Agriculture Resource Management Plan (ARMP)

Loren BirdRattler
The present reservation is located in northwest Montana, bordered by Glacier National Park to the west and Alberta, Canada to the north and the Bob Marshall Wilderness to the southwest. Spanning 1.5 million acres, just over 640,000 hectares.

Larger than Delaware and nearly twice the size of Rhode Island (without the two Senators and one or two Congressman) that represent both of those states.

The land elevation varies from 3,400 feet at the east end to over 9,000 feet at Chief Mountain in the west.
The Blackfeet reservation has abundant natural resources, including forestlands and oil and gas reserves, and is home to many species of fish and wildlife. In fact, there are more animal and plant species on the Blackfeet Reservation than anywhere else in the lower forty-eight states.

More than 518 miles of streams and 180 bodies of water, including eight large lakes, can also be found on the reservation.
Authority: Public Law 103-77 (The American Indian Agriculture Resource Management Act of 1993)

- Indian agricultural resource management planning program
- (C) Whether developed directly by the tribe or by the Secretary, the plan shall-
  - determine available agriculture resources;
  - identify specific tribal agricultural resource goals and objectives;
  - establish management objectives for the resources;
  - define critical values of the Indian tribe and its members and provide identified holistic management objectives;
  - identify actions to be taken to reach established objectives;
  - be developed through public meetings;
  - use the public meeting records, existing survey documents, reports, and other research from Federal agencies, tribal community colleges, and land grant universities; and
  - be completed within three years of the initiation of activity to establish the plan.
The Blackfeet Agriculture Resource Management Plan (ARMP) is a project that was created by the Blackfeet Natural Resource Conservation District, a volunteer board established in 1996 by the Blackfeet Tribe, by Tribal Resolution #: 1-97.

The project was established by a Contract Agreement between the Blackfeet Tribe and the United States Department of Interior’s Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Becoming Astute to all of the Moving Parts that the ARMP can effect within the current Tribal Government Structure

- Land Management
- Water Management
- Conservation and Holistic Management Concepts
- Agriculture, Farming, and Livestock
- Administration

Benchmarking
ARMP Process - Methodology

ARMP

• Project Plan

Interdisciplinary Team

• Six internal stakeholders - Done
• Six external stakeholders - Done - Awaiting notification
• BNRCD Board -

Define Measurable Goals

• Define Measurable Objectives
• Define Strategies and Tactics

Public Comment

• Community Focus Groups
• Door to Door Campaign (Survey)

Contract – Change Order

• ARMP Plan BTBC 1/12/17
• Environmental Assessment

Closed Session (Inter-Disciplinary Team, BNRCD)
Open Session (Stakeholders and Public)
Inter-Disciplinary Team (Continued)

• Planning Sessions (Schedule and Process):
  – The Blackfeet Natural Resources Conservation District and the inter-disciplinary team will define the Mission, Vision, and Goals for the Blackfeet Tribe’s ARMP, facilitated by ARMP project manager, Loren BirdRattler (2017 Second Quarter)
  – After all of the major goals are established, the inter-disciplinary team and the BNRCD will invite community stakeholders to participate in planning sessions that define the objectives, strategies, and tactics under each major goal, prioritize them, define their timeline, who is responsible, and possible funding sources (2017 Third Quarter)
  – Upon completion of the defined goals and objectives, a survey instrument will be created for a door to door campaign and community focus groups to gather additional input. (2017 Third Quarter)
  – Accompanying NEPA Assessment (2017 Fourth Quarter)
Inter-Disciplinary Team

Blackfeet Natural Resource Conservation District

- Vacant, Chairman
- Coco Boggs, Acting Chairman
- Senator Lea Whitford, Secretary
- Honorable Terry Tatsey
- Vacant
- Emerald Grant
- Verna Billedeaux
- Anne Stephens
Inter-Disciplinary Team (Continued)

• **Blackfeet Tribal Government Representatives**
  - Jerry Lunak, Director of Water Resources, Blackfeet Tribe
  - Mark Magee, Director of Land Management, Blackfeet Tribe
  - Ervin Carlson, Director of Buffalo Program, Blackfeet Tribe
  - Dona Rutherford, Director of Fish and Wildlife
  - Gerald Wagner, Director of Environmental, Blackfeet Tribe
  - John Murray, Tribal Historic Preservation Office, Blackfeet Tribe
Inter-Disciplinary Team (Continued)

• External Producers and Stakeholders
  – Bob Burns - St. Mary/Milk River Watershed
  – Joe Kipp - Cut Bank Creek Watershed
  – Dan Barcus - Two Medicine Watershed
  – Frid England - Badger Creek Watershed
  – Wayne Smith Birch Creek Watershed
  – Dylan DesRosier, Land Protection Specialist, The Nature Conservancy
  – Blackfeet Community College Representative (Needs Board Approval)
Challenges to Planning and Implementation

• Produce and Write the Plan (Pro’s and Con’s)
  – Internal
    • Buy In
    • More control over deliverables
  – External
    • Less Control
    • No buy in

• Implementation
  – Current Stressors to Tribal Governments
  – Measurable Goals
  – Measurable Objectives
Sample Measurable Goals and Objectives

• Using soil quality as a part of the appraisal process to help prevent erosion, over grazing, etc. (legislation that creates a directive with a timeframe)

• Getting tribal appraisers credentialed to free up backlog in trust land management

• **Taking advantage of all federal, state, county, and other existing programs to help augment defined Blackfeet goals and objectives** –

• Making recommendations for appointments to local, state, regional and national boards, commissions and committees to ensure that Blackfeet agriculture producers and stakeholders have a place at policy development tables (Food Safety and Management Act, among others) and training those who are selected to maximize participation and influence

• Make lending opportunities more available to Blackfeet producers through existing, expanded or new revolving loan programs administered both internally and externally

• Create a first right of refusal for Blackfeet producers leasing Blackfeet Tribal (existing or new resolution) or member owned (Trust subjected to BIA regulation) land

• Work across government and organization lines to create standards to eradicate noxious weeds

• Create a Tribal Food Code legislation that protects Native agriculture and food producers and defines regulations and safety standards that are aligned or more stringent than current federal food safety standards to bolster export opportunities

• Create a program that takes advantage of local producers to become suppliers of the USDA Blackfeet and other regional commodities programs, local schools and other entity’s
  – Tribal Buffalo
  – Locally produced Cattle
  – Locally produced chickens and hogs
  – Produce
Sample Measurable Goals and Objectives (Continued)

- Invest in our youth through established programs like 4H, that will increase the institutional knowledge base of Blackfeet, and to a larger extent, Native farmers and ranchers
- Invest in our youth through established education programs that teach about safety and proper use of farm and ranch equipment, firearms, hunting, fishing and conservation
- Create Tribal Nation of origin labeling (Blackfoot Prime)
- Measure the impact that agriculture has on the local economy and create baseline data for funding opportunities to expand current programs or create new ones
- Through the USDA StrikeForce Initiative, create the first USDA Research Station in Indian Country in our Blackfeet Capital of Browning
- Write and implement legislation that would create Tribal land conservation standards including creating bird habitat and the first Tribal National Park to bolster conservation efforts while also bolstering cultural tourism, eco-tourism through healthy ecosystems
- Partner with the Army Corp of Engineers or the U.S. Department of Defense to utilize irrigation head gates, irrigation canals and their repair as a training program for military personnel, the labor would be provided as a part of the training programs to update our irrigation systems.
- Use of green and alternative energy methods to help underwrite infrastructure development
- Collaborate and/or partner with local organizations to create a farmer’s market that enhances healthy lifestyles and keeps dollars in our local economy (health and buy local)
Questions?
(Some Photos Taken From the Internet)