



SOCIAL SCIENCES

Reservation Reductions

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Sovereignty
- Treaties with the U.S.
- History
- Genocide, Federal Policy, and Laws

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify two federal actions that reduced the reservation lands promised to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- Describe how the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians are rebuilding their Tribal land base today.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How did federal actions deprive the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians of reservation lands promised in treaties?
- How does the legacy of reservation reductions impact the past and present experience of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians?

LOGISTICS

- Where does the activity take place?
Classroom
- How are the students organized?
 Whole class Teams: 3 – 5
 Pairs Individually

TIME REQUIRED

Two hours

Overview

In this lesson, students will examine how the U.S. government illegally reduced the reservation land guaranteed to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians by treaty. Specifically, students will engage with primary texts and maps to understand how presidential and congressional actions in 1865 and 1875, respectively, reduced the size of the Coast (Siletz) Reservation to a fraction of its original size and further upended the lives of Native people confined to the reservation.

Background for teachers

Beginning in the mid-1850s, the U.S. government forcibly removed dozens of groups of Native Americans from their ancestral homelands across Western Oregon, parts of Northern California, and parts of Southwest Washington and concentrated them on the Coast (Siletz) Reservation. The previous lesson, “Siletz History: Creating the Coast (Siletz) Reservation,” covers the legal process that created the reservation—a large strip of land that initially encompassed close to a third of the Oregon coastline. This lesson will describe the rapid reduction of the reservation land base in the second half of the 19th century, and the impact of that reduction on the Native people confined on the reservation.



When federal officials selected the Central Oregon coast for the reservation in the early 1850s, it seemed an isolated region unfit for the farming and mining opportunities that were driving settlers to the Willamette and Rogue Valleys—the ideal area to segregate Native American people away from the settler population. However, it took only a few short years for federal officials to realize that what had initially appeared as a worthless, out-of-the-way strip of land was in fact valuable for logging, commercial fishing, and ports. It was a realization driven in no small part by the militancy of nearby settlers no more willing to respect the boundaries of the reservation than they had the ancestral territories of Native American people. Almost as soon as the reservation was announced, settlers began encroaching on the reservation boundaries to build homes, establish settlements, and set up business interests—all while peppering members of the Oregon congressional delegation with calls to reduce the size of the reservation. Overstretched federal officials charged with administering the reservation tried to prevent these intrusions—one notable dispute over trespass by an industrial oyster harvester even landed in court—but proved ineffective at preventing the creep of settlers onto the reservation.

Instead, federal officials in Washington D.C. choose to drastically reduce the size of the reservation. Within 20 years of its establishment, the government had reduced the Coast (Siletz) Reservation by more than 80 percent: first in 1865 by an illegal

STANDARDS

Oregon social sciences standards¹

HS.4 - Examine institutions, functions, and processes of United States government.

HS.5 - Evaluate the relationships among governments at the local, state, Tribal, national, and global levels.

HS.55 - Analyze the complexity of the interaction of multiple perspectives to investigate causes and effects of significant events in the development of world, U.S., and Oregon history.

HS.60 - Analyze the history, culture, Tribal sovereignty, and historical and current issues of the American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian in Oregon and the United States.

HS.61 - Analyze and explain persistent historical, social, and political issues, conflicts, and compromises in regards to power, inequality, and justice and their connection to current events and movements.

HS.63 - Identify and analyze ethnic groups (including individuals who are American Indian/Alaska Native/Native Hawaiian or Americans of African, Asian, Pacific Island, Chicano, Latino, or Middle Eastern descent), religious groups, and other traditionally marginalized groups (women, people with disabilities, immigrants, refugees, and individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender), their relevant historic and current contributions to Oregon, the United States, and the world.

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² Oregon is in the process of revising its social sciences standards. This document references the draft 2018 standards for high school.



presidential executive order that opened up a 200,000-acre tract of land centering on Yaquina Bay, and then by an act of Congress in 1875 that removed an additional 700,000 acres—two-thirds of the original reservation. The 1865 reduction especially relied on the legal fiction that the Coast (Siletz) Reservation had been created by an executive order unassociated with treaties. Had federal officials admitted that the reservation had been created to fulfill the obligations in several ratified treaties, the reservation could not have been legally reduced via executive order. However, both reductions also relied on another fiction: the idea that Native people consented to giving up reservation land. In both instances, federal officials submitted claims to Congress and the Indian Office that Siletz people had agreed to reduce the size of the new reservation. The primary sources in this lesson give students a chance to interact with these claims and compare them to the reality that Native people wanted nothing more than to maintain the integrity of their new land base.

For Native people, the reservation reductions heaped chaos on an already tumultuous environment. A large number of people at Siletz had been forcibly removed from other parts of the region and were essentially refugees from ethnic cleansing in Southern Oregon. But many others (Nestucca, Salmon River, and Siletz bands of Tillamook, Yaquina, Alsea, and Siuslaw peoples) had seen the reservation created out of parts of their ancestral homelands. Both groups were forced into sharing traditional subsistence sites and struggled to adjust to the enforced confederation. Inefficient and

STANDARDS *(Continued)*

HS.65 - Identify and analyze the nature of systemic oppression on ethnic and religious groups, as well as other traditionally marginalized groups, in the pursuit of justice and equality in Oregon, the United States, and the world.

HS.66 - Examine and analyze the multiple perspectives and contributions of ethnic and religious groups, as well as traditionally marginalized groups within a dominant society, and how different values and views shape Oregon, the United States, and the world.

HS.67 - Evaluate historical sources for perspective, limitations, accuracy, and historical context.

HS.68 - Select and analyze historical information, including contradictory evidence, from a variety of primary and secondary sources to support or reject a claim.

Oregon English language arts standards

9-10.RH.2 - Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate and evidence-based summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

corrupt local agents at Siletz further stressed the precarious situation—failing to provide promised food, housing, and medical care to the influx of people arriving to the Central Oregon coast. As a result, starvation was a very real threat during the first few years on the reservation. The reservation reductions in 1865 and 1875 occurred just as Native people had begun to adjust and recover from the early years of suffering and want. In a very real way, the reservation reductions reproduced the horrors of removal—once again destabilizing the social and material foundations of Native communities by forcing people to leave their homes and relocate to unfamiliar places and ways of life elsewhere on the reservation.

In the years to come, federal actions would further decimate the Tribal land base. In the 1890s, the government allotted individual Tribal members small parcels of reservation land under the General Allotment (Dawes) Act, auctioning and giving away much of the surplus to settlers and corporate timber interests. The Western Oregon Indian Termination Act of 1954 liquidated the scraps of Tribal land that remained, ending federal recognition of the Tribe entirely. Both processes are described in more detail in subsequent lessons.

The legacy of land loss shapes the modern political, cultural, and economic realities of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to this day. After persistent and stalwart advocacy by Tribal leaders, Congress restored the Tribe’s federal recognition in 1977 but only a few thousand acres of land, mostly scattered plots east of the current city of Siletz, were returned to the Tribe in 1980. Since then, the Tribe has managed to acquire additional land to create a checkerboard of noncontiguous parcels in

MATERIALS

Unless otherwise indicated, the following materials are provided as appendices or attachments to this lesson.

- **Slides** (PowerPoint slide deck)
- **Map packet.** Assemble packets for groups of three to five students using the following materials. Alternatively, post maps in an online location where students can easily view and access them. Copies of each map are also provided in the PowerPoint slides.
 - **Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Western Oregon Language Map**
 - **Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Aboriginal Areas within Oregon**
 - **Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Original Reservation Boundary**
 - **Siletz (Coast) Reservation Reductions**
 - **Current Siletz Ownership**
- **Reservation Reductions Documents** hand-out (at least one copy for groups of three to five students)
- **Reading: Wilkinson, chapter 10 (“Losing the Land”) of *The People Are Dancing Again: The History of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*.** Provided for lesson prep for teachers and/or use by students if desired. If sharing with students, consider posting the PDF in an online location where students can easily access and read it.

Lincoln County and other parts of Western Oregon, totaling nearly 16,000 acres as of 2021. Of that total land base, only 4,700 acres, or 7.4 square miles, are officially designated as reservation/trust land. The lands managed by the Tribe today represent a minuscule portion of the original Coast (Siletz) Reservation, to say nothing of the millions of acres of land throughout Western Oregon ceded in treaties.

Nevertheless, the Tribe has demonstrated its characteristic persistence and resourcefulness in making the best use of its lands and other resources. The Tribe has built housing for elders and other members on its reservation, as well as the Chinook Winds Casino on land the Tribe owns north of Lincoln City to generate revenue for the Tribe. The reservation hosts cultural and educational programs and community celebrations. The Tribe actively manages natural resources by issuing hunting, fishing, and firewood-cutting permits on its lands and participates in local and regional environmental restoration projects, including enhancing depleted native oyster beds in Yaquina Bay, managing a Tribal fish hatchery, restoring salt marshes and riparian zones, and working to revive lamprey populations. Many Siletz families continue to retain ties to important places throughout the original reservation boundaries and the rest of their ancestral territory, annually traveling hundreds of miles to traditional gathering places, sacred sites, and ancestral villages to pass those connections down to their children and grandchildren.

VOCABULARY

Acre - A measurement of land area equal to 43,560 square feet; traditionally thought to represent the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plow in one day.

Bias - Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared to another.

Point of view - The position or attitude from which something or someone is observed; also called "perspective."

Primary source - Documents, recordings, photographs, accounts, newspapers stories, films, and other records that historians study and analyze in order to describe and interpret the past.

Secondary source - A document or other material that interprets, evaluates, or discusses information found in one or more primary sources. Secondary sources depend on primary or original sources of information.



To prepare for this lesson teachers should:

- Read Wilkinson, chapter 10 (“Losing the Land”) of *The People Are Dancing Again* (included in the lesson materials).
- Review all handouts and worksheets for this lesson.
- Ensure students will have access to all materials (printed and/or electronic) needed to participate in this lesson (see materials section).
- Prepare classroom audiovisual technology to display the slides.

References

- Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. (n.d.). *Our heritage*. <https://www.ctsi.nsn.us/introduction/>
- Schwartz, E.A. (1991). Sick hearts: Indian removal on the Oregon coast, 1875–1881. *Oregon Historical Quarterly*, 92, 229–264. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/20614395>
- United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). U.S. gazetteer files, 2019: *American Indian reservations, trust lands, and Native Hawaiian home lands*. <https://www.census.gov/geographies/reference-files/time-series/geo/gazetteer-files.html>
- Wilkinson, C. (2010). *The people are dancing again: The history of the Siletz Tribe of Western Oregon*. University of Washington Press

ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



The lesson is primarily structured around group discussion and exploration, but much of it can be adapted for distance- or independent-learning purposes. A suggested sequence follows. Be sure all students have either print or electronic access to the materials described.

1. Hold a class meeting online and, using the PowerPoint slides and the steps in Activity 1 (“Warm up”), have students respond to the discussion prompts provided on slide 2 (“Warm up”). Alternatively, you can post the discussion questions in your school’s online classroom platform or an online document and have students respond to them asynchronously.
2. Using a web conferencing or online meeting platform, the PowerPoint slides, the map packet handout, and the steps and talking points in Activity 2 (“Losing the land”), provide a virtual lecture on the Siletz Reservation reductions.
3. Have students complete Activity 3 (“Primary source analysis: The path to violating treaties”) in small groups working synchronously (e.g., via web conference breakout rooms) or asynchronously through your school’s online classroom platform or other online document or collaboration tool. Alternatively, you can direct students to complete the activity independently or as homework. Ensure students have access to any information and documents they need to

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Resources

Indian Land Tenure Foundation. (n.d.). *Land tenure history*. <https://iltf.org/land-issues/history>

Kappler, C. J. (1927). *Indian affairs: Laws and treaties*. Oklahoma State University Library Digital Collections. <https://dc.library.okstate.edu/digital/collection/kapplers>

Considerations for teachers

Assessment

The core activity of this lesson is focused on student discussion and engagement with primary texts.

Teachers can assess student learning by monitoring student discussions in pairs and small groups.

Practices

- *Small groups* - Small-group activities allow students to share and analyze ideas among three to five people. This practice can be good for students who do not want to share their ideas with the whole class and/or who may be afraid of others' reactions. The teacher should monitor small-group discussions to determine the degree to which students are understanding the concepts and contributing to the group.

ADAPTIONS FOR DISTANCE LEARNING



(Continued)

complete the work, including the PowerPoint slides and the "Reservation Reductions Documents" handout. This may mean providing print or electronic copies of lesson materials and/or reformatting documents so students can work with them virtually.

4. Convene one or more follow-up online class meetings to review together and debrief student group (or individual) work, reflect on the lesson together (see steps in Activity 4, "Reflection/closure"), and answer any remaining questions.

- *Classroom discussion* - Large-group, whole-class discussion allows students to express their thoughts and hear the thoughts of others. For the instructor, this practice is a good way to take the pulse of the group and see what general themes are emerging. For students, large-group discussion can be a way to express themselves or hear differing perspectives.
- *Differentiation* - This lesson makes use of readings with some technical information, complex sentence structures, and archaic language. You may choose to organize groups based on reading needs and supports, or have students identify appropriate scaffolds for understanding if necessary.

Learning targets

- I can identify two federal actions that reduced the reservation lands promised to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- I can describe how the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians are reclaiming and using reservation lands lost through federal land takings.

Appendix

Materials included in the electronic folder that support this lesson are:

- Reservation_Reductions.Slides.ppt
- Materials_Map_Packet.pdf
- Materials_Reading_Wilkinson Ch10_Losing_the_Land
- Materials_Reservation Reductions Documents

Activity 1

Warm up

Time: 15 minutes

Overview

Students engage in a warm-up activity and review what they know so far about the history of the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to activate their prior knowledge.

Step 1

Display slide 2 (“Warm up”) and ask students to discuss the prompts with a partner.

Step 2

Ask for a few volunteers to share what they discussed in their pairs.

Step 3

If needed, provide a summary of previous lessons to refresh students’ memories of the history surrounding the creation of the Coast (Siletz) Reservation and the relocation of many Western Oregon Native Tribes and bands to the reservation.

Step 4

Provide an overview of the topics and information presented in this lesson.

Say:

Over time, the federal government abandoned its promise to secure a “permanent home” for the people removed to Siletz, and instead bowed to the demands of settlers and business interests to reduce the size of the Coast (Siletz) Reservation.

Activity 1 (Continued)

In this lesson we will examine two federal actions that took land from the Siletz peoples, how the legacy of land loss affects the modern circumstances and realities of the Tribe, and how the Tribe is making the best use of the reservation land that it has been able to retain and reclaim.

Step 5

Review the learning targets and vocabulary for the lesson.

Activity 2

Losing the land

Time: 30 minutes

Overview

In this activity, students learn general details about two federal actions that resulted in the loss of reservation land promised to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in treaties.

Step 1

Sort students into groups of three to five using your preferred sorting method and have them reorganize into new table groups.

Step 2

Distribute the map packets (see materials section) to student groups and give them a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the maps.

Step 3

Display slide 3 (“What is an acre?”) and discuss the definition of an acre. This is a measure of land area that students may or may not be familiar with, and it is an important part of the discussions that follow. Ask students who are familiar with the measurement to share what they know (e.g., they might know the acreage of their home, family farm, or ranchland).

Step 4

Using slides 4–7 and information from the “Background for teachers” section above, give students an overview of the federal actions that reduced the size of the reservation promised to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians in treaties. Refer students to the map packets and note that the maps in their packets match the maps provided in the slides—in case they are easier for

Activity 2 (Continued)

students to see and follow along with. Allow groups a few moments to study each and debrief what they learned before moving on to the next slide and map.

- “Siletz ancestral homelands and languages” (slide 4) shows the ancestral areas of Western Oregon inhabited by multiple Tribes and bands of Siletz ancestors prior to contact with Euro-Americans and the languages and dialects they spoke.
- “Siletz ancestral areas and 1855 reservation boundaries” (slide 5) shows the ancestral areas of the Western Oregon Tribes and bands as well as the original boundaries of the Siletz Coast Reservation as established in 1855.
- “Original Siletz Coast Reservation (1855)” (slide 6) shows the 1855 boundaries of the Siletz Coast Reservation superimposed on top of current county boundaries. Emphasize the large size of the reservation (around 1.1 million acres) and remind students the federal government created the Siletz Coast Reservation on land taken from the ancestral homelands of several coastal Tribes (Aalsea, Siuslaw, Tillamook) and then moved others in to live with the coastal Tribes. Some Tribes were used to living on that part of the Oregon Coast, but it was hard for other Tribes—such as those from Northern California and the Willamette Valley—to adjust to the new geography and climate of the reservation.
- “Reservation reductions” (slide 7) shows the reductions of the Siletz Coast Reservation as a result of presidential and congressional actions.
 - The Yaquina Tract (200,000 acres), represented in blue on the map, was opened by a presidential executive order of Andrew Johnson in 1865.
 - Congress removed an additional two-thirds of reservation lands (700,000 acres) in 1875 in two chunks north (yellow) and south (purple) of the reservation headquarters at the present-day city of Siletz.

Activity 2 (Continued)

- Remaining Siletz Coast Reservation lands (the green section on the map) were later taken away by Congress through policies called “allotment” and “termination.” These are described at length in other Siletz history lessons.

Step 5

Display slide 8 (“Land losses (acres)”) and review with students the data presented on the land loss suffered by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians due to the reservation reductions. Ask for a volunteer to calculate the size of the land losses as a percentage (Answer: 80 percent).

Step 6

Display slide 9 (“Current Siletz Tribal land ownership”) and point students to the copy of the current Siletz landholdings in the map packet. Ask students to discuss in their groups what they notice about the map and if they can identify any familiar landmarks that are on or near Tribal land, and then share the following key points.

Say:

In 1980, the federal government gave back to the Tribes some tiny pieces of the original reservation land, and the Tribe later bought additional land. It now manages some 4,700 acres of reservation land and has a total land base of nearly 16,000. These land holdings are a testament to the perseverance and resourcefulness of Siletz people.

Step 7

Display slide 10 (“Making the best use of Tribal lands today”) and discuss with students how the Tribe is using its land and other resources to serve its members and Oregon coastal communities and to help the Tribe survive and thrive into the future.

Activity 2 (Continued)

Say:

The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians has demonstrated its characteristic persistence and resourcefulness in making the best use of its lands and other resources. The Tribe has built housing for elders and other members on its reservation, as well as the Chinook Winds Casino on land the Tribe owns north of Lincoln City to generate revenue for the Tribe. The reservation hosts cultural and educational programs and community celebrations. The Tribe actively manages natural resources by issuing hunting, fishing, and firewood-cutting permits on its lands and participates in local and regional environmental restoration projects, including enhancing depleted native oyster beds in Yaquina Bay, managing a Tribal fish hatchery, restoring salt marshes and riparian zones, and working to revive lamprey populations. Many Siletz families continue to retain ties to important places throughout the original reservation boundaries and the rest of their ancestral territory, annually traveling hundreds of miles to traditional gathering places, sacred sites, and ancestral villages to pass those connections down to their children and grandchildren.

Step 8

Pause to take any questions from students before moving on.

Activity 3

Primary source analysis: The path to violating treaties

Time: 60 minutes

Overview

In this activity, students review and discuss documents related to the reservation reductions and consider the accuracy, assumptions, and perspectives of the people or groups that produced them.

Step 1

Distribute the “Reservation Reductions Documents” handout (see materials section) to student groups and give them a few minutes to familiarize themselves with the contents.

Step 2

Review the provided vocabulary definitions for primary sources, secondary sources, bias, and point of view.

Step 3

Display and review with students the slides discussing the benefits and challenges of primary and secondary sources and how point of view and bias can color or shape both (slides 11, 12, and 13).

Step 4

Point groups to the first page of their “Reservation Reductions Documents” handout and have them read and discuss it together for several minutes. Ask if students have any questions.

Step 5

Using slides 14 and 15 (“Reading analysis instructions” and “Reading analysis questions”), provide instructions for the activity. Students will work in groups

Activity 3 (Continued)

to review documents related to the 1865 presidential executive order and the 1875 act of Congress that reduced reservation land promised to the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Students will answer the reading reflection questions on slide 15 and be prepared to share what they learn with the whole class. The reading reflection questions are:

1. Who created the document(s)?
2. What voice(s) are represented in the document(s)? What voice(s) are missing?
3. Why did the author(s) create the document(s)?
4. What were their motivations and goals?
5. What claim(s) does/do the author(s) use to make their point(s)?
6. How does/do the document(s) help you understand the land losses experienced by the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians?

Step 6

Ask each group to appoint a facilitator, note taker, and timekeeper.

Step 7

Briefly walk students through the remaining pages of the handout to orient them to it, pointing out the two sections (parts 1 and 2) that contain excerpts of primary source materials associated with the two Siletz Coast Reservation reductions.

Step 8

Depending on available time and the number of student groups, assign groups to review and respond to the discussion prompts for one or both of the two sets of documents provided in the handout. That is, you may choose to have each group review and discuss both of the two sets, or have half of the student groups review one document set and the other half review the second set of documents.

Activity 3 (Continued)

Step 9

Give student groups approximately 35 to 45 minutes to read and discuss the documents using the reflection questions. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions and ensure they are on task and understand what they are supposed to be doing.

Step 10

When groups have read and discussed their assigned set(s) of documents, give them a few minutes to prepare and then ask them to share with the whole class what they learned and discussed.

Step 11

Thank students for their work and answer any questions they have.

Activity 4

Reflection/Closure

Time: 15 minutes

Overview

In this activity, students reflect on and summarize what they learned in the lesson.

Step 1

Restate or point to the learning targets for the lesson and review with students. Ask if they have any questions about what they learned.

Step 2

Ask students to share with their groups what stood out or surprised them the most in the lesson. Ask for volunteers to share their responses with the whole group.

Step 3

Ask students to work in their groups to design a digital story board that summarizes or shares their reactions to what they learned in the lesson. Have them share their ideas with the whole class and/or make and present their creations.