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FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS

DOCUMENTING TRENDS IN TRIBAL LAND OWNERSHIP

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CICD DATA SUMMIT
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The views expressed here are the presenter's and not necessarily those of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis or the Federal Reserve System.



Historical Land Loss

Through federal policies, tribal lands were dramatically reduced:

- **Treaty Era (1778-1871):** land cession and removal
- **Allotment Era (1887-1934):** Dawes Act, Curtis Act, Nelson Act, forced fee patenting
- **Termination Era (1953-1960s):** Wholesale ending of trust status

Scale of Loss (at two points in time):

1887: 138 million acres (before allotment)

1934: 48 million acres (after allotment)

Loss: 90 million acres (65% of tribal land base)

Over the past decades, tribes are actively rebuilding their land base

The Tribal Indian Land Tracker (TILT) Project

Goal: Document trends in tribal land ownership.

Method: Parcel-level data from county tax assessors

What this captures:

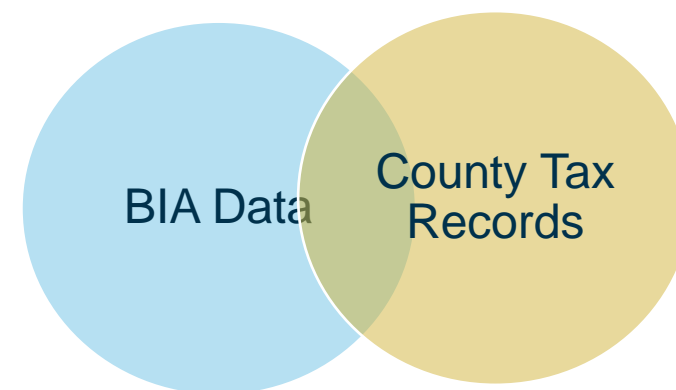
- Private land purchases by tribes, tribal enterprises
- Trust land holdings, transfers from state to tribe

What this misses:

- Trust land consolidation (BIA records only)

→ **Results are lower-bound estimates** of tribal land growth

Proof of Concept: Eleven federally recognized tribes in Minnesota. TILT accuracy within 4.1% of official records; captures major purchases and off-reservation holdings.



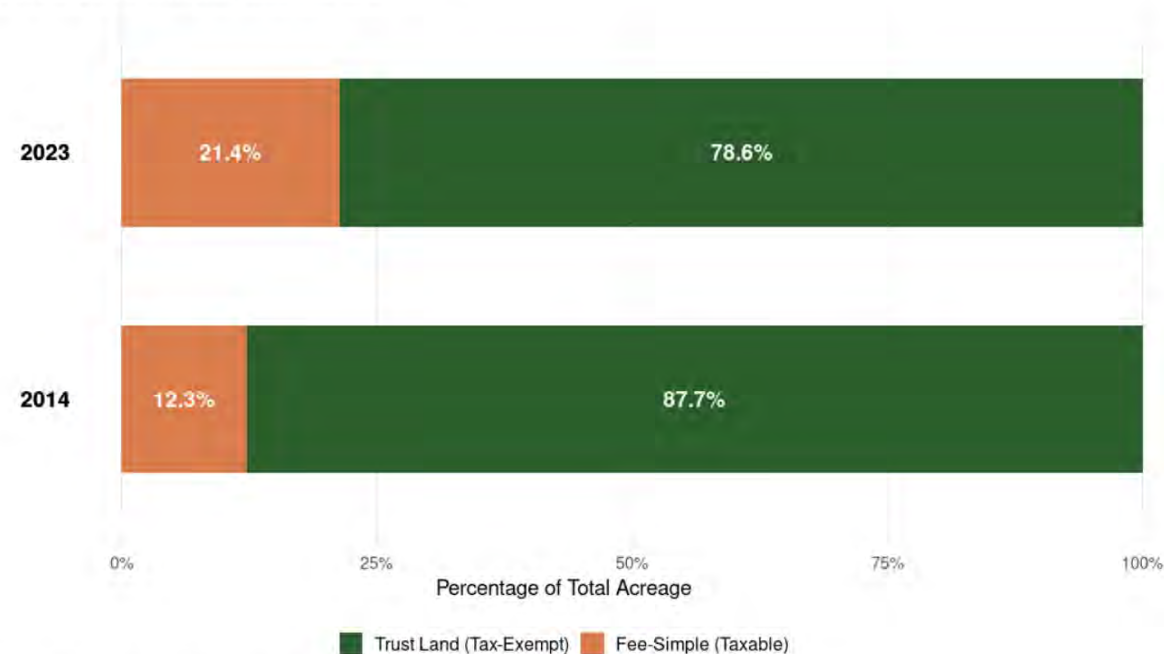
Minnesota Tribal Land Growth Takes Multiple Forms

In Minnesota, we find that

- From 2014 to 2023, tribal ownership grew by 25% (lower-bound estimate)
 - All 11 MN tribes have increased their land base since 2014.
- A large share of land increase is taxable land (21.4% of 2023 total acreage is fee simple).
- As a result, tribes (especially their tribal enterprises) pay \$7.3 million in property taxes annually.
- In 2023, tribes own between 5.3% and 99.6% of their reservation lands.
- Future work will expand TILT nationwide.

Composition of Minnesota Tribal Landholdings

Combined holdings of 11 federally recognized tribes



Total growth: 82,121 acres (25%) from 2014 to 2023.
Source: Minnesota County Assessor Records



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