

Why Treaties Matter

Self-Government
in the Dakota and
Ojibwe Nations



Educator Guide for Grades 6-12

The Chippewa National Forest

A partnership of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council
and the Minnesota Humanities Center

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Why Treaties Matter educator guides are intended as supplementary resources for your curriculum or stand-alone as lessons. This guide contains estimates of preparation and instructional time, a materials list, background information, preview strategies, assessment options, extension activities, a vocabulary list, web resources, bibliography, and related reading.

PREPARATION TIME

One to two hours (extension activities may require more time)

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME

One to two class periods (extension activities may require more time)

MATERIALS

- Student Reading: “The Chippewa National Forest” by Anton Treuer ([Appendix A](#))
- USDA Forest Service Chippewa National Forest map ([Appendix B](#))
- Study questions ([Appendix C](#)) and suggested answers ([Appendix D](#))
- Vocabulary list ([Appendix E](#))
- Poster board
- Markers, colored pens/pencils
- Anton Treuer’s *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask* (Borealis Books, 2012) and *Ojibwe in Minnesota* (Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010) are excellent resources, not only for this guide, but also for others that focus on contemporary American Indian issues.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

This guide provides a brief history of the Chippewa National Forest with accompanying narrative by Anton Treuer's mother, who grew up on the Leech Lake Reservation. Readers will learn when and how the federal government gained control of most of the land on the reservation, how the natural resources have been used and what the future may hold for management of the forest.



LESSON

Preview Strategies: Your preview strategies will depend on where this content fits into your instructional sequence as well as your students' background knowledge. Display the U.S. Forest Service map or provide maps to small groups.

- If you begin *Why Treaties Matter* with contemporary American Indian life, then you may want to do a KWL (Ogle, 1986) activity to find out what your students already know (K) about American Indian reservations, specifically Ojibwe. You might begin by asking small groups to brainstorm their ideas. Then combine the groups' data to make a class list. Next, ask what students would like to learn (W). Compile the (L) list, or what is learned, while reading, writing about, and discussing the story and related materials and participating in extension activities. Display your K and W ideas on poster board or paper (see Vocabulary preview). See www.teach-nology.com/web_tools/graphic_org/kwl for a KWL generator that will produce individual organizers for your students. KWL also gives you the opportunity to introduce interdisciplinary connections you will make during extension activities.
- If you begin with an historical perspective you may display a timeline with dates from the article as a prompt for a KWL on American Indian history related to reservations. You may print dates on one set of index cards and events on another set. Ask students to match dates and events. Begin your discussion with what it means to be indigenous and how cause and effect relationships exist between long-past events and contemporary life.
- If you have *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*, you may wish to begin by reading Chapter 1: Treaties and Reservations (PP. 23-40).
- Videos referenced in the second extension activity may also be of value as introductory information.

Activities:

- Students read "The Chippewa National Forest" ([Appendix A](#)) and view the USDA Forest Service Chippewa National Forest map ([Appendix B](#)). Preview the entire guide with your class before you read the article. You may wish to read the article aloud and complete the study questions in class, in small groups, or as an independent activity.
- Students complete the accompanying study questions ([Appendix C](#)). Suggested answers are provided ([Appendix D](#)). The questions may be assigned as homework, depending on the reading ability of your students. The study questions may also be used as discussion prompts or as a quiz. Encourage your students to be thoughtful about the experiences of the Ojibwe people on the Leech Lake Reservation. Note: The USDA Forest Service map will be referenced in several questions.

Differentiation Strategies: Read aloud to special needs students. Abbreviate the study questions or highlight priority items to be completed first. If time allows, remaining items may be attempted. Peer helpers, paraprofessionals, or adult volunteers may lend a hand with the study questions. Answers may be dictated to note-takers. With close teacher supervision, cooperative groups can also offer effective support to special needs students, especially for extension activities.

Assessment:

- You may use all or part of the study guide, combined with vocabulary, as a quiz.
- Students may write an essay describing how the article changed their attitude toward or understanding of American Indian people.
- Students may write multiple-choice, true-false, or short-answer questions. Select the best items for a class quiz.
- Posters are an excellent way for students to show what they know through visual art and oral presentations. Students may work in groups or individually. Poster presentations may supplement or take the place of essays. You may assign topics or allow students to choose topics that interest them. Encourage classmates to give feedback to poster presenters. Video record poster sessions and post on your class web site.
- Circle back to your timeline preview as a posttest.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Download the Minnesota Humanities Center short videos: *Community Voices and Experiences: A Better Portrayal of History*, Dallas Ross (<http://tinyurl.com/kasvovs>) and *American Indian Treaties and History*, Andy Favorite (<http://tinyurl.com/ltv8tac>) for discussions of Indian land treaties.
- For historical and contemporary connections to Leech Lake Reservation see *Minnesota Conservation Volunteer* Young Naturalists articles: “Who was George Bonga?” and “Ojibwe Lifeways.” Both may be downloaded in PDF format with teacher’s guides.
- *The Ojibwe People’s Dictionary* (<http://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/>) is a searchable, talking Ojibwe-English dictionary that features the voices of Ojibwe speakers. It is also a gateway into the Ojibwe collections at the Minnesota Historical Society. Encourage your students to create a list of Ojibwe words and phrases that are used in everyday life. Post words/phrases in your room.
- For students who want to dig deeper, the Minnesota Historical Society series, *Native Voices*, is highly recommended. *Night Flying Woman* not only provides a compelling narrative of the transition from traditional to reservation living, but also introduces students to over 100 Ojibwe words. *Living Our Language* is a collection of over 50 Ojibwe tales in both English and Ojibwe. While *the Locust Slept* is the story of an Ojibwe man who was placed in a state orphanage and later indentured to a farmer.
- The Nelson Act of 1889 had disastrous consequences for Indian people across the U.S. Challenge students to learn more about the struggle to receive compensation for lost land and resources.
- To further explore the Morris Act in its historical context see Newell Searle’s excellent article published in *Minnesota History* (Related Reading) <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/42/v42io7p242-257.pdf>. Students will see primary source information from newspapers of the day, including photos, a map and political cartoons. See if students notice how little attention is given to Indian people and their concerns.



Vocabulary: See the vocabulary list included in this guide ([Appendix E](#)). You may wish to modify the list based on your knowledge of your student’s needs or the subject you are teaching. Pretesting vocabulary individually, or in small groups, or with your entire class can be an effective preview strategy.

Web Resources (all links were active at time of publication):

Allotment

Dawes Act (U.S. National Archives & Records Administration)

http://www.ourdocuments.gov/print_friendly.php?page=&doc=50&title=Dawes+Act+%281887%29

National Archives – Teaching with Documents: Maps of Indian Territory, the Dawes Act, and Will Rogers’ Enrollment Case File

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/fed-indian-policy/>

Indian Land Tenure Foundation <http://www.iltf.org/resources/land-tenure-history/allotment>
American Indian Responses to Statehood: Allotment, Waziyatawin [http://humanitieslearning.org/resource/index.cfm?act=1&TagID=o&CatID=o&SearchText=allotment act&SortBy=1&mediatype=o&lurl=1](http://humanitieslearning.org/resource/index.cfm?act=1&TagID=o&CatID=o&SearchText=allotment%20act&SortBy=1&mediatype=o&lurl=1)
Sixth Grade Digital Suitcase: Dawes/Homestead Act – a partnership of the Minnesota Humanities Center and Saint Paul Public Schools [http://humanitieslearning.org/resource/index.cfm?act=1&TagID=&CatID=o&SearchText=Sixth Grade Digital Suitcase: Dawes/Homestead Act&SortBy=1&mediatype=&lurl=1](http://humanitieslearning.org/resource/index.cfm?act=1&TagID=&CatID=o&SearchText=Sixth%20Grade%20Digital%20Suitcase%3A%20Dawes/Homestead%20Act&SortBy=1&mediatype=&lurl=1)
Chippewa National Forest (USDA Forest Service) <http://www.fs.usda.gov/chippewa>
National Forest Foundation – Chippewa National Forest <http://www.nationalforests.org/explore/forests/mn/chippewa>
Indian Country Today <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/opinion/anthropologists-beasts-western-wild-147974>

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer

“Who was George Bonga?” (Young Naturalists article with teachers guide) http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/young_naturalists/george_bonga/index.html
“Ojibwe Lifeways” (Young Naturalists article with teachers guide) http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/young_naturalists/ojibwe/index.html
Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties - Morris Act http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/Vol1/HTML_files/SES0756A.html
“A Historic Record of Development of Quetico-Superior Wilderness Area and of the Chippewa National Forest, Minnesota” http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1957/10478/his_rec_dev.pdf?sequence=1
Minnesota History Magazine, “Minnesota National forest: The Politics of Compromise, 1898-1908” <http://collections.mnhs.org/MNHHistoryMagazine/articles/42/v42io7p242-257.pdf>

Nelson Act

Minnesota Indian Affairs Council, Tribes: White Earth http://mn.gov/indianaffairs/tribes_whiteearth.html
TwinCities.com, “U.S. House passes \$28 million settlement with Minnesota Chippewa Tribe” http://www.twincities.com/ci_20893429/u-s-house-passes-28-million-settlement-minnesota
Cass County, Minnesota et.al. v. Leech Lake Band of Chippewa Indians <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/pdf/97-174P.ZS>

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Treuer, Anton. *Ojibwe in Minnesota*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010.

RELATED READING

Folwell, William Watts. *A History of Minnesota*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 1924, pp. 254-61.
Kenney, Dave. *Northern Lights: The Stories of Minnesota's Past*. Revised Second Edition. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society, 2012.
Research Department of the Minnesota House of Representatives. *Indians, Indian Tribes, and State Government*. Fourth Edition. St. Paul, MN: 2007 <http://www.house.leg.state.mn.us/hrd/pubs/indiangb.pdf>
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“The Real Story of the Chippewa National Forest,” Minnesota Conservation Volunteer (St. Paul: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, November/December 2004).
Treuer, Anton. *Ojibwe in Minnesota*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press, 2010.
Treuer, Anton. *Everything You Wanted to Know About Indians But Were Afraid to Ask*. St. Paul, MN: Borealis Books, 2012.

STUDENT READING: The Chippewa National Forest

Introduction

Learning about the Chippewa National Forest is a perfect way to better understand how Indian land shifted from tribal control to nonnative control, and how that shift impacted the lives of people on reservations. The U.S. government did not just use treaties to separate Indians from the land. They used acts of congress, presidential executive orders, and even the creation of national forests. That involved federal and state law enforcement agencies and dramatically changed tribal life. This story is a window into a much bigger story about how the U.S. government works and how legal changes in the land have forced tribes to find new ways to live.



A Memory from Margaret Treuer

I was born in 1943 and grew up in Bena, Minnesota, right in the middle of the Chippewa National Forest. Our family had lived on the south shore of [Lake Winnibigoshish](#) for many generations. In fact, my family buried our dead at the cemetery there for over 250 years—over a hundred years before Minnesota became a state. We lived off the land for many generations. We picked wild rice, berries, and hazelnuts, and we netted fish, hunted deer, moose, and rabbits. It was a great place to live. When the U.S. government created the Chippewa National Forest, most of the families had to move about two miles away from the lakeshore. Most of the old village became public land and opened for white use. The forest service logged off all the tall pine trees. Some land was opened for white settlement. Even the cemetery is owned by whites now. Our family has to buy plots from the white landowners if we want to bury anyone there now. Most of us still do because that's where our family has always buried people, but it does seem strange that we have done that there for so long, but now the government and private landowners don't see that space as ours. Bena was a strong community when I grew up. All the families played little league and picked rice together. When I was twelve I went ricing all day with a friend of mine who was the same age. We riced at Lake Winnibigoshish. At the end of the day, the Department of Natural Resources came and took all of our rice away because we didn't have a permit from the Chippewa National Forest or Minnesota State Department of Natural Resources. We were just kids. And we were harvesting food, not hurting anything. Things like that happened a lot. Indians got pushed around and there wasn't usually a good reason. Today, Bena is changing even more. The tribe only owns four percent of their own reservation, and most of the reservation is the Chippewa National Forest. Now the tribe has to put people in housing programs anywhere they can find an open house and there is a waiting list years long. Bena doesn't have the same families that lived there for generations. It has families from all over Leech Lake who desperately need houses. The sense of community has changed. There's no little league and people don't rice together much anymore.

1871: The End of Treaty Making

The U.S. government used treaties to get land from Indians and open that land to white settlement from the Revolutionary War to 1871. But the government stopped making treaties in 1871, before they had acquired all the land from Indians. The U.S. Senate ratified treaties, not the House of Representatives. The House wanted

more power over the treaty process, but Senate would not agree to modify the U.S. Constitution to enable that, so the House, which has to approve all financial appropriations, simply attached a rider to their budget in 1871 that ended the right of the U.S. government to treat with Indians. After that, the government had to use executive orders from the President or acts of congress to get land from Indians. They did plenty of both.

1871-1928: What Drove Continued Pressure on Indian Land

When Congress ended treaty making with Indians in 1871, pressure on Indians to sell more land continued. There was a lot happening in the U.S. at the time. Before the Civil War (just ten years earlier), the U.S. exported raw materials like cotton. By 1871, the U.S. emerged as the world's preeminent industrial superpower—mining iron and making steel for railroads and industry. By 1871, the U.S. also became the largest harvester of timber in the world. And by 1871, the U.S. became the largest producer and exporter of food in the world. But Indians in Minnesota still controlled some of the largest deposits of iron ore, most incredible stands of virgin pine forest, and largest swaths of Grade A agricultural land in the world. The government, private businesses, and everyday white citizens wanted those resources. Since they couldn't make treaties, they looked for other ways to get the land and resources from Indians.

1889: Nelson Act

The Nelson Act of 1889 is one of the acts of congress that was used to get Indian land. The act took a large amount of land from the Ojibwe Indians at Red Lake. It also set up allotments for other Ojibwe Indians in Minnesota. Before the Nelson Act, all of the land inside reservation borders was not owned by individual people. Instead, it was owned by all the people of the reservation together and they all got to use all of the land. The Nelson Act required each family to own their own land and gave each family a parcel of land. But the policy did not give all the land inside reservations to the Indians there. Instead, it gave parcels to families and then kept much of the land so it could be given or sold to white settlers, loggings companies, and mining companies. A few white men got very rich off of the timber and mineral contracts. But most of the Indians got even poorer than they were before the Nelson Act. On top of that, many families lost their allotments through sales, tricks, contracts, taxes, and corrupt government officials. At Leech Lake, Indians soon owned only four percent of their own reservation. When you look at the map, the reservation looks really big, but when you look at how much land the Indians owned within the reservation, you can see that what Indians had (and still have today) is actually much smaller.

1902: Morris Act

The Morris Act was passed by Congress in 1902. It helped the big timber companies get access to a lot of timber in Minnesota on Indian land, but it also set aside a big chunk of land around Leech Lake as the Minnesota Forest Reserve. Some people were concerned that so much of the timber was being cut for the benefit of eight timber tycoons, and the Morris Act was supposed to protect resources at the same time that it enabled continued cutting. President Roosevelt signed the act into law.

1908: Minnesota National Forest

The Minnesota Forest Reserve was changed into the Minnesota National Forest. It was the first national forest east of the Mississippi River. It was also very large, including 1.6 million acres of land, of which 670,000 acres were owned and managed only by the U.S. Forest Service. The forest included 1,300 lakes, 1,000 miles of streams, and 25 watersheds. The Minnesota National Forest comprised 85% of the Leech Lake Indian Reservation. Over 200 pairs of nesting bald eagles lived there as well. This was the first forest managed by the U.S. Forest Service. It surprises many people to know that there is a huge difference between a national *forest* and a national *park*. National *parks* like Yellowstone and Itasca do not allow large scale logging. But national *forests* do allow logging. In fact, most of the timber stands there were cut down by the U.S. Forest Service every

25-35 years. There are a few “beauty strips” where the older trees were not cut—mainly along the big highway and the big lakes and along the Norway Beach area inside the forest, but everything else was cut. The Indians at Leech Lake did not get any of the money for the trees that were cut down on their reservation. In fact, since the forest was so big and took up so much of their reservation, many of the people at Leech Lake had to move to White Earth to get land allotments. The creation of the Minnesota National Forest helped push Indians off of the Leech Lake Reservation and denied those who stayed any benefit from the regular cutting of their trees.

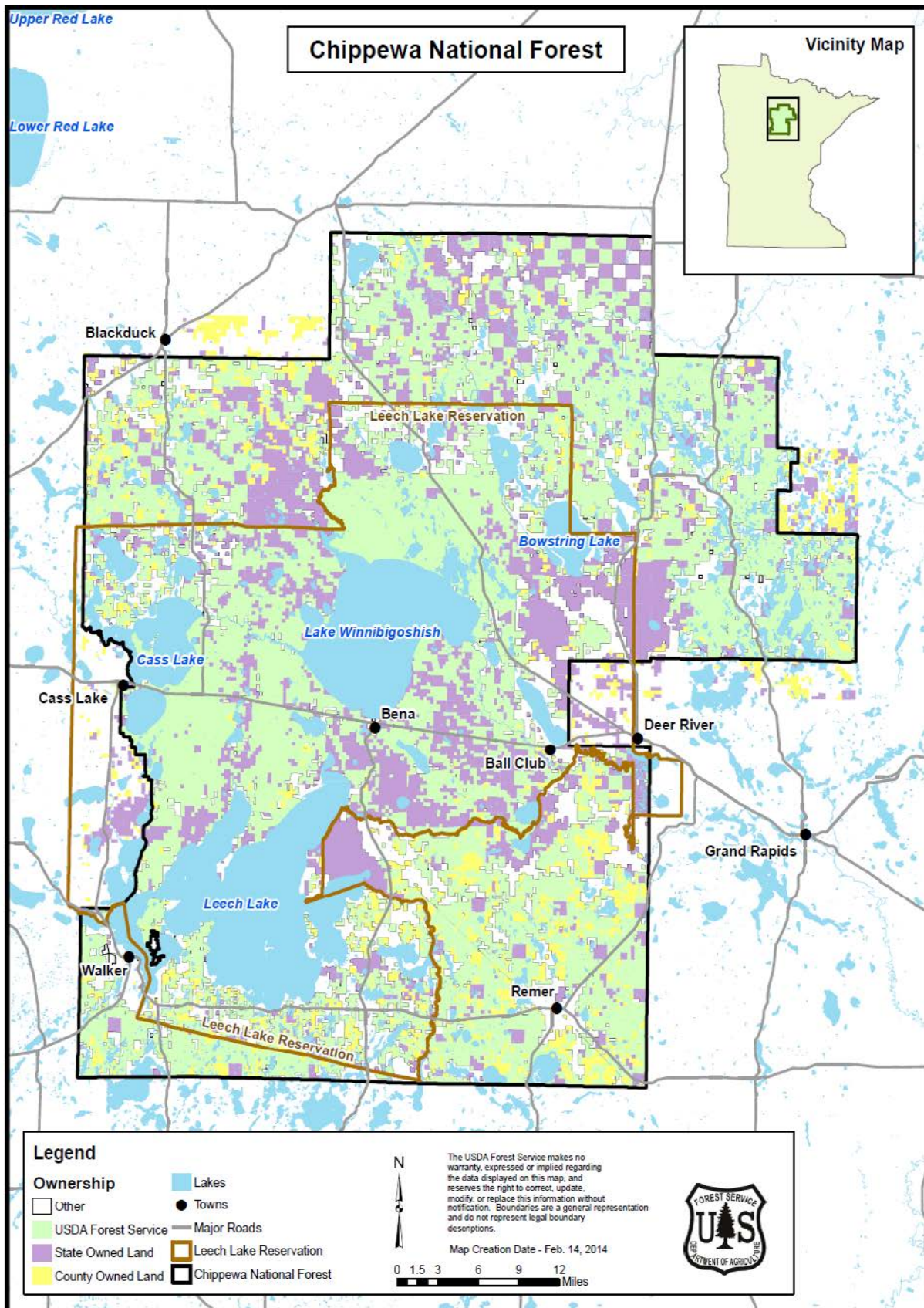


1928: Chippewa National Forest

The Minnesota National Forest was renamed the Chippewa National Forest in 1928.

The Chippewa National Forest Today

Today, the Chippewa National Forest still makes up 85% of the Leech Lake Reservation. The Indians at Leech Lake still own only four percent of their own reservation. The U.S. Forest Service still gets the money from logging the Chippewa National Forest. Things might change though. The tribal government at Leech Lake wants to co-manage the lands of the Chippewa National Forest with the U.S. Forest Service or even take over management. The U.S. Forest Service has been unwilling to do that so far. But the tribe does have its own natural resource management officers, program, and plan. As people learn about the history of the Chippewa National Forest and the ability and willingness of the Leech Lake Reservation to protect natural resources and manage them well for all people (Indian and non-Indian), it is possible that a new arrangement could be made in the future. What do you think?



STUDENT READING STUDY QUESTIONS: The Chippewa National Forest

Name: _____ Date: _____

1. Find Lake Winnibigoshish. Now find the village where Margaret Treuer grew up. When she says her family lived, "...right in the middle of Chippewa National Forest" is she correct? Why or why not?

2. Margaret Treuer's family "lived off the land." Explain what that phrase means. Does your family live off the land? Why or why not?

3. How do you feel about what happened to the cemetery where Margaret's relatives are buried? Explain.

4. Describe Margaret's ricing experience. Why do you think the government restricted wild rice gathering?

5. Housing is difficult to find on the reservation. Use the map to help explain why.

6. When was the last treaty between the United States and American Indians ratified?

7. After the last treaties were signed did Indians keep their lands? Why or why not?

8. Examine the map for the consequences of the Nelson Act on the people of Leech Lake Reservation. What color indicates land that is owned by nongovernmental individuals or nongovernmental organizations?

What colors indicate state and county government lands? _____

Why is so much land now owned by the state and county if the reservation was established by the federal government?

9. The Morris Act established _____ , which became the _____ in 1908.

10. The intent of the Morris Act was to _____
Do you think it achieved its purpose? Why or why not?

11. Explain the difference between a national park and a national forest.

12. What are beauty strips and what is their purpose?

13. On a reservation as large as Leech Lake why wasn't there enough land to provide allotments to each family?

14. Why do you suppose the Minnesota National Forest was renamed in 1928?

15. Should Leech Lake tribal members take over management of the natural resources in the Chippewa National Forest? Why or why not?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS TO STUDY GUIDE QUESTIONS:**The Chippewa National Forest**

1. Find Lake Winnibigoshish. Now find the village where Margaret Treuer grew up. When she says her family lived, "...right in the middle of Chippewa National Forest" is she correct? Why or why not?
Answers will vary. Bena is approximately in the center of CNF.
2. Margaret Treuer's family "lived off the land." Explain what that phrase means. Does your family live off the land? Why or why not?
Living off the land is exemplified by the list of native foods that Margaret's family gathered and hunted. It is difficult to imagine how urban dwellers can live off the land, however, you may have students whose families hunt, fish and gather wild foods.
3. How do you feel about what happened to the cemetery where Margaret's relatives are buried? Explain.
Answers will vary. Encourage empathy.
4. Describe Margaret's ricing experience. Why do you think the government restricted wild rice gathering?
Answers will vary.
5. Housing is difficult to find on the reservation. Use the map to help explain why.
If housing can only be built on areas in white, available space is limited.
6. When was the last treaty between the United States and American Indians ratified?
1871
7. After the last treaties were signed did Indians keep their lands? Why or why not?
Answers will vary. The primary pressure to obtain more Indian land was economic. Indian lands contained valuable natural resources like timber or metals. Some Indian lands were valuable for farming. Students may also mention the pressure of increasing non-Indian population and the expansion of westward settlement.
8. Examine the map for the consequences of the Nelson Act on the people of Leech Lake Reservation. What color indicates land that is owned by nongovernmental individuals or nongovernmental organizations?
White What colors indicate state and county government lands? **Purple and Yellow** why do the state and county now own so much land if the reservation was established by the federal government?
Answers will vary. Students can reference the Nelson Act and the allotment policy as prime causes for continued loss of Indian lands. Other causes were unpaid taxes (tax forfeitures) and corrupt land deals.
9. The Morris Act established the **Minnesota Forest Reserve**, which became the **Minnesota National Forest** in 1908.
10. The intent of the Morris Act was to preserve some of the timber on the Leech Lake Reservation. Do you think it achieved its purpose? Why or why not?
Answers will vary. While the Morris Act was a step in the direction of sustainable harvesting, big timber companies still had access to most of the forest.

11. Explain the difference between a national park and a national forest.
In national parks logging is limited in scale, while in national forests large scale logging is encouraged.
12. What are beauty strips and what is their purpose?
Beauty strips are bands of large trees left along major roads and recreational areas to give one the impression that large-scale logging is not taking place.
13. On a reservation as large as Leech Lake why wasn't there enough land to provide allotments to each family?
Most of the land was not available for housing.
14. Why do you suppose the Minnesota National Forest was renamed in 1928?
Answers will vary. What might the PR value be in a name change?
15. Should Leech Lake tribal members take over management of the natural resources in the Chippewa National Forest? Why or why not?
Answers will vary. Encourage divergent thinking here. Make a pro and con list. Is there a moral argument?

**Answers will vary for most items. Encourage students to justify their answers with specific details from the story, map or their own experience.*

APPENDIX E

VOCABULARY

allotment	laws passed by Congress that gave the President the power to survey Indian lands and to assign parcels (40-160 acres to individuals or families)
corrupt	immoral or dishonest
executive order	order issued by the President pursuant to an Act of Congress or power granted by the Constitution
generation	individuals born and living at about the same time; in humans every 30 years
ratify	to formally approve
reservation or community	a segment of land that belongs to one or more groups of American Indians. It is a land that was retained by American Indian tribes after ceding large portions of the original homelands to the United States through treaty agreements.
rider	In legislative procedure, a rider is an additional provision added to a bill or other measure under the consideration by a legislature, having little connection with the subject matter of the bill.
treaty	An agreement between sovereign nations



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