

Theme 1: Ice Age/American Indians

The geological and ecological history of this land shaped early people's adaptation to and use of the Upper Missouri Region.

Subthemes:

1. Pre-Ice Age geological period depositions and orogeny shaped the landscape and created stone resources used by Native Americans to make ground and flaked stone implements.
2. The Pleistocene Ice Age left glacial remnants from the Laurentide Ice Sheet as far southwest as Rainbow Falls on the Missouri River.
3. The Laurentide ice sheet wrapped itself around the Bears Paw and Little Rocky Mountains, leaving an ice-free landscape in the White Cliffs area.
4. The Late Glacial Laurentide Ice Sheet dammed the Missouri River at Rainbow Falls, creating Glacial Lake Great Falls that extended upstream to modern Upper Holter Lake.
5. Glacial Lake Great Falls burst out through three outlets, creating Lost Lake and the Shonkin Sag and rerouting the Missouri River.
6. Native Americans have lived in in the Upper Missouri region from at least 14,200 years ago to the present, perhaps when Glacial Lake Great Falls was present.
7. Algonquian, Kootenai, and Salishan people have used the Upper Missouri landscape continuously from the earliest occupation of the Northern Rockies and Northern Plains.
8. Early Native Americans used glacial gravels for stone tools, as well as hornfels from Chouteau County's Square Butte and other sedimentary and igneous rock in the region.
9. Archaeological sites in the Highwoods demonstrate continuous occupation for the past 9,000 years.
10. The Sun River archaeological site just north of Great Falls was left by people who lived there from 5,000 to 3,000 years ago.
11. Archaeological sites in Great Falls and near Carter have evidence of people living in this area during the Late Archaic period, approximately 2500 years ago.
12. Lost Terrace in the Upper Missouri Breaks National Monument is an Avonlea antelope butchering site dated at approximately 1800 years ago.

13. First People's Buffalo Jump has been used by Native people for the past 1500 years, and people have been on that landscape for at least 5000 years.
14. It is unknown how long the Nez Perce have hunted in the Upper Missouri region, but they are one of the thirteen tribes associated with First People's Buffalo Jump.
15. The Nez Perce Trail crosses the Upper Missouri region up the Cow Creek drainage; Fort Benton is designated as a Contributing Site.
16. Siouan-speaking people have used the Upper Missouri region from about A. D. 1400 into the historic period.
17. The Lame Bull or Blackfoot Treaty of 1855 was signed at a treaty council site on the Upper Missouri River, across from the mouth of the Judith River.
18. From at least the early eighteenth century until the present time, Chippewa (Anishinabe) Indians have lived in the Upper Missouri area and in modern times are represented by the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy's Reservation, Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians, and mixed blood Métis people.