

Montana v. United States

Pathmarking the Field of Indian Law for Three Decades and Counting

A SYMPOSIUM SPONSORED BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF LAW
& THE UNM INDIAN LAW PROGRAM

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On March 24, 1981, the United States Supreme Court issued its decision in *Montana v. United States*, a case that addressed several important issues concerning tribes' treaty rights, property interests, and sovereign governing authority on Indian reservations. Despite its inauspicious beginnings as a dispute over who controls access to a highly prized trout fishery on the Big Horn River within the exterior boundaries of the Crow Reservation, *Montana* since has served as juggernaut for a number of unprecedented changes to core doctrines of federal Indian law, all of them detrimental to tribes. The University of New Mexico School of Law and the UNM Indian Law Program will convene a one-and-a-half-day symposium—beginning on Thursday, March 24, 2011, thirty years to the day since the case was decided—to engage law professors, jurists, practicing attorneys, tribal leaders, and Indian law students in a wide-ranging reflection on *Montana*, including how the litigation originated and unfolded, how the case has impacted Indian law doctrines, and what potential pathways lie ahead for tribes and states in view of *Montana's* enormous continuing influence.