

Yellowstone



Associated Tribes

Yellowstone National Park
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www.nps.gov/yell



About Associated Tribes

Above, from left to right: Nez Perce explain the significance of the Nez Perce National Historic Trail; a Coeur d'Alene fisheries biologist works on Yellowstone Lake; a Salish elder talks about her tribe's use of Obsidian Cliff; a Kiowa sings about buffalo in the park.

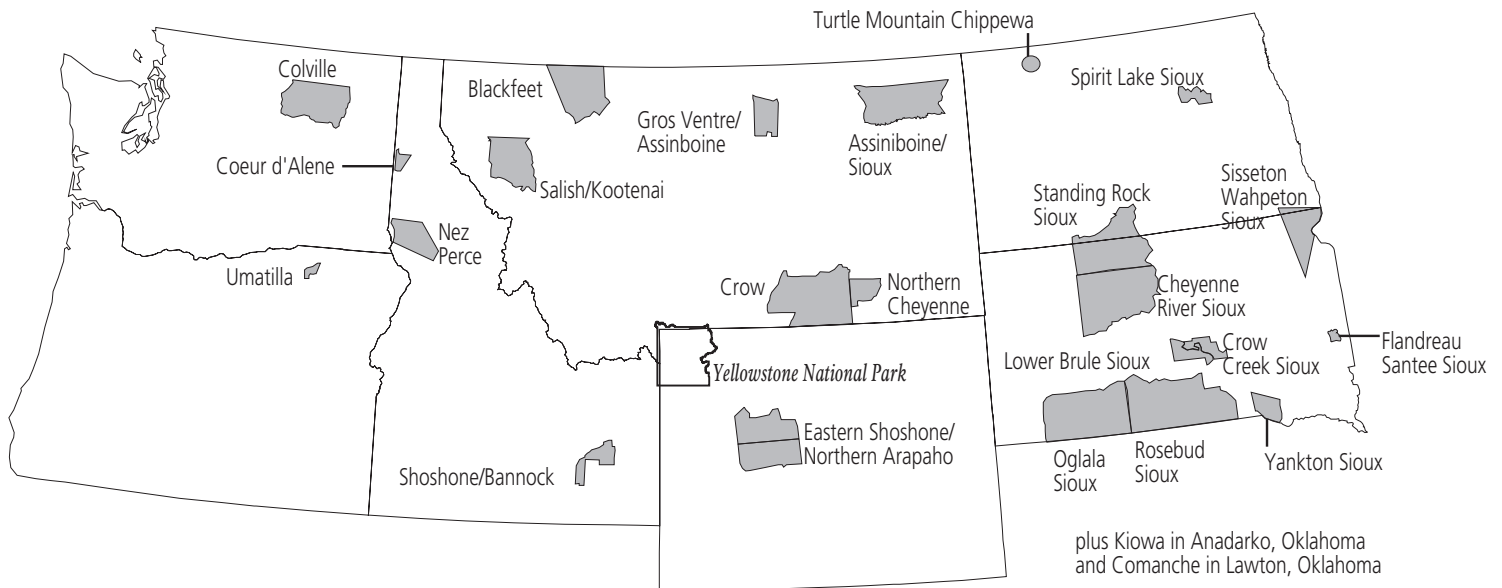
Which tribes? Those who show association to Yellowstone—from hundreds to thousands of years—through archeological evidence, oral histories, and ongoing consultations.

Designation: The associated tribes of Yellowstone.

Number of tribes: Twenty-six as of March 2005.

The tribes & the park:

- Some came for ceremonial reasons.
- Some tribes lived here through a few seasons at least, if not year-round.
- Almost all hunted and gathered, and traded here.
- Some came to raid other tribes.
- Certain places and resources remain important to these tribes' sense of themselves and in maintaining their cultural traditions.



Tribal Resources in Yellowstone

Ethnographic resources are the natural and cultural features of a park that are significant to native peoples. The associated tribes of Yellowstone have identified more than 263 ethnographic resources here. They include:

- tribal origination sites
- hunting, gathering, and ceremonial sites
- trails

- Yellowstone Lake
- obsidian
- bison
- wolves
- bears
- bighorn sheep
- medicinal and culinary plants
- hydrothermal areas such as Mud Volcano and Mammoth Hot Springs

Stories from Yellowstone



Dragon's Mouth

Shoshone: Their oral histories give the Yellowstone area as their place of origination.

Salish: Their oral tradition places their ancestors in this region several thousand years ago. The Salish tell of encountering the Kiowa here.

The Kiowa of Oklahoma: Their oral histories place their people in Yellowstone from the 1400s to the 1700s. They also tell a heroic story of their creator giving Yellowstone to the Kiowa as their homeland. This occurred at Dragon's Mouth, a hot spring in the Mud Volcano area.

Crow: Dragon's Mouth figures in Crow stories too. Descendants of Crow who frequented the Yellowstone Plateau say this feature was created by a young hero. He transformed a dangerous bull bison who was eating Crow people into this hydrothermal feature, which emits snorts of hot air by the old bull. To keep the old buffalo in place, the young man transformed a cougar into Mud Volcano. If you look closely at the earth surrounding this feature, you might see a closed eye and a down-folded ear of the lion.

Continuing Traditions, Enriching Experience

Tribes and Yellowstone National Park have a mutual interest in cultural preservation. Tribes want traditions to survive and the National Park Service wants to assist such preservation as part of its commitment to protecting cultural resources.

In addition, tribes are sovereign nations whose leaders have a legal relationship with the federal government that is not shared by the general public. Consequently, representatives of Yellowstone's associated tribes participate in periodic consultation meetings with park managers. They bring tribal perspectives to current issues such as bison management. (Bison in Yellowstone are a precious resource to all associated tribes.) Tribes also comment on park projects that could affect their ethnographic resources.

By working with associated tribes, Yellowstone National Park can manage Yellowstone's resources to protect the heritage of tribes, strengthen native peoples' ability to perpetuate their culture, and enrich visitors' understanding and enjoyment of these resources.



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For more information

American Indians and National Parks, 1988, Robert H. Keller and Michael F. Turek, University of Arizona Press
"Flight of the Nez Perce," Yell 245 (available free for the asking at park visitor centers)

Indians of Yellowstone National Park, 2002, Joel Janetski, University of Utah Press

Restoring a Presence: American Indians and Yellowstone National Park, 2004, Peter Nabokov and Lawrence Loendorf, University of Oklahoma Press

Also look for books about tribes in the Yellowstone Association bookstores or at www.YellowstoneAssociation.org, www.nps.gov/yell

www.yellowstoneassociation.org

many tribes have websites, including: www.crownations.net

www.easternshoshone.net

www.shoshonebannocktribes.com

www.nativeamericans.com/kiowa.htm

www.nezperce.org