



BLACKFOOT – CLARK FORK RESTORATION LANDSCAPE



Costewardship Highlights

The Bureau of Land Management is infusing \$9.54 million for ecosystem restoration and resilience into Missoula Field Office public lands, as part of the Biden- Harris Administration’s Investing in America agenda. The proposed work will focus on restoring public lands, strengthening communities and local economies, advancing climate resilience and furthering our commitment to Tribal collaboration and partnership.

A History of Working Together

The Blackfoot – Clark Fork Restoration landscape is part of the aboriginal homelands of the Salish and Kootenai Tribes and includes several culturally important landmarks. From the Blackfoot River to the Rattlesnake Mountains, the valleys and hills of this landscape are full of meaningful places that are being reconnected to members of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes for the first time in a generation thanks to federal and The Nature Conservancy partnerships.

As part of a multi-phased land conservation process, BLM is working to acquire new public lands in the lower Blackfoot landscape using Land Water Conservation Funds. As the Missoula Field Office closes in on acquisitions of nearly 60,000 acres of new federally managed public lands, the BLM is proud to honor the Reserved Treaty Rights set aside for this landscape in the 1855 Hellgate Treaty. These rights, including the opportunity to access, hunt and gather wild foods, and conduct traditional practices – is not new to Missoula BLM or CSKT – who have a legacy of prioritizing cultural values in close partnership with The Nature Conservancy.

BLM works closely with CSKT to develop project priorities based on leadership intent from Tribal Council and the Salish and Kootenai cultural committees. The projects prioritized by the Tribe are in close alignment with the ecological restoration needs brought forward by BLM staff; and we are working to create a collaborative co-stewardship plan – combining traditional ecological knowledge and the BLM’s resource management framework to manage forest conditions, native plants, and riparian habitat for the shared benefit of all users.



For more information, visit: www.blm.gov/montana-dakotas-restoration



Costewardship Highlights

Co-stewardship Projects

Reserve Treaty Rights Lands Program

In 2015, the Reserve Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) program was started by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Fuels Management Program with the intention to treat and restore Tribal landscapes within and adjacent to reserved treaty rights lands. The Missoula Field Office began partnering with CSKT's Forestry and Fuels programs in 2018 to complete a suite of projects including native plant community improvements and ungulate habitat restoration. Today, CSKT manages a robust RTRL program including work on BLM, The Nature Conservancy, and MT Department of Natural Resources managed public lands. Projects include activities such as native plant inventories, seed collection, and propagation, reforestation, weed spraying, prescribed burn preparations, and starting in 2023, projects will include supporting culture camps to reconnect Tribal members with their ancestral lands.



Connection with the Land Starts with Plants

A top priority of the co-stewardship efforts between BLM and CSKT includes restoration projects centered on culturally important plants, particularly bitterroot and blue camas. These species are important food sources to the Salish people, who still collect these plants for traditional practices today. As each species bloomed across the landscape, people would follow the most available food sources from valley bottoms to mountain tops. Missoula BLM has conducted a significant inventory of these native plant communities and continues to work on restoration treatments, including camas planting, seeding, and prescribed burning to restore meadow habitats where camas thrives.



BLM's First Good Neighbor Authority Agreement with a Tribe

In 2023, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes entered into a financial assistance agreement using the Good Neighbor Authority – this agreement was the first GNA agreement between BLM and Tribes in the United States! The financial assistance agreement, funded with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is pursuing capitol improvement projects for the Tribe's Forestry and Native Plant nursery. In the near future, seedlings grown from this nursery will be outplanted in co-stewardship projects across the Blackfoot Clark Fork restoration landscape.

Formalizing Co-stewardship

In 2022, Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland issued Secretarial Order 3403, directing BLM to create state-specific plans for outreach and identification of co-stewardship opportunities. With support from CSKT's Tribal Council and Montana-Dakota's State Leadership, CSKT and Missoula Field Office are working to develop a Co-stewardship Memorandum of Understanding. This MOU will provide a guiding document reflecting our shared restoration objectives and providing efficient paths to work together.