

5/31/2018

President Troy S. Weston, Oglala Sioux Tribe
Rapid City, South Dakota

U.S. Department of the Interior
Consultation on Land Into Trust

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is one of the largest Indian tribes in the United States, with almost 47,000 tribal members and our youth comprise a large percentage of our people, with over 35% of us under the age of 18. Our Pine Ridge Reservation is located in the southwest corner of South Dakota and into the northwest corner of Nebraska.

The Pine Ridge Reservation includes roughly 3,469 square miles of territory, which is larger than the States of Rhode Island and Delaware combined. Our Pine Ridge Reservation stretches from the Badlands National Park in the North across the Nebraska state line, where our Oglala Sioux nursing home is in Nebraska.

Although we have farm lands, our grazing lands are more extensive, and agriculture is our largest economic activity.

North and South Dakota are named for our Great Sioux Nation, and we are the Lakota Oyate of the Oceti Sakowin, Seven Council Fires, which includes Dakota and Yankton Sioux relatives in Minnesota and eastern South Dakota and our sister tribes from the Great Sioux Reservation, Rosebud, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Cheyenne River and Standing Rock.

We are born of the land. Our traditions tell us that in the beginning, Inyan—the Rock—was with Wakan Tanka, the Great Spirit, at the Creation of the World—Unci Maka, Grandmother Earth. Our people emerged from underground at Wind Cave, and came to live on the Prairies with the Buffalo Nation.

As one of the tribes of the Great Sioux Nation our original territory was vast. Extending north and south from North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas and from Minnesota and Iowa in the east to Wyoming and Colorado in the west. In the 1851 Treaty with the Sioux Nation—the first Fort Laramie Treaty—the United States acknowledged our territory, our status as sovereign nations with the power of war and peace, and sought peace and our friendship.

In 1854, in the Kansas Nebraska Act, our Sioux Nation territory was excluded from Nebraska territory because the United States acknowledged our lands as Sioux Nation Indian country and pledged to rigidly adhere to our 1851 Treaty and respect our Sioux Nation rights of person—meaning liberty and self-government—and property—meaning our lands just as if the Act had never been enacted.

Yet, with a dispute over a single Mormon cow lost on the Oregon Trail, the United States sent out the arrogant Lt. Grattan who started a war by killing Chief

Conquering Bear. Our Lakota people, acting in self-defense, killed Lt. Grattan and his military contingent. In response, the United States committed an atrocity by attacking the sleeping Lakota village at Blue Water Creek with U.S. 600 cavalry and infantry soldiers led by General Harney. Later, military surveyors named Hinhan Kaga—the highest mountain in the Black Hills—after Harney. Just three years ago, the U.S. Geologic Survey renamed our sacred mountain Black Elk Peak.

Under the 1851 and 1868 Treaties, the Great Sioux Nation reserved 21 million acres of western South Dakota from the low water mark on the east bank of the Missouri River as our “permanent home” and 44 million acres of land in Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and North Dakota as unceded Indian territory from among our original Lakota, Nakota, Dakota territory.

In 1876, in violation of the 1851 and 1868 Treaties, the United States sent the U.S. Army under the command of General George Crook and the U.S. Cavalry under the command of Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer to attack our Lakota-Nakota-and-Dakota people at the Little Big Horn. The Federal Government sought to steal the Black Hills. In 1877, in the “Sell or Starve” Act, Congress seized 7 million acres in the Black Hills from the Great Sioux Nation.

In 1889, to facilitate North and South Dakota Statehood, the United States took an additional 11 million acres of land and transferred our “permanent home” to the railroads and cattle barrons, dividing the Great Sioux Reservation into six small reservations. In 1890, the United States, acting through the BIA Agent, BIA Police and U.S. Cavalry assassinated Sitting Bull and chased his people down to the Cheyenne River Reservation. Sitting Bull’s people joined with Big Foot’s band and travelled down to Pine Ridge. At Wounded Knee, the Cavalry surrounded our people, disarmed them, and opened fire—killing 300 of our people, mostly women and children.

From 1889 through 1934, the Sioux Nation tribes lost an additional 6 million acres under the Allotment Policy. During this period, Indian nations suffered under unconstitutional religious, cultural and linguistic prohibitions that amounted to an official cultural genocide policy. As a result, the Oglala Sioux and our sister Sioux Tribes suffer from poverty, economic suffering, and untimely death and disease.

THE INDIAN REORGANIZATION ACT OF 1934

In 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt put forth the Indian Reorganization Act to restore Indian lands to promote tribal self-government, Indian economic development, and self-sufficiency. Allotment came to an end.

THE FIRST THING THAT THE SECRETARY SHOULD DO UNDER THE LAND INTO TRUST PROCESS IS TO CATALOGUE THE UNOCCUPIED FEDERAL LANDS IN OUR 1851 AND 1868 TREATY AREAS

And the Secretary should work with Secretary of Ag and return those treaty lands

60 million / Treats Why

THE GOAL OF THE INDIAN SELF DETERMINATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND RESTORATION OF INDIAN NATION HOMELANDS

- **The Goal of the Land Into Trust Program Should be Restoration of our Indian Nation Homelands in order to promote:**
- **Indian Self-Determination;**
- **Tribal Self-Government;**
- **Revitalization of our Tribal Economies;**
- **Government Programs and Services, including Education, Health Care, Housing, Transportation, Police and Fire, Water, Sewer and Sanitation Services;**
- **Cultural Preservation, including the Recovery of Sacred Sites; and**
- **Making our Reservations True Homelands for our Native Nations.**

ON-RESERVATION LANDS SHOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY RETURNED TO TRUST.

FORMER RESERVATION LANDS SHOULD BE TREATED AS ON-RESERVATION LANDS.

THERE SHOULD BE NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST INDIAN LANDS TO BE USED FOR GAMING BECAUSE THEY ARE SUBJECT TO THE INDIAN GAMING REGULATORY ACT PROCESSES.

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