



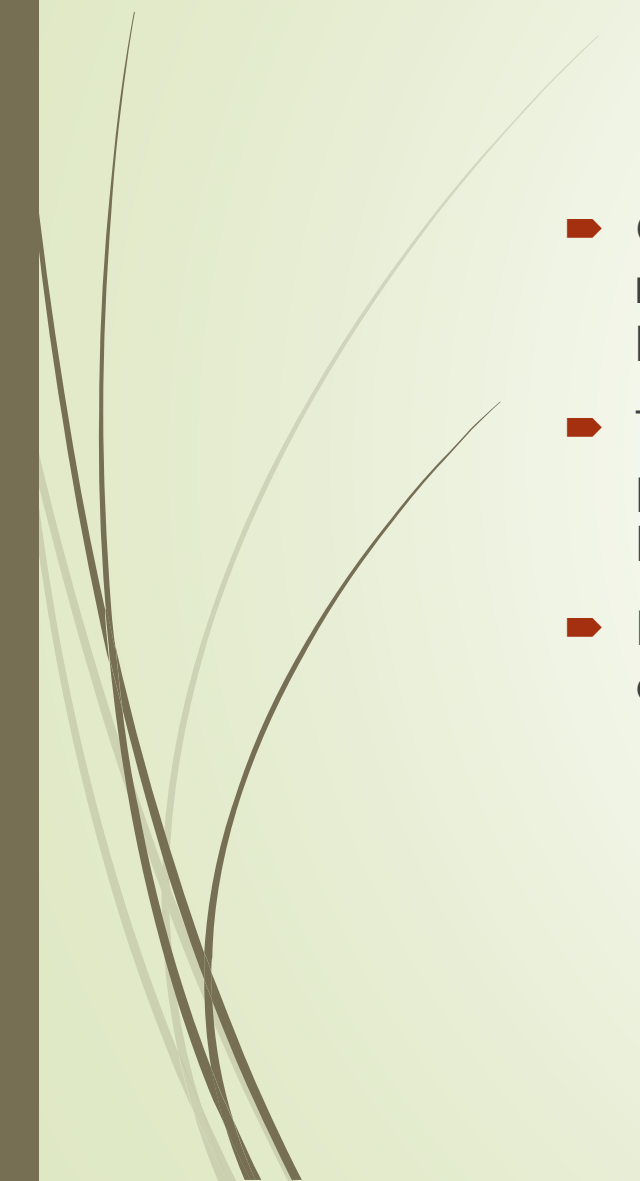
Shoshone-Bannock Tribe
Language and Cultural Preservation Department
HeTO – Heritage Tribal Office

Connections to the Land- Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands

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Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands

- ▶ Our grandparents, their ancestors lived and died in these areas. The reverence of our people to these lands includes the way we look at these lands with respect.
 - ▶ The places we go to pray, the ability to influence our world around us, by praying for all, the people, the lands and specifically the water, which brings life.
 - ▶ Each individual component is important and provides an important link to each other, creating a strong healthy world for us.
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Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands
IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands In Yellowstone National Park



- ▶ There are healing powers in the Yellowstone Park landscape that are tied to the Shoshone-Bannock peoples that are indescribable in the English language. For example, many elders stated that they had a “good feeling” about being in the Park
- ▶ This feeling was not tied to any specific area, but as Merceline Pokibro Boyer explains:
- ▶ “According to the Shoshone and Bannock peoples, the world is made up of four elements – earth, water, air and light (fire, heat). Everything maintains a shape by a balance of these elements in their being. The order of these elements in each animal, plant, stone and other life is different. We are told about the sacredness of our land, which our body, and the values of our culture, which is our soul, but most importantly water is the blood of mother earth and the Tribes. And, if its life giving flow is stopped, or it is polluted, all else will die, and the many years of our existence will come to an end.
- ▶ This means every feature of a landscape has stories attached to it. These stories reflect both secular events such as hunting, warfare, and sacred events such as tribal or personal religious and spiritual experiences. The very existence in this world is also a spiritual pilgrimage, and the landscape itself is spiritual. Thus, today, a journey by Tribal members to the Park is often simple for spiritual enrichment.

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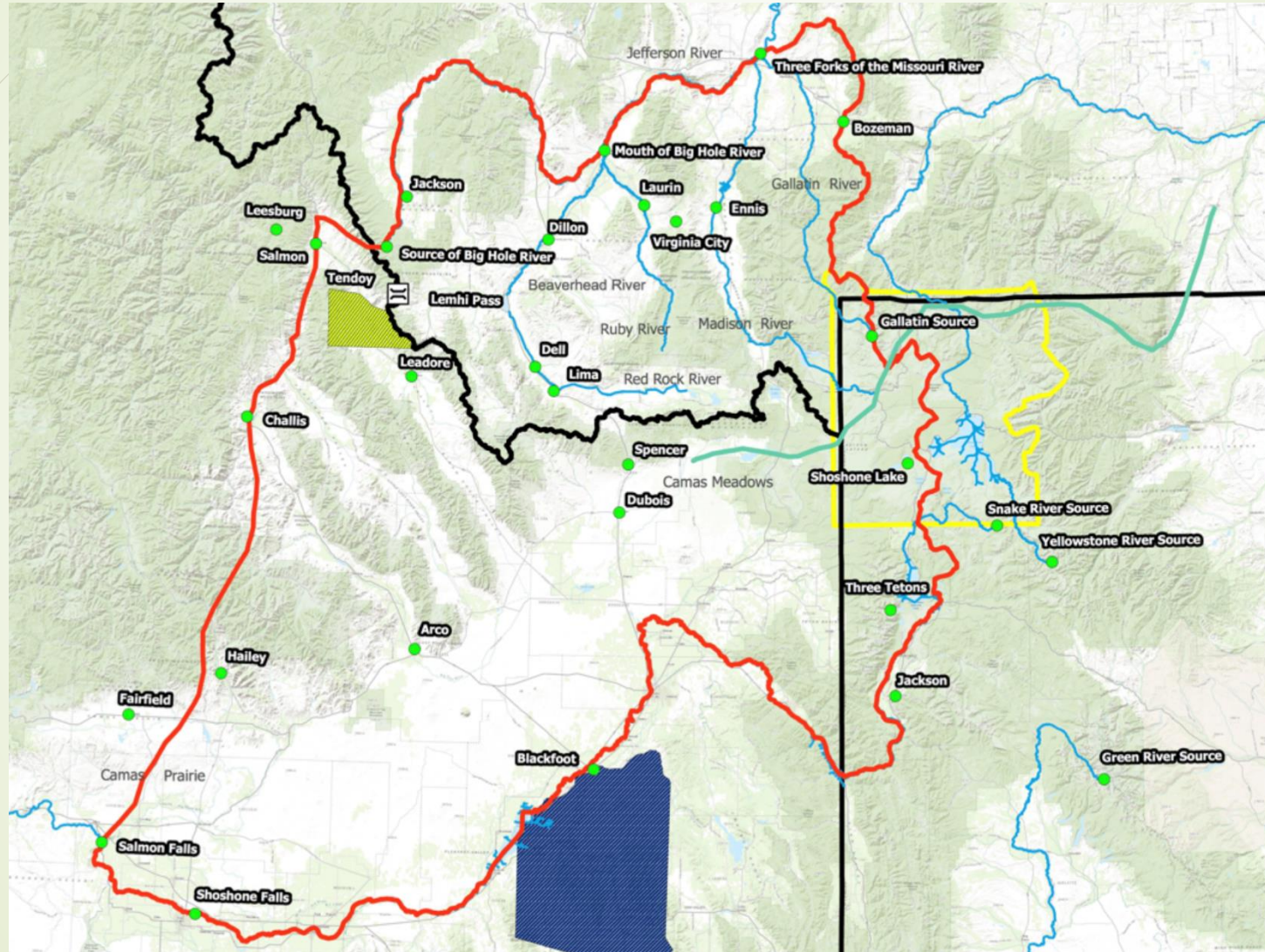
- The Shoshone and Bannock occupation and continuing presence in the Park was documented in several ways:
- First, based on the oral traditions of the Tribes, the greater Yellowstone area is the origin or creation area of the Shoshone people.
 - It is therefore considered first and foremost a spiritual or sacred landscape for the people.
 - This is verified by the continuing cultural knowledge of place names and uses of resources in the Park by Shoshone and Bannock Tribal members.
 - We have many stories relating to the Creation, formation of water ways such as the Snake River and other resources connected to the Park.
- Second, the Fort Bridger Treaty of 1868 secured the Tribes a permanent homeland – the Fort Hall Reservation in Idaho and Wind River Reservation in Wyoming.
 - And, the Treaty with the Shoshone, Bannock and Sheepeaters in 1868 and Cession Agreement of 1870 recognized the occupation of our people in the Park and Grand Teton Park areas.

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ Third, the Tribes reserved off-reservation hunting, fishing and gathering rights in the Fort Bridger Treaty, and secured our continuing rights in and near the Park area.
 - ▶ Despite the Park Superintendent and officials who sought to prohibit the Shoshone and Bannock from the Park, we continue to have a presence in the Park area.
- ▶ Following the Fort Bridger Treaty, a final treaty with the Mixed Bands of Shoshone, Bannocks and Sheepeaters (also known as the “Wihi’nite” or “Agaideka”) was signed in Virginia City, Montana on September 24, 1868. The officials wanted Chief Tendoy’s band of Shoshone and other Shoshone, Bannock and Sheepeaters to cede their claim to Montana lands, including lands which would later become the Park lands, and remain near the North Fork Salmon River in Idaho.
- ▶ The Virginia City Treaty of 1868, however, was never ratified by Congress, and therefore the Agaideka – Wihi’nite people remained in the Park area. In 1870, the United States and Territory of Montana signed a Cession Agreement to detail the expansive territory of Tendoy’s people, and to remove them to the Salmon River territory in present day Idaho. The Chief Tendoy Cession Agreement encompasses about 9 million acres of land including the lands that formed Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Their aboriginal ownership of the land was never extinguished by the Congress.

Virginia City 1870 Cession Agreement Map by Dr. Svingen, et al.

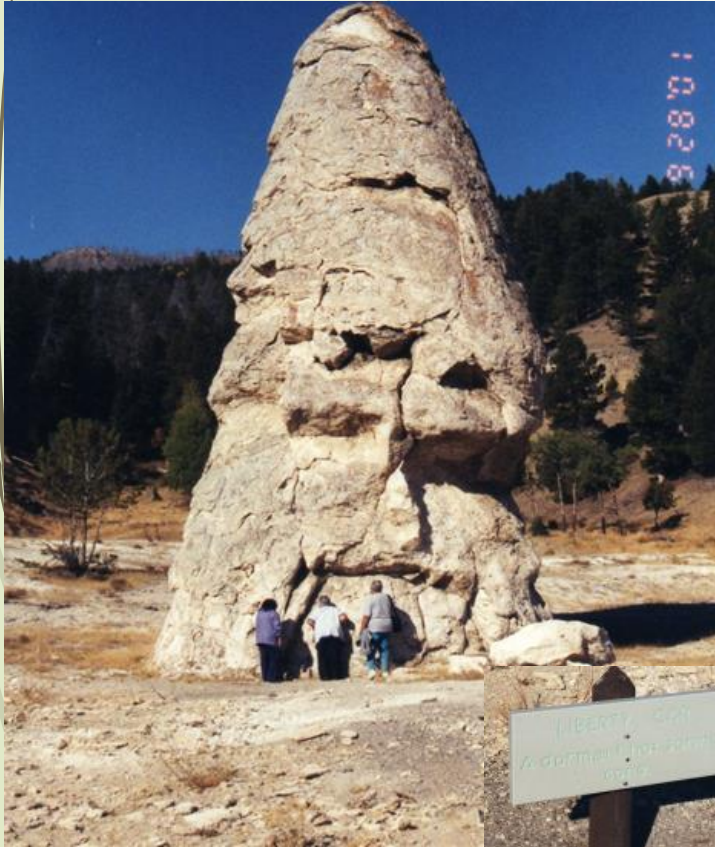


Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ Eventually, many of the Shoshone and Bannock bands were militarily removed to the Fort Hall Reservation. The Agaideka or Wihi'nite people were the last to be relocated in 1906. As Lucille Eldredge explained –
 - ▶ “Our people traveled all through this area, camping and using the many diverse resources. Our people traveled from season to season gathering and hunting, from Boise to Yellowstone. We traveled along ways to find subsistence. We had many winter and summer camps throughout the vast Shoshone and Bannock territory.”
- ▶ Perhaps the best evidence of the Tribal presence is that of continued travel and hunting via the Bannock Trail, which crosses the northern portion of the Park, the trails from Star Valley, Wyoming entering the Grand Teton and Yellowstone areas, the trail over the Teton Mountains, and trails from the Dillon-Bozeman area.
- ▶ These trails were utilized by many Shoshone and Bannock Tribal hunting parties entering the Park area for subsistence and cultural purposes.

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- Today, there are a variety of cultural resources, including water resources, earth, plants and medicines, and animals and mountains that are used by Tribal members.
- The cultural landscape areas and resources have multiple values and uses and often overlap.
- Some areas are utilized more than others for gathering, sacrament or spiritual area, or historical use such as trails. At spiritual places, these are often isolated areas, where individuals stop to pray, leave offerings, undertake vision quests, and offer their respect to the power of the location.
- It is important to recognize that Shoshone and Bannock people view the region as culturally powerful and interconnected with many other areas used by the Tribes.

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ Plants were/are used primarily for three purposes – food, medicinal and spiritual wellbeing.
- ▶ Many species of plants that were or are still collected in and adjacent to the Park. Some people believe that the plants in the Park are purer and have more power than those outside the area. The plants continue to be culturally significant to the Tribes.
- ▶ Our field trips identified many species of plants that were or are still collected in and adjacent to the Park.



Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ The Shoshone and Bannock relied extensively on plant foods to supplement their wild game in their traditional diet. The Tribes collected and consumed many resources located in the Park including berries, edible roots, greens, pine nuts and seeds, and bitterroot.
- ▶ Of particular importance today are plants such as chokecherries, wild carrots, nuts, fiber plants, wild onions, sage, peppermint, and many native medicines which all require aquatic system free from pollution. Many of these plants are also used in annual renewal and thanksgiving dances, daily, weekly and annual ceremonies.
- ▶ The tobacco plant which can be found growing around the Obsidian Cliff and Sheepeater Cliff areas is very important in the spirituality of our people.
 - ▶ Alfred Navo, noted, “the tobacco represents the outdoor fire of our ancestors, and is known to carry our prayer upward to the Creator. Tobacco is also used as an offering when the prayer of forgiveness is spoken.”

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- Bitterroot was an important root crop for the Tribes, and continues to be used by Tribal members.
- Root digging and berry picking season begin in July. The berry picking season included sarvis, currents, strawberries in the valley and lower slopes, and choke cherries and huckleberries in the higher elevations.
- Leaves, bark, roots, and pitch from a wider variety of plants (yarrow, sage, fir, balsamroot, mint) were gathered. These plants were used to treat bruises, cuts, sores, infections, headaches, and toothaches.
- A prayer of forgiveness was always given at the time of gathering plants.

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- Places: Obsidian Cliff - The Obsidian Cliff area was a primary source of obsidian for Shoshone and Bannock people, and was a primary stop over or camping area for hunting parties. During the summer and fall buffalo hunts, the Shoshone and Bannock came here to gather a supply of obsidian for knives, arrows and scrapers for the hunt, and also stopped on their way back through the area.
- Walter Nevada, 98, stated, “this is the place where the old people traveled and camped all through history.” Walter told us his mother use to travel across from the Salmon River area to the Park and made their camp there.
- Alton Bear added, “the old people say, that [Sheepeater and Obsidian Cliff areas] are the old campsites of the Salmon eaters. This is what the old people say. All through the rocky area.”



Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ Lucille Pocatello's great grandmother traveled to the Park with her family for buffalo hunting. Her great grandmother was an exceptional "butcher of buffalo, elk and other large animals so the men took her with them as they hunted the great herds."
 - ▶ The "hunting party entered the Park from the south and stopped at the Obsidian Cliff to gather obsidian and carved large knives and spears for the hunt." They camped for many days in the area while the hunting party prepared the obsidian." Ms. Pocatello spoke of the area in a very detailed manner, and also stated there were obsidian pits or quarries that were "located on top of the cliff area." She had not actually been to the top of the cliff area, but her grandmother had "told her this was so." In addition to obsidian, the area holds many other useful resources including tobacco, strawberries, currants, chokecherries, lodge pole pines, greens, willows, and water resources that are used by Tribal members.
- ▶ The Sheepstealer Cliff area was used by the Shoshone as a primary campsite area, and when they entered the Park for hunting and gathering, and camping during the summer months. Walter Nevada, Emory Tendoy and Alton Bear stated,
 - ▶ "This is the old campsite of the Salmon eaters (Agaideka). That is what the old people say. All through the rocky areas. The old people used to live and travel through here."

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- These elders on the trip read the sign located in the area and wondered if the Park representatives think that they are extinct. *
- These elders, Cina Kaiyou, Lois Navo, and Venus Mitchell, are Sheepstealer descendants. They asked that their picture be taken near the sign.
- The mountains are held in high regard for being the keeper of wild game. The wild game, such as the buffalo, moose, elk, deer, and mountain sheep are important, because they offer of themselves, meat for eating, hides for clothing and shelter, horns for utensils and ornaments for our people.



Elders Sheepstealer descendants(all deceased): Cina Kaiyou, Lois Navo, and Venus Mitchell.

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- Geysers and Hot Springs
- In the late 1800's, Park officials spread myths, and it once was commonly accepted by non-Indians as true that Shoshone and Bannock people were afraid of the geysers and hot springs and thus left the Park area. We have always known that these stories were false. Our people were forced out of the Park to make way for tourists and other recreation enthusiasts.
- The great geysers and hot pools known as “aigodooh-baa” and “baaguyu'wa-baa,” were areas where Shoshone and Bannocks sought healing, spiritual renewal, protection, vision quests and collected resources for ceremonial and medicinal purposes. Today, some of these resources do not exist outside the Park. Therefore, many Tribal members continue to utilize these geyser and hot spring areas.

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- ▶ Tribal members rely upon Park water resources for traditional cultural and ceremonial use.
 - ▶ “Water is one of the Tribes most sacred gifts from the Creator, and is an important part of the Tribes’ religion,” said Zelphia Pokibro Towersap.
- ▶ Reverence for and preservation of these religious practices mandate that the waters that are regularly used by Tribal members be free from toxic pollutants.
- ▶ Indeed, no other resource is more important to the survival of the Tribal people than water. It is the life giving source that sustains the foods and medicines, the crops, fish and wildlife, from which Tribal people drink, bathe, and worship in ceremony. It is where we began as a people.



Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



Alfred Navo stated, “The sacred medicine waters/rivers are held in high regard by our people. Water is life, every living being needs water for its survival.” Water brings and water can take away. For thousands of years, our ancestors experienced the wonders of water in many different forms, the ice and snow of the winter and the geysers and thermal pools year round. They looked to the energy of the healing water and healing mud baths for their health (physical cleansing and purification of the mind, body and soul.)

- ▶ The various minerals and rocks near and surrounding the geysers and hot pools are still used for ceremonies held at Fort Hall. Long ago, the hot pools also aided in preparing tools of survival for our ancestors. The mountain sheep horn was soaked in the pool until it became soft and flexible enough to be shaped into a bow for hunting.



Pictured by Yellowstone Lake, Randolph Wilson, Alfred Navo and Walter Nevada.

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- ▶ Repatriation of our ancestors has occurred and provides evidence of our existence in Yellowstone National Park
- ▶ Burial sites were located at Fishing Bridge in 1941 and 1956 when project construction activities were conducted.
 - ▶ A man 35-45 years of age was exhumed and contained 105 associated funerary objects.
 - ▶ Two individuals, female 40-50 years old, and an infant. No artifacts but fragmentary skeleton of a dog
 - ▶ Of the tribes who consulted with the park, only three stated they buried dogs with humans. Two Shoshonean groups and, the Shoshone tribe of Wind River Reservation, Wyoming and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation of Idaho stated that some of their ancestors were on the Yellowstone Plateau as early as what archaeologists refer to as the Paleoindian period and continued to inhabit it through historic times as Lemhi Shoshone and the Sheepeaters.

They were collected and stored in the administration headquarters. When the new Heritage and Research Center was completed the ancestors remains were transferred to Gardner.

After consultation with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Eastern Shoshone Tribe occurred, representatives from both tribes repatriated the remains to an undisclosed location and finally put them to rest. *

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- The Shoshone and Bannock people lived in what is now the Park lands for millennia. This tremendous longevity is a direct result of the Tribal people's technological, social and cultural flexibility and resilience, being able to respond to rapidly changing and unpredictable situations.
- Despite effectively adapting to changing environmental and social conditions, the taking of our original lands had a devastating impact on our peoples lives, traditions and well-being. Yet, the memories and stories of our ancestral lands remain, and have been passed onto the next generation which continues to strengthen cultural identity
- It is hoped that the Yellowstone National Park officials will begin to understand, recognize and respect the world views of the Shoshone and Bannock Peoples and our relationship to the Park area. One hundred fifty years is a very short period in the thousands of years of Shoshonean and Bannock presence in the Park.

Connections to the Land – Shoshone-Bannock Ancestral Homelands IN YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK



- ▶ Drusilla Gould further stated,
 - ▶ “The environment is sacred to us and is equivalent to the western culture’s church. Our ancestors made their homes throughout this land and moved about freely to hunt, fish and gather.
 - ▶ Creator told the human beings, there would not be any individual ownership of the land, sun, moon, or anything from Creator’s creation.
 - ▶ All would be shared equally.
 - ▶ All living beings will live in harmony taking care of each other.”

Usen daga (That's all)

SHOSHONE

