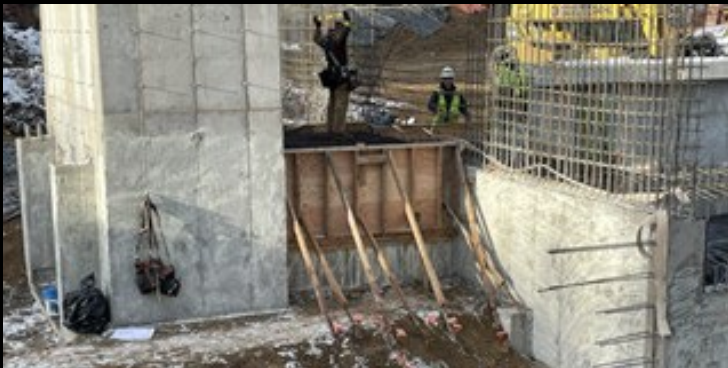




U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Office of Trust Services

FY2023 Mid-Year Accomplishment Report



Office of Trust Services Overview

Purpose of the Report

The Office of Trust Services (OTS) prepares mid-year accomplishment reports to inform Tribes and OTS employees across the country of the significant contributions our programs make to Indian Country. We take pride in the fact that our jobs help provide climate resilience, support efforts for ecosystem restoration, contribute to the reduction of fractionated Indian lands, and provide opportunities to support, manage, protect, and develop their trust lands and natural resources. Our work is challenging. We may be supporting the management of irrigation, dam, and power facilities, or protecting lives, property, and land from Wildland Fires, developing policy for the management of invasive species, traveling long distances to assist with timber sales and continuous forest inventory projects, formulation and communication policy and directives or collaboration with partners to advance our goals.

Employee Demographics

Central Office staff located in Washington, DC, Albuquerque, NM, Billings, MT, Boise, ID and Lakewood, CO. Additional Field staff positions are located at each of the twelve Regions and 83 Agencies nationwide. The pie chart shows a breakdown of our trust positions.

Visit our website at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots> for more information about BIA Trust Services.

Our Mission

The mission of the Office of Trust Services is to protect, develop, manage, and enhance Indian trust resources for the benefit of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples and expand economic opportunities through effective trust management that recognizes and support a Tribe's self-governance.

Who We Serve

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Office of Trust Services (OTS) has offices nationwide, and assists Tribal governments and allottees in managing, protecting, and developing their trust lands and natural resources, which total 56 million surface acres and 60 million acres of subsurface mineral estates. OTS Programs aid landowners in the stewardship of their cultural, spiritual, and traditional resources, and help Tribal governments create sustainable sources of revenue and jobs for their communities.

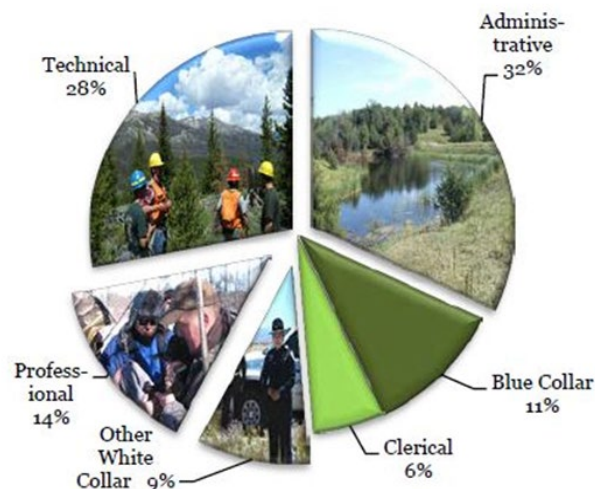


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Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD)



Sand and Gravel, Oil rigs at sunset

Mission

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development mission is to develop and enhance trust resources and provide economic development support to Tribes.

DEMD is the only office within the Federal government with the central responsibility of assisting Indian mineral owners in identifying, quantifying, and providing technical support towards the development of their vast energy and mineral resources and ensuring that they realize maximum revenue from their development. The two main regulations that guide DEMD's work are the [Indian Mineral Development Act section 7](#) and the [Energy Policy Act](#).

Economic Activity as a Result of Energy and Mineral Development

In the realm of natural resources, energy and mineral projects are the number one economic driver in Indian Country. This includes renewable and distributed energy, and aggregate resources, which show increased growth for the last several years.

The chart below summarizes the Economic Activity on Indian Lands as of FY 2019, which is the most recent Department of the Interior report entitled "*Summary of Economic Activity on Indian Lands (FY 2019)*"

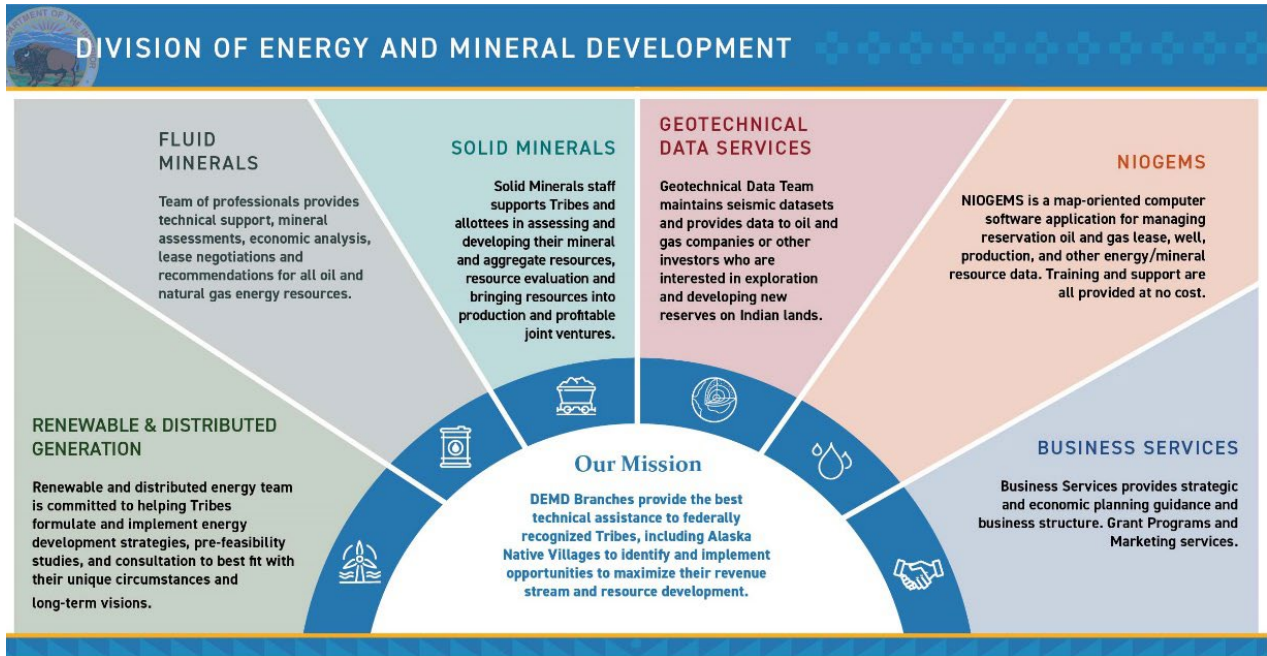
Summary of Economic Activity on Indian Lands, FY 2019

Source: U.S. Department of the Interior Economic Report, Fiscal Year 2019

DOI Activity (FY2019)	Direct Economic Contribution (Sales in billions)	Jobs	Value Added (billions, \$)	Total Economic Contribution (billions, \$)
Grading	0.03	864	n/a	0.07
Irrigation water*	1.07	28,331	1.57	2.86
Energy**	6.63 (83%)	49,946 (60%)	7.82 (81%)	12.59 (78%)
Other minerals***	0.20 (2%)	1,714 (2%)	0.24 (2%)	0.41 (3%)
Timber	0.05	465	0.03	0.13
Total Contributions to the National Economy	7.98	78,320	9.66	16.06

*Includes value of crops and jobs produced from irrigation water.

** **Renewable energy:** Tribal renewable energy production was associated with about \$100 million in value added, about \$171 million in economic output, and supported an estimated 775 jobs.*** **Sand and gravel or other industrial minerals:** Tribal sand and gravel production was associated with about \$240 million in value added, about \$410 million in economic output, and supported an estimated 1,714 jobs.



DEMD is organized into Six Branches. The first three Branches are based on the Available energy commodity resources:

1. **Renewable and Distributed Generation**
Solar, Wind, Biomass, Hydropower, Geothermal (from the usage perspective), Microgrids, Hydrogen, and more.
2. **Fluid Minerals**
Oil, Natural Gas, Helium, Geothermal (from the perspective of locating and well drilling/completion), and more.
3. **Solid Minerals**
Sand and Gravel, Limestone, Industrial Minerals, Precious Minerals, Critical Minerals, Coal, and more.

The second three branches provide direct support to Tribes to aid in the effective development of these commodities that maximize the economic return and community impact.

4. **Geotechnical Data Services**
Maintains Tribal energy and mineral resource data essential to the resource development process. This includes over \$300 million in seismic datasets, electric infrastructure (transmission lines, power plants, substations), road infrastructure, solid mineral geologic data, solar, wind, biomass, and more.
5. **NIOGEMS**
The National Indian Oil, Gas, Energy and Mineral System is a map-oriented software application developed and maintained by DEMD. The software, training, and data are provided to Tribes to aid in project development and resource management.
6. **Business Services**
Focuses on business organization, economic and strategic planning – including developing a portfolio of projects, and tribal capacity development.

Professional Services

Each Branch is comprised of professionals in their respective fields and provide direct technical advising and services to Tribes. DEMD remains aware of internal and external market influences – both those that will positively affect tribal economies and those that may pose negative impacts. For example, increased financial and political support for road infrastructure maintenance and development could make local markets viable for long-term tribal sand and gravel companies

All projects are tribally driven, with DEMD staff serving as partners in the projects. DEMD’s involvement varies based on each Tribe’s requests, the Tribe’s preference and DEMD’s current availability.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Competitive Grant Programs

[Energy and Mineral Development Program \(EMDP\)](#) Energy and Mineral projects require a multitude of pre-development studies and planning steps. The EMDP grant is a mechanism for completing these tasks and the results of these studies allow Tribes to reduce the risk of the projects and make decisions on how to move forward.

Some common task areas include:

- Resource Assessment
- Exploration Studies
- Feasibility Studies
- Market Studies
- Engineering Studies
- Economic Evaluation
- Defining Potential Targets for Development

In the last round of EMDP funding DEMD received 79 project applications totaling \$44.9 million in work.

[Tribal Energy Development Capacity \(TEDC\)](#)

The TEDC grant is designed to aid Tribes in Tribal management, organizational and technical capacity needed to maximize the economic impact of energy resource development on tribal lands. Tribes can enhance the management and regulation of energy projects through implemented organizational and business structures, legal and regulatory infrastructure specific to energy projects. The Business Services Branch has the lead role in the implementation of the TEDC grant.

The TEDC grant can be used for a variety of projects, and these are some of the frequent studies:

- Establishing a Tribal Utility Authority
- Developing the legal infrastructure to create a Tribal energy business
- Establish an energy-focused corporation under Tribal or state incorporation codes
- Establishing an energy-related Tribal business charter under federal law (IRA Section 17 corporation)
- Developing or enhancing tribal policies, codes, regulations, or ordinances related to energy resource, including land-lease regulations in accordance with the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act for energy development purposes or for business purposes connected to an energy project

In the last round of TEDC grant funding DEMD received 34 applications requesting over \$7.8 million in proposed work. Awards were made to 19 projects at a total of \$2.8 million.

DEMD, Branch of Business Services (BBS)

Structure

The Branch of Business Services (BBS) provides direct support to Tribes and their economic development goals for energy and mineral projects. The BBS provides expertise to all DEMD projects in need of capacity development services.

Business Services team members have professional backgrounds to aid in tribal capacity development include MBA's, financial analysts, business planning specialists, marketing specialists, and commercial lending experts. DEMD involvement in tribally driven projects may begin through direct coordination with the Business Services Branch. If coordination begins in another Branch the BBS is linked into the project development team.

Typical technical services include

- Business Planning, Entity Formation and Project Management
- Business Partnering, Deal Structuring and Evaluation
- Grant Fund and Loan Guarantee Financing Guidance
- Strategic Planning
- Portfolio and New Venture Performance Management
- Create strategic, comprehensive income-generating portfolios (financial and economic analysis) to monetize a Tribes' resources
- Advise Tribes on business structures, or foundational infrastructures, best suited for project financing options
- Advise on new venture partnerships

Portfolio Planning Expansion

The Business Services Branch is expanding their services available to tribes. The new service will focus on portfolio planning, assisting tribes on their assessment of their business goals, risks, resources, and other criteria to help inform which projects will be right for them.

BBS will utilize IMPLAN economic impact software to provide economic input output modeling and analysis. This tool will provide Tribes more insight into energy and mineral development projects and provide industry standard data analysis and open additional access to funding at the city, State, and Federal level.



The initial portfolio focus will be to develop project analysis around aggregate to serve as a template to be utilized by tribes across the nation

Optimize Energy Portfolios for Tribal Goals

- Economic Growth
- Economic Diversification
- Energy Independence

DEMD, Branch of Fluid Minerals (BFM)

Structure

The Branch of Fluid Minerals (BFM) is staffed with geologists, engineers, and other technical staff to provide to federally recognized tribes and allottees technical services in the following areas.

Typical technical services include

- Technical advisement in development of oil, natural gas, and helium
- BFM and the Branch of Renewable & Distributed Generation (BRAD) worked together for Tribes on geothermal development of utilities, CO2 capture and sequestration, and Hydrogen development
- BFM works with other DEMD branches and federal agencies to support Tribes in their goals for economic growth and job creation and to maximize results

Wind River Tribe acquires Steamboat Oil Field

BFM staff provided technical assistance to a Rocky Mountain Region Reservation (Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes) to acquire and operate the Steamboat Butte Oil Field on January 1, 2023, to create tribal jobs and increase income to the reservation.



Steamboat Butte Oil Field now operating under the Tribe's Wind River Energy Commission (WREC)

Mid-Year Accomplishments

North American Prospect Expo (NAPE) Representation

The annual [North American Prospect Expo](#) (NAPE) event in Houston, TX hosts nearly 14,000 attendees! The expo allows companies to explore opportunities and make connections to investors regarding oil, helium, other energy resources and, more recently, renewables. NAPE also provides Tribes a paramount chance to proactively seek developers and discover economic growth partners.

DEMD hosts a booth for Tribal representatives, DEMD staff, and BIA Agency representatives for allottees for the entire conference. Companies are provided open acreage brochures and maps created on behalf of in-person representatives of Tribes attending NAPE.

NAPE has expanded to include renewable energy opportunities. BFM will be collaborating with the BRAD team to continue to provide the Tribes opportunities at NAPE in 2024 and in the future.

Technical Assistance Jicarilla Apache Nation's Indian Mineral Development Act (IMDA) Lease

In January 2023, BFM staff visited the Jicarilla Apache Nation Reservation in New Mexico (BIA Southwest Region) to provide to technical assistance and advisement in a meeting with an oil and gas operator. The staff provided feedback on a draft [Indian Mineral Development Act \(IMDA\) lease](#) allowing the Tribe to negotiate more favorable lease terms before entering the official Secretary of Interior review.

Uintah & Ouray Tribe Meeting with Ovintiv

In February 2023, the BFM staff was invited to attend a monthly operator meeting at the request of Uintah & Ouray Tribe (BIA Southwest Region). BFM staff acted in a liaison capacity on behalf of the Tribe while complex data and figures were presented to Tribal representatives. BFM provided counsel and guidance when necessary. BFM will continue to work with this Tribe and have a planned trip to reestablish communication and connection with Tribe's energy sector.

Rocky Boys 3D Seismic Grant Project

DEMD staff, from the BFM and the Branch of Geotechnical Data Services (GDS), are working with the Chippewa Cree Tribe on the Rocky Boys Reservation (BIA Rocky Mountain Region) on processing, interpretation, and reporting results on their Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) grant for a 3D seismic project. This project was initiated several years ago to include the acquisition of the seismic data with care to natural and culturally sensitive areas. It will provide a report to assist further development of the Tribal oil and gas resources.



Hydroelectric project on the Flathead Reservation in MT, generates an estimated \$40M in revenue per year, supplies energy to over 100,000 homes and provides well paying, highly skilled jobs for tribal members.

Projects Going Forward

- preparing for the NAPE 2024 with oil and gas producing Tribes and Tribes interested in renewable energy development
- Providing technical assistance to Tribes and Allottees at requested and the currently engaged Tribes
- Making trips to visit Tribal leaders
- completing the 3D seismic EMDP grant project

Opportunities

The BFM seeks to capitalize for the remaining FY 2023 schedule by inviting renewable energy development interested Tribes to NAPE 2024 to help them find competing partners to develop their resources. BFM will continue seeking reservations that have underutilized the DEMD as a resource.

Challenges

The BFM has identified two challenges in FY 2023.

- Building rapport with council leadership given frequency of turnover in this leadership
- Continuing to staff operations to meet the increasing demand for services

DEMD, Branch of Solid Minerals (BSM)

The Solid Minerals Branch is staffed with professional geologists, mining engineers, and land acquisition specialists, working in collaboration with the Branch of Business Services.

Commodities Served

Base and precious metals – e.g., gold, silver, copper

Industrial materials – limestone, gypsum, clay, building stone

Aggregates – sand & gravel, crushed stone

Critical minerals – e.g., rare earth elements, lithium, manganese, tungsten, coal, uranium



Solid Minerals Branch Geologist logging drill core, Crow Reservation, Montana

Typical technical services include

- Direct assistance and grant program support for Tribes, allottees, and Alaska Native Regional and Village Corporations in assessing and developing their solid mineral resources
- Evaluating economic viability of resource development
- Bringing resources into production and profitable businesses

The result is improved infrastructure, jobs, and increased sustainable tribal revenues.

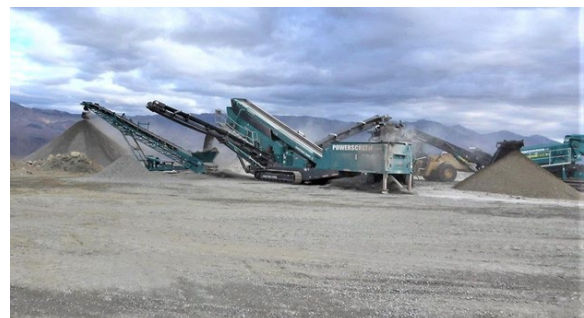
Mid-Year Accomplishments

Fort Independence Paiute Indians

The Solid Minerals Branch began working with the Fort Independence Tribe in July 2021 to launch an aggregate production company. Grinding Rocks Aggregate was quickly launched, and today is a significant aggregate supplier for the Owens Valley.

The plant now produces specification grade gravels and clean sands for the Tribe and multiple local and regional customers. This has created high-paying jobs and economic growth for the Tribe. With demand over the next decade forecast to be over 5 million tons, and average annual tribal profits in the multi-million-dollar range, there is a need to expand to other source areas on the Reservation. The Tribe has applied for a 2022 Energy and Mineral Development Program grant to explore several target areas, and the Solid Minerals Branch is currently working with them to identify possible future land acquisition opportunities.

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Grinding Rocks Aggregate Plant operated by the Fort Independence Tribe

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The Tribe applied for a 2022 EMDP grant to explore several target areas, and the Branch is working with them to identify future land acquisition opportunities.

Aggregate Development

Aggregate (sand & gravel, crushed stone) is a valuable and abundant natural resource that can be developed rapidly to generate sustainable jobs and economic growth for Tribes. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is expected to increase the commercial demand for sand and gravel significantly.

Over the first half of FY2023, the Branch evaluated specific economic costs for several different development scenarios for Tribes. The objective is to help move several Tribes nationwide from project concept, through feasibility, and on to revenue generating operations. This work includes:

- Analysis of geology
- Quantity and quality assessments
- Identification of internal and external markets
- Optimization of capital and operating costs, and
- Transportation to external markets.

Pacific Region

Completed one engineering analysis involved truck versus rail haulage for external sales of aggregate to high-demand markets in urban corridors.

Eastern Region

Parts of the region have limited access to high-quality aggregate due to unfavorable geologic formations. Solid Minerals Branch is working with one Tribe to find an economic low-cost means to acquire gravels via river barging and port development. The Tribe will be able to meet their internal aggregate demand and sell excess stockpiled gravel to neighboring communities for a profit.

Alaska Region

Coastal inundation of Native Villages is an increasingly dire problem requiring large quantities of aggregate for mitigation. Aggregate producers in Alaska are rare outside of urban areas, and demand is high.

Challenges

Barging distances can be up to 2,000 miles and cost up to \$350 per ton. This is up to 15 times the costs in the lower 48 states.

Support

Assisted a coastal Native Village develop a high-quality aggregate resource adjacent to their Village through EMDP grants and direct technical assistance.

Investigated engineering designs for a cost-effective way to bring aggregate to the coast (conveyor versus truck haulage) for barging to dozens of high-need Villages.

Locate Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds for an Alaska Village to develop an aggregate quarry and river port for barging. Completed EMDP grant aggregate assessment with positive results.

Land Acquisition

One of Solid Minerals Branch's missions is to assist Tribes to strategically acquire land for future resource development and other uses. The Assistant Secretary and Office of Trust Services view land acquisition as a high priority for Tribes. Solid Minerals is currently working with multiple Tribes in the Pacific Region to find the best avenues to expand their land bases.

Projects Going Forward

Locating and Defining Resources

Initiate a dialogue (BIA Regional Directors/Superintendents, Tribal transportation, Tribal leadership, natural resource staff) on the following topics:

- Where are the Tribe's resources located?
- How much do they have?
- How do they extract it?
- Do they have the appropriate permits in place?
- How much are they "selling" it for?
- Do they need assistance in locating and permitting projects?
- Do they need assistance in setting up a Tribal business to extract, process, and/or transport resources?

Locating and defining local resources is only the first step in the holistic economic development aspect; natural resources can be used as a stepping-stone to jump start local, sustainable jobs and businesses.

FY2023 Grant Kick-Off Meetings

Prepare kick-off meetings with Tribes once they receive new Energy and Mineral Development Program grant awards.

Opportunities

Construction Aggregate Development

There are many reasons construction aggregate development is vital for a robust local economy and can serve as the cornerstone for all Tribal economic development:

- Aggregate is required in all construction projects
- Aggregate development provides good-paying Tribal jobs, revenues, and cost-savings to the tribal administration, and
- Developing aggregate resources retains money in the local economy, helping to generate a robust, diversified local economy

Local aggregate production meets many Tribes desires to strengthen their sovereignty, to utilize local materials for the benefit of their own people, and to strengthen local economies.



Laying down aggregate road base

Customized Aggregate Demand Reports

The Branch has a new outreach program beginning with Wisconsin Tribes preparing customized local aggregate demand reports. Tribes can visualize aggregate development opportunities via maps and easily digestible reports demonstrating potential revenue streams they might be able to exploit.

Coal to Hydrogen

Coal is an abundant resource in Indian Country (over 20 billion tons) and has long been the source of revenue that drives the economic engine on every Tribe that possesses large surface minable coal reserves.



Demand for coal mainly for power generation has dropped 50% from 2006 to 2021. Tribes are in desperate need to replace this revenue stream

Solid Minerals Branch has been working diligently to help Tribes mitigate the economic downturn on these reservations by investigating a variety of coal utilization techniques and products that can be put in place to utilize coal in ways other than burning it to generate electricity.

Promising opportunities exist for the environmentally benign conversion of inexpensive coal to value-added products. These opportunities begin with the process of gasifying coal rather than burning it to produce non-carbon fuels, specifically hydrogen and ammonia. An environmental benefit of the gasification processing to Hydrogen is a carbon footprint about 1/8 that of green Hydrogen processing.

The Great Plains Synfuels Plant in North Dakota, opened in 1984, is a model of how coal can be used to produce energy in an efficient and environmentally responsible manner. The Branch continues to assist coal producing Tribes as they evolve toward environmentally sound methods to produce power and generate sustainable revenues using their immense resources.

Critical Minerals

[Presidential Executive Order 13817](#) is part of a government mandate to lower U.S. dependency on foreign minerals critical to economic stability and national security. Many of the 35 elements identified by the USGS in the Executive Order such as lithium, rare earth elements, and manganese, are primary ingredients for the technical needs of the emerging green economy. Solid Minerals Branch is assisting Tribes to develop high-demand minerals.

In the Western Region, one Tribe recently completed field work for an assessment of a high-grade manganese resource on their Reservation. Surface samples of this material contain promising assay values. Final study results will be complete in the next few months. If developed, this will be the only U.S. producer of primary manganese in the United States.

Best Practices

The Branch of Solid Minerals is available to assist both tribes and allottees with their mineral requests, In a holistic approach to development. This includes:

- Initial discovery and assessment of the resource
- Mine and reclamation planning
- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance
- Lease negotiation and application
- Mining, delivery of product, and mine shutdown and reclamation
- Advise Tribes on appropriate corporate structures
- Setting up legislation concerning effective business environments
- Financial analysis and loan guarantee information

Challenges

Staffing

Tribal and BIA tribal transportation staff are underfunded, understaffed, and overworked.

Tribes in some Regions are having difficulty accessing BIA archaeologists and biologists to perform Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act) and Section 7 (Threatened and Endangered Species Act) assessments as a part of the project permitting process.

NEPA Assessments

EMDP grants historically have not funded NEPA assessments. This creates a time and funding barrier for Tribes to achieve timely progress toward grant completion. One solution would be to expand funding within the Energy and Mineral Development Grant program to cover basic costs for NEPA assessments from Categorical Exclusions to Environmental Assessments.



NEPA Circle of Responsibility, source DOI

Technical Support

The availability of Division of Energy and Mineral Development grant funding and direct technical assistance to Tribes needs to be improved and streamlined.

Many regulatory federal staff are unfamiliar with the interactive roles that BIA, BLM, and ONRR play within the trust mineral oversight system, leaving Tribes vulnerable to substantial loss of revenues, substandard reclamation of mined lands, and mineral trespass.

Accessing Aggregate

Many Tribes do not know where their specification-grade aggregate is located, nor do they have any mineral lease agreement (with associated mine and reclamation plans, agreed upon unit rates, or environmental clearances) with which to remove the aggregate if an opportunity were to present.

Some Tribes who wish to produce aggregate do not have the equipment, experience, or capital to do so.

Use of Aggregate for Transportation Projects

Tribes and Federal Agencies oftentimes do not consider sand and gravel to be a valuable trust asset. The Doctrine of Trust Responsibility includes a federal obligation to provide those services required to protect and enhance tribal resources. One example of a breach of the responsibility is Federal Government programs are incentivized to encourage Tribes to donate aggregate material to transportation projects rather than paying fair market pricing for this valuable resource.



BIA transportation project completed

Roads projects already have significant regulatory hurdles and paperwork with which it is difficult to comply.

DEMD, Branch of National Indian Oil & Gas Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS)

The National Indian Oil & Gas, Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS) was developed in the early 1990s to consolidate various natural resource, realty, and geo-technical data into a single management software application. It is a map-oriented computer application that provides Tribes and federal users with access to natural resource data on Indian and non-Indian owned lands, both in and around reservations, to track and make decisions on leasing, developing, and managing energy and mineral resources.



Mid-Year Accomplishments

NIOGEMS Enhancements

The NIOGEMS Software is always changing and improving. Last year, both a soils data layer for aggregate exploration and a Rights-of-way Module were added. In FY2023, a system of record for oil and gas production in the Eastern Oklahoma Region will be added to further enhance the management of oil and gas resources.

Tribal Access

Currently, 11 Tribes have access to NIOGEMS that includes free use of the software, monthly data updates, training, and support. Tribes are encouraged to reach out to NIOGEMS to request access to the system.

Federal Access

The number of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) users has grown significantly during the first half of FY2023. Federal Agencies with a Trust Responsibility may be granted access to NIOGEMS.

Cloud Based Host for NIOGEMS

DEMD is assessing a hosting solution for Tribal Users to improve the service NIOGEMS provides to Tribes and Tribal users. A cloud based centralized solution will make accessing the software easier for Tribal Users and allow NIOGEMS staff to improve services to Tribes.

Benefits

- Current barriers to entry are eliminated
- More Tribes will be encouraged to request NIOGEMS access
- Eliminate the need for additional NIOGEMS staffing
- Eliminate the NIOGEMS staff labor-intensive method of installing software on Tribal Servers

Challenges

The major challenge faced by NIOGEMS in FY2023 is understanding the process for deploying the software to a centralized hosting solution for Tribal Users. There is no other BIA system similar enough to NIOGEMS to copy, so the NIOGEMS staff, in consultation with Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and the Division of Resource Integration & Services is working to determine the best solution. While the objectives and destination are clear, the path to getting a location for all Tribal Users

DEMD, Branch of Geotechnical Data Services (GDS)

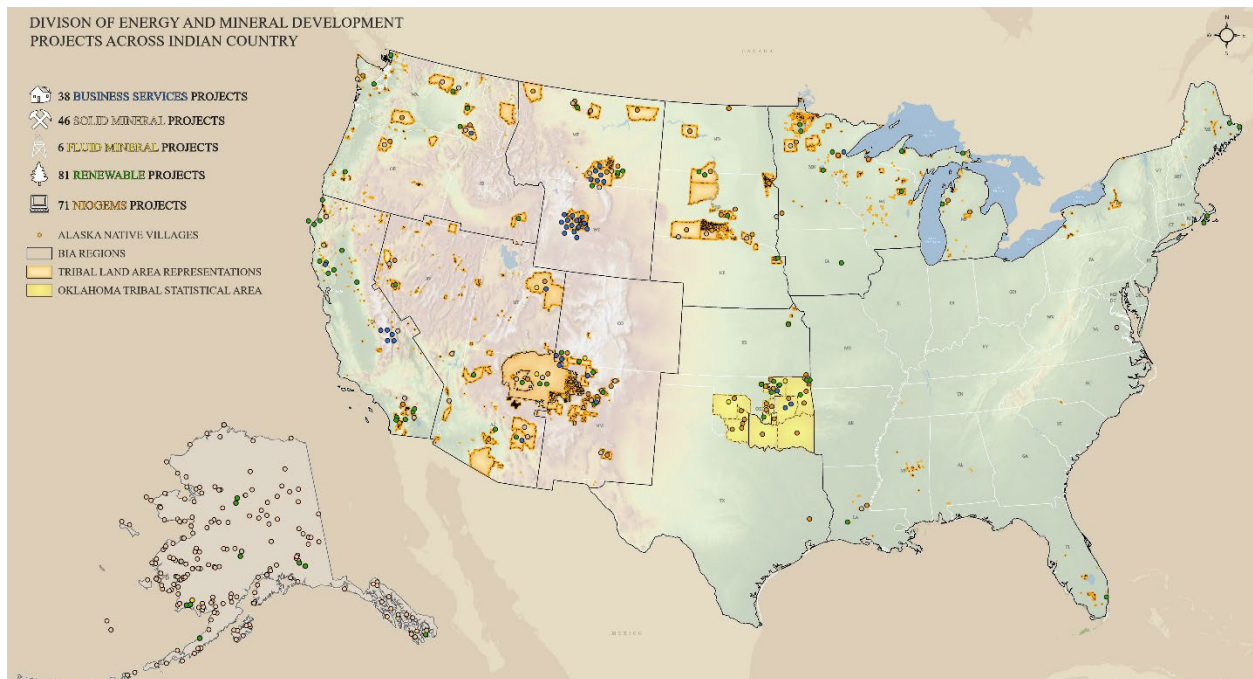
The Branch of Geotechnical Data Services (GDS) provides geophysical and geospatial solutions to support Tribal energy and economic development goals through DEMD's work on Tribal grant and technical assistance projects. The GDS is comprised of geophysicists, geographers, geographic information system (GIS) specialists and data analysts.

Typical technical services include

- Assist Federally recognized Tribes, Alaska Native Villages and individual Indian landowners with energy and economic development goals
- Seismic surveys/Seismic data consists of both 2D, and 3D surveys acquired from the early 1980s to present day
- Provide data on elevation and imagery
- Develop geographic information systems (GIS) datasets and cartographic (map) products that show energy demand, existing infrastructure, and energy generation potential
- Process and provide data on infrastructure (pipelines, transmission lines, wells, roads, turbines) and land ownership (leases, tracts)

Tribes can authorize oil and gas companies or other investors who are interested in exploration and developing new prospects on Indian lands to view this data at DEMD.

FY 2022-2023 DEMD Project Map



The interactive DEMD map provides geographic locations and descriptions of current projects. This includes 38 Business Services, 46 Solid Minerals, 6 Filled Minerals, 81 Renewable, and 71 NIOGEMS projects.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

GDS designed over 50 maps to support the DEMD's EMDP and TEDC grant programs and technical assistance projects for the benefit of approximately 40 Federally recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Villages.

Produced eight (8) new and six (6) updated NIOGEMS Tribal databases. Includes collection, analysis, and processing of datasets for well production, tribal land ownership, public land survey system, high resolution imagery, soil surveys, digital elevation models, and other geospatial administrative, energy and resource datasets.

Reprocessed over 150 miles of Tribal 2D seismic lines, and additional 3D seismic surveys related to current and potential Tribal projects. Completed seismic acquisition parameter testing in advance of potential Tribal seismic project.

Analyzed over 8,000 lease and ownership records for accuracy and digitized the records for display in DEMD, Tribal maps, and in NIOGEMS.

Managed 1,400 2D seismic lines (10,000 linear miles) and 64 3D seismic surveys for 26 Tribes with a valuation of approximately \$255 million.

Provided seismic data technical assistance in response to nine (9) Tribal requests.

Projects Going Forward

- On-going analysis and processing of lease and ownership records
- NIOGEMS databases are updated monthly
- New Tribal databases may need to be created ad hoc

- Continued monitoring, updating, and archiving of the seismic database with new additions and any edits or corrections
- Support DEMD branches with Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) and Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) grants and technical assistance projects that run multiple fiscal years

Opportunities

GDS opportunities will be driven by the award of new EMDP, TEDC and technical assistance projects and meeting DEMD and Tribal project requirements.

DEMD seismic staff will attend oil & gas industry events like the North American Prospect Expo (NAPE). NAPE is the energy industry's marketplace for the buying, selling, and trading of prospects and producing properties. DEMD partners with Tribes during NAPE attendance.

GDS will continue to stay on top of data and industry trends to apply new geospatial and analytical processes to further enhance maps and projects.

Best Practices

GDS best practices lie in meeting DEMD, and Tribal project needs with well researched, accurate datasets and up to date informative map products, assuring data quality and consistent presentation to all DEMD branches.

Priority in managing analog and digital datasets proprietary to Tribes is paramount.

FY 2023 Challenges

Maintaining staffing levels of GDS federal and contract staff is important for meeting the demands of current and upcoming projects.

Managing several terabytes of seismic and geospatial data so data remains current.

DEMD, Branch of Renewable & Distributed Generation (BRAD)

Mission

The DEMD Branch of Renewable and Distributed Generation (BRAD) is staffed with engineers and natural resource specialists to provide Federally Recognized Tribes, Native Alaskan Villages, and Individual Indian owners technical assistance and consultation in developing renewable energy and distributed generation projects on their land. See <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/demd/renewable-energy>

Typical technical services include

- Font-end planning phases for both utility scale and distributed energy development
- Helping Tribes bring projects to the point where they can secure financing



Solar array and Fond du Lac

Commodities Served

Solar, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal, Hydro, Microgrids, and Hydrogen, and other forms of distributed generation.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Grant Projects

The Branch continues work on forty-one (41) active grant projects for both the Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) and the Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) Grant Program. So far in FY 2023, the Branch is expected to close eleven (11) grant projects.

Summary highlights of closing projects include:

- Helped Tribes pursue or improve already existing energy utilities with activities such as improving energy codes and completing development final feasibility studies
- Assisted multiple Tribes with identifying Combined Heat and Power systems fueled by natural gas to save money while powering their casinos and other large energy loads.
- Completed a feasibility study for a utility scale natural gas-powered generation station to provide power a casino.
- Supported renewable microgrid system studies for tribal self-sufficiency at tribal campuses and for housing developments.
- Completed solar feasibility studies on multiple Tribally owned buildings to utilize clean and sustainable energy.
- Concluded renewable energy development feasibility studies that informed tribal leadership about the quality and quantity of the Tribe's renewable energy resources.
- Supported, along with the Branch of Fluid Minerals, geothermal resource exploration studies where a Tribe wants to move forward with next steps into test drilling and planning a utility scale geothermal project.

Technical Services support to 16 Tribes

BRAD has provided technical support directly to 16 tribes as of March 2023. Summary highlights include:

Assessments

- Microgrid solutions as a means of improving energy resilience and reliability at critical tribal facilities
- Technical and economic viability of solar development on or adjacent to tribal facilities
- Evaluating the development of utility-scale solar on tribal land and helping to identify and address any associated challenges
- Working with tribes to assess resource potential and economic feasibility of geothermal development and subsequent energy generation

Advisory Services

- Proposed partnership contracts from 3rd party developers
- Technical scope of work material to ensure accurate and up-to-date analysis of renewable energy development feasibility
- Development of hydropower resources

Technical Assistance

- Identify portfolio solutions of multiple renewable energy options for enhancing tribal sovereignty and promoting cost savings and/or revenue generation for the Tribe

- Assisting tribes to understand the incentives and potential benefits associated with the installation and ownership of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure
- Informing tribes on grant funding opportunities, both within and outside of DEMD, available for clean energy development
- Explain the many benefits provided to Tribes under the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), including incentives that are specific to tribal clean energy projects

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

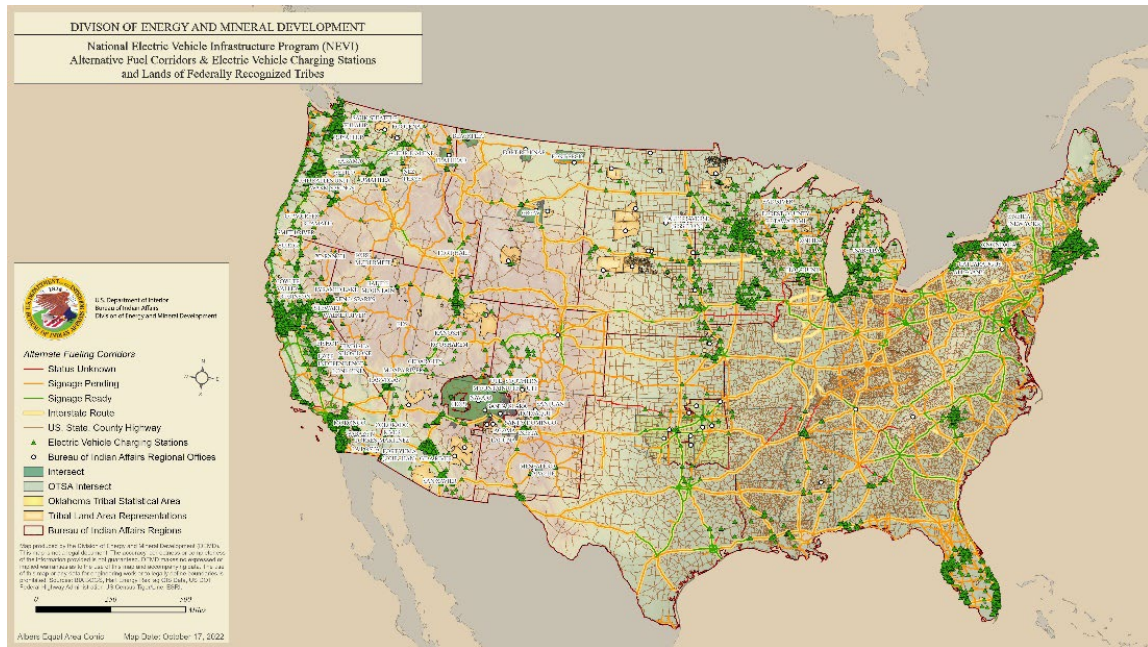
BRAD, in partnership with the Indian Energy Service Center, is implementing a new READI initiative. The vision for READI is to create expanded pathways for the BIA to support Tribes in harnessing the vast renewable energy potential that exists in Indian Country.

With support from a professional services contractor, the scope of READI will include:

- Literature review of current federal framework for renewable energy development on Indian land
- Extensive Tribal engagement through regional, hybrid workshops
- Final Comprehensive Report and Recommendations

Work is expected to kick-off in April 2023, with expectations for a final report by October. BIA will then implement recommendations in FY 2024.

National Electric Vehicle (EV) Maps for US and BIA Regions; Intersection of electric vehicle corridors and charging stations with Tribal Lands



Electric Vehicle Initiative

In December 2022, the [White House Council on Native American Affairs](#) (WHCNA) announced the [National Electric Vehicle \(EV\) Initiative for Tribal Nations](#). This initiative aims to ensure Tribes and Native communities are included in the EV future of the country and that the buildout of a national EV network includes Tribal lands and economies.

DEMD is one of several federal agencies that have signed on to support the WHCNA Electric Vehicle Initiative. Our role is to work with the Department of Transportation to map intersections of Tribal Nations with the electric vehicle corridors under the National Electric Vehicle Initiative (NEVI).

DEMD has completed mapping and development of tabular data reflecting which tribes are located within or out of the NEVI geographical areas. This includes a national map, along with 12 maps for each BIA Region.

Next Steps

Our next steps are to share the data with the committee and discuss consultation plans.

Using the data, agencies will consult with Tribes on how to deploy infrastructure for Tribes within those statutory, geographic constraints.



Projects Going Forward

Grants

In the upcoming half of FY 2023, we will be kicking off forty to forty-five (40-45) new grant projects. This includes supporting the Business Services Branch in initiating nineteen (19) new TEDC grants. The Branch expects to announce and kick off an additional twenty to twenty-five (20-25) new EMDP grants for the upcoming quarter.

Technical Assistance

Many of the current technical assistance projects will continue for the remainder of the year and more requests are expected to be received as we head into grant season. BRAD will continue to provide the best possible technical advising to Tribe's requesting assistance with developing their energy resources.

Opportunities

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022

The IRA provided unprecedented tax credit opportunities for Tribal renewable energy projects, which most notably includes cash payment options that Tribes can receive directly. Prior to the passage of the IRA, Tribes could not directly receive renewable energy tax credit benefits because they were non-taxable entities, and complicated tax-equity projects were required to receive benefits. The new opportunities provided from the IRA are a game changer for Tribal renewable energy projects.

Reconsider Tribal Projects under BIL

In the addition to the IRA, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also continues to provide significant investments across the board for renewable and distributed generation technologies and infrastructure.

This means that Tribal projects that were once considered not viable should now be reevaluated. BRAD subject matter experts will be reviewing post studies performed through DEMD programs to determine if project economics might be impacted from the changing market conditions. If so, the team will make efforts to reengage with Tribes to determine their interest in reconsidering the project and updating the study.

Additional Opportunities

The rapid growth of intermittent solar and wind provides a major opportunity for the expansion of energy storage capacity.

Renewable Gas industry is making more headwinds as credits for renewable gas products are now available in both California and Oregon. This may be an outlet for Tribes who want to leverage biofuel waste.

BRAD is developing Tribal Outreach Maps which will communicate and highlight regional trends, challenges, needs, and opportunities for Tribes to develop renewable energy resources.

Challenges

Recently, interest rates and equipment costs for renewable energy projects have been rising, resulting in a reduced impact from the incentives listed in the Inflation Reduction Act.

Price volatility regarding raw materials for renewable technologies poses a threat to the constant increase in demand for clean energy projects.

Securing financing for high-cost Tribal renewable energy projects remains a challenge.

Division of Environmental & Cultural Resources Management (DECRM)



Tipis at the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Tribe

Organizational Change

In Fiscal Year 2023, the Branch of Environmental and Cultural Resources Management was transition to a full Division reporting to the Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services.

Three Branches were established under the DECRM umbrella. They include the Branch of Cultural Resources Management & Museum Program, the Branch of Environmental Services, and the Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience.

DECRM, Branch of Cultural Resource Management & Museum Program (CRM/MP)

The Cultural Resources Management and Museum Program Branch (CRM & MP) contributes to the mission of the BIA by fulfilling and executing the Federal government's trust responsibilities relating to the cultural resources utilized by the tribes for sustenance, cultural enrichment, and economic development and support; and by promoting the conservation, development, and wise use of these resources for the maximum benefit of Indian people.

Archaeological resource crimes, including looting, vandalism, and trafficking of cultural items, continue to threaten and destroy archaeological sites and harm communities on Indian lands. In addition, these acts violate federal, state, and Tribal laws and degrade Tribal sovereignty and security.

The consultants work with the BIA, ARPA subject matter experts, law enforcement, and Tribal heritage and historic preservation offices to

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)

Under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA), the Branch of CRM & MP and the BIA Western Region use a CESU agreement initiated in 2018 to assist in a unique nationwide ARPA Assistance Program. This program helps to eliminate archaeological resource crimes from Tribal lands.

- Detect and respond to potential ARPA violations
- Prevent damage to cultural resources through public outreach and education, and
- Work with Tribal organizations, youth programs, and other federal agencies to remediate damaged archaeological sites

Two ARPA classes were conducted with the Office of Justice Service's Indian Police Academy. The course is focused on the professional development of all archaeologists, law enforcement personnel, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO), and cultural preservation programs in archaeological investigations. The five-day course is designed to provide insight into archaeological and cultural resource investigative matters, with both classroom and actual field work curriculum. Students learn about new techniques/investigative material and will learn how to implement those techniques during actual fieldwork.

The CRM & MP is responsible for ensuring compliance with environmental and cultural resource statutes, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA); administers the BIA museum and complies with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) for the respectful return of human remains, and sacred items curated in non-federal repositories under control of the BIA.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The Branch of CRM & MP supported the Winnebago Tribe in nominating three historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in Thurston County, Winnebago vicinity, Nebraska. The National Register of Historic Places is an official list of the country's significant sites worthy of preservation. The properties are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places because they meet the 50 years of age criteria and possess important Winnebago cultural history meeting Criteria A, which is associated with events that have significantly contributed to the broad patterns of Tribal history.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Federal Register Notice

Under NAGPRA, the BIA follows a process for Native American remains or cultural items to be removed from or discovered on Federal and tribal lands. NAGPRA also requires museums, agencies, and universities housing BIA-controlled collections to compile detailed summaries and inventories in their groups and consult with Native American tribes to allow the repatriation of ancestors, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony.

The Branch published two NAGPRA Notices of Inventory of Completion in the Federal Register accounting for two ancestors and 47 associated funerary objects. In addition, one Notice of Intent to Repatriate Cultural Items comprising of 376 cultural items were published in the Federal Register. Finally, BIA conducted consultation with Tribes that resulted in determinations of affiliation accounting for the return of human remains, funerary objects, and sacred objects.

Transfer of Control

Under NAGPRA, the BIA transferred control of the Federal agency's legal interest in cultural items and ancestors in its holding or collection to the appropriate lineal descendants, Indian Tribes published in the three Federal Registers.

In addition, BIA transferred control of two NAGPRA collections published in 1998 and 2009 that were not repatriated since publication in the Federal Register.

Consultation with non-Federal Repositories and Tribes

The BIA CRM & MP is collaborating with at least ten non-federal repositories and universities housing BIA museum collections. In addition, we initiated five-year Cooperative Agreements with two repositories to locate and inventory all BIA archaeological collections from Indian lands, assist with tribal consultation, prepare NAGPRA relevant items for repatriation, and catalog and process remaining non-NAGPRA archaeological materials.

Museum Collections Inventory

The Museum Program developed and provided museum management documentation for BIA repositories resulting in 78.9% of all repositories housing BIA museum collections in good condition. In addition, the curators regained access to the Interior Collections Management System (ICMS) database after two years of being offline.



Justin Giles, Museum Curator working on inventory of jewelry

The Museum Program began conducting its annual inventory of BIA and BIE repositories. During the past two years, COVID prohibited the curators from conducting site visits at facilities housing BIA museum collections. Four repositories were visited, and curation training was provided to the staff.



Small mukluks (K00021756). Arctic, Leather, fur, glass beads, string. Gift to Acting AS-IA James Cason from the Tanana Chiefs Conference, September 8, 2006

Museum Collections Move

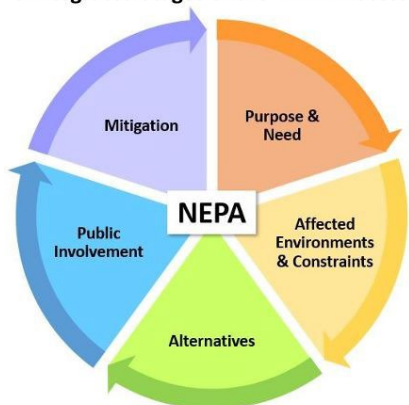
The Museum Program helped move museum collections from two BIA facilities and one Museum. Curators help pack and move items using appropriate curatorial methods.

DECRM, Branch of Environmental Services (BES)

The Branch of Environmental Services (BES) provides leadership, guidance, policy, and support for the protection of environmental and cultural resources, working with federal, state, and Tribal governments to ensure compliance with environmental law on Indian trust lands, restricted lands and federal facilities owned or operated by Indian Affairs.

This includes oversight and guidance for implementing a range of environmental laws and regulations, including the [National Environmental Policy Act](#) (NEPA) and [Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act](#) (CERCLA).

5 Integrated Stages of the NEPA Process



Mid-Year Accomplishments

New Categorical Exclusion for Sanitation Lines

BES adopted the Indian Health Service's (IHS) categorical exclusion (CatEx) determination under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for sanitation lines over Indian lands. Sanitation lines refer to water and sewage pipe and tunnel lines for sanitation purposes. This CatEx reduces staff time resources spent analyzing proposals determined to not have potentially significant environmental impact, positively impacting tribes.

BIE Environmental Auditing Activities

BIA BES and the BIE Branch of Environmental Management signed a Service Level Agreement (Agreement) to transfer environmental auditing activities involving BIE funded schools. This included transfer of all current and historical environmental data and records for BIE schools, and future Emergency Management System (EMS) and Environmental Management and Auditing Program (EMAP) systems.

NEPA Tracker 2.0

Reviewed BIA NEPA Tracker 2.0 Information Technology hosting agreement with the Office of Chief Information Officer. 100 percent access was maintained for all BIA employees and access for Regional Points of Contact (POCs). Provided management and technical assistance for all 12 Regions and added an application to the NEPA Tracker to improve accessibility.

DECRM, Environmental Quality Program (EQP)

The EQ program provided oversight, and policy, leading to regulatory compliance through documentation of environmental conditions and impacts, and protection of the environment and cultural resources.

Emergency Management and Accreditation Program (EMAP)

BES, together with the BIA Regions and BIE, are discussing potential upgrades and improved functions to the EMAP and auditing program.

Central Hazmat Funding (CHF)

Central Hazmat Fund Technical Review Committee (TRC) participation. The TRC is responsible for approval of funding for DOI bureaus Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability (CRECLA) or "Superfund" contaminated sites. The TRC reviews all requests for funding and makes final recommendations on which projects receive funding. Maintain Central Hazmat Fund Database Cost Tracking and ensure accurate costs are being reported.

Received Central Hazmat Fund for ongoing cleanup work at the Tar Creek Mining Site, Oklahoma.



Tar Creek Superfund Site (Photo credit: Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ))

Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR)

BES provides oversight, coordination, and guidance to BIA Regional case managers on 22 NRDA cases located around the country. BES ensures Tribes involved in NRDAR cases receive necessary funds from the Department of the Interior to support Tribal claim development. BES participates on the Department's Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment (ORDA) Technical Working Group (TWG) and reviews all funding requests.

Projects Going Forward

BES continues to provide both assistance and funding to support remedial activities for the Tuba City Landfill, Shiprock Demolition, Tuba City Abandon Building Abatement, and 6 Great Plains Regional Office Cleanup Projects.

Environmental Disposal Liabilities (EDL)

Worked with OEPC on the Environmental Disposal Liabilities (EDL) database reporting and cleanup of sites listed.

- Provided guidance and approved funding to regions for ongoing work and future removal of Environmental Disposal Liabilities (EDL) sites requiring longer cleanup.
- Review all sites quarterly to ensure at least 90% accuracy of the projects and relevant documentation.
- Sites reviewed for compliance and remedial/removal actions to accelerate removal of sites from DOI EDL list.
- Worked with the Division of Financial Reporting and Analysis (FRA) to report BIA liabilities associated with actual and potential asbestos contamination.
- Reviewed and approved environmental projects and expenditures for the Division of Facilities, Maintenance, & Construction (DFMC)
- Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act (AHERA) inspections, fuel spills, groundwater cleanup, mold, and asbestos removal
- Kept information and guidance current on the EDL/Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), Superfunds Amendments and Re-authorization Act (SARA) SharePoint IT site.

Challenges

BES was re-organized in 2023 from a Branch to a full OTS Division and is in the process of hiring management and staff positions.

DESCRM, Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR)

Mission

The mission of the Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR) is to enable climate preparedness and resilience across all Indian Affairs programs and for all Federally recognized Tribal Nations and Alaska Native villages through technical and financial assistance, access to scientific resources and educational opportunities.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Program Realignment and Support

The program was redesignated as a “Branch” within the Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management (DESCRM) in FY2022. TCR is currently expanding in areas supporting training and educational opportunities, technical assistance at the regions, and implementing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) opportunities for community relocation and climate adaptation strategies.



Community-Led Relocation, Managed Retreat, and Protect-In-Place (RMP) Cohort Facilitators in AK



RMP Cohort Training participants

Recruiting Branch Chief

TCR’s previous Acting Branch Chief and Climate Science Coordinator was also the Lead Author for the Development and/or coordination on the Tribes and Indigenous Peoples Chapter of the [5th National Climate Assessment](#) (NCA5). Since the Branch Chief position was vacated in July of 2022, the NCA5 Lead Coordinating Author role has now transitioned to the TCR Northwest and Rocky Mountain Regional Coordinator.

The Branch Chief position remains vacant as of March 2023, however, a position has been offered and the candidate is in the process of acceptance and security processing.

Modernizing Annual Awards Program Software

This year, TCR has planned to modernize its Annual Awards Program software with the following benefits

- Software will be more user-friendly and efficient, resulting in more convenient and accessible application submission for Tribes and Tribal organization
- Result in a faster and error-free reviewer process
- Provide added functionality to track the status of reviews and awards, which will help in monitoring the process and keeping track of the various stages involved in the process

Cooperative Agreement

Our Education and Outreach Cooperative Agreement with the [Institute of Tribal Environmental Professionals](#) (ITEP) Tribes and Climate Change Program was renewed. ITEP is setting up the 2024 NTICC National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference and assisting with ongoing Relocation, Managed Retreat, and Protect in Place Cohort Curriculum Development.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law added funding of \$216M over the course of five (5) years with \$86M dedicated to Tribal Climate Resilience and Adaptation projects, and \$130M dedicated to Community Relocation projects. A total of approximately \$45M was awarded from the Branch's Annual Awards Program for FY2022 through the TCR appropriations as well as BIL appropriations.

The new infrastructure funding has allowed funding for eleven Tribal communities to participate in the White House-led interagency [Voluntary Community Driven Relocation](#) (CDR) Demonstration Projects Program. The Department of the Interior (DOI) committed \$135M to support communities facing relocation, managed retreat, and protect-in-place decisions because of climate change impacts.

BIA funding and technical assistance support has been provided to eleven (11) Demonstration Projects

- Three (3) Implementation and/or construction Projects (2 Alaska, 1 in Lower 48 states)
- Eight (8) Planning Projects (4 in Alaska, 4 in Lower 48 states)

Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation (VCDR) Program

The VCDR program will assist eleven (11) Tribal communities severely impacted by climate-related environmental threats. Investments from the BIL and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) support two types of grants:

- Relocation grants for severely impacted communities currently ready to implement relocation and managed retreat plans

- Planning grants for communities that need additional planning support in evaluating climate threats and mitigation strategies

Relocation Grant Recipients

\$25M each over five years

Tribe	State
Native Village of Naptakiak	AK
Newtok Village	AK
Quinault Indian Nation	WA

Planning Grant Recipients

\$5M each over two years

Tribe	State
Chitimacha Tribe	LA
Havasupai Tribe	AZ
Huslia Village	AK
Native Village of Fort Yukon	AK
Native Village of Nelson Lagoon	AK
Native Village of Point Lay	AK
Passamaquoddy Indian Tribe	ME
Yurok Tribe	CA

Annual Awards Program and Grant Solicitation

TCR modified its annual awards program for FY23 and overall funding strategy to respond to input received from Tribes during consultation which called for increased flexibility in the awarding of climate funds. TCR has significantly increased the overall funding availability for climate adaptation planning and implementation of those plans, including implementation of Climate Relocation, Managed Retreat and Protect-in-Place plans. This year, TCR is announcing new categories: planning and implementation. TCR will also set aside funds for habitat restoration and adaptation, as well as for first time applicants.

The FY23 Solicitation is tentatively expected to be announced in April, though the Branch will likely begin accepting applications during the July/August timeframe.

Staffing

Permanent Positions Filled

- 5 Regional TCR Coordinators
- 1 Management/Program Analyst
- 1 Staff Assistant
- 1 Pathways Intern placed with DECRM

Permanent Positions to be Filled

- 1 Branch Chief, job offer pending
- 3 Regional TCR Coordinators in selection process

Contractors

- 7 Contractors under Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract Contractors to support [Climate Driven Relocation \(CDR\) Demonstration Projects](#)

Contractor Positions Sought

Construction analyst, environmental protection specialist, environmental engineer, civil engineer, and program management analysts

Challenges

Onboarding Contractors

Currently the Branch is waiting for the onboarding of additional Staff and Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) Contractors. This support is needed for the workload and effective TCR program management.

Equipment

The staff has been facing difficulties in obtaining equipment including laptops, PIV cards, cell phones, within a reasonable timeframe.

Awarding Official Technical Representative Certification

Updated Awarding Official Technical Representative (AOTR) Certifications needed for all staff with the recent transfer from Financial Assistance Awards to P.L. 93-638 Contracts and Compacts. Implementation Projects will require all employees to take the P.L. 93-368 (Subpart J) certification program.

Collaboration

Participation from other federal agency employees willing to engage in calls and offer valuable feedback can be challenging.

Division of Forestry (DF)



Forest on the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Reservation, Oregon

The Forestry Program conducts management on Indian forest land in accordance with sustained yield principles to develop, maintain, and enhance forest resources. Indian Forestry has a unique standing among Federal land management programs in that Congress declared the United States has a trust responsibility toward the management of Indian forest lands pursuant to the [National Indian Forest Resources Management Act of 1990 \(NIFRMA\)](#) (Pub. L. 101-630, Title III, 104 Stat. 4532).

Service Area Statistics on Management of Indian Forests

- 19.2 million acres in 33 States
- Commercial timber volume of approximately 66 billion board feet
- Allowable annual harvest of 712 million board feet

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Forestry Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA)

The FY2022 Forestry TPA budget included a general program increase of \$3.474 million. In the second quarter of FY2023, DFM distributed the general program increase to provide base support for 35 Tribes that were receiving little, to no support for their Forestry programs, or were otherwise underfunded.

Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT)

As required by the [National Indian Forest Resource Management Act \(NIFRMA\)](#), the Secretary must ensure Indian forest land management is independently assessed every 10 years. Forestry staff have worked closely with the IFMAT to gather information, including the Funding and Position Analysis, that will be used in the development of the IFMAT report which is scheduled for completion in June of 2023. [Ten-year IFMAT periodic assessments](#) on Indian Forest Lands were completed in 1993, 2003, and 2013.



Findings and recommendations developed by the IFMAT are used in guiding Indian forest management activities in the future and serve as a principal communication tool in explaining the challenges and opportunities of managing Indian forest lands to the Department, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Congress.

Portable Infrastructure Projects Funded

Since 2018, BIA Forestry has funded 22 Portable Infrastructure Projects for Tribes. Portable Infrastructure Projects can include small sawmills, pelletizers, fuelwood processors, chippers, and operations support equipment as examples. This initiative can improve forest health, reduce the risk of wildfire, create local markets for forest and energy products, and provide jobs for tribal members.



Lumber produced from Portable Sawmill at Picuris Pueblo, NM

Forestry received additional funding in the FY2022 appropriation and provided \$1.436 million to support seven tribal projects.

Forestry Geospatial Information Services (GIS)

BIA Forestry has added one GIS position to further coordinate, develop, and standardize the spatial component that the program currently lacks. Adding the Forestry GIS position is consistent with recent Bureau initiatives that placed GIS Coordinators and Cartographers in regional locations. Migrating numerical forestry data to a spatial platform is critical in transforming Indian forestry nationally

Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) Technical Assistance

The [Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning \(FIP\)](#) has reduced the backlog of CFI projects and returned 90% of those projects back to the Tribes and is a year ahead of schedule on future CFI projects. This has been a huge undertaking made possible by a commitment to customer service. Staff continues to provide technical assistance to Regions, Agencies, and Tribes and has done several site visits to help with data collection and correction.

Technical Assistance to Regions

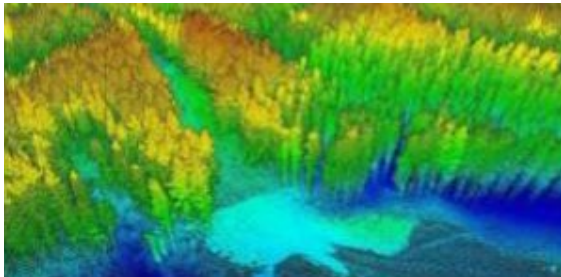
- Developed and completed 3 Continuous Forest Inventory materials for the Regions to initiate the collection of field data
- Completed 6 data cleaning /processing and analysis verifications and returned these projects to the Regions to initiate the Forest Inventory Analysis

Technical Assistance to Tribes

- **Mescalero Apache Tribe**
Continuous Forest Inventory and field data collection assistance
- **Alabama-Coushatta Tribe**
Continuous Forest Inventory and field data collection assistance
- **Pueblo of Zuni**
Delivered the Continuous Forest Inventory materials for Zuni to initiate the field data collection
- **Hoopa Valley Tribe**
On-site TA for the analysis program and Forest Vegetation Simulator growth and yield model for the Tribe's timber inventory analysis report

Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar)

The FY2022 Forestry budget included additional funding for Lidar. DFM utilized those funds to support two tribal Lidar projects. The FY2023 Forestry budget also included additional funding for Lidar. Project proposals were due at Central Office on March 31, 2023, and staff is now in the project selection process.



Lidar Imaging of a Forest

National Policy Memorandum (NPM)

The Forestry staff have submitted the Forest Management Deductions; and Direct Pay Authority documents to Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA). Staff continues to make edits and the NPM are on schedule for completion this calendar year. The Carbon Policy was approved and published on November 4, 2022.

Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA)

The [Indian Trust Asset Reform Act](#), P.L. 114-178, was signed into law on June 22, 2016. Title II of the law authorized the Secretary to establish and carry out an [Indian trust asset management demonstration project](#) for Tribal forestry and surface leasing programs.

- Two Tribes were approved to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project and are now operating their Forestry programs under approved Indian Trust Asset Management Plans (ITAMP) and Tribal Forestry Regulations (TFR).

- Technical assistance provided to a third Tribe seeking ITARA approval as well as on-going support in the development of their ITAMP and TFR.

The Division continues to provide outreach and information to the Intertribal Timber Council, Tribes, and the Tribal-Interior Budget Council.

Opportunities

One of the most significant opportunities moving ahead is the coordination between Forestry and Fuels to improve forest health and reduce the risk of resource loss to wildfire, insects, and disease. We have already started the dialogue with the Regions so that BIA Forestry and Fire staff understand what can be accomplished through a combined effort.

This also presents opportunities for the utilization of biomass that is removed through silvicultural treatments. We have seen more interest from Tribes wanting to utilize biomass, such as firewood, to fuel heating systems for tribal communities, especially in Alaska. This is a positive step that helps support tribal economies in rural locations.

Challenges

Vacancies

Staffing, budget, and support. BIA Forestry must increase staffing. We have many vacant positions, especially at the GS-5/7/9 grade level. These positions are critical in accomplishing forestry field work.

Backlog of Silvicultural Treatments

Funding levels for BIA Forestry have seen increases in the past few years, but additional increases are needed. Our backlog of acres in need of silvicultural treatments is over 1 million acres, which would take over a decade of project accomplishments to realize significant reductions.

DF, Timber Team (TT)

Mid-Year Accomplishments

The Timber Team lost several Foresters in FY2022, which has limited the number of projects that could be accomplished.



Tree Coring on the Chehalis Stand Exam

Even with short staffing, the team has continued to assist Tribes with forestry projects in the table below since the start of the new fiscal year.

Vacant Positions

The Timber Team is preparing to onboard two new foresters with anticipated start dates by early May 2023. In addition, the Timber Team has made three tentative offers to new foresters and hope to be fully staffed again by late-summer.



Timber Team working in the cold rainy Pacific Northwest gathering stand exam data on the Chehalis Reservation. The Tribe will use this data to monitor forest health and planning for future forest management activities.



Timber Team using a digital relascope to measure merchantable tree height while gathering stand example data on the Chehalis Reservation

Technical Assistance to Tribes

Tribe	BIA Region	Project	State
All Southern Plains Tribes	Southern Plains	GIS forest cover-type mapping project for all Tribal Trust lands within the region (on-going)	OK
Chehalis Reservation	Northwest	Completed 194 Stand Exam plots	WA
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians	Eastern	Cruised 258 plots and provide management recommendations on 3,000 acres	MS
Stockbridge Munsee Reservation	Midwest	Windfall Salvage Prep including 150 acres of timber being painted for harvest	WI
Alabama Couthatta Tribe of East Texas	Southern Plains	Installed 85 continuous forest inventory (CFI) plots. Team included foresters (1) Great Plains Region, (2) Forest Inventory & Planning, (1) Rocky Mountain region, and (1) Northwest region. Conducted black walnut surveys and offered recommendations for future management.	TX



FIP staff working with the Alabama Coushatta Tribe of Texas on installing Continuous Forestry Inventory plots on trust lands to gather long-term forest inventory data

Manuals, Handbooks, and TAAMS

The Division continually works on updates to the forestry directives. Most recently the Harvest of Forest Products Manual 53 IAM 3 and the handbook 53 IAM 3-H have been submitted to RACA for review as have revised contract and permit forms and standard provisions. The previous version of the handbook contained numerous "Illustrations", The "Illustrations" are being replaced with "examples, exhibits, and templates" which have been submitted for upload on the Forestry Division pages of bia.gov.

The Trust Asset Accounting Management System (TAAMS) is the system of record for harvest of forest products from Indian Lands. The Division continually works to ensure the field receive adequate training to enter contract and permit activity and are continually working on enhancements to the system to streamline business processes. A significant TAAMS Forestry document enhancement, the Timber Money Record, was released into TAAMS Production in March of 2023.

Projects Going Forward

- Policies and initiatives
- Tribal Youth Summer Camps,
- Coordination to Support Tribal Greenhouses and the National Reforestation Goals Established under Executive Order 14072
- Full Development of Forestry GIS

Opportunities

One of the most significant opportunities moving ahead is the coordination between Forestry and Fuels to improve forest health and reduce the risk of resource loss to wildfire, insects, and disease. Dialogue started with the Regional BIA Forestry and Fire staff to understand what can be accomplished through a combined effort.

There are opportunities for the utilization of biomass that is removed through silvicultural treatments. We have seen more interest from Tribes wanting to utilize biomass, such as firewood, to fuel heating systems for tribal communities, especially in Alaska. This is a positive step that helps support tribal economies in rural locations.

Challenges

Staffing, budget, and support. BIA Forestry must increase staffing. We have many vacant positions, especially at the GS-5/7/9 grade level. These positions are critical in accomplishing forestry field work.

Funding levels for BIA Forestry have seen increases in the past few years, but additional increases are needed. Our backlog of acre in need of silvicultural treatments is over 1 million acres, which would take over a decade of project accomplishments to realize significant reductions.

Division of Land, Titles, and Records (LTRO)



Landscape of the Badlands of South Dakota

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Policies and Handbooks

All policies and handbooks were completed in the first half of FY22. LTRO completed standard operating procedures (SOP) to coincide with the issuance of the LTRO Handbook.

Representation Tract Viewer

Working in collaboration with the Branch of Geospatial Services (BOGS), LTRO established a Representation Tract Viewer to allow BIA staff to search for and research tracts and associated data. This Tract Viewer is currently operational and being used nationwide. Our work now focuses on future development for easier reporting and ease of use

Fee to Trust

LTRO continues to review and record all Fee-to-Trust transactions which are a high priority for Tribes. Our office provides guidance and training outlining the LTRO Document Recording process.

Communication

Monthly LTRO Manager meetings address training, workloads, policies, challenges, questions from BIA and Tribally contracted LTROs.

National Training

Participated and presented on National Lockbox and TAAMS Title classes outlining the LTRO Document examination and recording process.

Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS)

Probate Module

Continued development and training for the new TAAMS Probate Module which has automated many processes in the probate distribution process.

Title Defect Correction Project

The Division of Land, Titles, and Records in collaboration with the Division of Real Estate Services has implemented this project to address active or unaddressed title defects which appear on title status reports. The LTROs reviewed the encumbrances to assure that no corrections have been submitted. After document review, the LTROs notified the home Agencies as to which documents require correction. This is an ongoing project for FY23.

Lockbox Phase 3

This is an on-going project which began on March 1, 2023, to address the outstanding checks and unallocated payment amounts found in TAAMS Lockbox. To date over 271 checks have been addressed totaling resulting in over \$2.555M for distribution to owners.

National Parcel Project On-Going

The National Parcel Project, which is creating mappable polygons from Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) records, is continuing with the Regional Cartographic Technicians in a few regions.

Challenges

Add positions and staff for DLTR to better serve Regions and Tribes.

Review Regional LTRO Organizational Charts to study workflow processing, reviewed personnel retention options regarding grades and positions, and further develop business rules and processes.

Support the ongoing creation of nationwide GIS dataset (Parcel Project) which represents all records currently housed in TAAMS. This will include the innovation, development, adaptation, and management of the dataset.

Division of Natural Resources (DNR)



Menominee recovery project for Lake sturgeon (endangered species) and lone buffalo

Mission

The DNR provided agency and tribal coordination, management, planning, oversight, and monitoring for the development and to protect:

- Trust natural resources
- Indian Treaty rights
- Fish and wildlife resource management development
- Environmental Quality considerations
- Federal regulatory direction
- Youth education and Climate Resilience

The Division provides funding support in the direction and guidance for all activities related to planning, management, conservation, development, and utilization of:

- Soil, Water, Farmland, Rangeland
- Fish and wildlife resources
- Endangered species, Invasive species, Noxious weeds
- Conservation law enforcement
- Youth, education within Natural Resources, Climate resilience
- Bison restoration
- Treaty resource protection and implementation

Mid-Year Accomplishments

The Division assists in Executive and Secretary order, and national agency policy development with Departmental, inter-agency, internal offices, and tribal partners in the arena of Indigenous Knowledge, Co-Stewardship, agency manual guidance, ecosystem restoration, and Land resilience.

DNR continues to facilitate OTS core priority to provide services to tribes, internal agency offices and agency partners in the management of Indian Trust Responsible natural resource assets through facilitation of best natural resource management practices.

DNR adheres to legacy and emerging distribution of fiscal assets to tribes and internal agency entities based on congressional, administrative, and tribal communicated priority needs within parameters of established processes such as narrative President Budget Requests and Tribal Budget Interior Council priorities and departmental strategies and initiatives.

Fish and wildlife tribal goals are set by the tribes year to year

Agriculture goals are basic management priorities set by each tribe's determination of priorities and adhere to regulatory allowances.

DNR navigates all leading prerogatives to advance tribal interest based on entitlements established to federal recognized individual or tribal entities.

Website Updates

Managed the web content manager to edit/upload content on our OTS webpage and to include updated contact information for Branch/Division Chiefs.

Rights Protection

Rights protection Implementation supported the implementation of Federal court orders that resulted from decisions in complex, off-reservation treaty rights litigation.

Budget

Oversight, review and finalized DNR Branch budgets (est. \$174 M) for Fish, Wildlife and Recreation (BFWR) and Agriculture Program. Fiscal assistance addresses and facilitates tribal priorities directly, fostering improvement at all agency levels to help tribes and agency offices incorporate best management scientific practice priorities consistent with regulation. Work plans tier from tribal priorities (TBIC or congressional omnibus language) facilitating tribal issues and venues such as electronic systems or sites framed by DNR services.

- Manage/support distribution of funds to regions and tribes for Agriculture and range invasive species plant projects and programs.
- Coordinate/distribute funds for Noxious Weed Projects
- Supports prevention, control, and eradication of invasive Noxious species on Indian reservations and Treaty-Ceded Territories.
- Funding instrumental in protecting valuable tribal grazing lands

Partnerships

Services, operations, and partnerships include 10 National Indian Organizations and 12 regional area Indian Organizations that cover, Fish and Wildlife, and Agriculture non-profit informational organizations

Division represents BIA on many DOI collaborative efforts, work groups, task force, relating to Indigenous Knowledge, Co-Stewardship, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Inflation Reduction Act, eco-system restoration, Federal Fisheries Agencies Summit, Noxious Weeds, Invasive Species, DOI Bison Management, Native Seed Revegetation, DOI Integrated Pest Management, and other Agriculture and Rangeland Issues.

Competitive Funding

Coordinated with BIA, regions in managing proposal based, and competitively ranked/funded programs (ESA, Invasive Species, Hatchery Maintenance, and Youth Initiative), Bison restoration projects, and with Alaska Region on the management and allocation of Alaska Subsistence special appropriation funding

Endangered Species (ES) Program, projects awarded from the FWR, Endangered Species program which is the primary program achieving Indian Affairs and tribal responsibilities associated with compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), P.L. 93-205, and the related protection and preservation of trust lands and resources.

Invasive Species Program reviewing projects that will be awarded funds under the Invasive Species Program which supports the prevention, control, and eradication of invasive species on Indian reservations and treaty-Ceded territories

Tribal Management Development Program

Guidance and implementation of Tribal Management Development Program (TMDP), where BFWR provides the core funding for several fish and wildlife management and economic development functions.

Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Program (CLEO)

Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Program (CLEO) supports the sound management of tribal trust resources and enforcement of tribal natural resource laws on trust lands

Government Performance and Results Act

Facilitating A-123 performance measures with Agriculture, AU ICR's annually and monitoring GPRA measures for annual reporting schedule.

Communication

DNR Continues to assist in communicating information from Central office to regional personnel and other BIA/Interior staff. Created records in agency Data Tracking System (DTS) and helped move correspondence forward.

DNR, tribes and other agencies are served a wide array of information covering resources and their management inherent to the 2 branches of DNR. The process of information sharing particular and available to DNR information platforms generate cooperative, co-management, partnership and collaboration for multiple tribes and associated agencies natural resource management.

DNR endeavors to rely on, and tier from, OTS program management office leadership guidance and align operations reflective with office direction consistent with administrative priority strategies, congressional direction, and agency services.

Policy

DNR is working with Indian Affairs, Office of Regulatory and Collaborative Action (RACA) to ensure current policy and memorandum facilitation of agriculture and Fish and Wildlife agency appraise procedural articulation of natural resource activities in operational guidance for field, regional and central activities.

Goals

Follow up on full fiscal distributions as consistent with purposes and criteria establishing project and program activity. Items of focus will be completed in conjunction with regional staff overseeing the 638 contracts and Annual funding agreements associated with line-item funds.

Continue to monitor all emerging agriculture, and fish & Wildlife international, national, regional, and local information that is of significance to the tribal natural resource trust interests.

Continue to respond with timely, correct informative accounts to data calls originating from Congress, all sectors internal and external within the administration, Tribes, public and judicial directive.

Enhance quality of life, to promote economic opportunity, and to carry out the responsibility to protect and improve the trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes, and Alaska Natives through delivery of quality services, maintaining government-to-government relationships within the spirit of Indian self-determination.

DNR, Branch of Agriculture and Range (AR)



Mid-Year Accomplishments

Distributed funds to regions and tribes for agriculture and range projects, and programs. This funding is instrumental in protecting valuable tribal grazing lands.

Direction and policy guidance provided for all activities related to the planning, management, conservation, development, and utilization of soil, water, farmland, rangeland, and Bison restoration.

BIA Collaboration

The Branch represented BIA on many DOI collaborative efforts, work groups, task forces, relating to Noxious Weeds, Invasive Species, DOI Bison Management, Native Seed Revegetation, DOI Integrated Pest Management, and other Agriculture and Rangeland issues.

Connected Regional Rangeland staff with professional organizations, and other sources of professional knowledge benefitting their job amidst the COVID 19 environment and workplace.

Native American Rangeland Advisory Committee

The branch participated in the Society for Range Management Annual Conference while supporting the Native American Rangeland Advisory Committee to continue providing its stakeholders with management approaches related to Indigenous Tribal Ecological Knowledge.

Updates to Agricultural Leasing Regulations, Part 162, Subpart B

The Branch of Agriculture and Range Development is currently in the process of updating Agriculture Leasing Regulations Part 162, Subpart B, while collaborating and coordinating within BIA Office of Trust Services. Grazing permit documents have been submitted to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval by the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action. The comment submission period has been completed and the forms are in the process of update.



Seminole Tribe of Florida Livestock Producers

Distribution of Hemp Rules

DNR Coordinated information distribution of [2018 Farm Bill](#) Hemp rules and regulation per Agriculture Marketing Service.

Bison Program

The Bison Program supports Tribes' Bison development and introduction efforts by supporting self-determination of Tribal management of Bison on Tribal Trust Lands. The Bison Program's scope of service encompasses cultural, historic, and educational uses of Bison, including religious, spiritual and subsistence uses.

As part of this effort, the Division of Natural Resources branches are tasked with expanding Bison technical assistance efforts for Bison to foster Tribes seeking to increase Bison and expand new herds for genetic diversity and to increase Indigenous healthy food initiative efforts.



Ft. Belknap Bison Paddock

New Bison Management Apprenticeship Program

DNR is working to stand up the Bison Management Apprenticeship Program to develop a pipeline of talent and build capacity within Tribal communities as the Tribes work to expand their bison herds and enter into co-stewardship agreements for bison management. The apprenticeship program will include opportunities for Tribal youth to work at Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service units. Program development will include Tribal engagement.

The Branch of Agriculture participated with Native Nation Buffalo Project Representatives, federal agency leaders, and government resource program managers on a Returning Buffalo with Native Nations Roundtable on Government Resources for Tribal Buffalo Restoration.

Invasive Noxious Weeds

Funded 134 projects for the prevention, control, and eradication of invasive noxious weed species on Indian Reservations and Treaty ceded territories in agriculture and rangeland settings. The program focused on damages caused to Tribal Trust Resources and left it to the discretion of landowners to manage whether species were invasive or represented an instance in which a native species is behaving as an invasive species due to altered environmental conditions.

Communication

The Branch continued to assist in communicating information from Central Office to regional personnel and other BIA/Interior staff. The branch distributed newsletters, notices of job opportunities, and other significant publications pertinent to Agriculture and Rangeland Management.

The branch continues to share and promote opportunities for Agriculture and Rangeland managers to participate in inter-agency workgroups and listen in on meetings.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Website Pages

BFWR created webpages supporting program delivery across Indian Country. BFWR webpages describe program function, application criteria and materials, examples of funded projects, and links to supporting organizations and sources of information.

Rights Protection Implementation (RPI)

RPI supports the implementation of Federal court orders that resulted from decisions in complex, off-reservation treaty rights litigation. Indian Affairs monitors and provides technical assistance annually for 49 rights protection contracts and compacts. This program ensures compliance by implementing effective tribal self-regulatory and co-management systems.

RPI funding is foundational in fulfilling court-upheld Treaty obligations. RPI funding maintains tribal resource management capacity by retaining key personnel, data systems, policies, and procedures for sound co-management in coordination with State and Federal resource management agencies.

Invasive Species Funding obtained through Infrastructure law

\$1.6M in additional invasive species funding to build tribal capacity to manage invasive species.



Invasive species pampas grass can outcompete native species for space, water, and soil nutrients

Tribal Management Development Program (TMDP)

TMDP provides the core funding for several fish and wildlife management and economic development functions. The program supports tribal self-determination by allowing tribes to plan and implement proper management of tribal fish and game programs on Indian reservations. Funds support the following entities:

- Twenty-four (24) tribes maintain key staff positions, data systems, equipment, conservation law enforcement and office space required to manage and protect valuable Trust resources on vast tribal acreages whose resources are entrusted to the Tribes through Treaties.
- Seven (7) Alaska subsistence management projects.
- Three (3) intertribal organizations/corporations (Lake Roosevelt, Upper Columbia United Tribes, Chugach) receive funding to work together on sound management of resources held in Trust for the benefit of multiple tribes.

Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT)

The UCUT represent nearly 20,000 enrolled tribal members and has management authority and responsibility over approximately 2 million acres of reservation land, 14 million acres of aboriginal territories, over 500 miles of navigable waterways, 40 interior lakes, and 30 dams and reservoirs.

The natural resources managed by the UCUT yields millions of dollars annually to the fishing, hunting, sustainable forestry, and recreation economies in North Idaho, Eastern Washington, and beyond.



Brown trout reared at the Lac du Flambeau hatchery

Circle of Flight Program

The Circle of Flight is a long-standing award-winning restoration program for Tribes in the Midwest Region that supports projects that restore wetlands, enhance waterfowl habitat, and manage wild rice on tribal lands and ceded territories. The program continues to leverage funding at a 3:1 ratio, providing tremendous benefit to Tribal entities eligible to participate in the Great Lakes program.

Management of Tribal Resources

The [Intertribal Bison Council](#) (IBC) and the [Native American Fish and Wildlife Society](#) provide a forum promoting cohesion, and sound management of important tribal resources, including bison. These organizations provide a unifying umbrella to promote collaboration and the use of best science/techniques in the management of tribal trust resources.

The Branch continues to participate in the DOI Bison Initiative to restore bison on federal lands. Including funding support for Yellowstone quarantined Bison at the Fort Peck Tribes Bison Quarantine Facility.

Special project funding allowed Rosebud Sioux Tribe to make great progress towards completion of their Wolokota Bison Restoration project, a top priority for the [DOI Bison Restoration Initiative](#).

Hatchery Construction Funding obtained through the Inflation Reduction Act

BFWR received \$10M in IRA funding to be used to help address bottlenecks that exist in existing hatcheries from lack of construction dollars.



Mescalero Apache Tribe fish hatchery raises trout

Wildlife & Parks Program (TPA)

This program supports the Wildlife and Parks program at the agency or tribal level. Funding is provided to tribes through a local priority setting process determined by the tribe and BIA to fund tribal activities in the areas of fisheries, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and public use management, conservation enforcement, and related fields. Activities conducted are determined by tribes, and cover a broad array of diverse fisheries, wildlife, conservation enforcement, public use, habitat management, and related programs.

DNR supported 78 Tribal priority projects funded through reimbursable agreements with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) to protect, restore, or enhance tribal wetlands and other habitats in the Great Lakes basin. These projects will protect an estimate 1,400 acres, control 860 acres of invasive species, and open 30 miles of aquatic connectivity. Additionally, 19 of the projects will specifically increase tribal capacity to ensure Tribes are active partners in Great Lakes discussions and planning efforts.

Fish, Wildlife and Parks Projects (Hatchery Operations & Maintenance)

Twenty-two (22) tribal hatcheries were funded under the DNR Hatchery Operations Program, providing base funding for the operation of tribal fish hatcheries in the Northwest and Midwest regions. This subset of tribal hatcheries is considered extremely important in the fulfillment of court-upheld, off-reservation treaty rights.

A total of 170 Projects were awarded under the DNR, FWR, Hatchery Maintenance Program, to 48 individual tribal hatcheries, which produced an estimated 454,830,007 fish and shellfish. Fish hatchery maintenance funding provides support to fish and shellfish producing Tribes in support of associated hatching, rearing, and stocking programs. Tribal hatcheries are often the only means of providing a valid treaty right to subsistence harvest.

On-reservation fish stocking programs (12) provide for subsistence important to the local tribal economies. Tribal fish stocking programs also provide important opportunities to steer youth towards activities promoting positive community values and careers in natural resources management.

One maintenance project allowed a tribal hatchery to meet new State water standards and prevent threat of closure.

BIA DNR staff attended an immersive, in-person Federal Fisheries Summit at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) earlier this year. The goal was to, “improve management and conservation of aquatic species and their habitats at the landscape scale through Federal agency coordination and collaboration.” BIA DNR staff interacted in large and small group discussions to try and help identify ways the BIA can facilitate better communications with other federal agencies. A main product of the event is a comprehensive list of Federal “fisheries” contacts, including BIA DNR staff.

Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Program (CLEO)

A total of 20 CLEO programs were funded, supporting the sound management of tribal trust resources and enforcement of tribal natural resource laws on trust lands.



Conservation Law Enforcement officer training provided by NAFWS

Tribal Youth Initiative

DNR FW&R Programs supported 50 Tribal Youth Initiative Projects that engaged youth in Natural Resource activities. Approximately 5,100+ Tribal youth will be reached in one form or another across all FW&R Programs this year.



California Condor, Endangered species

Endangered Species Program

A total of 55 projects were awarded from the FWR, Endangered Species program. This program achieves Indian Affairs and tribal responsibilities associated with compliance with the [Endangered Species Act \(ESA\)](#), P.L. 93-205, and the related protection and preservation of trust lands and resources.

Nine of these projects were critical to obtaining permits from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) allowing the harvest of timber and oil and gas resources on tribal lands.

One project was required to continue monitoring fish populations as stipulated in conditions placed upon ESA permits acquired from FWS or National Marine Fisheries Services.

Other projects seek to improve the status of species either listed by the Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) process or the equivalent process implemented by individual tribes. Tribally important species include California Condor, Buffalo, Gray Wolf, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, Black Footed Ferret, Chinook Salmon, and others.

Invasive Species Program

A total of 77 projects were awarded funds under the Invasive Species Program which supports the prevention, control, and eradication of invasive species on Indian reservations and treaty ceded territories.

This funding has been instrumental in protecting valuable tribal grazing lands from the impact of feral and invasive animals.

Three projects provide important protections against invasive mussels from reaching the Columbia River Basin, a key initiative of Department of Interior.



Removal of invasive species from lake

Challenges

Staffing

Complete recruitment of Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife, and Range positions to compliment DNR to better serve Regions and Tribes.

Networking

Network in-person and virtually with a wide array of Fish and Wildlife, and Agriculture industry agencies, tribes, and organizations to share Trust Natural Resource interests and access emerging information on the conservation, management, protection, preservation, expansion, and advancement of tribal trust assets.

Co-Stewardship and Indigenous Knowledge

Assist Interior, other departments, interagency, and internal offices in the Co-Stewardship and Indigenous Knowledge integration of Tribal Natural Resource, Tribal Eco-system resilience and restoration, best federal science practices throughout U.S. government offices.

Division of Probate Services (DPS)



Mid-Year Accomplishments

Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS)

TAAMS is the system of record for title and land resource management of Indian Trust and restricted land. The purpose of this system is to provide BIA and Tribal users access to trust asset data and trust asset management tools to create, modify, and maintain records relating to land ownership, contracts and leases, and beneficial owners.

System Updates and Testing

- Approved 16 change requests and submitted to the TAAMS contractor
- Coordinated testing and system changes that resulted in 6 released software updates to enhance TAAMS

Audits Completed

- TAAMS User Audit completed with no reconciling items
- Successfully completed the TAAMS High Value Asset (HVA) Security assessment. The HVA audit is designed for systems so critical to an organization that the loss or corruption of the information or loss of access to the system would have serious impact to the organization's ability to perform its mission or conduct business.

Collaboration with Federal Partners

- On-going collaboration with our DOI partners, Office of Natural Resources and Revenue (ONRR) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to streamline data sharing

Probate

High Impact Service Providers (HISP) Project

This [BIA HISP Probate Project](#) was newly designated in FY22 and in FY23 BIA met the requirement to submit an action plan addressing the following services:

- Accessing a Probate Order
- Receiving Trust Assets

As background, the President's Management Agenda (PMA) defines Government-wide management priorities for all Federal agencies to improve how Government operates and performs. The PMA identified BIA Probate as 1 of 35 of the nation's highest impact service providers (HISPs), due to the scale and impact of the public-facing services, to raise the standard of experience across government.

This subjected the BIA Probate program to [OMB Circular A-11 Section 280](#) activities including an annual enterprise-wide capacity assessment and action plan, focused on improvement efforts for designated services, customer feedback collections and public reporting.

New TAAMS Probate Module

- Completed two in person TAAMS probate Training sessions for new employees
- Completed additional requirements to enhance the module to further streamline the probate workflow

Projects Going Forward



Cloud computing free photo from Pixabay

Migrate TAAMS hosting from a dedicated facility to Cloud hosting environment.

- Implementation will Personal Identify Verification (PIV) cardholders to log onto TAAMS with as single sign-on
- Migration eliminates need for a dedicated Disaster recovery site
- Developing an external facing portal to integrate with TAAMS will allow non DOI users access to submit applications electronically and access information to complete their workflows

Opportunities

The probate program is taking advantage of being a HISP participant to bring awareness to the DOI probate program. The program is administered by OMB. This allows the program to communicate its needs for a successful probate program.

Challenges

Cloud Project Approval

The Cloud project has been ongoing for almost two years. The contract has been in legal review for at least 4 weeks. The DOI processes are holding up the project. To date, the Program is unable to obtain timeframes for an award date.

External Facing Portal

The External facing portal is challenging. The Office of Information Management Technology (OIMT) is responsible for aligning DOI, and Indian Affairs strategic plans and ensuring compliance with the [Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act](#) and must become familiar with [Login.gov](#). Obtaining direction for development of the one account and password for secure, private access to government agency systems and secure identity verification has been challenging.

Division of Program Management & Coordination (DPMC)



OTS Administrative Program Overview Training attendees in Lakewood, CO. Pictured Back Row (L to R): C. Wolf, A. Samoy-Morris, S. Haskie, A. Williams, E. Stegeman, S. Grywusiewicz, D. Begay, and P. Batliner. Front Row (L to R): J. Jones, C. Torres, O. Lucero-Nelson, E. Pierce, S. Smart, V. Garcia, J. Jeanne, A. Auld, W. Armijo, and A. Roubideaux

Services Provided

DPMC serves in a supporting role to Office of Trust Services (OTS) Programs and assist leadership in assuring the programs adhere to the regulatory requirements and stay audit-free. This Division provides centralized administrative programs and processes:

- Budget & Finance
- Acquisition, Fleet Management & Personal Property Inventories
- Human Resources & Workforce Planning
- Internal Policies & Procedures
- Performance Management Program & Internal Controls
- Communication Plans & Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- Storyboard Development
- Data Calls, Data Standardization & Integration, Records Management

A centralized administration helps with response time, creates efficient standardized processes and strategies. modernizes operations and improves data management.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Administrative Program Overview Training

DPMC had their first Administrative Program Overview workshop in Lakewood, CO, in conjunction with the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) Symposium for all OTS administrative staff. The purpose of the overview was to ensure all staff are well informed on the services provided (see list to the left). These additional topics were also covered:

- Purchase Requests, Property Management, Travel Requests, Charge Card Requirements
- Data Call Requirements
- Internal Control and Enterprise Risk Management Programs
- Office of Trust Services policies
- Department Tracking System (DTS) Process for electronic transmission of outgoing correspondence for signature
- Modernization Tools (e.g., Dashboards, Tableaus, SmartSheets, Esri Insights, Teams Channel, Power Apps, SharePoint, OneDrive, etc.),
- FBMS UAR Roles and Responsibilities
- Audio-Video Production Program

Data Integration and Story boarding program success

OTS is moving towards a visual way to showcase program performance using [Tableau software](#), a visual analytics platform making it easier to explore and manage data.

A One-Stop Management dashboard developed by the Office of the Chief Financial Officer was built into our Financial Business Management System (FBMS).

The OTS Tableau Finance displays a visual data screen showing a summary “To Do List” of pending financial actions, and a breakdown of Fiscal Year funds committed, obligated, and expended.

Tableau presents summary data in a visual format readily available for decision making. OTS uses include:

To Do Lists of Pending Actions

Purchase request status, undelivered orders, outstanding invoices, travel vouchers and pending acceptance of Property

Tracking Supplemental Funding

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
- Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA)
- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act
- American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)

Tool for Developing an Annual Spend Plan

- Spending summary
- Fund status summary
- Financial Assistance Purchase Requests (PRs)
- Budget forecast
- Payroll projection

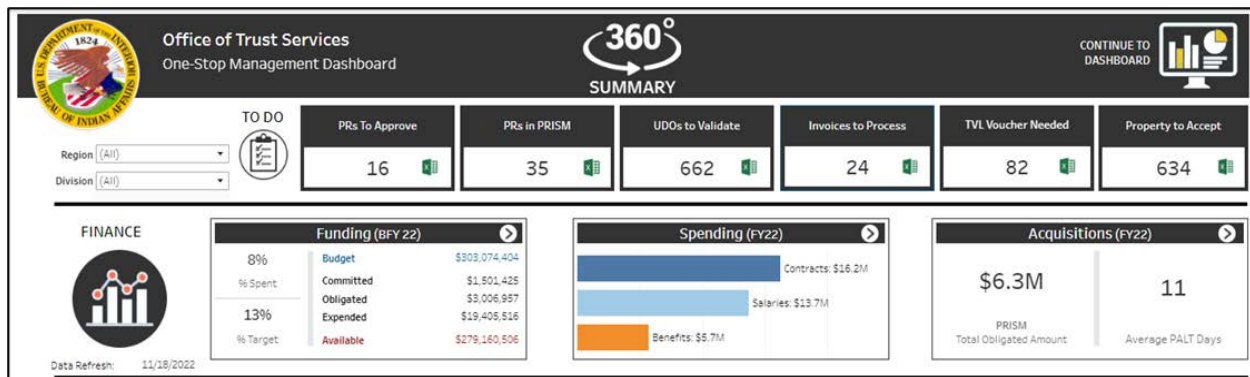


Enhancing Reporting through Development of Decision Support Tools

OTS will model the Division of Water and Power (DWP) Dashboard for data driven decision making, planning, and visual display of need.

The ArcGIS platform Dashboards will tell a visual story of annual services and when, where, and what funding is provided in Indian Country.

The Branch of Geospatial Services (BOGS) team developed OTS Dashboard on Supplemental Funding Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and an Interactive map of BIL projects for FY 2022.



Screenshot of Tableau Finance page

Internal Controls Updated

DPMC successfully updated the assessable units (AUs) for FY-2023 Internal Control Programs for the OTS programs. Six AUs eliminated and five new AUs created for new initiatives added to support the new DOI Strategic Plan.

Administrative Sharepoint Site

DPMC working on developing an Admin SharePoint site as a one-stop shop for OTS programs. The SharePoint will provide guidance, procedures, forms, and status on the various administrative activities.

- Appraisal Plans (EPAPs) with clear expectations, and
- to develop individual development plans (IDPs) to support any skill building needs for staff

Modernizing Systems – Paperless Records Management



The deadline for Federal agencies to manage all permanent records electronically is June 30, 2024

DPMC is collaborating with the DOI Records Office to transition to a comprehensive paperless records management process; to design and develop a process with automatic notifications to alert staff when records are eligible for transfer or disposed, search and retrieve capability, and actual transfer of records to American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) facility.

Phase 1: Feasibility Study

The initial phase includes DPMC and Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA) Records Information Management Specialist (RIMS) Team to complete a Bureau-wide records assessment and feasibility study. This includes:

- Identify records need
- Set up standard folders for current active records on SharePoint

Assist all programs prepare active and inactive records to be scanned/digitized and transferred to American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) facility

Phase 2: Initiate Digital Records Plan

The feasibility study will be shared with BTFA to develop a plan for phase two, which includes:

- Scanning/digitizing eligible records
- Transferring eligible inactive records to American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) facility
- Design and develop a comprehensive paperless records management system for Indian Affairs, and
- Provide training prior to implementation

Opportunities

- DPMC continues to collaborate with DRIS/Branch of Geospatial Services and OTS programs to determine best tools to use in our modernization efforts.
- DPMC has monthly scheduled Admin update calls with OTS Divisions to provide guidance and relevant updates. For example, the Indian Affairs Ethics team provided a brief virtual training to fulfill annual training requirements for Division leadership.

Best Practices

DPMC participating in the various calls and conferences provided by other DOI Bureau working groups to gain understanding of

- Environmental Justice initiatives, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding
- Sustainability Requirements
- Data and records management efforts

Challenges

Human Resources

DPMC continues to have challenges with human capital activities.

- Formalizing and finalizing the OTS organizational charts
- Updating outdated position descriptions
- Aligning the positions to the organization charts
- Having sufficient human capital support to provide services and guidance

Remote Workers



While remote workers often report a high degree of satisfaction and greater work-life flexibility with telecommuting, virtual work presents its own set of challenges

- Achieving work-life balance
- Communication challenges with staff to keep engaged in the various priorities and initiatives has an impact on performance
- Provide training opportunities for staff to learn about the remote work policy requirements and explore the best practices top organizations are using to keep remote employees happy, engaged, stress-free
- Implement new habits that produce more effective collaboration and communication within a virtual team

Division of Real Estate Services (DRES)



Mission

The mission of the Division of Real Estate Services is to protect and maintain the integrity of trust lands and resources by providing policy direction, technical assistance, training, and administrative review and monitoring of real property operations.

We work to benefit the natural resources of American Indian and Alaska Natives landowners and Tribes are protected, and help tribal communities reap the economic benefits from their land.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Mortgages

Senate Bill S70, Tribal Trust Land Homeownership Act of 2023

March 13, 2023, BIA responds to proposed bill to require the BIA to process and complete all mortgage packages associated with residential and business mortgages on Indian land by certain deadlines, Included information for the Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Technology

A new TAAMS Mortgage Module was approved. Mortgage Smartsheets created will enable teams to manage projects and automate processes.

Collaboration with Lenders

Developed a Lending Focus Group data call on Certified Title Status Reports (CTSRs)

Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) solicited comments proposed updates to 24 CFR 1005 Loan Guarantees for Indian Housing. In addition, BIA research is ongoing on foreclosures for their Office of Native American Program (ONAP).

Collaboration with Tribal lenders, traditional banks, and Tribally Designated Housing Entity (TDHE) Authorities, which are the organizations within the tribe, tribal housing authority with separate board of commissioners, or a nonprofit organization designed to receive HUD funds.



Home under construction on Suquamish Tribe reservation

Technical Assistance

On-going assistance to Regions and Agencies, HUD-ONAP and the Veterans Administration (VA) on mortgages.

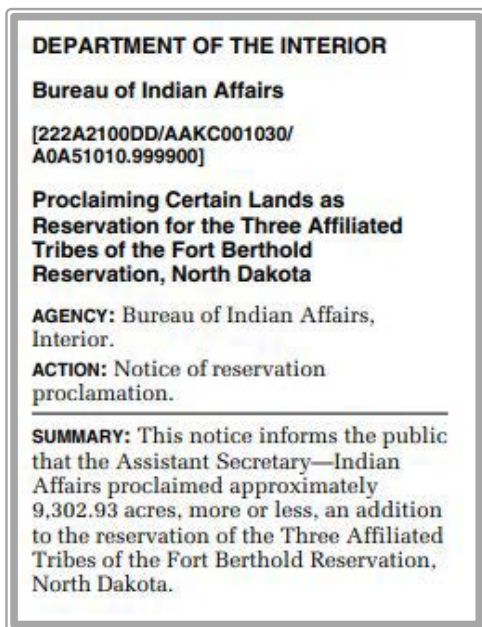
Proclamations

The Secretary of Interior is authorized by the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) to proclaim reservations under 25 U.S.C. 467.

Why would tribes want a Reservation Proclamation?

- To clarify jurisdictional boundaries
- To be eligible for some local, state, and federal grants, loans, programs, and other funding opportunities
- To facilitate negotiations of intergovernmental agreements with local governments
- Simplify legal analysis regarding land status
- Head off legal challenges to land status

In FY 2023, DRES received and is reviewing tribal proclamation requests for completeness in the Great Plains, Northwest, and Western Regions.



All approved Reservation Proclamations are published in the Federal Register

On and Off Reservation GSA Excess Real Property Transfers

Federally recognized Tribes can request General Services Administration ([GSA Real Property Transfers](#)) of undeveloped land, office buildings, warehouses, commercial and industrial facilities, military holding, single family residences.

DRES serves as a nationwide point of contact for the GSA utilization and disposal management process, administration, and direction of the excess real property available to tribes including. In FY2023, fifteen (15) GSA Notices of Availability (NOAs) were sent to the BIA Regions.

Internal Disposal Policy

DRES initiated internal disposal policy for staff on real property policies, regulations, and procedures approaches and to outline BIAs role to coordinate regulatory and statutory aspects of acquisitions and disposals of excess real property.

BIA Region and agencies field staff were engaged to reviewed current processes and determine the effectiveness of streamlining efforts. A contractor developed a Smartsheet dashboards for excess real property requests for on and off reservation available to tribes

Facilitate Tribal Transfer Requests

Serve point of contact (POC) for Central office in weekly meetings with other federal agencies on excess real property transfer requests from tribes.

Current excess land transfer case reviews are for Tribes in the Eastern and Midwest regions.

Reduced Barriers for Tribes

National Policy Memorandums (NPMs) developed for excess real property under the [Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act](#) (ISDEAA) 93-638 and [40 U.S.C. Section 523](#), Excess Real Property located on Indian Reservations authorities available to transfer real property to tribes

Acquisitions and Disposals of Excess Real Property Manual in draft process.

Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) drafted to redelegate the Central Office authority to approve BIA held real property located within the boundaries of Reservation to Regional Directors (RDs) for economic development and other projects.

Fee to Trust

Land Acquisitions, Fee-to-Trust and the Restoration of Tribal Homelands remains the highest priority within Indian Affairs by the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs (AS-IA). DRES coordinates with internal offices to prioritize and efficiently process fee-to-trust acquisitions:

- Director, BIA
- Deputy Director-Trust Services
- Deputy Director-Field Operations
- Regional Director
- DOI, Office of the Solicitor

Handbook Update

The Fee to Trust Handbook update will provide:

- Guidance for Legal description review requests
- Identify documents required for Title Opinion Reviews
- Identify process steps that can run concurrently

TAAMS to Accept Online FTT Applications

DRES working with contractors on updating the TAAMS system portal to streamline the FTT application process:

- Option for online FTT applications rather than the current mail in process.
- The immediate acknowledgement each online applications is a benefit
- The portal will allow applicants to track the status of an application (transparency)

Fee to Trust Meetings

DRES and the FTT Strike Team regional meetings virtually and presented on Realty processes and requirements of FTT and TAAMS.

The last regional FTT meeting is scheduled for April 18-20, 2023, with Southwest and Navajo Regions.

Tribal Consultation on Land Acquisition

The Strike Team is preparing a briefing and presentation to be used during the [Tribal Consultation on 25 CFR 151, Land Acquisition](#) scheduled for April 18 and 20, 2023 via Webex.

The land acquisition effort is intended to foster and restore lands to new and landless Tribes, at regional authority levels, for the development of conservation practices, law enforcement, applicable regulatory policies, and sustainable Tribal communities and economic development.

Performance Measures (GPRA)

The Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measure 2100 measures timeliness of issuing acknowledgments of Fee to Trust requests.

FTT Strike Team Re-Established

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA) re-established the FTT Strike Team (Strike Team) from FY2022 until full-time Central office positions are filled. The Strike Team responsibilities include:

- Assist Regions with case movement ensuring cases continue to be processed
- Update regulations and handbook to include pre-application procedures
- Updates to TAAMS Module
- Other FTT related projects

Updated Performance Objectives

The Team worked with the Office of Budget and Performance Management to update new FY 2023 standards, targets, risk management and performance objectives for the Indian Affairs Performance Management System (IA-PMS) to align with organizational strategic goals.

FTT Cases Accomplishments as of April 3, 2023

- Reviewed 36 cases
- 20 Notice of Decisions (NODs) assistance provided or drafted and all approved by Regional Directors
- 15 AOCs sent to regions accepted meaning the deeds were approved in TAAMS.
- Weekly monitoring of UFJ and High-profile cases progress.
- Weekly nationwide FTT Status Reports provided to DOI leadership, the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs and Regional Directors

FTT Overview Training

- All Tribal Leaders (Sept 2022)
- AK Providers Conference (Nov 2022)
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Turtle Mountain Band (Oct-Nov 2022)

FY 2023 Regulation, Policy, Handbook and Departmental Manual Updates

Title	Document Name	Status
25 CFR 151	Land Acquisition regulations	Tribal consultation on proposed updates complete. 81 written comments, transcript of verbal consultation comments pending issuance by contractor. Team will address all comments.
*NPM-TRUS-43	Modernize the land Description Process for Fee to Trust Acquisitions	Interim policy update to original April 26, 2022, memo is pending review and comment by BIA Field Offices. April 5, 2023, target date for implementation.
Handbook	Fee to Trust Handbook	This update will incorporate external FTT policies that have been issued since 2016 and streamline the FTT process. Adds guidance for legal description review requests. Identifies documents required for Title Opinion Reviews, process steps that can run concurrently, and timeframes for processing applications.
602 DM 2	Real Property for Pre-Acquisition Environmental Site Assessment	Draft proposed updates currently pending AS-IA review

* NOTE: NPM-TRUS-43 replaces the BLM Indian Land Surveyor's (BILS) Land Description Review (LDR) requirement from the FTT handbook with a Realty Land Description Review (RLDR) or a Land Description Examination & Validation (LDEV). Policy implements Realty staff Land Description Training requirements.

Geographic Information System (GIS) Strike Team

Regional Meetings

- Presentation for the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) on Land Description & Evaluation (LDEV) process and best practices.
- On-site technical assistance for BIA Pacific and Western Regions on Land Description Reviews to facilitate the processing of Fee to Trust transactions.

Collaboration with BLM Indian Lands Surveyor (BILS)

Team capturing is the BILS subject matter expertise critical for incorporating the data for Tribes in the Southwest and Navajo Regions into the BIA nationwide GIS.

Land Description & Evaluation (LDEV) Requests

LDEV Requests are land descriptions reviews for clarity, comprehensibility, and legibility. The description of acreage in related documents are examined and confirmed to accurately describe the subject property as it is written.

- The FTT GIS Strike team completed 32 LDEVs in the first half of FY2023
- Eight (8) LDEV applications are in the review process.

GIS Strike team plans to meet with Regional Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to ensure future LDEVs are completed using GIS best practices.

The Strike Team will also work alongside Regional Geospatial Coordinator (RGC) on current national mapping efforts and right of way data incorporation.

Rights-of-Way

Biden-Harris Permitting Action Plan for BIL Implementation

The [Biden-Harris Permitting Action Plan](#) issued in May 2022, outlines changes in the way Federal infrastructure projects are permitted. The Action Plan established a federal environmental review and permitting process for early cross agency coordination, reduce barriers and establish clear timeline goals.

DRES took the following implementation plan actions:

- Provided BIA Regions with written input and technical guidance on the legal complexities in a variety of broadband rights-of-way situations
- Prepared briefings for congressional testimony on realty transactions barriers for tribes utilizing Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funds
- Responded to data call for plans on how to use funding provided in FY 2023 for infrastructure projects and workforce development plans

FY2023 Program Reviews

Completed ROW transaction program reviews at both the Fort Belknap and Fort Berthold Agencies.

Leasing

Actively participating in revising the Agricultural lease regulations in 25 CFR 162.

Surface Lease User Group worked on updating the Residential lease handbook.

Broadband

Streamlining Rights-of-Way Policy Update

DRES has drafted an update to NPM-TRUS-44, Streamlining the Rights-of-Way (ROW) and Business Lease Application Process for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Telecommunication, and Renewable Energy Projects. The updated NPM will be implemented before the current NPM expires on April 15, 2023.



Installation of 2.5 GHz radio frequency band tower to provide broadband services on the Flathead Reservation

Collaboration

DRES set land use designations for broadband rights-of-way and related projects in collaboration with these regularly scheduled working groups:

- [NTIA, American Broadband Initiative](#) (ABI) Federal Interagency Work on Streamlining Federal Permitting (bi-weekly)
- DOI Broadband and Infrastructure (bi-weekly)
- [CALTRANS Middle Mile Broadband](#) initiative broadband project (weekly)
- NTIA, [Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program](#) (TBCP) meetings
- BIA Regions Data Call, "Pending broadband ROW applications and related projects"

Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41)

BIA and NTIA entered an MOU on the environmental reviews for broadband funded projects to use Title 41, Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST-41) with the Steering Permitting Council to streamline the ROWs for broadband projects.

Cadastral Services

Facilitating creation of Smart Sheets intake form and system for tracking requests as well as pending legislation for land transfers. Eventually, converted data from former cadastral tracking will be verified.

Ensured approval of yearly Reimbursable Services Agreement with BLM for appropriated budget amounts. Ensured \$591,000.00 is available for Cadastral Program.

Providing technical assistance on Shoshone Bannock boundary issue impacting approximately 1.2 million acres of tribal lands.

BIA Lockbox Distributes \$3.9M

DRES worked with BIA Regions nationwide to get 418 checks completed with an unallocated balance paid out of \$3,965,730.56. The amount in the unallocated balances column of the table below track progress made in check matching and disbursements in 2023.

Lockbox Status as of	Checks	Unallocated Balance
4/3/2023	210	\$698,946
3/1/2023	628	\$4,665,577

HEARTH Act

Each week a HEARTH Act report is prepared, analyzed, and distributed to Senior levels on the ongoing status of each leasing regulations received by DRES. In the first half of 2023 DOI approved six (6) HEARTH Acts

November 2022

- Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of Michigan - Business leasing
- Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma - Ag/Bus/Res/WSR/WEEL leasing

December 2022

- Miccosukee Tribe of Indians - Ag/Bus/WSR/WEEL leasing

February 2023

- Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria - Ag/Bus/Res/WSR/WEEL leasing

March 2023

- Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians - Ag/Bus/Res/WSR/WEEL leasing
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe - Ag/Bus/Res/WSR/WEEL leasing

From October 2022 thru March 2023, Central Office DRES received 3 leasing regulations for review and approval.

General Accounting Office (GAO) Responses

DRES provided responses to interviews for GAO 105875, Real Estate Services to Tribes

DRES provided responses to interviews for GAO 106542, Navajo Land leases

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) A-123 Circular Self-Assessments

In compliance with OMB circular A-123, Management Responsibility for Internal Controls, DRES reviews and documents internal controls and key processes, evaluating programs to ensure realty field offices are meeting their intended goals. DRES has ten (10) Accessible Units:

- Real Estate Mortgages
- Leasehold Mortgages
- Agricultural Leasing, 25 CFR 162
- Leases and Permits, 25 CFR 162, Subpart C, D and E (Residential, Business, Wind Solar Resource, and Wind Energy Leases)
- Rights-of-Way, 25 CFR 169
- Fee to Trust Acquisitions, 25 CFR 151
- Trust to Trust, Trust to Fee Acquisitions, 25 CFR 152
- Solid Minerals Leasing 25 CFR 211, 212, & 216
- Leasing of Tribal/Allotted Lands for Mineral Development. 25 CFR 211 and 216

Completed IA Integrated Risk Registers for all components identified on the inventory. Completed Risk Assessment questionnaire for combined A & D component, new component in FY2023. Completed Control Matrices for all components identified for review in FY2023. Prepared program review and quality review check models for OMB A-123 Circular Reviews for FY2023.

Program Reviews

- Fort Belknap Program Review, October 24-28, 2023
- Fort Berthold Program Review, November 14-18, 2023

Technical Assistance and Guidance

DRES drafted NPM for Administrative Fee's and provided technical assistance to Rocky Mountain Agency regarding its use.



Trainings and Webinars

TAAMS Training

DRES staff participated in TAAMS CGI WebEx training classes as subject matter experts:

- Fee to Trust (FTT)
- Acquisition & Disposal (A&D)
- Rights of Way (ROW)
- Realty Proposal
- Business Leasing
- Lockbox

HEARTH Act Training

DRES staff conducted four (4) Realty WebEx training classes for tribes, third parties, and BIA staff on the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act on the following dates:

- October 27, 2022
- November 9, 2022
- January 27, 2023
- February 22, 2023

Lockbox Training

DRES staff conducted two (2) Lockbox training classes for BIA Regional and Agency staff.

- January 31, 2023
- February 1, 2023

Projects Going Forward

DRES has been involved with several collaborative efforts along with other federal agencies on new initiatives and discussions:

- Broadband Permitting Collaboration Discussions
- Streamlining Federal Processes
- Cadastral Surveys
- Audio/Visual Production
- Smart Sheets

HEARTH Act Application Tracking System (HAATS) on-line application tool for submission and tracking of Tribal HEARTH Act Regulations.

Excess Real Property Transfers tracking of Notice of Availability (NOA)

DRES hired a Program Analyst dedicated to cover the Fee to Trust strike team.

Opportunities

Increase collaboration and project tracking for broadband projects.

Workforce planning tool will assist leadership in identifying gaps and future staffing needs.

Best Practices

DRES is a remote team that communicates the beginning of each workday on priorities and tasks and concludes the workday reporting out its activities

Challenges

DRES experienced the retirement of its Division Chief and the transfer of a key Realty Specialist. Both positions will be advertised.

Division of Resource Integration & Services (DRIS)



Mission

The mission of the Division of Resources Integration is to facilitate the modernization of data resource communications and interface, promote collaboration amongst programs and improve workflows. The Division oversees three branches:

Branch of Geospatial Support oversees AWS Enterprise Platform, ESRI software administration and training and the GIS helpdesk support

Branch of Resource Services coordinates and manages OTS data for reporting and System Helpdesk services.

Branch of GeoData Examination and Validation provides the data/mapping digitization of Fee to Trust, Rights of Way and Parcelization for nationwide geospatial dataset into the AWS enterprise.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Pilot of the Trust Representative Tract Viewer

This Webapp Pilot was deployed across the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Regions BIA and Bureau of Trust Fund Administration (BTFA) employees. Employees can review and provide comments on the work product prior to the official release for Tribes and Federal agencies.

Migration to new GeoPlatform Portal

DRIS migrated from a Prim Portal to the Amazon Web Services (AWS) GeoPlatform Enterprise portal. The new portal allows non-Personal Identity Verification (PIV) cardholder access to Tract Viewer WebMap and additional Trust Web maps and data.

The GeoPlatform business model emphasizes a partner network of providers, including Federal agencies, State, local, regional, and tribal governments; Non-profit organizations; Academic institutions; Industry and the Public.

Partners provide geospatial assets including data, services, applications, and infrastructure to the GeoPlatform. In return, partners receive hosting capacity, technical support, and exposure of services to the broader community.

Smartsheets Software Acquired

Smartsheets will be deployed to support project tracking

- HEARTH Act Application Tracking Solution (HAATS)
- Mortgage Tracker
- Cadastral Survey Contracts
- OTS Fire Human Resources applications
- GIS helpdesk
- Fee to Trust Land Description Evaluation and Validation (LDEV) applications
- Replaces the TAPS Legacy project tracking system

DRIS, Branch of Geodata Evaluation and Validation (GEV)

Strategic Plan

The Branch of Geodata Examination and Validation developed a strategic plan outlining mission, goals, strategy, and a road map to:

- Facilitate the modernization of data resource communication and interface
- Prompt collaboration amongst programs
- Improve workflows throughout Indian Country in support of the BIA mission and objectives
- Support the sharing of geospatial information and data resources among offices, programs, field offices and Tribes
- Promote informed decision making. A Strategic plan has been developed outlining mission, goals, strategy, and road map.

Branch of Geodata Examination and Validation has three main Project Areas:

- Fee to Trust Strike Team
- Parcel Team
- Rights of Way Team

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Fee To Trust GIS Strike Team

Meetings to Share Information

A presentation on the Land Description and Evaluation (LDEV) process and best practices was made to the [Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians](#) (ATNI)

The FTT GIS Strike Team participated in two regional meetings on FTT with the BIA Pacific and Western region.

The team attended the [National Tribal Land Associations](#) annual conference for Tribal land staff to meet Tribal staff, build relationships and answer any questions they had about the new FTT process as it relates to the LDEV.

Legal Description Evaluation and Validation (LDEV) Requests

FTT GIS Strike team has completed 32 LDEVs in the last 6 months and currently have 5 pending LDEV applications.

Opportunities

- Meet with Regional staff regularly on LDEV submissions and best practices.
- Shadow train team members on leadership, presentation skills, and meeting facilitation.
- ESRI Parcel Fabric training.
- Utilize DRIS Regional Visits to check in with realty staff on FTT.

Best Practices

Continue to prioritize LDEV applications as well as follow standard operating procedures.

Keep an open line of communication with regional staff.

Challenges

Having to pull staff from other teams to fulfill an influx of LDEV applications.

Mid-Year Accomplishments



Sample Parcel Map

Parcel Team

Mapping Indian Tracts

The Parcel team is in collaboration with DRIS, Branch of Geospatial Support (BOGS) and Land Title and Records Office (LTRO) map Indian Tracts and accompanying parcels to support the [Geospatial Data Act of 2018](#).

The team creates/gathers TAAMS tabular data into a GIS as the base layer of data for multiple BIA GIS systems. This collaborative effort continues with the update of geodatabases and mapping of Indian Tract/Parcels. This effort is patterned after similar work already completed for DOI's Indian Buy Back Project.

Completed parcel mapping for Land Area Code (LAC) 990 Chugach Alaska parcel and it is in the repository.

New GIS Data Request Form

GIS Data Request form went live February 2023. Three (3) parcel data requests were met within 3 days of receipt.

Network Speed Issues

The BOGS Development Team is working to alleviate network speed issues and re-platforming (AWS) repository data caches.

Developed Non-Parcel Tracts Course

The Team developed Specialized Polygon Feature Training to accommodate Lot Block and Subdivision (LBS) survey and TAAMS data type. The new class is required for LBS data from Eastern and AK regions. It will also be used for Townsites found in all other regions.

On-Going Land Mapping

- Resolving TAAMS records identified with Cannot Map status within 30 Land Area Codes (LACs)
- Alaska Region LACs. Alaska Native lands require a specialized process to convert TAAMS output data into a standardized LAC schema, while accommodating unique source data formatting developed to accommodate unique source data formatting.
- Special data set development for Annette Island Metlakatla (LAC 99J)
- Fort Belknap (LAC 204) dataset repair for the Hayes Townsite
- Match E Be Nash She Wish (LAC 484) mapping
- Uintah & Ouray Tribe (U&O) litigation requires GIS work on Split Estate identification and mapping and U&O portal map development
- Work with ESRI to develop parcel fabric methodologies by sharing existing data sets
- Initial mapping (areas previously unmapped) for the Eastern Region

- Mapping for Magdalena School
- Mapping for Pokogon Band Potawatomi of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan
- Tony Creek, GA trust land data search
- Developing parcelization process diagrams for Census meetings
- Special TAAMS query requests to identify mineral acreage

Projects Going Forward

- Land Area Code (LAC) 984 Aleut and remainder of the LACs within Alaska
- New GIS Data Requests submitted
- Map locations of American Indian Boarding Schools

Opportunities

- Working with Regional staff to complete LAC area
- Receive various project requests.
- Having Parcels mapped for each LAC
- Able to provide Tribes and Agencies with knowledge to assist in making decisions
- Rights of Way Team

Best Practices

- Completing one LAC at a time
- Prioritizing projects as they are being requested based on urgency
- Getting the correct data to the agencies that needs it for decision making

Challenges

- Short staffed and having the team to complete and maintaining parcel data.

Mid-Year Accomplishments



Diagram of a right of way

Rights of Way Team

Services provided

The Rights of Way Team (ROW) provides a visual location of right of way contracts within TAAMS, an inventory the types of right of ways across trust lands. Identifies active, expired, and cancelled contracts within TAAMS. Enables a visual assist in decision making for trust lands.

Completed

Colville LAC 101 February 2023 (7-month project) 863 contracts able to map 835 of those contracts. Completed a Dashboard to display the ROWs.

Laguna Land Transfer - Request to map tracts as well as any surface contracts connected to the land. Completed within 1 day of receiving request.

Project Request

To date - Received 1 request out of 40 for to map a ROW from the NW Region to correct title defects on March 20, 2023.

Projects Going Forward

- Coeur D'Alene LAC 181 is the next LAC I will be working on. 1004 ROW contracts.
- Complete LACs within the NW Region and then move on to the next Region

- Work on parcel fabric for Colville and continuous updates. Checking for updated ROW contracts (Pending contracts that were approved and approved contracts that will expire.)

Opportunities

- Training - Leadership Training and Esri
- Able to work with other GDEV teams - FTT GIS Strike Team and Parcel Team
- Receive various project requests.
- Working with regional staff to complete mapping rights of way contracts
- Able to provide Tribes and Agencies with knowledge to assist in making decisions.

Best Practices

Prioritizing projects as they are being requested based on urgency.

Getting the correct data to the agencies that need it.

Challenges

Having the time to complete Right of Way mapping. Short Staffed.

During the past 6 months, BOGS worked with Esri and DOI to add 5,992 creator licenses. This greatly empowers tribes because it gives BIA the ability to add many more ESRI licenses for tribes. This potentially allows over 5,000 tribal employees access to GIS and to use the technology in ways that can significantly benefit the tribes.

DRIS, Branch of Geospatial Support (BOGS)

Data Dashboards under Construction

BOGS is developing OTS data reporting dashboards with customizable content to allow easy monitoring of funding and visually show managers the status of high priority projects. Access to visual data and reports is expected to increase awareness of how much funding is going to projects that directly benefit tribes. Data mapping for each division is in process and started with BOGS.

A dashboard will provide quick access to FTT weekly status reports as requested by the Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs. BOGS is expanding its dashboard team and developing templates to bring BIA the benefits of GIS for decision-making.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Application

BOGS is creating an Electric Vehicle Charging Station mapping application showing potential sites for EV charging stations in Indian Country.

Collaboration

Over the last 6 months, BOGS has worked to establish/build relationships with other federal agencies.

Quarterly Meetings

Organized small quarterly meetings with the BLM Indian Land Surveyors (BILS) and the RGCs to promote interaction and positive working relationships

Meetings with Federal Partners

BOGS met with US Geological Survey (USGS) and [Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment](#) (SHIRA) Project team to demo tools for RGCs, and possibly bring these free tools to tribes.

BOGS, tribal boundary working group and [Census](#) connected on shared issues and inform the rest of federal agencies about updates to BIA datasets such as the LAR.

Met with [NOAA Fisheries](#) and RGC's to discuss some of the issues facing coastal tribes.

The Tribal Boundary Working Group (TBWG) helps develop accountability with the tribes. BOGS briefed TBWG about plans for the Land Area Representation (LAR) dataset in January 2022, to obtain tribal feedback for the LAR and on the working group in general.

Tribal Consultation Planning

BOGS is developing a plan for consultation on the LAR which would allow tribes to have much more involvement and feedback on products BOGS produces.

Uintah & Ouray Litigation Mapping Project

BOGS is managing the Uintah & Ouray (U&O) litigation mapping project. This has been a longstanding six (6) year project of collaboration with the Solicitor to identify and add patents effecting the litigation to the current map. The Branch published an interactive map called the *Restored Reserved Mineral Patents application* which integrates previous mapped information plus the newly discovered patents. This will result in a map that will significantly benefit the tribe and solicitors.

Migration to Amazon Web Services (AWS)

BOGS began planning for a contract negotiation to migrate to the Amazon Web Services (an on-demand cloud computing platform and web services) almost two years ago. This transition is moving forward and will be key to BIA's GIS program and development going forward. (April 2022 – Began initial migration, June 2022 – Move users over to AWS, August 2022 – propose full production in BOGS).

Creation of Region AWS Hubs

BOGS started creating AWS hubs for each region and turning control over to each Regional Geospatial Coordinator (RGC). RGCs customize their page, build GIS within their region, and interact with users/tribes. This has a positive impact on GIS within the BIA and has potential to allow interaction with tribes for consultation purposes in the future. BOGs will be the first branch to move to AWS and will set the stage for other divisions in the future.

Challenges, Opportunities and Best Practices

System Center Configuration Manager (SCCM)

The BOGS branch chief and Help Desk worked with IT to initiate automated software updates for the Regions using SCCM. This improves the customer experience centralizes requests for GIS software updates, such as Arc Pro. SCCM moves updates to the background so each user will no longer have to submit update requests through configuration management for action. Automating this process saves times for RGCs and the BOGS helpdesk staff while providing software users a much better experience and receipt of direct updates.

Growth in Training Program

BOGS increased training available to BIA GIS users, tribes, and regional staff to 36 courses, up from 24 in FY 2021. Courses allow users to enhance their GIS skills, learn mapping, and create products to benefit tribal communities. BOGS is planning to increase this training program even more in the future.

Outdated Help Desk System

The current helpdesk system is outdated. Over the last few months, BOGS worked with stakeholders and BIA Security to gather requirements and evaluate available software with these requirements.

Helpdesk Quality Assurance Project

The BOGS helpdesk staff focused on reconciliation of records over the last few months. Many records needed to be updated, and data in the system verified with the RGCs. The database is now up to date.

Mapping Services

BOGS created a standardized process for printing large maps for leadership. Creating templates increases efficiency and consistency across the BIA for GIS maps and allows for a quick turnaround on requests.

Standard Operation Procedure (SOP)

BOGS is working on creating a master SOP for all processes across the Branch. Each staff member will be provided access to reference documents on how all processes are done. This tool contributes to continuity of operations for the long term and reduces risk in the event of staff turnover. The SOP may also be used as a training tool as the branch grows.

Land Area Representation (LAR)

The LAR dataset is the BIA's official geospatial representation of American Indian Land areas.

BOGS is in the process of reworking and modernizing the LAR. This will involve integrating the LAR into Amazon Web Services (AWS) and allowing users to interact with the dataset and propose changes through AWS. This ability could possibly allow tribes to propose changes this way.

BOGS has had a working group meeting on this process for months and is now starting to work with the regions on the actual process. The first region that BOGS has begun working with is the Midwest region. When complete, it will completely change the BIA GIS dataset available to the public, other federal agencies, and most importantly tribes.

Division of Trust Land Consolidation (DTLC)



Caldera Valley

Land Buy-Back Acquisition Center / Division of Trust Land Consolidation

In the first half of Fiscal Year 2023, the Land Buy-Back Acquisition Center completed its work under the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Buy-Back Program) and initiated its operations as the Division of Trust Land Consolidation.

The Buy-Back Program ended in November 2022 under the terms of the Cobell Settlement. In the initial months of Fiscal Year 2023, the Acquisition Center carried out land acquisition efforts at the Buy-Back Program's final 4 locations: Crow Creek, Pine Ridge, Fort Belknap, and Umatilla.

Accomplishments at these locations include:

- 255 sales processed
- 928 fractional interests acquired
- 7,554 equivalent acres consolidated under Tribal ownership

Throughout the 10-year life of the Buy-Back Program, the Acquisition Center processed a total of 123,173 sales, acquiring over 1 million fractional interests in nearly 52,000 tracts of land at 53 locations throughout Indian Country. Approximately 3 million equivalent acres were restored to Tribal ownership, with Tribes gaining majority ownership in more than 20,000 tracts.

ACQUISITION CENTER ACCOMPLISHMENTS throughout the 10-Year Life of the Buy- Back Program

Tribes gained a majority ownership in more than 20,000 of the 52,000 tracts of land purchased



53 Locations throughout Indian Country



More than 1 million Fractional Interests Consolidated



123,173 Sales



3 million Acres Restored to Tribal Ownership

While Indian land fractionation was reduced substantially through the Buy-Back Program, resources made available through the Cobell Settlement were not sufficient to purchase all fractional interests. At the end of the Program, more than 100,000 fractionated tracts of trust or restricted Indian land remained across Indian Country. These tracts currently contain approximately 2.4 million fractional interests and comprise the equivalent of over 5.6 million acres.

FY 2022 and FY2023 Appropriations

In recognition of the benefits to be gained by sustained efforts to reduce fractionation, Congress provided authorization and an initial appropriation of \$7 million in Fiscal Year 2022 for the BIA to continue land consolidation efforts beyond the Buy-Back Program. An additional \$8 million was provided in Fiscal Year 2023.

Division of Trust Land Consolidation

Having completed its responsibilities under the Buy-Back Program, the Acquisition Center was redesignated the Division of Trust Land Consolidation, and the Division has now assumed the lead for the Interior Department's fractional interest acquisition program.

Best Practices

The Division adheres to best practices from the Buy-Back Program, including:

- Streamlined, standardized, and automated process and procedures for acquiring fractional land interests, specifically designed to minimize associated administrative costs
- Efficient and cost-effective appraisal methods for obtaining timely fair market values on large numbers of properties, and
- Close coordination and collaboration with participating Tribes

FY2023 Pilot at Fort Belknap and Pine Ridge

In its first four months of operation in FY 2023, the Division carried out land acquisition efforts at 2 pilot locations (Fort Belknap and Pine Ridge) for which appraisals were currently available. Accomplishments to date at these initial locations include:

- 219 purchase offers extended
- 124 fractional interests acquired
- 3,367 equivalent acres consolidated under Tribal ownership

The Division will continue land consolidation efforts on a nationwide basis by purchasing additional fractional land interests from willing sellers at fair market value, thereby increasing the amount of Tribal trust land for conservation, stewardship, economic development, or other uses deemed beneficial by Tribes. At least 2 additional locations are scheduled for implementation in Fiscal Year 2023.

Continued efforts will further enhance the ability of Tribes to address the climate crisis while supporting environmental justice principles and Tribal sovereignty and self-determination, in support of Administration priorities and initiatives in Indian Country. Continued efforts will also further reduce Federal government cost associated with managing fractional land interests.

Challenges

FY 2023 challenges include filling critical positions which are key to successfully accomplishing the Division's mission and obtaining appraisals for cost-effective acquisitions at future locations.

Division of Water and Power (DWP)



Yakima Reservation Irrigation District

Mission

The mission of the Division of Water and Power (DWP) is to promote self-determination, economic opportunities, and public safety through the sound management of irrigation, dam and power facilities owned by Bureau of Indian Affairs. DWP's mission also includes the protection of Indian water rights, water development projects, litigation support and attorney's fees as well as the Bureau's responsibilities under the Federal Power Act in relicensing hydropower projects that affect Indian trust resources.

DWP supports Tribal governments and BIA Regional Offices through three branches:

Branch of Irrigation and Power

Through the Branch of Irrigation and Power, DWP provides policy, advisory, oversight, and technical assistance to DWP power projects and authorized irrigation projects. DWP also distributes appropriated program funds and provides customer billing and collection for BIA-owned irrigation projects.

Branch of Safety of Dams

The Branch of Safety of Dams carries out dam safety activities, which include risk management, emergency management, inspections and evaluations, maintenance and repairs, and dam security, for dams under the BIA's administration to minimize risk of dam failure and to allow continued access to the beneficial uses these dams provide with available funding.



Coolidge Dam

Branch of Water Resources

The Branch of Water Resources serves as the DWP Division Chief's liaison to BIA Regional Offices, local BIA agencies, and Tribal governments on issues involving water rights and negotiations, pre-development and water management, attorney fees, litigation support and water program evaluation.



Two Medicine River on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation

DWP, Branch of Irrigation and Power (BIP)

The Branch of Irrigation and Power (BIP) is currently responsible for 102 ongoing and planned construction irrigation rehabilitation and modernization projects across 17 Indian Irrigation Projects.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

In fiscal year 2023 the BIP Branch funded 27 design and construction projects through Appropriations, Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law totaling \$35.3 million. Some example projects are listed in tables below.



Long crested weir under construction at Uintah Indian Irrigation Project (UT)

Fiscal Year 2023 Design and Construction Projects

Navajo Region

Project	State	Project Description
Navajo Indian Irrigation Project	NM	Block 9 improvements & design

Northwest Region

Project	State	Project Description
Wapato Irrigation Project	WA	Wapato Main Diversion Rehabilitation and Modernization (R&M), Drop 1 Screening System and Pump Rehabilitation
Flathead Indian Irrigation Project	MT	Tabor Canal Diversion Dam Repair
Fort Hall Indian Irrigation Project	ID	Bannock Pump Station Rehabilitation
Mission Valley Power	MT	Kerr Substation Upgrades

Rocky Mountain Region

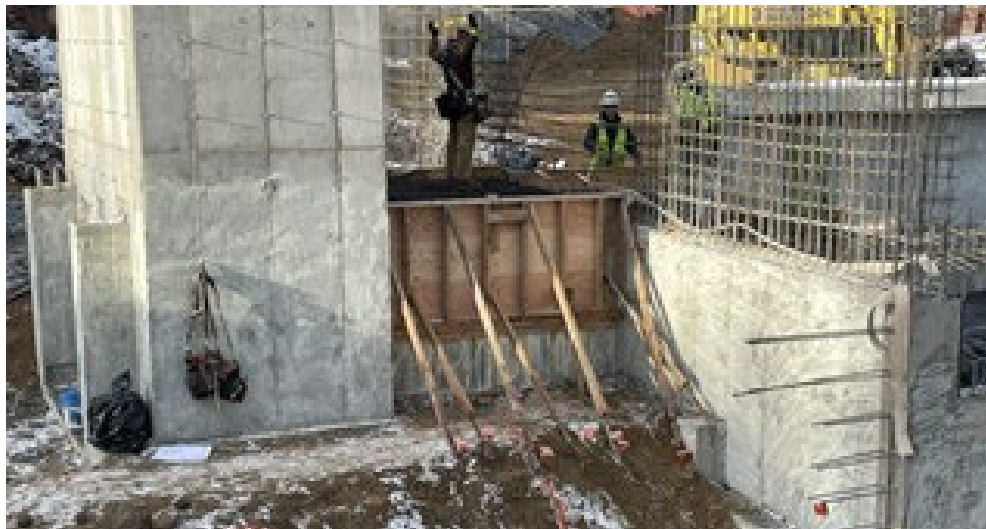
Project	State	Project Description
Blackfeet Indian Irrigation Project	MT	Birch Creek Canal R&M
Crow Indian Irrigation Project	MT	Soap Creek Unit Canal Headgate Design
Fort Belknap Indian Irrigation Project	MT	Milk River Main Diversion R&M
Fort Peck Indian Irrigation Project	MT	Wiota and Frazer Pumping Stations Rehabilitation
Wind River Indian Irrigation Project	WY	Replacement of chute and five drop structures on Lateral 37C
Wind River Indian Irrigation Project	WY	Replacement of chute and five drop structures on Lateral 37C

Southwest Region

Project	State	Project Description
Pine River Indian Irrigation Project	CO	Repair Dr Morrison Canal Over Ignacio Creek

Western Region

Project	State	Project Description
Colorado River Agency – Electrical Services	AZ	Headgate Rock Dam Power Plant – Unit 1 Overhaul
Duck Valley Indian Irrigation Project	NV	Heavy Equipment Purchase
Pyramid Lake Indian Irrigation Project	NV	Heavy Equipment Purchase
San Carlos Irrigation Project – Power Division	AZ	Casa Grande Distribution Substation Rehabilitation
Uintah Indian Irrigation Project	UT	Lower Bench Canal R&M
Walker River Indian Irrigation Project	NV	Canal 1 R&M



Jocko K Diversion construction progress in FY 2023 at the Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (MT)

Projects Going Forward

Going forward, over the next five years, BIP is planning on funding over \$150 million for irrigation and power utility design and construction projects.

The high-profile projects currently being considered for FY 2024 funding include but are not limited to those identified in the table on the next page.



Mission Valley Power, Kerr Substation

FY 2024 Proposed Design and Construction Projects

Project	State	Project Description
Mission Valley Power	MT	Finley Point Substation – 69 kV Conversion
Fort Hall Indian Irrigation Project	ID	Bannock Pump Station Rehabilitation
Fort Hall Indian Irrigation Project	ID	Reservation Canal Headworks Rehabilitation
Wapato Irrigation Project	WA	Drop 1 Screening System and Pump Rehab
Wapato Irrigation Project	WA	SCADA Telemetry Measurement Sites
Wapato Irrigation Project	WA	Wapato Diversion Dam R&M
Fort Belknap Irrigation Project	MT	Milk River Diversion Rehabilitation and Modernization
Colorado River Agency – Electrical Services	AZ	Headgate Rock Dam Power Plant – Unit 2 Overhaul
San Carlos Irrigation Project – Power Division	AZ	Feldman Distribution Substation Upgrades

Irrigation Operations and Maintenance Funding

A FY 2023 budget increase in the Irrigation Operations and Maintenance funding account provides additional funding to support replacement of the National Irrigation Information Management System (NIIMS), BIA’s irrigation billing, collection, and rate setting software. The budget increase will also support increasing Irrigation Operations and Maintenance (O&M) payments on behalf of Tribes.

Decision Support Tool

Division of Water and Power’s Decision Support Tool now incorporates the Branch of Irrigation and Powers “5-year plan” and the ability to see previous/future funding for all projects from the initial design through to completed construction phases.

Work continues to increase the functionality of the Decision Support Tool to visually illustrate data compiled from numerous systems: GIS, financial, asset management, as well as documents and photos stored on BIA servers.

Geographic Information System (GIS) and Database Integration

BIP is working to integrate data across the organizational systems that support BIA-owned irrigation projects and power utilities. This will create an opportunity to see asset data, work orders and condition metrics spatially, as well as integrate NIIMS parcel information geospatially.

Challenges

Construction Cost Escalation

Actual construction costs over the last three years have increased significantly. Labor and material shortages, combined with a large amount of ongoing heavy civil projects, has inflated construction costs by 25% over the last three years per the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) composite trend for [Construction Cost Indexes](#).

Supply chain issues also exacerbate costs due to delays in acquiring equipment and materials. As these are outside of a contractor's control, the Agency is responsible for any additional delay costs. For example, acquisition of electrical components that typically would have a 3-to-6-month delivery window are now over 12 months out (per discussions with irrigation project personnel, power utility managers and others associated with the management of projects).

Opportunities

Infrastructure Rehabilitation and Modernization

BIA continues to develop modernization studies at BIA-owned irrigation projects and power utilities. The results of these studies will allow BIA to communicate with Tribes, irrigators and power utility customers with state-of-the-art information and collaborate on future infrastructure investments.

Recruiting Challenges, Staffing Shortages and Aging Infrastructure

BIA has multiple vacancies in its organization. It has been difficult to accomplish the program mission, including the added infrastructure rehabilitation workload, given the increased funding and associated accomplishment expectations with our current staff size. Along with its aging infrastructure and escalating capital costs for construction, overcoming the deferred maintenance backlog for both irrigation projects and power utilities remain BIA's biggest areas of concern.

Best Practices

BIA-Branch of Irrigation and Power has developed and distributed the BIA Irrigation Safety Guide to assist irrigation field staff in maintaining a safe work environment. The Irrigation Safety Guide focuses on irrigation-related matters (e.g., pulling flashboards, operating canal gates and chemical exposure).

DWP, Safety of Dams Branch (SOD)

The Safety of Dams Branch is currently responsible for the safety of 141 high-hazard potential dams on 42 reservations. Annual funding provides for dam rehabilitation projects, maintenance, and program activities.



Two Medicine Dam at Blackfeet Reservation

Mid-Year Accomplishments

From October 2022 to March 2023, the SOD Branch Program performed routine scheduled activities for program high-hazard dams, including Periodic Reviews, Comprehensive Reviews, Early Warning System (EWS) maintenance, emergency preparedness, and non-routine design and construction activities:

Hazard Classification Studies

- 6 Studies Advanced
- 25 Studies in-progress

Status of Formal Dam Evaluations

- 14 Comprehensive Review Reports completed, 28 are ongoing
- 8 Periodic Review Reports completed, 8 ongoing

Emergency Action Plan

- 20 Dam Emergency Action Plan Exercises completed, 16 in planning stage
- The Emergency Action Plan was revamped for greater ease of use and added security elements

Early Warning System (EWS) Sites

- Completed 2022 annual maintenance
- Initiated 2023 annual maintenance for all EWS sites
- Conducted infrastructure improvements and site maintenance activities at 9 EWS sites on 3 reservations
- Published 1 EWS Newsletter with articles about winter maintenance, Division of Water and Power internships, dam safety training opportunities, and more.

Status of Studies

- 15 Hydrologic Hazard Studies completed, 25 studies on-going
- 3 Site-specific Extreme Precipitation Studies for 3 dams completed, 2 studies are ongoing
- 17 Dam Failure Inundation Studies completed, 27 studies are ongoing
- 16 Dam Failure Consequence Assessment Studies completed, 25 studies are on-going

Budget Items

- Awarded 2 EWS Task Orders totaling approximately \$0.4M and the EWS Site Infrastructure Improvements task order (\$1.4M) is in-progress
- Disbursed \$2.4 million in Operations and Maintenance funding in support of all 141 high-hazard dams on 42 reservations

Status of FY2023 Dam Construction Projects

Dam	Tribe	Project	Status
Standing Pine Dam Rehabilitation		Replaced the failed outlet works Reinstalled embankment Installed fencing & outlet channel improvement	Completed
Oglala Dam	Pine Ridge Reservation	Preparing to advertise in April 2023 Targeted completion date August 2025 Estimated value \$48M	In Progress
To'hajiilee Dam	Navajo Nation	Construction started August 2022 Targeted completed date August 2023 Estimated value \$5M	In Progress

Sixteen (16) Dam Rehabilitation Design Projects In-Progress

Dam	Tribe	State
A1 Dam	Fort Apache Indian Reservation	AZ
Allen Dam	Pine Ridge Reservation	SD
Antelope Dam	Rosebud Indian Reservation	SD
Bonneau Dam	Rocky Boy's Reservation	MT
Bootleg Dam	Fort Apache Indian Reservation	AZ
Cooley Dam	Fort Apache Indian Reservation	AZ
Davis Dam	Fort Apache Indian Reservation	AZ
Ghost Haw Dam	Rosebud Indian Reservation	SD
Lake Pushmataha Dam	Choctaw Indian Reservation	MS
Menager's Dam	Tohono O'odham Reservation	AZ
Neopit Dam	Menominee Indian Reservation	WI
Oglala Dam	Pine Ridge Reservation	SD
Owhi Dam	Colville Reservation	WA
Tufa Stone Dam	San Carlos Indian Reservation	AZ
White Clay Dam	Pine Ridge Reservation	SD
Willow Creek Dam	Crow Reservation	MN

Five (5) One-Time Special Maintenance Projects (In Progress)

Dam	Tribe	Project	State
Bonneau Dam	Rocky Boys Reservation	Spillway erosion repair design and revetment installation	MT
East Fork Dam	Rocky Boys Reservation	Spillway erosion repairs and revetments	MT
Indian Lake Dam	Umatilla Reservation	Siphon installation and drawdown pumping	OR
Lake Capote Dam	Southern Ute Reservation	Spillway erosion repairs	CO
Trapped Rock Dam	Zuni Pueblo	Dredging	NM

Dam Incident Responses

Kiwosay Dam, Red Lake Reservation, MN

In July 2022, Kiwosay Dam breached, which damaged wild rice paddies downstream of the embankment and Reservation Highway 4 along the crest of the embankment. It also drained and endangered over 8,000 acres of critical wetland, aquatic, and avian habitat.



Breach of Kiwosay Dam, Red Lake Reservation, MN

The SOD Branch and the Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management worked together to procure funding and provide technical dam safety assistance to the Nation. In November 2022, the breach was plugged, restoring critical habitat in time for the start of winter. The BIA SOD Branch is continuing to work with the Red Lake Nation and other BIA and federal partners to identify funding for permanent repairs.

Mesita Dam, Pueblo of Laguna, NM

In March 2023, Mesita Dam was found to be actively failing from seepage through the downstream slope. Mesita Dam is currently an unclassified dam, which is downstream of the Jackpile-Paguate Uranium Mine Superfund site. Wastes from mining operations have contaminated the reservoir sediments with uranium.

The SOD Branch worked with the Pueblo of Laguna, Southern Pueblos Agency, and the Southwest Regional Office to lower the reservoir as far as possible with the use of existing discharge structures. The SOD Branch and Acquisitions offices were able to work together to mobilize a contractor and equipment to the site and begun making emergency repairs.

As of March 27, 2023, the seep has mostly dried at the surface of the embankment, and the area with previously observed slope movements appeared to be stable.

Initiated a secondary screening of the 2,169 dams reported by Tribes that were identified to have a population downstream that could potentially be harmed in the event the dam failed to prioritize which will receive hazard classification studies.

Staff/stakeholder communication

- Continued periodic meetings across SOD Program areas and with Regional SOD Officers
- Held 3 EWS Working Group meetings, which have improved communications, increased transparency, and provided additional opportunities for input from Tribes, BIA Regions, and BIA Agencies
- Initiated a SOD Central Office monthly “brownbag” meeting to increase SOD staff’s understanding of Indian issues. The topic of the initial meeting was the History of Indian Federal Law

Training

- Annual BIA/Tribal Safety of Dams Workshop (including Emergency Action Plan training), Albuquerque, NM, March 14-17, 2023
- Virtual Dam Tender Training every other month on various dam safety topics
- Early Warning System and Dam Tender 3-day in-person trainings held at Western and Great Plains Regions
- Began teaming with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on the National Dam Consortium group they established to promote dam safety training for staff nationwide.



New program tools

- Significantly advanced an update to the SOD Handbook and created three draft guidance documents to further outline SOD technical processes.
- Implemented the project management software, Smartsheet, which has resulted in improved tracking of routine and non-routine dam safety projects at the Central Office
- Expanded access to the SOD SharePoint site to include tribal dam safety staff (with the permission of the tribe)

Challenges

Condition of Dams

In general, dams on Indian lands are in much worse condition than dams managed by other federal dam safety programs. Two-thirds of the high-hazard potential dams (those that would probably cause loss of life if they failed) on Indian lands do not meet federal dam safety standards. To minimize downstream risk, nine Program dams are breached and many Program dams have been fully or partially drained.

Cost to Address Known Deficiencies

The SOD Program estimates that \$1.4B is required to address known life safety deficiencies at the dams that do not meet federal guidelines. In addition to the \$1.4B in known deficiencies, an unknown but not insignificant need likely exists for hidden life safety deficiencies that cannot be detected and for operational deficiencies that exist but do not pose a life safety threat. While the program has identified and prioritized actions at dams which pose unacceptable risk, addressing these issues remains a challenge.

Recruitment and Retention Challenges

Beyond the financial resources necessary to address these issues, the Program faces difficulties in obtaining and retaining adequate human resources. The Program has awarded a technical services contract to assist, but inherently federal duties remain that bottleneck the execution the program. Due to HR challenges, it took over two years for the Program to hire three Senior GS-13 Engineers. Many additional federal personnel are needed.

Lack of Special Salary Rates for Engineers

A significant recruiting and retention challenge faced by the Program is that the BIA does not participate in special salary rates used by other agencies for engineers performing similar duties. In addition, the BIA Regional and Agency Offices have difficulty recruiting and keeping qualified and trained Dam Tenders and other related dam safety staff. Attracting and maintaining a qualified federal staff remains the program's most significant challenge.

Opportunities

The FY 2023 budget increase and the additional funding provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law will afford the opportunity to accelerate the completion of several dam rehabilitation projects and continue the approximately 30% increase to the SOD Program O&M budget nationwide, initiated in FY22.



Bipartisan Infrastructure Law increased budget by 30%

Best Practices

Rehabilitation funding is prioritized for dams that currently present the greatest life-safety risk. Risk is measured using the Dam Safety Priority Rating (DSPR), a methodology based on the Bureau of Reclamations' Public Protection Guidelines and the risk analysis processes developed by the BOR and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In addition to considering the condition of a dam, DSPR evaluates design methodology, construction methodology, past performance, and downstream population at risk should a dam failure occur.

DWP, Branch of Water Resources (WR)

Services Provided

The Branch of Water Resources serves as the DWP Division Chief's liaison to BIA Regional Offices, local BIA agencies, and Tribal governments on issues involving water rights and negotiations, pre-development and water management, attorney fees, litigation support and water program evaluation.



Irrigation Canal Testing at the Water Resources Technician Training Program held at California Polytechnic State University in CA

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Water Resources Ranking Team

The Water Resources Branch held a water resource ranking team meeting virtually with members from various Regions, as well as a team member from the [Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office](#) (SIWRO) and the Central office Solicitor's Office. Water resources projects were ranked and scored for funding distribution. The Tribes and Regions submitted projects for the Water Management Planning & Pre-Development program and Projects for the Water Rights Negotiation/Litigation program.

Federal Funding Partnerships

The Water Resources Branch has continued to partner with the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), [Native American Affairs Program](#), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), and the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office to fund like projects involving ongoing Water Rights Settlements and implementation projects. All projects include Trust protection projects to improve knowledge of Indian Water Rights. Funding allocations will be transferred to the Regions and Tribes after BIA Trust accounts are funded for this year's budget allocations.

Regional Administrative Costs

Compiled and summarized administrative costs for all water resources regional staff for FY 2023. Administrative Costs Funds allows regional staff to oversee Water Management Planning & Pre-Development projects, Water Rights Settlements and litigation projects, Water Rights Contracts, and Department of Justice Agreements. Funding also allows regional staff to participate on the Secretary's Indian Water Rights settlement and implementation Teams and allows the Regions to provide technical assistance to tribes for all facets of work involving trust water resources.



Gorge Powerhouse



Water Technician Training

Water Resources Technician Training Program Re-established

The Branch has begun to re-establish the Water Resources Technician training program and is currently working with a non-profit organization that performs the AmeriCorps program for student interns.

- Target set for fifteen (15) students to intern in water science careers and attend water resources technician training at a selected site.
- The BIA is currently submitting the statement of work outlining the various vetted universities that will be administering the training.
- 10+ host sites have applied to the program to host students during the 26-week internship.

The branch is developing an interagency memorandum of understanding between BOR and the Indian Health Service (IHS).

Attorney Fee Rankings

The Water Resources Branch is continuing the Attorney Fee/Litigation program and will be reviewing Tribal proposals received in FY23. A ranking team (members from the Solicitor's Office, BIA, and Assistant Secretary's Office) is reviewing submitted proposals from the Tribes and anticipates submitting recommendations for funding to the Assistant Secretary's Office by the end of May 2023.

Water Resources Summit

The main topic for this year's workshop will be discussing implementation procedures for Indian Water Rights Settlements, as well as discussion for improvement of the water resources programs. Market research and coordination complete for three potential sites for 41 participants. Attendees will include:

- Regional Water Resources staff
- Bureau of Reclamation
- U.S. Geological Survey
- Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office
- Solicitor's Office
- Conservation Legacy
- Selected tribes within the Regions

A-123 Reviews

Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-123 provides guidance to Federal Managers on improving the accountability and effectiveness of Federal program and operations by identifying and managing risks, establishing requirements to assess, correct and report on the effectiveness of internal controls.

A-123 Program Reviews conducted via Webex with the Great Plains, Northwest, and Rocky Mountain Regions and included Central Office, Regional Water Tribal Water Program staff.

- Regional Water and Administration staff provided their perspective on tribal water needs.
- Reviewed various projects being implemented by the Tribes for management of reservation water resources.
- Team sought recommendations to better aid and serve Tribal Water Programs.

The Alaska Region A-123 Review is scheduled for April 17-21, 2023.

Indian Affairs Internal Control Review

Collected FY23 Government Performance Reporting Act goals from Regional Water Coordinators for submission to the OMB and transmitted to the appropriate department for future use. Data calls completed:

- Indian Affairs Integrated Risk Rating Tool Questionnaire
- Three-year Component Inventory Priority Plan
- Indian Affairs Control Matrix and Test Form

Projects Going Forward

Water Rights Settlement Database

Collaborative effort to include regional water coordinators input on various agreed upon data points. Regional assistance is necessary to the compilation of data into the decision support tool and historical water rights settlement database

University collaboration is underway to ensure research and development occurs in appropriate mediums. The work consists of the collaboration between the [Utton Transboundary Research Center](#) at the University of New Mexico Digital Water Rights Repository and the BIA Water Resources Branch.

Working with the Secretary of Indian Water Rights Office to develop a series of structured interviews to extract basic funding and water rights information to achieve the full inputs for the historical settlement database.

Decision Support Tool Information Research and Data Update

Completed review and collected additional information for input and update of the Data Support Tool for fund transfers completed at the regional levels for the FY23 Water Management, Planning and Pre-Development Accounts and the FY23 Water Rights, Negotiation and Litigation Accounts.

The Water Resources Branch will continue to aid the GIS Lead in population data gaps and provide current fiscal year funding details for update of Decision Support Tool system.

Water Resource Technician Training Program

Working with Bureau of Reclamation to increase funding through master agreement using cooperative non-profit, Conservation Legacy, the non-profit arm of the cooperative agreement associated with the water resources technician training program is under a master agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Therefore, it is our recommendation that the Bureau of Reclamation uses the master agreement to send down funds to add either a student or a training within our program.

Collaboration with Universities have been secured for FY23 and a general time frame for that program has been determined. Member and host applications were received from 15 members and 10 host sites.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Projects

BIA coordinates with numerous Tribes, DOI Solicitors, other federal and state agencies, and hydroelectric licensees as the BIA technical advisor on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing process for several hydroelectric projects involving the tracking of post-license implementation actions and settlement agreements to protect tribal trust resources and interests.

Potter Valley (California)

2023 funding activities will continue monitoring and maintaining gages that have been reinstalled and collect hydrologic gage data for management purposes. The RVIT will consult with McBain Associates on technical issues regarding fisheries, infrastructure and operations management, negotiations, and decision-making.

Klamath Hydroelectric Project (Oregon, California)

The long-term benefits of removing these four dams (J.C. Boyle, Copco No. 1, Copco No. 2, and Iron Gate) are primarily centered around endangered salmon and steelhead. The removal of will open a large section of spawning habitat in the Klamath River and its tributaries, improve water quality with cooler water temperatures and decreases in toxic algae blooms in the river, and reduce disease outbreaks which have resulted in large fish kills of endangered salmon and steelhead.

Skagit River Hydroelectric Project (Washington)

BIA is working with the Upper Skagit Indian Tribe, Swinomish, and the Saux-Suiattle tribes as the technical advisor in the FERC relicensing of this project. Completed milestones include the development and implementation of baseline studies to protect trust resources and technical assistance is being provided in the development of fish passage alternatives, flow management, water quality, aquatic habitat restoration, and the protection of cultural resources.

Hells Canyon Complex (Oregon, Idaho)

This project extirpated and continues to block anadromous runs from the aboriginal territories of the four USRT Foundation member tribes. BIA is assisting the Upper Snake River USRT Foundation through funding and outreach to other resource agencies involved in this relicensing.

Kalispel Tribe Request for Proposal Funding

BIA successfully worked with the Kalispel Tribe to secure funding in a timely fashion for their participation in the Clark Fork and Box Canyon hydroelectric projects post-license implementation and the Boundary and Sullivan Lake project licensing/decommission and implementation of associated settlement agreements.

Rock Island (Washington)

The Rock Island Hydroelectric is undergoing the preliminary stages of FERC relicensing. BIA is working with the Yakama Nation and Colville Tribes as a technical advisor in the FERC relicensing of this project. Completed milestones include the identification of project impacts and implementation of baseline studies to assess these impacts to trust resources, including salmon and steelhead, Pacific lamprey, water quality, and cultural resources associated with the Mid-Columbia River.

Challenges

The Water Resources Branch currently lacks adequate staff. One of the Branch's goals for FY23 is to advertise for a Program Manager and a Water Rights Specialist to support the water programs more effectively.

Opportunities

There is Greenbook funding for water filtration systems that needs to be implemented to enhance water quality. The Branch needs to investigate the potential for Interagency collaboration with Indian Health Services and Bureau of Reclamation for water technician training.

Best Practices

The Water Resources Branch recently implemented Smartsheet as a team planning and development tool.

Water Resources Branch Chief has been training current staff to take over duties that are necessary for continued coverage of the water resources programs including the Attorney Fee/Litigation Support program, Construction Indexing review for the various water right settlements, and over all Branch Chief administrative duties necessary to support mission objectives.

Division of Wildland Fire Management (DWFM)



Mid-Year Accomplishments

The Division of Wildland Fire Management (DWFM) continues to facilitate weekly Fire Leadership Team (FLT) meetings and monthly National Fire Leadership Team (NFLT) meetings. These teams are governance structures that provide Regional Office, Agency and Tribal participation and collaboration with Central Office wildland fire managers. Wildland fire management issues move quickly, and the need for Regional, Agency and Tribal engagement and participation is critical for the long-term success of the program.

The FLT/NFLT governance structures are not just to support the peak fire year suppression activities, but all aspects of the wildland fire program to include fuels, burned area emergency rehabilitation, wildfire prevention, and other support functions of the wildland fire program.

Website

The [DWFM website](#) continues to be a slow but steady process to reorganize, compact, and update wildland fire webpages, in coordination with the DOI Office of Information Management contractor, for easier public information consumption.

Hiring

Temporary promotions were processed for the Aviation Manager, Safety Manager and Secretary positions. Recruitment efforts were completed for the Assistant Aviation Manager, National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Specialist and Aviation Geographic Information Specialist positions.

Northern Arizona University Tribal Forestry Student Summit

In October 2022, DWFM participated in Northern Arizona University's Tribal Forestry Student Summit focusing on Investing in the Future of Tribal Forest Resources Management and Wildland Fire in Flagstaff, AZ. The event provided an opportunity for staff to engage with Native American and Alaska Native students and share the numerous opportunities for employment within fire. The one-on-one engagement and presentation opportunity was valuable for wildland fire recruitment efforts.



American Indian Science and Engineering Society's (AISES) Conference

DWFM staff is currently coordinating involvement in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society's National Conference to be held in Spokane, WA, this October.

Employee Engagement

Virtual Quarterly Meetings

Virtual quarterly DWFM all staff meetings provide an opportunity for staff to virtually engage in a full team environment and learn about various fire and government-related topics throughout the year. Recently, an employee ice breaker activity was incorporated into the meetings to facilitate communication between employees in various programs.

In-Person Meetings

March 28-30, 2023, an in-person all staff training was held in Boise, ID, to provide presentations and training with staff in an inclusive face-to-face environment. Topics covered included government travel training, administrative processes, anti-harassment training, employee benefits information, team cohesion and connection, program updates and an opportunity for face-to-face questions and answers directly with DWFM leadership and OTS staff.



November 29 – December 1, 2022, NFLT members and regional supporting staff members met in Boise, ID, to engage in face-to-face conversations regarding program updates, needs and national priorities.

An Administration SharePoint site was established for DWFM to provide employees easy access to commonly used administrative documents and see updates on travel requests among other items. The site is located within the Division's SharePoint site as a resource to DWFM staff and regional fire staff.



Budget Guidance

A reciprocal agreement template has been provided to regional fire leadership. This template has been Solicitor approved and is intended to facilitate collections from states on behalf of federal agencies or Tribes.

The DWFM has received full year funding from the Office of Wildland Fire. Distribution to regions has begun and will continue as needed throughout the remainder of the 2023 fiscal year.

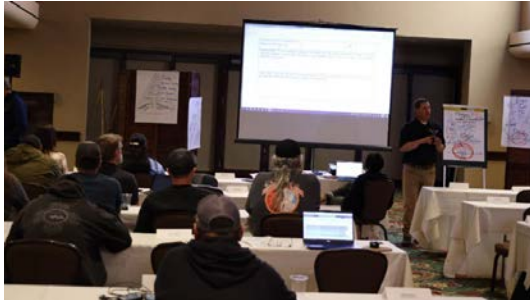
Budget has conducted and completed fiscal reviews of the fire management programs in both the Rocky Mountain and Eastern Regions.

DWFM, Aviation (AV)

Mid-Year Accomplishments

The 2022 fire season resulted in a below average total flight time for all aviation categories in support of initial attack and large fire support on trust and interagency lands.

Staff Training



March 6-9, 2023, DWFM hosted the National Aviation Training in San Diego, CA to give fire management officers, line managers and helicopter managers the opportunity to meet Federal biennial refresher mandates within one work week. The training included 64 attendees participating from 9 BIA regions.

Aviation Staff Hiring

The [National Aviation Office](#) (NAO) is working on filling three vacancies. A Data/GIS Specialist has been hired to assist with the integration, streamline, and flow of critical data within the program.

Flights

Thus far in FY23, 18 hours on a rotor wing aircraft have been contributed to the BIA Exclusive Use and On-Call Managed Contracts. This contribution is not unusual during the off-fire season. Exclusive use needs are expected to increase as soon as the weather warms.

There were no accidents or injuries reported during aviation operations on Trust land. The NAO will continue to assist in improving existing facilities and aviation equipment. We are encouraging and supporting all exclusive use helicopters to increase staffing levels to the maximum capacity to increase succession levels.



2022 Fort Apache helitack crew shows White River Elementary first grade students one of their aircraft while talking about fire prevention and safety

DWFM, Fuels Management (FM)

Mid-Year Accomplishments

DWFM's Fuels Management program in collaboration with the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Rocky Mountain Research Station, and Tribes, continues investigating incorporation of new technological advancements for quantifying wildfire risk spatially and temporally.

BIA has invested in Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology in five reservations to improve strategic placement of treatments that are critical components of fuels management to maximize cost effectiveness, efficiency, and risk reduction. LiDAR can provide cost effective strategic landscape level planning that supports multi-year integrated resource management planning.

San Carlos Apache Tribe hosted Terrestrial Laser Scanning (TLS) technology and its application for fuels management and post-wildfire recovery training in collaboration with DWFM and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Western Region, USGS, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), Rocky Mountain Research Station and the National Advanced Fire & Resource Institute. BIA and San Carlos supported additional TLS training attended by another seven Tribal staff in Tucson, AZ.

The Fuels Management program is currently in the process of finalizing the FY2024 Preliminary Program of Work (PPOW) BIL planning documents.

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) projects:

- 2,628 acres accomplished to date. This included one prescribed fire for 518 acres
- Base Funding supported approximately 59,369 treatment acres accomplished to date. Included in this total are 50 prescribed fires for 37,686 acres
- Reserved Treaty Rights Lands funding supported approximately 108 acres of thinning accomplished to date

Future Fuels Projects

Conventional approaches to wildfire risk assessment, used for the prioritization of fuel treatments to reduce risk, privilege the developed lands of the wildland-urban interface (WUI). However, tribal lands are essential contributors to the culture of tribal communities and are often considered at least equal in importance to WUI. In collaboration with USGS, BIA is working to develop a project that will produce a regional wildfire risk assessment methodology that equitably represents Indian Country's values and can be applied across BIA regions. BIA would like to finalize a three-year agreement with USGS to complete the project.



In October 2023, S-219 firing operations trainees apply 16.4 acres of fire in field exercise

WFM Fuels is working to become integral partners within a national Innovation Landscape Program in collaboration with USGS, FWS and the Forest Service. As part of a Southwest (SW) Innovation Node based out of Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff AZ, BIA, and San Carlos Apache Tribe has already hosted Terrestrial Laser Scanning (TLS) training at San Carlos, AZ.

Due to the nature of the new and evolving technologies and the involvement of multiple integrated science disciplines the Innovation Flagstaff concept will provide technical and training support for Indian Country, other DOI bureaus and Forest Service.

FY 2023 Fuels Planning Statistics

BIL funding

241 treatments are planned for 107,529 acres to be treated by prescribed fire, mechanical thinning, or other means. 93 activities are planned inclusive of 7,482,430 acres of monitoring via LiDAR.

Base funding

460 treatments and activities are preliminarily planned for 145,024 acres (of this total, 216 planned treatments are prescribed fire for 99,866 acres).

Reserved Treaty Rights Lands funding

Currently three treatments are planned for 497 acres (of this total, one planned treatment is prescribed fire for 75 acres). Total planned data is very fluid as some treatments were not yet identified in the National Fire Plan Operations Reporting System (NFPORS) and additional projects will likely be approved.

Post-Wildfire Recovery

Post-Wildfire Recovery (PWR) staff continue to work with Tribes on approved post wildfire recovery projects. BIL necessitates updating post-wildfire reporting direction and staff are working with Tribes and BIA Regional Offices to submit accomplishment reports for completed projects. This updated policy provides consistent departmental direction on authoritative data sources and due dates for post-wildfire related planning and accomplishment reporting.

Staff will continue to work with Regional Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Coordinators and assist them with inputting and updating the [National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System](#) (NFPORS).

- NFPORS is the DOI System of Record and Authoritative Data Source for planned and completed post-wildfire actions
- Funding transfer to agencies for Burned Area Rehabilitation actions is contingent on the agency's entering an approved program of work in the NFPORS.

Sharepoint Site

PWR developed a SharePoint site to provide information with updates and centralize documents for both internal and external use. Tribes and other agencies have access to key documents for training and other resource management guides. Both SharePoint sites were developed to increase our communication internally and externally. PWR will continue to maintain and keep updated.



Helicopter picks up water for fire response use

Interagency Support

Wildfire Prevention staff currently serve as the BIA's representative on the [National Wildfire Coordinating Group \(NWCG\)](#) Communication Education and Prevention Committee and have been working as the team leader for the Fire Restrictions Tasking Team. This Team is exploring the feasibility of establishing a national interagency fire restrictions website to display fire restrictions in one central location.

Prevention staff are also serving as the BIA representative to the Nevada Interagency Fire Restrictions Plan, developing and coordinating plans with the Tribes and Agencies located in Nevada. The plan is an interagency document to outline and the process for implementing fire restrictions and closures. This will help to provide consistency among land management partners and define fire restriction stages and boundaries to the public, so they are easily distinguishable to the public.

PWR staff serve as the primary member on the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Resource Advisor Sub-Committee. This group is in transition as the Chair and Vice Chair positions are up for rotation. A BIA representative may be designated Chair within the next two years.

PWR staff is working with DOI interagency BAER Leaders on a framework for BIL-BAR plant material. BAER leaders are developing sideboards for prioritizations and ranking criteria (i.e., projects that collaborate with neighboring land management agencies). BIA and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are seeking Tribes for collaboration on vegetation production and materials for post wildfire work. The end goal is to increase a Tribes' overall production of seedlings per year. Some nurseries need infrastructure upgrades or staff to accomplish this task.

Student training and instructor guides are continuously updated to stay current with changes in wildfire prevention activities. Staff are assisting interagency partners as cadre members for training planned for this year.



Wildfire Prevention Planning

Staff are working with the DWFM's public affairs specialist to develop common prevention messages that can be used across Indian Country throughout the various wildfire seasons. These messages will focus on reducing human-caused wildfires.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Working Capital Fund

Fire Operations has been collaborating with the Office of Inspector General (OIG) since the Fall of 2022 on data requests and evaluation of the applicability of the Working Capital Fund authority as authorized in the [Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976](#) (Organic Act). Section 306 of the Organic Act addresses the Working Capital Fund [43 U.S.C. §1736].

The OIG is reviewing the Organic Act, current processes for Fire Fleet management and procedures, and working towards a determination that can be provided to the BIA to consider the implementation of a Working Capital Fund to support Fleet, Facilities, and Equipment.

Interagency Hotshot Crews

Operations has further improved coordination with BIA and Tribal Interagency Hotshot Crews (IHC) to further strengthen our IHCs and work towards better workforce succession. Additionally, staff have been working with IHCs to standardize planned crew configurations and budget formulation.



Navajo Hotshot Crew photo, 2021



Fire dozer, transport tractor, and transport trailer

Wildland Fire Fleet Inventory

Operations has completed our Wildland Fire Engine Fleet inventory through survey 123, this was a priority for the National Fire Leadership Team (NFLT), it is the first step in planning the wildland fire fleet with the goal of having a comprehensive replacement cycle, as well as provide safer equipment to the field. The inventory is tracked through a Wildland Fire Engine Fleet Inventory dashboard.

Operations has collaborated with the National Fire Equipment Program (NFEP), operated by BLM to acquire a new Fire Fleet. To date, all IHCs and Helicopter Modules have fully transitioned all fleet to the NFEP. Operations has also acquired two fire dozer packages (Fire Dozer, Transport Tractor, and Transport Trailer) for the Eastern Oklahoma Region and the Northern Cheyenne Agency.

Additionally, the DWFM has acquired eight tactical water tenders that are currently being built and will start to be transferred to units this spring. Operations staff has also submitted orders in NFEP for various fire command vehicles, support vehicles, and seven Type 6 Wildland Fire Engines.

Interagency Efforts

Operations continues to collaborate with Interagency Partners through the [National Wildlife Coordinating Group](#) (NWCG) and [National Multi Agency Coordinating Group](#) (NMAC) to further transition from traditional Type 1 and 2 Incident Management Teams to Complex Incident Management Teams (CIMT).

Operations has collaborated with the Deputy Regional Director for Alaska Region (who serves as BIA Representative to the Agency Administrator Working Group for [Incident Workforce Development Group](#) (IWDG)) to develop briefings for BIA Agency Administrators to help BIA with success in the transition and implementation of CIMT's for 2024.

Operations continues to work with other Subject Matter Experts to finalize the Draft Standard Cooperative Agreement for Wildland Fire Management. The draft is roughly 90% completed and should be ready for final Solicitor review by late Spring.

Fire Safety

Operations had a detailed employee serve as the DWFM's fire safety program manager. This individual represented the BIA in all interagency committees and work groups related to Wildland Fire Safety. He served to guide Regions and Units on the implementation of the Medical Standards Program including the transition to Acuity.

Fire Safety led two Rapid Lessons Learned Reviews

- Eastern Region/Seminole Agency: Dudda Shop #2 Prescribed Fire Incident
- Western Region/Southern Paiute Agency: Non-Fire Engine Rollover Incident

These Rapid Lessons Learned are designed to review an accident/incident to learn what occurred, what caused it, and how can we learn and improve from it to reduce the risk of a similar occurrence in the future. The Rapid Lessons Learned are shared through the Lessons Learned Center and on an Interagency basis.

Fire Management Training



April 2023, ENOP training field exercise in Sycuan, CA

Engine Operator (ENOP)

After requiring an N-9018 ENOP training course in 2019, DWFM training has since coordinated and funded eight courses and trained over 300 initial attack personnel. In FY23, three ENOP training courses were coordinated:

- 21 staff trained in Phoenix, AZ
- 30 staff trained in Albuquerque, NM
- 24 staff trained in Sycuan, CA

We will continue to coordinate spring ENOP training in Billings, MT, and the Great Plains Region. This training further professionalizes our fire personnel and ensures consistency in ENOP training with our interagency partners.



March 2023, Engine Operator (ENOP) training class in Albuquerque, NM

Fire Management Training

Engine Operator (ENOP)

After requiring an N-9018 ENOP training course in 2019, DWFM training has since coordinated and funded eight courses and trained over 300 initial attack personnel. This training further professionalizes our fire personnel and ensures consistency in ENOP training with our interagency partners.

In FY23, two ENOP training courses were coordinated for Phoenix, AZ, where 21 staff were trained and Albuquerque, NM, where 30 staff were trained. We will continue to coordinate spring ENOP training in Sycuan, CA and Billings, MT, and the Great Plains Region.

Wildland Fire Apprentice Academy (WFAP)

Training has made substantial progress with this existing workforce development program by collaborating with our SW Region. We plan to pilot BIA participation in WFAP in 2023 by advertising and filling two student positions who will attend the WFAP academy, and upon graduation, will be able to convert to a vacant full-time employee at the GS-5 salary level.

0456 Wildland firefighter Job Series

DWFM staff members have spent over 100 hours in GS-0456 Wildland Firefighter Series project meetings supporting the interagency effort to standardize position descriptions for Department wide use. Twelve of these position descriptions have already been issued for use. DWFM staff have been consistent and major contributors to the interagency effort for standard position descriptions within fire with BIA leading the way in the new job series formulation.

The BIA training workforce development specialist has been the fire subject matter expert within the 0456 interagency development group. Along with the Division's fire program liaison, they have been making crucial decisions to ensure BIA fire personnel will be paid appropriately and the new streamlined job series will be read for a June 2023 rollout.

Federal Fire Workforce Development Program (FDWP)

Utilizing BIL funding, the DOI and USDA training officers plan to hire FWDP staff who will build, research, and maintain curriculum which focuses on daily job duties. Staff for this program, which will include a BIA training specialist at the GS 11 salary level, will begin working on this as early as June 2023. This new program will focus on recruitment, retention, helping new employees visualize a fire career, and invest in the career needs of current personnel.

Projects Going Forward

Tracking Tools

Staff will explore development and implementation of Power Apps and Smart Sheets to modernize tracking and approval of routine and regular tasks such as Mission Critical Travel Requests, recruitment and staffing, property and equipment cycling, fleet utilization reporting, and charge card monitoring.

Program Review

The Budget Team will conduct a fiscal review of the Southwest Region Fire Management program April 10-13, 2023.

National Fire Leadership Team subcommittees

Fuels, operations, and budget subcommittees are under development for the National Fire Leadership Team and draft charters for each subcommittee have been initiated. The subcommittees are expected to have both regional and national representation and will advise and provide subject matter expertise related to fuels, operations, and budget concerns.

Opportunities

Information Management

Development and use of the suite of Office365 tools for information sharing amongst DWFM Branch Chiefs.

Unmanned Aircraft

The uncrewed aerial systems (UAS) demand has significantly increased, therefore additional efforts and collaboration has been provided to bring existing pilots to proficiency levels, additional training courses will be scheduled, and acquisition of new platforms will be facilitated with regional, agency, and tribes.



Pathways Fire program interns visit the National Interagency Fire Center

Student Interns

The BIA Pathways program has provided an opportunity for one of their students to join the Post Wildfire Recovery Program this summer. Staff are working to provide students with valuable post-fire restoration experience.

Messaging of the DWFM mission and brand to graduating high school seniors and technical college students utilizing the opportunities provided by the GS-456 series to increase recruitment and retention.

Staffing

As wildland fire budgets continue to increase the Post Wildfire Recovery program is taking steps to evaluate the current program and seek to expand staffing positions. This includes a proposal to the Office of Wildland Fire to the program to meet the increasing post wildfire restoration needs of Tribes and partnerships with other agencies.

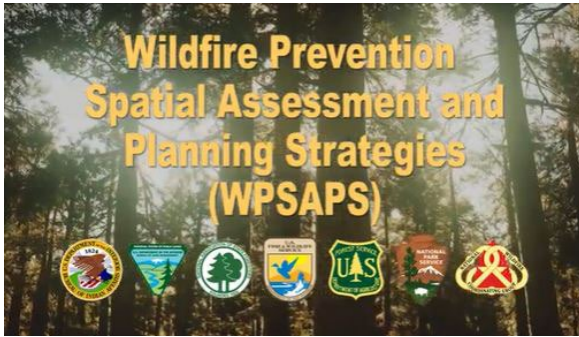
Wildfire prevention program is taking steps to evaluate the current program and develop "Optimal" program staffing levels. The goal of this is to prioritize tribes and agencies where the greatest need is to expand or implement new wildfire prevention programs when funding becomes available.

On-going stewardship of interagency consistency in hiring new GS-456 series employees.

Best Practices

Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment Planning Strategies (WSPAS) Software

The BIA continues to lead the development and expansion of the Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment Planning Strategies (WPSAPS) software application. WPSAPS is a web-based application designed to make wildfire prevention program risk assessments, planning and accomplishment reporting more efficient and effective. It provides users with a research-informed set of prevention actions based on a geospatial assessment of the risks, hazards, and values to be protected in their management unit.



Software user can select a fire prevention plan based on types and frequency of Fires. See YouTube video at <https://youtu.be/7MIs-zWk4Kg>

Data Transparency

Continue use and development of the Administration SharePoint site to provide information updates, process changes and central location for current forms. The site will adapt to meet the needs of DWFM staff and support the mission.

Fire Assignment Coding

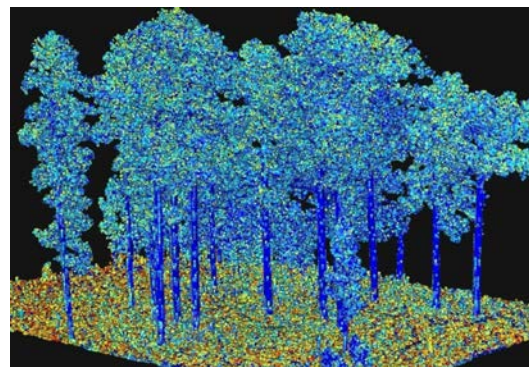
Budget is advising all Central Office and Regional Fire employees on the proper coding of labor while on fire assignments. Steps to reallocate expenses other than labor are also being addressed.

Cutting Edge Technology

Over the last two years, the Fuels Management Program has taken Indian Country to the cutting edge of new technologies highlighting the need for motivated science-minded recruitment.

- Aerial Lidar
- Terrestrial Lidar
- Satellite Technology
- Emerging Fire Behavior Modeling
- Forest Growth & Yield Modeling
- Potential use of Virtual Prescribed Fire Simulator and Integrating 3-dimensional fuels modeling into fire planning

Fuels has requested two large booths for new technology demonstrations and information to students at the [American Indian Science and Engineering Society's \(AISES\) National Conference](#) scheduled for October 19-21, 2023 in Spokane, WA. The new technology demonstrations are meant to garner interest from AISES students and support the Division's recruitment efforts.



3D Fuel Modeling helps predict fuel behavior

Support for Tribal Bison Restoration

In support of the Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland's bison restoration initiative, over the past seven years, the DWFM has provided Tribes with [Reserved Treaty Rights Lands](#) (RTRL) funding to use fire in various ways to support bison restoration. The RTRL program's intent is to provide Tribes the opportunities to conduct Tribally determined project work on ancestral lands regardless of ownership to enhance the health and resiliency of priority Tribal natural resources with high risks of wildland fire. As a historical cultural resource dating back thousands of years, bison restoration is a priority for Tribes throughout the nation.

Challenges

Staffing

The wait for approval of DWFM's proposed organizational chart continues to be a challenge when hiring and filling critical positions within the Division. Hiring and retention of prevention program staff remains a challenge.

The Wildfire Prevention program currently has multiple vacancies within the program nationally with one position approaching 3 years being unadvertised and vacant.

Rollout of GS-0456 positions

Tasking Divisional subject matter experts with perpetual project involvement and competing deadlines involved with the GS-456 series rollout during peak fire season continues to be challenge for staff involved. The 456 series, Wildland Fire Management may involve fire suppression, fire management, fuels management, fire preparedness, suppression and/or fuels.

Budget

Reducing Carryover of Base and BIL annual funding within the fuels management program.

Contracting

Identifying Tribal contracting procedures and support (including personnel) that positively affect the timing of funds provided to tribes.

Collaboration with USDA, Forest Service

Facilitating collaboration with the Forest Service and DOI Bureaus to improve communications and coordination of fuels programs available to Tribes.

Division of Workforce and Youth Development (DWYD)

DWYD, Pathways Internship Program (PIP)



Pathways interns Coral Avery, Dalyna Hanna, Keisha Birdhat and Matthew Federico-Hall

The BIA Pathways Internship Program connects Native American and Alaska Native students to paid internships across the United States. With meaningful projects, rotational assignments, and multi-semester opportunities, Pathways prepares Native American and Alaska Native students for impactful careers in public service and offers a direct pipeline to full-time employment with the BIA or Tribal Nations upon graduation.

Student Interns are working in the program areas listed in the bar graph below:

Mid-Year Accomplishments

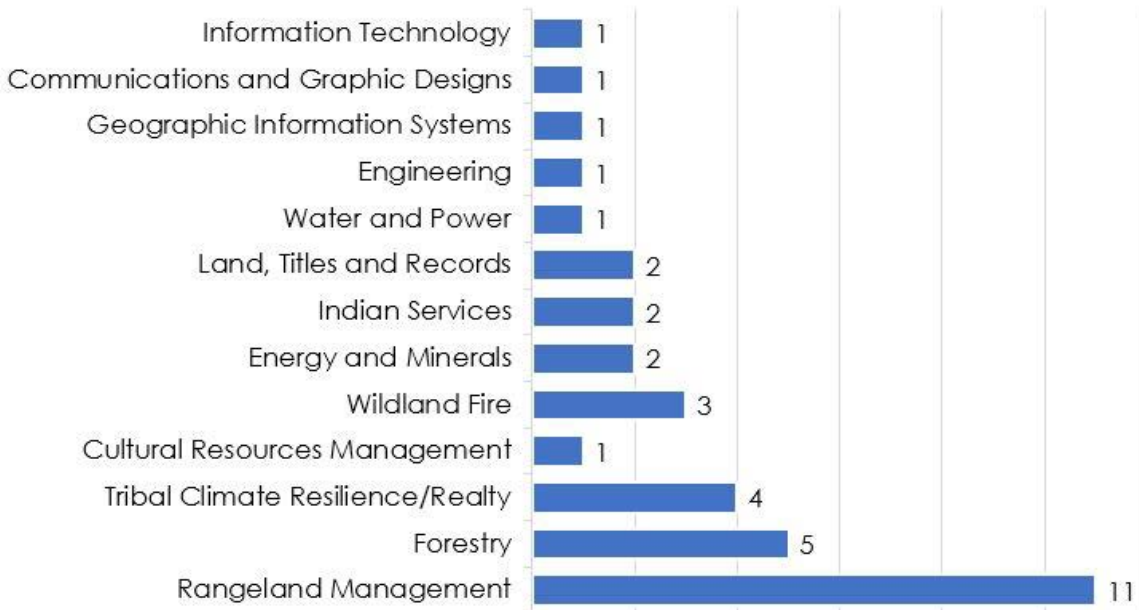
Snapshot of 2023 Pathways Cohort

In FY23, the Pathways Internship Program is supporting 46 *Student Trainees* representing 22 different tribes, 33 different educational institutions, and 21 different home states.

FY23 Student Trainee Conversions

Eleven (11) Student Trainees have already converted or are currently in the process of converting to permanent positions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

FY 2023 Number of Pathways Interns by Program



Outreach and Recruitment (In Person)

Pathways has conducted the following in-person and virtual events in FY 2023.

Event	Dates	Location
Annual Tribal Forestry Student Summit	October 12-14, 2022	Flagstaff, AZ
Absentee Shawnee Tribal Directors Meeting		Shawnee, OK
NCAI Native Youth Leadership Summit	February 20-23, 2023	Washington, DC
Jones High School Career Fair		Jones, OK
McLoud High School Career Fair		McLoud, OK
AIHEC Annual Student Conference	March 21-14, 2023	Albuquerque, NM
The Corps Network National Conference	March 7-9, 2023	Washington, DC
American Indian Science & Engineering Society (AISES) Conference	October 6-8, 2022	Stillwater, OK
Diné College		Tsaile, AZ
Navajo Preparatory School		Farmington, NM
San Juan College		Farmington, NM
Fort Lewis College		Durango, Co



Pathways Program Specialist Weston Cain discusses Pathways internship opportunity with Oklahoma State University students



Kai Veney, Student Trainee in center with Pathways Program Specialist Rosina Carrion and Karen Herrera, 2023 AIHEC Conference

Outreach and Recruitment (Virtual)

Educational Institutions

Dine College
 Haskell Indian Nations University
 Navajo Technical University
 New Mexico Highlands University
 New Mexico State University
 NM Institute of Mining and Technology
 Salish Kootenai College
 San Juan College
 Santa Fe Indian School
 Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute
 University of New Mexico
 Western Colorado University

Federal Events

Bureau of Indian Affairs, Midwest Region
 Bureau of Indian Education
 National Park Service
 U.S. Bureau of Land Management
 U.S. National Park Service

Upcoming Pathways Outreach Events

Event	Dates	Location
National Tribal GIS Conference	April 25-27, 2023	Albuquerque, NM
Gathering of Nations Powwow	April 27-29, 2023	Albuquerque, NM
National Indian Native American Employment and Training Conference	April 30-May 4, 2023	Mashantucket, CT
Red Earth Festival	June 1-3, 2023	Oklahoma City, OK
46 th Annual National Indian Timber Symposium	June 12-15, 2023	Walker, MN
Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC)	June 25-30, 2023	Shepherdstown, WV
Tribal Self-Governance Annual Conference	June 26-29, 2023	Tulsa, OK
United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) Conference	June 30-July 4, 2023	Washington, DC
ESRI User Conference	July 10-14, 2023	San Diego, CA
88 th Annual American Indian Exposition	August 2-5, 2023	Anadarko, OK
AISES National Conference	October 19-21, 2023	Spokane, WA



Pathways Program Specialist Cathy Dyer and Administrative Specialist Amanda Williams

Pathways Program Modernization and Data Management

Pathways has completed a full migration of its student database to a new *SharePoint* site to modernize program processes. The team is now using Microsoft Lists, Power Automate, OneDrive, Microsoft Forms, PowerBI, and PowerApps to manage data efficiently and process information in significantly less time. The new tools reduced +human error and allow extensive Microsoft integrations, creation of auto-generated reports, visualizations, decision support tools, and more.

Projects Moving Forward

Strategic Outreach and Recruitment

For the remainder of FY23, Pathways will be focused on formalizing a national outreach and recruitment strategy divided into sub-strategies for each BIA Region. Objectives and performance indicators will take into consideration both BIA and Tribal mission critical hiring needs, geographic distributions of target student populations, and efforts to reach new or previously underserved Tribal and Urban Indian communities.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility (DEIA), Veterans, and System-Impacted Youth

Pathways is prioritizing new efforts to reach underserved communities and attract DEIA candidates, Native veterans, and system-impacted Native Youth. Staff will complete a series of trainings tied to these populations and will begin engaging with experts in these fields across the federal government, Tribal governments, and educational and nonprofit institutions throughout Indian Country.



Social Media and Online Community Management

Summer 2023

- Launch Facebook and Instagram account
- Begin circulating a regular Pathways Newsletter. Pathways is eager to engage its Student Trainees in documenting and celebrating internship accomplishments
- Develop short form video highlights for social media and the Pathways website

Fall 2023

- Launch Microsoft Teams and SharePoint site for Pathways Student Trainees, Hosts, and Alumni

Improving the Pathways Experience

Pathways has standardized and simplified dozens of forms and processes to both reduce administrative burdens on BIA offices, Tribes, and student participants and increase document processing times.

Support to Intern Host Program Managers

Released a new online Host Request Form for the automatic collection and categorization of host request data from offices across the country.

Internship hosts receive guides, checklists, and best practices documents to assist in the design and implementation of meaningful internship programming.

Support to Pathways Interns

The Pathways program is organizing required and optional training and travel opportunities by appropriate grade level and program throughout the year.

Pathways is also redesigning its tuition assistance and scholarship awards process with the goal of increasing accessibility to this funding while also streamlining the awards process.

Challenges

Decrease in Human Resources Support

In FY22 and FY23, Pathways has experienced a sharp decline in the level of Human Resources support because of staffing shortages and the redistribution of workloads. Prior to FY22, HR staff provided extensive assistance for student conversions, recruitment, managing the USAJOBS.gov recruitment process and USA staffing functions.

HR staff previously alerted Pathways staff about incomplete student applications prior to deadlines, allowing Pathways staff to send reminders to students and help them complete their USAJOBS applications. HR would also provide feedback on specific reasons why certain candidates were unsuccessful.

This is no longer the case, and as such, Pathways has no way to assess the root cause of an over 80% attrition rate between the number of USAJOBS applicants and the number of applicants who manage to reach the USA Staffing certification list.

BIA-wide Requests for Interns

The Pathways Program expanded to meet a rapidly increasing demand for student interns and workforce planning support across the BIA. The OTS Pathways Internship Program was designed only to serve OTS programs and is the only active Pathways Program in BIA and BIE.

The program was designed to meet the high demand for requests within OTS and is not staffed to support additional outside requests. Pathways has accommodated outside requests by matching students with opportunities that suit their academic and professional goal, as well as the BIA's most pressing workforce needs.

DWYD, Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC)

The Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) is a new Department of Interior (DOI) initiative designed to provide Native youth with opportunities to engage in meaningful public service projects on federal and Tribal lands for the benefit of Native communities.

In FY23, over 40 pilot project proposals were collected and assessed. The BIA Office of Trust Services has collaborated closely with several DOI stakeholders and agencies to identify co-funding opportunities and joint projects, greatly improving interagency cooperation, information-sharing, and further reducing barriers for Tribes and Tribal enterprises interested in engaging in IYSC activities.



IYSC provides Native youth opportunities to engage in meaningful public services projects on federal and Tribal lands

Mid-Year Accomplishments

- Completed 50 virtual and in-person meetings with federal partners, potential pilot projects, tribal entities, and other stakeholders
- Collected, evaluated, scored, and ranked over 40 IYSC Pilot Project proposals)
- Developed new organization chart
- Developed two position descriptions for IYSC-focused staff

Projects Moving Forward

- Develop a regular funding notification and annual awards cycle for a diverse range of audiences, including Tribal governments, Tribal enterprises, nonprofits, educational institutions, corps organizations, and other federal agencies.
- Engage in youth program capacity-building for tribes to 1) reduce reliance on partnering Corps organizations, 2) promote self-determination, and 3) encourage program longevity
- Develop an IYSC Strategic Communication Plan for IYSC programs and initiatives.
- Build IYSC social media and online presence
- Conduct regular recruitment and outreach work
- Build IYSC BIA OTS web portal for community education, to include resources on starting and maintaining youth projects, examples of proposals, sample IYSC budgets, etc.

Challenges

The IYSC Program requires a dedicated Program Manager, Program Specialist, and additional support staff to satisfy program needs and ensure seamless support for IYSC stakeholders. However, without approved updated organization charts, position descriptions, and adequate HR and Classification support, these roles cannot be established in a timely manner. This has forced other Division of Workforce and Youth Development staff to take on IYSC duties, which is not a sustainable solution. The BIA Office of Trust Services risks missing this unique window of opportunity for Native Youth services if the organization cannot keep pace with these developments.

DWYD, Office of Workforce Planning (OWP)



Strategic Organizational Design Review

The BIA in partnership with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) completed a [Strategic Organizational Design Review](#). The project consisted of a review and analysis of BIA's mission, functions, strategic objectives, work processes, and workloads. It included identification of:

- Our existing skills mix required to achieve strategic objectives (i.e., occupational types, grade levels, and number of positions in each occupational category)
- Functional interrelationships
- Workflow and work products

Purpose

- Align the Bureau's strategic mission and objectives, along with the organization of its position structures and goals
- Ensure BIA's workforce planning understands the policies, procedures, and practices to measure outcome(s) effectively and efficiently
- Address position and organizational challenges
- Support the broader human resource scope such as, retention, pay gaps, recruitment, and undesirable working locations
- Address these challenges at the highest leadership within Indian Affairs

BIA's Priority

BIA's priority is the structure of individual Field Offices (FO) and clarifying roles of Regional Office, field agencies and the Central Office to support use of all resources. Define roles required by field offices to report activity data to Central office. Ensure field offices do not carry out activities that are the responsibility of Central Office or other federal agencies.

Decision Making Tool

The process outlined in the final plan will commit BIA leadership to utilizing data from the organizational analysis to create positive changes. Identified weaknesses can be strengthened.

Mid-Year Accomplishments

Effective Workforce Planning

- Analyze Workforce, Identify Skills Gaps, and Conduct Workforce Analysis
- Strategic Organizational Analysis Field Office Activities

Projects Going Forward

Strategic Organizational Design Review

- Strategic Alignment Initiative for BIA Positions

Indian Energy Service Center (IESC)



Oil rigs Wind River and solar panels on tribal land

Services Provided

The IESC coordinates and processes Indian energy, mineral and renewable energy development, resource management and leasing activities for the BIA in coordination with several Interior bureaus.

The IESC facilitates energy, mineral and renewable energy development, resource management and leasing activities in Indian Country.

IESC is staffed by BIA, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA).

The IESC upholds the Department's fiduciary trust responsibility on behalf of Individual trust beneficiaries and Federally recognized Tribes by:

- Expediting leasing, permitting, and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands
- Providing resources to ensure development occurs safely while protecting the environment
- Managing risks appropriately by providing support and technical assistance in the assessment of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of energy development

Mid-Year Accomplishments



Orphaned well

\$150M Tribal Orphaned Well Grant Program

The Orphaned Well Site Plugging, Remediation, and Restoration Program provides funding to administer a program for plugging wells on Federal land, and for issuing grants to States and Tribes on State, private, and Tribal land.

IESC collaborated with Interior's Office of Policy Management and Budget, Orphan Well Program Office (OWPO) to assist in the development of a grant funding distribution instrument for the \$150 million earmarked for Tribes in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL).

Tribal Consultation

The IESC completed the summary documents for two Tribal Consultations sessions regarding the program's tribal grant guidance in October of 2022.

Inventory of Orphaned Wells

IESC has continued work on developing a comprehensive inventory of orphaned oil and gas wells on Indian lands. The IESC received all the well data requests from BOGS and is currently reviewing next steps.

Technical Review Team

As of March 2023, IESC, through a Technical Review Team, is evaluating applications, in coordination with OWPO, and will provide award recommendations to the Interior Business Center (IBC) and the OWPO for final grant award.

Technical Grant Assistance to Tribes

IESC coordinated a series of technical assistance sessions, called “office hours” for potential tribal applicants to the program. Multiple sessions were held with potential program applicants. These office hours produced a diverse applicant pool resulting in 14 applications requesting over \$170 Million from the Tribal Orphan Well Grant Program.

Communitization Agreements

The IESC has perfected over 245 Communitization Agreements (CA) since 2017, resulting in over \$1.7 billion in estimated royalty revenue to Indian Tribes and individual Indian mineral owners.

This activity is performed in coordination several BIA Agencies: Fort Berthold, Uintah & Ouray, and Southern Ute. See example of CA Royalty Sharing below (source GAO-16-553).

Mineral Royalty Accounting Distribution (MRAD)

MRAD operations the engagement and transfer of data between the DOI Federal offices and three unique integrated systems:

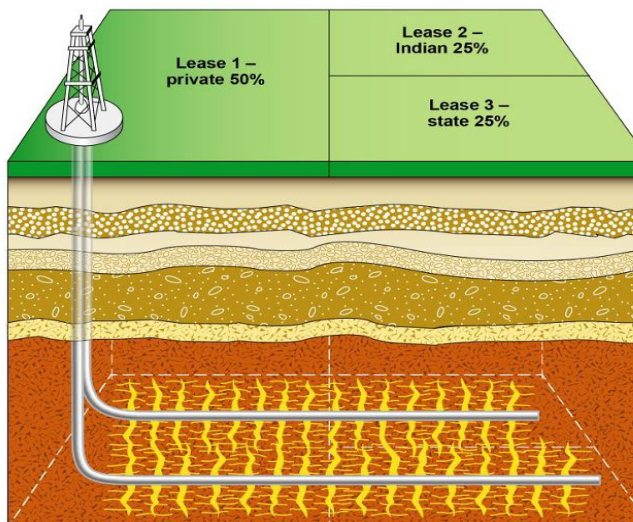
- ONRR’s Mineral Revenue Management Support System (MRMSS)
- BIA’s Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS)
- BTFA’s Trust Funds Accounting System (TFAS) now the Innovest System

The IESC oversees a twice-monthly distribution of allotted (individually owned) revenues to Individual Indian owners nationwide. The IESC also certifies the transfer of financial data from ONRR to BIA and troubleshoots issues.

IESC Strategic Plan

Completed the IESC Strategic Plan 2022-2026 to incorporate new and existing projects and the assumption of additional Real Estate Services functions in FY2023.

Example of Royalty Sharing Based on an Approved Communitization Agreement



Three leases make up the hypothetical **Spacing Unit** shown in the figure to the left.

- Private
- Indian
- State

A CA is required because multiple leases, **including and Indian Lease**, are included within the spacing unit

The approved CA results in all three lessors **sharing royalties based on production allocations**

- Lease 1 – 50% private allocation
- Lease 2 – 25% Indian allocation
- Lease 3 – 25% state allocation

Engineering Activity

Customer	Activity	Project Status
ND Field Office	32 Engineering Reviews of Applications for Permit to Drill	Completed
OK and ND	12 Production Accountability Records Analyses	On-Going
ND Indian Leases	9 Suspension of Production Reviews	Complete
OK Field Office	63 Engineering Reviews on Indian leases	Complete
OK Field Office	71 Adjudication Reviews on Indian leases	Complete
Orphaned Well Program	Conducted data analysis for Indian Well Inventory	Complete
Uintah and Ouray	2 Communitization Review	Complete
Fort Berthold	1 Communitization Review	On-Going
Uintah and Ouray	Created fillable CA checklist	Complete
Fort Berthold	Updated fillable CA checklist	Complete
Uintah and Ouray	Updated BLM portion of Standard operation Procedures	Complete

Fort Berthold BIA Agency Active Projects

Training

Provided Communitization Agreement (CA) Bootcamp Training to MHA Nation, Energy Department on February 24, 2023.

Hosted a CA Operator's Meeting (March 14th and 15th) for Operator's on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, ND addressing CA processing on the Little Missouri River.

Communitization Agreements

Continuing coordination with Federal Partners on the approval of Fort Berthold CAs.

Reviewed Fort Berthold Agency pending Upland CA's (59) for 100% allotted ownership for further adjudication and recommendation to approve.

Document Processing

The IESC assists the BIA agency by processing Accounts Receivable routing transactions, Oil and Gas Leases, Oil and Gas Lease Assignments, and Communitization Agreements.

Beneficiary Support to BIA Agency

The IESC coordinated a workgroup to process, research, and report on Phase II Lockbox balances and outstanding invoices. Lockbox cleanup is a priority of the AS-IA.

Rural Water Right of Way (ROW) Project

IESC facilitated a Rural Water ROW workgroup with membership from

- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
- Ft. Berthold Indian Reservation (FBIR), Rural Water Department
- Three Affiliated Tribes, MHA Energy Office
- BIA Great Plains Region, Land Titles, and Records Office
- BIA Ft. Berthold Agency

The workgroup accomplished a 30% increase in recorded ROWs in TAAMS for the FBIR Rural Water Department. Completed research on all recorded payments received in Ft. Berthold Lockbox to pay for easements for Ft. Berthold Rural Water System.

Fort Peck Agency Active Projects

Oil & Gas Lease Sale

Compiled and provided Fort Peck Agency and Division of Energy and Minerals Development with a tract listing of 2,513 potential/active mineral tracts.

Uintah & Ouray (U&O) BIA Agency Active Projects

Communitization Agreements

- 31 Communitization Agreements submitted by the U&O Agency: 7 CAs have been completed and 24 are in the adjudication process.
- 7 CA lease amendments: 2 completed, 5 in process.
- Created SOP for the U&O Communitization Agreement adjudication process for the IESC, U&O Tribe & Agency.

Oil and Gas Leases

49 Oil & Gas lease assignments completed.

Rights of Way

ROW Name Change Project – 1,021 ROWS were submitted to IESC, of these 1,011 have been completed, the remaining 8 are pending Agency Action.

ROW Assignment Project - 743 ROWs submitted to IESC, of these 738 ROWs were completed and 114 need to be corrected for defects. 5 ROWs are pending Agency Action.

Lease Expiration Project

The IESC is assisting with a Lease Expiration Project and energy related ROWs and Assignment processing. Also, began the lease segregation process for EDA leases for current & future submitted CAs.

Southern Ute BIA Agency Active Projects

Lease Segregation Research project

IESC has concluded the research and provided recommendation memo to the Southern Ute Agency (SUA) in January 2023.

Energy Related Leases and Communitization Agreements

IESC has processed (1) Communitization Agreement reviews

Indian Mineral Development Agreement (IMDA) Reviews

IESC has coordinated and completed (2) Indian Mineral Development Agreement (IMDA) lease reviews and provided recommendations for approval to SUA.

National Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

The BIA, BLM, ONRR, BTFA SOP Training

- Virtual session held December 13-14, 2022, for 63 students
- Virtual session held March 28-29, 2023, for 52 students
- To date, the IESC has trained over 825 Federal and Tribal employees

SOP Attachment Updates (BIA, BLM, ONRR, BTFA)

Completed the updates for the SOP Attachment F (IMDA process) as approved by the Indian Energy Minerals Steering Committee, IEMSC.

IESC Scope Increased

The IESC was notified by BIA Director memorandum dated March 23, 2022, certain Division of Real Estate Services functions are to be performed by IESC. The IESC scope increased to include DRES functions that will allow for modernized energy related business processes, thereby achieving better protection of Trust records and combined efficiencies in energy and mineral development.

Meetings and Trainings

Federal Partnership Collaboration Meeting

The IESC facilitates regular meetings between Federal partners and Tribes to facilitate problem solving on shred oil and gas issues.

Federal Partners Meetings	Dates
Fort Berthold (Federal Only)	January 18, 2023
Fort Berthold Federal and MHA Nation	January 23-24, 2023
Navajo (Federal Only)	April 6, 2023
Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas	February 7, 2023
Rocky Mountain Region	March 9, 2023
Southwest	January 31, 2023
Uintah & Ouray (Federal Only)	November 3, 2023

Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC) and Executive Management Group (EMG)

These entities provide Senior Executive Members from the BIA, Bureau of Land Management, Office of Natural Resources and Revenue, and Bureau of Trust Funds Management for coordination and oversight.

Meeting	Dates	Purpose
Executive Management Group	January 10, 2023	Reviewed the IESC Annual Operating Plan for FY 2023. IESC provided updates on accomplishments and current projects
Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee	January 11, 2023	Provided mineral status, mineral information updates, and reported progress on IESC action items to be completed by next meeting scheduled for June 21, 2023

Delegation of Authority Updates

The IESC Indian Affairs Manual 48 IAM has been published reflecting organizational realignments, roles, and responsibilities consistent with IESC's new delegation.

Please find the publication here:

https://www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/dup/assets/public/raca/manual/pdf/48-iam-1_iesc-overview_final_signed_508.pdf

TAAMS Mineral User Group

The Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) User Group is a body of subject matter experts/Realty Specialists. The group meets regularly to identify user needs for the TAAMS system, draft system modification requests, complete user acceptance testing, business rule development/modifications, and works with the Contracting Officer's Representative for the TAAMS contract to address CGI, Inc. (TAAMS vendor issues or recommendations).

Mineral Bonds/Sureties for Nationwide Bonds

The IESC will house and maintain original BIA nationwide sureties for energy and mineral companies.

Backlogged Bonds

Nationwide bond processing was to be transferred to IESC in April of 2022, and final approval in October 2022. IESC inherited was a backlog of 36 bond requests (pending from 2016-2022). IESC processed 30 of the backlogged bonds, 6 on-going.

Inventory of Bond Files

A complete inventory was completed for the nationwide bond physical files. IESC noted a total of 400 nationwide bonds that vary in status and have been filed.

Bankruptcies

The IESC has responded to 11 requests from the Solicitor and DOJ for information related to energy and mineral bankruptcies.

TAAMS Mineral Module

The IESC is coordinating the Mineral Users Group for BIA and is currently reviewing the TAAMS business rules for the Mineral Module.

Indian Solid Minerals Training

Onshore Energy and Mineral Lease Management Interagency SOP, Indian Solid Minerals training coordinated by the IESC held on March 28-29, 2023.

Data Collection and Tracking

IESC developed a documented process to:

- Track its review and response times
- Enhance data collection efforts
- Generate a FY2023 report on the number of pending and approved oil and gas contracts
- Sort data by BIA Region
- Data presented at monthly virtual Regional Realty Officer Meetings

FY 2023 Status of Nationwide Bonds as of March 2023

Overall, 66 nationwide bond requests have been logged, and 41 have been approved, completed, and distributed as of March 2023.

NATIONWIDE BONDS	REQUEST	PENDING REVIEW	DRAFTED	PENDING APPROVAL	APPROVED	PENDING OBJECTIONS	OBJECTIONS RECEIVED	COMPLETED
APPROVAL	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
RELEASE	23	5	0	0	0	2	3	13
CONTINUATION	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
RIDER	20	9	0	0	0	0	0	11
REPLACEMENT	6	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
TOTALS	66	20	0	0	0	2	3	41

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

Contractor Sought for Clean Energy Initiative

The IESC established a work strategy to support the Department's goal to further clean energy initiatives. IESC, in collaboration with the Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) successfully drafted and advertised a solicitation package for a professional services contract, receiving multiple bids that are currently being evaluated. The professional services contractor will lead the READI effort.

Outreach and Consultation

The READI process is aimed at presenting clean energy development options to Tribal and Individual Indian Owners and receiving input through structured and coordinated dialogue. The READI Program will provide a forum for the following:

- Enhanced outreach and communication to Tribes on existing renewable energy development opportunities (i.e., assistance programs from the Department of Energy and Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD))
- Advice on how to structure consultation, outreach, and listening sessions to Tribes and Individual Indian owners
- BIA Regional and Agency Offices engagement - future events to be determined

- Comments on needed regulatory updates, process development, and streamlining leasing procedures
- Potential additional public resources and support functions to include technical assistance, permit coordination, and others for Tribes

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Section 40601 Tribal Orphaned Well Grant Program

IESC will be assisting with grant review and on-going technical assistance for program development. A Grant management specialist has been hired to assist in this collaborative effort with the Orphaned Well Project Office.

Renewable energy implementation on Indian lands could be expanded through a comprehensive process like that of fluid minerals on Indian lands, subject to the preferences of the sovereign Tribal and Individual Indian owners.

Expanding the clean energy focus may include establishing new regulatory provisions that provide for regularly advertised, competitive clean energy sales, lease title maintenance and designation, renewable facility energy permitting, revenue collection and disbursement, and comprehensive valuation, accounting compliance, and enforcement of these activities.