

# Indian Education for All Units Related to Montana State Parks Bannack State Park

January 2010 (revised)

## Title

Contradictory Worldviews: Placing Montana's Gold Rush into a Tribal Historical Perspective

## Grade Level

6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> (suitable for 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> with corresponding high school benchmarks)

## Content Areas

Social Studies; Science

## Duration

Three 50-minute class periods and one homework assignment.

## Overview and Objectives

The Gold Rush brought thousands of emigrants into southwestern Montana in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The frequent and persistent illegal encroachment of white settlers onto designated Indian lands, however, spurred the revision or over-riding of the treaties in favor of settlers' wants, even though the treaties were entered into as nation-to-nation agreements delineating tribally owned lands. These changes resulted in the dispossession of millions of acres of tribal lands and, in many cases, the forced removal of tribes from their ancestral homelands. This was the situation for the Salish, Bannock and Shoshone people of southwestern Montana as settlers and gold miners intruded into the region.

One of the issues at the heart of this matter was the incompatibility of the worldviews of the indigenous inhabitants and the Euro-American newcomers. For the many tribes who had lived in and used this region for thousands of years, the natural environment was an integral part of their identities and a living world with which they were engaged in a relationship of mutual reciprocity. The U.S. government and Euro-Americans failed to understand that over many millennia, indigenous peoples had developed complex relationships with their environment, relationships that stemmed from their detailed ecology of this landscape and their understanding of their own role in the ecosystem. *(The concept of an ecosystem and the interdependence of all living and non-living organisms within a shared environment is intrinsic to the worldviews of Montana's indigenous peoples, but was not part of the Western worldview or science at the time.)* To the Americans, the natural world was a warehouse of resources for the taking. Thus, their relationship to the earth was one of exploitation based on their belief in the right of human dominance over nature.



Indian Education Division  
Montana Office of Public Instruction



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Students will compare and contrast Salish and Euro-American beliefs and ecologies, specifically concentrating on each group's values regarding the land and its use in order to understand the impacts of white encroachment and mining on the region's tribal inhabitants during the nineteenth century. Students will be able to explain how a culture's worldview determines its interactions with other groups of people and the environment.

## Related Curriculum and Suggestions for Integrating this Lesson

If your class is using the new Montana history textbook, *Montana, Stories of the Land* by Kryss Holmes (Montana Historical Society press, 2008), this lesson will fit nicely with chapters 6 and 7. A couple of ways you could include this lesson are: with Chapter 6 at the Chapter Review Activity (page 121) use this lesson for a "Critical Thinking" activity in response to questions 3 and 5, or as an alternative "Make It Local" project or an "Extension Activity." This unit could be also integrated following the section in Chapter 7 subtitled "Two Ways of Life Collide," which ends on page 132. Selected pages from these two chapters *are* included in the reading assignments for this lesson in addition to materials from other sources, but ideally the two lessons could be used side-by-side for greater enrichment, and students would not have to re-read the selected pages from the textbook.

Consider, also, borrowing the Montana Historical Society's footlockers, *Gold, Silver, and Coal—Oh My!: Mining Montana's Wealth and Life ways of Montana's First People*. See the Montana Historical Society's website at [www.mhs.mt.gov](http://www.mhs.mt.gov) for more information. Suitable for grades 3-8, the website for the footlockers also contains printable teaching materials.

## Montana Education Standards & Benchmarks

### *Indian Education for All "Essential Understandings"*

**Essential Understanding 3, part 2:** Each tribe has its own oral histories, which are as valid as written histories. These histories pre-date the "discovery" of America.

**Essential Understanding 4:** Reservations are lands that have been reserved by the tribes for their own use through treaties, statutes, and executive orders and were not "given" to them. The principle that land should be acquired from the Indians only through their consent with treaties involved three assumptions:

- i. Both parties to treaties were sovereign powers.
- ii. Indian tribes had some form of transferable title to the land.
- iii. Acquisition of Indian lands was solely a governmental matter not to be left to the individual colonists.

**Background:** *Indian nations located in Montana Territory prior to the passage of the Montana Constitution in 1889 held large land bases as negotiated through their treaties with the United States. The treaties assigned tribes to certain areas and obligated them to respect the land of*

*their neighbors. However, in the 1860s, as miners and others [settlers] rushed into the prime gold fields that often lay along or within the designated tribal lands, tribal life was disrupted. The new inhabitants demanded federal protection. These demands resulted in the garrisoning of Montana and the eventual relocation of the tribes to smaller and smaller reservations.*

*The federal government and many Montana citizens did not understand the lifestyles of Montana's Indian tribes. Consequently, the tribes were often dealt with from non-Indian expectations and points-of-view. However, the federal government did understand that these tribal groups were sovereign nations and that they needed to enter into treaty negotiations with the tribes.*

**Essential Understanding 6:** History is a story and most often related through the subjective experience of the teller. Histories are being rediscovered and revised. History told from an Indian perspective conflicts with what most of mainstream history tells us.

## Montana Content Standards

**Social Studies Content Standard 3:** Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g. location, place, human/environment interactions and regions). *Rationale: Students gain geographical perspectives on Montana and the world by studying the Earth and how people interact with places. Knowledge of geography helps students address cultural, economic, social and civic implications of living in various environments.*

**Benchmark 3.1.** Students will analyze and use various representations of the Earth to gather and compare information about a place.

**Benchmark 3.2** Students will locate on a map or globe physical, natural and human features and explain their relationships within the ecosystem(s).

**Benchmark 3.3** Students will analyze diverse land use and explain the historical and contemporary effects of this use on the environment, with emphasis on Montana.

**Benchmark 3.4** Students will describe how movement and settlement patterns lead to interdependence or conflict.

**Benchmark 3.7** Students will describe major changes in a local area that have been caused by human beings and analyze the probable effects on the community and the environment.

**Social Studies Content Standard 4:** Students demonstrate an understanding of the effects of time, continuity and change on historical and future perspectives and relationships. *Rationale: Students need to understand their historical roots and how events shape the past, present and future of the world. In developing these insights, students must know what life was like in the past and how things change and develop over time. Students gain historical understanding through inquiry of history by researching and interpreting historical events affecting personal, local, tribal, Montana, United States, and world history.*

**Benchmark 4.6:** Students will explain how and why events may be interpreted differently according to the points of view of participants, witnesses, reporters and historians.

**Benchmark 4.7** Students will summarize major issues affecting the history, culture, tribal sovereignty and current status of the American Indian tribes of Montana and the United States.

**Science Content Standard 5:** Students, through the inquiry process, understand how scientific knowledge and technological developments impact communities, cultures and societies. *Rationale: Our world and human activity is shaped in many ways by the advances in science. Science and technology are parallel in that science drives technological advances and these advances drive future scientific endeavors. Many different cultures contribute to science and technology. These advances affect different societies in different ways. It is vital that students understand the interrelationships of science, technology and human activity.*

**Benchmark 5.5.** Students will describe how the knowledge of science and technology influences the development of Montana's American Indian cultures.

**Science Content Standard 6:** Students understand historical developments in science and technology. *Rationale: Students need to understand that scientific knowledge was [is] influenced greatly by societal influences. They also need to know that scientific and technological advances have influenced society...The use of history in school science programs is necessary to clarify different aspects of scientific discovery, to understand that scientific knowledge is publicly shared, and to understand the role that science has played in the development of various cultures.*

**Benchmark 6.1.** Students will give historical examples of scientific discoveries and describe the interrelationship between technological advances and scientific understanding, including Montana American Indian examples.

**Benchmark 6.3.** Students will describe and explain science as a human endeavor and an ongoing process.

## Materials and Resources Needed

**Map:** Tribal Territories in Montana, circa 1805, available at Montana Office of Public Instruction <http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education/People-Place-History>

**Map:** Montana's Indian reservations, available at the OPI website <http://opi.mt.gov/Educators/Teaching-Learning/Indian-Education/People-Place-History>

**Map:** "Montana tribal territories, 1855" on page 124 of *Montana: Stories of the Land* (see full reference below)

**Video: *Bannack: A Window in Time*** (available through Inter Library Loan from Montana State University Libraries, Call No. F739.B308B36 1996; or purchase the 60 minute DVD for \$8.95 from Bannack State Park, 4200 Bannack Road, Dillon, MT 59725-9702)

**Book: *Challenge to Survive: History of the Salish Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation, Unit I: "From Time Immemorial: Traditional Life (Pre-1800)"*** from the Salish Kootenai College Tribal History Project, Pablo, Montana; Salish Kootenai College Press, 2008. Available from the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Salish Kootenai College Press, P.O. Box 70, Pablo, Montana, 59855. (\*Note: Coyote stories in the Salish tradition are to be told only in the winter months. Please respect this Salish tradition.)

**For teacher preparation:** "Who are the Salish?" pages xi-xii (unmarked)

**For students:** "The Seasonal Round" and "Salish Calendar" pages 1-24.

**Book: *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition***, by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Cultural Committee and the Elders Advisory Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, 2006. **You will need pages 19-32, "This Land Was Good."** This chapter describes the traditional Salish view of the natural world and their relationship with it.

**Book\*: *Montana Stories of the Land***, by Krys Holmes, Montana Historical Society Press, 2008. Selected Chapters: **Chapter 6: "Montana's Gold and Silver Boom, 1862-1893" pages 100-121,** and **Chapter 7: "Two Worlds Collide, 1850-1887" pages 122-147.** These chapters (with additional materials) are available online

<http://svcalt.mt.gov/education/Textbook/TextbookMainPage.asp> Click on the chapter title. Textbook is also available from the Montana Historical Society and may be at your school library. Your class will not need to read the entire two chapters, especially if you are already using this textbook. Selected pages from these chapters are designated in the "Activities and Procedures" section of this lesson plan.

**Attachments A-D included in this lesson plan.**

## Activities and Procedures

**Teacher Preparation:** Teachers should become familiar with the two maps and find Bannack State Park's approximate location on these maps. If you are not familiar with where Bannack State Park is located, please refer to a Montana State Highway map or see the Montana State Parks website. In addition, please read the following materials:

- ✓ "Who are the Salish?" on pages xi-xii (unmarked) in *Challenge to Survive: History of the Salish Tribes of the Flathead Indian Reservation, Unit I: "From Time Immemorial: Traditional Life (Pre-1800)."*
- ✓ "The Seasonal Round" and "Salish Calendar" on pages 1-24 in *Challenges to Survive.*

- ✓ **“This Land Was Good”** on pages 19-32 of *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*.
- ✓ **Chapters 6 and 7 (pages 100-147)** of *Montana Stories of the Land*.

### **Class Period 1: Introduction, Geography and Vocabulary**

For this period you will need the maps (one copy per small group), one copy per group of the vocabulary/definitions list (Attachment B), the worksheet (Attachment C) for each student, and “An Introduction to Bannack State Park” (Attachment A) to read aloud. Each group will also need either a computer with access to an online dictionary or a print dictionary.

- 1) Read aloud to your class “An Introduction to Bannack State Park” (Attachment A).
- 2) Divide the class into small groups of 3 or 4, and provide each student with the worksheet (Attachment C) and each group with a copy of the maps. Using the maps, students should locate the region of southwestern Montana that includes Bannack State Park. Have them fill in the “Geography” section of the worksheet.
- 3) Using the vocabulary list (Attachment B) and a dictionary (online is fine), have students complete the vocabulary section of the worksheet in their own words, using BOTH the provided list of definitions and at least one other source. Students should read the definitions aloud to their groups. (If your class has access to the internet, one online dictionary is <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/dictionary/entry/history>. (Enter a different word in place of “history” to get that word’s definition.)
- 4) Assign as homework the following pages from *Montana, Stories of the Land*. If students have time, they should begin this reading in class. (Total reading time approx. 20-30 min)
  - Chapter 6: p. 100-106 (end after “Routes” section)
  - Chapter 6: p. 108-109 (“Settlers Used the Land in a New Way”)
  - Chapter 6: p. 118-120 (“Two Ways of Life...” and “Placer Mining Required...”)
  - Chapter 7: p. 123-126 (Note: be sure to look at map and timeline)
  - Chapter 7: p. 131-135 (start at “Two Ways of Life Collide” p.131 and end when you get to subtitle “1870 Massacre on the Marias” on p. 135.)

### **Class Period 2: Video and reading assignments.**

You will need the video *Bannack: A Window in Time* and viewing equipment for this period. Students will also need to take notes on the video and the reading assignments from *Challenge to Survive* and *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. (It may be easiest to photocopy these pages so that students can highlight informative points and make notes on the text.)

- 1) Show students from minute 1 to minute 15 of the video *Bannack: A Window in Time*.
- 2) Have students begin reading and taking notes on the following pages from these two books on the Salish:
  - *Challenge to Survive*: pages 1-24, "The Seasonal Round" and "Salish Calendar"
  - *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*: pages 19-32, "This Land Was Good."
- 3) Students will probably need to take some of the reading home to complete.

### **Class Period 3: Short answer written work and class discussion.**

- 1) Have the students work independently to complete the "Questions" section of their worksheets using their notes. Their answers should be thorough and, when applicable, they should refer to specific examples from the readings and the videos. (20-25 minutes)
- 2) After the students turn in their worksheets, lead a full-class discussion comparing and contrasting the worldview and ecologies of the Salish and the Americans, specifically concentrating on each group's values regarding the land and its use. Discuss as well their perceptions of the impacts of the Gold Rush on the Salish and other area tribes.

### **Assessment**

Evaluate and grade students' knowledge according to their:

- participation in the small group activities;
- completion of their worksheets; (Attachment D provides sample answers to questions) and
- participation in the class discussion.

## Additional Resources & Extensions

Fort Hall Indian Reservation, Official Website of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

<http://www.sbtribes.com/>

Kappler, C.J. (Editor). (1904a). *Lame Bull Treaty or "Treaty with the Blackfeet, 1855," Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, Vol. II, Treaties*. Washington: Government Printing Office. URL: <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/bla0736.htm>

Kappler, C.J. (Editor). (1904b). "Treaty of Fort Laramie with Sioux, Etc., 1851," *Indian Affairs: Laws And Treaties, Vol. II, Treaties*. Washington: Government Printing Office. URL: <http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol2/treaties/sio0594.htm>

Montana Historical Society (2002). *Footlockers. Gold, Silver, and Coal—Oh My!: Mining Montana's Wealth and Life ways of Montana's First People*. URL: <http://www.his.state.mt.us/education/footlocker/mining.asp> These are created primarily for 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grades, but other grade levels, especially middle school, will benefit from their contents.

Trailtribes.org. *Blackfeet* (discussion of tribal history and contemporary culture; there is also a link (URL) to the Shoshone-Bannack Tribes.) <http://www.trailtribes.org/greatfalls/home.htm>

To learn more about some of the impacts of early gold mining on tribes of this region, research the creation of the Bozeman Trail and the mining towns of Idaho.

## Attachment A

### An Introduction to Bannack State Park

Located in southwestern Montana, Bannack State Park comprises the remnants of Bannack City, the first capital of Montana Territory and the residence of Montana's notorious outlaw, Henry Plummer, who was hanged by vigilantes. This gold-mining town was named after the Bannock Indian tribe who had lived in the region encompassing southwestern Montana.

In addition to the Bannock, the Salish is one of the tribes that lived in this region and used it for thousands of years. Dozens of pictographs (rock paintings), which anthropologists attribute to Salish or Pend d'Oreille artists, exist in the Big Hole Valley near Bannack and throughout southwest Montana. The Blackfoot tribe (including the Blood and Piegan) also used this area from the early eighteenth century into the latter nineteenth century for hunting, as did the Crow, Dakota Sioux, Northern Cheyenne and Arapaho. The Big Hole, Beaverhead, and Jefferson rivers marked part of an ancient, well-established east-west route to the Missouri River and the Great Plains, where tribes from the intermountain region hunted buffalo and elk and harvested wild plants. Several tribes from the southern part of the Columbia Plateau and the western portion of the Great Basin, such as the Nez Perce and the Shoshone, region regularly traveled across the continental divide to participate in intertribal trade with Plains tribes.

During the first half of the nineteenth century (1800-1850), American trappers in the Northwest killed hundreds of thousands of beaver for their skins, almost trapping the animal to extinction. Then, gold was discovered in the 1840s in California, and soon large numbers of American settlers pushed westward along the Oregon Trail to seek their fortunes in the Gold Rush. In 1851, the United States Government and several Indian tribes negotiated the first Fort Laramie Treaty. In this treaty, the lands of southwest Montana east of the Continental Divide became the legally recognized "territory of the Blackfoot [sic]," in spite of the fact that several tribes lived in or used this territory. For a while, these other tribes continued to live in what is now southwestern Montana, but soon white travelers ventured north into this region and began cattle ranching and mining here, squatting (living illegally) on lands belonging to the tribes.

In 1855, another treaty, the Lame Bull Treaty between the Blackfeet and the U.S., permitted all Indians living in what is now Montana to continue to hunt buffalo on the plains, as they already had been for hundreds of years. However, the United States was anxious to exploit the resources of this "new" region and to make it possible for more settlers to move here, so Article 8 of the Lame Bull Treaty allowed the use of the lands along the rivers and all of what was to be southwest Montana by U.S. citizens "for any ... purpose," including white settlement and mining. This meant that nearly all of the tribes whose lands these had been were displaced (pushed out of their homelands).

Gold was discovered at Grasshopper Creek in 1862, and the town of Bannack City established. Within a very short time, hundreds of miners and businesses to support them moved into the

town. The new white settlers had to kill elk, deer and other animals for food and to make clothing, and in doing so they depleted (used up) the animal populations for miles around. Their cattle also competed with both the indigenous peoples and native animals for food and habitat. In a few short years, white settlement, ranching and gold mining changed forever the situation of the Indians who had lived in the area for such a very long time.

By the 1870s, bison were nearly extinct. They had been killed by the thousands by buffalo hunters for their hides, and their bodies had been left to rot. This meant that the indigenous people who depended on bison for survival had to find other resources. This was a very sad time for the tribes, a time when many of them were extremely impoverished (very poor) and many died of starvation, malnutrition and exposure. Except for small bands traveling through the area, or camping temporarily, the Indians mostly withdrew from southwestern Montana as it became harder and harder to maintain their way of life in the wake of the many changes to the environment and its resources.

## Attachment B

### Definitions

**INDIGENOUS:** This term refers to the original inhabitants of a particular place. The oral histories of many indigenous societies locate them at a specific place for many hundreds or thousands of years. They may also have origin stories (cosmogonies) which describe their creation at a particular place. Around the world, indigenous peoples have often been displaced by newcomers—colonialists, pioneers, and other non-native settlers. The United Nations recently passed the Indigenous Peoples’ Bill of Rights in an attempt to give indigenous peoples legal protection against dispossession and exploitation. In the United States, indigenous peoples are the tribes who were present on this continent prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The descendants of these indigenous peoples are called Native Americans or American Indians, as well as by their specific tribal names (such as Apsáalooke or Crow). Many, but not all, of the indigenous peoples in the U.S. are recognized by the U.S. government as sovereign tribal nations. Some Native Americans today are the descendants of both indigenous ancestors and immigrants, but only some are tribal members and as such retain the rights of their indigenous ancestors who entered into nation-to-nation treaties with the United States.

**ORAL HISTORY/ ORAL TRADITION:** Oral history is history that is “recorded” orally through means such as stories and songs. Native American tribes have a long history of oral tradition—the tradition of passing down one’s tribal and personal history orally from generation to generation. This kind of history differs from a written history, because it depends on the accurate repetition of descriptions and accounts from person to person over time, which in turn relies on the preservation of tribal languages for accuracy in linguistically bound concepts. In some cases, petroglyphs, pictographs, hide paintings and winter counts are examples of oral histories being recorded visually and the imagery is used as a reminder of oral histories associated with it. Other times names—especially place names—serve as mnemonic devices that link to oral histories. Some oral histories are many thousands of years old, having been passed from one generation to the next with very little change. In other cases, an oral history may vary slightly depending on how it has been remembered and retold by different tribal members.

**NATIVE:** The term “native” means “born” to a particular place. It can be used to imply that a person or group of people are indigenous to a specific location. The phrase “Native Americans” indicates that these people are both Americans (citizens of the United States) *and* descendants of the federally recognized indigenous peoples of this continent. Some Native Americans, such as the Little Shell Chippewa Tribe of Montana, however, are not legally recognized by the U.S. Government, but are nonetheless *de facto* Native Americans as identified by themselves and by others in their communities. (The state of Montana does recognize the Little Shell tribe.) Many Native Americans prefer the term “Indian” or to be identified by their specific tribe’s name—such as “Blackfeet” or “Piegan.” When referring to a person of indigenous descent, use “Native”

with a capital “n;” “native” with a lower-case “n” can mean any person born at the place you are referring to, such as a Montana native (anyone born and raised in Montana).

**COSMOGONY:** A cosmogony is an origin history or creation story. Tribal origin stories tell of the creation of the world or the creation of people of that specific tribe at a certain place in the world. For example, the Blackfeet creation story locates the site of the creation of the Blackfeet people at a specific place in northern Montana. Origin stories and creation stories are important to the histories and identities of indigenous peoples and tribes. They do not always agree with non-tribal theories about human evolution, human geography or scientific theories (such as the Bering Strait theory), but sometimes they corroborate newer scientific “discoveries” (such as the existence of Lake Missoula following the last Ice Age).

## Attachment C

### Bannack State Park Lesson Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Geography:** Using the maps of tribal territories, locate what is now southwestern Montana.

1. Which tribes lived primarily in this territory before 1805?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Which other tribes used this area to travel through for hunting or trade?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How was southwestern Montana described (labeled) on the map of Montana's tribal territories in 1855 (following the Lame Bull Treaty)? What does this name suggest about the intent of the Lame Bull Treaty?

**Vocabulary:** Please define the following words using a dictionary, online resource or materials from this lesson. Be as thorough in your answers as you can in the space provided.

1. Indigenous:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. History:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Oral History:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Ecology:

5. Ecosystem:

6. Treaty:

7. Indian Reservation:

**Questions:** Please use the readings in this lesson to answer the following questions as thoroughly as you can. Use the back of this page for your answers, so that you have enough space to write.

1. Give three examples of the ecology of the Salish that show their knowledge of the natural environment.

2. Describe three differences between how these two groups of people (Salish and white settlers) viewed nature and used the natural resources of this region.

3. Why did these differences matter?

4. What is one thing that did NOT change for the Salish following the arrival of whites into southwestern Montana?

## Attachment D

### Sample Answers for Bannack State Park Worksheet

#### Geography:

- 1. Which tribes lived primarily in this territory before 1805?** Salish, Shoshone and Bannock.
- 2. Which other tribes used this area to travel through for hunting or trade?** Nez Perce and other Plateau tribes, Crow, Blackfeet, Arapaho, etc.
- 3. How was southwestern Montana described (labeled) on the map of Montana's tribal territories in 1855 (following the Lame Bull Treaty)?** "Common Hunting Grounds" What **does this name suggest about the intent of the Lame Bull Treaty?** One intention was to allow for white settlement and mineral exploration into this area, thus the Lame Bull Treaty did not acknowledge or specify that this area belonged to one of the tribes who did in fact reside there (such as the Salish) and had occupied it for many centuries.

#### Vocabulary:

- 1. Indigenous:** The original native inhabitants of a place or the people who have lived there since time immemorial; their descendants.
- 2. History:** An account of the past and past events, often assumed to be a written account. All histories depend on the perspectives of the entity (person, nation, etc.) recounting those histories and histories of one event or place may contradict one another. Early tribal histories pre-date American history by thousands of years.
- 3. Oral History:** An oral account of the past or past events; history that is shared by one generation telling the next, rather than being entirely written down. Oral history is a traditional indigenous form of keeping an historic record for tribes in Montana and the preservation and use of indigenous languages are important to the accuracy and remembrance of tribal oral histories.
- 4. Ecology:** The study of the relationships between humans, life and all parts of the natural environment. Ecology may also refer to the body of knowledge produced by this study.
- 5. Ecosystem:** An observable system of interdependence between living (including human) and non-living elements who share a specific habitat or location.
- 6. Treaty:** An agreement between nations or sovereign entities. Treaties between indigenous tribes and the American government were entered into as nation-to-nation agreements, but the United States, as a colonial power, has consistently violated or dishonored those treaties.

**7. Indian Reservation:** Reservations are tribal land “reserved” for Indian tribes; by treaty, reservations were for the sole occupancy of tribal members, (although this was violated by the Dawes Act and the “opening up” of Indian reservations following 1887).

**Questions:**

**1. Give three examples of the ecological knowledge of the Salish that demonstrate their understanding of the natural environment.**

They knew what plants were edible or useful for medicine, like camas, bitterroot, and the inner bark of some trees. Coyote stories told why some resources, like salmon, were only available at certain places. They returned each year to specific places to hunt, gather or fish, so they knew how to find the resources (geography) and they knew what time to find them (like when the wild roses bloomed they knew to go hunt bison).

**2. Describe three differences between how the Salish and the American settlers perceived and interacted with the natural environment. Why did these differences matter?**

The Salish saw themselves as part of the natural environment, just like everything else, not superior to it. They believed they had to respect other aspects of nature, and that everything had a living element to it. They had stories that told them about the right kind of action—like not to over-hunt or take too much. They also had stories that told them that the different resources they needed (like deer, bitterroot, camas and salmon) were gifts to them from Coyote. Their interaction with the natural environment was on a sustainable level.

The American miners and settlers did not know how to survive, which plants they could eat or use for medicine, or how to hunt in a sustainable way. They believed they were supposed to dominate nature, and they did not see themselves as an interdependent part of ecosystem. They believed nature was there for them to exploit or extract “resources” they wanted, such as gold. Gold mining brought thousands of people into the region in a short period of time, which resulted in the over-hunting of game animals, deforestation for smelters and construction, and water contamination, in addition to the displacement of tribal inhabitants from their ancestral homelands. Quite likely, most of the settlers and miners were oblivious to the thousands of years old history of tribal occupation of this land and their knowledge of its geography and ecology. At the time, most Americans erroneously viewed the West as an “untamed wilderness” and were of the attitude that its indigenous peoples were inferior to themselves intellectually and culturally.

**3. Why did these differences matter?**

The differences between the Salish and Euro-American perceptions of nature determined how they interacted with or acted upon it. Because they had a long history of extensive observation of their environment and a belief system, which taught them, essentially, that they were

interdependent with other aspects of their environment, the Salish developed a sustainable way of life that did not exhaust the region's resources on which they and other life depended. This way of life was greatly disrupted due to the arrival of Euro-American settlers and miners, who lacked the scientific understanding of the environment that comes from a long history of habitation. Mineral extraction and resource exploitation, including logging and hunting, quickly depleted the region of many of its resources. Boomtowns and the intrusion of settlers into areas previously utilized by tribes for hunting and gathering made it impossible for tribes to continue to live according to their sustainable, seasonal patterns and traditional ways of life. Ultimately, the differences resulted in the removal or withdrawal of tribal peoples from this region and their confinement to Indian reservations where they had to change how they lived and survived.

**4. What is one thing that did NOT change for the Salish following the arrival of whites into southwestern Montana?**

One thing that did not change for the Salish is their appreciation for their homeland and its continued importance to their history and identity as Salish. Salish (and other tribal) people continue to visit many of the cultural landmarks in their homeland and still consider these places valuable to their cultural identity and history.