

Fire on the Land Project

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

The landscape that European-Americans first saw when they traveled west of the Mississippi was not a natural terrain in the sense of being untouched by humans. It was a cultural landscape, a landscape in which the plant and animal communities had been shaped in large part by at least fourteen thousand years of burning by Indian people. In many areas tribal people doubled the frequency of fires.

Today, as managers attempt to reintroduce fire after a century of fire exclusion, the extent to which Native Americans used fire as a land management tool is often left out of the public debate. *The Fire on the Land* materials discuss in depth the tribal use of fire along with fundamental principals of fire ecology in the Northern Rockies, the changes that have occurred in vegetation as a result of one hundred years of fire exclusion, and how and why fire is being restored to the landscape. They include: (1) a storybook based on the Salish and Pend d'Oreille tale, *Beaver Steals Fire*; (2) a 12-to-15 minute video for all ages based on the storybook and hosted by the Salish elder and cultural leader Johnny Arlee; (3)

an interactive DVD on the Tribal use of fire and fire science; and (4) lesson plans to accompany the DVD and book. Using the DVD students can explore a Coyote story about stealing fire from the sky world,

Native Peoples and their use of fire in the Northern Rockies.

The materials produced help to inform both tribal and non-tribal people about the his-

Source: CSKT, 2009



Firestarter

listen to interviews with tribal elders and fire managers, interact with a primer on the science of fire ecology, read a history of the collision of traditional Indian burning with non-Indian attempts to suppress and exclude fire from the land.

toric use of fire by Indians and how the native plant and animal communities that we have inherited are the legacy of frequent fires, many of which were set by Indian people. Importantly, the information has been compiled and presented by Indian people. In the past, information about the Indian use of fire has been presented by non-Indians and therefore has lacked the tribal perspective. This project is unique in that it integrates the most up-to-date scientific knowledge and technology with traditional tribal knowledge about the use of fire. www.cskt.org/fire_history.swf

Source: CSKT, 2009



Coyote telling story

Underlying the tribal view and incorporated into this multimedia package are the cultural values of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille, which place the lessons within the larger context of the traditional Salish and Pend d'Oreille world view. That world view is a window into the way that fire was successfully used to shape and maintain landscapes for many thousands of years. It offers an alternative way of looking at both fire and landscapes. Join us as we explore



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