

Indian Education for All Units Related to Montana State Parks Beavertail Hill State Park

January 2010 (revised)

Title

What's in a Name?

Grade Level

4th – 5th

Content Areas

Social Studies; Geography; Montana History

Duration

Two 40-45 minute periods

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn that some of the place names in Montana have tribal origins or associations with Montana tribal peoples. Beavertail Hill, for example, was named because the natural feature (the hill) resembled the tail of a beaver. (It should be noted that Interstate 90 slices through the “beaver’s tail!”) Students will learn that many tribal names predate the “modern” names by thousands of years and that each tribe has its own name for certain places even when tribal territories and geographies overlapped. Furthermore, each tribe has culturally specific ways of naming places, and tribal place names are often significant as ‘markers’ or reminders of specific events recounted in tribal oral histories. Students will examine maps and place names as cultural artifacts that express and transmit cultural values, perceptions, and perspectives. This lesson gives particular attention to the Salish and Pend d’Oreille tribe (whose homelands included the area that is now Beavertail Hill) but it also includes other Montana tribes’ place names.

Montana Education Standards & Benchmarks

Indian Education for All Essential Understandings Regarding Montana Indians

Essential Understanding 1: There is great diversity among the 12 Tribal Nations of Montana in their languages, cultures, histories, and governments. Each Nation has a distinct and unique cultural heritage that contributes to modern Montana.

Montana Content Standards

Social Studies Content Standard 3: Students apply geographic knowledge and skills (e.g., location, place, human/environment interactions, movement, and regions).



Indian Education Division
Montana Office of Public Instruction



*Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks*

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 identify and use various representations of the Earth (e.g. maps...).

Benchmark 3.2. Students will locate on a map or globe physical features, natural features ... and human features....

Benchmark 3.4. Students will describe how human movement and settlement patterns reflect the wants and needs of diverse cultures.

Benchmark 3.5. Students will use appropriate geographic resources ... to gather information about local communities, reservations, Montana, the United States, and the world.

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 4.1. Students will identify and use various sources of information ... to develop an understanding of the past.

Benchmark 4.3. Students will examine biographies, stories, narratives and folk tales to understand the lives of ordinary people and extraordinary people, place then in time and context, and explain their relationship to important historical events.

Benchmark 4.7. Students will explain the history, culture, and current status of the American Indian tribes in Montana and the United States. [in this lesson, Montana.]

Social Studies Content Standard 6: Students demonstrate an understanding of the impact of human interaction and cultural diversity on societies.

Rationale: Culture helps us to understand ourselves as both individuals and members of various groups. In a multicultural society, students need to understand multiple perspectives that derive from different cultural vantage points. As citizens, students need to know how institutions are maintained or changed and how they influence individuals, cultures, and societies. This understanding allows students to relate to people in Montana, tribes, the United States and the world.

Benchmark 6.2. Students will describe ways in which expressions of culture influence people....

Benchmark 6.4. Students will identify characteristics of American Indian tribes and other cultural groups in Montana.

Materials and Resources Needed

Names on the Face of Montana (book) by Roberta Cheney, Missoula, MT: Mountain Press Publishing, 1983. (Available at most school/public libraries.)

--or--

Montana Place Names: From Alzada to Zortman (book), Helena, MT: Montana Historical Society Press, 2009. Available from the Montana Historical Society bookstore, online at <http://mhs.mt.gov/store>, or by calling 1-800-243-9900.

The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition (book—pages 35-78) by the Salish-Pend d'Oreille Cultural Committee and the Elders Advisory Council of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Lincoln NB: University of Nebraska Press 2005. (Available at many school libraries and through the bookstore of Salish-Kootenai College, Pablo, Montana.)

Montana Highway Map (*one per student or one per four students if they work in groups*) Free copies of this map are available from the Montana Department of Transportation, 1-800-847-4868 or use online request form at http://www.mdt.mt.gov/mdt/comment_form.shtml

Map: “Tribal Territories in Montana, 1855” from *Montana: Stories of the Land*, 1st edition, page 124, or <http://svcult.mt.gov/education/textbook/Chapter7/Chapter7.pdf> (Scroll down to page 124).

Montana “zoomable” online map (*optional*) at the Montana Department of Transportation’s Web site, http://www.mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/maps/montana_map.shtml

Attachments A-D

Introduction

Indigenous peoples had names for many of the geographical features and places in what is now Montana. Different tribes often had different names for the same location, depending on that tribe’s particular culture and history. As Americans moved west, they invented their own names for Montana places and features, while also learning some of the place names already used by the area’s tribes. Some of the current place names of locations in Montana are based on earlier tribal names or make reference to Montana’s Indians. Even though most of the tribal place names have been replaced by American names, some Native Americans continue to recognize these areas by their traditional names. Within tribes, the knowledge of tribal place names is important to maintaining tribal histories, and cultural and geographic knowledge are embedded in many tribal place names. This lesson will introduce you to some of the place names used by Montana’s indigenous peoples, some of which are still used by tribes and non-tribal Montanans today. You will learn that place names depend on one’s culture, language, and relationship to the physical environment. You will also learn there are many different ways of thinking about a place and remembering it through a culturally meaningful way.

Activities and Procedures

Teacher Preparation: Teacher should become familiar with the following resources:

- ✓ *Names on the Face of Montana* by Roberta Cheney; --or--
- ✓ *Montana Place Names: From Alzada to Zortman* by the Montana Historical Society Press.
- ✓ *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, pages 35-78.
- ✓ *Selected Montana Place Names – Native origins* (included in lesson plan)

Class Period 1: MAPPING ACTIVITY *Note: This activity can be done using a current Montana State Highway map or, if your students have access to computers, they can use the “zoomable” online Travel Montana map at the Montana Department of Transportation’s Web site, http://mdt.mt.gov/travinfo/maps/montana_map.shtml. You will also need the story on pages 69-70 of *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition* to read to your class at the end of this period.*

1. Read the Introduction to your class.
2. Divide the students into groups of three or four, and provide each group with a Montana Highway map. They will need room to spread out the map, either on the floor or on desks pushed together, so they can see the entire map at once. Draw their attention to the map key and to the mileage scale of measure.
3. Assign a place name from the lists (Attachments A and B) or from one of the books to each student or allow each student to select a place name from the list or book. (The advantage of assigning locations is you can make sure they are spread out across the state.) Have each student locate his or her chosen place on the map and mark it with a sticker or sticky note with the student’s name and place name on it. (10 minutes for steps 1-3)
4. While viewing the Montana highway map, each student should begin the worksheet (Attachment D) and answer questions 1-5. They will need rulers to measure the distance from their locations to the nearest reservation. (10 minutes)
5. Now have students compare the state highway map to the 1855 map of tribal territories and identify which tribe or tribes occupied the area around the location each student has chosen or been assigned. Have the students answer questions 4-6 on the worksheet. They may need to refer to the highway map again as well. (10 minutes)
6. Read aloud to your class “Place of the Sleeping Baby” (Sleeping Child Hot Springs), pages 69-70, from *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. (10 minutes)

Class Period 2: LEARNING ABOUT PLACE NAMES For this class period, students will need their worksheets, copies of Attachments A, B, and C, and the books listed in the materials section. (You might want to photocopy the relevant pages listed on Attachment A so students working with any of these place names can have a copy of the material. This will make it quicker for them to fill in the worksheet without all trying to use the Salish book at the same time.)

1. Provide students with Attachments B and C. Read aloud (or have students read aloud) to the class “Home Sweet Home” and the brief excerpt from “Lewis and Clark Slept Here.” (10 minutes)
2. Have students complete the worksheet, questions 6-10. They will need to use the books for reference. (The books provide better and more accurate information than the list in Attachment B.) (15 minutes)
3. Once the students have finished filling in their worksheets, have each group chose one location to share with the entire class (reading from the worksheet). (15-20 minutes, depending on the amount of material associated with the selected place names and the number of presentations)

Extensions

Check out these great books to learn more about Salish, Pend d’Oreille, and Kootenai people. They are available through the bookstore of Salish Kootenai College.

- *Coyote stories of the Montana Salish Indians* by Johnny Arlee, Salish Kootenai College Press, 1999.
- *Stories from our Elders* by Clarence Woodcock and the Salish Culture Committee, Flathead Culture Committee Publication, 1979.
- *In the Name of the Salish & Kootenai Nation*, Robert Bigart and Clarence Woodcock, editors, Salish Kootenai College Press, 1996.

Attachment A Salish and Pend d'Oreille Place Names

These are some of the place names listed and described in *The Salish People and the Lewis and Clark Expedition*. This list is for teacher's reference, so you may assign some of them to your students. Page numbers are included so students can read the accompanying descriptions in the book.

"Tree Limb Cut Off" (*Council Grove, west of Missoula*) p. 44-45.

"Place of the Big Bull Trout" (*where Bonner is, east of Missoula*) p. 51.

"It Has Camas" (*in the Potomac Valley, northeast of Missoula*), p. 52-53.

"No Salmon" (*Lolo*) p.55-57

"Waters of the Red Osier Dogwood" (*along the Bitterroot River*) p. 61.

"Place of the Small Bull Trout" (*where Missoula is*) p. 46-48. (Note: this name's history requires the most reading.)

"Place Where They Would Lift Something" (*Darby area, in the Bitterroot valley*) p. 71.

"Waters of the Pocket Gopher" (*Big Hole river and valley*) p. 78, left column.

"Many Trails" (*Skalkaho Pass area*) p. 68.

Attachment B Selected Montana Place Names – Native origins

Please note the term Flathead is used primarily to refer to the Salish and/or Kootenai people.

COUNCIL GROVE STATE PARK, Missoula County

Council Grove State Park commemorates “the place of tall trees with no limbs,” where tribes of western Montana reluctantly gave up most of their homeland 150 years ago. Like those of other ancients nearby, the pine’s lower limbs have long rotted and broken off. In the Salish language, this site along the Clark Fork River, ten miles west of Missoula, is known as chilmeh—“the place of tall trees with no limbs.”

LOLO, Missoula, County

In Nez Perce language Lolo means "muddy water." According to Judge Woody, Lolo is an Indian rendition of the word Lawrence, name of an old trapper. It may be a corruption of La Louis, the name given the creek by trappers.

The Salish name of the stream was 'Tum-sum-lech,' meaning 'salmonless,' or 'no salmon.' In all of the creeks and rivers across the range, the Clearwater, and its several branches, has an abundance of salmon, but none were ever found in the Lolo, hence the name.

MISSOULA, Missoula County

A city and county, the name is said to be; 1) a Salish Indian word meaning "the river of awe;" 2) Duncan McDonald says it means "sparkling water;" 2) Contraction of Flathead word meaning "by place of ambush or fear;" or 4) Salish say the name means “River of the Bull Trout.”

PLAINS, Sanders County

A town formerly called Horse Plains. It was originally a wintering place for native people and their horses. Later, stockmen from as far as Walla Walla, Washington, drove their horses there to winter. "Horse" was dropped years ago.

PONDERA, Pondera County

Originally Pend d'Oreille [ear pendent]; the name was changed to a form resembling the phonetic spelling to avoid confusion with the town and lake by same name in Idaho.

RED LODGE, Carbon County

The county seat of Carbon County. There are two Versions for the name. The first is the first White settlers called the locality by this name because the Crow Indians had inhabited the area, and the second is the town was named for an {Crow?} Indian medicine man.

SLEEPING CHILD CREEK, Ravalli County

A creek named by the {Salish} Indians and is said to have been Weeping Child originally, because of a child left there by its mother.

STINKING WATER CREEK, Beaverhead County

A creek that flows into Beaverhead River near Twin Bridges. Native people of the area described the area as "stinking water," which is caused by sulfurous drainage.

TONGUE RIVER, Rosebud County

A river named by the Crow and Cheyenne Indians.

VICTOR, Ravalli County

A town named for Chief Victor of the Salish.

Other sites of interest

AKOKALA CREEK (Lake), Glacier National Park

This is a Kootenai name meaning "rotten." The creek was formerly known as "Indian Creek," and the lake as "Oil Lake."

AMBROSE CREEK, Ravalli County

Named for Ambrose Amelo, a Flathead Chief, according to the published journal and letters of Major John Owen.

BELLY RIVER, Glacier National Park

The Blackfeet people had a custom of apportioning the anatomy of Napi all over the landscape. His elbow was the Bow River at Calgary. His knees were the Teton Buttes. Midway lay his stomach, and what more appropriate than the aforementioned buttes, which to the Indian resembled the contorted manifold of a buffalo. Hence, they became Mokowanis, or Big Belly Buttes. The river that flowed at their base became Mokowanis River, and later, when Indians from Algonquin nations of the southeast drifted into the region and established themselves along the river, these too, became Mokowanis.

BISON, Glacier County

A station on the Great Northern Railway. It is so named because of the large herds of bison roaming in that vicinity in the early days

BITTERROOT RIVER VALLEY, MOUNTAINS, FLOWER, AND FOREST

The river had several names before the name 'Bitter Root' or 'Bitterroot' was adopted. Lewis and Clark named it 'Clark's River' on September 6, 1805, after Captain William Clark. Alexander Ross's journal, dated 1824, called it 'Courtine's Fork of the Piegan River.' The Jesuit Missionaries called it the 'St. Mary's River' in the late 1840s. The 1863 survey of the John Owen Donation Claim by DeLacy shows 'Bitter Root River.' The General Land Office survey plats use both 'Bitter Root' and 'St. Mary's' on different plats. W.H. Baker's 1870 survey of T12N, R20W, shows 'Bitter Root River.' George W. Irvine's and Henry C. Rodleder's 1872 surveys of townships include the name 'St. Mary's Fork of the Bitter Root River,' but Henry C. Rodleder shows it as 'Bitter Root River' in his survey of T6N, R20W. Later surveys used the name 'Bitter Root.' The Salish Indian

name for the Bitter Root River is 'Spitlem seukn.' The valley was named for the river.

The Bitter Root flower was named by Lewis and Clark. Wheeler says of the Bitter Root in 1898, "A beautiful flower, a beautiful river, a valley, a magnificent range-such is the Bitter Root." The flower is a small plant that blooms in May or June, and is common to many of the Montana valleys. It seems to thrive more especially in the Bitter Root Valley, and this circumstance has given the valley its name. The petals are of a beautiful delicate pink or rose color; the root is edible, and was formerly much-used by Indians and mountaineers for food, although it is very bitter. Native people dry it, and in this condition it will keep for years. The botanical name of the plant is 'Lewisan redivina,' after Captain Lewis (who collected it in 1806); the Shoshone Indians, Granville Stuart says, call it 'Konah;' the Flathead or Salish Indians characterize it by the word, 'Spitlem.'

BLACKFOOT, Glacier County

This is a village named for the Blackfoot Indian tribe.

CARCAJOU LAKE, Glacier National Park

Named for a mythical being of the Cree Indians, meaning "hungry," or "eats a lot," and from which the English word "carcajou," for wolverine, is derived.

CHIEF MOUNTAIN, Glacier National Park

There are many legends regarding this mountain, the most popular being that of the young Flathead Indian brave who spent several days on the top of the peak searching for his "medicine vision," and using a bison skull for a pillow. When Henry L. Stimson, later Secretary of State, and his companions first climbed to the top of this mountain in 1892, they were probably the first white men to do so. There they found an ancient bison skull almost entirely decomposed, giving considerable authenticity to this popular legend.

The present name was taken from the Blackfeet Indian name "Old Chief," or "The Mountain-of-the-Chief," by which it was known to the Blackfeet, probably because of the above-mentioned legend.

KAKITOS MOUNTAIN, Glacier County

Kakitos is the Blackfeet name for star. The mountain often resembles a three-pointed star.

KINTLA LAKE (Creek, Glacier, Peak), Glacier National Park

The only explanation for this name is found in a reported legend of the Kootenai Indians, to whom the word "kintla" means "sack." It is reported by the older Indians that in the olden days in their hunting, camping, and visiting trips they would cross the mountains near this point, but would never go near the water because it had been reported that one of the Indians had gone to this lake and had fallen in and disappeared, meaning that he was drowned and his body did not come back."

MEDICINE LAKE, Sheridan County

This town takes its name from nearby Medicine Lake, a body of water so named by the native people because they found many of their medicinal herbs and roots around its shores and because the water itself had medicinal qualities.

PAINTED ROBE, Golden Valley County

A station on the Great Northern Railway, in Golden Valley County, Montana. This name was derived from the fact that the Indians, while hunting and trapping in the vicinity, painted their robes at this place, using a certain kind of clay available in the creek bed.

PLENTYWOOD, Sheridan County

During frontier days, the region surrounding this town, particularly along the creek bearing the same name, was thickly wooded. The area was once prime hunting grounds for the Assiniboine. When cattlemen arrived, they referred to the locality as “that place where there is plenty wood.” It is easy to understand why the name “Plentywood” was adopted when the first post office was established there.

RED EAGLE, Flathead County

A station on the Great Northern Railway. This locality is named in honor of a prominent chief of the Blackfoot Tribe of Indians.

ST. MARY LAKE (Falls, River), Glacier National Park

The Piegan Indians called these lakes the "Walled-in Lakes," while the Kootenai Indians called them "Old Woman Lakes."

SALMON RIVER, IDAHO

The Shoshone called it 'Tom-Agit-Pak,' or 'Big Fish Water.'

SINOPAH MOUNTAIN, Glacier National Park

Sinopah, meaning "kit fox" in Blackfeet.

SIYEH (Creek, Glacier, Pass), Glacier National Park

"Sai-yeh," in Blackfeet means Crazy Dog, or Mad Wolf.

SKALKAHO CREEK, Ravalli

Skalkaho means 'many roads' in the Salish language.

SPOTTED ROBE, Glacier County

A station on the Great Northern Railway. The station was first named “Kilroy,” but on February 7, 1926, the present name was substituted in honor of a former chief of the Blackfoot tribe of Indians.

SWEATHOUSE CREEK, Ravalli

The name dates prior to 1872. It was a favorite site for the Salish Indians to camp and build sweat houses; hence, the name.

Attachment C Selected Readings

Home Sweet Home*

Although the West was new and unknown to Lewis and Clark, the indigenous (or native) people of this region were very familiar with the territories they occupied. Tribes had their own names for locations they spent time in and for topographical features (rivers, mountain peaks, and so on) that were (and still are) important in their lives. Here are a few interesting facts about tribal place names:

Tribes whose territories overlapped often had different names for the same places or features. The Hidatsa—relatives of the Apsáalooke—called the Milk River “The River that Scolds the Other” because it flows along parallel to the Missouri for a ways before joining it. The Apsáalooke, however, called the same river “Bear River.”

The Sweetgrass Hills in north-central Montana are known to the Blackfeet as the “*Sweet Pine Hills*” and to the White Clay as “Three Buttes.”

Tribal place names can be very specific to a particular location, such as just one part of a valley or just one section of a river. “Place of the Small Bull Trout” is the Salish name for the confluence of Rattlesnake Creek and the Clark Fork River, now a part of downtown Missoula.

Sometimes tribal place names come from the resources that tribe found at that particular location. Both the Crow and the Blackfeet noted the abundance of elk all along a very large river and referred to it accordingly as “Elk River.” On today’s maps, this river is the Yellowstone.

Other indigenous place names come from a tribe’s history. In south-central Montana is a river today referred to as the Clark’s Fork of the Yellowstone, but to the Apsáalooke this river has long been known as “Rotten Sun Dance Lodge River” or “Where the Sun Dance Lodge was Run Over.”

Tribal origin stories, interactions between tribes and unique topographical features are also sources of place names. The large, tower-like sandstone butte that Meriwether Lewis named “Pompey’s Tower” (later changed to “Pompey’s Pillar”) is known to the Crow as “Where the Mountain Lion Lays Down.” The Salish traversed over the Bitterroot Mountains on the “Trail to the Nez Perce,” which is now called Lolo Pass.

- ***The Crazy Mountains, Bitterroot Valley, Bear’s Paw Mountains, Bighorn River and Heart Butte*** are examples of places whose present names are similar to or the same as those used by regional tribes long before Lewis & Clark’s journey through this region.

- **Geography Fact:** *Most of Yellowstone Park is part of the traditional Apsáalooke territory and was included in the original treaty designating the Crow Reservation. The Shoshone, Bannock and Nez Perce tribes also used this area, and other tribes in the region were familiar with it. The Blackfeet called the Yellowstone region “Many Smokes” because of its numerous geysers.*

Place names are an essential part of indigenous people’s oral histories. One purpose for preserving and teaching tribal languages is to preserve the history of the tribes themselves. Each tribal language is unique and carries important cultural and historic information that cannot be “translated” into English.

*(*Quoted from pages 3-4 of “An Interactive Guide with Activities for Parents and Children” by Laura Ferguson for the exhibit “Neither Empty Nor Unknown—Montana at the Time of Lewis and Clark.” Copyright 2008, Montana Historical Society, <http://mhs.mt.gov/>)*

Excerpt from “Lewis and Clark Slept Here”

Dr. Walter Fleming is the chair of the Native American Studies program at Montana State University, Bozeman. In his essay “Lewis and Clark Slept Here,” Dr. Fleming commented on the Lewis and Clark expedition and its impact on place names in Montana.

My other important point is that the Expedition forever changed the landscape of Montana. The Milk River marks the western boundary of the Fort Peck Reservation and is some 50 miles away from Poplar. The Expedition named the river, the Milk, "from the peculiar whiteness of its water, which precisely resembles tea with a considerable mixture of milk." This river was known to the Hidatsa as "The River that Scolds the Other," because as this river flows into the Missouri, it travels side by side with the Missouri for a short distance before giving up its identity. And what does your official Montana highway map call this river today? That's the impact of the Corps of Discovery. Montana carries little of its Native character as measured by current place-names.

(from “Lewis and Clark Slept Here” by Walter C. Fleming, retrieved online February 5, 2018, <http://hearingvoices.com/trail/writs/fleming.html>)

Attachment D Place Names Worksheet

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Place Name
2. County
3. Is it on an Indian Reservation? (If so, which one?)
4. If it is *not* on an Indian Reservation, which is the nearest reservation, and how many miles away is that reservation?
5. Is it near (or on) the Lewis and Clark Trail?
6. Compare the state highway map to the 1855 tribal territories map. Find the approximate location of the place you are learning about. (*If your location is in the area referred to as the "Common Hunting Ground," the tribes you would list are Shoshone, Nez Perce, Bannack, and Salish because they were the main tribes who had occupied or used this territory for the last several centuries.*) Which tribe (or tribes) lived in this area in 1855?
7. What do you know about the place name you are researching? (What or who is the origin of this place name and why it called by this name?)
8. Write down at least two of the different influences on place names as named by any of the tribes of Montana. Give an example for each, if you can and tell which tribe the names came from.
9. What is one difference between place names given by tribes and place names chosen by Euro-Americans (explorers, settlers, map-makers, etc.)? Give a specific example of a tribally named place and an "American" place name to illustrate your answer.
10. How do you think a resource like a map tells something about one's culture and influences a person's perception of the world?