



AMERICAN INDIAN HOUSING INITIATIVE

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This trip will provide a unique opportunity to increase our understanding of the construction process, another culture and ourselves. To make the most of our learning, we will need to be patient and inquisitive to new ways of seeing, speaking, and acting. We hope that the materials we have compiled will help you better prepare for this summer's experience so that it is rich in both teaching and learning. We also encourage you to bring along and use a journal to record and reflect on what you will encounter and experience during this build.

We look forward to seeing you on site!

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The American Indian Housing Initiative

AIHI works to restore a culture of self sufficiency on Reservations through the use of regionally appropriate green building technologies and sustainable development strategies. AIHI is both a capacity building initiative and a learning and educational exchange between the tribal and academic communities.

Tremendous housing shortages exist on American Indian reservations. Through public scholarship, students and faculty at Penn State University, the University of Washington and the University of Wisconsin along with Chief Dull Knife College are exploring the use of straw bale building methods as a low cost and appropriate building technology. Straw bale construction is favorable in the Northern Plains, as straw is locally available and inexpensive, easy to work with, and results in highly insulated and durable homes. The goal of AIHI as a whole is to develop sustainable designs and construction processes for tribal-based, grass-roots, community housing programs in action within the Northern Cheyenne Nation of southeastern Montana.





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A note about Community and Culture

Many sources on community improvement show that the best efforts have all come from *within* the community. We are collaborating with Northern Cheyenne people to help improve their community in one small way, but we are **not** noble experts stepping in to 'save' the community. We are grateful that the Northern Cheyenne have invited us to participate in this project.

It is inevitable that we will experience Northern Cheyenne culture on this trip and we will emerge from the experience as new learners, not as experts on the Northern Cheyenne or the conditions of reservation life. We can perhaps make the most of our experience by **observing** rather than assessing our hosts' activities, by **appreciating** rather than appropriating culture and spiritual practices, and by **sharing** rather than flaunting our own knowledge.

Understandably, many American Indians are deeply offended by non-Indigenous people who are *overly enthusiastic* about Indigenous cultures. Many such non-Indigenous look at only the parts of Indigenous culture that are useful to them (such as inspiring spiritual ceremonies or traditional spiritual stories), and for this, they are compared to European settlers who came to America, saw the value the land could have for them, and took it for themselves despite protests. Non-Indigenous version of Indigenous spirituality is usually highly inaccurate—almost a caricature, a mocking—and it takes attention away from people who are alive today who are involved in current social and political struggles. In an interview, Native American author Linda Hogan voiced a gentle message to those non-Natives hoping to find spiritual fulfillment in Native ideas:

“ . . . I teach in American Indian studies at the university and I find that many of the non-Indian students are desperately searching for spirits, for their own souls, that something in the contemporary world has left many euro-Americans and Europeans without a source, has left them with a longing for something they believe existed in earlier times or in tribal people. What they want is their own life, their own love for the earth, but when they speak their own words about it, they don't believe them, so they look to Indians, forgetting that enlightenment can't be found in a weekend workshop, forgetting that most Indian people are living the crisis of American life, the toxins of chemical waste, the pain of what is repressed in white Americans. There is not such a thing as becoming an instant shaman, an instant healer, an instantly spiritualized person.”

~Linda Hogan

(from an interview published in *Winged Words* by L. Coltelli)



Cultural Considerations and Tips

- Always remember that we are **invited guests**.
- Try to be lighthearted, relaxed, and humorous. Culturally, most Cheyennes find humor in everything and they'll tell you so!
- People who are uncomfortable around others make others uncomfortable.
- Elders are treated with the utmost respect. Do not walk in front of an elder. If an elder (or a community member) visits the building site, stop and speak with him or her; do not continue working without acknowledging his or her presence.
- It is considered disrespectful to ask questions about sacred ceremonies and religion, in general (Sundance, Sweats, Rituals). We will make every effort to arrange for community members to share elements of their culture that they feel comfortable sharing. If you are invited to sweat, the experience is to remain your experience. Avoid exploiting the experience by discussing and analyzing it with others.
- Avoid pointing with your finger.
- Show gratitude, but do not be overly gracious. Among the Northern Cheyenne, gifts of food are highly appreciated and expected when visiting elders.
- Our meals will be prepared by community members, please show appreciation. Also, food is in short supply, so please take only what you will eat.
- Male/ Female relationships between Cheyennes are very respectful yet male dominated. More traditional Cheyennes and Elders will not acknowledge women as readily as they will men. If in a group, the men might be expected to initiate a greeting and lead a conversation with the Cheyennes.
- The Reservation is "dry" so NO alcohol. Alcohol is an enemy to many families and individuals so joking and glorifying drinking habits is completely inappropriate.
- Stay in groups of at least 2 at all times.

For more information:

<http://www.ncheyenne.net>
<http://www.socialpreservation.org>
<http://www.mt.gov/css/default.asp>
<http://www.ncbgclub.org/index.php?PID=1>
<http://indiannations.visitmt.com/northerncheyenne.shtm>
http://www.soaringeagle.org/elders/hollowbreast_history.html
<http://www.mnisose.org/profiles/ncheyne.htm>
<http://www.sandcreek.org/>

News sources:

Billings Gazette, <http://www.billingsgazette.com/>
Indian Country Today, <http://indiancountry.com/>
Indianz, <http://www.indianz.com/>
Native American Calling,
<http://www.nativecalling.org/>

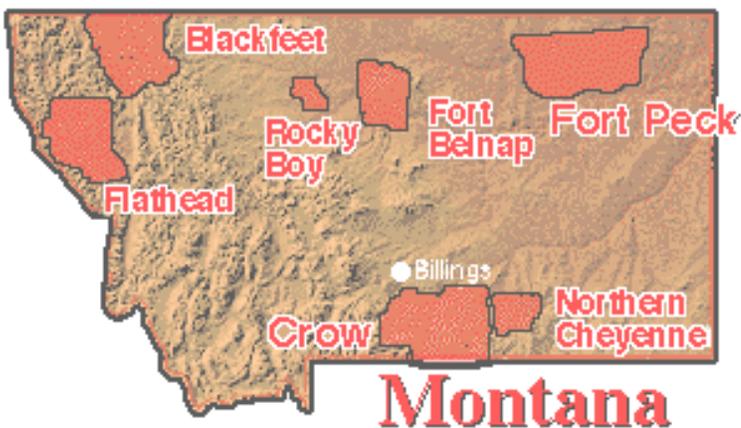
Regional Description

Chief Dull Knife College is in the town of Lame Deer, located on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation in the southeastern region of Montana. Covering 445,000 acres, it is bounded on the east by the Tongue River and on the west by the Crow Reservation. Approximately 5,000 Northern Cheyennes, along with members of other tribes, live on the Reservation. For the first time in the history of the Northern Cheyenne nation, the people elected a female president in 2000. Their presidential elections coincided with National elections in November 2004 when they elected Eugene Little Cyote.

Roadside in Muddy District, Northern Cheyenne Reservation



The **Great Plains** or High Plains are the elevated plains which lie east of the Rocky Mountains in the United States of America, covering the states of New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota and the Canadian provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta. The region is arid and generally characterized by rangeland or marginal farmland. Generally it lies west of the 100th meridian, which roughly corresponds with the line west of which there is 20 inches of rainfall a year or less. Historically the Great Plains were the range of the bison and of the Great Plains Culture of the Native American tribes of the Blackfeet, Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche and others.



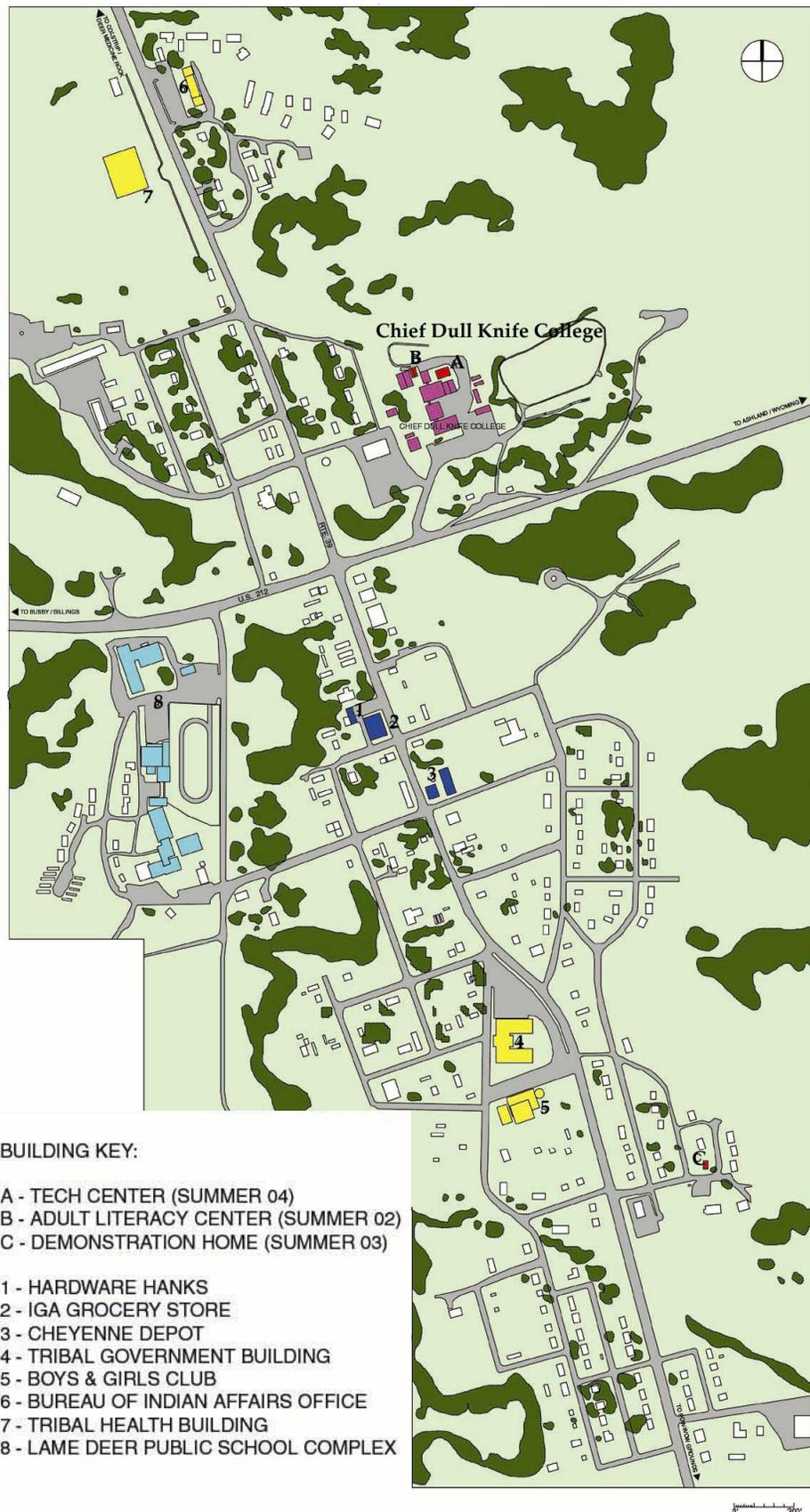
Native Americans were the first inhabitants of the area to become known as Montana. Tribes include the Crow in the south central region, the Cheyenne in the southeastern part of the state, the Blackfeet, Assiniboine and Gros Ventres in the central and northcentral area and the Kootenai and Salish in the western sector. The Pend d'Oreille were found around Flathead Lake, and the Kalispel occupied the western mountains. As more and more European people came into the area, Native peoples lost access to their traditional hunting grounds and conflicts

grew. The Sioux and Cheyenne were victorious in 1876 at the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and Chief Joseph and the Nez Perce won a battle in the Big Hole Basin (1877). Yet, in the end, the Native peoples could not hold out against the force of the United States army. Currently a very diminished number of Native Americans live on Reservations and struggle to keep their cultures and traditions alive while participating in "American" culture and society.

Lame Deer, Northern Cheyenne Reservation

The majority of the Reservation population lives within the five distinct community areas of Busby, Ashland, Lame Deer, Muddy and Birney. The largest population center is Lame Deer with approximately 5,000 people.

Lame Deer, Montana



Local Points of Interest

Chief Dull Knife College, Lame Deer, MT

- An “Open-admission, community based, comprehensive, tribally controlled community college and land grant institution designed to provide affordable, quality educational opportunities to residents of the Northern Cheyenne reservation and the surrounding community.” AIHI built the Adult Ed Center in 2002, installed a courtyard in 2003, and built the Technology Center in 2004 <http://www.cdkc.edu>

Little Big Horn Battlefield National Historic Site

- Just over the border on the neighboring Crow Reservation, this National Monument within the National Parks Service has artifacts from the battle, a memorial to Custer and his men and a newly built memorial to the Lakota Sioux, Arapaho and Cheyennes who died there. You will most likely pass this on your way to Lame Deer from US Rt. 90 to Rt. 212E.



Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site

- Though this site is down in southeastern Colorado, you may hear of it while among the Northern Cheyenne. Otto Braided Hair, who will host us, has been working toward locating the site and seeing legislation approved that will honor those massacred and bring light to the horrible betrayal that happened there.

Medicine Wheel, Bighorn National Forest, WY

- This incredible area is a circular arrangement of stones measuring 80 feet across with 28 rows of stones that radiate from a central cairn to an encircling stone rim. Placed around the periphery of the wheel are five smaller, stone circles. The Medicine Wheel's function and builders remain a mystery. However, there is general agreement that it was built approximately 200 years ago by Indigenous Americans, and that its 28 "spokes" may symbolize a lunar month. To Native Americans, this remains a sacred ceremonial site. Some say that the Medicine wheel was known to the Cheyenne for a long time.



Crazy Horse Memorial, Black Hills, SD

- This monument is phenomenal and should not be missed. This incredible sculpture is in the Black Hills of South Dakota. Overall, Crazy Horse will be 563 feet high, 641 feet long and carved in-the-round. The colossal mountain carving is the focal point of a nonprofit educational and cultural Memorial honoring the North American Indian. The project is being continued by the wife and large family of Sculptor Korczak Ziolkowski (1908-1982). He was asked to carve the mountain by Lakota Chief Henry Standing Bear whose 1939 invitation said, “My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know the red man has great heroes, too.” This photo is the dream of the sculpture with the mountain in the background in 2003.



Chief Two Moons Monument, Busby, MT

- Built in 1936, this historic monument commemorates Chief Two Moons, who participated in the Battle of Little Bighorn.

St. Labre Indian School, Ashland, MT

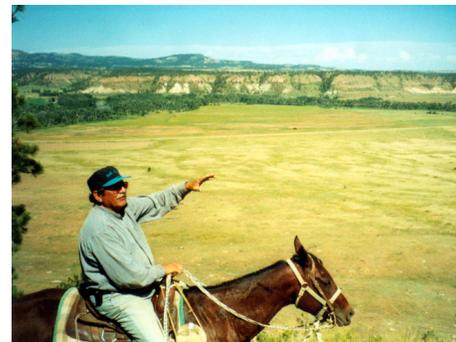
- Established in 1884 by Franciscan Order, St. Labre (pronounced La-Bray) began as a boarding school for American Indian children. A strenuous relationship exists between the Catholic school and the tribe.

Local Activities

Cheyenne Trail Riders

- Zane and Sandy Spang are members of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe and they welcome you to visit their homeland. In order to help you appreciate the significance of your visit to this land, workshops are provided on Northern Cheyenne history, culture and ethnobotany. You can also learn about Gourd dancing and how to play the intertribal 'Hand Game'. You can listen to a Cheyenne storyteller or relax to the beautiful music of a Northern Cheyenne flute player who composes his own music and makes his own flutes.

http://indiancountrytourism.com/Cheyennetrails_files/Cheyennetrails.htm



Fourth of July Pow Wow

- The premier event of the Northern Cheyenne Nation is the annual Fourth of July Celebration, the largest pow-wow held on the Reservation. Activities to observe and participate in include fun runs and health walks. The Princess Contest (all princesses welcomed), Indian dancing contests in all categories, parades, and Grand Entries welcome visitors to a brilliant display of color and traditions. Gourd dancing is held daily. Traditional feasts of Native foods are always part of the festivities, as well as drum groups, dancers, singers and vendors. Be ready to open your eyes to new meanings behind the carnival atmosphere.



Fireworks Display

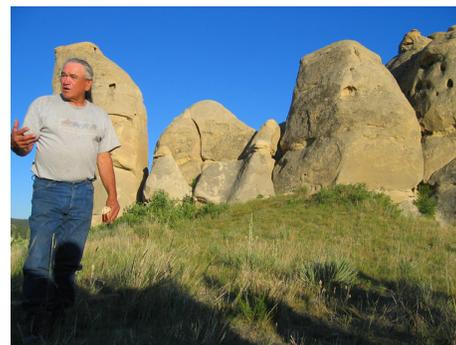
- This fireworks display is put on by some of the Northern Cheyenne fire fighters on a hill near downtown Lame Deer. If you were afraid you'd miss the fireworks while away on the Reservation, this display will make you feel right at home.

Petroglyphs

- These prehistoric carvings and/or drawings can be seen not too far from downtown Lame Deer. Tribal member, Leroy Whiteman hosts an informative tour of some of the drawings complete with historical stories and legends.

Crazy Head

- This local swimming hole is an awesome network of ponds and springs that offer cool relaxation in the heat of the summer. Please remember not to help yourself, but to ask for permission or an invite from a Northern Cheyenne to enjoy this local luxury.



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Travel

It will be **up to you to make and let us know your travel arrangements by May 30** to and from the Reservation. If you choose to fly, try to book well in advance to get the best rates, most are around \$600. Please plan to **arrive in Billings on Sunday, June 26, Saturday, July 2, or Sunday July 10** so that you have time to get to Muddy to set up camp and attend an orientation. It would be best for you to rent a car in Billings to travel to and use while on the Reservation- split the cost and carpool with AIHI friends. If you plan on driving your own vehicle (carpooling with friends of course) let us know and we can suggest a route, where to stop and where to stay along the way. For 1st week participants we will have a **mandatory meeting on Sunday July 26 at 7:00 pm at Muddy Hall.**

Flying: Arrive in Billings, MT on Alaska/Horizon, Delta or United Airlines. Rent a car with friends. Limited transportation available by AIHI provided we know your plans by May 1.
From Billings head out on I-90 South (approx. 60 miles)

- exit at the Little Bighorn Battlefield #510

Driving: Coming from East or West on I-90

- exit at the Little Bighorn Battlefield #510

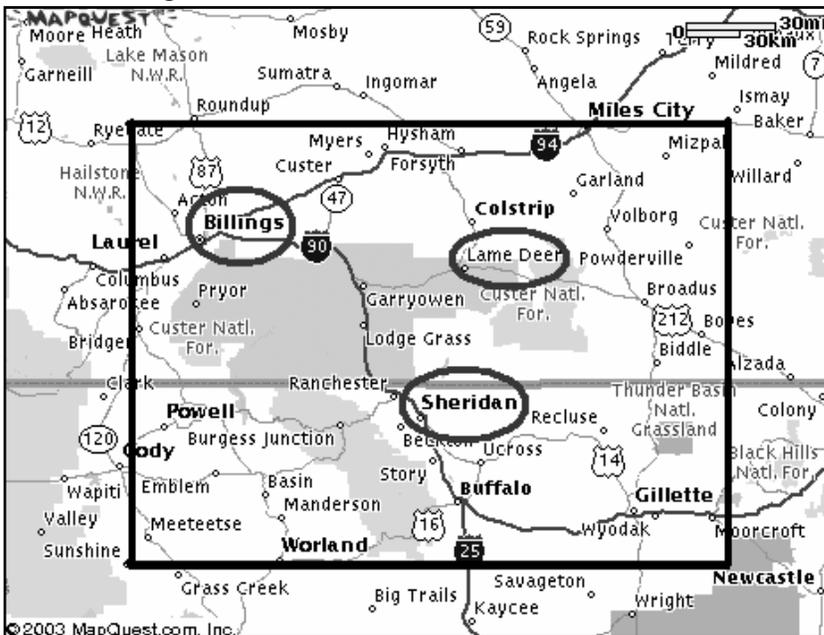
Muddy District Community Center, Our Home

From Little Bighorn Battlefield Exit #510

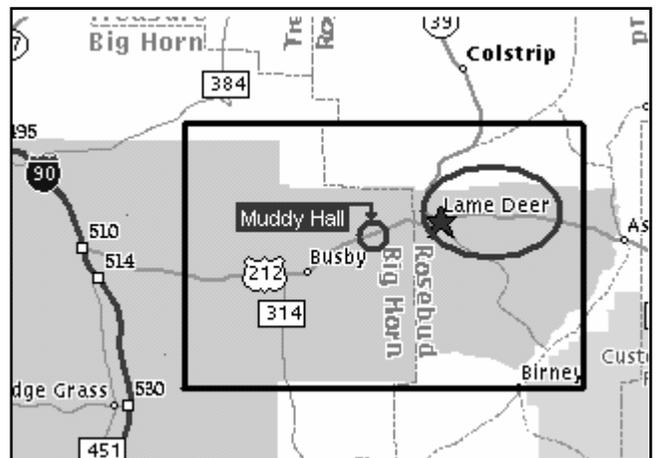
- East on US-212
- Continue about 40 miles to “Muddy Hall” our home, on the way:
 - Pass through the town of Busby
 - Pass through the blinking yellow light
 - About 10 miles from the yellow light you’ll see our site
 - On your left (to the North) is the community center
 - set back about 150 yards
 - look for the blue and white structure, and straw bales near the road



Billings, MT/Sheridan, WY



Busby, Muddy, Lambe Deer, MT



Accommodations

We will be staying at a beautiful site a few miles outside of downtown Lane Deer, in Muddy District. **We will be “roughing it”** in tents, using portable toilets and [solar shower bags](#) for bathing. The evenings get chilly so be prepared with warm sleeping bags/blankets and clothing. We will have simple breakfast together at Muddy and bag lunch on site and hot dinner at the Middle School cafeteria. If you have any **special dietary requests** please let us know so we can try to meet your needs. (We have limited meal options, so keep an “open mind”.)

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Things To Bring

Clothing – Durable or Expendable

Underwear
Socks
Belt
Towel
T-shirts
Sweatshirt
Long sleeve shirt
Shorts
Light-weight pants
Jeans
Tennis shoes
Work boots
Sandals
Swimming suit (there are places to swim)

Hat, cap or bandana

Camping / Comfort

Tent ([PSU Outing Club](#))
Air mattress/pad/cot
Sleeping bag
Pillow
String/cord
Extra tarp

Durable stakes

5-gallon shower bag

Required Tools & Items

Water bottle
Safety glasses
Tool belt – with space for water bottle
Leather work gloves
Tape measure (25’ is best)
Utility knife
Carpenter pencils
Tin snips
Hammer (at least 16 oz.)

Other Items

Camera & Film
Flash light/ headlamp
Battery operated lantern
Batteries
Folding camp chair
Raingear
Books
Money (there are many sites to support)
PSU gear/gifts for community members
Calling cards for payphones (no cell service)

Safety and Hygiene

Sunscreen

Antiperspirant / Deodorant
Toothbrush
Toothpaste
Shampoo, Conditioner
Soap
Hand sanitizer
Lotion (stucco dries out your hands)
Bug spray
Comb or brush
Hair ties/clips
Glasses or contact lens and cleaner
Sunglasses
Ibuprofen / Tylenol
Tums / Maalox

Optional Tools/Items

Writing pad, pen
Journal
Carpentry tools
Masonry tools
Cordless Screw/ Drill
Framing square
Torpedo level

Suggested Readings

These readings are meant to expose you to what is out there, these do not reflect AIHI core values.

Indian Communities and Living on the Reservation

Love Medicine, by Louise Erdrich

Excellent novel intertwining tales of several generations of two Chippewa families. A fast, enjoyable read.

Ceremony, by Leslie Marmon Silko

Beautifully written novel about a young man who returns from WWII in poor condition, but who eventually rediscovers his life in the stories and ceremonies of his people.

House Made of Dawn, by N. Scott Momaday

Classic novel setting the stage for a burst of literature from Indian authors over the last few decades. Tells the story of a young Navajo man wrestling between two worlds.

Neither Wolf nor Dog, by Kent Nerburn

Nerburn shares the wisdom and world-view of an Indian elder as he tries to bridge gaps between the Indian world and the white world.

On the Rez, by Ian Frazier

Story of the author's friendship with an Indian who moves from NYC back to the Oglala Sioux Reservation. Nicely folds factual information about the reservation into the story of the friendship. Great read!

Reservation Blues, by Sherman Alexie

Other Native writers and poets:

Simon Ortiz, Joy Harjo, James Welch, D'Arcy McNickle, Linda Hogan, Paula Gunn Allen, Wendy Rose, Sherman Alexie

Northern Cheyenne—History, Culture and Politics

"Northern Cheyenne: A Fire in the Coal Fields", by Winona LaDuke

Offers an excellent overview of the experience of the Northern Cheyenne vis-à-vis the U.S. government, settlers, and corporations from the 1850s to the present. (We have included a copy of this article.)

Cheyenne Autumn, by Mari Sandoz

History of the Northern Cheyenne. An enjoyable tone, less academic than some histories.

Tell Them We Are Going Home, by John Monnett

History of Northern Cheyenne. Introduction provides a very brief history of the N.C. people's forced move to Indian Territory and unsanctioned migration North.

Holding Stone Hands, by Alan Boyle

Northern Cheyenne History

Wolves of Heaven: Cheyenne Shamanism, Ceremonies, and Prehistoric Origins, by Karl H. Schlesier.

Highly respected by the Cheyenne for its accuracy

Sweet Medicine, by Father Peter Powell (recommended by Bently Spang, Northern Cheyenne)

Shows much of the Northern Cheyenne culture with tremendous accuracy.

Indian and Non-Indian Interaction

Indians Are Us?, by Ward Churchill (especially the chapter “Indians Are Us?”)

While this author certainly expresses opinions about cultural imperialism that are present in the Native American community (and expresses them with intelligence and humor), the wording is pretty strong, and these attitudes are likely much more severe than those we’ll encounter on the reservation.

The State of Native America, edited by M. Annette Jaimes

An excellent and comprehensive collection of essays on topics ranging from art and literature to identity to international and domestic politics. Reading any one of these essays will give readers insight into past and present issues important to American Indians. We have provided the table of contents for you to peruse—we especially recommend the chapter by Wendy Rose entitled “The Great Pretenders: Further Reflections on Whiteshamanism.”

Custer Died for Your Sins, by Vine Deloria, Jr.

A 1969 “Indian Manifesto” which helped ignite a vibrant intellectual activist movement. Covers a wide variety of topics from the “Termination Era” of the 50s to the problem of interaction between anthropologists and Indian peoples.

In The Absence of the Sacred: The Failure of Technology and the Survival of the Indian Nations, by Jerry Mander

A look at the problem of technology and the alternatives offered by Native philosophy and way of life. Examines the false promises of those who promote technology with one-sided and overly-optimistic views, also questions who it is that truly benefits from technology. Highlights recent legal battles between corporations and Native groups.

American Indian Culture and Research Journal

We have found that this is a fabulous resource. We recommend browsing through some issues if you have access to this journal.

New Resource Wars, by Al Gedicks with Forward by Winona LaDuke

Gedicks skillfully written book helps us to understand how these struggles have taken place, why, and what we can do in the future. He tells these stories not as a journalist, or even an interested bystander, but rather as an integral part of many battles over mining and energy development in North America.

—Winona LaDuke (from the foreword)

Reflections on Identity

Partial Recall, edited by Lucy Lippard

This collection of essays by American Indian scholars explains the role of photographers and photography in cultural genocide and assimilation of American Indians. Think before you shoot. (Amazon.com)

Savagism and Civilization, by Roy Harvey Pearce

An exploration of the Euro-American notions of civilization and savagism that have informed Indian policy since the 1600s. An excellent way to reflect on our own culture and its history as well as the implications of both for the past and present.

Playing Indian, by Philip Deloria

An insightful look at Indianness in the imaginations of Americans and how "Indianness" has figured crucially (and contradictorily) in the formation of an American identity from the Boston Tea Party to Grateful Dead fans of the 90s.

Tribal Secrets, by Robert Allen Warrior

A look at the work of Vine Deloria Jr. and John Joseph Mathews that develops into a look at the state of American Indian literature and culture, concluding with thoughtful directives for the future of Indian thought.

Pedagogy of the Oppressed, by Paulo Friere

This book deals with indigenous South Americans, but it is about the way that people learn to read and how that transforms their identity.