



The Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Wetlands Program Plan in Wetlands Program Development

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Presentation Outline

Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Background

Wetlands Program and
Wetland Program Plan (WPP)

WPP Observations

Challenges and
Recommendations

Background

The Coeur d'Alene Reservation is approximately 334,000 acres, not including Tribal submerged lands.

Aboriginal territory = more than 5 million acres.

6,760 residents according to the 2010 Census.

Tribal enrollment is 2,554 and growing (December 2020).

Tribe relies on forestry, agriculture, gaming, etc. in the current economy.

Tribe continues traditional subsistence activities such as fishing, hunting and gathering foods and medicine.

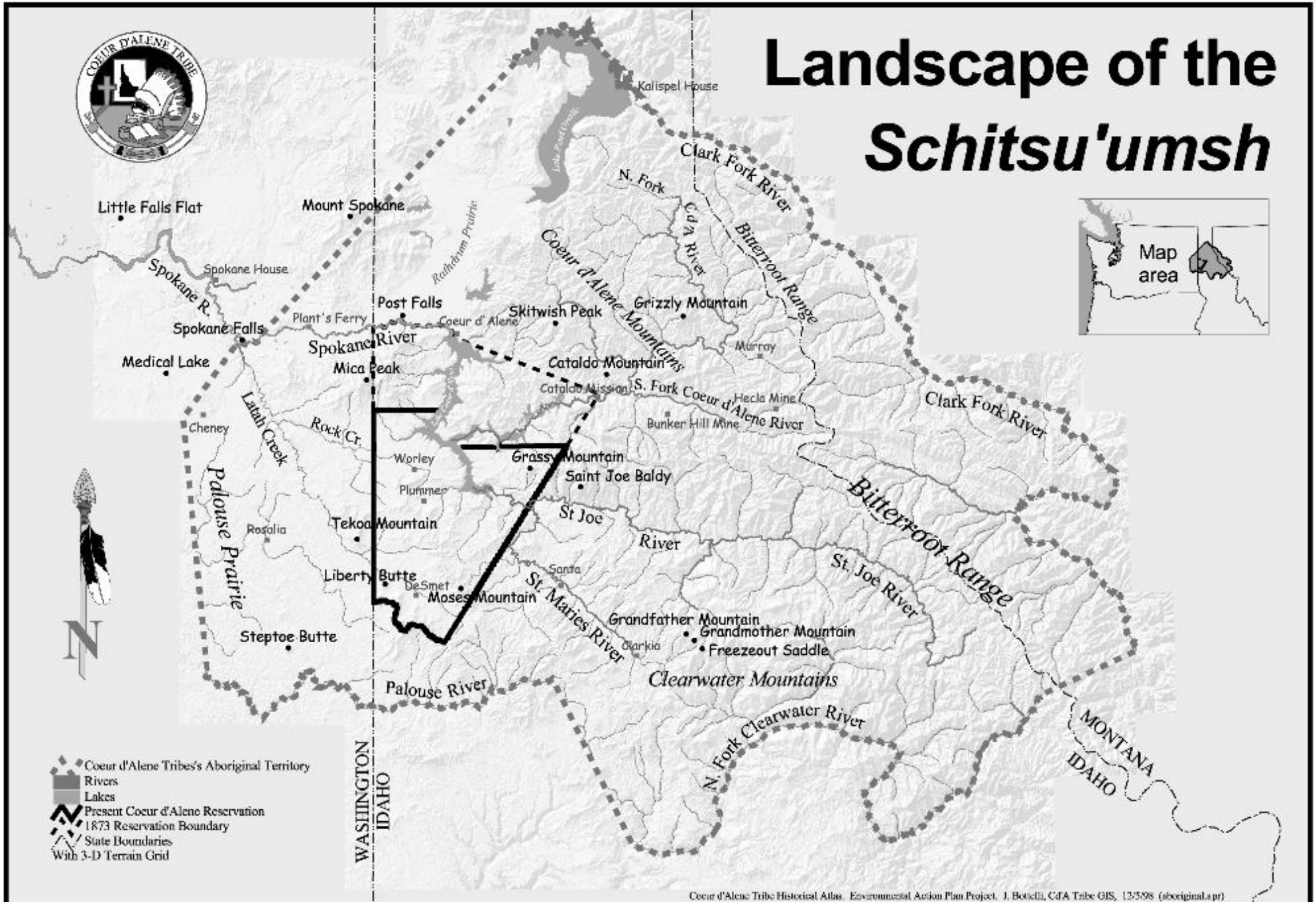
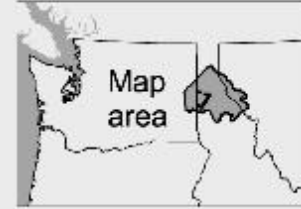
Background

Schitsu'umsh is the name of the Coeur d'Alenes in the Coeur d'Alene Language

It means,
“The ones who were found here.”



Landscape of the Schitsu'umsh



- Coeur d'Alene Tribes's Aboriginal Territory
- Rivers
- Lakes
- Present Coeur d'Alene Reservation
- 1873 Reservation Boundary
- State Boundaries
- With 3-D Terrain Grid

Background

The Coeur d'Alene Tribe has been in the Inland Northwest since time immemorial

The Tribe was not relocated from another area; the aboriginal territory has always been the Tribe's homeland



Coeur d'Alene Reservation





Coeur d'Alene Reservation

Coeur d'Alene Reservation



Background

A salmon tribe
with canoe
culture

Coeur d'Alene
Lake the center
of the world



Canoe Journey 2016

Tribal Natural Resources Department

- ▶ **Current Programs in the Tribal Natural Resources Department**
 - ▶ Air Quality – EPA funded
 - ▶ Culture
 - ▶ ***Environmental Programs Office***
 - ▶ Fisheries
 - ▶ Forestry/Fire
 - ▶ Hazardous Waste – EPA funded
 - ▶ Land Services
 - ▶ Pesticides – EPA funded
 - ▶ Recreation
 - ▶ Water Resources – some EPA funding
 - ▶ Wildlife

History of Environmental Programs Office



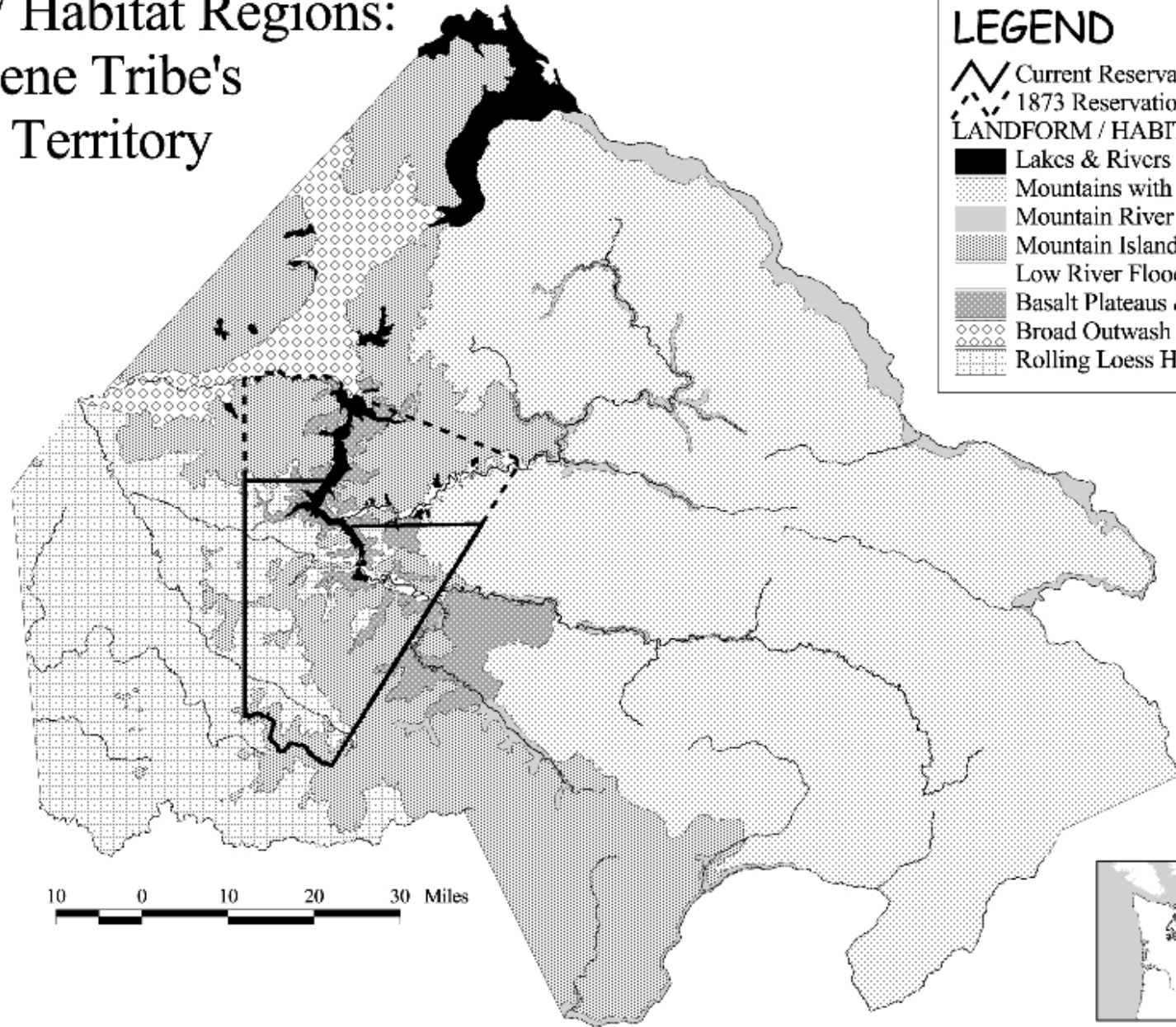
Importance of Wetlands

- “My grandfather and great grandfather fished for salmon in Hangman Creek; as a boy, I fished here. I know that our ancestors are smiling today. Today is a proud day.”
- - Ernie Stensgar, at juvenile salmon release ceremony on May 1, 2018 (Council member and former Chairman of the Tribe)

Importance of Wetlands

- Beaver (nature's engineer)
- Tule, Cattails
- Water potatoes
- Camas
- Salmon, Cutthroat Trout
- Clams
- Crawdads
- Wildlife (deer, elk, moose, waterfowl)
- Other Food and Medicinal plants

Landform / Habitat Regions: Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Aboriginal Territory



LEGEND

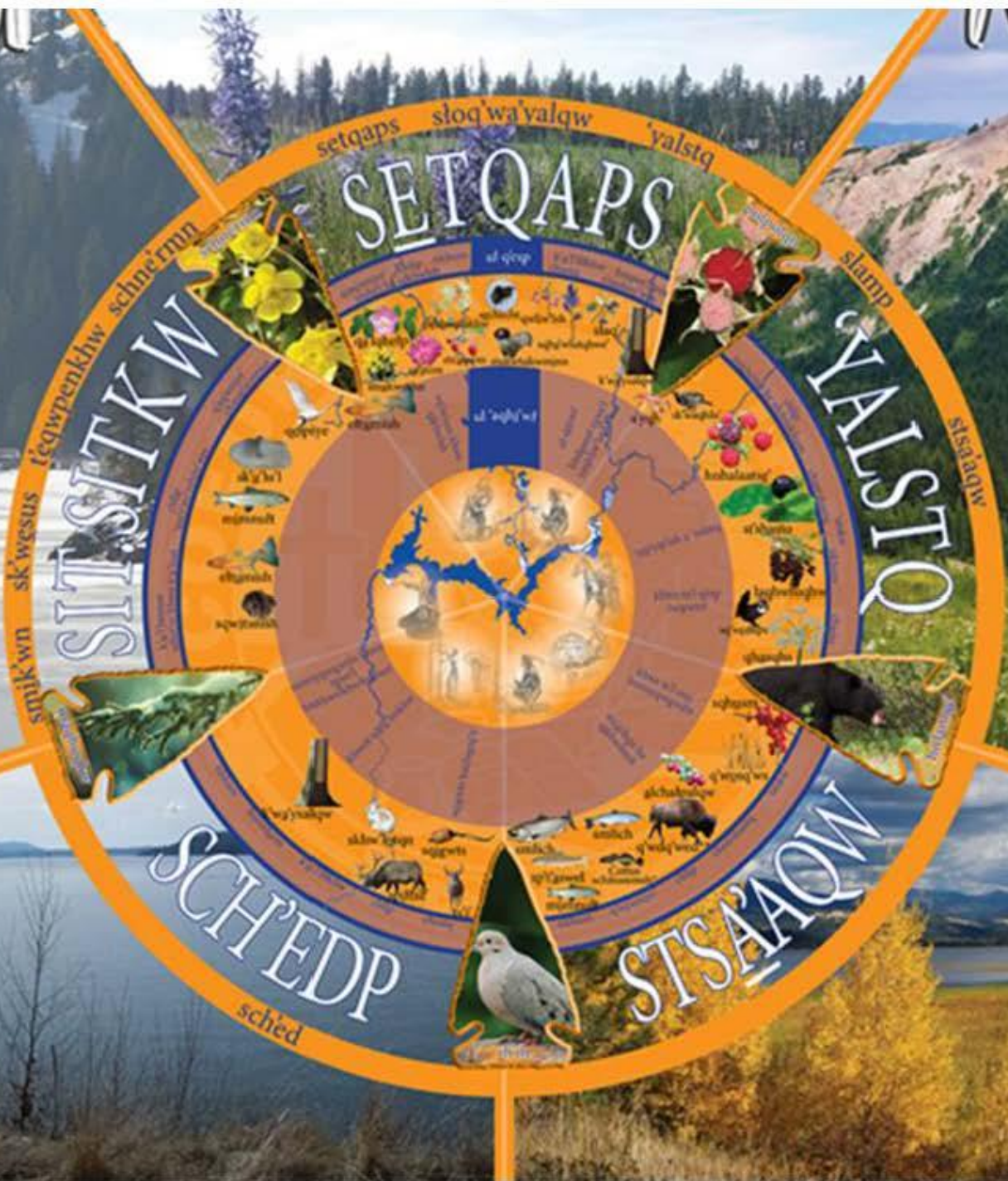
- Current Reservation Boundary
- 1873 Reservation Boundary
- LANDFORM / HABITAT REGIONS:**
- Lakes & Rivers
- Mountains with Deep River Canyons
- Mountain River Valley Bottoms
- Mountain Islands & Footslopes
- Low River Floodplains
- Basalt Plateaus & Escarpments
- Broad Outwash Plains
- Rolling Loess Hills



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Moons & Seasons

●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
IAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
sit,siikw (winter)		setqaps (spring)			'yalsiq (summer)		stsa'aqow (early fall)		sch'edp (late fall)		stsiikw (winter)



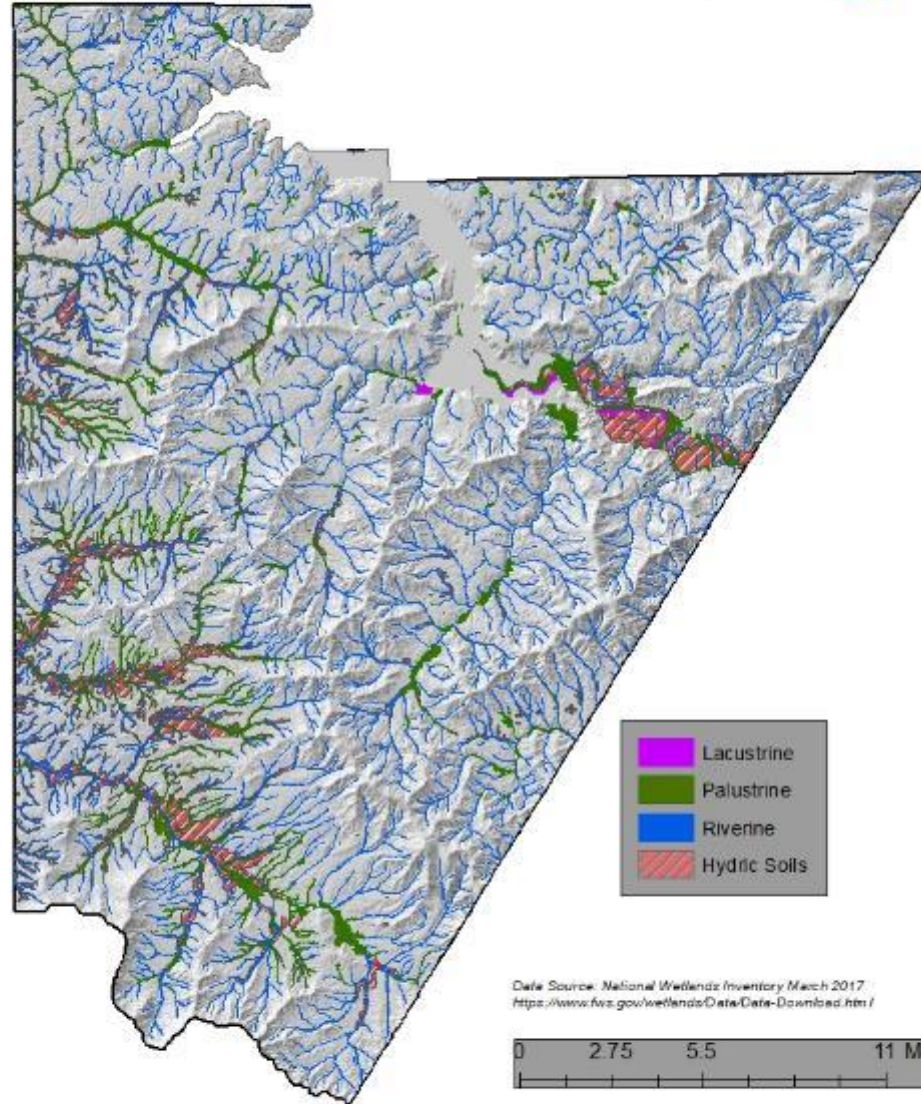
Wetlands Loss

- Palustrine, Lacustrine and Riverine Wetlands occur on the Reservation [updated from the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's Assessment of Environmental Concerns report (2000)]

In Acres	Palustrine	Lacustrine	Riverine
Current NWI	5347	161	3625
Estimated Historical	16280	2186	7276
Estimated Percent Loss	0.67	0.93	0.50



National Wetland Inventory 2017 with Historical Wetlands



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File Name: GIS/GIS/Data/Wetlands Group/March_2017_CoH/March_2017_repaired
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Wetlands Goals

- **Integrated Resource Management Plan (2012) – Stqhessiple’ (Future Course of Our Renewal) – Wetlands Goals**
 - Restore proper functioning conditions to a minimum of 30 percent (estimated at 6,425 acres) of the native riparian/wetland habitats to support vertebrate species that use these habitats by the year 2024.
 - Coordinate with other entities and the public to restore and maintain wetlands.

Wetlands Program

- First EPA Wetlands grant for the Tribe was awarded in 2004 or 2005 (EPA Wetlands Core Elements Framework was not developed yet)
- Resulted in a report entitled, “ON THE PREDICTION OF SURFACE SATURATION WITH TOPOGRAPHIC INDICES: UPPER HANGMAN CREEK WATERSHED
- Assisted the Tribe in prioritizing areas to restore in the Hangman Creek watershed

Wetlands Program

- Next EPA Wetlands Grant was awarded in 2014
- This is the grant that allowed the Tribe to establish a wetland division within the Tribe's Environmental Programs Office

Wetlands Program

- Initiating a Wetland Program with EPA in 2014:
 1. Study Wetlands Core Elements Framework
 2. Develop Wetlands Program grant application with input from relevant programs (Fisheries, Water and Wildlife)
 3. Obtain Tribal approval and submit application (as part of the Tribe's EPA Performance Partnership Grant)

Wetlands Program

- The 2014 EPA Wetlands Grant had the following components:
 1. Establish a Wetland Workgroup
 2. Develop a Wetland Program Plan
 3. Develop a Tribal definition of wetlands and Tribal classification scheme for wetlands
 4. Identify wetlands, compared to pre-settlement wetlands, on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation using remote data (update earlier information)
 5. Conduct a pilot study to assess wetland function using Tribal indicators in a selected subset of wetlands

Palustrine Wetland – Hangman Creek watershed



Wetlands Program

- Steps taken in the 2014 EPA Wetlands grant work:
 1. Initiate Wetland Workgroup
 2. Research Tribal plans, codes, etc. for wetlands refs.
 3. Research wetlands classification systems (Cowardin)
 4. Research wetland assessment types and methods (Montana Wetlands Assessment Method)

Wetlands Program

- Steps taken in the 2014 EPA Wetlands grant work:
 1. Interview selected Tribal members about wetlands
 2. Conduct a wetland assessment training on MWAM
 3. Develop a Tribal Addendum to the MWAM
 4. Develop NWI Ground-Truthing aspect to assessment
 5. Complete Wetland Program Plan (December 2017)
 6. Complete comparison of wetland assessment methods report

Lacustrine Wetland – Coeur d'Alene Lake



COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE WETLAND PROGRAM PLAN

DECEMBER 2017



Coeur d'Alene Tribe Wetland Workgroup
coordinated by the Environmental Programs Office
in the Natural Resources Department



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Wetlands Program

- Observations about Wetland Program Plans after the first WPP was completed:
 1. Tribe had already completed a broad assessment of concerns and set some broad wetland goals and desired future conditions for Reservation resources
 2. Tribe needed to go through some initial steps in order to develop the first Wetland Program Plan (such as other planning processes, having expertise in NR and restoration, diving into the specifics of wetlands and deciding how to approach them)
 3. Difficult to separate wetlands from other resources that are managed by tribes (riparian areas, streams, wildlife habitat, water resources, cultural resources, etc.) – reductionist/deconstructionist approach may not align with how the Tribal community views and has viewed wetlands

Wetlands Program

- Observations about Wetland Program Plans after the first WPP was completed:
 1. While voluntary, an EPA-approved WPP allows tribes to apply for state and tribal funding (Tier 1), and it likely gives tribes a better chance to be funded overall
 2. Timeframe for WPP is short (3 to 6 years)
 3. EPA wants all components of a grant application to tie back to the WPP and it can be difficult to know what you want to do for the next 6 years (why the Tribe's WPP is a 3 year plan)

Riverine Wetland – Benewah Creek Watershed



Wetlands Program

- The 2018 EPA Wetlands Grant had the following components:
 1. Continue Wetland Workgroup
 2. Inventory and Assess 10 Wetland sites (with QAPP)
 3. Identify and potentially enroll Coeur d'Alene Reservation lands eligible for wetlands conservation programs
 4. Develop a Wetlands Outreach Plan

Wetlands Program

- The 2021 EPA Tribal Wetlands Grant has the following components:
 1. Update the Tribe's Wetland Program Plan (and continue Wetland Workgroup)
 2. Identify a reference wetland for each of the 3 wetland types on the Coeur d'Alene Reservation and assess a total of 5 new wetland sites
 3. Develop a Standard Operating Procedures Manual for enrolling wetlands into conservation programs
 4. Research establishing a Coeur d'Alene Tribe Conservation District

Related Wetlands Work

- **Wetlands Conservation Projects**
 - Restoration Projects with Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - 3 Riparian planting projects along Hangman Creek (EQIP Projects)
 - Applying for HFRP for Redband Trout
 - Helped coordinate Hepton Lake WRP

Planting at Hangman Creek

1st EQIP Project

2,000 trees and shrubs planted
on 10 acres of riparian area



Challenges

- Understanding and applying the EPA Wetlands Program Core Elements Framework – initially very difficult
- Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge in wetlands work (difficult to find ways to define, classify and/or assess wetlands from a Tribal cultural perspective)
- Consistent funding for wetlands programs
- Covid-19 Pandemic
- Staff turnover

Recommendations for EPA Wetlands Program

- Allow for other mechanisms for tribes to qualify as having a WPP (i.e. the Coeur d'Alene Tribe's IRMP)
- Allow for longer timeframes for the WPP and not have it need to tie so closely to the EPA grant applications and workplans
- Allow for tribes to develop their own wetland program framework
- Allow more flexibility for implementation in the wetland grants
- Provide consistent funding for tribal wetland programs (i.e. GAP or STRP 128(a) funding for Brownfields)

Contact Information

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Thank you for your
time today