmers and ranchers or local tribally owned enterprises such as Island Mountain Development Group, Fort Belknap Casino, Fort Belknap Kwik Stop, Little River Smoke House, and the Little Rockies Meat Packing Company. A Tribal Employment Rights Office monitors employers on reservation to ensure that tribal members are given employment opportunities.

## **Contemporary Issues**

The Fort Belknap Indian Community currently manages around 300-500 buffalo near Snake Butte Reservoir. On August 23, 2013, 34 genetically pure bison were released onto a 1,000 acre pasture located just south near the 18 mile marker on highway 66. The Fort Belknap Bison Program teaming with Yellowstone National Park's bison have brought the buffalo back to the plains area, and for the first time in over a century, the buffalo will roam the prairies of the reservation. The return of the buffalo signifies not only the preservation of the pure strain bison, it brings new beginnings to future generations of the Aaniiih Nakoda people.

The Fort Belknap Reservation sits on large quantities of undeveloped oil and gas reserves. As the oil boom makes its way west from the Bakken, Tribal Government and reservation residents must prepare for the time when it reaches Fort Belknap. Although economically beneficial, time and time again the social and environmental ills that follow an oil boom has proven to destroy rural communities. Advanced planning on how to deal with issues such as law enforcement, courts, medical, infrastructure, housing, environmental protection, and drug and alcohol abuse must be made.

## **Water Rights**

In 1905 a Federal Supreme Court decision commonly called the Winters Doctrine was a huge victory for Indian Country as birth was given to Reserved Indian Water Rights. This case was adjudicated on behalf of the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and has withstood the test of time for over a century. Many tribes have benefitted from the Doctrine by retaining the right to water not only for agricultural purposes but for domestic and commercial use as well. Despite having won its case, Fort Belknap has encountered problems over the years actually getting the water to which it is entitled due to water shortages. Congressional Acts have forced most tribes in Montana to enter into water rights settlement agreements with the state. Although the Fort Belknap Community Council has been negotiating a settlement agreement for some 30 years, a final agreement has yet to be approved. Many members of the historical ᠳᠤᠰᠤᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ' and Nakoda tribes question whether the Community Council is the proper body to be negotiating or if it is a Treaty Committee function since the foundation for the water right is a treaty right. An agreement between the United States and Canada called the International Boundary Treaty and the Blackfeet Tribe's water right complicate Fort Belknap's water right on the Milk

River because they all claim a share of the water supply. Additionally, water quality has become an issue in the negotiations due to the adverse effects of mining.

## Mining Effects

From 1979 to 1998 Pegasus Gold, a Canadian based mining company, operated the Zortman/Landusky mine in the Little Rocky Mountains. The method used was open pit mining, with the construction of cyanide heap leach pads to recover precious metals from the ore. After the company filed for bankruptcy, it departed leaving the mountains permanently scarred and an estimated \$33 million in clean up and reclamation costs. Although some reclamation work has been completed, there is still a long road to hoe. The long term health and environmental effects have yet to be measured. One thing for certain is that the water must be treated forever.

## Recreation

Throughout the scenic Little Rocky Mountains one can enjoy recreational opportunities year round. During the summer months picnicking, camping, and hiking can be enjoyed at many spots; probably the best known is Mission Canyon just south of Hays, which is a recreational site and home to the Natural Bridge, Wilson Park, Devils Kitchen, Needle Eye, Kid Curry’s Hideout and the Pow-Wow grounds for the Hays Community Pow-wow in August.

On the reservations north end Snake Butte Recreation is located seven miles south of Fort Belknap Agency. It is a high-line landmark and is known to the ᠳᠠ’ᠵᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ’ and Nakoda People as a spiritual place for vision quests and a lookout point. Adjacent to one of the buffalo pastures, Snake Butte has recreational trout fishing, fresh water spring, prairie dog hunting, shaded picnic areas around the reservoir, and hiking. The granite-like rocks of Snake Butte were mined for the Fort Peck Dam in the 1930s and played a major role in the completion of the dam in 1940. A few miles north fishing in the Milk River is available or farther east the Strike Reservoir area is available for picnics, camping, and fishing.

The Fort Belknap Fish and Game department regulates tribal and non-tribal members within the boundaries of the reservation with upland game bird, antelope, deer, elk, buffalo, and prairie dog shooting. Fishing licenses are available for purchase. Guided hunts can also be arranged from the list of licensed guides.

## Annual Festivities

The Milk River Indian Days Annual Pow-Wow celebration is in July at the Fort Belknap Agency Pow-Wow Grounds, Ft. Belknap MT. featuring traditional regalia dancing and singing contests throughout the weekend with the Annual Mosquito 1k, 3k fun run, parade, Indian relay horse racing, youth rodeo, and the ultimate warrior competition.

Hays Community Pow-Wow is held in August, the Pow-Wow grounds are located in Mission Canyon. In keeping with tradition, Hays community members, consisting of the Aaniiih Nakoda Nations, host an annual Pow-Wow. This event and gathering is a traditionally hosted celebration. Many events are scheduled such as a parade, rodeo, Indian relays, but the most important event is the traditional dancing that allows the native people the freedom of expression and socializing.

<i>Month</i>	<i>Event</i>	<i>Location</i>
<i>January</i>	<i>New Year’s Celebration</i>	<i>Lodgepole</i>
<i>February</i>	<i>Mid-Winter Fair</i>	<i>Fort Belknap Agency</i>
<i>June-2nd week</i>	<i>ᠳᠠ’ᠵᠠᠨᠢᠨᠢᠨ’ Sundance</i>	<i>Mid-way between Hays-Lodgepole</i>

<i>July-1st week</i>	<i>Nakoda Sundance</i>	<i>Mid-way between Hays-Lodgepole</i>
<i>July-2nd week</i>	<i>Lodgepole Pow Wow &amp; Rodeo</i>	<i>Lodgepole</i>
<i>July-4th weekend</i>	<i>Milk River Indian Days</i>	<i>Fort Belknap Agency</i>
<i>August-2nd week</i>	<i>Hays Community Pow Wow</i>	<i>Mission Canyon</i>
<i>October-2nd week</i>	<i>Chief Joseph Pow Wow</i>	<i>Fort Belknap Agency</i>
<i>November-2nd weekend</i>	<i>Veterans Pow Wow</i>	<i>Rotates to Communities</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>Christmas Pow Wow</i>	<i>Fort Belknap Agency</i>

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# Fort Peck Reservation

## ASSINIBOINE AND SIOUX TRIBES

### Fort Peck Tribes

The Fort Peck Indian Reservation is home to a number of different Nakoda (Assiniboine), Dakota, and Lakota (Sioux) communities that stretch along northeast Montana's Hi-Line from the Big Porcupine Creek to the Big Muddy Creek. The reservation, Montana's second largest in terms of land area, consists of 2,093,318 acres of which just under half is owned by individual tribal members or held in common by the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes. Linguistically, the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota are related. Sometime in the late 16th century they resided in the region between the Mississippi River and Lake Superior. As pressure from eastern tribes increased, the Nakoda split from the other Dakota and Lakota groups and moved north into Cree country. Today, bands of Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota reside in Frazer, Oswego, Wolf Point, Poplar, Brockton, Riverside, and Ft. Kipp. These communities lay along the Missouri River's north bank, the reservation's southern boundary. Wolf Point, with a population of 4,000, is the largest town on the reservation and serves as the reservation's commercial center. Poplar, the next largest community, has a population of 3,200. Poplar is also the center of tribal government. The Ft. Peck Tribes, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Indian Health Service are headquartered there, as well as a number of other federally funded programs. The nearest primary trade centers are Billings, Great Falls (both approximately 300 miles from the reservation), and Williston, North Dakota, which lies some 75 miles east of Poplar.



### Population

Enrolled Sioux members	8,814
Enrolled Assiniboine members	4,568
Total Ft. Peck tribal members	13,382

There are close to 1,000 members of other tribes living on Ft. Peck Reservation. One of the largest non-enrolled tribal groups is the Chippewa from the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota. The next largest non-enrolled group is the Assiniboine from Ft. Belknap followed by individuals from the Three Affiliated Tribes (Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara) in North Dakota, and a number of Canadian Assiniboine.

### Land Status

Total reservation acreage	2,093,124
Total tribal acreage	413,020
Total individually allotted acreage	548,000
Total fee simple or state acreage	1,132,104

The Ft. Peck Tribes have instituted an active policy of land acquisition. Over the past 20 years the Tribes have acquired over 19,000 acres. Ft. Peck, like most reservations, experienced the allotment policy, which resulted in the loss of just over half of tribal land holdings. Although the Dawes Act was enacted in 1887, it wasn't until the early 1900s when Ft. Peck was allotted. By 1922 the allotment process was near completion and lands not allotted were opened up for homesteading by non-Indians. Again, like most reservations, much of the better

cropland passed into non-Indian hands. During the Depression, many non-Indian farms failed and the government repurchased the lands. An Act of Congress returned much of that land to the tribes in 1975.

## Historical Background

In the mid-1600s, the Nakoda separated into two groups. One group moved further west to the upper Red River territory, where they and their ever-present Cree allies began refining their buffalo hunting skills. The other group moved north toward Lake Winnipeg and initiated a trading relationship with the Hudson's Bay Company.

Soon after they established a foothold in the upper Red River region, the Nakoda and Cree found themselves engaged in a bitter dispute over hunting grounds with the Dakota bands who had also moved onto the Northern Plains. By the time the United States was forging a new nation east of the Appalachian Mountains, the Nakoda were engaged in a full scale war against the various Dakota bands. Raids on each opposing village became commonplace as Plains warfare evolved. The boundary differences between the United States and Britain over present-day Montana, North Dakota, and Canada also affected the Nakoda. By the time these disputes were settled, the Nakoda divided into bands that either moved west of Lake Manitoba or southwest toward the Missouri River. The bands that controlled the area north of the confluence of the Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers, found themselves in alliance with the United States political forces. In September 1825, the Nakoda met with Indian agents at the Mandan Indian Villages.

A few years later, trader James Kipp of the American Fur Company began trading with the Nakoda at newly established Ft. Union. As the demand for beaver pelts decreased, trade focused on buffalo hides and the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota became increasingly dependent on American trade items. Women welcomed metal pots, pans, skinning knives, manufactured blankets and cloth, and beads. Men were more interested in guns, ammunition, and tools. Trade enticed the southern Nakoda to move their lodges, some 1,200 strong, more permanently to the vicinity of Ft. Union. Unfortunately, as more contact occurred, disease decimated lower Nakoda populations. Smallpox, carried upriver on a steamboat, reduced their numbers by two-thirds. Similarly, Dakota groups fled their homes to escape the smallpox epidemic of 1837-38. Thousands perished and bodies were dumped into rivers or left where they had died.

In 1851, the United States government formalized its relationship with Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota groups. Along with dozens of other Plains tribes, they met near Ft. Laramie and negotiated the first of many treaties between tribal leaders and government officials. The treaty involved acceptance of a set of tenuous boundaries. The Nakoda believed their designated territory lay in the northeast region of Montana, near Ft. Union. The Lakotas and some bands of Dakotas accepted much of present-day North and South Dakota.

During the first years of the Civil War, many eastern Dakota bands fled from reservation life. As the Civil War waned, exiled Dakota and Lakota groups battled American militiamen near the Killdeer Mountain, west of the Missouri River in Dakota Territory. This was one of the largest assemblies of American forces fighting in a single battle against Plains tribes. Dakota and Lakota bands continued moving further west, and leaders such as Sitting Bull, Medicine Bear, Standing Buffalo, and Waanatan found the country of the upper Missouri quite agreeable. Under the leadership of Red Stone, the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota put old differences aside and began to participate in buffalo hunts and inter-marry with each other. Eventually, the bands of the southern Nakoda and their new Dakota and Lakota allies began inquiring about securing an agency of their own somewhere closer to the mouth of the Milk River. By 1871 the government established the Fort Peck Agency near the old Ft. Peck trading post on the Missouri River. Some 5,000 Nakoda and Dakota moved closer to this new agency. Sitting Bull, however, and most of his Hunkpapas drifted back to Dakota Territory, nearer to his Lakota relatives. After the

Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, soldiers hunted Dakota and Lakota refugees until they submitted or sought sanctuary with Sitting Bull and other leaders in Canada. By 1880 bands of Lakota following Sitting Bull, Gall, and Black Moon began to drift back into the United States, with most of those refugees surrendering at Ft. Buford. However, some of Sitting Bull and Gall's people remained on Ft. Peck.

With the buffalo near extinction, the Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota faced total dependence on the United States government. In 1885, they mounted a hunt in which they shot the last few buffalo left in Montana. The reservation period, marked by starvation and confinement, had begun. Tribal consolidation and land cessions became the fare of the day. After much suffering, the chiefs of the Blackfeet, Gros Ventre, Upper and Lower Nakodas and Dakotas, along with a few refugee Lakota bands, signed an agreement in 1887. They surrendered about 17.5 million acres and accepted smaller reservations. The next year Congress ratified the agreement creating the Ft. Peck Reservation with its present boundaries.

At the turn of the century, the allotment process was in full swing, the Great Northern Railway was completed and towns began to emerge on and near the reservation. By 1911 allotment was completed and hundreds of thousands of acres were left over. Conveniently, homesteading by non-Indians seemed the answer. Most tribal allotments remained in trust for the next 25 years. When the Depression hit Ft. Peck, many non-Indian homesteads failed and the land reverted back to the government.



The building of the Ft. Peck Dam on the Missouri River provided some relief, however, most Indians remained dependent upon what little the government provided. Most Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota families planted gardens, worked on local farms, and hunted and trapped to supplement their livelihoods.

During World War II, Nakoda, Dakota, and Lakota men and women joined the armed forces. This was the first time many of them had left the reservation. Many served in European, African, and Asian campaigns.

Oil was discovered on the reservation in the early 1950s and over 50 wells were producing enough crude oil each year that the Ft. Peck Tribes became the leading oil producing tribe on the Northern Plains.

Economically, the Ft. Peck Tribes relied heavily on agriculture, tribal leases, and oil and gas production. However, in 1968, the A & S (Assiniboine and Sioux) Industries began, which refurbished M-1 rifles for the U.S. government. They soon expanded this venture to include other government contracts. A & S Industries was followed by West Electronics, which operated in the private sector. By 1990 A & S Industries went out of business; however, West Electronics continued to operate. In December 1998, a geographic zone within the boundaries of Ft. Peck was designated as an Enterprise Community. The intention was to encourage federal agencies in assisting Ft. Peck in efforts of empowerment toward social and economic growth.



## 1978

### **Tribal Community and Universities Act**

When this act was passed it created Indian Community Colleges and gave them funding. Fort Peck Community College was founded in 1979 and continues to serve the Fort Peck Indian Reservation and the FPCC campus expanded in 2003 to Wolf Point.

## 1985

### **Fort Peck Water Compact**

Fort Peck Tribes signed the first tribal-state water compact with the state of Montana. Under the conditions of the compact the tribes are allowed to divert 1 million acre feet of water from the Missouri River and its arteries.

## 1999

### **Tribal Buffalo Ranch**

Fort Peck established a buffalo ranch 25 miles northwest of Poplar.

## 2009

### **Cobell Case**

Eloise Cobell filed a class action suit in 1996 because of mismanagement of federal Indian trust monies and land. The U.S. Government settled the case for \$3.4 billion.



## 2012

### **Yellowstone Bison**

The Fort Peck Tribes expand their bison ranch herd with 75 (including calves) genetically pure bison. Soon after, 36 of these 75 bison were given to the Fort Belknap Reservation. In 2014 another 134 pure genetic herd of buffalo were added. These bison originate from the Yellowstone bison herd and will be added to the cultural herd.

## 2012

### **Salazar Payment**

The Fort Peck Tribes received a settlement claim in the amount of \$75 million dollars. The Tribal Executive Board decided to give out two large per capita payments to enrolled members. The first payment of \$1,500 was distributed on October 2, 2012 and the total cost was \$19,500,000. The second payment of \$1,000 was distributed in December 2012 and totaled \$13,000,000. The tribal board also put money into (1%) Tribal Health, (13%) tribal reserves, (13%) for land buy back, (21%) for restoration on cultural buildings and tribal facilities, and for paying off some outstanding debts (6%). The Tribal Land Buyback Program has added over 11,000 acres to the tribe's land base.

## Housing

Since 1962, the housing conditions of Ft. Peck have steadily improved through tribally sponsored programs. Extensive housing programs, both low-rent and mutual help, have been undertaken by the Ft. Peck Housing Authority. The BIA Home Improvement has also helped to bring Indian homes up to standard. The Indian Health Service also provides sewer and water facilities to Indian homes. The BIA's road department has also built and paved new and existing roads and streets in the surrounding communities. Ft. Peck Housing Authority (2015): 1,062 housing units include 620 low rent unit; 438 home owner units; and 47 tax credit units.

## Medical Facilities

Indian Health Service clinics can be found in Wolf Point—The Chief Redstone Medical Clinic and Poplar—The Verne E. Gibbs Medical Clinic. The clinics serve over 7,300 patients regularly. The clinics offer outpatient services, dental care, X-rays, optometry care, pharmacy, mental health care, and field health and administration. Services provided through P.L. 93-638 contracts include alcohol treatment, community health representatives, nutrition, sanitation, health education, housekeeping, environmental health, and tribal health administration. At the Poplar clinic, the Indian Health Service also operates a tribal dialysis program; however, this is totally funded by the Tribes. Inpatient services are provided by the Community Hospital in Poplar and the Trinity Hospital in Wolf Point. Many patients also see specialists in Billings and Williston, North Dakota.

## Employment and Income

Unemployment on Ft. Peck reached catastrophic heights just after World War II and into the 1950s and '60s. A & S Industries provided some relief through the 1970s and into the early 1980s. The oil boom that Ft. Peck initially experienced in the 1950s and later in the early 1980s waned after oil exploration dropped off soon after 1985. Ft. Peck has experienced tides of prosperity and economic slump. Currently, the Ft. Peck Tribes have been working with off-reservation communities in a water pipeline project which will provide water for human and livestock consumption over some 75,000 square miles, both on and off the reservation. The Enterprise Community, which receives \$250,000 annually to promote economic development, is also a bright spot for Ft. Peck's economic endeavors, while farming and ranching will continue to provide a sound foundation for the future.



The median house hold income is \$36,115.00, unemployment rate of over 50%, and 25.2% individuals living in poverty. (FPTED, 2015; U.S. Census, 2010)

## Annual Festivities

**Poplar Wild West Days**—two-day rodeo - First weekend in July

**Badlands Celebration**—three-day Pow Wow. Third weekend in June - Brockton

**Ft. Kipp Celebration**—three-day Pow Wow. Fourth of July weekend - Ft. Kipp

**Red Bottom Celebration**—three-day Pow Wow. Second weekend in June - Frazer

**Wadopana Celebration**—three-day Pow Wow. First weekend in August - Wolf Point

**Wolf Point Wild Horse Stampede**—three-day rodeo (Montana's oldest). Second weekend in July

**Turns Around Pow Wow**—Three day pow wow. Second week of August - Poplar

**Poplar Indian Days**—three-day Pow Wow. Labor Day weekend - Poplar

## Fort Peck Public Education K-12

Several public schools are located on the Fort Peck Reservation and they include the following: Brockton Public Schools, Frazer Public Schools, Frontier Elementary, Poplar Public Schools, and Wolf Point Public Schools.

Every year during tournament time students honor individuals who have impacted them in their lives.

## Points of Interest

### **Ft. Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Culture Center and Museum, Poplar, Montana, Director: Darrel “Curely” Youpee (406) 768-2328**

Features permanent exhibits of local tribal culture.  
Arts and crafts are for sale.

### **Ft. Peck Community College, Poplar, Montana, President: Haven Gourneau (406) 768-6300**

The Fort Peck Community College consists of two campuses: Poplar site established in 1978 and the Wolf Point campus that opened in fall 2003. FPCC offers many Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees and certificates and also limited Bachelor of Science degrees. The TiToká Tibi-college book store and gift shop displays local artists’ work, including beadwork, hide paintings, sculpture, star quilts, etc., most of which are for sale. The college also has two community wellness centers, one located in Poplar and the other in Wolf Point, and the new James E. Shanley library for student and public use.

### **Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch Director of Fish & Game: Robbie Magnan. (406) 768-5301.**

The Turtle Mound Buffalo Ranch was established by the Fort Peck Tribes in 1999. It currently has two pastures that house the tribes’ business herd and cultural herd. The tribes’ business herd averages 176 bison and is used for business-live sale and buffalo hunts. The cultural herd consists of 187 animals. The tribes set aside 13,000 acres of pastureland for the business herd and 12,000 acres for the cultural bison to roam. In 2012 the Fort Peck Tribes added genetically pure Yellowstone bison to their ranch. The ranch is located 25 miles northwest of Poplar Montana.





# Little Shell Tribe of the Chippewa Indians of Montana

## Location

The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana does not have a reservation in Montana. The office for the Little Shell Tribe is headquartered in its tribally owned commercial building located at 625 Central Ave. West, Suite 100, Great Falls, MT. Members of the Little Shell Tribe live in various part of the United States and Canada, with a strong concentration of members in communities throughout Montana. Because the tribe has not been federally recognized yet, the tribe is without a land base. The Little Shell Tribe is now recognized by the state of Montana; Montana's only state recognized tribe.

The Little Shell Tribe has recently purchased land and a building at 1529 Stuckey Road Great Falls, MT. which has been remodeled and a new addition to the present building. This property is now the Little Shell Tribal Cultural Center. Incidentally, this land is adjoined with the infamous Hill 57.

## Population

The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana is often shortened to "Little Shell." The name "Metis" refers to mixed blood and was first used during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries because of the association with the Europeans. At that time it identified a specific Northwest society with its own culture and economic traditions, living in the areas of the Red River, The Saskatchewan River, Turtle Mountain, North Dakota and the area of Winnipeg and Pembina, North Dakota. A further discussion regarding this group is found in the subsequent section titled Ethnography and Historical Background.



The current population of enrolled tribal members has increased dramatically over the years to 6,400 members. There are thousands of Metis people throughout the United States and south central Canada.

In the mid-1800s, the tribe was numbered at several thousand in the Red River-Pembina region. At that time, there was no formal enrollment procedure, no reservation, and thus no documented population figure. After the 1892 renegotiation of the Treaty of 1863, (the infamous ten cent treaty) many of the Metis, including the Band of Chippewa under Chief Little Shell, were left without a land base or reservation, and many became nomadic.

## Ethnography and Historical Background

The lack of a reservation or land base has been a profound determinant of the fate and destiny of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana, a defining part of their history.

The origins of the Metis date back to the late 17<sup>th</sup> century when the fur trade became a significant commercial endeavor. Before the establishment of the United States/Canada border in 1846, vast regions of the central and western parts of the continent in what are now known as Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and Washington were unsettled and under the chartered use of the Hudson's Bay Company (Rupert's Land). Trapping and harvesting beaver pelts and other furs for return to Europe through eastern markets required the alliance and support of the native inhabitants of the areas west of the Great Lakes. Working for Hudson's Bay Company and the competing North West Company, the trapping and trading was done largely by immigrant Irish, Scotch, and French (voyageurs) who formed liaisons with the northern tribes to trade for goods in exchange for the valuable animal pelts. Marriage "a la facon du pays" (according to local custom) was a basic part of the social interaction and liaison between the voyageurs and the local native inhabitants. Most of these

unions involved Saulteaux (Ojibwa) and Cree women, although there were also many unions with the Chippewa, Blackfeet and Sarcee, the latter two living further west.

Thus, thousands of Metis or “mixed blood” people came to occupy the areas nearest the trading posts along with thousands of Chippewa and Cree. This population increased to many thousands and took root in the region of the Red River in what is now southern Manitoba and northern Minnesota. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, they called themselves “Metifs,” “Bois-Brules,” and “les gens libres” (the free people).

The early generations were of Indian mothers and immigrant European fathers-parents who usually did not even share a common language. The resulting language, called “Mitchif” today by the Little Shell and Turtle Mountain people, was a unique blend of Chippewa native language, French, Cree, and a little English. By 1840, they had become a distinct and independent group, unique in the world with cultural ties to both French voyageurs and other Chippewa bands, but they also identified with their full blood parents’ communities.

They industriously trapped, hunted buffalo, and conducted trading business with the Hudson’s Bay Company, transporting goods from the far west to the trade centers at Fort Benton, Battleford, Red River, Batoche and Pembina. Their numbers grew and the settlements increased in size, containing both full-blooded Chippewa and Metis. Many lived in North West Company camps further west in Montana and southern Alberta. In 1867, New Brunswick, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Ontario merged to form a British Dominion called Canada. In the late 1860s and early 1870s when colonization of Canada continued westward from Quebec, and the Hudson’s Bay Company began to relinquish control of these vast territories, the Red River settlements occupied by the Metis were geographically annexed to Canada, although there was no political alignment to the newly formed dominion of Canada by the Metis people. The Metis and Chippewa people of the Red River Settlements began resisting the colonization of what they perceived as their home territory and attempted to establish a sovereign nation in southern Canada to be known as “Assiniboia.” Louis Riel, their chosen political leader and representative to parliament for purposes of establishing the Metis-Indian nation, was only partly successful. Ultimately, the movement for independence from Canada was denied, and over the next two decades, two military rebellions by Riel and the Metis were put down, the last in 1885. Riel’s military leader, Gabriel Dumont, left for Montana. The execution of Louis Riel for treason marked the end of the Metis-Chippewa Nation as they had conceived of it, and white settlers poured into the region. A reservation in the Turtle Mountain Area had been set aside for the Chippewa and Metis who had taken up permanent residence in what is now North Dakota. The two principal chiefs of the tribe to be known as the Pembina Chippewa were Little Shell and Red Bear. Along with the United States government, these two chiefs were signators to the Treaty of 1863, which established a ten million acre reservation. Many of the Chippewa and Metis engaged in agriculture and ranching on this reservation, while others continued to subsist on buffalo hunting and trading endeavors to the west where they had migrated to insulate themselves from the westward expansion of white settlements, which accelerated after Manitoba was annexed to the Dominion of Canada in 1869.



In a manner similar to what happened on many reservations, white settlers continued to migrate onto the Indian lands on both sides of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel, which had become the United States-Canadian border, and seeing no industry, they erected permanent buildings, businesses, fences, and roads, until the federal government moved to renegotiate the treaty. Chief Little Shell (son of the signator to the 1863 treaty) refused to sign. The new agreement provided approximately a million dollars for the ten million acres of land ceded under the 1892 document, which became known as the “Ten-Cent Treaty” in reference to the ten cents per acre being offered. In

the wake of Little Shell's refusal to sign the Ten-Cent Treaty, and because many of the group were on a prolonged hunting expedition in Montana, tribal members were removed from the reservation list and federal recognition was lost. The resulting reservation was then less than ten percent of its original size.

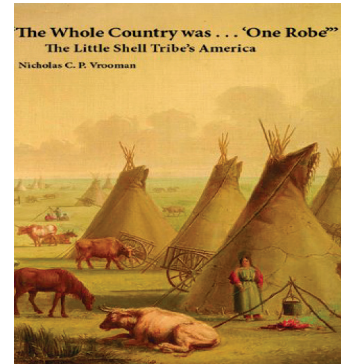
Eighteen Ninety-two was the beginning of the 120-year period of languishing as a tribe without a homeland and with little economic opportunity. Some took refuge in Montana and some migrated west to Alberta in their traditional two-wheel "Red River Carts." Some allied with other tribes, and some joined the Turtle Mountain Chippewa to the south in what is now North Dakota. Many wandered and hunted as a means to avoid drifting into poverty, as white settlers took over their settlements, fields and crops. As the buffalo disappeared, their subsistence and their way of life crumbled. Without federal recognition, they were without legal standing as citizens, without a land on which to live, and unable to qualify as homesteaders. There were instances of the Little Shell Chippewa being rounded up by the United States military and deported to Canada.

Facing starvation, many survived this era by salvaging buffalo bones and skulls from the prairie and selling them at trading posts to be shipped eastward to fertilize rose gardens in the east. Many could not read or write and had no access to education, taking jobs as servants and ranch hands for the very settlers who occupied their former homeland. Some integrated with other Indians on other reservations (French surnames are common on Montana reservations), and some lived in wandering destitution or in hovels on the perimeter of white communities. Many were poverty stricken, and without health care, many died during the harsh northern winters.

But efforts to re-establish their status as federally recognized Indians continued. After the third Chief Little Shell died in 1904, Joseph Dussome became a popular leader among the tribe, dedicating his life to efforts in locating members, enrolling members, meeting with officials in Washington, D.C., and organizing the splintered tribe. In 1927 he was organizing under the name of the "Abandoned Band of Chippewa Indians." In 1934, he incorporated a group known as the "Landless Indians of Montana," and in that same year, under the Indian Reorganization Act, congress offered land for a reservation for the Little Shell Tribe, but President Franklin Roosevelt vetoed the action, based on the tribe's lack of federal recognition. Dussome continued in his efforts to restore hope for the tribe, even as the nation suffered through the Depression. Dussome has come to exemplify hope to the people of the tribe and spirit—that same spirit that has shown itself in the tribe's relentless petitioning of the United States government for recognition—and the hope that one day they will be landless no longer. This hope began to be realized in the year 2000, under provisions of a 1978 program that established criteria under which a tribe may petition the federal government for acknowledgment. Congressional bills have been introduced by Senator Jon Tester of Montana and Congressman Steve Daines of Montana under the "Little Shell Restoration Act of 2013." Both bills are still pending at this time and still waiting for support to pass. Also, B.A.R. (Branch of Acknowledgment and Research) has been instructed to change some of the criteria to meet federal guidelines for recognition. They are to review the negative findings of the Little Shell's petition for federal recognition. Hopes are high among the Little Shell tribal members that they may see federal recognition.

## Government/Education

The little Shell Tribe is governed by an elected Tribal Council, which has maintained its integrity throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We abide by our Tribal constitution. There are seven elected positions to the Little Shell council (3 executive positions, 1 secretary treasurer and 3 council persons). Executive position is a four year term and council members a two year term.



*Used with permission of  
Nicholas Vrooman*

Current duly elected council members are as follows: (Note: These are not compensated for all their hard work and dedication to the cause of the Little Shell Tribe (Federal Recognition)).

Chairman	Gerald Gray Jr.
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman	Clarence Sivertsen
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman	Leona Kienenberger
Sec/Treasurer	Colleen Hill
Councilman	Richard Parenteau  Don Davis Shawn Gilbert

At this time, the Little Shell Tribe participates in several state and federal programs such as the Tobacco Program which is administrated by Little Shell members. We have many programs that are structured for our young members such as the cultural program and the language program.

As a group, which is not federally recognized, the Little Shell do not qualify for any educational or government support services such as housing, medical facilities, or federally funded educational facilities, which are typically provided for tribes recognized by the United States government. The Little Shell Chippewa have obtained such services only through public services available in urban centers.



*Little Shell Tribal Headquarters*

To survive and support their families, Little Shell tribal members had to seek employment and hold down a paying job. We have many talented individuals who are successful both in the private sector and the business sector. Many of our tribal members have attained college degrees without any assistance. Many Little Shell members have served in the armed forces past and present. We are proud of our veterans!

## **Contemporary Issues**

The principal concern of the Tribal Government and most of its members lies in the federal acknowledgment process.

The petition, as it existed in the late 1990s, represented many thousands of hours of work by the tribal government, volunteers, and consultants. This historical document consisted of over 300 pages, according to deceased Tribal Councilman Robert VanGunten, who was the Director of Adult and Continuing Education at the Salish and Kootenai College in Pablo, and there are ten boxes of attachments to the historical document. The current petition consist of slumberous and lengthy reports submitted by the tribe to provide the historical, anthropological, and cultural evidence needed for the Interior Department’s Branch of Acknowledgment and Research (BAR) to review the petition. When BAR responded with a list of deficiencies and omissions, the tribe responded with further research. The supporting evidence of “community,” an important criterion, was strengthened by the report of Dr. Franklin Bunte, deceased and his wife Pam Bunte, also deceased et. al.k, of the Department of Anthropology of California State University, Long Beach, California, a report by Montana sociologist Milton Colvin of the College of Great Falls (1957), and a 1941 report by Stephen Gray, a leader of a factional group known as the “Montana Landless Indians.”

Council Chairman Tim Zimmerman praised tribal leaders such as Van Gunten, former Tribal Chairman John



Gilbert, and others who have worked tirelessly without compensation to keep the petition alive when the announcement came in May 2000. The Native American Rights Fund, and particularly Robert Peregoy, were also instrumental during the 1980s and 1990s as an advocate for the Little Shell Tribe.

Affecting a change in public perceptions of the citizens of Montana about who the Little Shell people are is among the goals of the tribe as recognition is imminent. Economic opportunities, training, and health care will be increasingly available to the tribe and it is important that the citizens of Montana continue to support the efforts of the Little Shell Tribal Council and its members.

## Events of Interest

**Joseph Dussome Day-** An annual gathering of the tribe for cultural renaissance, social activities, election results, announcements, and committee meetings, usually in November.

**Back to Batoche Celebration-** An annual gathering of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa and sister Tribes of Metis in Canada, commemorating the Riel Rebellion, and including cultural activities, dancing, art, and socializing, at Batoche, Sasatchewan.

**Traditional Native American Activities-** Participants are 12 to 18 year olds sponsored by the Little Shell Cultural Committee.



*Little Shell Tribal Cultural Center*

## Resources: More Information about The Little Shell

*The Whole Country was One Robe : The Little Shell Tribes America*, by historian and folklorist Nicholas Vrooman, is an extraordinary account of an extraordinary people. Dr. Vrooman, after a lifetime of engagement with the history of a burgeoning and distinctive aboriginal amalgam culture on the Northern Plains, gives us the untold story of the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana. Available on Amazon.com.

*The Great Falls Tribune*, along with other area newspapers, has carried literally hundreds of stories, both current events and containing significant historical coverage during the period from 1930 to the present. The Tribune has often advocated federal recognition for the Little Shell Chippewa.

*A Brief Historical Overview of the Little Shell Tribe of Pembina Chippewa*, by Deward E. Walker Jr., July 1990- This historical digest may be obtained from the Little Shell Tribal Office in Great Falls.

*The Free People-Otipemisiwak*, by Diane Paulette Payment. This volume contains a detailed and articulate history of the Metifs and includes cultural issues, early photographs, political action descriptions, and other historical data-from a Canadian perspective. May be available on inter-library loan from Canadian affiliates.

*Waiting for a Day that Never Comes*, by Verne Dusenberry, published in “Montana Magazine of Western History.” This article highlights the efforts of Joseph Dussome and features easy reading cultural and historical information. May be available through the Montana Historical Society.

*Buffalo Voices*, compiled and published by Nicholas Churchin Peterson Vrooman. Stories told by Metis and the Little Shell Elders, part of Turtle Island 1492-1992, North Dakota Quarterly Vol 59 No. 4, Fall 1991, Univ.

of North Dakota, Grand Forks. Vrooman also produced a recording (cassette tape) for Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings, entitled *Plains/Chippewa/Metis Music from Turtle Mountain*. The recording includes drumming, Chansons, and 1992 Rock & Roll by Tribal Musicians. It is distributed by Koch Int'l for the Smithsonian and can be ordered from music stores.

*Strange Empire*, by Joseph Kinsey Howard. The definitive but cumbersome history of the Metis, Canadian Metis, Little Shell Tribe, Turtle Mountain, and Pembina and related groups, reprinted in 1994 by Minnesota Historical Society Press with a new introduction by Nicholas Vrooman.

*Medicine Fiddle*, by Michael Loukinen, produced by Northern Michigan University, 1992. This film (videotape) features Metis and Chippewa music, dancing, and spirituality and contains interviews with musicians from several tribes and bands in the Western Great Lakes Red River Area. Available through Up North Films, Northern Michigan University, 331 Thomas, Fine Arts Bldg, Marquette, MI 49855

## Current Address for Little Shell Tribe

### Physical address

Little Shell Tribal Office  
625 Central Ave West Suite 100  
Great Falls, MT 59404  
Phone: 406- 315-2400  
Fax: 406-315-2401  
e-mail: [frontdesk@ltribe.org](mailto:frontdesk@ltribe.org)

### Mailing address

Little Shell Tribal Office  
PO Box 543  
Black Eagle, MT 59414





# Northern Cheyenne Reservation

## NORTHERN CHEYENNE TRIBE

### Northern Cheyenne Reservation

#### Location

The Northern Cheyenne Reservation, situated in southeastern Montana, lies within the counties of Big Horn and Rosebud. The Crow Reservation borders it on the west and the midstream Tongue River on the east. The Northern Cheyenne Reservation consists of ponderosa pine, plateau, and valley country with an annual rainfall of approximately 16 inches. The topography ranges from about 4,800 feet to a low of a little less than 3,000 feet. The Reservation headquarters and the center for business activities and population are in Lame Deer. The reservation itself is divided into five districts; Busby, Lame Deer, Ashland, Birney, and Muddy.

#### Population

Total number of enrolled tribal members approximately is 10,840. Even though there are over 10,000 enrolled members, about 4,939 members live on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation scattered through the five district communities. Relatively small population of non-Indians and other tribal members are also living on the Reservation.



#### Land Status

Total acres within the reservation's boundary	444,774.50 acres
Individually allotted lands	113,277.70 acres
Tribally owned lands	326,546.81 acres
Fee title or state lands	4,827.70 acres

Non-Indians own about 30 percent of the fee or state lands on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The Tribal Council has selected a Land Acquisitions Committee whose primary policy is directed to the purchase of land into tribal ownership. The Committee thus assures that Northern Cheyenne land is retained in Cheyenne ownership.

As of December 2014 under the Northern Cheyenne Land Buy Back Program \$6,850,409.00 has been paid to landowners for fractionated lands, a total of 13,845 equivalent acres purchased. The Northern Cheyenne are one of the few tribes in the United States having virtual complete Indian ownership of their reservation.

A major legislation in December 2014 restored control of 100 percent ownership of mineral rights to the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. In early 1900 when the Northern Cheyenne Reservation was created, an oversight was made by the Federal Government that left 5,000 acres of mineral rights to the railroads. These mineral rights contained some of the richest coal deposits; and for the past twenty years the Northern Cheyenne Tribe has sought a correction to this oversight. Finally on December 12, 2014 the U.S. Senate approved the Historic Public Lands agreement called the Cheyenne Lands Act. This victory has long been coming and Northern Cheyenne Tribe finally has total control of the minerals on the Reservation. In addition to granting the Tribe mineral rights to some 5,000 acres of Reservation sub-surface, the Tribe will receive 40% royalty interest in off-reservation coal that may be developed by Great Northern Properties. The passage of the Cheyenne Lands Act was a major victory and "it is a true expression of sovereignty that will be very important to our economic well-being in the future" stated Councilman Tracy Robinson.

## Historical background

The Cheyenne Indians are part of a linguistic group of the Algonquian language stock. Originally, it is believed that the ancestors of the Cheyenne lived south of the Hudson Bay and James Bay areas and slowly moved west into what is now northwestern Minnesota where the Red River forms a border between Minnesota and the Dakotas. During the late 1600s, they settled among the tribes of the upper Missouri River and began farming rather than subsisting as small game hunters and fishermen. During the early 1700s, they were still primarily farmers growing corn, but they also hunted buffalo. The Cheyenne acquired the horse around 1750, and made the transition from a horticultural existence to a horse culture within a matter of several generations. Hunting buffalo became a way of life as they migrated as far south as Old Mexico and Texas.

The Cheyenne participated in the treaty making in the Friendship Treaty of 1825 near what is now Fort Pierre, South Dakota. A few years later, the larger part of the tribe (now the Southern Cheyenne) moved southward and occupied much of the Arkansas River in Colorado and Kansas. The remainder who became the Northern Cheyenne continued to inhabit the plains from the headwaters of the North Platte up on to the Yellowstone River in Montana. The division of the tribe was recognized by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851.

In the Battle of the Little Bighorn in 1876, the Northern Cheyenne, the Sioux, and Arapahoe joined forces in what the Cheyenne call “where Long Hair was wiped away forever.” Cheyenne oral history recalls a time when Stone Forehead, keeper of the Sacred Arrows, smoked the pipe with George A. Custer. Stone Forehead told Custer that “if you are acting treacherously toward us, sometime you and your whole command will be killed. Custer speaking for the white soldiers promised to keep peace with the People. Stone Forehead dropped the ashes from the pipe on the toes of Custer’s boots. As he did so he declared “Thus will Maheo’o destroy the soldier chief if he ever walks contrary to the peace pipe again.” These ashes were wiped away signaling Custer’s commitment never to fight the Cheyenne again. (People of the Sacred Mountain, pg.707) Although the Cheyenne won the battle Where Long Hair was killed, it was the beginning of the end for them for in 1877 they were exiled to Indian Territory in Oklahoma with the Southern Cheyenne. In September 1878 a small band escaped in a desperate effort led by Chief Dull Knife (Morning Star) and Chief Littlewolf. These two chiefs, in one of the most heroic episodes of western history, bravely fought against overwhelming odds, leading a small band of men, women, and children back to their homelands. The Northern Cheyenne call themselves “the Morning Star people.” The name is taken and used in respect of Chief Dull Knife who was also known as Morning Star.

By Executive Order of November 26, 1884 President Chester A. Arthur created the Tongue River Indian Reservation which consisted of 371,200 acres for the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Within this area the early white homesteaders were allowed to remain. While on the other side of Otter Creek, which is now in the town of Ashland, Montana forty six Northern Cheyenne families had established their home sites under the Homestead Act of March 3, 1875. These Northern Cheyenne families lived off the Reservation and they were not eligible to receive assistance from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Meanwhile within the new Reservation there was extensive conflict between the white settlers, who from the beginning had fought against the establishment of the Reservation. Finally in early 1900 congress settled the land problem and all the white settlers were bought out, while the forty six Northern Cheyenne families on the Otter Creek area were moved onto the west side of the Tongue River at \$25.00 each for their home sites. The midstream of the Tongue River was established as the eastern boundary of the Reservation. On March 19, 1900 the second executive order signed by President William McKinley established the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. This executive order extended the land to its present boundaries.

## Organizational Structure

The Northern Cheyenne Tribe was organized in 1936 under the Indian Reorganization Act. Today, the Tribe is a federally chartered organization with both governmental and corporate responsibilities. The governing body is a tribal council headed by a president (elected at-large) to serve a term of four (4) years. Other members of the Council include the vice- president (elected at-large) and ten (10) council representatives from the five (5) districts on the Reservation and serve four (4) year staggered terms.

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe have been amended and approved by the Secretary of the Interior three times. The latest amended constitution is dated March 27, 1996. This amendment consists of the following: Amendment A, (Governmental Reform), Amendment B (Separation of Powers), and Amendment C (Code of Ethics). The chief judge and associate judge positions are both elected at-large to serve four (4) year terms. Today tribal membership is based on descent and those that are able to provide documentation and lineage to the 1935 census rolls are eligible for enrollment.

## Housing

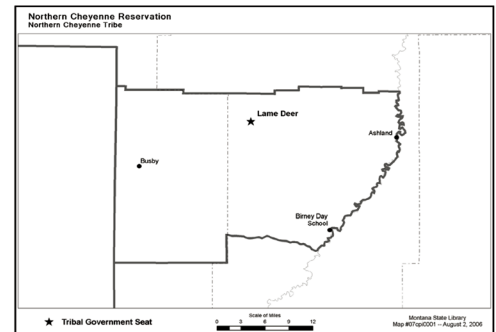
The availability of housing on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation has improved in recent years because of participation in federal housing programs similar to other tribes in Montana. To date, the Northern Cheyenne Tribal Housing Authority (NCTHA) which was under the Department of Housing and Urban Development (DHUD) program has been transformed into the Native American Housing Self-Determination Act (NAHSDA). This Act allows the Northern Cheyenne to become more self-sufficient through block grants from DHUD. There are 525 mutual help homes and 299 low rent homes that have been built since the inception of federal programs on the Reservation. Currently, the NCTHA is looking into tax credit homes and home ownership rather than continuing with mutual and low rent homes. Through NAHSDA, the NCTHA on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation operates on an annual budget of \$3.1 million.

The NCTHA also houses a Senior Citizen's Complex that was built in 1978 with 35 apartments. Currently, the complex has 29 occupants with the majority of them being elders. The other units are for people with disabilities. Several units have been converted as public service offices.

The NCTHA has been exploring the possibility of building log cabins with the use of local timber and labor. There have also been air force housing relocated from the Maelstrom Air Force Base. NCTHA has been active in seeking alternate housing for there are many families still in need of shelter.

## Medical facilities

An Indian Health Service (IHS) clinic was recently built to replace the old clinic lost to fire. The new clinic opened in 1999 and is located in Lame Deer, Montana. The clinic provides medical doctors, dentists, nurses, sanitation personnel, nutritionists, Well Child personnel, and others. It has been modified and expanded to include the mental and physical needs of the Reservation and non-Indian communities. The nearest Indian Health Service hospital is at Crow Agency, 45 miles west of Lame Deer, Montana. The nearest specialized facility, other than the Crow hospital, is at Billings (110 miles from Lame Deer). Other medical facilities not on the Reservation include places such as Colstrip, Hardin, and Forsyth.



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## Education

Northern Cheyenne students are served by six schools: St. Labre Indian School and Ashland Elementary School, both in Ashland; Lame Deer Public Schools, Lame Deer; Northern Cheyenne Tribal School, Busby; Hardin Public Schools, Hardin; and Colstrip Public Schools, Colstrip. Both St. Labre Indian School and Ashland Elementary School border the eastern part of the Reservation approximately 20 miles from Lame Deer. The Northern Cheyenne Tribal School is located 16 miles west of Lame Deer near the western border of the Reservation in the community of Busby. Hardin Public Schools is approximately 55 miles west of Lame Deer. Colstrip Public Schools is located approximately 25 miles north of Lame Deer. All schools that serve the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have buses that run on a daily basis to and from school. Increasingly, culture and language are being emphasized at most schools that serve Reservation students. Chief Dull Knife College (CDKC) serves as the tribal community college on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. The College is named after one of two chiefs instrumental in returning the northern group back to Montana from Oklahoma. The College was originally chartered in September 1975 by Tribal Ordinance as the Northern Cheyenne Indian Action Program Incorporated (IAP). Funding was granted by the Indian Technical Assistance Center of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Today, CDKC is an open-admission, community-based, comprehensive, tribally controlled community college and land grant institution designed to provide quality educational opportunities to Reservation and surrounding communities. CDKC's financial support includes Bureau of Indian Affairs' funds, grants foundations, and partnerships with other institutions.

## Employment and Income

Major employers on the Reservation include St. Labre Indian School, the federal government, tribal government, PP & L (an electrical power producing plant formerly operated by Montana Power Company) of Colstrip, Western Energy Company, and the local and surrounding public schools including CDKC. The branch of Forestry of the Bureau of Indian Affairs is another source of employment, particularly during the fire season. Unemployment fluctuates and is usually anywhere from 60 to 75 percent. On average, Reservation income is at poverty level.

Tribal income or operating funds for the Northern Cheyenne tribal government includes grazing fees, farm and pasture leases, and timber and stumpage fees. The Tribe also operates under federal monies through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The funds are administered through the Tribal Council to provide many services via tribal programs including Tribal Health, Social Services, Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO), Tribal Court, Natural Resources, and others.

## Contemporary Issues

The Northern Cheyenne Reservation has one of the largest coal reserves of any tribe in Indian Country. Deliberations on coal development on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation have been ongoing since the 1960s. In the 1960s sections of land were leased for coal development. At the request of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe these leases were cancelled. In a unanimous decision concerning the Hollowbreast Case, the U.S. Supreme Court on November 19, 1976 ruled that all mineral rights are owned and controlled by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe. Members have definite opinions about coal development. Some see development as the answer to unemployment and creating a stronger economy. Others are concerned about disturbing pristine land that could possibly have cultural and sacred significance. On December 12, 2014 a recent land exchange made right a more than a century old wrong. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe now owns all minerals underlying the Reservation.

Revitalization of the Northern Cheyenne language has been ongoing for many years. An important relationship exists between language and culture. Culture is expressed in language. Richard Little Bear, President of Chief Dull Knife College, said that "language is the basis of sovereignty as well as the vessel of culture. During the

nineteenth century,” said Little Bear, “the United States showed its respect for Native American languages’ essential role in culture by trying to eliminate them. We have all those attributes that comprise sovereign nations: a governance structure, law and order, jurisprudence, a literature, a land base, spiritual and sacred practice and that one attribute that holds all of these together is our language. So once our languages disappear, each one of these attributes begins to fall apart until they are all gone. Those in my generation who speak the Cheyenne language are quite possibly the last generation able to joke in our own language.” Take language away and salutations, songs, prayers, humor, proverbs, literature, and laws are all lost.

Language immersion camps for children and adults have been initiated through Chief Dull Knife College. Chief Dull Knife College has a daycare on campus to assist students, staff, and faculty that have small children. The daycare staff and Administration of Native American (ANA) funded staff offers Cheyenne language classes to the children and their parents. Cheyenne language classes are also taught in the local elementaries, high schools, and college.

Class 7 gives each language group in the state of Montana the opportunity to test and certify its own language and culture instructors. The Montana Office of Public Instruction issues the license. Class 7 certified and licensed instructors have all the rights and responsibilities of the other seven classes of teachers. There are eight classes of teachers who can be licensed and certified in Montana.

The Cheyenne language is in danger of vanishing. This might be the last time that Cheyennes have the opportunity to save our language. They must learn from successful language preservation methods. The Cheyenne is a community of cultural communication. In an informal 2013 survey approximately 500 first speakers of the Cheyenne language were still living. Of that number, between November 2013 to November 2014, approximately 96 Northern Cheyenne people died. Of that 96, approximately 24 were people who spoke the Cheyenne language as their first language. This shows graphically the attrition of the Cheyenne language in a natural basis.

Every year American Indian youth pay homage to their Cheyenne ancestors by participating in a spiritual run. On January 9, 1879 Cheyennes were being held captive at Fort Robinson, Nebraska. That winter, troops locked the Cheyenne in the barracks without food, water or heat. After five days, the Cheyennes fled the barracks. Most of the band was killed within minutes, but many survived. Chief Dull Knife and a small band survived and embarked on a long, rigorous journey to the north. The long trek back to the north is commemorated today by remembering the ultimate sacrifice of our ancestor’s lives in exchange for our homelands in Montana. Today the 400 mile spiritual run begins at Fort Robinson, Nebraska and continues until the runners reach Busby, Montana. Running through winter storms and below freezing conditions much like their ancestors did in 1879.

In September 2013, the Northern Cheyenne Tribe made a land purchase adjacent to Bear Butte State Park, South Dakota. The property was called “Free Spirit Campground.” Bear Butte is a uniquely solitary mountain on the edge of the Black Hills that many Plains Tribes regard as a sacred site. The Cheyenne have a strong relationship to Bear Butte. It is the place of origin for their nation through the Sacred Arrows Covenant, which established their government, military systems, and code of conduct. Bear Butte, known as Noavose by the Cheyenne, has been a major concern over the past few years. Recently, the area has experienced disturbances to the area because of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally that brings thousands of visitors to the area every summer. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe is concerned for the cultural preservation of the region. This is a sacred area where people come for prayer and ceremony. Now the Northern Cheyenne have another sanctuary for spirituality. The Northern Cheyenne Tribe intends to begin the process to have the land put into trust so that it will be better protected against inappropriate use.



In 1906, the Northern Cheyenne Reservation was bombarded with heavy rains for several weeks. Then violent winds followed uprooting thousands of trees. More than one million board feet of timber lay upon the ground, according to Superintendent John R. Eddy. Superintendent Eddy thought the wind-blown timber should be cut to avoid deterioration. These events led to the early stages of the timber industry on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. Sawmills were purchased and agreements were made with the Forest Service. Sawmills were originally constructed to manage wind-blown trees and later in 1911 for the beetle infested pines.

The mill in Ashland, Montana was acquired by the Northern Cheyenne Tribe in the 1980s. However, sharply declining timber markets resulted in closure. In 2012 Ash Creek fires in the Ashland area spurred interest in salvaging timber left from the fires. In May 2014 the Cheyenne Tribal authorities negotiated a lease on the mill to harvest and utilize timber salvaged from the Ash Creek fires. Negotiations were made with Fox Lumber. The reopening of the mill will be a boost to the economy in the area. The mill will hire approximately 15 full-time employees earning from \$10-\$15 an hour. Back in 1909 Northern Cheyenne loggers earned approximately \$2.00 a day.



## Recreation

The Northern Cheyenne Reservation and its surrounding area offer a variety of activities. There are a number of fishing and camping areas. Non-Indians can purchase permits that allow fishing in all ponds and streams.

## Points Of Interest

- **Head Chief/Young Mule Monument**  
On September 2, 1890 two Northern Cheyenne youth rode to their death after shooting a white settler's cow. The people were starving. The Calvary hunted the boys down. They chose death rather than being arrested and hanged.
- **Two Moons Monument at Busby**  
This historic monument was built in 1936 in memory of Chief Two Moons, who was a participant in the Battle of the Little Big Horn.
- **WHITE BULL (ICE) MONUMENT**  
Located across from the Two Moons monument, this monument was recently established to honor one of the great medicine men of the Tribe. White Bull performed a miracle at this site in 1867.
- **Crazy head Springs Camp Area**  
Located between Lame Deer and Ashland on U.S. Highway 212, the area is used for swimming, fishing, and camping.
- **Chief Dull Knife College**, Lame Deer, Montana, (406) 477-6215 The first academic courses were offered in the winter of 1978. Chief Dull Knife College is one of 36 tribal colleges in the United States. The curriculum has expanded to provide the Northern Cheyenne people and their neighbors with access to a variety of programs leading to the degrees of Associate of Arts, Associate of Applied Science, and Certificates in several skill areas.

- **St. Labre Indian School**, Ashland, Montana

Established in 1884 by the Franciscan Order; the visitors' center, museum, and gallery are important showplaces of Cheyenne heritage and art.

- **Deer Medicine Rocks**

The site is located five miles north of Lame Deer, Montana and off the Reservation. On June 11, 2012 this site was dedicated as a National Historic Landmark. According to stories told it was at this site where Sitting Bull, Lakota chief, pledged 100 pieces of his flesh in the Sundance. During his quest he had a vision of soldiers and some Indians on horseback coming down like grasshoppers, with their heads down and their hats falling off. They were falling right into camp. The warriors knew it meant those white men would be killed. Sitting Bull's vision of the upside down soldiers was carved into the rocks.

- **Rosebud Battlefield**

A National Historic Landmark and it is a site of the battle between the Cheyenne and Sioux against General Crook's cavalry. This site is off the Reservation and is located off Highway 314 eleven miles south of Kirby, Montana.



*Charging Horse Hill, site where the youth rode to their death.*

## Annual Events

- White River Days, June 18 to coincide with the anniversary of the Rosebud Battle or Battle of Where Girl Saved her Brother.
- 4th of July Pow Wow, Lame Deer, Montana
- Labor Day Pow Wow Ashland
- Memorial Day Pow Wow and Rodeo, Lame Deer, Montana
- Veteran's Day Pow Wow, Birney, Montana

For more information about the Northern Cheyenne Reservation, contact: Northern Cheyenne Tribe, (406) 477-6285 or Chief Dull Knife College, (406) 477-6215.

## Resources for more information on the Northern Cheyenne

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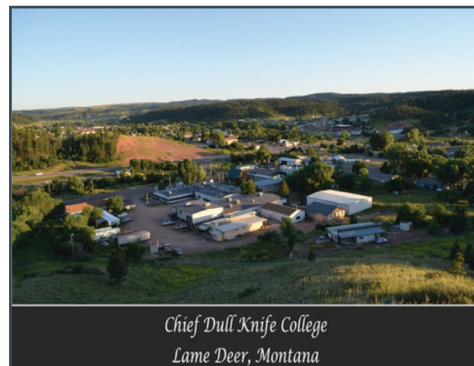
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# Rocky Boy's Reservation

## Location

The Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation is located in north central Montana, taking in portions of both Hill and Chouteau counties. The reservation lies 90 miles south of the United States-Canadian border near the boundary separating the provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. The city of Havre (pop. 12,000) is located 26 miles to the north. U.S. Highway 87 between Havre and Great Falls intersects the reservation at Box Elder. Reservation roads total 216 miles with 62 providing well-paved, easy access to major points throughout the reservation. Airport facilities in Havre and Great Falls provide commercial airline services. Rail service, including Amtrak, is available in Havre on the main east/west line of the Burlington Northern Railroad; a south spur adjoins the reservation.

Mt. Baldy, Mt. Centennial and Haystack Mountain are the more prominent landmarks found within the boundaries of the reservation. All three maintain significance in one way or another for the Chippewa Cree. East Fork, and Bonneau Dams are also popular recreational areas.

There is no town site on the reservation. The community of Rocky Boy is truly rural in every sense of the word. Rocky Boy's Agency is the hub of all reservation activity and serves as headquarters for the Chippewa Cree Tribe. The Rocky Boy's Reservation is the smallest reservation in the state of Montana and the last to be established.



## Population

The reservation's unusual name comes from the leader of a band of Chippewa Indians. Translated from the Chippewa language it means Stone Child, but the original translation was lost and the name Rocky Boy evolved. The reservation was established by Executive Order in April 1916, when Congress set aside 56,035 acres for the Chippewa and Cree Bands of Chief Rocky Boy. In 1947 the reservation was expanded by 45,523 acres, bringing it to nearly its current size. None of the land has been allotted, though some individual assignments have been made.

The ethnic origin of the residents of the Rocky Boy's Reservation has remained complex, with the reservation becoming home to a diverse group of Cree, Chippewa, Metis, and Assiniboine peoples. The Cree represent one of the largest Native American groups in North America. While primarily residing in Canada today, a group of Cree settled in northern Montana after the Riel Rebellion in 1885. Led by Little Bear, these Cree eventually, after some three decades, became associated with a band of landless Chippewa under the leadership of Stone Child or Rocky Boy.

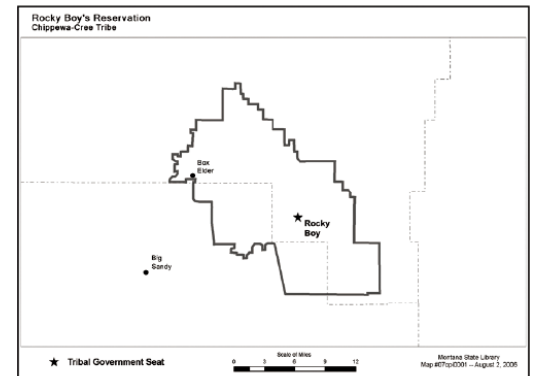
The principal use of lands within the reservation is grazing and dryland farming. There is no substantial industry with the exception of a few small family-owned businesses. Although the reservation is isolated from larger metropolitan areas, community residents are avid participants in church, community, and school related activities, such as basketball games. This extreme isolation also accounts for the rich cultural heritage continuing on the Rocky Boy's Reservation.

## Land

Rocky Boy's Reservation was established by Executive Order in 1916. Along with the passage of the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act, the Chippewa Cree Tribe had the opportunity to acquire the remaining land base, which consisted of area farm operations that had been abandoned during the depression era, thereby bringing the reservation land base to the current 122,259 surface acres.

Rocky Boy's Reservation is unallotted and is held in trust for the entire tribe. The reservation's resource base consists of farm and range lands, minerals, timber stands, and the Bear Paw mountains which sustain wild game, fish, waterfowl, and springs and creeks that converge to form seven major drainages.

The reservation has three distinct topographic zones including the Bear Paw Mountains in the southeastern portion, central rolling foothills, and semi-arid plains in the north. The reservation is also split by Hill County covering the northeast and Choteau County covering the southwest portion of the reservation. Reservation topography is dissected, showing glacial plains and volcanic outcroppings. Small perennial streams arise in the Bear Paw Mountains, cutting steep sloped valleys. Elevation on the reservation ranges from 2,500 on the plains to 6,916 feet on top of Baldy Mountain. The average annual precipitation ranges from ten inches at the lower elevations to 20 plus inches at the higher elevations. Temperature extremes are commonly from 110 degrees to -35 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are long and cold and the roads are narrow and treacherous, particularly in the winter months.



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## Historical Background

Chippewa lived in bands on both sides of what now divides their aboriginal homelands, the Canadian border and the Great Lakes region. The Cree territory extended from eastern Canada into the Saskatchewan and Alberta provinces. The Tribes began their migrations in the 1700s and 1800s and by the early 1890s had united in a search for a permanent home - a place where children could be brought up in peace, where their religion would be uninterrupted and flourish.

Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation was named after Ah-se-ne-win, or Chief Stone Man; "Rocky Boy" evolved from the non-Indian misinterpretation. The reservation was established through the persistent efforts of Chief Rocky Boy (Chippewa) and Chief Little Bear (Cree). The two chiefs and their followers, numbering 450 at the time, had sought refuge in sizable Montana towns, cities, and even other Montana Indian reservations including the Blackfeet, Flathead, and Fort Belknap Reservations.

Three non-Indians were instrumental in assisting Chief Rocky Boy's and Little Bear's efforts: William Bole, editor of the Great Falls Tribune, Frank Linderman, and Charles Gibson, son of Montana Sen. Paris Gibson. Gibson also applied much political pressure in both Montana and Washington, D.C., and gained supporters for the establishment of a reservation on the Fort Assiniboine lands for Rocky Boy and Little Bear.

The first years on the reservation were difficult ones. There were few jobs and many people had to go off the reservation to find work. Those who stayed tried to garden, hunt, pick rock, and collect bones, wool, tin, and other metals.

The population of the Rocky Boy's Reservation is about 5,000 with 3,750 of the residents being enrolled members of the Chippewa Cree Tribe. By the year 2045, the reservation population is expected to reach 16,000 people. The birth rate for the community is three times that of the national average and over 60 percent of the tribal membership is under 25 years of age. The reservation resident population is comprised from approximately 450 families. There are 675 homes located in 11 low-income clustered housing sites and scattered housing sites throughout the 81,000 acres in the lower reservation elevations.

## Government

The Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation was organized in accordance with the Indian Reorganization Act of June 18, 1934 (34 Stat. P. 984) as amended by the Act of June 15, 1935 (74th Congress, Pub. No. 147). The governing document is the Constitution and Bylaws of the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation, Montana, which was signed in 1935 and amended in 1973; the Charter was ratified in 1936. The Chippewa Cree governing body is the Tribal Business Committee comprised of a Chairman, Vice Chairman, and seven members who are elected at large by the tribal membership and serve four year staggered terms.

The Tribe entered into a Bureau of Indian Affairs Self-Governance Compact Agreement with the U.S. Department of the Interior in October 1993 and assumed all the functions, services, and activities that were previously a governmental function at the Rocky Boy's Bureau of Indian Affairs agency. The mission of the Chippewa Cree Tribe is to conduct all business in the best interest and understanding of the tribal members.

Tribal Business Committee members serve on 18 subcommittees that have direct oversight and decision-making authority for tribal departments and programs. The subcommittees include: Administration, Stone Child College, Water Resources, Health Board, Gaming, Housing, Social Services, Senior Citizens, Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance, Enrollment, Housing Improvement Program, Development Company, Imasees Land and Cattle, Self-Governance, Public Works, Public Safety & Law & Order, Risk Management, and Natural Resources.

In accordance with Ordinance No. 1-77, applications for new enrollment are presented with supporting documents and the necessary proof of tribal enrollment. The tribal Enrollment Committee then reviews applicants fulfilling the requirement of one-fourth Chippewa-Cree blood. Enrollment meetings are held throughout the year to review and approve any and all applications.

## Education

The first school on Rocky Boy's Reservation was a small log building built by members of the local community in 1918. The school and teacher were provided by funds from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Children on the reservation were educated through the sixth grade. In 1926, the Rocky Boy school system expanded with the addition of a two-story brick school. Eventually the school system included four elementary schools across the reservation: Haystack, Parker, Sangrey, and the Agency school. The Indian Affairs Administration controlled all of the schools.

In June 1960, a new school opened near the agency. The new school was constructed under the jurisdiction of the Havre school board and designed for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. If they wished to continue



school beyond the 6th grade, the students were sent to Havre, Box Elder, BIA, or parochial boarding schools far from the reservation in South Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Kansas. In February 1970, a petition signed by 163 Chippewa-Cree to the Hill County Superintendent requested the creation of a new elementary school district for Rocky Boy's Reservation. In less than a month, a separate school district was approved for Rocky Boy's Reservation. Rocky Boy Elementary School became the second Indian-controlled school in the nation and the first in Montana.

Transporting school children from the many homes requires an extensive busing system. The total number of students in grades K-12 is 550. In addition, at least 200 attend off-reservation schools either in nearby Havre or Box Elder. The Rocky Boy's educational system is located in the Agency proper and includes Head Start, Kindergarten, Junior and Senior High School, and Stone Child College. Box Elder School, whose enrollment is nearly all Indian, is located 14 miles to the west of the Agency in the unincorporated town of Box Elder.

The Chippewa-Cree Business Committee chartered Stone Child College (SCC) on May 17, 1984. Operating as a satellite site for Dull Knife Community College and Salish-Kootenai College for many years thereafter, SCC finally was on its own in 1989. Stone Child College coordinates and regulates all higher education on Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation. SCC is authorized to develop and operate programs granting degrees and certificates and/or enters into agreements with public or private agencies to offer postsecondary education on the Rocky Boy Reservation. Degree programs are offered in the areas of: Associate of Arts, General Studies/Liberal Arts Option, Human Services Associate of Applied Science, Secretarial Science, Computer Science, Business Certification of Completion, and Building Trades. Construction of a new college campus in the Bonneau Area is a possibility, considering potential funding.

The accomplishments of all reservation educational institutions are critical in meeting a tremendous need for training to prepare our tribal members for employment to benefit the reservation and the membership.

## **Economics**

Although substantial advances have been made in the area of education, Rocky Boy's Reservation continues to encounter economic distressed conditions. Unemployment averages 70 percent during the winter months when household expenses are the greatest. Virtually all available jobs are government related with most of the income generated at Rocky Boy's derived from federal government sources. This income is then spent in Havre, with little evidence of the recirculation of reservation dollars. The reservation's isolation and distance from major highways impedes gain from the state's tourism industry. The beauty of the reservation, while offering spiritual sustenance to the Chippewa Cree, goes unnoticed by the mainstream.

Major employers include the Chippewa-Cree Health Board, the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Office, Rocky Boy Schools, Stone Child College, and Box Elder Schools. In 1998, there were a total of 31 small businesses with active files at the Tribal Employment Rights Organization (TERO) office on Rocky Boy's Reservation. The Chippewa-Cree Tribe operates the 4C's Casino, Chippewa-Cree Meats, and a propane delivery service. Through the passage of tribal Ordinance No.1-91, the Chippewa-Cree Tribal Business Committee adopted the Enterprise Zone Act of 1991. The purpose of this act is to create employment and business growth on the Rocky Boy's Reservation. Through this Act, the tribal government is able to offer very flexible economic incentive packages to new businesses and industries that would like to locate on the Rocky Boy's Reservation.

The passage of the Self-Governance Act by Congress in 1994 empowered the Rocky Boy's Business Committee to place funds where they are most needed and increased the financial ability of the committee to deal with the



increase in population. Rocky Boy's negotiates yearly for a financial lump sum from the government that it is free to use as the business committee sees fit to meet the needs of the people.

Prior to the passage of the Self-Governance Act by Congress, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Indian Health Services controlled the availability of service to Rocky Boy community members. The two agencies employed a total of about 120 government employees with 85 percent of all the money appropriated went to pay the salaries of the government employees. Only 15 percent of the funds were available for roads, forestry projects, or health services, or other reservation needs.

Rocky Boy's now employs about 210 people in Health Services instead of the 60 the government used to employ and about 160 in other areas of the reservation. This allows the reservation to decide what and how many health services will be offered with the capacity to offer treatments such as acupuncture and traditional Indian medicine.

## Contemporary Issues

In the summer of 1998, Rocky Boy community programs and organizations met to discuss the current status of the tribe and the needs to be faced in the new millennium. Through a process of group discussion and data collection, the following issues were determined to be of greatest importance.



- Elders and Cultural Preservation
- Cultural Preservation Office
- Enforcement of codes and the Constitution
- Memorandum of Understanding between departments
- Self-sufficiency
- Tribal sovereignty
- Representation on county government and appropriate committees
- Trust land
- Code revision
- Financial management relevant to fees, leases, and loans
- Sacred site protection and the development of relevant tribal ordinances

## Recreation

Many recreation areas are accessible on and near the reservation. Winter skiers are within a half-hour drive to the Bear Paw Ski Bowl on the Rocky Boy's Reservation. Camping is permitted on Beaver Creek, at the base of the scenic Bear Paw Mountains. Beaver Creek Park, a 10,000-acre strip of the Bear Paw Mountains, is the largest county park in the nation. Camping, fishing, swimming, and canoeing are enjoyed spring through fall. The Natural Resources Department has made considerable strides in promoting tourism through the development of campsites. These campsites are scattered throughout the accessible areas beginning near Mt. Baldy and continuing through the Mt. Centennial area.

## Points of Interest

Major points of interest for outsiders include Chief Rocky Boy's gravesite, Mt. Baldy, Chief Kennawash's oratory hillside, the Bear Paw Ski Bowl, ceremonial grounds located three miles north of the Agency, Stone Child College, Rocky Boy Schools, and Box Elder Schools.

## Calendar of Events

The more notable public events on Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation are the Annual Chippewa-Cree Pow Wow held during the first weekend in August, community-wide Native American Week events held during the fourth week in September, and the Christmas Pow Wow held during the Christmas season at the Stone Child College gym. The community prides itself in its respect of traditional ceremonies and thus limits the information related to their occurrence.

## Chippewa-Cree Resources

The Rocky Boy Internet Co-Op E-Mail Addresses

<http://www.cct.rockyboy.org/email.html>

Rocky Boy Indian Reservation—Montana Online Highways

<http://www.lewisclark.org/r/rocboyir.htm>

HighWired.com: ROCKY BOY JR/SR HIGH SCHOOL

<http://highwired.com/School/0%2C2067%2C24171%2C00.html>

Rocky Boy School District 87-J Information

<http://www.nmp.umt.edu/netday/schools/rockyBoyDistrict.htm>

Geochemical, Rocky Boy's Indian Reservation, Montana

<http://snake1.cr.usgs.gov/demr/niemr/geochem/text/rockyboy.htm>

H.R. 3658—Settlement of the water rights claims of Rocky Boy's Reservation

[http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/resources/hii51141.000/hii51141\\_0.htm](http://commdocs.house.gov/committees/resources/hii51141.000/hii51141_0.htm)

The Rocky Boy Area

<http://www.rbclinic.rockyboy.org/rbarea.html>

2000 Rocky Boy's Pow Wow—Havre Daily News

<http://www.havredailynews.com/powwow/powwow.html>

Stone Child College

<http://www.montana.edu/~wwwai/scc.html>

Boys & Girls Club of the Bear Paws—Rocky Boy Reservation History

<http://www.bearspaw.org/rbhist.html>

Chippewa-Cree Health Center Home Page

<http://www.rbclinic.rockyboy.org/>



## Montana Urban Indians

The following section addresses the subject of Montana Urban Indians. It must be understood that this is as complex as any area dealing with Montana Native people. The information stated is not all-inclusive, for the individual history and circumstances of Montana Urban Indian people are as diverse as the people themselves (Essential Understanding #2). However, some commonalities do emerge, which include and transcend individual tribal affiliation.

### Definition

*“... ‘Urban’ is not a kind of Indian. It is an experience, one that most Indian people today have had.”*  
(National Urban Indian Family Coalition)

The term Urban Indian is sometimes confusing and complex, even among Indian people themselves. Because of the divisions and disenfranchisement, Indian people in Montana have been split into many communities, social structures, cultural groups, and economic strata. This has resulted in reservation and off-reservation Indians, enrolled and non-enrolled Indians, treaty and non-treaty Indians, Indian reservations and Indian country, trust and non-trust lands, etc. This condition has sometimes caused strained relationships between the various groups and has led to confusion for young people.

There is no one definition of an “urban Indian.” The National Urban Indian Family Coalition, an organization based out of Seattle, WA, uses the following definition, “individuals of American Indian and Alaska Native ancestry who may or may not have direct and/or active ties with a particular tribe, but who identify with and are at least somewhat active in the Native community in their urban area.”

A 2006 publication by the Montana Indian Education Association called, *Fast Facts about Montana Tribal Governments* includes the following information that pertains to Urban Indians.

**Are there any Indian people in Montana who live off the reservations?** Yes. According to the 2000 Census, there are 56,068 American Indians living in Montana. Of this number, about 35% live off of a reservation. This percentage has held fairly steady for the last 20 years. This percentage includes the members of the Little Shell Tribe because the Tribe does not have a reservation. It also includes American Indians who are enrolled members of tribes outside of Montana. Tribal enrollment offices for Montana tribes estimated that in 2006 anywhere from 30% to 50% of their enrolled tribal members lived off of their home reservation.

**Do Indian people who live off of their home reservations in Montana lose their tribal membership and benefits?** No. Tribal members who live off of their home reservations do not lose tribal membership and benefits. However, to access those benefits (e.g. health care) or to exercise their membership rights (e.g. voting in tribal elections), they may have to return to their home reservations. There may be some benefits, such as higher education scholarships, that they are eligible for without returning to the reservation. Tribal services and benefits for off-reservation members will vary from tribe to tribe.

### Historical Background

It should be noted that many American Indians have lived in urban areas for thousands of years. A few notable examples include the MesoAmerica city of Tenochtitlan (an estimated population of 200,000) and Cahokia (an estimated population of 40,000) which was located near present day St. Louis.

Most of the contemporary urban Indian populations were created after World War II, when the federal government embarked on a policy to terminate federal recognition and services to reservations. This resulted in terrible economic conditions and high unemployment in these rural areas. Many Indian people were forced to leave the reservation because of the tremendously high level of unemployment and little chance to provide for their families. During World War II 44,000 Indians served in the military, and another 40,000 left reservations to work on farms and in factories.

Native American's service during World War II prompted the Bureau of Indian Affairs to decide that Indians were ready for assimilation. Later, during the late 1940s and 1950s, the government followed their termination policy with the disastrous Relocation Program. This policy moved several hundred thousand Indian people from the reservations to the cities, hoping to provide them with training that would ensure they would seek a better life, and therefore abrogating the government's responsibility to uphold promises made in treaties. However, the policy did not work for all participants, and many returned to the reservations with little or no skills for off-reservation employment and more disillusioned about government programs. However, large populations of Indian people left the reservations to find employment in large cities such as Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, Denver, and Minneapolis.

Many Indian people who remained in the cities did not fare any better than those remaining on the reservations. They ended up with poor health and inadequate housing and were unemployed and surrounded by prejudice or discrimination. Most of the support promised by the government failed to materialize, and, in many cases, Indian people were left to survive on their own. Contrary to government intentions, many urban Indians maintained their cultural identity and beliefs but lacked strong community or tribal support. However, much of their ties to tribal identity and cultural practices were either isolated or fragmented. Many of the people who migrated to the cities became assimilated into the mainstream culture. It is unsure just how many, or to what degree, the assimilation process affected the urban Native population.

A 1996 publication, *Native America in the Twentieth Century: An Encyclopedia*, noted that Urban Indians fall into three broad categories:

- (1) those who live in urban areas, but remain oriented to their reservation, and who may move back and forth between the reservation and the city;
- (2) skilled laborers who move to the city, but live generally on the "fringes" of the city and city life;
- and (3) "middle class" American Indians who typically live in predominately white neighborhoods, but may also participate in American Indian cultural and political activities.

In more recent times, Indian people continue to leave the reservations for many reasons; employment and educational opportunities, professional access, inter-marriage, etc. They may leave for a period of time and return to the reservation or decide not to return.

## **Montana Context**

Even though Indian people are concentrated on the seven reservations and in the larger cities of Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula, they are also scattered over the state of Montana, probably in every county, city, and town. Smaller, off-reservation towns with significant Indian populations include Augusta, Chinook, Choteau, Cut Bank, Hardin, Havre, and Lewistown.

A large percentage of Indian people living in the larger Montana communities have ties to the Little Shell or Metis. However, off-reservation Indians represent a considerable mixture of tribes from throughout the United States. The Population Division of the U.S. Census Bureau reported in 1990 that there were over 275 Indian tribes represented in the state of Montana.

## Current Population Statistics

According to the 2010 Census, 5.2 million people in the United States identified as American Indian or Alaska Native, either alone or in combination with one or more other races. Out of this total, 2.9 million people identified as American Indian or Alaska Native alone, and 2.3 million people reported being American Indian or Alaska Native in combination with one or more other races.

Among places of 100,000 or more population in 2010, Anchorage, Alaska, had the greatest proportion (12 percent) of American Indians or Alaska Natives alone or in combination with one or more races. Other places with large proportions of American Indians or Alaska Natives alone or in combination were Tulsa, Oklahoma (9 percent); Norman, Oklahoma (8 percent); Oklahoma City, Oklahoma (6 percent); and Billings, Montana (6 percent). Nationwide, Billings has the fifth highest percentage of Indian population in an urban area.

Census data consistently shows the majority of the American Indian or Alaska Native population live outside of American Indian or Alaska Native areas. In 2010, 78 percent of the American Indian or Alaska Native alone-or-in-combination population lived outside of American Indian or Alaska Native areas. This compares with 67 percent of the American Indian or Alaska Native alone population.

Current statistics for Montana indicate that 47 percent of American Indians live off the reservation. For the 2010 Census, the total reported population of Montana was 989,415. Of this population, 78,601 residents identified as American Indian/Alaskan Native alone or in combination with other races. Of these, 62,555 residents identified as only American Indian/Alaskan Native. Of the 78,601 state resident population in 2010 who identified as American Indian/Alaska Native alone or in combination, 41,140 individuals lived within a reservation or trust land on April 1, 2010; leaving a total of 37,461 who resided off-reservation.

## Organizational Structure

American Indians may lose access to many of the federal services and tribal privileges (i.e. health care and voting in tribal elections) when they leave the reservation, and there is no official government or organizational structure on a statewide basis for Urban Indians. There are local committees and organizations whose functions are to provide a forum for economic, social, medical, and cultural concerns. Many off-reservation and urban schools have Title VII Indian Education Programs, which may be the center of cultural activities, projects, and programs for the Native populations. They may be the lone central organization available to promote and carry on Indian culture in the schools, as well as the community.

## Medical Facilities

Although about half of Montana Indians live off the reservation, a very small amount of the IHS budget goes to urban clinics. Some urban communities have Indian Health Service facilities that provide for minor medical care and referrals to regular hospitals and clinics. The Billings Area Indian Health Service contracts five non-profit corporations to provide a variety of levels of health care services to Indians living in the Billings, Butte, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula urban areas. Among the services provided by the urban programs are limited primary medical care, in addition to outreach referral, health education, limited health care, and substance abuse counseling. The transportation component also transports patients from urban areas that are within a day's travel to reservation-based health programs.

Current contact information for the urban centers and urban health clinics along with descriptions of their services is provided below.

## **BILLINGS**

Indian Health Board of Billings  
Substance Abuse Program  
1127 Alderson Avenue  
Billings MT 59102  
Phone: (406) 245-7318

The mission of the Indian Health Board of Billings is to empower the urban Indian/Alaska Native community by providing comprehensive, low or no cost medical services; substance abuse counseling, referrals, and treatment; preventative services; youth programs; and community based recreational and cultural programs.

## **BUTTE**

*North American Indian Alliance (Butte)*  
55 East Galena  
Butte, MT 59701  
Phone: (406) 782-0461  
Email: [meaglefeathers@naia-butte.org](mailto:meaglefeathers@naia-butte.org)

The North American Indian Alliance (NAIA) is committed to protect and perpetuate the health and welfare of all eligible Native Americans residing in an urban setting.

## **GREAT FALLS**

*Indian Family Health Clinic*  
1220 Central Avenue, Suite 2B  
Great Falls, MT 59401  
Phone: (406) 268-1510

The Indian Family Health Clinic provides high-quality and comprehensive health care services to support and strengthen individual, family, and community health.

## **HELENA**

*Helena Indian Alliance*  
301 Euclid Avenue  
Helena, MT 59601  
Phone: (406) 442-9244

The Helena Indian Alliance develops, implements, and maintains cultural, social, and economic programs for families, seniors, and youth. The HIA contracts with the Indian Health Service to operate the Leo Pocha Memorial Clinic, to give service for the physical, diabetic, and behavioral health of the Helena-area Indian population.

## **MISSOULA**

*Missoula Indian Center*  
Building 33, Fort Missoula Road  
Missoula, MT 59804  
Phone: (406) 829-9515

The Missoula Indian Center promotes and fosters the health, education, and general welfare of urban Native Americans in and around Missoula.

## **OTHER ORGANIZATIONS:**

### *National Council on Urban Indian Health*

The National Council on Urban Indian Health, a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization based in Seattle, Washington, supports and develops quality accessible healthcare programs for all American Indians and Alaska Natives living in urban communities through advocacy, training, education, and leadership development.

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