

## Introduction

Welcome to *Work House*, an education program developed for use in the classroom and Glacier National Park. This program has been written in cooperation with tribal members and educators on the Blackfeet and Confederated Salish/Kootenai Reservations.

While the title *Work House* (apotoki [work] oyis [lodge or house]) may have negative connotations in an anglo context, it is actually a translation of a very positive Blackfeet language concept for the way in which American Indian children traditionally acquired the skills needed to become productive members of their society. Tribal heritage and culture were transmitted to the children on a continuing basis. There was no such thing as school as we know it today. School for Native American children was in fact a form of apprenticeship--education for life. Life was school or *work house*. By the time children were five years old and able to follow directions, they began helping the women with everyday activities. Young boys played games that developed skills preparing them for the day they would be invited on a hunt. Gradually, the children learned by doing until they were as adept at survival tasks as any adult.

Winter evenings around the family or community fires were particularly good times for the transmission of culture and heritage. All history was passed on through oral tradition and tribal elders and leaders were accomplished storytellers. Adults seldom lectured the children. Stories and legends were designed to preserve tribal history and culture, provide examples for righteous living, explain natural phenomenon, and, of course, entertain. An accomplished story teller would command a child's undivided attention. Most children remembered well and looked forward to the time when they would have the experience and prowess to be a storyteller.

Because of the cultural premium placed on storytelling, adults never lost their desire to listen to the stories and improve their own repertoire and presentation skills. Central to many of these narrations were tribal heroes and spiritual helpers such as Napi, Coyote, Raven, Blue Jay, and Old Grandfather Creator. Because of the tribes close geographic proximity, names of Blackfeet spiritual helpers like Napi, Old Man, and Creator Sun occasionally crept into the Salishan stories, and Coyote was occasionally featured in Blackfeet stories. Traditional stories and parallel secular scientific stories are central to the integrated structure of *Work House*.

Educational philosophy of the Native American has always entailed learning by doing in the environment where the children were to apply their knowledge. Contemporary educators have reinvented this philosophy and call it hands-on education. The activities in *Work House* are designed to be hands-on.



A unifying theme for *Work House* is **succession**. Succession is a series of natural changes in topography, flora, and fauna taking place over time. Before humans developed the technology and numbers to impact and engineer the environment on a large scale, all succession was an inevitable outcome of evolution of species and natural phenomena like erosion, rainfall, fire, ice, or avalanche. An observer may have been saddened by the extinction of a plant or animal, or by the changing of the Earth's features resulting from flood or fire, but the change would have been accepted as natural and inevitable.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans, Native Americans had an impact upon the environment, but their way of life and philosophy precluded major changes to their world. Today technology is creating rapid change. Some of it good and some of it not so good. As a species, our actions have greatly accelerated the rate of change. While many of us might welcome some aspects of life as it was lived 500 years ago on this continent, few imagine that it would be possible. At the same time, only the very cynical accept all adverse changes that have occurred as irreversible. We can make an effort to heal the Earth; to regain positive aspects of the environment that existed in times past.

The Classroom and Park Visit Activities in this program are intended as a supplement to a school's curriculum. Background information and activities have been compiled and created with a consideration for the history, cultural heritage, and traditional relationships that Native Americans have had with the Earth. The activities are relevant to Glacier National Park and are designed to give dramatic impressions which will stimulate further interest, more detailed studies, and greater appreciation for Glacier National Park.

Glacier National Park was established to preserve the environment and provide for its use by park visitors. Active attempts have been made to keep the park as natural as it was when established in 1910. It is desirable to expand our role by being a part of an effort to heal the Earth -- to insure that humankind's influence on succession is truly for the better. *Work House* is designed with this ideal in mind. The more our children understand the workings of nature the more they can do to heal the Earth. What better, more natural place to learn about the world than in their own back yard --Glacier National Park.

Location of Glacier National Park in relation to the Blackfeet and Flathead Reservations.



## How to Use Work House

*Work House* consists of five interrelated tracks that focus on geological and biological succession while utilizing local Indian tribal heritage as a background. The five tracks in this program are:

1. Mountains and Mountain Building
2. Glaciers and Glaciation
3. Native Plant Use
4. Animals and Habitat
5. Humans and Glacier National Park

Each track has a similar format. *Work House* includes cultural and scientific background information, traditional stories, Classroom, Park Visit, and Back in the Classroom Activities for use by program participants.

When using this program, teachers should read the tribal information and the section titled *The Way* and then select a track to follow. Be sure to review the background and activities provided. It is not necessary to be familiar with the entire program to use individual tracks; however, an activity from another track may supplement the unit you are studying.

A teacher may choose to do some or all of the Classroom Activities. If arrangements are made for a naturalist to conduct Park Visit Activities with your class, we recommend that some of the Classroom Activities be completed prior to coming to the park.

If possible, Classroom Activities should be conducted bilingually. Park naturalists are not fluent speakers of the area's native languages; however, the staff is interested in learning and incorporating as much of the language as they can. Naturalists also encourage teachers to participate in the Park Visit Activities.

### Work House Activity Kit

The *Work House* Activity Kit is available on the Blackfeet and Confederated Salish/Kootenai reservations for use and contains presentation materials, background books, and other items to be used in your classroom (see list of kit contents in the appendix). Non-reservation teachers should call Glacier National Park staff to receive additional materials. Many of the kit materials are to be used for specific activities; however, some books, slide sets, videos, etc., are included for the teacher's use in designing their own classroom activities. The kit will be stored in your school district and you will need to arrange to pick it up from the current user or have it delivered to your school. After obtaining a few supplementary materials most activities can be implemented with minimal preparation.



Additional Classroom Activities for Track 4--Animals and Habitat, are provided in the Activity Kit. Classes wishing to do all Track 4 exercises would do well to obtain the kit before beginning.

### **Conducting the Activities**

Review the background information for your chosen Track and decide how to adapt it for your class. Select Classroom Activities for use, locate any materials that are not included in the kit, and practice using the materials provided. It should be relatively easy to follow the procedures as they are detailed in the activities. You may wish to select your own stories from the supplemental books in the kit or from your own repertoire.

### **Arranging for a Park Visit**

After selecting a tract for study, you may want to plan a park visit. If so, call the park naturalist at the number and location listed below. Allow at least 1 1/2 hours on-site for your park visit. Optimum class size for a visit is approximately 30 students. Special arrangements must be made for larger groups. Also, please be sure to provide chaperons to assist with classes. Teachers are responsible for class discipline. You may choose to visit the park on your own; however, we encourage contact with a park naturalist.

**To arrange for a visit to Apgar, please contact:**

**District Interpreter  
West Lakes Office  
Glacier National Park  
West Glacier, Montana 59936  
(406) 888-7942**

**To arrange for a visit to St. Mary, please contact:**

**District Interpreter  
Hudson Bay District  
Glacier National Park  
St. Mary Ranger Station  
Browning, Montana 59417  
(406) 732-7757**

Park entrance fees are waived for educational groups and there is no charge for park naturalist activities.



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## Special Instructions

It is important to note that, out of respect for cultural values, Coyote stories may not be used until November. None are directly presented in this program but, if the decision is made to use them, please use them after the first snowfall and stop using them in the spring. Ideally teachers would do well to confer with local cultural authorities about Coyote story usage.

Before your park visit, be sure to discuss the field trip with the students. Be prepared for adverse weather and have the students dress accordingly. Also, use the materials in the Activity Kit to introduce the class to the National Park. Remember, everything in the park is protected. Students should know that they can not collect souvenirs. Students can help preserve Glacier by not picking the flowers, crowding the wildlife, or damaging the vegetation.

For teachers who would like additional information on how to implement the activities in this and other science programs there are two sections included in the Appendix titled *A Rationale for Teaching Science in an Integrated Format* and *Some General Considerations in Preparing Concrete Activities for the Study of the Environment*.

## Program Evaluation

Your feedback on the effectiveness of *Work House* is wanted. Please take the time to fill out and return the evaluation form provided in the Activity Kit. Suggestions on improving activities or thoughts on additional tracks to be added to this program would be appreciated.



## Getting to Know “The People”

It is not the purpose, nor is it within the scope of *Work House* to give a complete history of the bands and tribes of the Salish and Kootenai Confederation or of the Blackfeet Nation. Various cultural committees, historians and ethnographers may advocate somewhat different interpretations of the information provided in this section of the introduction. There will probably never be a version of this information that will perfectly satisfy all points of view. However; for the convenience of program participants, brief tribal histories are included. More complete accounts can be found in the books listed in the bibliography at the end of this work, or in your local library. **It would be most appropriate to invite a Tribal Cultural Committee spokesperson into your classroom to discuss Tribal history.**



Tipis at the Logan Pass dedication, 1933. (N.P.S. Photo)



## The Blackfeet

The Blackfeet Nation consists of four subdivisions; the Siksika or Northern Blackfeet, the Kainah or Blood, the Northern Piegan, and the Southern Piegan or Pikuni. The neighboring Cree Indians began calling this tribe, the Blackfeet. It is unclear at this point in history why the name Blackfeet was chosen. Some historians feel that it is reference to blackened moccasin soles caused by walking through burned over prairie. Others think moccasin soles were intentionally painted black.

By the early nineteenth century the Blackfeet occupied and controlled most of the area from the North Saskatchewan River south to the Missouri and Yellowstone Rivers, and from the Rocky Mountain Front in the west to the mouth of the Milk River in the east. They dominated the entire eastern front of what is now Glacier National Park. The Piegan people formed the southwestern vanguard of the Blackfeet Nation and patrolled the gateways to the plains in an ongoing attempt to prevent the western tribes from using the area and its resources.

The tribes from west of the mountains often used northern passes on their journeys east to hunt the buffalo. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Blackfeet and the western tribes had their most frequent contact, and on occasions armed conflict, in and near these passes.

The Blackfeet are of the Great Plains culture. Some Blackfeet traditions claim that they have always occupied parts of Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Montana--that they "woke up here". Other traditions, heavily favored by Anglo anthropologists, preserve an ancient account of The Long-Ago People crossing over from Asia on the Bering Land Bridge as they followed game. Still other sources trace the Blackfeet to Algonquin sources in the northeastern Canadian forests. According to the latter tradition, the Blackfeet had migrated to the Great Plains long before the arrival of white men and had finished their migration to the Rocky Mountains by the beginning of the eighteenth century. A popular and quite recent theory, supported by archeological, linguistic and genetic arguments, suggests that the Blackfeet may have been a strong presence in the immediate area for a minimum of 5,000 years. The dialects of the Blackfeet language belong to the Algonquian family of languages. None of these accounts necessarily contradicts the others -- the Blackfeet have been a strong presence in the area for a long time.

People of the Plains culture followed a subsistence hunting and gathering cycle. However, since the Blackfeet were almost exclusively dependent upon the buffalo herds for every facet of their livelihood, they were much more nomadic and mobile than their western neighbors. Though they tended to camp in the same locations at certain times of the year, the Blackfeet seldom constructed permanent lodges of any kind. Their skin lodges were put up and taken down in a matter of minutes and could be readily trans-



ported through a cycle of camps even in the “dog days” before horses made moving so much easier.

Though the western tribes relied heavily on seasonally abundant roots and berries, the bulk of the Blackfeet diet consisted of buffalo meat. They gathered plants for food but went so far as to call it “nothing food”. Buffalo meat was “real food”. Nonetheless, the Blackfeet sometimes traveled to the western valleys to dig for bitterroot and camas where they were much more plentiful than on the dry plains.

Plains culture was dependent upon buffalo, limited use of roots and berries, virtually no fishing, no agriculture other than raising tobacco, highly moveable lodges, transportation by travois, either behind dogs or horses, and a highly developed use of buffalo and deer skins in the crafting of clothing, lodges, and other household items. Heavier items made of wood, stone, and bone were de-emphasized because of the need to travel light. The Blackfeet seldom needed water transportation; when necessary they constructed make-shift rafts to transport items across swollen rivers.

Aside from the heavy emphasis upon the buffalo hunt, the search for food was similar to other area tribes. Blackfeet men did most of the hunting while the women did most of the gathering and processed the harvests of both activities. Blackfeet children learned by doing, by example, and through apprenticeship to their elders. The Blackfeet had to find sheltered river valleys in which to spend the winter. They enjoyed the long winter evenings when their heritage and culture were transmitted and reinforced around the communal fire. Blackfeet stories had their heroes and spiritual helpers. Foremost among the creation heroes were Napi or Old Man and Creator Sun. Because the Plains culture of the Blackfeet overlapped with the Salishan Plateau culture of the western tribes, their stories influenced each other. Napi or Old Man is often the protagonist in a story that matches one about Coyote in the Salishan culture.

Blackfeet were completely dependent upon the buffalo herds for survival and were very protective of the territory in which the herds ranged. In order to insure their livelihood, it was necessary to keep other tribes from hunting the buffalo. Consequently, warfare became a way of life. Much of Blackfeet culture centered on becoming a warrior. Patrolling the borders of their territory required many good horses and excellent horsemanship. Being a warrior involved a great deal of skill raising and handling horses. Horses, in turn, became the primary spoils of war.

The skill of the Blackfeet warrior was legendary. In part, it was fear and respect that other tribes and white explorers had for the Blackfeet that kept the northern plains unchanged for so many years.





## The Salish/Kootenai Confederation

The tribes and bands comprising the Confederated Salish/Kootenai were loosely associated long before confederation was forced upon them by the Hellgate Treaty of 1855. The Kalispel, Lower Pend d'Oreilles, and the Bitterroot Salish were all part of the Salishan Plateau culture which included many of the Indian tribes in the Pacific Northwest. They spoke dialects of a Salish language base which allowed them to communicate and trade with most groups in the Columbia drainage. It is likely that all of these groups were derived from common ancestors somewhere to the northwest of present day western Montana. Many Anglo historians, anthropologists and ethnographers suggest that Native American tribes are descended from aboriginal natives who crossed into the Americas on the Bering Land Bridge. Many oral traditions assert that The People have always lived in the Americas, and still others claim that the original ancestors came over the great waters to the west in large canoes. At any rate, the Salishan peoples have occupied the Northwest for a very long time.

The Kootenai, as they are commonly known today, prefer the name Ktunaxa and the Montana group most intimately related to the Glacier National Park area is called the Ksanka Band. In a translation of their native language, they are known as the Fish Trap People in reference to the numerous fish traps that they traditionally used on Flathead Lake. Ktunaxa territory once occupied much of present day Southern Alberta, British Columbia, Idaho, and Montana. Their language base is unrelated to the Salishan base of the Northwestern Plateau culture or to the predominant Algonquian base of the Blackfeet Plains culture. No one really knows where the Ktunaxan language base originated and there are no closely related languages in the Americas.



Native Americans at Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park. (N.P.S. Photo)



territory with the Salish groups known as the Kalispel and the Lower Pend d'Oreille. The confederated tribes respected each other's needs and rights, sometimes influenced each other's culture, and often cooperated in hunting expeditions to the east side of the mountains. The confederation was solidified by the necessity to marshal large forces for protection while hunting buffalo in areas where they were likely to encounter Blackfeet.

Up until the early eighteenth century, their territory extended out onto the prairies east of the Continental Divide which the tribes called The Backbone of the World. However, with the growing dominance of the Blackfeet, the western tribes were eventually confined to the west side of the mountains when not hunting. These western tribes were able to share what is now western Montana because their hunting-gathering life style was easily sustained in the woodlands and mountains of the area.

Today the tribes are collectively known as the Flathead Tribes. Flathead is actually a misnomer. When Lewis and Clark first encountered the Bitterroot Salish, the explorers mistook them for the west coast Flatheads.

The Bitterroot Salish contingent of the confederation traditionally made their home in the Bitterroot Valley. Most of their economy was centered in that area, though they ranged freely west of the Continental Divide. The Pend d'Oreilles and the Kalispel ranged throughout the western valleys from the Missoula area to the Canadian border. In early spring the hunting and gathering cycle began with root digging. The women dug for bitterroot, camas, wild carrots, and onions as well as for other roots and bulbs. They also gathered mosses and berries, medicinal plants, and herbs as they came in season. The gathering cycle was continuous from the first thaw in spring until the killing freeze in autumn. Until use of horses became common among people of the Plateau culture it was not unheard of for the men to help with the gathering although their time was occupied for the most part with fishing and hunting.

In late fall the women were busy drying and preserving meats and plants and processing hides for various uses while the men continued to hunt. The winter months were a little more relaxed, though the men continued to trap, go on occasional hunts, and ice fish. Women spent a good deal of their time making and repairing clothing. Everyone spent more time during the winter nights around the fire. It was a time for socializing and story telling.

Until the coming of the horse in the first half of the eighteenth century, hide-covered lodges were not common on the west side of the mountains. Even though Salish and Ktunaxa territory once extended out onto the plains east of the mountains, their primary home was west of the mountains where they often lived in semipermanent villages. When traveling, they had to move all of their belongings on their backs or with the help



of packing dogs. A buffalo hide lodge and the poles to support it were extremely heavy and cumbersome. Before horses, it was difficult to carry many hides over the mountains on a regular basis. Even after the introduction of the horse, the people found it more practical to construct a temporary lean-to of logs and branches when travelling into buffalo country.

Until horses became a common means of transportation, the usual lodge was likely to be covered by woven tule mats. Some lodges were partially sunken into pits and banked with earth. Some "long houses" for multiple family dwellings were built in lean-to fashion with a smoke slit running the length of the lodge peak. While these lodges were not as portable as the tipi, Plateau culture people were not required to move as often as Plains Indians.

As the white man's influence began to push the Blackfeet and other plains tribes closer and closer to the mountains, the people of the Salish and Kootenai Confederation were confined more and more to the west side of the mountains. Trade goods, horses, and weapons began to make their way into the area long before the local tribes actually saw white people. With horses, the plateau people became more mobile.

The Bitterroot Salish, the Kalispel, the Lower Pend d'Oreille, and the Ksanka Band of the Ktunaxa shared territory and exchanged useful knowledge and culture while retaining their tribal individuality and identity. The Bitterroot Valley was recognized as the home of the Salish. The Kalispel and Pend d'Oreille ranged from what is now western Washington, through the Pend d'Oreille Lake/Priest River area in what is now Idaho, to Camas Prairie and the present St. Ignatius area of western Montana. The Ktunaxa occupied an area ranging from the Tobacco Plains area in the north to the west shore of Flathead Lake. These groups were usually able to move freely through each other's home territories by observing certain courtesies and protocol.

The Ktunaxa, felt at home in what is now Glacier National Park. Their allied bands lived to the west, north, and east of the park and they probably hunted frequently in the area. Some traditions claim that the Ktunaxa actually held gatherings of the bands in the area. Not only did the North Fork Valley provide a convenient conduit for travel south by the northern bands, but the locations of Kintla, Bowman and McDonald Lakes provided inspiring central locations for gatherings.

Whether they gathered in the area, hunted, or just passed through, all of the groups of the Salish and Kootenai Confederation probably used some of the passes in what is now Glacier National Park for journeys east to hunt buffalo on the plains.



## The Influence of European Immigrants

The European influence was felt by the tribes before the Blackfeet or the Salish and Kootenai ever saw a white person. The Spanish brought horses to North America early in the sixteenth century. By the middle of the eighteenth century Indians in the Northwest were breeding and trading horses extensively. Tribal culture was beginning to change. People could travel further and faster and carry more possessions with them. Soon after the arrival of horses came the fur traders. The pursuit of the beaver took them into every part of the Americas. With the trappers came trading posts and trade goods. At first, some tribes were pleased. It was convenient to have metal tools and weapons. Canvas made maintenance and transportation of lodges much easier. Some even welcomed large-scale agriculture and the white man's religion. While many Indians felt that European religions were evil and destructive of their native culture, others felt that the white man's god was a confirmation of their traditional beliefs. Some preferred the white version of heaven to their traditional destinations in the Spirit World.

Regardless of how the white influence was received, it appeared to be here to stay. Most Indians found it impossible to live according to the old ways because their territory and means of subsistence had been taken away. Blackfeet culture nearly collapsed when the last of the great buffalo herds was wiped out in 1883. The following winter more than a quarter of the Pikuni died of starvation.

The tribes on the west side of the mountains were able to manage longer because they were not dependent on the buffalo. The reservations grew smaller and the opportunity to survive in the old way was eventually eliminated. Some of the people agreed to be acculturated because they had no other choice if they were to survive. Fortunately for us all, some tribal members held on to the old ways and preserved what they could of their heritage.

Today there is a strong interest in preserving Native American culture. Even whites have come to realize that Indian people know things about ecology and medicine that modern technology has yet to understand. Although few Indians would choose to return entirely to the old days, Indians and whites alike want to restore what they can of the values and culture which made the "People One With the Earth".



## The Way

There are many traditional differences among the individual tribes and bands that make up the Salish and Kootenai Confederation on the west side of the mountains and among the subgroups of Blackfeet on the east side. However, a mutual respect and an understanding that all Indians know a “way of life” that is in tune with the environment serves as a common bond.

Native Americans lived life in a highly spiritual manner. They were so intimately involved with *The Way* that it was not necessary to philosophize about how one should live. As children grew and learned survival skills by working with the adults, understanding and respect for their environment grew along with the skills. Children seldom needed to be told to respect living things. They learned through adult example and the values inherent in oral tradition. One Piegan elder called it living a “prayerful life”. He was not talking about prayer as it is used in formal religions. He meant living a life that is thankful for what the Earth gave us and always giving back to the Earth.

Living according to *The Way* involved understanding that we are a species sharing the Earth with other equally important species. All animals are participants in the cycle of life, and all things on Earth have a spirit nature interdependent with everything else; be it a human, grizzly bear, mosquito, tree, or rock. In our interdependence we use, consume, and learn from each other. Today it may be necessary to eat the buffalo; tomorrow it may be our turn to be eaten by the grizzly bear. Neither of these actions is taken lightly. If we use the buffalo, we pay him honor. We thank him and waste nothing. The first and the tastiest morsels are given back to the Earth from whence they came. If we use berries, the first are buried in the soil in acknowledgment that they are a gift from the Earth we share.

Never do we accumulate or harvest more than we can use. Napi and Coyote stories about harvesting and preparing foods frequently end with the refrain: “But some were left for seed”, or “The females were left to produce more of their kind so that there would always be food for future generations”. There was no such thing as conspicuous consumption. There was no deliberate waste. Because people needed to be mobile, it was considered foolish to burden oneself with too many possessions. In fact wealth was measured by the capacity to be generous. The accumulation of horses was not considered greed because horses enabled persons of influence to provide for others.

Indian life-style impacted the land lightly. No one owned land, one simply lived on it for a lifetime. Most tribes were on the move during a large part of the year. Treading lightly upon the land was deliberate. Long before all of the wood in an area was depleted and before all the plants and animals were harvested, the elders would look around and announce that it was time to move the camp, time to let the Earth heal. When whites asked Indians to become farmers and plow the land, most were appalled. Plowing would be



like cutting your mother with a knife. When travelling, every effort was made to leave little trace upon the land. Offerings of tobacco were left to the water spirits at crossings and tribute was made to significant landscape features along the way. When camp was made, all doorways were oriented to the east. Upon rising each day one's first act was to pay tribute to the Sun, the force behind all that grew and was good in nature.

The elderly were treasured and treated with respect. If it was truly an "old one's" desire to pass on, respect dictated that they be allowed to go off and die. It was considered an honor to be able to provide for many. Even when food was scarce, it was considered dishonorable for someone in the community to have to beg. True sensitivity and power included the ability to recognize when someone was in need. A "great one" anticipated tribal members' needs and helped them before they asked. It was a privilege and a power to be in a position to help. Affluence was measured by the ability and willingness to share.

Indians did not consider themselves to be lords over the animals, but approached animals from a position of humility. After all, animals seem to be better equipped for survival in the world. Animals never waste and seldom impact the environment in a negative way. Nearly all animal homes blend into their environment.



Native American encampment near Glacier National Park, circa 1930 (N.P.S. Photo)



Native Americans were aware that animals coexisted with every element of the environment. They believed that in many ways animals were as intelligent as humans. They observed the animals closely and looked to them for guidance. Though some had more to teach than others, all had something to teach humans. Different tribes looked more to some animals than to others depending upon the tribe's way of life. A very important "medicine" animal to the Blackfeet was the beaver. An important animal to the Ktunaxa was the grizzly bear. These two animals played important parts in their oral traditions. Both the beaver and the grizzly bear were important to the Salish and the Kalispel as well. Many stories attributed human characteristics to medicine animals.

For hundreds of years, the tribes on both sides of the mountains followed *The Way*. Their daily lives were in harmony with the world around them. They were truly living as if one with the Earth. The world as they knew it changed dramatically with the coming of the whites.



