

# 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 *Stq̓etk<sup>m</sup>msč̓int*, 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 Tuṅáḡn 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 Tuṅáḡn 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 Sḡeʔi, 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>etłłcín (Many Horses or Victor) of the Salish, Tmłłcín (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*