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### **The Blackfeet Nation is opening its own national park**

A view of Chief  
Mountain in Montana.  
The mountain is on the  
northwestern border  
between the Blackfeet  
Nation and Glacier  
National Park.

[Jeff Hitchcock/CC via  
Flickr](#)



**Members of the Blackfeet Nation want tourists to understand how the story of Glacier National Park is really the story of their nation. [Samantha Weber](#) April 23, 2019**

In 1992, Ed DesRosier wanted to offer visitors to Glacier National Park an experience that didn't yet exist. Tourists learned about the park's wildlife and the history of the iconic red tour buses that carried them to the park's most breathtaking views. But the stories of the people who were connected to the landscape centuries before it became a tourist destination were not mentioned.

So DesRosier, an enrolled member of the Blackfeet Nation in northwestern Montana, made it happen. But before he could become one of the few Indigenous people in the country licensed to operate a tour business in a national park, he would be arrested and have to fight in court for the right to tell the stories of his people and their home.

*Ed DesRosier's company Sun Tours has been giving Indigenous-centered tours of Glacier National Park for 27 years. He and other tribal members are pushing to establish Blackfeet National Park to the east of Glacier.  
Courtesy of Ed DesRosier*

It's easy to imagine DesRosier, whose energy belies his 65 years, captivating tourists at the helm of one of his 10 Sun Tours buses, which have become ubiquitous on Glacier's main roads in the summer. His official business came after many not-so-official tours; the corporate entity in charge of concessions in Glacier refused to give him a license to tell the Blackfeet stories he knew, but he gave tours anyway. DesRosier was responding to a common problem: Despite the fact that they comprise the ancestral lands of hundreds of tribes, few national parks offer visitors the sort of nuanced Indigenous view that DesRosier wanted to provide.



The Blackfeet want to fix this problem, and others, in a dramatic way. The tribe is working toward that goal through myriad avenues, including a plan to become one of the few tribes in the country to open its own national park, a way to assert the tribe's place in the region's history, protect its natural resources and provide new economic opportunities to its members, mostly in Browning, home to approximately 1,000 people and the largest community on the Blackfeet Reservation.

"The invisibility of the Blackfeet has a way of eliminating our connection," DesRosier said. He sees taking advantage of the park tourism economy as more than just a chance for his tribe to reassert its connection to the park, but also as an economic opportunity. Despite once owning half of Glacier and now sharing a border along some of its most breathtaking terrain, the Blackfeet Nation has not yet tapped into the booming national parks tourism economy in any significant way, though such tourism generated \$18.2 billion in park gateway communities last year. That's where Blackfeet tribal members see an opportunity.

Surrounded by rolling plains, Browning's western horizon is dominated by Glacier's iconic craggy peaks. The eastern half of the park was once part of the Blackfeet Reservation, the first

official boundaries of which were delineated by the federal government in the Lame Bull Treaty of 1855. The park's northern and southern areas were occupied by Kootenai and Salish people, respectively. Both tribes were moved to the Jocko Reserve about 100 miles south of Glacier, to what is now the Flathead Indian Reservation, after the 1855 Hellgate Treaty.

The lure of potential mineral extraction in the Blackfoot territory's western mountains brought the government back to the tribe's doorstep in the 1890s. To earn funds for desperately needed food and supplies, the Blackfoot Nation ultimately agreed to sell the mountainous region and natural resource rights to the federal government for \$1.5 million, as long as the land remained public. That sale, or lease, as many tribal members maintain, was negotiated in the still-contested 1895 Agreement. When the land was declared a national park in 1910, Blackfoot hunting and fishing rights were revoked, but gathering rights remained. Since then, Blackfoot people have been arrested and challenged in court while attempting to assert some of their treaty rights. Park and tribal officials alike say meetings between the groups rarely end without a discussion about Indigenous rights in Glacier.

According to the Missoula-based Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research, non-resident spending in Glacier County, where the Blackfoot reservation is, totaled \$92.7 million in 2016. On the west side of Glacier National Park in Flathead County, though, non-residents spent \$505.5 million. Not all of that money is related to park tourists—the National Park Service said Glacier generated \$275 million in gateway communities in 2017—but the disparity is glaring, nonetheless. After revitalizing a nearby campground, the Blackfoot tribe increased profits from the site 25 times in a single year, and tribal members see an opportunity there.

In a small corner office on a quiet Browning street, Blackfoot tribal member and the tribe's recreation and tourism director, Stephanie Vielle, juggles strategies to improve the reservation for tribal members as well as tourists. Many Glacier visitors stop in Browning only for gas or to spend the night in a tribally-owned hotel before heading into the park early in the morning, she said. The trick is figuring out how to get them to stay longer.

“It's kind of the big open question,” Vielle said. “I thought we didn't really have a lot to offer at first, but now that I've been here and I see what's going on, I see that we have a lot.”

According to Loren BirdRattler, project manager for the Blackfoot Nation's ambitious Agricultural Resource Management Plan, that's true. He said around 55 percent of Montana's biodiversity is present on Blackfoot Nation's 1.5 million acres. The management plan, including a proposal for a Blackfoot national park, is still being finalized and will go out for public comment in mid-February. BirdRattler said he and his team plan to put the plan in front of the Blackfoot Tribal Business Council by May 1 for a ratification vote.

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[Recreation is redefining the value of Western public lands](#) [Read more](#)

“When you think about how we utilize our ecology to augment our lives and practice traditions of the Blackfoot people, those would not only be preserved,” he said, “but would also underwrite other efforts in cultural preservation.”

Tribal parks are rare entities in the conservation world, but there are a few models to inspire the Blackfeet. The Navajo Nation controls a couple of parks open to tourists, and Ute Mountain Tribal Park is open to visitors accompanied by Indigenous guides. A tribe in Wisconsin is working on creating a park to protect a watershed--only part of it is open to the public, the rest is just tribally-accessed.

Plans are still in the conceptual phase, but BirdRattler said he imagines the tribal park could span a northwestern slice of the reservation all the way up to the Canadian border. Confident the plan will pass, Birdrattler and his team are working on a feasibility study to identify biodiversity protection hotspots in the area and quantify the potential economic benefits of a new park.

Some areas of the proposed park could also serve as an important piece of habitat for bison, an animal many Blackfeet tribal members hope will attract more tourists. The Blackfeet Nation has been leading the effort to reintroduce free-roaming bison to the Rocky Mountain Front, and a herd that descended from the animals who once roamed free in the area just returned to their reservation in 2016. BirdRattler said a new park would also protect the land, flora and fauna for future generations of Blackfeet.

DesRosier is glad these tribal leaders have taken a serious interest in developing a tourism economy, but he doesn't think they're moving fast enough. He also thinks Glacier National Park should be required to offer more opportunities to Indigenous people, an idea that compelled him to fight for his business all those years ago. He fought at negotiation tables and in appeals courts for two years before a judge ultimately expunged the charges against him, and Glacier Park Incorporated, the corporation that controlled park concessions at the time, offered him a full concession license.

At the zenith of his successful court battle, DeRosier's legal team planned to base their argument on the rights ensured in the 1895 Agreement. Back then, hunting, fishing and gathering fueled livelihoods. He maintains that a modern interpretation of those rights includes business ventures like his. "What is livelihood and survival nowadays," he asked. "Business opportunities, economic growth. When it was afforded to corporate America, it certainly should have been afforded to Native America."

That said, DesRosier and many other Blackfeet tribal members agree that the park's new superintendent, Jeff Mow, has helped shift the tides. Mow came to Montana for the Glacier job in 2013, following a long career in Alaska's parks and Indigenous communities, an experience he said helped prepare him for his new role in the lower 48. He's a vocal advocate for giving Indigenous people a seat at the table. In 2017, he agreed to move some of the park's Native America Speaks programs onto the reservation for the first time and decided to open the tourist season with a Blackfeet blessing ceremony.

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[Will the Badlands become the first tribal national park?](#) [Read more](#)

Mow thinks sharing a border with an Indigenous people living on their ancestral homelands puts Glacier in a unique position. "I can demonstrate what the best relationship between the park service and a tribe could be," he said. In the future, if the Blackfeet tribe succeeds in opening a

tribal national park, Mow said he'd like to include it in the existing international peace park, the first of its kind, which encompasses Glacier and Canada's Waterton Lakes National Park.

Though the Blackfeet Nation's hold on a tourism economy hasn't reached its full potential, DesRosier is optimistic that a stronger connection to Glacier could help reverse a century of Indigenous invisibility in the park.

"I think everybody could do better," DesRosier said. "We have to have a presence in the park to move forward. I think there's no limit in benefits to the Blackfeet in keeping strength as a tribe to that powerful connection."

*Samantha Weber is an M.A. candidate in the University of Montana's Environmental Science & Natural Resource Journalism program. Before attending graduate school, she was a reporter at a small newspaper in southwestern Montana. This story was edited by Graham Brewer and produced as part of the Crown Reporting Project at the University of Montana.*

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### **[Brazil Judge Blocks Bolsonaro Plan to Transfer Control Over Indigenous Land](#)**

Al Jazeera

Excerpt: "A Supreme Court judge in Brazil has suspended President Jair Bolsonaro's plan to transfer power over indigenous land to the country's agriculture ministry." [READ MORE](#)

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**[OPINION: Our Mojave Water Project Makes Good Sense](#)** By Wall Street Journal, 6/24/19 Cadiz operates a large agricultural property in California's Mojave Desert at the base of a 1,300 square mile watershed with an aquifer system storing more water than Lake Mead. We currently irrigate the property with groundwater, but it's a "tipping cup" and what we don't use migrates to saline playas and evaporates—over 10 billion gallons lost annually. By managing the aquifer and this loss, Cadiz will sustainably provide new water to 400,000 Californians. We've been approved under stringent environmental laws, upheld by the courts and validated through continued scientific analysis.

**[Court rejects Interior bid to advance Calif. desert project](#)** By Jeremy P. Jacobs, Greenwire, A federal judge Friday said the Trump administration's position on a Southern California water project was "contrary to law" and sent it back to the Interior Department to reconsider.

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### **[Las Vegas OKs paying for parking tickets with school supplies](#)**

If you get a parking ticket between Wednesday and July 19 in Las Vegas, you can pay for it by donating school supplies, the Las Vegas City Council said.

### **[19 States Still Allow Schools to Beat Their Students](#)**

**DANIEL UNCAPHER, TRUTHOUT**

Corporal punishment or the act of beating children in the name of discipline is still popular in the U.S., especially in the South, despite overwhelming evidence that it accomplishes little besides perpetuating the cycle of violence. With schools already subjected to militarization, police patrols and shootings, it's time we banned this heinous practice in our publicly funded institutions at the national level. [Read the Article →](#)

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## [Lake Mead forecast continues to brighten as water cuts are modeled](#)

The outlook for Lake Mead continues to improve, as forecasters account for a wet winter and a new interstate deal that will leave more water in the reservoir.

## [Kern cow manure leads California's anti-climate change efforts](#)

[By John Cox, Bakersfield Californian, 6/16/19](#)

Roy Dowd sniffed the air during a dairy tour he was leading last week on the edge of Bakersfield. "That's the smell of money," joked the director of operations, maintenance and research at a Visalia company, California Bioenergy LLC, helping local dairies turn manure into a new revenue stream.

## [Who Gets to Own the West?](#) By **JULIE TURKEWITZ**

A new group of billionaires is shaking up the landscape.

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## **Scientists have discovered a sea of fresh water under the ocean**

Thousands of years ago, glaciers covered much of the planet. Oceans receded as water froze in massive sheets of ice blanketing the North American continent. As the ice age ended, glaciers melted. Massive river deltas flowed out across the continental shelf. The oceans rose, and fresh water was trapped in sediments below the waves. Discovered...

Read in Quartz: [https://apple.news/AX\\_8HinuBTs256fk\\_ViSxA](https://apple.news/AX_8HinuBTs256fk_ViSxA)



[This Solar-Powered RV Runs](#)

[Without Fuel Or Charging Stations](#) [goodshomedesign.com](http://goodshomedesign.com)

Electric Car Guest Drive

**What:** seeking EV advocates!

**When:** Saturday, July 13th // 10am - 4pm

**Where:** NV Energy, 6100 Neil Road, Reno, NV 89511

**Why:** to educate the public on real life with an electric vehicle.

We attended last year and we are doing it again in Reno, Nevada!

The event is an opportunity for the public to have conversations with electric car owners. There will be educational displays and test drives to learn more about different aspects of owning electric vehicles, from charging options to driving range and rebates.

(Volunteer signup) [Click here to RSVP](#) as a display vehicle or test drive vehicle.

(Share with friends) To reserve your spot behind the wheel at the Electric Car Guest Drive event: [Electric Car Guest Drive registration form](#)

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**['We've Made History': Ireland Joins France, Germany and Bulgaria in Banning Fracking](#)** [ecowatch.com](#) By [EcoWatch](#)

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**[Nevada's first female majority Legislature got a lot done](#)**

The list of accomplishments includes new laws that strengthen domestic violence penalties, create a sexual assault survivors bill of rights and permanent funding for rape kit testing.



**JULY 2019 EDITION DIRECT DOWNLOAD**

<http://www.americanindianreporter.com/downloads/2019/AIR-July-2019.pdf>

**The Back Issues are all here:**

<http://www.americanindianreporter.com/downloads/back-issues/>

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**[Trump EPA OKs 'Emergency' Use of Bee-Killing Pesticide on 13.9 Million Acres](#)** [ecowatch.com](#)

**[A Plan to Mine the Minnesota Wilderness Hit a Dead End. Then Trump Became President.](#)**

By HIROKO TABUCHI and STEVE EDER

The project's reversal of fortunes has angered environmentalists and focused attention on an unusual connection between a Chilean billionaire and President Trump's family.

**[Native Americans revive squash from seeds found in an 800-year-old pot](#)**  
[ancient-origins.net](#)

## More Books from Heydaybooks.com



### **Enough for All: Foods of My Dry Creek Pomo and Bodega Miwok People** by Kathleen Rose Smith

Explores the deep connection between Native Americans in California and the place of food in their culture. Includes the technical aspects of food gathering, as well as the social and spiritual.....

ISBN: 9781597142427



### **The Fine Art of California Indian Basketry** by Brian Bibby

After a search through private collections and public museums throughout the country, over sixty stunning examples of California Indian basketry were assembled for this book--some almost two hundred years old, some made within the last few decades. Commenting upon each basket are native basket weavers, California Indian artists in other media, and scholars. Together they provide exciting and intimate insights into this world of subtle yet intense beauty. For thousands of years California Indians have been making baskets, often for the most practical reasons--for use as cradles, cooking and serving vessels, winnowing trays, and dozens of other necessary functions. Over the centuries these baskets have evolved artistically as well, and many people now consider them to be among the world's most beautiful, sophisticated, and cherished art objects. Published in conjunction with the Crocker Art Museum ISBN: 9781597142496

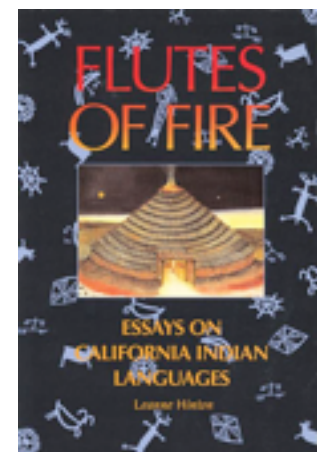


### **First Families: A Photographic History of California Indians** by L. Frank Manriquez

First Families takes an intimate look at the history and contemporary lives of California's Native American peoples. Rich with photographs from family albums, coupled with archival photographs and accompanying text based on interviews, this book constitutes a documentary that celebrates the diversity, culture, and ongoing legacy of the native people of California. ISBN: 9781597140133

### **Flutes of Fire: Essays on California Indian Languages** by Leanne Hinton

Before outsiders arrived, about 100 distinct Indian languages were spoken in California, many of them alive today. Each of these languages represents a unique way of understanding the world and expressing that understanding.

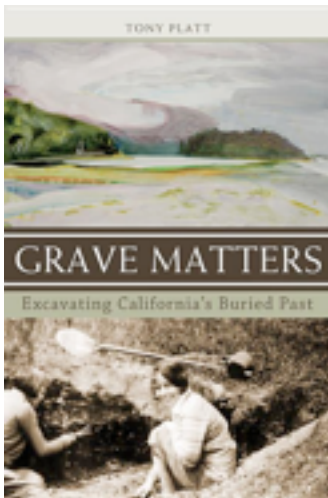




*Flutes of Fire* examines many different aspects of Indian languages: languages, such as Yana, in which men and women have markedly different ways of speaking; ingenious ways used in each language for counting. Hinton discusses how language can retain evidence of ancient migrations, and addresses what different groups are doing to keep languages alive and pass them down to the younger generations. ISBN: 9780930588625

### **Grave Matters: Excavating California's Buried Past**

**by Tony**



**Platt**

Whether by

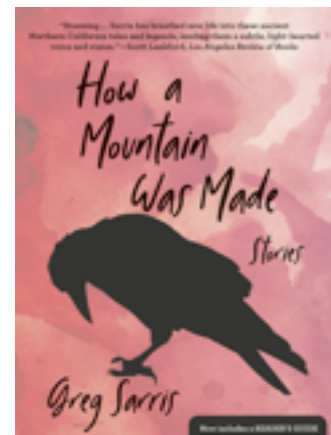
curious Boy Scouts and "backyard archaeologists" or competitive collectors and knowledge-hungry anthropologists, the excavation of native remains is a time-honored practice fraught with injustice and simmering resentments. *Grave Matters* is the history of the treatment of native remains in California and the story of the complicated relationship between researcher and researched. Tony Platt begins his journey with his son's funeral at Big Lagoon, a seaside village in pastoral Humboldt County in Northern California, once O-py weg, a bustling center for the Yurok and the site of a plundered native cemetery. Platt travels the globe in search of the answer to the question, How do we reconcile a place of extraordinary beauty with its horrific past? *Grave Matters* centers around the Yurok people and the eventual movement to repatriate remains and reclaim ancient rights, but it is also a universal story of coming to terms with the painful legacy of a sorrowful past.

ISBN: 9781597141628

### **How a Mountain Was Made: Stories**

**by Greg Sarris**

Now available in paperback In the tradition of Calvino's *Italian Folktales*, Greg Sarris, author of the award-winning novel *Grand Avenue*, turns his attention to his ancestral homeland of Sonoma Mountain in Northern California. In sixteen interconnected original stories, the twin crows Question Woman and Answer Woman take us through a world unlike yet oddly reminiscent of our own: one which blooms bright with poppies, lupines, and clover; one in which Water Bug kidnaps an entire creek; in which songs have the power to enchant; in which Rain is a beautiful woman who keeps people's memories in stones. Inspired by traditional Coast Miwok and Southern Pomo creation tales, these stories are timeless in their wisdom and beauty, and because of this timelessness their messages are vital and immediate. The figures in these stories ponder the meaning of leadership, of their place within the landscape and their community. In these stories we find a model for how we can all come home again. At once timeless and contemporary, *How a Mountain Was Made* is equally at home in modern letters as the ancient story cycle. Sarris infuses his stories with a prose stylist's creativity and inventiveness, moving American Indian literature in an emergent direction. ISBN: 9781597144735



## Nevada Magazine photo needs - September/October 2019 issue

**Submission Deadline: Monday, July 15**

**\*\*\*Important: In order to be considered for publication, you must include your name, address, phone number, and information about the photo (where it was taken, how it was taken, etc.).\*\*\***

**The International Car Forest of the Last Church** - Located in Goldfield, this bizarre art installation features an assortment of vehicles assembled in interesting positions. Send us your vision of this automotive graveyard.

**Candy Dance** - The Candy Dance in Genoa is turning 100. Send us your shots of this Nevada tradition.

**St. Thomas** - This ghost town was swallowed up by the waters of Lake Mead after the completion of the Hoover Dam. As the water recessed recently, the foundations can be explored. We're looking for modern and historical shots of this southern Nevada ghost town.

**Tahoe Pyramid Trail** - A 15-year odyssey to build a trail from Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake following the Truckee River is about to reach a milestone this summer. Send us your action shots taken on this monumental trail.

**Ash Meadows National Wildlife Refuge** - This southern Nevada gem turns 35 this summer. The refuge lays claim to one of the most endangered animals on the planet, along with thousands of acres of pristine Nevada wilderness.

**Caliente** - We're looking for shots of this southern Nevada railroad town.

**Fall Events** - Any images that capture the spirit of a popular September/October celebration in Nevada are desired.

**Visions and Cover shots** - Captivating images from your collection could be used in this department. Think seasonal and timely to the issue.

Deadline to enter is Friday, July 19, 2019, 5 p.m. [Learn More →](#)

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**[Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology](#)**

**[Organizer of Family Workshop: Pouch Making - Organizer Website Website](#)**

Join this month's Family Workshop at the Hearst Museum! Create and decorate leather pouches and learn about the cultural significance and uses of these carrying devices. This is a drop-in workshop for all ages. Bring the whole family for this activity included free with museum admission.

Find out more about events at the Hearst Museum by going to [hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/events](http://hearstmuseum.berkeley.edu/events).

We are a Museum of Anthropology for the 21st Century

We are anthropologists, educators and researchers, motivated by a passion for preserving stories today in order to make new connections tomorrow.

Founded in 1901, the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology is dedicated to the study of cultures from yesterday and today, both near and far. Today, the Museum contains an estimated 3.8 million objects from California and around the world, as well as extensive documents, photographs and film recordings. In this capacity we continue a legacy of enrichment and education, functioning as a research unit for the University of California, Berkeley supporting scholarly discovery and community-based research.

Located in the heart of the Berkeley campus, we have grown into a museum that studies the past and the present in order to encourage dialogue, understanding and respect. We facilitate connections by helping people relate to objects, cultures, and to one another. It would take years to explore everything in our care. With a collection containing millions of objects, we are constantly working to tell the stories of the cultures around us. Stories that demonstrate our shared humanity and the genuine connections that bring communities—from around the world—closer together.

### **[What's Next for the Youth Climate Lawsuit](#)**

FRAN KORTEN, YES! MAGAZINE

A group of 21 young people is suing the U.S. government for endangering their future by supporting a fossil fuel-based energy system. In this interview, lead attorney Andrea Rodgers discusses the lawsuit, the youth movements erupting around the world, and how she is preparing her own children for a future marked by climate crisis.

[Read the Interview →](#)

### **[Bernie to Student Loan Sharks: Drop Dead](#)**

*Ben Beckett, Jacobin*

Beckett writes: "Bernie Sanders, Ilhan Omar, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and Pramila Jayapal just introduced a plan to completely eliminate student debt. Now let's fight like hell for it." [MORE](#)

### **[Canceling Student Loan Debt Doesn't Make Problems Disappear](#)**

By KEVIN CAREY

Plans from Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren could have unintended consequences.

### **[Oregon GOP Lawmakers Flee State to Stall Vote on Historic Climate Bill](#)**

#### **AMY GOODMAN, DEMOCRACY NOW!**

The Oregon state legislature has been in a standoff for nearly one week, after 11 Republican lawmakers fled the Capitol Thursday to avoid voting on a landmark climate change bill that would decrease emissions by implementing a statewide cap-and-trade model. Right-wing militias supporting the rogue GOP legislators have threatened violence, which has led the remaining lawmakers to shut down the state Capitol in Salem.

[Watch the Video and Read the Transcript →](#)