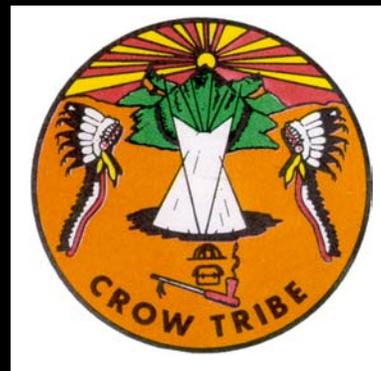


CROW INDIAN TRIBE



Resources Report

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ECONOMY

Economic Activity

Agriculture has been the historical base of the economy of the Crow Indian Reservation. The economy also includes production of natural resources as a base of employment and income for the reservation. Natural resources include the land, water, coal, oil and gas, timber, and sand and gravel. Tribal and federal (i.e., BIA and IHS) governments are the largest employers.

Retail trade establishments on the reservation are primarily small food and convenience stores. Residents of the reservation travel to larger communities such as Hardin, north of the reservation, as well as the more distant cities of Billings (in Yellowstone County) and Sheridan, Wyoming to purchase consumer goods. Crow Agency, has facilities to serve tourism trade at the Little Bighorn National Monument, and Lodge Grass (near the center of the reservation) have the largest retail business areas on the reservation (Big Horn County 2000).

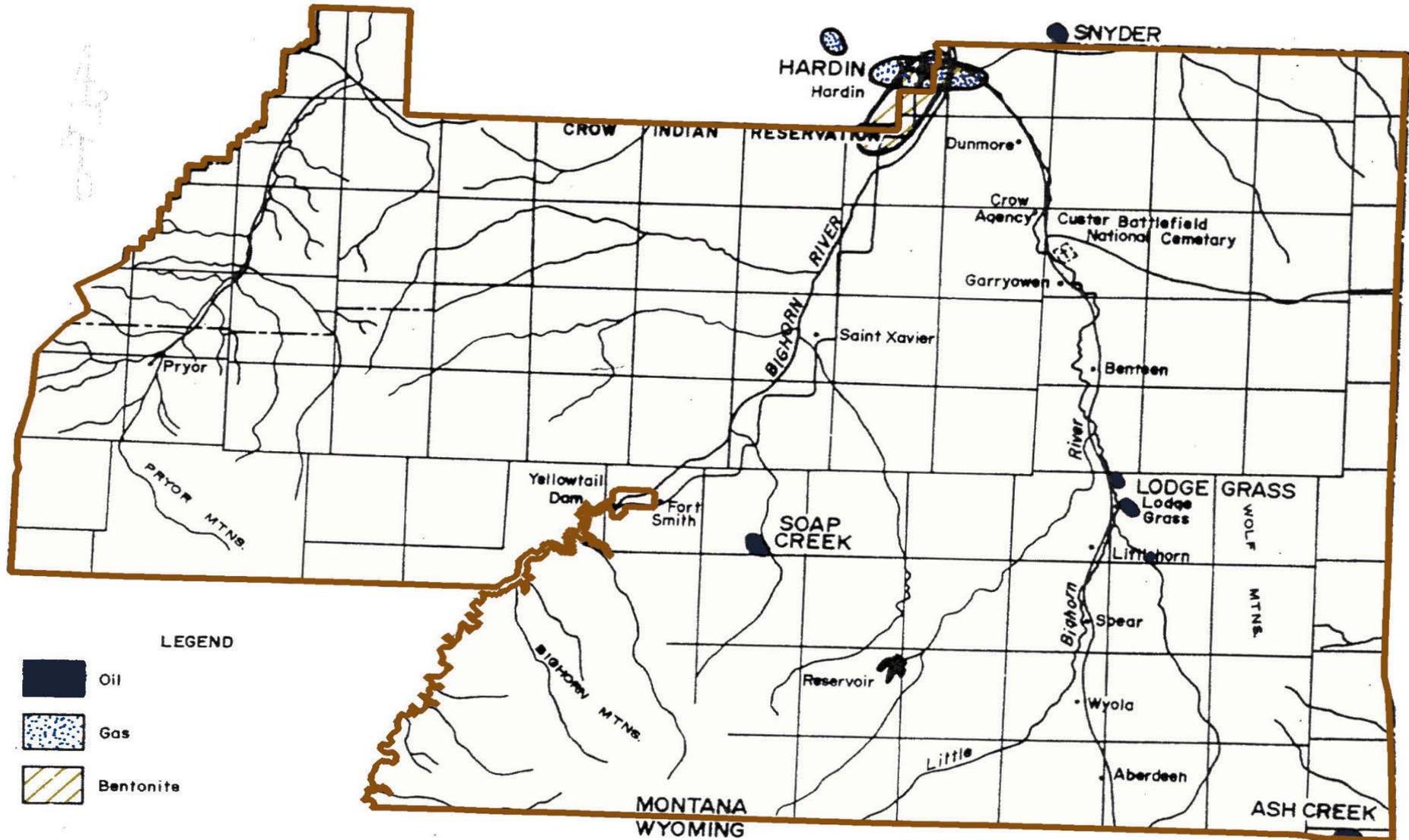
Agricultural crop production on the reservation includes livestock, wheat, barley, oats, corn, sugar beets, alfalfa and hay. Information is not available for livestock and crop yields, and cash receipts from agricultural production on the reservation. In 1977, the Crow Tribe estimated the value of crops grown on the reservation was approximately \$18,000,000. In 2000, the Montana State University/Big Horn County Agricultural Extension Service compiled information for agricultural production in Big Horn County showing the values of crops and livestock were \$20.8 and \$35.5 million, respectively (Barnette 2000).

The Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS, p. 3-39, states the Crow Indian Reservation has estimated coal deposits of 17.1 billion tons, of which 16.1 billion may be prospective for CBM development. Currently no surface coal mines operate on the reservation. Table 4-2 (p. 4-33) in the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS identifies six surface coal mines and four coal-fired power plants that operate within 5 to 20 miles of the reservation's northern and eastern boundaries. Table MIN-2 in the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS identifies annual average production for the surface coal mines in the vicinity of the Crow Indian Reservation.

The Absaloka Mine is located within five miles of the reservation's northern boundary and employs between 40 and 75 Crow tribal members, depending on variable annual levels of production at the mine (Fitzpatrick 2002). Page 3-39 in the Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS discusses this mine's location in the 'ceded area', for which the United States holds mineral rights in trust for the Crow Tribe. Based on the ceded area's mineral trust status, the Absaloka Mine employs tribal members under requirements of the Crow Tribal Employment Rights Office (TERO).

The Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS (p. 3-40) states there have been 172 conventional oil and gas wells drilled on the reservation. These wells have been drilled by non-Indian interests through leases with the Crow Tribe. In 1985, 20 companies had 709 oil and gas leases with the Crow Tribe (EDA 1996). *Figure 11* shows locations of oil and gas fields on the reservation. The Crow Indian Reservation has approximately 36,300 acres of commercial forests in the Wolf and Pryor mountains (BIA 1999). The BIA Forestry Department manages the reservation's forest resources. Timber units generally are leased to non-Indian interests for harvesting.

OIL AND GAS FIELDS AND BENTONITE DEPOSITS ON AND ADJACENT TO THE CROW INDIAN RESERVATION



LEGEND

-  Oil
-  Gas
-  Bentonite

Base Map Developed By:
RMR for Crow Tribe Resource
Development and Land Use Plans



Figure 11
Oil and Gas Fields and Bentonite Deposits

Report developed by
LAO Environmental
Billings, Montana



Forest resources in the Wolf Mountains are located in the Crow CBM production area (Map 4-1, P. 4-3, Statewide Draft Oil and Gas EIS).

The sections Regulatory Framework and Tribal Government in this document present details about jurisdictional territories and fiscal resources of the Crow Tribe, respectively.

Economic Development

The Crow Indian Reservation has been classified as an economically distressed and disadvantaged area by the federal government. The Crow Tribe's economic development plans incorporate the reservation's resources such as agriculture, energy, tourism and recreation, and commercial institutions. Currently the Tribe is working with programs from federal agencies to prepare strategy for comprehensive economic development. As part of the federal Economic Development Administration's community economic development strategy (CEDS), the Tribe is preparing an economic development plan to balance development and protection of the reservation's resources (Iron 2001).