

Present Status

At the time of the Wheeler-Howard Act, a.k.a. the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, six Ojibwe bands were formed and were re-organized under the general heading of "the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe"

During this reorganization period, the Bureau of Indian Affairs for "**administrative convenience**" placed the Sandy Lake Reservation under the auspices of the Mille Lacs Reservation despite :

1. The distinct cultures, history, traditions, and community leaders of the Sandy Lake Band and the Mille Lacs Band; and
2. A seventy-five (75) mile distance from the Sandy Lake Reservation to the Mille Lacs Reservation;

When this was accomplished, our federal recognition and Identity as the Sandy Lake Band was lost. Today, our members are not enrolled in the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe although the Mille Lacs Band has claimed our lands and our resources.

For the past 24 years, the Sandy Lake Band has led efforts on the administrative, judicial, legislative, and political levels to have our federal recognition status as a separate and distinct Indian tribe **restored**.

Our only obstacle has been the tribes in Minnesota who continue to oppose our efforts due to the competition that may occur with federal programs, funding, and economic development if we should succeed in restoring our federal recognition status.

Supporters

Over the years, our efforts have produced new friends and allies. We are very thankful to our local government, the Aitkin County Board of Commissioners who have offered their full support in the form of two resolutions of support.

Our local businesses in the Sandy Lake/McGregor area have also produced letters of support on our behalf as well

In addition, we have letters of support from State of Minnesota Senators and State Representatives who we have come to know over the years as a result of our legislative efforts.

All letters and resolutions of support on our behalf are available for review upon request.

As the direct descendants of the historic Sandy Lake Band, it is our duty and our honor to maintain and preserve our identity, our tribal history, our culture, and to improve the quality of life for our future generations to come

We shall continue our commitment to restore the federal recognition status of the historic Sandy Lake Band of Mississippi Ojibwe, separate and apart from any other federally recognized tribe.

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Sandy Lake Band of
Mississippi Ojibwe

History of the Sandy Lake Band of Mississippi Ojibwe

The Sandy Lake Band's history as an Indian group can be traced to the 1730s when westward Ojibwe expansion reached beyond the Great Lakes to the Sandy Lake area of what is now Aitkin County in Minnesota. As the Ojibwe pushed westward in the 18th century, the Sandy Lake Band played a vital role in establishing a permanent Ojibwe presence in the north central region of Minnesota.

The Sandy Lake Band strategically made its home on the historic Mississippi water route – rich in wild rice and game – and the legendary Savanna Portage which linked the Mississippi and Great Lakes drainage systems. This transportation network hosted the exploratory travels of notables like David Thompson, Zebulon Pike, Lewis Cass, and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft to name a few, who all wrote about the Sandy Lake Ojibwe. Traders and government officials also conducted business with the Sandy Lake Ojibwe; and missionary activity at Sandy Lake went on for decades. In fact, the first school in what is now Minnesota was established at Sandy Lake by Rev. Frederick Ayer and his wife in 1831.

In 1794 and 1826, the British Northwest Company and the American Fur Company established posts at Sandy Lake and in the year 1850-51, the United States Indian Department established and maintained a sub-agency at Sandy Lake.

The Sandy Lake Band's prominence as a people and as an Ojibwe leadership capitol are recorded at length in scores of academic works in the areas of history, ethnohistory, and archaeology.

Treaties

The Chiefs and headmen of the Sandy Lake Band figured prominently in Ojibwe history. The Sandy Lake Chiefs and headmen were signatories to ten (10) treaties with the United States during the pre-1871 treaty-making period.

1. Treaty of Prairie du Chien, August 19, 1825
2. Treaty with the Chippewa, August 5, 1826
3. Treaty with the Chippewa, July 29, 1837
4. Treaty with the Chippewa, October 4, 1842
5. Treaty with the Chippewa, August 2, 1847
6. Treaty with the Chippewa, September 30, 1854
7. Treaty with the Chippewa, February 22, 1855
8. Treaty with the Chippewa, March 11, 1863
9. Treaty with the Chippewa, May 7, 1864
(Superceded Treaty of 1863)
10. Treaty with the Chippewa, March 19, 1867

The effect of the ten treaties that the Sandy Lake Band signed was to transfer to the United States, millions of acres of land in exchange for a guarantee of certain portions of the land being reserved to them, the payment of annuities, the construction of roads, the provision of schools, and guarantees of their ability to conduct hunting and fishing activities in the ceded territories.

Recognizing these indigenous bands as sovereign nations, the United States made treaties with the Ojibwe to gain access to the land and the natural resources. Today, the signatory bands of the treaties are recognized by the federal government as distinct tribes with the **exception** of the historic Sandy Lake Band.

¹ Treaties and Agreements of the Chippewa Indians, Institute for the Development of Indian Law

Executive Order / Reservations

Over the years, the United States has provided three reservations for the Sandy Lake Band.

The original Sandy Lake Indian Reservation was created by treaty on **February 22, 1855** and included all of what is now called Big Sandy Lake and a surrounding land area. The reserved tract at Sandy Lake is specifically described in the treaty document.

The second, was created by Executive Order signed by President Woodrow Wilson on March 4, 1915.

In response to the Ojibwe families living at Sandy Lake, the Interior Department conducted an investigation and recommended to President Woodrow Wilson that a new reservation at Sandy Lake be created. The executive order set aside 32.35 acres of land for the use and occupancy of the Sandy Lake Band of Chippewa Indians.

And the third, was created by the United States Government's land acquisition program for Indians. The Department of the Interior purchased approximately 147 acres of land for the direct benefit of the Sandy Lake Band of Chippewa.

Throughout the years, the U.S. government had dealt directly with the representatives of the Sandy Lake band. Mr. Monroe Skinaway helped facilitate the formation of the 147-acre Sandy Lake Indian Reservation in 1940.

The funding to purchase the 147 acres of land for the Sandy Lake Chippewa came from the Interior Department Appropriation Act of June 18, 1940.