

# Mille Lacs Indian Reservation



*By connecting people, ideas and capital, we are growing a regional economy that benefits all Minnesotans.*

- Joseph Nayquonabe, Commissioner of Corporate  
Affairs for the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

# About the Reservation



- ❧ Southern end of Mille Lacs Lake
- ❧ East central Minnesota
- ❧ Composes about 60,975 acres of land
- ❧ Before the raising of the lake level, claims have been made that the reservation was 61,014 acres of land.
- ❧ Established in 1855 under the Treaty of Washington



“American Indian nations have been recognized as sovereigns since before the formation of the United States. The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, a federally recognized Indian tribe, has a **rich history and culture** that dates back to a time before Minnesota became a state. As the Band’s democratically elected Chief Executive, and on behalf of our more than **4,300 member citizens** and more than **4,000 employees**, I take **great pride** in presenting the story of our **long and proud history**.” In the mid-1700s, the ancestors of today’s Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe settled near Lake Mille Lacs in what is now Central Minnesota and established a way of life that the Band **continues to preserve**. The Ojibwe **hunted, fished, gathered wild rice, and taught their children a profound respect for nature**. They **endured hardship and poverty in the face of pressures from the non-Indian culture, but they worked hard and dreamed of a better future**.”

– Melanie Benjamin, Chief Executive

# History



- ❧ 500 years ago → Europeans began settling in North America and the ancestors of Mille Lacs Band began migrating west to the place “where the food grows on water”
- ❧ Mid-1700’s → Ojibwe established themselves around Mille Lacs Lake
- ❧ In the Treaty of 1837, ancestors ceded millions of acres of land in now Minnesota/Wisconsin to the U.S. but reserved the right to hunt, fish, gather, etc. on the ceded lands.
- ❧ In the Treaty of 1855, the U.S. government set aside 61,000 acres of land that became the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe reservation

# Recognition of Self-Government



- ❧ Government declared that Indians must conform to the lifestyles of non-Indians (forbidden to speak the Ojibwe language or practicing their religious teachings)
- ❧ 1934 → Congress passed Indian Reorganization Act to restore Indian self-determination and tribal culture.
- ❧ Unique relationships with the U.S., state, and local government



# Passing Along Traditions



- ✧ Incorporating the elderly
- ✧ Nay Ah Shing Schools have Ojibwe Language and Culture Program that brings Elders into classrooms to offer WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE to preschool through high school students.
- ✧ Assisted living units to provide a way for Elders to stay in the community and pass on Ojibwe culture
- ✧ Advisors to the Band's government; teach classes on traditional crafts such as birch bark baskets

# Culture



- ❧ Ceremonial buildings
- ❧ Ojibwe language classes
- ❧ Wigwam construction
- ❧ Sugarbashing (making maple sugar)
- ❧ Hunting and fishing practices
- ❧ Powwows draw neighbors and friends each summer
- ❧ Drum music



# Seven Grandfather Teachings

---



- ❧ Gwekwaadiziwin (HONESTY)
- ❧ Dbaadendiziwin (HUMILITY)
  - ❧ Debwewin (TRUTH)
  - ❧ Nbwaakaawin (WISDOM)
- ❧ Zaagidiwin (LOVE/COMPASSION)
  - ❧ Mnaadendimowin (RESPECT)
- ❧ Aakwade'ewin (BRAVERY/COURAGE)

# Government

---



- ❧ Separation of powers
  - ❧ Legislative branch
  - ❧ Executive branch
    - ❧ Different departments
  - ❧ Judicial branch
- ❧ Employs 700 people full time
- ❧ Responsible for providing services to meet the needs of its people

# Districts

---



- Due to the large territorial spread, the Mille Lacs Band divides its territory into three administrative districts and one special services district
  - Neyaashiing District (District I)
  - Gaa-mitaawangaagamaag District (District II)
  - Aazhoomog District (District III)
  - Urban District (Special Services)

# Department of Education



- ❧ To provide learners of all ages access to a variety of high-quality educational opportunities
- ❧ Hopes to enhance the pride, culture, and expectations
- ❧ Head Start/Early Head Start, academics, extra-curricular activities, scholarships, library services, and Ojibwe language and cultural programming
- ❧ Anishinaabe College

# Enterprises



- ❧ Casinos
  - ❧ Grand Casino Hinckley
  - ❧ Grand Casino Mille Lacs
- ❧ Hospitality
  - ❧ Crowne Plaza Hotel
  - ❧ Riverfront, DoubleTree
- ❧ Printing Press
  - ❧ Sweetgrass Media
- ❧ Small businesses
  - ❧ Grand Market
  - ❧ Grand Makwa Cinema
  - ❧ Marathon Convenience Stores
  - ❧ Subway



# Sources



⌘ <http://millelacsband.com/>

⌘ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mille\\_Lacs\\_Indian\\_Reservation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mille_Lacs_Indian_Reservation)