

**CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS OF THE  
CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES  
OF THE FLATHEAD RESERVATION**

**PREAMBLE**

We, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation, Montana, in order to establish a more responsible organization, promote our general welfare, conserve and develop our lands and resources, and secure to ourselves and our posterity the power to exercise certain rights of self-government not inconsistent with Federal, State, and local laws, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Reservation.

**ARTICLE I – TERRITORY**

The jurisdiction of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of Indians shall extend to the territory within the original confines of the Flathead Reservation as defined in the Treaty of July 16, 1855, and to such other lands without such boundaries, as may hereafter be added thereto under any law of the United States, except as otherwise provided by law.

**ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP**

**SECTION 1.** The membership of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Reservation shall consist as follows:

- a) All persons of Indian blood whose names appear on the official census rolls of the Confederated Tribes as of January 1, 1935.
  
- b) All children born to any member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation who is a resident of the reservation at the time of the birth of said children.

**SECTION 2.** The Council shall have the power to propose ordinances, subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior, governing future membership and the adoption of members by the Confederated Tribes.

**SECTION 3.** No property rights shall be acquired or lost through membership in this organization, except as provided herein.

**ARTICLE III – THE TRIBAL COUNCIL**

**SECTION 1.** The governing body of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation shall be the Tribal Council.

**SECTION 2.** The Council shall consist of ten councilmen to be elected from the districts as set forth hereafter, and Chiefs Martin Charlo and Eneas Paul Koostahtah.

**SECTION 3.** Representation from the districts hereby designated shall be as follows: Jocko Valley and Mission Districts, two councilmen each; Ronan, Pablo, Polson, Elmo-Dayton, Hot Springs-Camas Prairie, and Dixon, one councilman each.

**SECTION 4.** The Tribal Council shall have the power to change the districts and the representation from each district, based on community organization or otherwise, as deemed advisable, such change to be made by ordinance, but the total number of delegates shall not be changed as provided for in Section 2 of Article III of this Constitution.

**SECTION 5.** The Tribal Council so organized shall elect from within its own number a chairman, and a vice chairman, and from within or without its own membership, a secretary, treasurer; sergeant-at-arms, and such other officers and committees as may be deemed necessary.

**SECTION 6.** No person shall be a candidate for membership in the Tribal Council unless he shall be a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Reservation and shall have resided in the district of his candidacy for a period of one year next preceding the election.

**SECTION 7.** The Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Reservation shall be the sole judge of the qualifications of its members.

#### **ARTICLE IV – NOMINATIONS AND ELECTIONS**

**SECTION 1.** The first election of a Tribal Council under this Constitution shall be called and supervised by the present Tribal Council within 30 days after the ratification and approval of this Constitution, and thereafter elections shall be held every two years on the third Saturday prior to the expiration of the terms of office of the members of the Tribal Council. At the first election, five councilmen shall be elected for a period of two years and five for a period of four years. The term of office of a councilman shall be for a period of four years unless otherwise provided herein.

**SECTION 2.** The Tribal Councilor an election board appointed by the Council shall determine rules and regulations governing all elections.

**SECTION 3.** Any qualified member of the Confederated Tribes may announce his candidacy for the Council, within the district of his residence, notifying the Secretary of the Tribal Council in writing of his candidacy at least 15 days prior to the election. It shall be the duty of the Secretary of the Tribal Council to post in each district at least 10 days before the election, the names of all candidates for the Council who have met these requirements.

**SECTION 4.** The Tribal Council, or a board appointed by the Council, shall certify to the election of the members of the Council within 5 days after the election returns.

**SECTION 5.** Any member of the Confederated Tribes of the Flathead Reservation who is 21 years of age or over and who has maintained a legal residence for at least one year on the Flathead Reservation shall be entitled to vote.

**SECTION 6.** The Tribal Council, or a board appointed by the Tribal Council, shall designate the polling places and appoint all election officials.

#### **ARTICLE V – VACANCIES AND REMOVAL FROM OFFICE**

**SECTION 1.** If a councilman or official shall die, resign, permanently leave the reservation, or be removed from office, the Council shall declare the position vacant and appoint a successor to fill the unexpired term, provided that the person chosen to fill such vacancy shall be from the district in which such vacancy occurs.

**SECTION 2.** Any councilman who is proven guilty of improper conduct or gross neglect of duty may be expelled from the Council by a two-thirds vote of the membership of the Council voting in favor of such expulsion, and provided further, that the accused member shall be given full and fair opportunity to reply to any and all charges at a designated Council meeting. It is further stipulated that any such member shall be given a written statement of the charges against him at least five days before the meeting at which he is to appear.

#### **ARTICLE VI – POWER AND DUTIES OF THE TRIBAL COUNCIL**

**SECTION 1.** The Tribal Council shall have the power, subject to any limitations imposed by the Statutes or the Constitution of the United States, and subject to all express restrictions upon such powers contained in this Constitution and attached Bylaw;

- a) To regulate the uses and disposition of tribal property, to protect and preserve the tribal property, wildlife and natural resources of the Confederated Tribes, to cultivate Indian arts, crafts, and culture, to administer charity; to protect the health, security, and general welfare of the Confederated Tribes.
- b) To employ legal counsel for the protection and advancement of the rights of the Flathead Confederated Tribes and their members, the choice of counsel and fixing of fees to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior.
- c) To negotiate with the Federal, State and local governments on behalf of the Confederated Tribes, and to advise and consult with the representatives of the Departments of the Government of the United States on all matters affecting the affairs of the Confederated Tribes.
- d) To approve or veto any sale, disposition, lease, or encumbrance of tribal lands and tribal assets which may be authorized or executed by the Secretary of the Interior, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, or any other agency of the Government, provided that no tribal lands shall be sold or encumbered or leased for a period in excess of five years, except for Governmental purposes.

- e) To advise with the Secretary of the Interior with regard to all appropriation estimates or Federal projects for the benefit of the Confederated Tribes, prior to the submission of such estimates to the Congress.
- f) To manage all economic affairs and enterprises of the Confederated Tribes in accordance with the terms of a charter to be issued by the Secretary of the Interior.
- g) To make assignment of tribal lands to members of the Confederated Tribes in conformity with Article VIII of this Constitution.
- h) To appropriate for tribal use of the reservation any available applicable tribal funds, provided that any such appropriation may be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior, and provided, further, that any appropriation in excess of \$5,000 in anyone fiscal year shall be of no effect until approved in a popular referendum.
- i) To promulgate and enforce ordinances, subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior, which would provide for assessments or license fees upon, nonmembers doing business within the reservation, or obtaining special rights or privileges, and the same may also be applied to members of the Confederated Tribes, provided such ordinances have been approved by a referendum of the Confederated Tribes.
- j) To exclude from the restricted lands of the reservation persons not legally entitled to reside thereon, under ordinances, which may be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior.
- k) To enact resolutions or ordinances not inconsistent with Article II of this Constitution governing adoptions and abandonment of membership.
- l) To promulgate and enforce ordinances which shall be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior, governing the conduct of members of the Confederated Tribes, and providing for the maintenance of law and order and the administration of justice by the establishment of an Indian Court, and defining its powers and duties.
- m) To purchase land of members of the Confederated Tribes for public purposes under condemnation proceedings in courts of competent jurisdiction.
- n) To promulgate and enforce ordinances, which are intended to safeguard and promote the peace, safety, morals, and general welfare of the Confederated Tribes by regulating the conduct of trade and the use and disposition of property upon the reservation, providing that any ordinance directly affecting nonmembers shall be subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior.
- o) To charter subordinate organizations for economic purposes and to regulate the activities of all cooperative and other associations which may be organized under any charter issued under this Constitution.
- p) To regulate the inheritance of real and personal property, other than allotted lands, within the Flathead Reservation, subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior.
- q) To regulate the domestic relations of members of the Confederated Tribes.
- r) To recommend and provide for the appointment of guardians for orphans, minor members of the Confederated Tribes, and incompetents subject to the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, and to administer tribal and other funds or property

which may be transferred or entrusted to the Confederated Tribes or Tribal Council for this purpose.

- s) To create and maintain a tribal fund by accepting grants or donations from any person, State, or the United States.
- t) To delegate to subordinate boards or to cooperative associations, which are open to all members of the Confederated Tribes, any of the following powers, reserving the right to review any action taken by virtue of such delegated power.
- u) To adopt resolutions or ordinances to effectuate any of the forgoing powers.

**SECTION 2.** Any resolution or ordinance which by the terms of this constitution is subject to review by the Secretary of the Interior, shall be presented to the Superintendent of the Reservation who shall, within ten days thereafter, approve or disapprove the same, and if such ordinance or resolution is approved, it shall thereupon become effective, but the Superintendent shall transmit a copy of the same, bearing his endorsement, to the Secretary of the Interior who may, within 90 days from the date of enactment, rescind said ordinance or resolution for any cause, by notifying the Council of such action: Provided. That if the Superintendent shall refuse to approve any resolution or ordinance submitted to him, within ten days after its enactment, he shall advise the Council of his reasons therefore; and the Council, if such reasons appear to be insufficient, may refer it to the Secretary of the Interior, who may pass upon same and either approve or disapprove it within 90 days from its enactment.

**SECTION 3.** The council of the Confederated Tribes may exercise such further powers as may in the future be delegated to it by the Federal Government, either through order of the Secretary of the Interior or by Congress, or by the State Government or by members of the Confederated Tribes.

**SECTION 4.** Any rights and powers heretofore vested in the Confederated Tribes but not expressly referred to in this Constitution shall not be abridged by this Article, but may be exercised by the members of the Confederated Tribes through the adoption of appropriate bylaws and constitutional amendments.

## **ARTICLE VII – BILL OF RIGHTS**

**SECTION 1.** All members of the Confederated Tribes over the age of 21 years shall have the right to vote in all tribal elections, subject to any restrictions as to residence as set forth in Article IV.

**SECTION 2.** All members of the Confederated Tribes shall be accorded equal opportunities to participate in the economic resources and activities of the reservation.

**SECTION 3.** All members of the Confederated Tribes may enjoy without hindrance freedom of worship, speech, press, and assembly.

**SECTION 4.** Any member of the Confederated Tribes accused of any offense, shall have the right to a prompt, open and public hearing, with due notice of the offense charged,

and shall be permitted to summon witnesses in his own behalf and trial by jury shall be accorded, when duly requested, by any member accused of any offense punishable by more than 30 days' imprisonment, and excessive bail or cruel or unusual punishment shall not be imposed.

## **ARTICLE VIII – LANDS**

**SECTION 1. Allotted Lands.** Allotted lands, including heirship lands, within the Flathead Reservation, shall continue to be held as heretofore by their present owners. The right of the individual Indian to hold or to part with his land, as under existing law, shall not be abrogated by anything contained in this Constitution, but the owner of restricted land may, with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, voluntarily convey his land to the Confederated Tribes either in exchange for a money payment or in exchange for an assignment covering the same land or other land, as hereinafter provided. The Tribal Council shall have the right to exchange tribal lands for individual allotments when necessary for consolidation of tribal holdings and subject to approval of the Secretary of the Interior. Such exchanges shall be based on the appraised value of the lands so exchanged, and the individual Indian shall hold the land so exchanged in the same manner as the original allotment.