Introduction to Native American Indian Lands

Getting ready for the visit

2015 Rethinking Forest Regulations Workshop
Some facts about Native Americans

- 4.5 million American Indian, or 1.5% of the total U.S. population (2007, U.S. Bureau of the Census)
- 566 federally-recognized sovereign Indian Tribes (which means they are recognized as having a government-to-government relationship with the US)
- The largest reservation in the US is the Navajo Nation (~6.5Mha), the smallest is 0.5ha.
- Indians lands represent 5% of the total land area in the US but contain about 10% of all the country’s energy reserves.
A brutal and difficult history

- **Up to 15\textsuperscript{th} – mid-19\textsuperscript{th} Century:** American Indian and Alaska Native people lived in organized societies with their own forms of government.

- **16\textsuperscript{th}-18\textsuperscript{th} Centuries:** European, colonial and then US government signed treaties with the tribes to acquire their land.

- **18\textsuperscript{th} -19\textsuperscript{th} Century: Westward Expansion:** tribes pushed to the west, military campaigns led by the US government to acquire Indian land in the East, then West and relocate tribes to Indian reservations. Indian Wars.

- **1890** – last major massacre “Wounded Knee”

- **1891** – “Forest Reserve Act - foundation of the US Forest Service – “withdrawing land from the public domain”
US Westward Expansion

1783
1803
1845
1846
1848
1783
1819

WEST

EAST
A brutal and difficult history

- **Early 20th Century:** forced conversion of communally held tribal lands into small parcels for individual Indian ownership; the US government took over 90 million acres (36Mha) of land from tribes without compensation. Government cut support, people starved, tribes lost much of what they had.

A poster advertises Indian lands for sale in the allotment arena.
A brutal and difficult history

• **1968-Present: Self-Determination Period:** development of a policy of self-determination and self-governance, tribes regaining control over their lands and resources.
New exhibition at the National Museum of the American Indian documents the history of 450+ treaties between American Indians and the US, from the days of the early republic to the US government’s use in the 19th century of coercive treaties to the 20th century, when Indian Nations successfully fought court and legislative battles for federal recognition of their treaty rights.

(The destructive) Dawes Act of 1887 “to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the Various Reservations”

“To each head of a family, one-quarter of a section; To each single person over eighteen years of age, one-eighth of a section; and To each other single person under eighteen years now living, or who may be born prior to the date of the order of the President directing an allotment of the lands embraced in any reservation, one-sixteenth of a section...”
Tribal Land Tenure in the US today

56 million acres (~23 Mha) held in trust by the federal government for the Indian beneficiaries

326 Indian land areas in the U.S. are administered as federal Indian reservations (i.e., reservations, pueblos, rancherias, missions, villages, communities, etc.).

11 million acres (~4MHa) held in individual allotments

40 million non-trust acres (~16Mha) held in Alaska by Alaska Native Corporations

> 100 million acres (~40 Mha) beyond tribal boundaries, where Tribes have rights to manage and/or use (hunt, fish, gather, perform spiritual and cultural practices), where Tribes have Treaty Rights
Original inhabitants of Montana

About Our Maps

Other Indian tribes driven into Montana after Europeans arrived included:

- The Chippewa tribe
- The Cree tribe

There are seven federally recognized Indian tribes in Montana today.
Land Ownership on the Flathead Nation – Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes