



Preserving the Sacredness of the Badger-Two Medicine

By Shane Doyle, EdD

Hello Montana students!

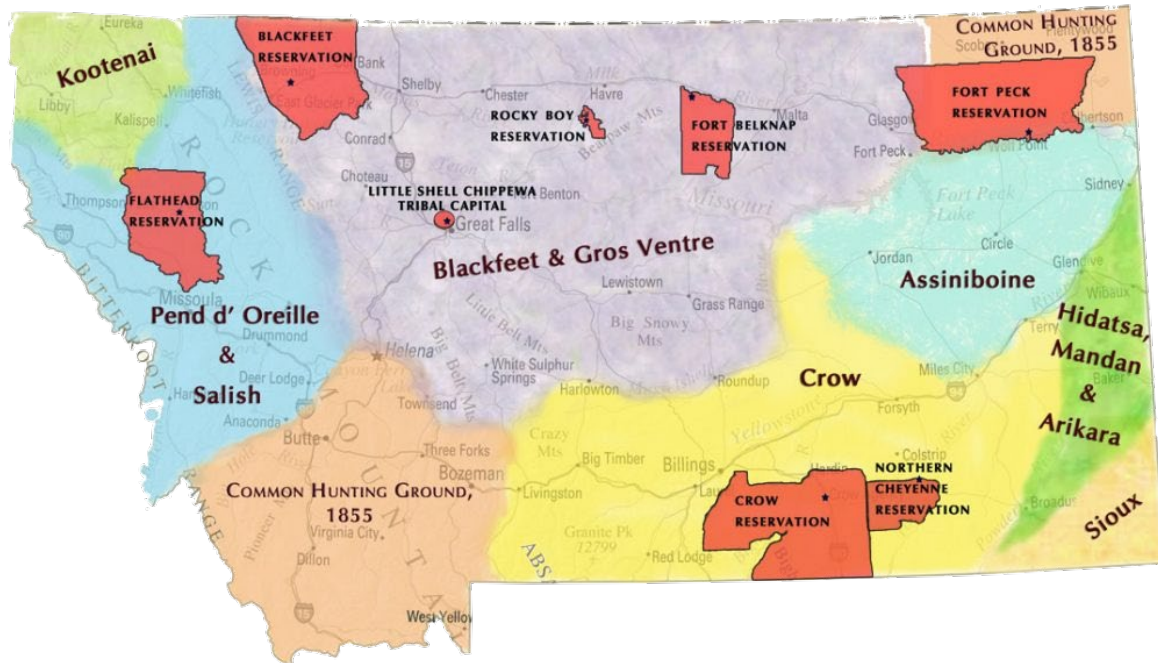
Oki! This is a Blackfeet greeting pronounced “Oh-Kee,” and it means hello! I am excited you have chosen to learn about the Native American people of Montana, and I have created this lesson especially for you to learn about some of the most interesting and important aspects of Indigenous culture and history. This lesson is designed to help you understand a little more about the remarkable ceremonial and legal history of the Badger-Two Medicine region and the Blackfeet Nation.

The Blackfeet people have been in Montana for many thousands of years, and their culture is very ceremonial in nature, with a strong belief in prayer and family. You can learn more about the Blackfeet Nation by exploring their [official website](#).

Like all the Indigenous nations of Montana, the Blackfeet way of life is closely connected to the landscape and all its amazing and powerful sites. Some of these sites became to be understood as sacred places, where people are drawn together to pray. Many ceremonies like the Blackfeet Sun Dance, known as the Okan, are held at these sacred sites, to acknowledge their importance and to pray for individual and community healing and continued life. The following film is intended to provide you with a uniquely modern Blackfeet perspective about one of those most sacred places, the Badger Two Medicine. [Our Last Refuge: The Badger-Two Medicine Story](#).

Take a moment to reflect on what you just watched before you watch this next short [video from KRTV News](#) about what the Blackfeet Nation is currently doing to preserve their lands and also make the most of them in a way that celebrates and shares them with visitors from all over the world.

You can find the Blackfeet Nation Reservation on the map below:



Reflection

Now that you have watched the videos, look at the map above and locate the modern-day Blackfeet Indian Reservation. You will notice the current Blackfeet Reservation represents a small corner of what the original territory was in 1851, as the tribe lost millions of acres of land during the 1800s. This great loss of land over time is one of the reasons why the modern Blackfeet Nation wants to protect the small amount of land they have left. Preserving land while also making money off it is sometimes very difficult; that is why leaders in the Blackfeet people are thinking about innovative ways to bring tourists to their beautiful mountains and keep the water, plants, and animals clean and in their own space. Creating the first Native American National Park is a goal for the Blackfeet Nation, and they are leading the way for other Native American nations and providing an example for the United States.

For further information check out these on-line resources regarding Badger-Two Medicine and the Blackfeet Nation.

<http://www.badger-twomedicine.org/>

[Indian Nations: Blackfeet](#)

[Montana Indians Their History and Location](#)

Preserving Sacred Blackfeet Lands

Suggested Assignment: Please answer the questions below and consider the points of view that you've seen represented in the video links above.

- 1) Why does the Blackfeet Nation want to protect and preserve the Badger-Two Medicine area from oil and gas drilling?

- 2) How do you personally feel about the issue? If you held an oil and gas lease, would you want to drill there? Why or why not?

- 3) How does the Badger-Two Medicine area represent a church to the Blackfeet people? Do you think it is a church? Why or why not?

- 4) Are there other special places you know of where you would not like to see oil and gas drilling, coal mining, or any other resource extraction industry? Why or why not? If so, where are they?

- 5) Does the United States of America have sacred sites that everyone agrees is important to protect and preserve from any kind of change? Where are those places and why are they considered sacred?

- 6) Does the world have sacred places that every nation agrees upon? What are those called and why are they considered so special?

Dr. Shane Doyle is an educational consultant and member of the Apsaalooké (Crow) Nation. His Apsaalooké name means Old Buffalo Bull, and he lives in Bozeman with his wife, Megkian, and their five children.