



# Fort Berthold Reservation: Home of the Three Affiliated Tribes

**Tribal/agency headquarters:**  
New Town, N.D.

**Year named federal reservation:** 1870

**Population of enrolled members:** 8,400

**Reservation population:** 3,776

**Unemployment rate:** 42%

**Language:** Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara and English

**Tribes:** Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara

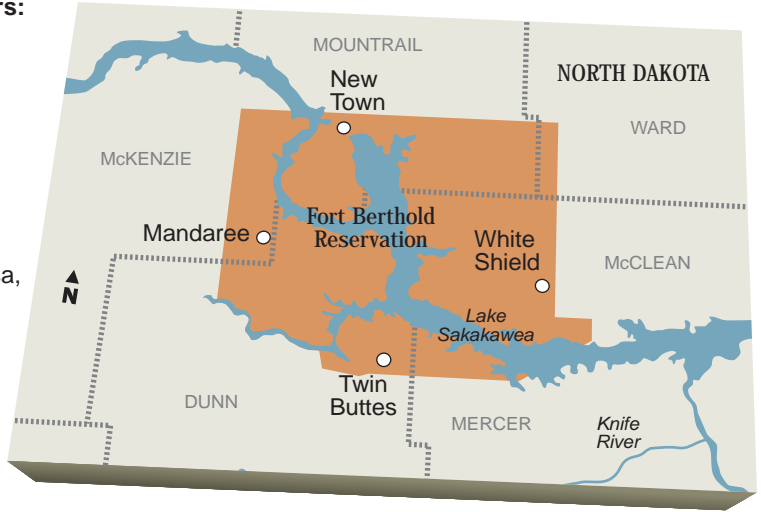
**Land status**

**Total area:** 988,000 acres

**Tribally owned:** 79,233

**Allotted owned:** 378,604

**Government owned:** 3,280      **Non-Indian owned:** 526,883



## History of a shrinking reservation

The Fort Berthold Reservation is home to three tribes: the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara. The Hidatsa and Mandan lived permanently in their present area since 1845. Before 1845, they lived in villages at the mouth of the Knife River. After moving to this area, they helped build and eventually settled around a fur trading post for the American Fur Co. The post was built on a bend of the Missouri River called by the tribes "Like-a-Fishhook-Village." The Arikara later moved up the river and joined with Mandan and Hidatsa tribes around 1862.

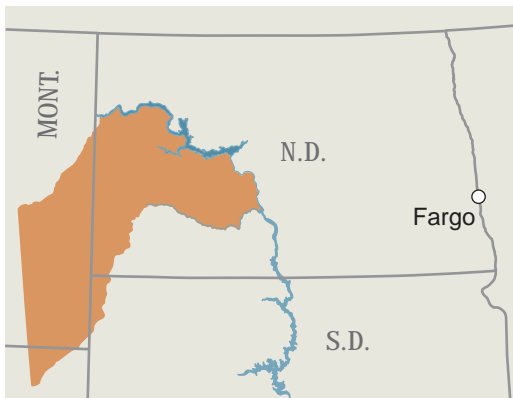
The original reservation was

established for the three tribes by the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851, but a series of changes significantly reduced its size. A large land tract was ceded by the Fort Berthold Agreement of 1866. In 1868 an executive order reduced the reservation by another 98,645 acres. In 1870 an investigation found that the Fort Laramie Treaty had never been ratified by Congress; therefore, no reservation legally existed for the three tribes. An executive order of April 12, 1870, established a much smaller reservation than the area described in the Fort Laramie Treaty. On July 13, 1880, an

executive order granted land to the Northern Pacific Railway. Further cedings brought the reservation down to less than 1 million acres and its present boundaries.

The Allotment Act of 1888 allotted Indian lands into 160-acre lots to adult male heads of household and 80-acre lots to adult males to further divide the nation. The act and later foreclosures from taxation, land sales and homestead acts have further reduced land holdings on the reservation today, both individual and tribal, to about one-half their original size before 1880.

Original reservation boundaries set by Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851



Reservation boundaries today

