



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Aaniin (Hello),

In preparation for this annual report, I reflected on the Little Shell Tribe's individual and collective accomplishments. I am continually impressed with the work our members, community, and employees accomplished in 2023. Tribal Council asked for your input and our government acted. In this 2023 Annual Report, you will see how our government and employees were able to serve our tribal members through nation building, program development and implementation, and strategic planning for short- and long-term goals. The Little Shell Tribe continued to fortify a foundation to provide programs and services to our members.

Every project and economic endeavor the Little Shell Tribe pursues is carefully considered and executed with the input from tribal membership. As you read this report, I hope you see your thoughts and community throughout. If you haven't utilized any of these programs, I encourage you to join us at an upcoming event and share your views about the future of the Little Shell Tribe.

I am immensely proud of the work that the Tribal Council has accomplished for the people, but this is not the time to rest or relent. The Tribal Council has big plans for 2024 and our attention now moves forward to the tasks at hand. As the Little Shell Tribal Council prepares for the new year, we must continue to support and uplift one another. This is the only way that we will continue to grow and prosper as a Tribal Nation. Please continue to engage with us, step up when you are called to support community efforts, and set an example to others.

I look forward to a great 2024 for our tribal members and welcome the chance to work with each of you to make our community more prosperous, welcoming, and inclusive for all.

Miigwech (Thank you),

Gerald Gray, Jr.

GERALD GRAY, JR.
CHAIRMAN



ABOUT THE LITTLE SHELL TRIBE

The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana is a federally-recognized tribe of Ojibwe people in Montana.

The Little Shell Tribe is a political successor to the 1863 Pembina Treaty. After signing the treaty, the Little Shell Tribe migrated into the State of Montana. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Little Shell Tribe petitioned the federal government for a formal reservation and to be allowed to organize under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 ("IRA"). While the federal government at that time determined the Little Shell Tribe was eligible to organize under the IRA, the lack of land caused the federal government to consider the Little Shell Tribe unrecognized. The Little Shell Tribe relentlessly fought over 150 years for restoration of its federal recognition and on December 20, 2019, the Little Shell Tribe became the 574th federally recognized tribe with the passage of the Little Shell Restoration Act.

Today, Little Shell Tribal members live across Montana and the United States and elect a government consisting of a seven member Tribal Council according to its constitution. The Little Shell Tribal Council works on behalf of the Little Shell Tribal members and exercises tribal sovereignty to develop and execute its short- and long-term plans through land acquisition and programs. The Little Shell Tribal Council serves tribal members following the Seven Grandfather teachings. With these principles in mind, the Little Shell Tribe remains strong as it continues to build a great Tribal Nation for all members.





LITTLE SHELL TRIBAL COUNCIL

Article I of the Little Shell Tribe's Constitution establishes the governing body for the Little Shell Tribal Government. The 2023 Little Shell Tribal Council consists of four Executive Board members and three council members.

GERALD GRAY

Chairman



Gerald Gray has served as Chairman since 2012. In his time on Council, Chairman Gray successfully worked with Congress on federal restoration, created revenue opportunities for the Tribe, built partnerships with federal and state officials, and served on tribal, local, state, and federal boards, commissions, and councils.

CLARENCE SIVERTSEN

First Vice Chairman



Clarence Sivertsen has served on the Little Shell Tribal Council for four terms. First Vice Chairman Sivertsen has proudly worked with the Tribal Council for the betterment of the Little Shell Tribe since federal restoration and focuses his leadership on expanding the Little Shell Tribe's agricultural opportunities, improving conditions for veterans and supporting economic development efforts.

LEONA KIENENBERGER

Second Vice Chairwoman



Leona (Doney) Kienenberger has been involved with the Little Shell Tribe for many years and has served as the Vice Chairwoman since 2010. Second Vice Chairwoman Kienenberger is a retired English teacher who built the 9th through 12th grade English Curriculum in Harlem, served on the MACIE Montana Advisory Council for Indian Education, and was a board member of Bear Paw Development. Kienenberger currently serves as the Vice President of the U.S Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency County Committee.



LITTLE SHELL TRIBAL COUNCIL

COLLEEN HILL

Secretary/Treasurer



Having been involved with the Little Shell government since 1989 and serving more than a decade on Tribal Council, Colleen Hill has provided business and organizational work and guidance to tribal government operations. Hill also participates in language and cultural education and has helped automate the Tribe's internal processes and procedures. She has been adamant of following the 7 Grandfather Teachings in all aspects of the Little Shell Tribe and the community.

ALISA HERODES

Councilmember



Prior to her election to the Council in 2023, Alisa Herodes served as the Chair for the Pow-wow Committee and Election Committee. As a lifelong resident of Great Falls and business owner, Herodes has focused her time on community relations and promoting cultural education and historic preservation.

IRIS KILL EAGLE

Councilmember



Iris Kill Eagle has a passion for tribal youth and families. Since joining the Council, she has represented the Tribe on the Montana Advisory Council on Indian Education, the Missing Murdered Indigenous People Task Force and served a Qualified Expert Witness for the Tribe's Indian Child Welfare Program.

DON DAVIS

Councilmember



With nearly 30 years of experience in construction, construction management, and government contracting, Don Davis has been an important voice on Council. Davis uses his knowledge and expertise to provide strategic advice and oversight to large scale construction projects.

MEET THE MEMBERSHIP



6,590

Tribal Citizens

The Little Shell Tribal Council is proud to represent 6,590 Tribal citizens in Montana, across the United States, and around the world.

HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES



The Little Shell Tribal Council and staff have been focused on competing for private, state, and federal grant funding to provide health, prevention, education, and other community-based services. These grant-funded programs support many of the existing outreach and education programs and resources available directly from the Tribe.

HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

LITTLE SHELL TRIBAL HEALTH CLINIC



Shortly after the Little Shell Tribe's restoration in 2019, the Tribe met with the Indian Health Service ("IHS") to ensure that Little Shell members would have access to health care services as soon as possible. These discussions included determining when IHS would build a facility to provide health care services. In that meeting, IHS leadership explained to the Little Shell Tribal leadership that the process to build a facility and provide direct health care services would likely take more than fifty (50) years. As a result, the Little Shell Tribal Council made health care access a priority by leveraging federal funds to find a property. Once the property was identified and acquired, the Little Shell Tribal Council entered into negotiations with IHS, which resulted in the beginning direct healthcare services in 2022 – less than two (2) years later.

This effort was the fastest that a restored Tribe has been able to bring direct health services to their members in recent history. It also means that members are not forced to travel to other local IHS Service Units on Reservations across Montana. Today, IHS provides services on behalf of the Tribe at the Little Shell Health Center for Little Shell tribal members as well as members of any federally recognized tribe.

Since its grand opening in April 2022, IHS and the Tribe have partnered to expand service and offer reliable, quality health care to members who visit the clinic. Today, IHS provides primary care, laboratory service, pharmacy care, behavioral, dental and vision services.

In addition to direct health care services, IHS also operates a Purchase and Referred Care (PRC) Program for Little Shell tribal members who live in the four-county service delivery area. The PRC Program is for care provided away from an IHS. If members living in Blaine, Cascade, Glacier, or Hill counties need access to specialty service not available at IHS, then they may be eligible for a PRC referral.

IN 2023:

4,933

PATIENT
VISITS

18,840

PRESCRIPTIONS
FILLED

35,000+

LAB TESTS
PERFORMED

If you need health care services or have a question about the PRC Program, please contact the Little Shell Health Clinic at 406-247-7130.

MOBILE MEDICAL CLINIC

The Little Shell Tribal Council knows that not every member lives in the four-county service area or has the ability to come to our clinic for preventative care and primary care visits. To make services more accessible, the Tribal Council negotiated a contract with IHS and acquired two mobile medical units.

One of the mobile medical units visited several of our communities across the region in 2023 and provided vaccinations, testing, screenings, and public health education services to nearly 100 patients. Our mobile medical units also partnered with Alluvion Health and their professional and courteous Prevention Services Team.



Tribal Council is excited to announce another excellent community partnership that will expand dental services to community members in 2024. The Little Shell Tribal Council and Health Department is partnering with Smiles Across Montana to bring primary dental services, including cleanings, screenings, and referrals to members across the Little Shell Tribe's service area.



IN 2023:

**NEARLY
100 PATIENTS
SERVED BY OUR
MOBILE MEDICAL UNIT**

If you know of an event where it would be helpful to have the mobile medical unit or where we may be able to reach many of our members at once, please contact the Community Services Department at (406) 315-2400

HARM REDUCTION PROGRAM

While Opioid addiction has had negative consequences in our community, substance abuse has broadly plagued tribal communities for decades. The Little Shell Tribe's Harm Reduction Program is an evidence-based approach that engages with people who use drugs and equips them with life-saving tools and information to create positive change and potentially save their lives.

STANDING BUFFALO STRONG

Standing Buffalo Strong is the Little Shell Tribe's Suicide Prevention Program which aims to reduce risk of suicide and to increase resilience in Little Shell communities. Suicide is a serious public health problem that can have lasting harmful effects on individuals, families, and our community. The Little Shell Tribal Council made it a priority to offer services and outreach to reduce the public health challenges.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS IN CRISIS OR CONSIDERING SUICIDE, THERE IS 24/7 FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL HELP BY CALLING OR TEXTING 9-8-8.

We encourage members in our community who are not comfortable reaching out directly to the Tribe to review the resource guide for other community-based services. The Resource Guide is available here: <http://tinyurl.com/Istresource>

SPECIAL DIABETES PROGRAM FOR INDIANS (SDPI)

The Little Shell Tribe competed to become a new SDPI awardee in 2023. The Tribe won a five-year grant to provide Diabetes education, limited prevention services, and nutritional education opportunities. SDPI partnered with the mobile medical unit, elder luncheon program, and other community outreach activities to provide regular access to Diabetes-related information and prevention services.

CHRONIC DISEASE PREVENTION

Culture is prevention. The Little Shell Tribe's Chronic Disease Prevention Services provide education, information, and cultural activities such as beading, ribbon skirt making and storytelling. Our community health worker assisted members with insurance enrollment, Medicaid enrollment and aid to find resources, including smoking cessation services.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Little Shell Tribe's Domestic Violence Assistance program actively assists individuals and families with needed resources to promote their safety, autonomy, and dignity. In 2023, the program provided resources, hygiene kits, smudge kits and emergency shelter vouchers. In addition to emergency resources, the Tribe hosted a bi-weekly survivor group which focused on domestic violence in our community. The Program also had an active role in the community SANE and SART meetings with the sheriff's department, police department and local programs to advocate for the unique needs of our community. The Program also participated in the Domestic Violence Task Force run by the State Parole Department.

OPIOID PREVENTION PROGRAM

Opioid use and abuse have plagued our communities for more than a decade disrupting families and tearing apart communities. The Tribal Council is committed to investing in resources that will help prevent opioid use disorder, support members who currently suffer from opioid use, and provide resources to families to avoid overdoses.

The Little Shell Tribe leads the Montana Opioid Education and Naloxone Distribution Program (OENDP) for Region Three. Region Three is comprised of mostly rural and frontier areas and is home to three reservations. The Little Shell Tribe established an advisory board to hold discussions and planning sessions regarding needle exchange and other harm reduction strategies. These strategies will include greater access to counseling and approaches for safer use of both legal and illegal drugs.

If you need any assistance, please contact the Stronghearts Native Helpline at 1-844-7NATIVE (1-844-762-8483).

INDIAN CHILD WELFARE ACT

The Indian Child Welfare Act ("ICWA") has been important to the Little Shell Tribe by ensuring that Little Shell children are afforded protections in the state foster and adoption systems. The purpose of ICWA is to address the alarmingly high rates of Native children being removed from their families. In these child welfare cases, ICWA allows the child's Tribe to participate and observe ongoing court cases to confirm that the State is following its legal requirements.

In 2023, the Little Shell Tribal Council successfully advocated for the passage of the Montana Indian Child Welfare Act. Councilwoman and ICWA Qualified Expert Witness Iris Kill Eagle provided testimony to the Montana State Legislature. The MT ICWA was signed into law in the spring of 2023. This was a vital step in ensuring that the State of Montana has both state and federal laws mandating the protections of Native children.

The Tribe hired an ICWA Caseworker in 2023 to work individually with our tribal families going through court cases regarding the removal of their children. The ICWA Caseworker is available to provide families with resources, family activities, and parenting training.

HEALTHCARE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF LITTLE SHELL HEALTHCARE

The Little Shell Tribe received a grant from the Montana Healthcare Foundation ("MHCF") to advance the Tribe's vision and goals to directly provide health care services to Little Shell tribal members. In partnership with MHCF and the Southcentral Foundation, the Tribal Council and the Tribe's department leads traveled to Anchorage, Alaska, for a week-long site visit at a tribally operated health care facility. This facility has implemented a nationally-recognized and award-winning system of care that is relationship-based and prioritizes customer-owned approaches. This learning experience provided an opportunity for the Tribal Council and staff to create, operate, evaluate, and adapt programs effectively and efficiently. This experience was vitally important as the Tribe seeks to integrate health care and other social service programs with a specific customer focus in the forefront. Tribal Council and staff continue to use resources and information provided during the exchange in program creation and evaluation discussions.

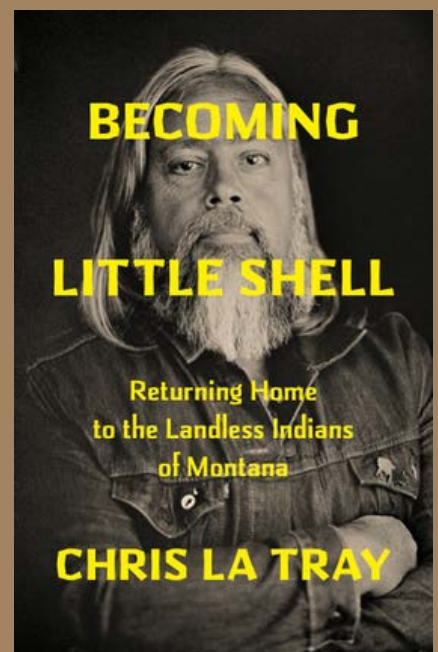
LITTLE SHELL CELEBRATES POET LAUREATE

The Little Shell Tribe celebrates Montana's 2023-2024 Poet Laureate and Tribal Member Chris La Tray. Growing up in Western Montana, La Tray always identified as Indian. While the representation of Indigenous people was mostly limited to racist depictions in toys and television shows, and despite the fact that his father fiercely denied any connection, he found Indians alluring, often recalling his grandmother's consistent mention of their Chippewa heritage.

When La Tray attended his grandfather's funeral as a young man, he finally found himself surrounded by relatives who obviously were Indigenous. "Who were they?" he wondered. "Why didn't I know them? Why was I never allowed to know them?" Catalyzed by the death of his father two decades later, La Tray embarks on a sprawling investigation. He takes a DNA test, which offers the first key clue to his heritage: a family tree. He scours the archives of used bookstores, interviews family, and travels to powwows, book fairs, and conferences. Combining diligent research with a growing number of encounters with Indigenous authors, activists, elders, and historians, he slowly pieces together his family history, and eventually seeks enrollment with the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

As La Tray comes to embrace his full identity, he discovers the rich history of his people. He learns of Métis origins and border crossings; usurped territories and broken treaties; exile and forced assimilation; poverty and food deprivation. He also encounters the devastating effects of settler colonialism rippling through surviving generations today, from the preservation of blood quantum laws and the trauma of boarding schools for Indigenous children to the ongoing crises of homelessness, addiction, and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. And eventually he is moved to take part in their 158-year long struggle for federal recognition, unflinchingly documenting past and present along the way.

Brimming with propulsive, vibrant storytelling, *Becoming Little Shell* is a major contribution to the burgeoning literature of Native America.



HOUSING PROGRAMS

LITTLE SHELL HOUSING DEPARTMENT



The Little Shell Tribal Council established the Housing Department in 2020. The primary purpose of the Little Shell Tribal Housing Department is to provide safe and affordable housing and housing services to low and moderate income Little Shell Tribal members and their families.

Utilizing funding from a number of federal agencies, the Housing Department works to build and implement housing programs that provide services and assistance to tribal members to remain housed, to offset housing expenses, and to invest in improving elderly housing conditions.

In 2023, the Housing department continued to provide mortgage assistance to homeowners and expanded the Program to tribal members across the Nation. The Department also recently launched a new program with funding from the BIA and HUD to improve appliance efficiency for elders residing in Cascade County and looks forward to expanding the programs in the next year.

In 2023,
more than

350

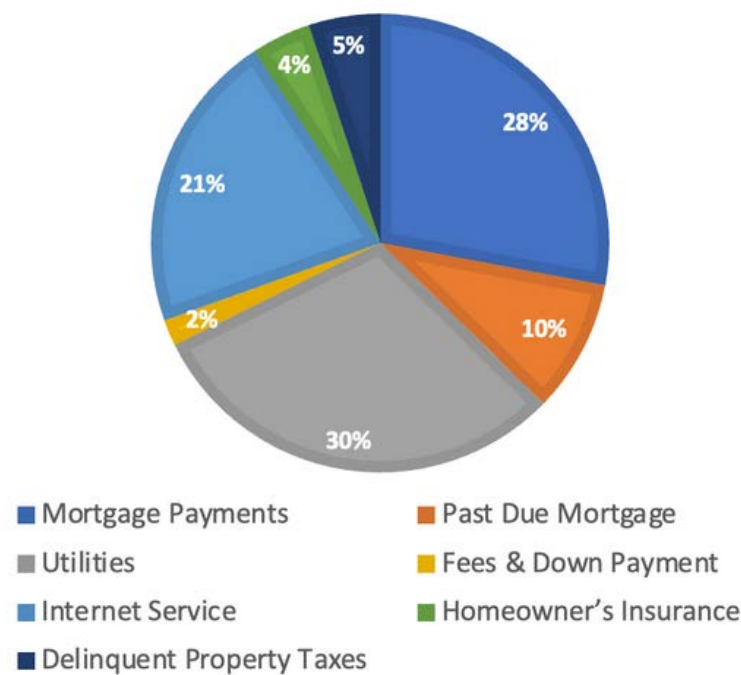
Tribal Member
households assisted.

HOMEOWNERS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Tribal Council established the Homeowners Assistance Fund Program ("HAF") to lessen hardships by providing funds to prevent mortgage delinquencies, defaults, foreclosures, and the loss of utilities. The HAF provided assistance for a number of expenses including mortgage payments, past due taxes, HOA fees, and utilities such as gas, water, electricity, and internet. With the hard work of our Housing staff, the Little Shell Tribe allocated over \$1.7 million of critical funding awarded to nearly 200 tribal households.

IN 2023:
OVER
\$1.7 MILLION
OF HAF ASSISTANCE
TO NEARLY
200
TRIBAL MEMBERS

TYPES OF HAF ASSISTANCE RECEIVED BY TRIBAL MEMBERS



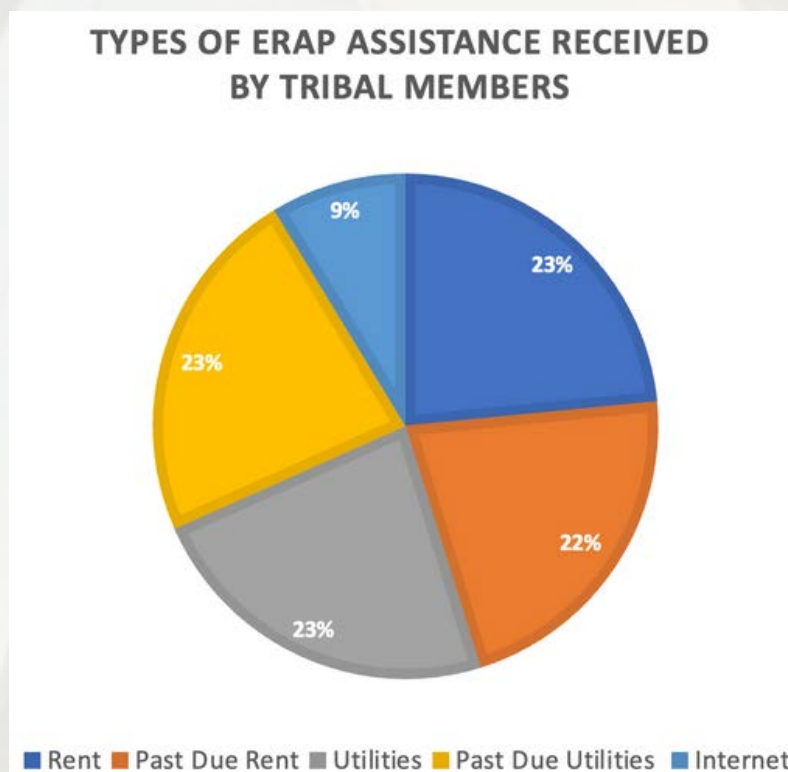
The Housing Department has successfully expended all of its HAF funding, therefore, the HAF program has been officially closed

EMERGENCY RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Little Shell Tribal Council established the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (“ERAP”) to provide financial assistance and housing stability services to eligible low-income households living in rental units nationwide. The Housing Department provided financial assistance payments for current and past due rent; current and past due utilities and home energy costs; and other expenses such as relocation expenses, rental fees, internet services, or hotel costs.

OVER
\$1.4 MILLION
OF ERAP ASSISTANCE
TO NEARLY
300
TRIBAL MEMBERS

After two years of dedication to processing every application, the Housing Department was able to provide nearly \$1.4 million to over 300 tribal members!



The Housing Department has successfully expended all of its ERAP funding, and therefore the ERAP program has been officially closed.

ELDER HOUSING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Tribal Council has recognized the need to ensure that our elders have energy efficient appliances that are reliable and dependable. With that in mind, the Tribal Council established the Elder Housing Assistance Program ("EHAP") to improve the housing conditions of Little Shell Tribal elder homeowners by replacing, removing, or repairing housing defects.

In 2023, Tribal Council expanded the Elder Housing Assistance Program (EHAP) to include the EHAP Appliance Upgrade Program. This program provides appliance upgrades for appliances that do not meet current energy efficiency standards. Additionally, all major appliances will be evaluated for safety issues and replaced as necessary to mitigate any issues identified. The appliances offered at this time include a refrigerator, gas stove or electric range, dishwasher, hot water heater, clothes washer and a clothes dryer. The program started in late 2023 and the Little Shell Tribe has already helped 25 Tribal member elders upgrade their appliances. The EHAP Appliance Upgrade Program is open to Tribal member elders, age 62 years of age or older, that own or co-own a home in Cascade County and meet HUD low-income guidelines.

SINCE THE START OF
EHAP IN LATE 2023,
THE LITTLE SHELL
TRIBE HAS HELPED

25

TRIBAL ELDERS

UPGRADE THEIR
APPLIANCES





LAND ACQUISITION

Our Tribe is a political successor of interest to the historical Pembina Band of Chippewa Indians. The Pembina Band and the United States signed the 1863 Treaty of Old Crossing, together with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. Later, in 1892, the Turtle Mountain Indians entered into an agreement with McCumber Commission to establish a Reservation in present day North Dakota. The Little Shell Tribe, under the leadership of Chief Little Shell, refused to cede any additional lands and instead migrated to Montana. Here, we went more than 100 years without a significant land base and no reservation. Upon migration to Montana, our ancestors became known as the “landless Indians of Montana” or the “landless Indians of Hill 57.” The moniker continued to be a reference for Little Shell ancestors and the present-day Tribe.

The Little Shell Tribe’s federal recognition was restored in 2019 after a centuries long fight pursuant to the Little Shell Restoration Act of 2019. Pub. L. 116-92, Section 2870. The Little Shell Restoration Act provided the Tribe with the ability to acquire and place lands into trust, but it did not provide the means since no appropriation (funding) was attached to the legislation. As a result, the Tribal Council applied and received grant funding to expand the Tribe’s land holdings in Great Falls. In 2023, the Tribe competed for and received funding from the Bureau of Indians Affairs to acquire forty acres on Mount Royal (colloquially referred to as “Hill 57”). This land is contiguous to existing property the Tribe owns and is located near existing facilities. The property will be a permanent home to the Tribe’s Powwow.

The Tribe also used available federal resources to purchase an 18-acre parcel near existing tribal properties for future development. The Tribal Council envisions expanding housing and tribal services on this parcel in the future. These critical investments will ensure that future developments are concentrated in a singular area and allow for well-planned service delivery and community development.

CULTURE/LANGUAGE PROGRAM

LANGUAGE PROGRAM

The Little Shell Tribal Council acknowledges that there is inherent value to sustain and improve linguistic, cultural, and historical awareness of the Little Shell Tribe. To support this, the Little Shell Tribal Council passed a resolution approving the validation of the Ojibwemowin Certificate from Turtle Mountain Community College for Montana's Class 7 American Indian Language and Culture Specialist Licensure. This licensure will provide Montana educators the ability to teach and promote our language.

In 2023, Little Shell Language Program staff spent the year developing DVDs with the help of elders to teach the Chippewa language and produced a DVD for Chippewa fiddling. Language program staff also created a Chippewa/Ojibwe Conversational Language Curriculum for Little Shell K-12 youth.

The Language Program also sent staff to the Annual 2023 National Indian Education Association Conference's Native Language Summit. Staff brought back what they learned at the Summit and will carry that knowledge as they prepare future planning advancing the mission of the Little Shell Language Program.



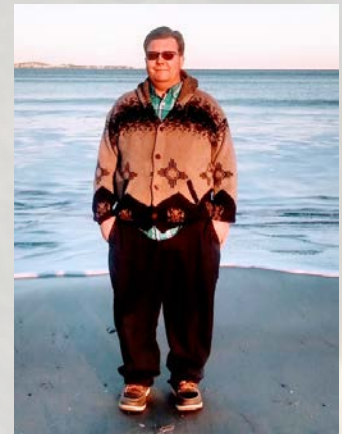
MAAMAWI GROUP

The Maamawi Group is a standing group of the Little Shell Tribe charged with promoting the communication and exchange of information among members, employees, and the Little Shell Council. The Maamawi Group accomplishes this through collaborative efforts and maintaining an environment that promotes healthy communications, resources, and services between members and Council. Members of the Maamawi Group include two individuals appointed by the Little Shell Council from each county service area and serve two-year terms.

NAGPRA GRANT

Council worked with the Little Shell Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Duane Reid to write a competitive National Park Service Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) grant. In August of 2023, the tribe was notified by the National Park Service that they were awarded the NAGPRA grant. After the grant award, Duane began contacting museums and institutions across the United States to inquire about their collections of Native American human remains and cultural items.

This began the long process of identifying and repatriating tribally associated human remains, associated funerary objects, and items of cultural patrimony. The NAGPRA grant will also support the creation of a Cultural Heritage Database of artifacts and cultural items related to the Little Shell Tribe.



Little Shell Tribe THPO Officer Duane Reid

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

ELDER LUNCHEON PROGRAM

The Little Shell Tribe's Elder Luncheon Program provides and delivers nutritious food in a welcoming atmosphere. These meals provide nourishment for the body and the socialization provides nourishment for the spirit. The Little Shell Tribe served 2,965 meals for our elders in 2023 and plans to expand this program in 2024 to include additional activities and educational events led by our elders at least once per month.



2,965
MEALS

SERVED TO OUR
ELDERS IN 2023



FOOD DISTRIBUTION

Designed to address food insecurity within our tribal community, the Food Distribution Program aims to provide access to nutritious food for all members of the tribe, particularly those facing economic challenges. In 2023, the Little Shell Tribe completed the construction of the Food Sovereignty building and will begin using the building to distribute dry and cold goods using USDA resources. First Vice Chairman Sivertsen and Councilman Davis worked with staff to complete the construction project and initiate the Distribution Program. This Program does have income and residence requirements. More detailed information about eligibility for the Program will be available soon.

ANNUAL POW WOW

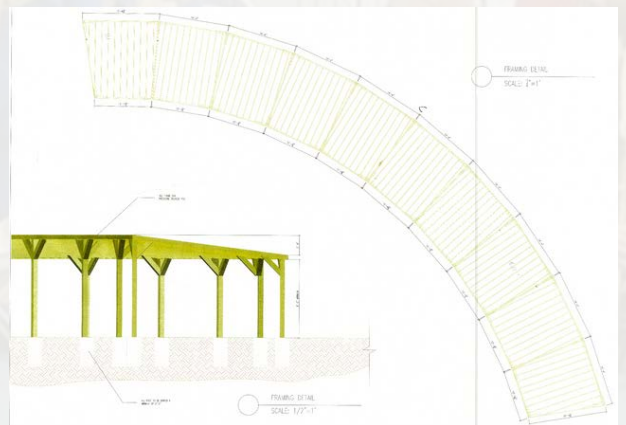
This year, Council approved its Pow-wow Committee Code to formalize the Committee for future Pow-wow operations. The Code institutionalizes current practices, identifies membership, and establishes power and responsibilities. We also held a successful 12th Annual Little Shell Veteran's and Elder's Pow Wow on August 26-27, 2023, at the University of Providence in Great Falls, MT. This annual event brings our tribal communities together from across Montana. The Little Shell Tribe Pow-wow Committee would like to thank the Head Staff, dancers, singers, tribal members, and vendors who came and honored our veterans and elders.



ANNUAL POW WOW

ARBOR IN 2024

The Little Shell Tribe is in the process of building a new arbor located near Mount Royal. Once the arbor is built, we will bless the grounds and have a permanent place for all our relatives to come together in celebration each year. We look forward to hosting our next annual pow wow August 24-25, 2024, at our new arbor.



PLEASE JOIN US AT NEXT YEAR'S
POW WOW AUGUST 24-25, 2024!



Welcome to the
LITTLE SHELL
POW WOW

COMMUNITY EVENTS

METIS MEMORIAL

In 1879, 25 Metis families, led by Pierre Berger, settled along Spring Creek thus becoming the founders of Lewistown. Many of these Metis buried their loved ones on a cattle ranch. Father Van Den Hueval of the St. Leo's Catholic Church in Lewistown agreed to move their loved ones to Calvary Cemetery. In 1894, over 70 Metis were interred in the new cemetery. Sadly, over 120 years later, their graves were unmarked.

More than a decade ago, a number of Little Shell Tribal members took it upon themselves to ensure that their Metis ancestors would not be forgotten. The members discovered a writing by Elizabeth Berger Swan, a Little Shell member, recounting the reinterment to what is called "God's Acre." In 2014, Little Shell Tribal Councilmember Alisa Herodes, sent a letter to St. Leo's Catholic Church requesting to place a memorial honoring the Metis buried in Calvary Cemetery. This request on behalf of our relatives initiated efforts to identify the location of the graves and to place a memorial.

The Little Shell Tribe was thankful to participate in the unveiling of the memorial and supported these efforts by donating Travertine used in the memorial.



TOYS FOR TOTS



Hosting Toys for Tots in partnership with the United States Marine Corps is a highlight of the Little Shell Tribe's Holiday Season. The 2023 Toys for Tots was no different. This year, the Tribe served families in the Great Falls area and worked with community partners to ensure those that were not able to access our distribution had other options. We look forward to partnering again in the future.



LITTLE SHELL FINANCE UPDATE

ANNUAL AUDIT

Tribal governments depend on centralized services to support all the other government programs. Since 2020, the Little Shell Tribal Council has hired an outside accounting firm to review internal procedures and audit the Tribe's financial statements. This requires additional effort from Tribal Council members and staff to prepare each audit, but that keeps our government accountable and identifies opportunities to improve processes.

The accounting firm's 2023 audit reviewed transactions from 2022. The outside auditor classified the Tribe as a low-risk auditee and provided a clean "unmodified" opinion on our financial statements. This means the Little Shell Tribe's finances are healthy and meet federal government standards.

ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES UPDATE

Little Shell Tribal Enterprises LLC was established to provide a sustainable income source to the Little Shell Tribe while providing job opportunities to our members. That mission guides how we impact the communities where we operate and provides a model of a healthy Tribally-owned enterprise.

The Little Shell Tribe began its economic development endeavors in July of 2020. As the Tribe establishes a diverse set of businesses, the Tribal Council projects that there is a three- to five-year development period to become a stable and profitable businesses. In 2023, all of our businesses continued to develop and are on pace to meet that three- to five-year goal.

ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES



**YELLOWSTONE
ROCK**

YELLOWSTONE ROCK (GARDINER, MT & IDAHO FALLS, ID)

Operating in Montana and Idaho, Yellowstone Rock manages several Travertine quarries and a stone processing facility. Travertine is a type of unique Limestone that is formed where there is geothermal activity. Yellowstone Rock operates 2/3 of the known, active Travertine quarries in the United States with generations worth of reserves. Yellowstone Rock offers skilled custom Travertine production and will soon launch into standardized products such as tile and pavers.



SILVER WOLF ENTERPRISES CORP (GREAT FALLS, MT)

Silver Wolf has been specializing in government contracting for 25+ years selling goods such as appliances, water related products including bottled water, canned food, health and safety supplies, coffee machines, and more. Once awarded a contract, Silver Wolf provides customers such as federal agencies and other tribes exceptional service.



BLUE RIBBON NETS LLC (BOZEMAN, MT)

Blue Ribbon Nets has been building hand made wood fishing nets for approximately 20 years. Located in the Southwest Montana fly-fishing mecca, Blue Ribbon caters to fly fishers around the world. Blue Ribbon's high-quality laminated fishing nets are made from ash, cherry, and walnut in a variety of combinations to achieve both beauty and function. They also hold a trademark on their "AquaFade" bag that is biodegradable therefore providing an eco-friendly option for recreation fishers. In 2023, Blue Ribbon Nets went through a re-branding including new names for our nets, a new website, and a new catalog.

ECONOMIC ENTERPRISES



HELL CREEK RECREATION AREA LLC (FORT PECK LAKE)

In the Spring of 2022, Little Shell Tribal Enterprises took over the no-cost lease of the Hell Creek Recreation Area (HCRA) from the US Army Corps of Engineers that was previously held by Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. Once called Hell Creek State Park, this 337-acre property includes 71 camping spots, employee housing, a shop, a shower house, a fish cleaning station, and several other facilities used to serve campers.

HCRA is a world-class fishing destination that is very busy during the Spring and Summer months as well as a destination for hunting and ice fishing during the off-season. The Little Shell Tribe holds a 25-year lease and future development plans include adding solar electric sites, an interpretive center, amphitheater, and primitive cabins. The goal is to continue to improve this area so that we can increase the visitor count and allow more people to recreate in this wonderful public resource.

LITTLE SHELL PET PRODUCTS LLC (GREAT FALLS, MT)

In the Spring of 2023, Little Shell Tribal Enterprises acquired a business that was supplying aquatics water products to several large retailers including Walmart and Petco. Using a specially constructed 900-foot well that accesses the Madison aquifer Little Shell Pet Products packages water without having to modify the water by adding minerals or removing impurities. We supply fresh water for aquatic life - our most popular products are used in aquariums. Another key product we supply is salt water primarily used for hermit crabs.



CONTACT THE LITTLE SHELL TRIBE



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