

# Flathead Reservation Land Use

by Peggy Mattson

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**Grade level** 6

**Time required**

Two to three 45 minute class periods

**Materials/Technology**

Flathead Reservation maps  
Calculators  
Rulers  
Tribal personnel  
*The Politics of Allotment* by  
Burton K. Wheeler

**Summary**

The focus of this lesson is to enable students to become familiar with the physical features, infrastructures, and land ownership boundaries of the Flathead Reservation. Using maps, students will calculate the land type distributions. They will compare early reservation size and areas to the present acreage.

**Objectives**

The student will:

- 1) become familiar with the various types of lands and features on the Flathead Reservation, including Tribally owned and fee patent land.
- 2) strategize and use a method for determining percentages of various designated land types.
- 3) make a chart and compare results with those of classmates.

**Montana Math standards addressed**

- 1) Students engage in the mathematical processes of problem solving and reasoning, estimation, communication, connections and applications, and using appropriate technology.
- 2) Students demonstrate understanding of and an ability to use numbers and operations.
- 3) Students demonstrate understanding of measurable attributes and an ability to use measurement processes.
- 4) Students demonstrate understanding of and an ability to use data analysis, probability and statistics.

**Assessment**

- 1) The teacher should observe students daily and evaluate their ability to work together, to develop a reasonable strategy for computing land type areas, to perform the calculations, and to create the graphs/charts of land areas.
- 2) Evaluate students based on their ability to explain land calculations and charts/graphs.

**Procedure**

*Day 1* – Introduction to the Reservation maps

Introduce students to the reservation maps, show them how to read map keys, and discuss the various types of lands on the reservation. Teacher explains the color codes of the Reservation Map and provides background information on the Allotment and Homestead Acts. Give

background information on the early reservation land size and discuss how the land distributions have changed over the years. Invite a tribal member, such as a professional from one of the tribal natural resources departments, or a member of a culture committee, to talk with the class about the history of the land distribution on the reservation. Have students estimate the amount of water versus land on the reservation, amount of state versus tribal land, trust vs. fee land, roads, railways, wilderness areas, etc.

*Day 2 – Calculating land areas*

Have pairs of students strategize how to calculate the percentage of each type of land on the reservation from the map. Land types could include wilderness, allotments, fee, trust, state, federal, towns and water. Student answers should reflect reasonable data finding methods. Students should then chart and graph their results. Finally, as a class, students should compare their results with those of their classmates.

**Further information**

For further information about this activity, contact Peggy Mattson via electronic mail at [rmspmatt@ronan.net](mailto:rmspmatt@ronan.net).