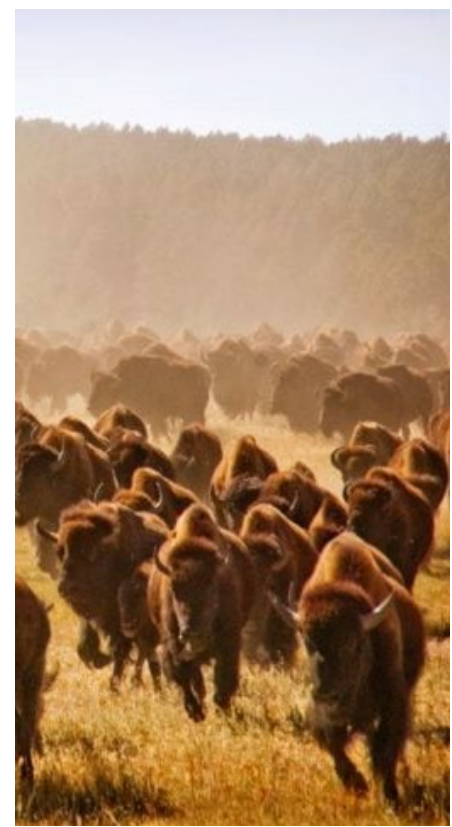


FY 2023 Accomplishment Report

October 1, 2022 – September 30, 2023

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Office of Trust Services





Photos: Blackfeet Nation, DOI
Intertribal Bison Council, Bob Wick

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS FACTS

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) was established in 1824 under the War Department and transferred to the Department of the Interior in 1849. BIA provides services to American Indian and Alaska Natives from the 574 federally recognized Tribes in the 48 contiguous States and Alaska. More than 80 percent of Indian Affairs employees are American Indian or Alaska Native.

OFFICE OF TRUST SERVICES

Who We Serve

The 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 59 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.

Our Mission

The BIA OTS carries out the Indian Affairs' trust responsibilities to protect, develop, manage, and enhance Indian trust resources for the benefit of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples. This includes expanding economic opportunities through effective trust management that recognizes and supports Tribes' self-governance and self-determination.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Office of Trust Services (OTS) prepares the Annual Fiscal Year (FY) Accomplishment Report 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, formulate policy and directives and engage in collaboration with partners to advance our goals.

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October 31, 2023

Greetings,

As we end another Fiscal Year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on a few of our OTS accomplishments you will read about in this report. This year we have restructured our operations and added new talent in the areas of Geographic Information, Environmental Services, Fire and Workforce and Youth Development. The new Division of Resource Integration and Services was the result of a natural evolution from a GIS Boots on the Ground initiative last year to more tribal engagement in setting priorities. We are actively recruiting talent through our Pathways Internships and a new Indian Youth Service Corp. In addition, the BIA Museum are protecting, preserving, and displaying tribal cultural art and artifacts in offices nationwide and through online museum collections.

Our Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS), the official ownership and land management system for the Bureau of Indian Affairs was enhanced with new modules for Leasing and Rights of Way. Probate of Indian Estates was a stove piped process for information gathering on deceased Indian beneficiaries of trust land on the BIA-side and adjudication of estates and Probate orders by the Office of Hearings and Appeals. Going paperless isn't the only benefit of the automated TAAMS Probate Module. Probate accounting, data management, training and data for decision making has been enhanced.

The HEARTH Act leasing regulation approval for six (6) Tribes this year supports tribal self-determination by transferring approval authority for business, housing, agriculture, wind solar and wind energy evaluation leases to these Tribes. Strike teams consisting of subject matter experts from across the country were employed to address top tribal priorities for on-reservation timber projects, energy and mineral activities and priority reviews of fee to trust applications. Tribal homelands are being restored through tribal acquisition of lands and the transfer of these properties from fee to trust status.

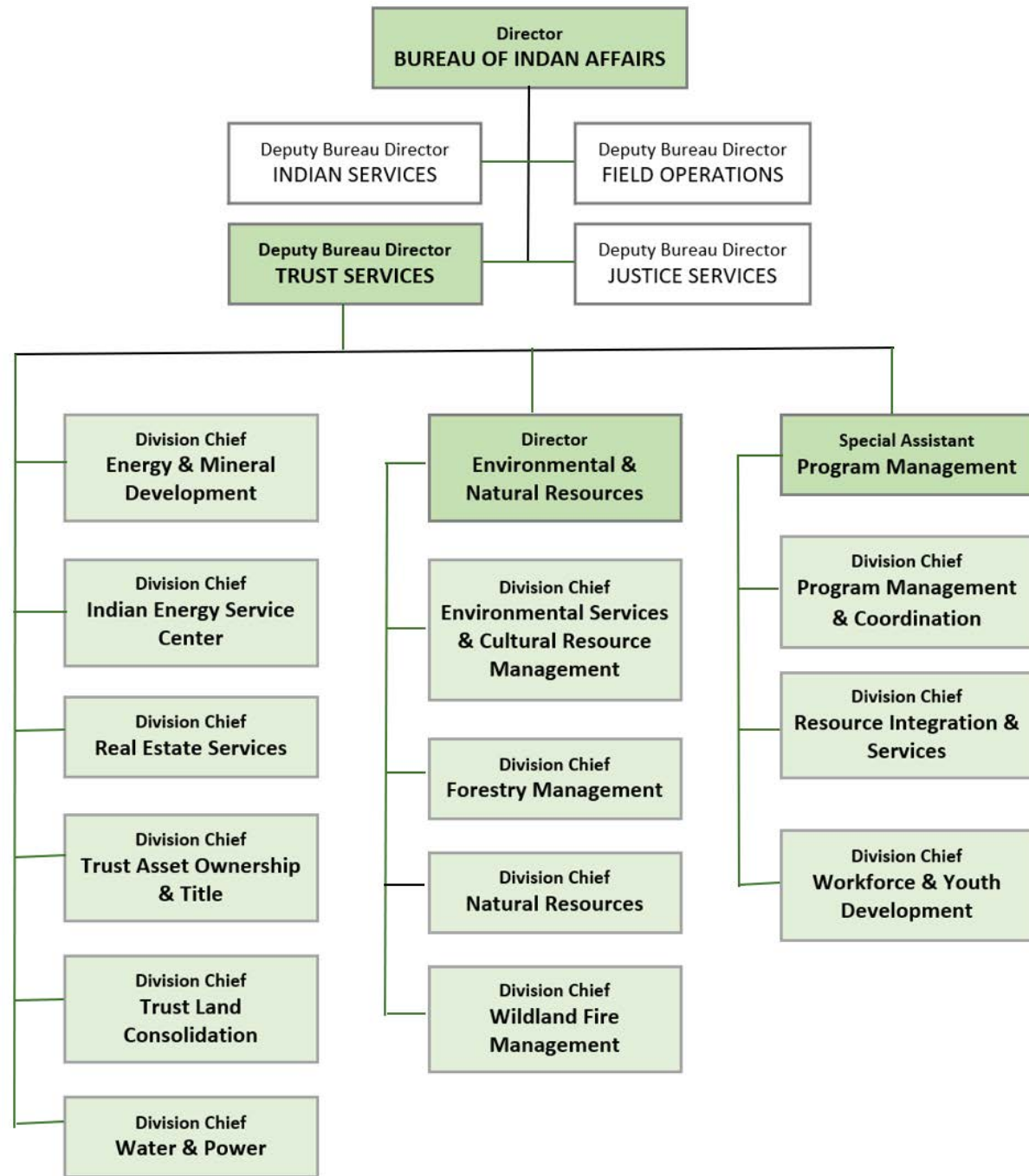
I am optimistic about the future and have guided the development of an Office of Trust Services Strategic Plan we will be rolling out in FY 2024. This plan will align our internal goals with that of the Department and the input we have heard in Tribal Consultation sessions on Trust programs and regulations.

Trina Locke
Directorate of Environmental & Natural Resources

Johnna Blackhair
Deputy Bureau Director-Trust Services

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

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



DIVISION OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT



FY 2023 STAFF AND FUNDING

15	Full Time Employees
33	Vacant Positions
\$23,494,538	FY23 Enacted Appropriation

Mission

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development mission is to provide the best possible technical and economic advice to Indian owners in the evaluation and development of their energy and mineral resources. The two main regulations that guide DEMD's work are [the Indian Mineral Development Act section 7](#) and the [Energy Policy Act](#).

DEMD directly supports the assessment and development of renewable energy, conventional energy, and mineral resources on Indian lands through administering annual competitive grant programs available to Tribes and associated technical assistance. The DEMD's staff includes engineers, geologists, and other STEM fields reflective of the conventional and renewable energy and mineral development industries. The DEMD also contain economic development professionals aimed specifically at assisting Tribes build organizational capacity necessary to establish the ability to independently manage energy and mineral resources, in line with the Federal government's priority of supporting Tribal sovereignty.

Lastly, the DEMD also maintains the National Indian Oil & Gas, Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS), which is a major software application designed to assist Indian Tribes in decision-making, resource management, financial planning, and strategic development, and can provide considerable support for Tribes actively managing energy and mineral resources under a self-determination contract or self-governance compact.

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)*"

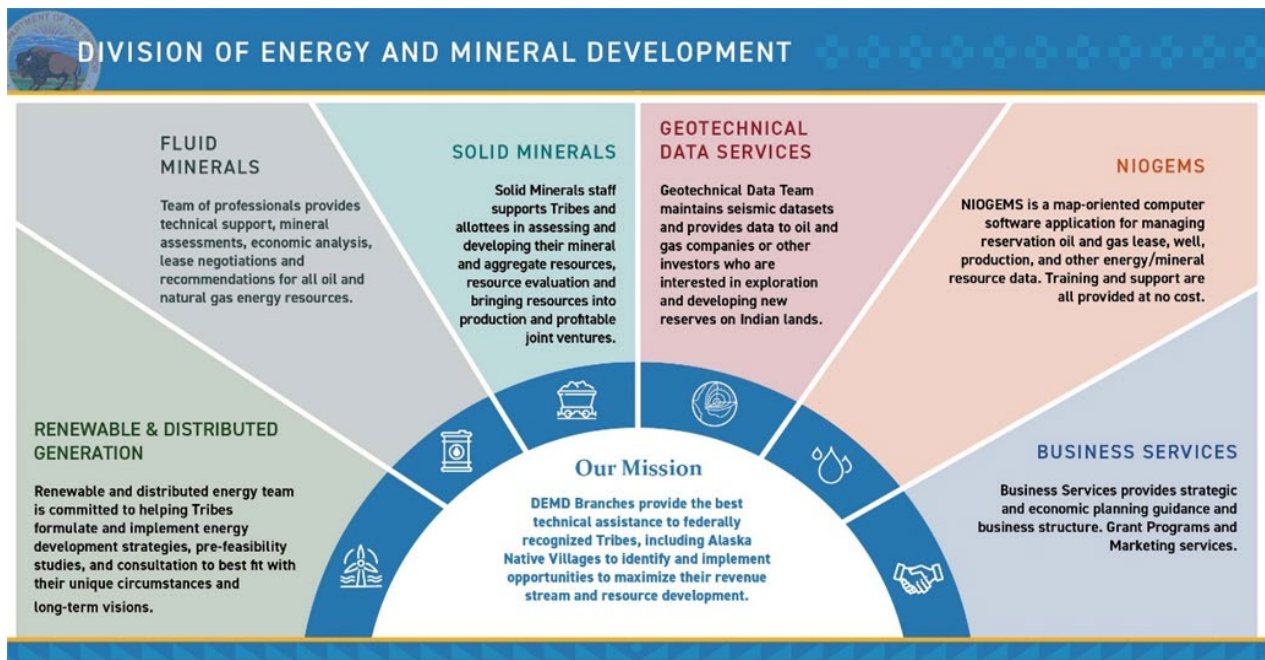
Summary of Economic Activity on Indian Lands, FY 2019

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

DOI Activity (FY 2019)	Direct Economic Contribution (Sales in billions)	Jobs	Value Added (billions, \$)	Total Economic Contribution (billion, \$)
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%)	2.82 (81%)	12.59 (78%)
Other minerals***	0.20 (2%)	1,714 (2%)	0.24 (2%)	0.41 (3%)
Timber	0.05	4.65	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 (6) branches. The first three branches are based on the energy and mineral commodity resources.

- Renewable and Distributed Generation
Solar, Wind, Biomass, Hydropower, Geothermal (from the usage perspective), Microgrids, Hydrogen, and more.
- Fluid Minerals
Oil, Natural Gas, Helium, Geothermal (from the perspective of locating and well drilling/completion), and more.
- 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.

- 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.
- NIOGEMS
The National Indian Oil, Gas, Energy and Mineral System is a map-oriented software application developed and maintained by DEMD. The software, ranging, and data are provided to Tribes to aid in project development and resource management.

- 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.

The personnel who deliver technical assistance include staff credentialed in engineering, geology, geophysics, economics, and business development. They work directly with Tribes and individual Indian owners. These staff bring many years of private business experience and operate in teams to address all aspects of exploration and development of renewable and conventional energy, industrial minerals, rare earth minerals, base metals, and precious metals. The assistance starts at a project's conception, continues to assessment of the resource, and culminates in negotiating agreements that lead to development and production.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Competitive Grant Programs

In FY 2023, DEMD issued \$14.1 million in grant funding and technical assistance valued at \$9.3 million to Tribes nationwide.

Program	Funds	Projects	Tribes
EMDP	\$11.3M	32	28
TEDC	\$2.8M	19	19
Total	\$14.1M	51	38

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. Of those requests, DEMD issued \$11.3 million to 32 projects with 28 Tribal Nations.

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 with 19 Tribal Nations at a total of \$2.8 million.

BRANCH OF BUSINESS SERVICES



Sand and Gravel piles

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.

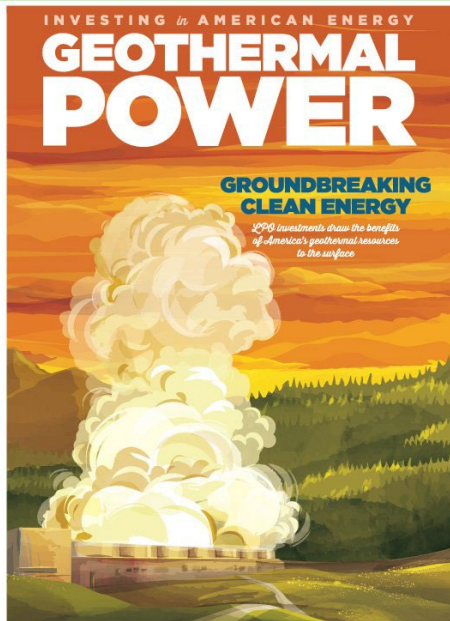
BBS will utilize IMPLAN economic impact software to provide economic input output modeling and analysis. This tool will provide Tribes more insight into energy and mineral development projects and provide industry standard data analysis and open additional access to funding at the city, State, and Federal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

BRANCH OF FLUID MINERALS



DOE Geothermal Power poster

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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Wind River Tribes exploration and acquisition of seismic data at Circle Ridge

A FY 2022 EMDP grant was awarded to the Wind River Tribes to acquire 3D seismic data over and around the Circle Ridge oil field. BFM staff have been and continue to provide technical assistance to maximize value for the Tribes from this project. Given the technical complications and other needs, this project is expected to run multiple years.

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. The expressed desire from Tribes to attend 2024 NAPE has increased by more than 100% compared to 2023! DEMD is expecting to house a significant presence to meet the requests.

Introduction to Oil and Gas Development on Indian Lands Class

The DEMD partnered with Colorado School of Mines Petroleum Engineering and Economic Departments to host an in-person 3-day Intro to Oil and Gas on Indian Lands class. 24 participants were exposed to petroleum geology, petroleum engineering, project economics, risk management, and surface equipment design concepts. Attendees included tribal representatives, realty officers from the BIA, Indian Energy Service Center, and other federal agencies. DEMD is investigating a second course in 2024.

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.

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. Results of this project were presented to the Tribal Council on September 26, 2023, during the above-mentioned trip

Visitation to Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Rocky Boys Reservations

September 25 and 26, staff representing BBS, BFM, and BRAD presented to the tribal councils at Blackfeet, Fort Belknap, and Rocky Boys reservations illustrating DEMD's review of their specific needs and resources. The councils shared their goals and plans. Future projects are expected to germinate from these visitations.

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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

- 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.
- Wind River 3D Seismic EMDP grant management and technical assistance.
- Reserve analysis for multiple reservations.
- Introduction to Oil and Gas Development on Indian Lands spring 2024 class.

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 several challenges in FY 2023. Significant staffing delinquencies and shortage of qualified applicants. Building rapport with council leadership given frequency of turnover in this leadership. Continuing to staff operations to meet the increasing demand for services.

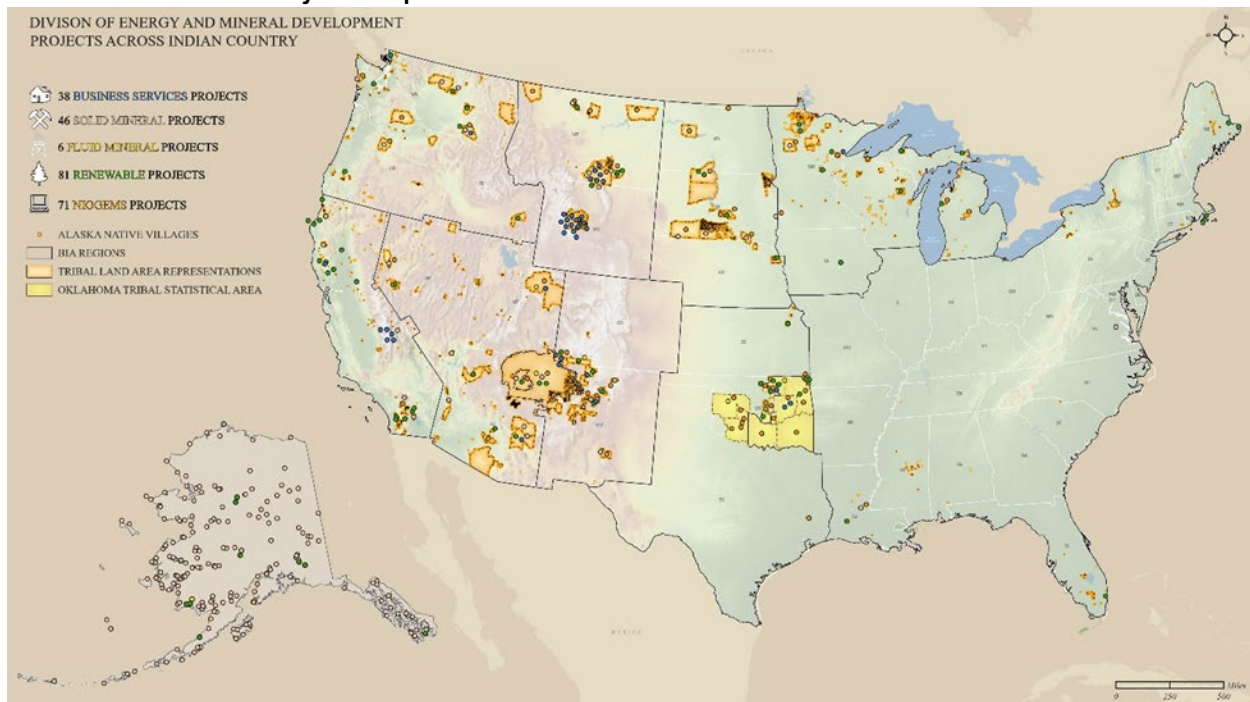
BRANCH OF GEOTECHNICAL DATA SERVICES

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.

- 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.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

50+ Maps Designed

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.

NIOGEMS Tribal databases

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.

Seismic Lines and Surveys

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.

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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO 2024

- 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.

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.

BRANCH OF NATIONAL INDIAN OIL & GAS ENERGY AND MINERALS SYSTEM (NIOGEMS)



What is 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.

FY 2023 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 FY 2023, more Reservations datasets were added to the system to allow for use in more of Indian Country.

Tribal Access

Currently, 13 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 in FY 2023. 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.

- 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 FY 2023 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 to access NIOGEMS is still unclear.

BRANCH OF RENEWABLE & DISTRIBUTED GENERATION



Solar array and Fond du Lac

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.

<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.

Commodities Served

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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Special Initiatives: Grant Projects

At the close of 2023, BRAD was active on forty-six (46) EMDP grant projects and thirty (30) TEDC grant projects. These numbers include twenty-three (23) new EMDP grants and nineteen (19) new TEDC grants kicked-off in FY 2023.

A total of twenty-two (22) EMDP and TEDC grant projects have been completed and closed. Of these, approximately 50% of projects funded found viable development opportunities and are moving on to the next phases for project development.

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

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

DEMD, in partnership with the IESC, has been undertaking the Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative for Indian Country (READI). The mission is to engage with Tribes and to inform decision makers of Tribal visions and needs regarding Tribal renewable energy development plans. With support from a professional services contractor, we have completed the following:

- Establishment of a technical workgroup comprised of Federal Agencies with a role in Tribal renewable energy development.
- Literature review of current federal framework for renewable energy development on Indian land. This literature review will become a living document, serving as tool to help Tribes navigate renewable energy development practices and programs.
- Extensive Tribal consultations has been through seven hybrid and virtual listening session occurring nationwide, August through September 2023.

White House Council and DEMD supports Electric Vehicle Initiative for Tribal Nations

In December 2022, the [White House Council on Native American Affairs](#) (WHCNAA) 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 WHCNAA 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.



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

Technical Services support to 20+ Tribes

BRAD provided technical support to over 20 tribes in FY 2023. Summary highlights include:

Technical Evaluations and 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
- Evaluation of the use of agricultural waste products for biomass energy development.
- 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.
- Identify portfolio solutions of multiple renewable energy options for enhancing tribal sovereignty and promoting cost savings and/or revenue generation for the Tribe.
- Assessing the potential for power generation fueled by natural gas and the installation of solar and battery energy storage systems (BESS) to create a backup power system with potential grid connection.

Advisory Services

- Reviewing 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

- 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

Additional Program Management and Administration Highlights

Advancing Technical Subject Matter Expertise

- BRAD developed Standard Operating Procedures for the Commodity Teams, which serve as the main platform for maintaining and enhancing the Divisions readiness to support Tribes in the wide range of energy development activities. This includes development of 2023-2024 Commodity Team goals and an ongoing series of workshops focusing on Commodity Team Effectiveness.
- BRAD implemented a monthly Learning Series for the branch staff to advance and expand their expertise in topics related to renewable energy and distributed generation, as well as share our experiences about visiting with Tribes.
- Initiated comprehensive hydrogen supply chain analysis to begin defining key opportunities and considerations for Tribes interested in participating in the emerging hydrogen economy.

BRAD Program Management

- BRAD developed an improved Master Project List of all previous renewable and distributed energy EMDP and Technical Assistance projects, which includes performance metrics from each project to act as both a database for future outreach opportunities and as internal data analytics tool.
- BRAD updated internal Standards Operating Procedures for grant monitoring and technical assistance.
- BRAD subject matter experts finalized development of new guidelines and best practices for renewable energy feasibility studies. These new resources will be made available to Tribes and used to improve the quality of work completed under DEMD grant programs.
- BRAD took the lead in updating the EMDP solicitation and participated in the update of the TEDC solicitation.
- Government Accountability Office (GAO) initiated a new engagement on Tribal microgrids. BRAD provided a comprehensive information package regarding the status of microgrid development on Tribal land, including overview of federal funding and technical assistance programs, a listing of known Tribal microgrid projects, and key issues for Tribal microgrid project development.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Special Initiatives:

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

One additional READI engagement session is planned to hear from Alaska Native Villages at the upcoming BIA Providers Conference, currently scheduled November 28-30, 2023, in Anchorage, AK.

A final comprehensive report and recommendations documenting the outcomes of the READI engagement series is expected by November 2023. The BIA team will then begin implementation of recommendations in FY 2024.

Grants and Technical Assistance

In addition to ongoing grant and technical assistance activities, BRAD will also provide technical expertise for promotion and implementation of the next round of EMDP and TEDC solicitations.

We are also expecting an increased workload for renewable energy leasing on trust land, including geothermal leasing. This will involve increased support and coordination with BIA Field Offices for development of sample leases and best practices. BRAD is also collaborating with the Fluid Mineral Branch to expand presence of Tribal renewable energy development opportunities at the North American Prospect Expo.

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.

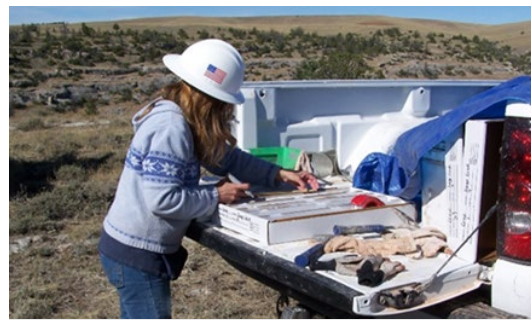
CHALLENGES

Travel and site visits to the Tribal communities we serve is one effective mechanism for building rapport and effective working relationships. However, travel approval processes can be burdensome and have resulted in canceled activities with Tribes request technical assistance. Canceled travel because of burdensome approval processes have directly diminished relationships with Tribes.

The Branch is facing significant staffing vacancies. Efforts to advertise and fill vacancies have also found shortage of qualified applicants. The Branch heavily relies on support from our labor contract to fill gaps and provide services that federal staff would otherwise not be able to fulfill at current staffing levels. Demand for BRAD services are only expected to increase, and staffing will continue to be a challenge going into FY 2024, both for filling vacancies in federal positions as well as retaining labor contract services.

Effective engagement with Tribes during grant and technical assistance activities remains an ongoing challenge and can impact both our relationships with the Tribes we serve as well as the quality of services provided. In FY 2023, a workshop was held for all DEMD staff to learn about the successes and challenges the Division faces in building and sustaining ongoing relationships with Tribes. Over 300 comments were gathered in the workshop and a follow-up survey that revealed a great interest and need in tribal engagement training and improvements in communication and internal processes. Onboarding resources have been developed to better educated new employees on best practices for working with Tribal nations, however, additional efforts may be needed to formulate an improved Tribal Engagement Strategy.

BRANCH OF SOLID MINERALS



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

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	Examples
Base & Precious Metals	Gold, silver, copper
Industrial Materials	Limestone, gypsum, clay, building stone
Aggregates	Sand & gravel, crushed stone
Critical Minerals	Rare earth elements, lithium, manganese, tungsten, coal, uranium

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.

FY 2023 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.



Grinding Rocks Aggregate Plant operated by the Fort Independence Tribe

The aggregate 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 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 FY 2023, 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

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.

Eastern Region

Parts of the region have limited access to high-quality aggregate due to unfavorable geologic formations. Solid Minerals Branch is working with Tribes in the region to find 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. Numerous tribes in this region have asked DEMD for technical assistance with future exploration, aggregate development, and possible mineral development.

Northwest Region

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development worked hand in hand with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Northwest Region, and the Northwest Solicitors office to develop and redefine the processes involved in generating a legitimate mineral leasing document for aggregate development. DEMD brought together BIA representatives, other pertinent federal government agencies involved in this process, and private industry to craft a lease document that fulfilled requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations as well as satisfying the trust responsibility of the federal government to assist tribal allottees in that region.

Pacific Region

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

Western Region

The Division of Energy and Mineral Development worked hand in hand with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Western Region to develop and redefine the processes involved in generating a legitimate mineral leasing document for aggregate development. DEMD brought together BIA representatives, other pertinent federal government agencies involved in this process, and private industry to craft a lease document that fulfilled requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations as well as satisfying the trust responsibility of the federal government to assist tribal allottees in that region.

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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

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.

FY 2023 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.

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.



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
- Advises Tribes on appropriate corporate structures

- Setting up legislation concerning effective business environments
- Financial analysis and loan guarantee information

CHALLENGES

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.

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.

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.

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.



Oil rigs Wind River and Solar panels on tribal land

FY 2023 STAFF AND FUNDING

25	Full Time Employees
14	Vacant Positions
\$4.672M	FY 2023 Enacted
\$1.150M	FY 2023 Tribal Priority Allocation

- Managing risks appropriately by providing support and technical assistance in the assessment of the economic, social, and environmental impacts of energy development

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 Departments 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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Section 40601 Tribal Orphaned Well Grant Program

The Orphaned Well Program Office provides funding to administer a program for plugging wells on Federal land, State lands and Tribal land.

The IESC was initially tasked with assisting the Office Environmental Policy and Compliance OEPC to facilitate the Tribal portion of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation BIL specifically section 40601, which provides \$150 million specifically for Tribal land reclamation and plugging of orphaned wells. The IESC facilitated two Tribal Consultations sessions regarding the programs tribal grant guidance in October of 2022 This work was in coordination with the OEPC and the AS-IA. Applications for the grant program were accepted between, November 18, 2022, through February 21, 2023. In January of 2023 the Orphaned Wells Program Office (OWPO) was established by Secretarial [Order 3409](#).

The IESC, through a Technical Review Team, evaluated applications, in coordination with OWPO, and provided award recommendations to the OWPO for final grant award.

- The IESC contributed to the Tribal Grant Guidance issued by the OEPC.
- The IESC hosted a series of Office Hours available to Tribes during the application period.
- Participated in the Technical Evaluation Panel for the Federal Orphaned Well Program, Plugging & Abandonment IDIQ. Reviewed 15 proposals and made selection based on SOW criteria.
- A Grant management specialist has been hired to assist in this collaborative effort with the Orphaned Well Project Office
- IESC meets weekly with OWPO office for ongoing coordination of Tribal Grant Program.

- IESC has continued work on developing a comprehensive inventory of orphaned oil and gas wells on Indian lands.
- The IESC is currently working on the submission to the BLM IDIQ on a Tribal In Lieu of grant application.

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.

SOP Attachment Updates (BIA, BLM, ONRR, BTFA)

Completed updates for the SOP Attachment F (IMDA process) as approved by the Indian Energy Minerals Steering Committee, IEMSC. Document was made effective April 20, 2023.

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT ENGINEERING BRANCH

FY 2023 Completed Projects

Customer	Quantity	Activity
Fort Berthold	1	Updated fillable Communitization Agreement checklist
IESC Detail	1	BLM Branch Chief detailed to IESC Deputy Director for 7 months
ND Field Office	77	Engineering Reviews of Applications for Permit to Drill
ND Indian Leases	18	Suspension of Production Reviews
OK and ND	12	Production Accountability Records Analyses
OK Field Office	124	Engineering Reviews on Indian Leases
OK Field Office	138	Adjudication Reviews on Indian Leases
Orphaned Well Program	2,900	Conduct data analysis for idled Indian Well Inventory across nation
READI	1	Reviewed Renewable Energy Deployment Initiation (READI) scope of work for procurement of contracting services & evaluated bids
Uintah & Ouray	1	Created fillable Communitization Agreement checklist
Uintah & Ouray	6	Communitization Reviews
Uintah & Ouray	1	Updated BLM portion of Standard Operating Procedures

FY 2023 Projects On-Going or Awaiting Agency Action

Customer	Quantity	Activity
Fort Berthold	2	Communitization Agreements reviewed (on-going)
Fort Peck	1	Lead for Oil and Gas Lease Sale Team (awaiting agency action)

BUREAU OF TRUST FUNDS ADMINISTRATION

BTFA branch assisted in (4) records move projects this fiscal year. Shawnee BTFA Field Office, BTFA Eastern Region Office, BTFA Northern California Field Office and BTFA Pacific Regional Office.

BTFA branch presented a training on “How to Reconcile Explanation of Payment (EOPs) to Individual Indian Money (IIM) Quarterly Statements” to Western Region BIA office.

BTFA branch assisted and responded to (43) beneficiary oil and gas inquires this fiscal year.

Outreach

- BTFA branch assisted with the following beneficiary outreaches: U&O Virtual Indian Landowners Meeting, Ute Mountain Ute at White Mesa Community.
- Attended and represented IESC at the North American Prospect Expo (NAPE). Assisted with staffing the NAPE booth with DEMD to offer information and answer questions of attendees. Attended the Renewable Energy Pavilion, the Bitcoin Mining, and the Women in Energy Sessions.
- Attended and represented IESC at the Department of Energy Tribal Energy Summit.
- Attended and represented IESC at the Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) Tribal Engagement Sessions.

OFFICE OF NATURAL RESOURCES & REVENUE

Referrals submitted to ONRR for compliance issues on Indian properties resulted in additional royalties collected of \$758,180 for FY 2023.

Reviewed 924 different Indian Properties for volume comparison compliance.

Indian Lease Review Project – collected, researched, and reviewed 3,471 leases to have major portion and dual accounting requirements identified for all producing Indian leases.

Assisted Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE) with the creation of their Tribal handbook for their newly created National Tribal Engagement Program

Supported BSEE with promoting their first Director Tribal Roundtable meeting by sending it to all BIA offices to disseminate the information to Tribes in their region.

REAL ESTATE SERVICES RESPONSE TEAM

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.

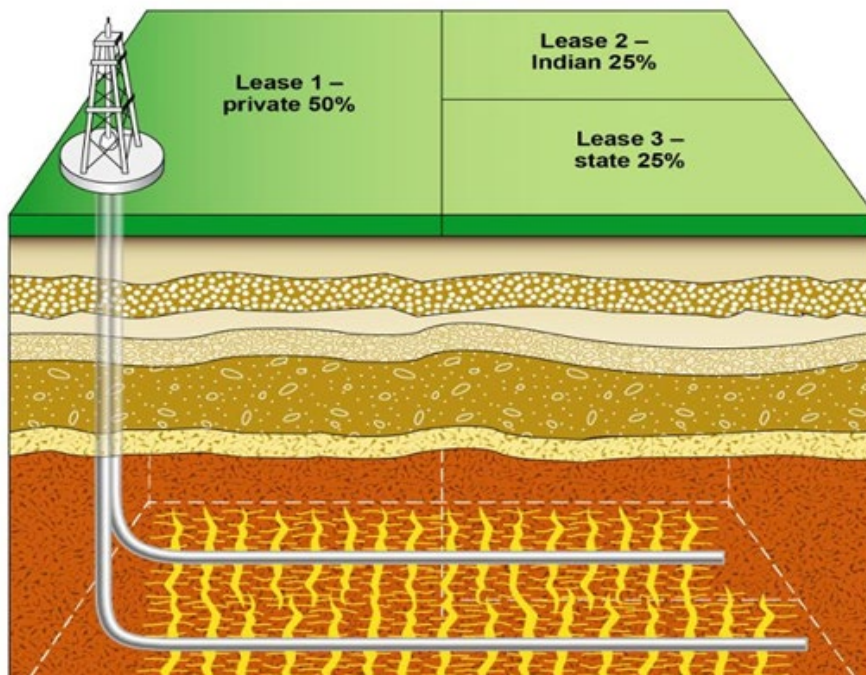
Rural Water Right of Way (ROW) Project

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, Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation (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.

Example of Royalty Sharing Based on an Approved Communization Agreement
Communization Agreements (Source GAO-16-553)



The IESC has perfected over 257 Communization Agreements (CA) since 2017, resulting in over \$1.8 billion in estimated royalty revenue to Indian Tribes and individual Indian mineral owners. The IESC has completed a total of 16 CAs during FY 2023.

This activity is performed in coordination several BIA Agencies: Fort Berthold, Uintah & Ouray, and Southern Ute.

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 an 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

Fort Berthold BIA Agency Active Projects

Communization 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.

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 Energy Development Agreement (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 (3) Communitization Agreement reviews. Over \$3,3 million in immediate revenues for the Tribe was made available upon approval and countless more dollars will be earned through these oil and gas leases.

Indian Mineral Development Agreement (IMDA) Reviews

IESC has coordinated and completed (3) Indian Mineral Development Agreement (IMDA) lease reviews and provided recommendations for approval to SUA.

REAL ESTATE SERVICES SUPPORT TEAM

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.

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

Regulation Updates

Weekly meetings are held with the Office of the Solicitor and representatives from BLM, ASIA and DEMD to review and update 25 CFR 211, 212, 225. Efforts are on-going.

Mineral Royalty Accounting Distribution (MRAD)

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.

MRAD operations involve 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

IESC has been coordinating with Federal partners to establish a plan for modernization of the MRAD process to prevent delays and overloads to the TAAMS, TFAS and MRMSS systems.

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 Handbooks updates

Weekly work sessions are held with BIA and DEMD in the review and updating of the Fluid Minerals Handbook. Efforts are on-going.

Bankruptcies

The IESC has responded to 11 requests from the Solicitor and DOJ for information related to energy and mineral bankruptcies.

Data Collection and Tracking

IESC developed a documented process to track its review and response times, enhance data collection efforts and generate a FY 2023 report on the number of pending and approved oil and gas contracts

Each month the IESC has provided a depiction of the number of pending and approved contracts involved with oil and gas for the current fiscal year. The data is broken out by region and has been presented at the monthly Regional Realty Officer Meetings.

A-123 Region and Agency Solids Review

The IESC completed the Indian Affairs' FY 2023 A-123 Control Review Integrated Risk Register and Control Matrixes for Solids program assessable unit. A-123 Program Reviews Completed:

- Crow Agency, Montana
- Western Navajo Agency
- Hopi Agency

The IESC virtually reviewed and tested 7 solid leases according to the DRES A-123 Solids checklist. The IESC submitted review and testing results to the Division of Internal Evaluation and Assessment Office.

Nationwide Bonds

Nationwide Bonds	Request	Pending Reviews	Drafted	Pending Approval	Approved	Pending Objections	Objections Received	Completed
Approval	17							17
Release	27	3				6	3	15
Continuation	3	3						12
Rider	20	8						3
Replacement	7	4						
TOTALS	74	18	0	0	0	6	3	47

The IESC houses and maintains original BIA nationwide sureties for energy and mineral companies.

Overall, 74 nationwide bond requests have been logged, and 47 have been approved, completed, and distributed as of September. The IESC has responded to 25 requests from the Solicitor and DOJ for information related to energy and mineral bankruptcies.

Backlogged Bonds

Nationwide bond processing was to be transferred to IESC in April of 2022, and final approval in October 2022. IESC inherited 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.

Federal Partners Meeting in 2022 and 2023

Federal Partners Meetings	2022 Dates	2023 Dates
Fort Berthold (Federal Only)		Jan 18, Jun 21, Jul 31
Fort Berthold Federal & MHA Nation		Jan 23-24, Jun 28, Aug 8
Navajo (Federal Only)	Oct 20	Apr 6
Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas Region	Feb 7	Aug 22
Rocky Mountain Region		Mar 9, Sep 14
Southwest Region		Jan 31, Jul 11
Uintah & Ouray (Federal Only)	Nov 3	May 4

The IESC facilitates regular meetings between Federal partners and Tribes to facilitate problem solving on shred oil and gas issues.

Meeting	2023 Dates	Purpose
Executive Management Group	Jan 10, Jun 14	Reviewed the IESC Annual Operating Plan for FY 2023. IESC provided updates on accomplishments and current projects
Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee	Jan 11, Jun 15	Provided mineral status, mineral information updates, and reported progress on IESC action items to be completed by next meeting scheduled for Jun 21, 2023

These entities provide Senior Executive Members from the BIA, BLM, ONRR, and BTFA for coordination and oversight.



Standard Operation Procedures Training, August 1-2, 2023, Lakewood, CO

Communitization Agreement Bootcamp

February 24, 2023 - IESC hosted a Communitization Agreement Bootcamp Training for the MHA Nation, Energy Department

March 14-15, 2023 – IESC hosted a Communitization Agreement Operator’s Meeting for Operator’s on the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, ND to address CA processing on the Little Missouri River

Nationwide Standard Operation Procedures (SOP) Training

Virtual SOP Training: Dec 13-14, 2022 (65 students) and Mar 28-29, 2023 (52 students). In Person Training: August 1-2, 2023,(36 students) The BIA, BLM, ONRR, and BTFA coordinate this SOP training. Since SOP training began the IESC has trained over 956 Federal and Tribal employees.

TAAMS Virtual Minerals Training

- Feb 28-Mar 2, 2023 (11 students)
- Jul 18-20, 2023, (6 students)

IESC Trainings Attended

- Mar 31, 2023 - BTFA “What is a Fiduciary?” training
- Apr 12, 2023 - HEARTH Act Realty Training
- May 2023 - BTFA Fiduciary Trust Officer annual meeting

Other Staff Training

- Supervision for Experienced Supervisors
- Contract Officer Representative Level II
- Bureau of Land Management, Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity Contracts Training
- Office of Natural Resources Revenue, Oil & Gas Operations Reporting (OGOR)
- Compliance Federal and Indian Billing
- Lease Language & Valuation Terms
- BIA, TAAMS Minerals & Lockbox
- BLM- Oil & Gas Agreements
- BTFA Leadership Training
- Department of Justice Litigation Holds

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

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, advertised, and selected solicitation package for a professional services contract, receiving multiple bids that are currently being evaluated.

The professional services contractor will lead the READI effort.

- Clean Energy Development 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 provides 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 DEMD)
- Advice on how to structure consultation, outreach, and listening sessions to Tribes and Individual Indian owners
- BIA Regional and Agency Offices engagement
- 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 Tribe

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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

The IESC continues to support Inter-bureau coordination on:

- Administrative appeals and precedent-setting acreage/boundary determinations for leases affected by updated cadastral determinations along water ways on Indian lands because of river course migration.
- Lands affected by judicial review (active litigation in the US District Court System), with respect to lands underlying the bed of the (Big) Missouri River, which are subject to competing claims against title.

Tribal Engagement Sessions held by the professional services contractor, IESC and DEMD

Meeting	2023 Dates	Purpose
Virtual/In Person	Aug 21	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino Tulsa – Catoosa, OK
Virtual/In Person	Aug 24	Pechanga Resort Casino – Temecula, CA
Virtual/In Person	Aug 28	Wild Horse Resort & Casino – Pendleton, OR
Virtual	Sep 6	Online
Virtual	Sep 7	Online
Virtual/In Person	Sep 11	National Indian Programs Training Center – Albuquerque, NM
Virtual/In Person	Sep 22	Grand Traverse Resort, Acme ,MI



FY 2023 STAFF

7 Full Time Employees
 2 Vacant Positions

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 hep tribal communities reap the economic benefits from their land.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Tribal Trust Land Homeownership Act

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).

TAAMS Mortgage Module

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

Lending Focus Group

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

HUD Loan Guarantee Updates

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

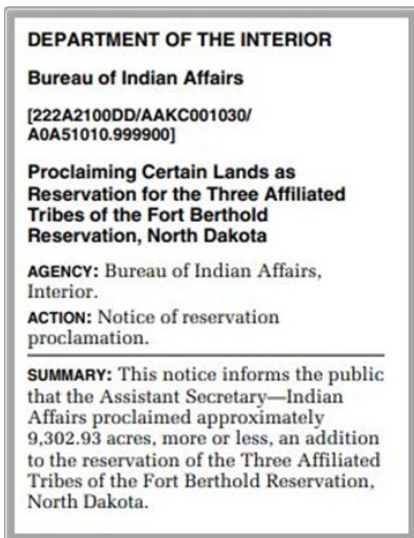
On-going assistance to Regions and Agencies, HUD-Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) and the Veterans Administration (VA) on mortgages.

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 as 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
- Identify internal timeframes for processing applications

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.

FEE TO TRUST STRIKE TEAM

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (AS-IA) re-established the FTT Strike Team (Strike Team) from FY 2022 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 deeds were approved in TAAMS.
- Weekly monitoring High-profile cases in 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)
- Alaska Providers Conference (Nov 2022)
- Crow Creek Sioux Tribe
- Turtle Mountain Band (Oct-Nov 2022)

FY 2023 Regulation, Policy, Handbook and Departmental Manual Updates

Document 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). In addition, the policy implements Realty staff Land Description Training requirements.*

GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM STRIKE TEAM

Regional Meetings

Presentation for the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) on Land Description Evaluation and Validation (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 and Validation (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 FY 2023
- 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.

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

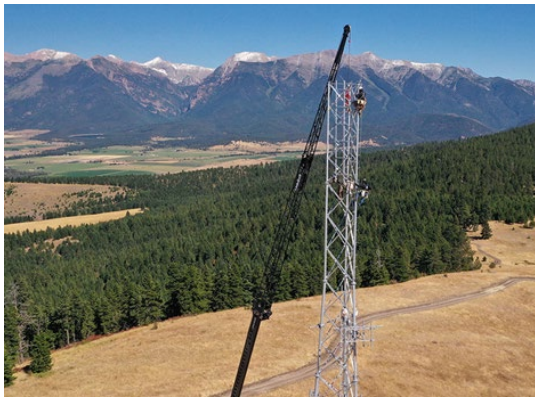
Actively participating in revising the Agricultural lease regulations in 25 CFR 162.

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

Broadband

Streamlining Rights-of-Way (ROW) Policy Update

DRES has drafted an update to NPM-TRUS-44, Streamlining the 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 into a Memorandum of Understanding (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 budge amounts. Ensured \$591,000 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
Apr 3, 2023	210	\$698,946
Mar 1, 2023	628	\$4,665,577

FY 2024 Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership (HEARTH) Act Leasing Regulations Approved

Tribe	Leasing Regulations	Approved
Saginaw Chippewa Tribe of MI	Business	Nov 2022
Pawnee Nation of OK	Agriculture, Business, Residential, Wind Solar & Wind Energy Evaluation	Nov 2022
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians	Agriculture, Business, Residential, Wind Solar & Wind Energy Evaluation	Dec 2022
Mechoopda Indian Tribe of Chico Rancheria	Agriculture, Business, Residential, Wind Solar & Wind Energy Evaluation	Feb 2023
Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians	Agriculture, Business, Residential, Wind Solar & Wind Energy Evaluation	Mar 2023
Southern Ute Indian Tribe	Agriculture, Business, Residential, Wind Solar & Wind Energy Evaluation	Mar 2023

HEARTH Act

Each week a HEARTH Act report is prepared, analyzed, and distributed to Senior levels on the status of leasing regulations received by DRES. The DOI approved six (6) HEARTH Acts leasing regulations as shown in the table above.

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

Trainings and Webinars



HEARTH Act Training

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

- Oct 27, 2022
- Nov 9, 2022
- Jan 27, 2023
- Feb 22, 2023

TAAMS Training

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

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

Lockbox Training

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

- Jan 31, 2023
- Feb 1, 2023

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.

Technical Assistance and Guidance

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

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) Assessable 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 Acquisition & Disposal component, new component in FY 2023. Completed Control Matrices for all components identified for review in FY 2023. Prepared program review and quality review check models for OMB A-123 Circular Reviews for FY 2023.

Program Reviews

- Fort Belknap Program Review, Oct 24-28, 2023
- Fort Berthold Program Review, Nov 14-18, 2023

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

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.



BRANCH OF LAND TITLE & RECORDS

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Policies and Handbooks

All policies and handbooks were completed in the first half of FY 2023. The Branch of Land Titles and Records (LTRO) completed standard operating procedures 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 Transactions

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

CHALLENGES

Staffing

Adding positions and staff for DLTR to better serve Regions and Tribes. Review of Regional LTRO Organizational Charts to study workflow processing, reviewed personnel retention options regarding grades and positions, and further develop business rules and processes.

GIS Dataset Parcel Project

Support the ongoing creation of a 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.

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 LTRO in collaboration with the Division of Real Estate Services implemented a title defect correction project to address active or unaddressed title defects which appear on title status reports. LTROs reviewed encumbrances to assure that no corrections have been submitted. After document review, LTROs notified home Agencies of documents requiring correction. This is an ongoing project.

Lockbox Phase 3

The Lockbox project 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. This is an on-going project.

National Parcel Project On-Going

The National Parcel Project is creating mappable polygons from TAAMS records. The project is continuing by including a few Regional Cartographic Technicians.

LTRO Process Training

Presented LTRO Document examination and recording process at both National Lockbox and TAAMS Title classes.

BRANCH OF PROBATE SERVICES

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Management of TAAMS System

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.

TAAMS 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

TAAMS Collaboration with Federal Partners

On-going collaboration with our DOI partners, ONRR and BLM to streamline data sharing. 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.

TAAMS Audits Completed

TAAMS User Audit completed with no reconciling items

High Impact Service Providers (HISP) Project

This [BIA HISP Probate Project](#) was newly designated in FY 2022 and FY 2023 BIA and Probate 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

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024



Cloud computing free photo from Pixabay

Cloud Hosting Environment

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

- Implementation will allow 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](#) (FITARA) 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 TRUST LAND CONSOLIDATION



Caldera Valley

FY 2023 STAFFING AND FUNDS

21	Full Time Employees
2	Vacant Positions
\$8M	Indian Land Consolidation
\$2M	Tribal Land Acquisition

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

In the first half of FY 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 FYr 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

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

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.

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 FY 2023 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 FY 2022 for the BIA to continue land consolidation efforts beyond the Buy-Back Program. An additional \$8 million was provided in FY 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



Initial Trust Land Consolidation Efforts

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. The Division also began implementation at a third location (Umatilla) in FY 2023 using appraisals obtained by the Tribe. Accomplishments to date at these initial locations include:

- 747 purchase offers extended
- 177 fractional interests acquired
- 3,503 equivalent acres consolidated under Tribal ownership

Through these initial implementations, carried out in accordance with an approved initial implementation plan, the Division successfully tested and confirmed all new processes and procedures and built constructive relationships with partners for land acquisition efforts going forward.

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. The Division has entered into an interagency agreement with the Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO) to provide appraisals for additional highly fractionated locations, and a fourth location is scheduled for implementation in FY 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

Staffing

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.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Land & Water Conservation Fund – Tribal Land Acquisition

A top priority identified by Tribes at the Department's 2021 Tribal listening session on Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) opportunities, was direct access to LWCF funding for Tribal land acquisition, without existing program requirements to partner with or apply through states.

In FY 2024, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services requested \$12 million in discretionary unobligated funds for the creation of a new LWCF Tribal land acquisition program. The Division of Trust Land Consolidation was assigned responsibility in Spring 2023 for administering the funding.

BIA will develop its own process and criteria for allocating LWCF Tribal land acquisition funding in a manner that advances the BIAs mission and goals, maximizes opportunities for Tribes and Alaska Natives, and meets statutory LWCF requirements. The Division led three Tribal Consultation Sessions in September 2023 to present and seek Tribal input on proposed criteria.

Hire and Fill Key positions

Took all necessary actions to get new Tribal Relations Advisor positions classified, advertised, and filled. The Tribal Relations Advisors are key to carrying out our mission now that the Buy-Back Program has ended, with primary responsibility for coordination and communication with Tribal and Federal partners.

TAAMS Trust Land Consolidation Module and Additional Start Up Actions

Took all necessary actions for successfully standing up a new Division of Trust Land Consolidation, to build on the success of the Buy-Back Program by continuing to acquire fractional interests in trust or restricted land from willing sellers. This required creating a new module in TAAMS for processing transactions, working out new processes and procedures with Federal partners, preparing and obtaining approval on an initial implementation plan, developing a long-term strategic plan, drafting and working with Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA) to get new program policies issued in a timely manner, entering into a preliminary agreement with AVSO to provide appraisals, and working with Tribal leadership and staff and BIA Regional and Agency leadership and staff on successful initial implementations.

New & Land Limited Tribes – Land Acquisition

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services received \$2 million annually for FY 2022 and FY 2023; for Tribal Land Acquisition. In Spring 2023, the Division of Trust Land Consolidation was assigned responsibility for administering the funding. The Division prepared and distributed a Request for Proposals with the goal of awarding funds before the end of FY 2023. In accordance with instruction from Indian Affairs leadership, award of the initial funding available was focused on “new” and “land limited” Tribes, to assist these Tribes in establishing a Tribal trust land base over which to exercise their sovereign authority. The definition of “new and land limited” Tribes was developed in coordination with the Solicitor’s Office and the Division of Real Estate Services.

A total of 12 funding proposals were received: 7 applications from Tribes under the jurisdiction of the Alaska Region, 4 applications from Eastern Region, and 1 application each from the Rocky Mountain and Western Regions.

The Division, in consultation with the respective Regions, determined that 9 of the applicant Tribes were not eligible for the funding opportunity because they did not meet the definition of “new and land limited” which was provided in the Request for Proposals.

A committee assembled by the Division reviewed, scored, and ranked all eligible proposals, and the following awards were made in September 2023:

- The Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians of Montana proposal will be fully funded and awarded \$500,000 for the Historic 57 Land Project.
- The Nansemond Indian Nation received the remaining FY 2022 funding of \$1.5 million for the Greater Bridge Road Complex Project and the initial steps toward acquisition of the Roundtree Property. The Tribe will receive FY 2023 funding when available to cover remaining steps for acquisition of the Roundtree Property.

The FY 2022 funding is under a 2-year account requiring BIA to move quickly on distribution. The FY 2023 funding converted to no year funding that provides more flexibility to negotiate effective terms. The Eastern and Rocky Mountain Regions have completed the contracts to award funds to Nansemond and Little Shell, and both Tribes have endorsed and returned the contracts to the Regions.

If funding is continued in FY 2024, the focus on and definition of “new and land limited” Tribes will be released.



Yakima Reservation Irrigation District

FY2023 STAFFING

20 federal employees

- 2 of the 20 are detailed
- In addition to federal employees, there are over 40 contract employees in 10 DWP programs. The Option Year 3 of the staff augmentation contract was awarded in August 2023 with a contract value of over \$9M.

20 vacant DWP positions

- The Division Chief position has a candidate selected but their starting date is unknown.
- The large number of vacant positions is a critical challenge for DWP.

FY 2023 FUNDING

Enacted Funding FY2023

Branch of Irrigation and Power
(A1121, A1128, A1163, A1122, A1123, A0N30) - \$47,876,000 (includes \$10,000,000 in Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act funding)

Irrigation Operation & Maintenance
There has been an increase of \$1,000,000 for Irrigation Operation & Maintenance

Safety of Dams Branch
(A1124 & A1125) - \$42,052,000

Dam Maintenance
There has been an increase of \$1,000,000 for Dam Maintenance

Water Resources
(A0N34, A0R31, A0R32, A0N9D)-\$28,806,000. There has been an increase of \$2,500,000 from FY22 in the Water Resources Program (TPA) account for small filtration systems for tribes experiencing potable water issues in their homes. The Water Resources Branch also oversees \$90 million per year for mandatory funding allocations including construction indexing review for the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes Water Rights Compact extending through 2031.

Hydropower Compliance Program
(A1126) - \$671,000

FY 2023 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funds

Branch of Irrigation and Power
(Ai112) - \$10,000,000

Safety of Dams Branch (Ai114 & Ai115) - \$39,502,000

Water Rights Settlements Final discretionary payments in FY2023

- Montana Water Rights Protection Act (Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes) - \$1,179,522,000 completed discretionary funding for settlement
- Blackfeet Water Rights Settlement Act (Blackfeet Tribes) - \$102,242,000 completed discretionary funding for settlement
- White Mountain Apache Tribe Water Rights Quantification Act (White Mountain Apache Trust Fund) \$109,106,000 Settlement not to be completed until 2031
- Navajo-Utah Water Rights Settlement Act (Navajo Nation) - \$249,539,000 - completed discretionary funding for settlement

The proposed DWP organizational chart provides opportunities for federalizing several positions currently being performed by contractors, including the qualified American Indians and Alaska Natives hired after their internships. When the DWP organizational chart is approved, it is anticipated that staff from the contract could fill many of the new positions.

- Modernization of the National Indian Irrigation Management System
- Rehabilitation and modernization of Indian irrigation projects and dams

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Pipeline for Indian Preference Hiring

Increased hiring of qualified American Indians and Alaska Natives in the Division of Water and Power (DWP).

A significant portion of DWP staff are federal contractors through a staff augmentation contract. This contract has proven to be an excellent pipeline for recruiting for DWP. Recognizing this, DWP has focused on hiring Indian Preference (IP) candidates and interns under this contract to increase the number of qualified American Indians and Alaska Natives in DWP.

Over the last several years, DWP has hired a total of 4 IP candidates under the staff augmentation contract, including one hired in Fiscal Year 2023.



Mesita Dam

The Mesita Dam is located on the Pueblo of Laguna, NM, was found to be actively failing in February 2023. Complete failure of the dam would have likely resulted in an environmental disaster as uranium contaminated sediments in the reservoir upstream of the dam could have been released into the Rio Grande River Basin. The DWP Safety of Dams Branch prepared an in-house emergency design and worked with BIA Acquisitions to implement an Indian Small Business Economic Enterprise (ISBEE) emergency construction contract that successfully arrested the failure.

Weber Dam, located on Walker River Indian Reservation, NV, experienced historic flooding from early April to mid-September due to record snowpack in the Walker River Basin upstream from the dam. An inspection identified concerns about the integrity of the service spillway in mid-May.

Due to those concerns and the severity of the flooding, the DWP Safety of Dams Branch together with BIA Office of Emergency Management, Acquisitions, Western Region, Western Nevada Agency, and the Bureau of Reclamation completed the following tasks to best prepare for potential failure of the service spillway:

- Activated Response Level 1 of the Emergency Action Plan
- Reviewed every aspect of the service and auxiliary spillways
- Determined that removal of the auxiliary spillway fuse plug and reinforcement of the auxiliary spillway was needed to minimize consequences to the downstream population in the event of failure of the service spillway
- Implemented an Architect/Engineer (A/E) Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity task order to provide 24/7 monitoring of the service spillway
- Implemented an ISBEE materials and construction contract to provide materials and equipment to attempt intervention of a service spillway failure, if needed, and to remove the fuse plug and reinforce the auxiliary spillway

- Developed inundation mapping to show the area's most likely to be flooded during the event (assuming the spillway operated properly) . Developed weekly river flow forecasts for use by the local emergency operations team
- Participated in several meetings with the Walker River Paiute Tribe and local emergency operations to provide technical information about the spillways, information on flooding, and to answer questions.

Fortunately, the service spillway performed well throughout the event. Removal of the fuse plug and reinforcement of the auxiliary spillway provide permanent risk reduction for the downstream population. The DWP Safety of Dams Branch is currently working to evaluate the integrity of the service spillway and to implement any needed repairs.

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 Blackfoot Indian Reservation

BRANCH OF IRRIGATION & POWER

Revenue-Generating Indian Irrigation Projects

The BIA owns and operates, in full or in part, the following revenue-generating Indian irrigation projects:

- Blackfoot
- Colorado River
- Crow
- Flathead
- Fort Belknap
- Fort Hall
- Fort Peck
- Pine River
- San Carlos
- Uintah
- Walker River
- Wapato
- Wind River

BIA's Indian Irrigation Projects serve approximately 25,000 water users and irrigates over 780,000 acres of land.

Power Utilities

In addition, BIA owns and operates, in full or in part, three power utilities:

- San Carlos
- Colorado River
- Mission Valley Power

BIA's Office of Trust Services, Division of Water and Power, Branch of Irrigation Power (BIP) provides policy, advisory, oversight, and technical assistance to 16 congressionally authorized irrigation projects and associated regions, including billing and collection activities for operations and maintenance (O&M) assessments and distributes funds both collected and appropriated for the O&M of those facilities.

In addition, there are over 100 irrigation systems, mostly operated and maintained by the Indian tribes, which were established under the general authority of the 458263 (25 U.S.C. § 13). These 16 irrigation projects and over 100 systems are under the jurisdiction of the specific region or agency where they are located. BIP also provides oversight and technical assistance to three power utilities across two regions and distributes the collected funds for the O&M of those facilities back to the projects.

The individual congressionally authorized power projects provide generation, transmission, and distribution of electrical services to customers within their project service areas. These three power projects are under the jurisdiction of the specific region or agency where they are located:

- San Carlos Irrigation Project – Power Division (Arizona)
- Colorado River Agency – Electrical Services (Arizona)
- Mission Valley Power (Montana), which is currently managed, operated and maintained under a P.L. 93-638 contract with the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.

For the purposes of this report, National Irrigation Information Management System (NIIMS) "FY24 accomplishments", "FY24 tasks going forward" and "challenges, opportunities, best practices" are provided separately from the remaining program activities and are listed first in this document.

NATIONAL IRRIGATION INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (NIIMS)

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NIIMS Metrics (through July 31)

- 8,248 annual and supplemental bills printed and mailed
- ~ \$31.3M in annual O&M revenue collected
- ~ 7,350 total customer payments
- ~ 4,800 electronic payments processed
- 48.5% of total payments paid via electronic payment
- ~ 2,700 delinquent receivables referred to U.S. Treasury
- ~ \$727,000 from customers paid to U.S. Treasury for delinquent irrigation O&M debt

NIIMS Training

NIIMS staff provided eight (8) NIIMS for Users training sessions on topics including:

- New User
- NIIMS for Managers
- Quarterly Update
- NIIMS Refund Process
- Irrigation Operation & Maintenance Overpayments

Lockbox Implementation

NIIMS implemented U.S. Treasury's Lockbox program for receiving and processing irrigation O&M paper payments for 15 out of 16 irrigation projects. Customer bills and bill coupons are updated with a scanline for bank processing; payments are processed Monday-Friday, and a daily data transmission is received from US Bank each day containing payment information; payment images are retrieved and stored electronically per Indian Affairs Records Management policy.

System Audit

NIIMS staff implemented identity and access management controls within the NIIMS system because of the findings of the 2022 Federal Information Security Modernization Act (FISMA) audit and are documented in program policy.

- NIIMS user sessions are automatically terminated at 30 minutes of inactivity
- NIIMS user accounts are disabled at 90 days if no system login is recorded
- A weekly audit of NIIMS user activity is conducted.

Program Documentation

NIIMS staff are currently working researching the capability of enabling multi-factor authentication with Office of Information Management and a monthly audit with reconciliation of NIIMS users is compared with IIS system access requests. Technology (OIMT) staff.

NIIMS program documentation has been created and updated for the following: System Administration Guide, Standard Operating Procedures, Central Office Functions Guide, NIIMS User Training Slides, and five internal use forms.

Paperwork Reduction Act OMB 1076-0141 form series renewal was coordinated with Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action, along with implementation of a Carriage Agreement template.

Updated Webpage

The Irrigation Services webpage on www.bia.gov was updated in coordination with Office of Trust Services.

O&M Rate Setting Sessions

NIIMS staff conducted irrigation O&M rate setting sessions with Northwest, Western, and Rocky Mountain Region irrigation project staff to propose 2025 annual O&M rates.

NIIMS staff coordinated with the Office of the Solicitor on drafting and publishing Federal Register Notices for Proposed and Final Irrigation Rate Adjustments for calendar year 2024.

Customer Overpayments

Implemented a monthly review of customer payment overages eligible for reallocation to another O&M bill or refund. NIIMS staff notify irrigation project staff of customer overpayments and coordinate on documentation and process for clearing the overpayment.

NIIMS Bankruptcy Pilot Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

A MOU modification for NIIMS Bankruptcy Pilot with US Treasury is pending BIA approval. The modification revises the timeline of the original MOU from July 2025 to September 2023 due to low volumes/returns on investment.

Management System Support

Contracting Officer Representative (COR) for NIIMS replacement contract - prepared Enterprise Case.

- This contract provides services for the modernization of three BIA IT systems including NIIMS, Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), and PL477 programs; base year funding is \$6,784,160
- In June 2023, in coordination with the Small Business Administration (SBA), a direct sole award was issued to an 8(a) Alaska Native Corporation (ANC). The replacement solution is Microsoft Dynamics 365 suite Software as a Service (SaaS).
- NIIMS will strive to leverage the existing Authority to Operate (ATO) for BIA's Financial Assistance Social Services and Case Management System (FASS-CMS), hosted in the Microsoft Azure Government Community Cloud tenant.
- Funding for replacing the legacy system includes congressional appropriations of \$1M in the 2023 Omnibus budget and remaining funds provided by Office of Trust Services.

BIA has a two phased requirement for the cloud-based application system:

- Phase 1- build a modernized replica of NIIMS and migrate the data, so the features are equivalent to the existing application
- Phase 2 provides future, optional enhancements. The future enhancements are beyond the base period of the initial contract and are contingent on funding.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

NIIMS Replacement – Continue with tasks for installation, configuration, and implementation of the replacement system; activities include gathering requirements, solution acceptance, installation, initial configuration, data conversion, user testing and implementation, and training. Tentative Go Live is targeted for October 2024. Enhancements and modifications to existing legacy NIIMS functions will be limited.

NIIMS metrics and charting: information sharing with irrigation projects, agencies, and Regions.

- Data quality goals.
- Reduce billing errors and revenue loss.
- Land analysis, potential for geospatial layers.
- Delinquent debt and Taxpayer Identification Number compliance per regulation.
- Continue promoting electronic payment options: billing inserts, and Automated Clearing House (ACH) credit mailer kits for projects.
- Analysis of Bankruptcy Claim Filing pilot project with U.S. Treasury.
- Schedule NIIMS Training: New User, Managers, Quarterly Updates.
- Migration of paper records to electronic: printable reports menu option for temporary file storage.
- NIIMS documentation: Update additional internal use forms and potential for an encroachment permit template.

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, BEST PRACTICES

The NIIMS application is set to be replaced with an updated solution to continue meeting BIA's mission and goals. Irrigation is seasonal, meaning that most BIA irrigation project billing lifecycles are timed with irrigation water supply availability. The billing lifecycle must run on one version of NIIMS, either in the legacy system or replacement system, but not both. Engagement with all invested program areas such as irrigation project, agency, and regional staff; Acquisitions; Office of Information Management and Technology; and Associate – Chief Information Officer will streamline the process for implementation of a complete system replacement.

The transition to a modern technology platform allows for enhanced functionality; it will also further improve our efficiency and greatly reduce the risk of system failure, thereby maintaining compliance with regulations.

IRRIGATION PROJECT AND POWER UTILITY

Wapato Irrigation Project

Drop 1 Pumping Plant, Water Screen, Pumps, and Structure A/E Task Order

- This project is a complete rebuild of the Main Canal Drop 1 Pumping Plant structure built in 1929. The Drop 1 structure is the main distribution point for the primary canals on the Wapato Irrigation Project. It lowers the Main Canal 21 feet, in doing so it generates power to pump 165 cubic feet per second (cfs) to the Highline Canals. Overall cost of the project is estimated at \$20M. The project is currently in the engineering phase.

- A/E contract was successful awarded for Phase 1 (Water Screen Design) and Phase 3 (Drop 1 Condition Assessment) of the task order to Jacobs Engineering for \$1.1M.
- Phase 1 involves designing and installing an automated water screen and trash rake to eliminate the safety risk of having irrigation employees on-site 24/7 removing canal debris.
- Phase 1 is at 90% completion and is scheduled for construction in 2024. Estimated cost is \$6M.

Power Divestiture Study Task Order

- Providing on-going technical assistance for the BIA Power Projects Divestiture effort.
- Maintaining engineering services contract with HDR Consulting for outside expertise on electrical power divestiture options.
- HDR has submitted a draft Final report for Phase 1 divestiture. Remaining on standby for possible Phase 2.

Wapato Main Diversion Dam Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

- This project involves the total reconstruction of the Wapato Main Diversion Dam facility. The Dam was constructed in 1916. Estimated cost for final construction is \$100M.
- Established a project team that included key individuals from the BIA Central Office, Region and Agency, Yakama Nation Engineering, Yakima Lower River Group and DOWL Engineering.

- Negotiated and awarded contract to DOWL Engineering.
- All contract activities are on-schedule and up to date.
- Separated the project into four phases with 21 individual tasks. Currently on Phase 2 of the contract (“Conceptual Design Alternatives and Feasibility Study”); cost is \$1,699,811.
- Phase 2 includes a construction contract for dewatering the Yakima River to gather geotechnical information of the existing dam and perform minor rehab on the headworks. The Phase 2 contract was awarded to McMillen Construction Group for \$4.2M. Dewatering will take place Fall 2023.
- Assisted in the negotiation and implementation of a \$3.5M contract modification to accommodate additional debris removal around the base of the intake towers.
- Final inspection has taken place on the rehabilitation work. Both the engineering and the construction contracts are in the process of being closed out.

Bannock Pumping Plant Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order.

- This project involves modernization and safety improvements to the pumping plant facility. Total project cost is estimated at \$20M.
- Administered the Source Selection Evaluation Board.
- Team leads on the successful award of Phase 1 and 2 (“Condition Assessment, Conceptual and Preliminary Designs”) of the task order to HDR Engineering for \$528,000.
- Identified the best avenue for administration of the construction contract through the BIA Central Office Contracting group.
- Coordinated the assembly of the required contracting documentation and assignment of a Contract Officer.
- Phase 1 and 2 will be complete by May 2024. Phase 3 (“Final Design”) will be negotiated and awarded directly after.
- All contract activities are on-schedule.

Coolidge Dam

Outlet Works Rehabilitation Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order.

- All contract activities are on-schedule and up to date. Contract is currently in final closeout.
- Negotiated and implemented two contract modifications with Stantec Engineering to increase scope of services on the pre-construction support task and the construction administration task, specifically in the areas of inspection and submittal review.
- Modifications and Period of Performance extensions were the result of unforeseen site condition impacts and additional challenges due to COVID.

BIP staff served as co-COR on the Coolidge Dam Outlet Works Construction Contract.

- Negotiated an acceptable award amount to match scope of services. Final award amount was \$12.231M to McMillen LLC. The contract is being administered through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction Branch.

CO River Agency Main Canal

Co-COR for Colorado River Agency Main Canal Check Structures Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

- This project involves the replacement of three large check structures on the main canal. Total project cost is estimated at \$18M.
- Administered the Source Selection Evaluation Board.
- Identified the best avenue for administration of the construction contract through the BIA Central Office contracting group.
- Coordinated the assembly of the required contracting documentation and coordinated assignment of a Contract Officer.
- Awarded the A/E contract to Dowl Engineering for \$320,000
- All contract activities are on-schedule and up to date. Co-COR for Colorado River Agency Main Canal Check Structures Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order
- Final design and permitting is complete for the check structure with the highest chance of failure. Construction for this structure is scheduled for 2024.

Fort Belknap Irrigation Rehabilitation

COR for the Fort Belknap Irrigation Rehabilitation Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

- This project involves the replacement of a small regulating dam. Total project cost is estimated at \$1.7M.
- Final Design and permitting are complete. Construction for this structure is scheduled for 2024. BIP staff to take the lead on this contract.

Pine River Indian Irrigation Project

Ignacio Canal Diversion on the Dr. Morrison Canal

- Awarded Phase I contract to AKANA for the design work to replace the failing structure in the amount of \$241,215.
- Phase II is to construct the replacement structure during the next irrigation off-season.

BIA Irrigation Condition Assessment

Comprehensive Review, Analysis and Update of the BIA Irrigation Condition Assessment

- This project involves analyzing and indexing the current value of all BIA irrigation assets and their associated deferred maintenance costs.
- Contract has been awarded. Total cost is \$206,000. Scheduled completion is 2024.

Fort Hall Irrigation Project

Reservation Main Canal Headworks and Canal: Design and Rehabilitation

- This project involves replacing/rehabilitating the Main canal and headworks at the Fort Hall Indian Irrigation Project. Total cost is estimated at \$10M. Scheduled completion is 2028.
- Technical Evaluation Board has selected the highest qualified contractor for the A&E work. Contract will be awarded early 2024.

Distributed Deferred Maintenance Rehabilitation Funds

Coordinated the distribution of FY 2022 A1128 Deferred Maintenance Rehabilitations Funds, FY 2022 A1163 WIIN Act Funds and assisted with the distribution of FY 2022 Ai112 BIL Funds

- Trained other staff on the process of collecting project information, assembling list of candidate projects, populating the spreadsheet, and initiating fund distributions.
- Maintained the Project Ranking and Prioritization Spreadsheet.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Meetings

Established the agenda and facilitated the FY 2023 BIA Power Meeting at Mission Valley Power in Pablo, MT.

FY 2023 BIA National Irrigation Meeting at the Irrigation Training and Research Center, California Polytechnic University

Reporting

Assisted with FY 2023 DWP-BIP Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report (CAPER) Report submittals.

Assembled the 2023 Project Data Sheets (PDS) for several of the irrigation projects, as well as training other staff on assembling PDS information.

Reviewed draft Irrigation Modernization and Rapid Appraisal reports.

Level II COR Certification

Maintaining Level II Contracting Office Representative Certifications. Established the agenda and facilitated the FY 2023 BIA Power Meeting at Mission Valley Power in Pablo, MT.

Deferred Maintenance

Coordinated with Regional Irrigation Engineers on A1128 deferred maintenance project submissions.

Provided technical assistance to BIA Northwest Region and Fort Hall Agency for the Portneuf Pumping Plant Rehabilitation Project at the Fort Hall Irrigation Project. Project is a design/build through the Shoshone Bannock Tribes.

Technical assistance for establishing a scoping report on the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the Flathead River Pumping Plant to be conducted by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) and Bureau of Reclamation (BOR).

Technical Assistance

Assisted Regional Irrigation Engineers in the development of a Five-Year Project Priority Lists for each of their irrigation projects.

Assisted the Regional Engineer on the Dr. Morrison Chute rehabilitation project at Pine River Irrigation Project.

Assistance for the ongoing landslide issue associated with the Two Medicine Canal at the Blackfeet Indian Irrigation Project. Provided technical assistance to Southwest Region by performing Designed Engineering duties (environmental, water accounting, and operations and maintenance) on behalf of the six Middle Rio Grande Pueblos and Southwest Region.

Provided Navajo Region technical assistance with O&M assessment of Navajo Indian Irrigation Project.

Policy, Oversight and Technical Assistance

Activities

BIP staff completed all Indian Affairs' FY 2023 A-123 Control Review Integrated Risk Register and Control Matrices for four program assessable units, including Power Finance, Power Operations, Irrigation Finance, and Irrigation Operations.

BIP staff also coordinated the A-123 Self Assessments for FY 2023, including Fort Belknap Irrigation Project and San Carlos Irrigation Project (Indian Works and Joint Works).

A-123 Program Reviews Completed:

- Uintah Indian Irrigation Project
- Mission Valley Power
- Wapato Irrigation Project
- Navajo Indian Irrigation Project

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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Meetings

BIA National Power Meeting (tentatively scheduled December 2023 at SCIP)

BIA National Irrigation Meeting and Training for Key Field staff is tentatively scheduled February 2024 at the California Polytechnic State University Irrigation Training & Research Center.

Program Reviews

A-123 Program Reviews Schedule in FY 2024

- Blackfeet Indian Irrigation Project
- Flathead Indian Irrigation Project
- Fort Peck Irrigation Project

Irrigation Projects

Wapato Irrigation Project

Drop 1 Pumping Plant, Water Screen, Pumps, and Structure A/E Task Order

Main Diversion Dam Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

Fort Hall Irrigation Project

Bannock Pumping Plant Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

Colorado River Irrigation Project

Main Canal Check Structures Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

Fort Belknap Irrigation Project

Main Canal Diversion Dam Engineering Services and Construction Management Task Order

Funding

Distribution of A1128 Deferred Maintenance Rehab Funds, A1163 WIIN Act Funds and Ai112 BIL Funds

Operations & Maintenance

Establish O&M assessment for Navajo Indian Irrigation Project.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In 2022, BIP reported challenges with insufficient staffing levels to implement the expanding scope of programmatic services provided, growing performance expectations, and growing budget for infrastructure improvements across the irrigation and power program.

In 2023, BIP updated organizational charts to better match program requirements, developed a strategic plan to address the challenges it faces with staffing shortages and hiring young, Native American talent into the program, and looked forward to embracing the growing challenges. Despite our best efforts to have organization charts reviewed and approved, positions advertised and filled, and implement the strategic plan, almost no progress has been made.

In FY 2023, only one (1) position was advertised and filled (Branch Chief), and the position was filled with existing staff, so there was a net zero change in staffing levels. Further, of the six existing BIP staff, one (1) has been detailed out of the Division for the entire fiscal year 2023, and another one (1) has been detailed out of the program for the entire calendar year of 2023 and appears to be lost permanently. This leaves four (4) FTE's, including the Branch Chief, to accomplish all Branch requirements (including development of a new, modernized NIIMS).

This staffing shortage is stressful for existing staff, resulting in burnout and significant potential loss of institutional knowledge, should staff move on to other opportunities.

In FY 2023, BIP submitted thirteen (13) positions to OTS for review, approval, and recruitment by BIA Human Resources, including Direct Hire positions for young Native American Pathways students and critical Compact Implementation Technical Team positions needed to support the Montana Water Rights Protection Act (MWRPA). These positions funded by the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes have not been advertised.

Next steps include:

- Review and approval of proposed organizational charts.
- Review and approval of hiring packages that match the proposed organizational charts.
- Leadership support with Office of Human Capital to facilitate recruitment and retention activities.

BEST PRACTICES

- In June 2023, BIP and our A&E consultant (HDR Engineering) supported BIA's Northwest Region in productive discussions with Mission Valley Power's Utility Board regarding asset management, deferred maintenance, capital planning and potential divestiture and title transfer of MVP from BIA to the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. Similarly, BIP staff assisted the Western Region in preparing for formal government-to-government consultations with the Gila River Indian Community and San Carlos Apache Tribe regarding divestiture and title transfer of San Carlos Irrigation Project – Power Division.
- Despite anemic staffing levels, existing BIP have performed above and beyond what should be expected, given the expanding workload. BIP continues to foster its positive partnership with a very dedicated and cooperative staff from Contracting/Acquisitions.

- BIP continues to leverage its Cooperative Agreement with Cal Poly's Irrigation Training and Research Center to provide BIA with essential work products and technical resources in irrigation modernization, Indian Irrigation project economic sustainability, capital investment planning/asset management and water measurement and water management training. BIP is coordinating with Regional Irrigation Engineers across these strategic areas but could accelerate accomplishments with more staff.
- BIA-Branch of Irrigation and Power 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).
- BIP continues work 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.
- BIP staff also provided technical support and expertise to the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office and Federal Team on the Fort Belknap water rights settlement negotiations.

BRANCH OF SAFETY OF DAMS

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.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Disbursed \$2.4 million in Operations and Maintenance funding in support of all 141 high-hazard dams on 42 reservations

Hired 3 additional contract staff to provide hydrologic engineering and Early Warning System support

Nearly completed a secondary screening of the 711 dams, reported by Tribes, that have a population downstream that could potentially be harmed in the event the dam failed.

- Of the 711 structures receiving a secondary screening, 89 are likely high-hazard potential, 240 are likely significant-hazard potential, and 293 are likely low-hazard potential. The remaining 85 will be screened by the end of the fiscal year.
- These screened hazard potential classifications will assist in prioritizing the order the dams will receive a hazard classification study.
- Significantly advanced an update to the SOD Handbook and created three draft guidance documents to further outline SOD technical processes. The draft has been reviewed by RACA and is under review by the Solicitor's Office.

- Created a process for verifying Indian land status that uses GIS and the Trust Asset Accounting Management System (TAAMS)
- In collaboration with Regional Safety of Dams Officers, responded to dam safety incidents at ten (10) dams. These response efforts entailed the activation of emergency action plans, and, in several instances, included the successful intervention of various dam safety issues that had the potential to develop into dam failures.

Dam safety incident responses occurred at the following dams:

Dam	Tribe	State
Bootleg	Ft. Apache Reservation	AZ
Cooley	Fort Apache Reservation	AZ
Fourth of July	Jicarilla Reservation	NM
Lake Capote	Southern Ute Reservation	CO
Many Farms	Navajo Nation	AZ
Mesita	Pueblo of Laguna	NM
Owhi	Colville Reservation	WA
Rosebud	Rosebud Indian Reservation	SD
Standing Rock No. 1	Standing Rock Reservation	SD
Weber	Walker River	NV

Staff/stakeholder communication

- Continued periodic meetings across SOD Program areas and with Regional SOD Officers
- Held 5 Early Warning System (EWS) Working Group meetings, which have improved communications, increased transparency, and provided additional opportunities for input from Tribes, BIA Regions, and BIA Agencies

Training

- Held the annual BIA/Tribal Safety of Dams Workshop in Albuquerque, NM on March 14-17, 2023 (Over 80 tribal and federal dam safety employees attended. Included Emergency Action Plan Training)
- Continued holding virtual Dam Tender Training every other month on various dam safety topics
- Organized and conducted 2 EWS and Dam Tender Trainings, 3-day in-person trainings (1 in the Western Region and 1 in the Great Plains Region)
- 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.
- Presented “Enhancing Watershed Monitoring with Quick Deploy Early Warning Systems” at the National Hydrologic Warning Council annual meeting

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Completed 2 dam construction projects:

Standing Pine Dam, Choctaw Indian Reservation, MS

- Replaced the failed outlet works and reinstalled embankment
- Installed site fencing and outlet channel improvement
- Total cost \$350k

To'hajiilee Dam, Navajo Nation, NM

- Embankment and outlet works replacement
- New riprap spillway
- Total cost \$6.2M

Awarded 1 dam construction project:

Oglala Dam, Pine Ridge Reservation, SD

- Awarded September 2023 to an ISBEE contractor using Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds
- Total cost \$58.5M

One-time Special Maintenance Projects

Completed:

- East Fork Dam, Rocky Boys Reservation, MT - Spillway erosion repairs and revetments
- Standing Rock Dam, Standing Rock Reservation, ND – Filter stability berm
- Lake Capote Dam, Southern Ute Reservation, CO – Spillway erosion repairs

In-progress:

- Indian Lake Dam, Umatilla Reservation, OR – Siphon installation and drawdown pumping
- Bonneau Dam, Rocky Boys Reservation – Spillway erosion repairs and revetments
- Trapped Rock Dam, Zuni Reservation, NM – Dredging to restore storage

17 Dam rehabilitation design projects are in-progress:

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

Two emergency response modifications:

1. Mesita Dam, Pueblo of Laguna, NM
2. Weber Dam, Walker River Indian Reservation, NV

Early Warning System Accomplishments

- Completed 2022 annual maintenance and initiated 2023 annual maintenance for 256 EWS sites at and near BIA program dams
- Conducted infrastructure improvements, site maintenance, and elevation survey activities at 46 EWS sites on 8 reservations
- Awarded 5 EWS Task Orders totaling approximately \$1.4M
- Awarded EWS Site Infrastructure Improvements task order (\$1.4M) under the A/E IDIQ contract
- Continued progress towards obtaining an Authority to Operate the EWS website
- Published 1 EWS Newsletter with articles about winter maintenance, Division of Water and Power internships, dam safety training opportunities, and more.
- Updated the EWS website to improve overall usability and mobile user experience

Emergency Management and Security Accomplishments

- Completed Emergency Action Plan Tabletop Exercises for 20 dams
- Completed Emergency Action Plan Functional Exercises for 3 dams
- Emergency Action Plan Exercises for 19 dams are in the planning stage
- Revamped the Emergency Action Plan for greater ease of use and added security elements
- Awarded an Emergency Action Plan Task Order for \$0.7M

Flood Hydrology Accomplishments

- Completed 22 Hydrologic Hazard Studies
- 18 Hydrologic Hazard Studies are in-progress
- Completed 25 Dam Failure Inundation Studies
- 18 Dam Failure Inundation Studies are in-progress
- Completed 21 Dam Failure Consequence Analyses
- 24 Dam Failure Consequence Analyses are in-progress
- Completed 3 Site-Specific Extreme Precipitation (Probable Maximum Precipitation) Studies for 3 dams and 2 are in-progress

Formal Dam Evaluations and Hazard Classifications Accomplishments

- Completed Comprehensive Review reports for 16 dams
- 39 Comprehensive Reviews are in-progress
- Completed 8 Periodic Review Reports for 11 dams
- 19 Periodic Review Reports are in-progress
- Completed 7 Hazard Potential Classification studies
- 26 hazard classification studies are in-progress

GIS Support Projects and Mapping

- Prepared 26 mapping products for Emergency Action Plans, Dam Failure Inundation Studies, and Hydrologic Hazard Studies; 6 mapping products are in-progress
- Completed 29 structures analysis screenings to support consequence analysis

- Built a custom web application that allows users to quickly view the SOD Dam Inventory, filter on specific criteria, access dam statistics, and link to relevant reports hosted on SharePoint.
- Published SOD program data to Esri's Enterprise Portal Environment which allows approved users to access the database using various platforms
- Created 5 tabletop maps for the Weber Dam incident for community use

CHALLENGES

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, eight (8) Program dams are breached and many Program dams have been fully or partially drained. The SOD Program estimates that approximately \$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.

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. Two separate external audits of the program have identified that insufficient federal personnel staffing levels pose a significant risk to the program's success.

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. construction methodology, past performance, and downstream population at risk should a dam failure occur.

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 BOR's 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.

BRANCH OF WATER RESOURCES

The mission of the Branch of Water Resources (WR) is to administer the Water Resources programs for the purpose of managing, conserving, and utilizing Reservation water resources, and to provide the necessary technical research, studies and other information for Indian Tribes and Alaska Natives to serve as informed and prudent managers of adjudicated decreed or of water otherwise appurtenant to Tribal and or Indian trust lands including public domain allotments.

WR manages the following programs: the Water Rights Negotiation/Litigation Program; the Water Management, Planning, and Pre-Development Program; Attorney Fees and Litigation Support; Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) for Water Resources; and Indian Land and Water Settlement Claims.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Federal Collaboration

WR has established a working relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation and Indian Health Services and various other federal agencies to partner with other water resources programs for "like" projects being implemented to expand capacity of these projects. Currently, the federal partners are working on a database that tribes can utilize to navigate federal funding grants that can aid in water resources projects tribes are performing.

Contracting Subject Matter Experts

The number of WR Branch staff has increased by contracting a water rights specialist through the DWP staff augmentation contract to help with historical research for Water Rights Settlements and to aid in information flow to senior management for ongoing reporting of status of settlements. WR has also contracted with a subject matter expert to aid in ongoing interpretation of the laws and regulations for water rights matters. WR has continued to work with the Regions, USGS, the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office, and other BIA Central Office staff on projects necessary for success of the water resources program throughout the country.

Additionally, WR has been training the 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.

Resource Ranking Team

WR held a water resource ranking team meeting in FY 2023. All Water Rights Program funding requests were evaluated, scored, and prioritized by a six-member team composed of representatives from BIA Regional Offices, BIA Central Office, Solicitor's Office, and the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office. In 2023, BIA water staff members from Great Plains, Eastern Oklahoma and, Southwest Regions participated in ranking and scoring all funding proposals submitted.

The team prioritizes funding requests pursuant to the Notice of Revised Instructions for Preparing and Prioritizing Water Program Funding Requests, Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 201, October 19, 2005.

Funding Requests

The *Water Management Planning & Pre-Development Program* received 114 Program funding requests from Tribes and Regional offices for a total requested funding amount of approximately \$14.1 million. The \$8 Million in available funding will allow BIA to fund 91 Projects.

The *Water Rights Negotiation/Litigation Program* received 76 Water Rights Program funding requests from Tribes and Regional offices for a total requested funding amount of approximately \$13.9 Million. The \$8.87 Million in available funding will allow BIA to fund 62 Projects.

Requests for Proposals

WR staff have requested proposals from the Regions for FY2024 funding allocations and is currently receiving proposals which are due on September 15, 2023. The staff has set up a ranking team for 2024 including staff members from Navajo, Northwest, and Eastern Regions, also included in the Team are staff members from the Solicitor's Office and The Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office.

Distribution of Admin Costs

Administrative cost for water resources regional staff was distributed for FY 2023. This allowed 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 allowed regional staff to participate on the Secretary's Indian Water Rights settlement and implementation Teams. Finally, this funding allowed the Regions to provide technical assistants to tribes for all facets of work involving trust water resources.

Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project

The Navajo Gallup Water Supply project and the Navajo Nation is continuing to perform implementation activities for BIA's portion of the settlement that is planned to be completed in 2024 and appears to be on schedule. Final Funding for this Settlement has been allocated to the Navajo Region with FY 2019 funding allocations.

Program Reviews

The WR Branch conducted four (4) A-123 Reviews prior to June 30, 2023, including Alaska, Northwest, Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions. Questionnaires were developed for the regional programs enabling Regional Water Coordinators to provide clear and concise answers. Coordination was conducted with the Regions to arrange video conference calls or on-site meetings with the Tribes to aide Central office in gaining an understanding of the concerns and wants of the Tribes.

Indian land & Water Settlement BIL Funds

Funding Allocations for four (4) Indian Land & Water Settlement Claims has been distributed from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Yearly funding including Indexing for the Mandatory fund for FY 2021 to Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes' (CSKT) Water Rights Compact was distributed. Continued funding distribution for FY 2022 is anticipated to be distributed as soon as Indexing values have been determined. Continued funding for 4 Water Rights Settlements including CSKT, Navajo Utah Water Rights Settlement, White Mountain Apache Water Rights Settlement and Blackfeet Water Rights settlement is currently being worked on.

WR staff are currently working on procedures to fund these settlements with various staff within in the Department. It is anticipated that final funding for Indexing will be distributed at the end of FY 2023 or in the first quarter of FY 2024 dependent on the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office's implementation team progress with the Tribes.

Attorney Fee/Litigation Program

The WR Branch continued the Attorney Fee/Litigation program. A ranking team was set up which included a staff member from the Solicitor's, BIA, and Assistant Secretary's office. The Team reviewed submitted proposals from the Tribes. and submitted recommendations for funding to the Assistant Secretary's office. Additionally, the WR Branch is in process of soliciting proposals for FY2024 and will request proposals back from the Regions in February 2024.

The WR Branch has begun to re-establish the Water Resources Technician training program and a Cooperative Agreement with a non-profit organization that performs the AmeriCorps program for student interns has been completed and approved. Twenty-one (21) students are planning to be interned into water science careers. Staff is anticipating holding trainings at California Polytechnic University at San Luis Obispo (Cal-Poly), California and Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado.

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND BEST PRACTICES

The WR Branch staff needs to be increased. One of the goals for next year is to advertise for two program managers for oversight of the Water Resources Technician Training Program as well as coordination for all administrative program activities including funding distributions, records management oversight, coordination with various DWP tracking applications and general coordination between sister agencies involved in Water Resources throughout Indian Country.

Additionally, the WR Branch intends to hire a Water Rights specialist to support the water rights programs and work directly with the office of the Solicitor and the Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office. Staffing increases will allow the WR Branch to provide services more effectively.

The WR Branch is in the process of evaluating a small filtration system program requested by the Tribes for potable water use within homes. Decision will be made to increase staff for technical assistance of this program and/or enter into an agreement with Indian Health Services to service this need.

HYDROPOWER COMPLIANCE PROGRAM

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is the agency charged with exercising the Secretary of the Interior's authorities under the Federal Power Act (FPA)(16 USC § 791a et seq). The Hydropower Compliance Program (HCP) endeavors to uphold the mission of the BIA by ensuring impacts to Tribal interests and resources are sufficiently mitigated in any hydropower license issued by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HCP prioritized spend-down of carryover funds. FY 2021 funding is zeroed out at the Central Office level. FY 2022 funds at the Central Office level are down from \$520,000 to \$395,000, with the balance moved to Northwest Region for Tribal projects. Pacific Region has obligated FY 2020 and FY 2021 project funds into a contract. Eastern Region project funds have been obligated now that the Passamaquoddy Tribe has signed contract documents.

Northwest Region's FY 2021 project funds have been obligated to a tribal Annual Funding Agreement and the Swinomish Tribe has drawn down funds. Additional FY 2022 funds for Northwest Region Tribes are going to be expended pending e-FED processing by Office of Self Governance.

HPC reviewed FERC notices for projects in regions that do not receive administrative support. Administrative support provided to the Regions in FY 2023 included:

- Contacted the licensee for Pensacola Project in Eastern Oklahoma Region to be on their mailing list for updates.

- Attended a meeting for White Wolf Project in Midwest Region to advise the Tribe on license application comments to file with FERC.
- Contacted Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs) in Midwest Region, Rocky Mountain Region, Eastern Oklahoma Region, and Western Region about project notices in their areas of historic interest.

The program manager is also assigned to the DOI Science Advisors Council. In this role he has provided guidance to other DOI Bureaus on tribal consultation and climate adaptation.

The program manager has a background in meteorology and provided severe weather updates to BIA Emergency Management, as requested by the Deputy Bureau Director. This included forecasts for hurricane Hilary (California, Nevada), Idalia (Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina), and Lee in Maine. Forecasts were also provided for flash flooding forecasts for multiple western states.

Northwest Region provided technical expertise to the Tribes for estuary restoration, mainstem riverine habitat restoration, and fish passage for the relicensing of the Skagit River (WA), Hells Canyon (ID, OR), Rock Island (WA), and Thompson Falls (MT) hydroelectric projects.

Northwest Region provided oversight and review of aquatic, terrestrial, and cultural resource actions for FERC post-licensing implementation at numerous hydroelectric projects.

Northwest Region worked with the Tribes by providing technical expertise on the impacts of new forms of hydroelectric power (i.e., pumped storage hydroelectric) and its impacts to trust resources.

Northwest Region worked in conjunction with the Solicitor's Office and the National FERC Coordinator to provide technical and policy level information on Bill S.1521 or commonly referred to as the "Community and Hydropower Improvement Act."

CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND BEST PRACTICES

Tribal databases used by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) contain incomplete information. FERC, in turn, provides incomplete advice to prospective project licensees regarding which Tribes should be consulted at the start of the licensing process.

Consequently, Tribes do not have an adequate seat at the table for ensuring compliance with issues of importance to their sustenance and/or cultural preservation, such as fish passage and Section 106. HCP is continuing to review these databases and communicate with FERC staff/licensees with better information on Tribal points of contact.

HCP is the least funded program for Division of Water and Power, receiving \$671,000 in FY 2023. Full funding for a Tribe to participate in a licensee proceeding via 93-639 Self Determination Contract can be as much as \$125,000 per year. This greatly limits the ability of the program to support direct participation by Tribes affected by the operations of hydropower projects.

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

FY 2023 STAFF AND FUNDING

20	Full Time Employees
13	Vacant Positions
62,891M	FY23 Enacted
	34,991M Tribal Climate Resilience
	27,900M Environmental Quality
43.2M	Bipartisan Infrastructure

BRANCH OF CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The Branch of Cultural Resources Management 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, economic development support, promoting the conservation, development, and wise use of these resources for the maximum benefit of Indian people.

The BCRM is responsible for ensuring compliance with environmental and cultural resource statutes, including the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Antiquities Act of 1906, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and the Archeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA); in addition, BCRM 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 federal and non-federal repositories under control of the BIA.

BIA museum staff continued to focus efforts on locating and accounting for all museum collections in both BIA and non-BIA repositories and revitalizing the program to meet standards outlined in the Departmental Manual, Part 411 (411 DM) and its Directives.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)

The Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA) governs the excavation of archaeological sites on Federal and Indian lands in the United States and the removal and disposition of archaeological collections. To comply with ARPA, BCRM entered into a Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) agreement with Archaeology Southwest to assist in a unique nationwide ARPA Assistance Program.

This program helps to reduce archaeological resource crimes, including looting, vandalism, and trafficking of cultural items, which continue to threaten and destroy archaeological sites and harm communities on Indian lands. 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:

- 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.



Fred Nials (Geomorphologist Consultant) shares his knowledge with participants during the mock crime scene at the Oklahoma City ARPA training. Fifteen (15) participants attended the training, representing the Chickasaw Nation, the Seminole Nation, the Ponca Tribe, the Sac & Fox Nation, the Pawnee Nation, the Delaware Nation, the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office, and the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation.

Four in-person ARPA classes were conducted in partnership with the Office of Justice Service's Indian Police Academy.

- Two three-day ARPA trainings with the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation and a three-day advanced ARPA and restoration training for Gila River Indian Community Cultural Resources Management Program were conducted.
- Two 40-hour ARPA Trainings in Show Low Arizona and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

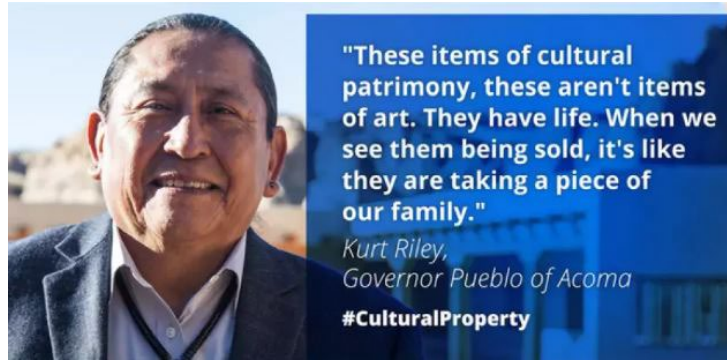
Three webinars/virtual ARPA Trainings were performed:

- 1-day virtual ARPA training for BIA Rocky Mountain Region
- 1-hour webinar for the Oklahoma State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- 1.5-hour webinar for the Tribal Archaeology Network

The courses focus on the professional development of all archaeologists, law enforcement personnel, Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPOs), 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 how to implement those techniques during actual fieldwork.

Two site restoration projects were coordinated with Tribal heritage and historic preservation offices to develop and implement restoration and repair plans at sites damaged by looting, vandalism, and other unauthorized activities for a Hohokam ballcourt and graffiti removal at a petroglyph site in Arizona. The CESU agreement supports backfilling, stabilization, and repair projects, graffiti removal, barrier installation, advisory signage, and other remediation efforts.



Source: Department of State, GAO-22-106685

Four archaeological damage assessments were performed for rock art vandalism and three unauthorized excavations on tribal lands. Damage to cultural resources is assessed when unauthorized excavation acts are performed. The evaluation uses archaeological methods to provide the information necessary to prove that the archeological elements of a criminal or civil violation of ARPA are met according to the requirements of the law and the judicial system. Components of an assessment include field damage assessments, value and cost determinations, and archaeological report damage assessment report preparation.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

The BCRM 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.

BCRM is also working with the New Mexico State Historic Preservation Office on the Old Fort Wingate historic site to update a National Register and boundary increase for the Fort Wingate Historic District, listed in the National Register in 1978. The update will focus on when the campus served as a school from 1926 to the 1970s. This project will extend into the coming fiscal year.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Under NAGPRA, the BIA follows a process for Native American remains or cultural items when 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 seven NAGPRA Notices of Inventory of Completion (NIC) in the Federal Register, accounting for 25 ancestors and 410 associated funerary objects. In addition, one Notice of Intent to Repatriate (NIC) cultural items comprising 376 cultural items (25 unassociated funerary objects, one sacred item, and 350 items of cultural patrimony) was published in the Federal Register.



Art pictured above from left to right: 'Woman Grinding Corn' by Howell Sonny Orr, Spotted Owl Mask by Jewell Praying Wolf James, 'Preparing for the Performance' by Joan Hill, Red Polished Pot with Square Mouth by Anita Suazo.

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 six Federal Registers.

The BIA has transferred legal control of 14 ancestors, 100 Associated Funerary Objects, 28 Unassociated Funerary Objects, 350 items of cultural patrimony, and 91 sacred items to their descendants. Finally, BIA conducted consultation with Tribes that resulted in determinations of affiliation accounting for the return of human remains, funerary objects, and sacred objects.



Historical photo of Blackfeet Nation tipis

Consultation with non-Federal Repositories and Tribes

BCRM is collaborating with at 21 federal and non-federal repositories and universities housing BIA museum collections. We initiated a 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.

BIA Museum

The BIA Museum is connecting and building relationships with Accountability Officers and staff at our Regions, university, and museum levels. We have revisited inventories are applying resources where support is needed.

Much needed exhibit case upgrades are in the works with installation targeted for January 2024. These new cases will replace outdated cases in the BIA hallway of the Main Interior Building to protect and preserve the collections.



Intern Latisha Dewahe conducting object inventory in Secretary Haaland's office

Museum Collections Inventory

Annual museum inventory and certifications for FY 2023 were prepared and sent to 82 Indian Affairs repositories, 63 non-federal museums and university repositories, and six non-Indian Affairs repositories in March and April 2023. The BIA Museum received 95% of completed annual inventories from IA repositories and 93% of completed yearly survey and certification forms from non-federal and non-IA repositories.

Every five years, the BIA Museum must complete site visits to ensure that BIA museum collections are appropriately housed and exhibited according to the IA Department Manual and DOI Museum Property Directive 14. Museum Staff Curators have conducted museum site visits in the Southwest, Midwest, Alaska, Rocky Mountain, and Northwest Regions.

Site visits entail the completion of facility condition assessments of areas that exhibit or house BIA museum collections. In addition, the Staff Curators perform object handling training to regional staff.

Museum Collections Move

The Museum Program moved collections from two BIA facilities and one museum. Curators packed and moved items using appropriate curatorial methods. Four emergency collections moves were conducted in November 2022, February 2023, March 2023, and April 2023 due to facility closures.

BIA Museum collections at Mescalero Agency, Winnebago Agency, Cherokee Agency, and Reston Offices were relocated. Thirty-three objects were moved to the BIA Museum Program Office in Albuquerque, New Mexico. At the same time, 200 objects and approximately 100 linear feet of museum documents were moved to the Main Interior Building in DC.



A portion of the Reston, Virginia museum collection to be packed and moved



Justin Giles, BIA Museum Program curator gives behind the scenes tour of art being prepared for display

Museum Loans

The museum has short- and long-term loans with various universities and museums. Two previous loans were granted extensions. The loan agreements with both museums will be finalized before the end of the fiscal year. Two new loan agreements will be signed with Tribal Museums – Angel De Cora Museum and Research Center and Museum of the Cherokee Indian. Three large 2-D objects painted by a local artist from the Winnebago Reservation will stay in the community and be placed on exhibit for tribal community members and the public to visit. The 2-D artwork will be returned following preservation practices. Sixty-one (61) 3-D objects will also stay in the community and be housed in the Museum of the Cherokee Indians on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Reservation. The community will use the object as part of an outreach revitalization program.



Loaned oil painting on canvas returned to BIA Museum, 'Super Pueblo' by Fritz Scholder, created in 1968, dimensions 73 in. H x 8 in. W

Art In Office Program

The DC Staff Curator oversees the Art-in-Office Program, which curates Indian Affairs staff and political appointees' offices and divisions in the Main Interior Building. The Curator leads consultation, collections tours, art-in-office rotations, and installations of BIA collections. The year's highlight is curating Secretary Haaland's office with six 2-D art and 2 Allan Houser statues.



BIA Curators and interns visit Alaska Heritage Museum in Anchorage, Alaska

Staff

A new curator was hired in January 2023. Two interns with the Pathways Internship Program were onboarded with the Museum Program in May and July 2023. The interns are undergraduate students majoring in anthropology at the New Mexico State University and the University of New Mexico. They have assisted with museum site visits in Alaska, the Midwest, and the Southwest Region, and on NAGPRA projects, annual inventory projects, housekeeping, and curation projects.

BRANCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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



FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Hiring

BES was thrilled to welcome two new senior level NEPA reviewers to its staff in FY 2023. The new staff members bring tremendous expertise and experience to the program. The staff have hit the ground running in coordination with other agencies and the regions to carry out the review and permitting work.

Regional Coordination

BES hosted monthly national meetings to provide Environmental Services program and budget information and to provide a forum for regions to work together to address project and process challenges. BES also organized special topics calls on priorities such as Fee-to-Trust environmental reviews. Planning is underway to hold an in-person meeting in November 2023 in which the group will conduct strategic planning and focus on priorities such as permitting.

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.

NEPA Tracker 2.0

BES provided critical support to implementation of NEPA Tracker 2.0, a database that allows quick query into the status of NEPA reviews. The team assured access and provided technical assistance for regional POC's and worked with the developer to implement single sign on which is now active.

Emergency Management and Accreditation Program (EMAP)

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

Central Hazmat Funding (CHF)

BES participates on the Central Hazmat Fund Technical Review Committee (TRC). The TRC is responsible for approval of funding for DOI Bureaus' Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability (CERCLA) contaminated sites. The TRC reviews all requests for funding and makes final recommendations on which projects receive funding. It also maintains the Central Hazmat Fund Database Cost Tracking and ensures accurate costs are being reported.

BES received and transferred Central Hazmat Funds 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 NRDAR 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.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

BES continues to provide both assistance and funding to support remedial activities for the Tuba City Landfill, Shiprock Demolition, Tuba City Abandoned 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.
- Reviewed 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 or add sites to the 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 Office of the Environmental and Compliance Environmental Management Information System (EMIS) SharePoint site.

CHALLENGES

- BES is in the process of hiring additional management and staff positions. Vacancies continue to strain workload.

BRANCH OF TRIBAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE

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.



Blackfeet Nation Reservation Land

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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.

Branch Chief Selection

TCR successfully hired new Branch Chief, John Mosley, in April 2023. This strategic addition brings a wealth of experience and expertise, reinforcing TCR's commitment to addressing climate challenges within tribal communities. With a focus on tribal climate resilience, BIA tribal funding awards, team building, and staff support strategies, this leadership enhancement positions the Branch for even greater impact in the coming year, as TCR continues to collaborate and innovate towards a more resilient future for tribal nations.

Annual Awards Program and Grant Solicitation

For FY 2023, TCR has made history by offering a monumental \$120 million in annual awards. The funds are earmarked for climate resilience planning and implementation, habitat restoration, adaptation efforts, and equity-building initiatives. Notably, first-time applicants and coordinators involved in Relocation, Managed Retreat, or Protect-in-Place (RMP) activities benefit from specific set-asides. This significant financial commitment underscores the administration's dedication to empowering Tribal communities against climate-related environmental threats.

Modernizing Annual Awards Program Software

This year, TCR modernized 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 National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference (NTICC) 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 FY 2022 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) announced \$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)

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.

Staffing

Permanent Positions Filled

- 1 Branch Chief
- 7 Regional TCR Coordinators
- 1 Management/Program Analyst
- 1 Staff Assistant with DESCRM
- 1 Pathways Intern placed with DESCRM

Permanent Positions to be Filled

- 1 Regional TCR Coordinator for Alaska

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

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

The Branch is gearing up for additional demonstration projects site visits, a proactive move aimed at enhancing CDR initiatives. Simultaneously, meticulous efforts will be invested in reviewing and selecting recipients for the annual awards program by January 2024, underlining the commitment of recognizing and supporting tribal efforts in building climate resilience.

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.



Forest on the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians Reservation, Oregon

FY 2023 STAFF AND FUNDING

21	Full Time Employees
10	Vacant Positions
\$30.5M	Forestry Projects
\$35.5M	Tribal Priority Allocation
\$2.5M	Bipartisan Infrastructure

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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Forestry Tribal Priority Allocations (TPA) General Increase

TPA General Increase: The FY 2023 Forestry budget included a \$2.5 million general increase. The Division of Forestry (DOF) evaluated input from the Regions, current base program funding levels, and current staffing needs to determine allocations to BIA programs. The FY 2022 general increase of \$3.474 million was used to fund thirty-five (35) 638 and Office of Self-Governance (OSG) programs. FY 2022 and FY 2023 general increases will become base funding in FY 2024 and FY 2025, respectively.

The Forestry TPA General Program Increases in FY 2022, and FY 2023 were the first base increases in decades and provided much needed staffing funding for the BIA and the tribes.

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.

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 FY 2022 appropriation and provided \$1.436 million to support seven tribal projects.

National Policy Memo on Carbon

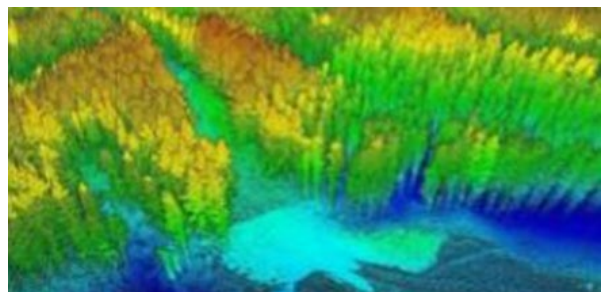
The DOF completed and published the National Policy Memorandum (NPM) for Carbon and is presently working with RACA to convert the NPM to an Indian Affairs Manual (IAM). The DOF also coordinated and assisted in the first formal review of a Carbon Agreement for the Navajo Nation, according to the new NPM. This allowed the Nation to move forward with their Carbon Agreement and begin generating revenue.

Systems Improvements / Manuals and Handbooks

The DOF made system improvements to the Trust Asset Accounting Management System (TAAMS), Information Database (InfoDat), and implemented the use of new data gathering tablets for forest inventory projects. Improvements to the TAAMS system included deploying a timber money record that has been an identified need since the inception of TAAMS. All the harvest of forest product contract and permit form documents were revised in FY 2023 and are available at bia.gov. Additional timber harvest policy related exhibits and templates were also uploaded to the DOF page at bia.gov. All these system improvements better serve the Tribes.

Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar) Project

The FY 2023 Forestry budget included a \$1 million increase in the Forestry Projects budget line for Lidar. The DOF funded the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Lidar – Assisted complete Natural Resources and Forest Inventory project. The DOF utilized other parts of the annual Forestry Projects appropriation to partner with the BIA Fuels Program in funding three other additional Lidar Projects. Funding Lidar projects allows tribes to gather large amounts of data, not just for Forestry, but for Natural Resources, Range, Invasive Species, Water/Riparian Areas, and Wildlife Habitat.



Lidar Imaging of a Forest

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.

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.

The DOF provided technical assistance to the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, Siuslaw Indians as they prepared their application to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project. Their application has been approved and the tribe is now preparing their Indian Trust Asset Management Plan. The DOF continues to provide technical assistance as requested.

The DOF provided technical assistance to the Quinault Indian Nation in reviewing their draft application and resolution to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project. The Nation formally submitted their application to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project on September 5, 2023. The DOF and Office of the Solicitor have completed the review and the documents have been sent forward with a recommendation for approval by the AS-IA.

ITARA Workshop

DOF also presented an ITARA workshop at the Inter-Tribal Timber Council Annual National Symposium. Participation in the project and developing an Indian Trust Asset Management Plan approved by the Secretary is beneficial to tribes because it authorizes them to conduct forest land management activities without any further Secretarial approval, and it also authorizes them to conduct and approve forest land management activities under a tribal environmental review process. This supports tribal sovereignty.

Economic Restoration (ER)

The DOF provided outreach through communications with the BIA Regional Foresters and the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC). The DOF assisted Regions and Tribes with the development of projects for the various ER funding opportunities; and how to use the OTS template to propose a project.

In FY 2023, four economic restoration proposals were funded:

Tribe	Funded	Project
Confederated Tribes of the Colvill Reservation	\$660,000	Tribal greenhouse expansion
Pueblo of Santa Clara	\$800,000	Long-term solutions for Ecosystem Health
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes	\$450,000	Ecological health on Indian lands
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation	\$758,000	Ecological health on Indian lands

The DOF submitted 12 proposals for the FY 2024 – FY 2026 funding period. The total for all projects proposed is approximately \$4,387,200 and includes Prairie and Meadow Restoration; Tribal Greenhouses; Forest Health and Thinning; Habitat Restoration; and Watershed and Fish Passage Improvement. Those proposed projects will be evaluated by Leadership, and selection and funding are anticipated in the 1st quarter of CY 2024.

Forest Health

Annually, Tribes are eligible to receive Forest Health funding provided by the United States Forest Service. The DOF facilitates the submission of tribal projects and funding requests and completes year-end reporting for the Tribes. The DOF coordinated with the US Forest Service (USFS) to provide funding for two forest health projects to be completed on BIA trust lands in FY 2023:

Tribe	Funded	Project
Menominee Indian Tribe	\$105,790	Invasive species management
Yakama	\$5,111	Mountain pine beetle treatment

Timber Harvest

The harvest of the Allowable Annual Cut (AAC) of timber from tribal forests is one of the primary metrics for DOF.

- In FY 2022 targets of 396 million board feet to be prepared for sale and 2 million tons of biomass to be harvested were exceeded.
- FY2023 targets are again set at approximately 396 million board feet of timber to be prepared for sale and approximately 2 million tons of biomass to be harvested. Targets are expected to be exceeded again in FY 2023; however, these numbers will not be reported until October.

A portion of the FY 2023 Forestry Projects budget line increase was utilized for Timber Harvest Initiative (THI). In FY 2023, \$2.37 million THI funding was distributed to the Regions and OSG for forestry field work that supports the harvest of forest products on reservations that are unable to meet their allowable annual cut. This not only maintains forest health and reduces the threat of wildland fire, but also provides tribal revenue and supports local economies.

Timber Team

In FY 2023, the Timber Team spent 23 weeks traveling between driving and flying to locations and brought direct forestry services to Tribes throughout the nation. Twelve tribes received support that included:

- 771 stand exams measured with 100 additional plots inspected from contract work.
- 85 continuous forest inventory plots installed.
- 563 natural regeneration, planting, and stocking surveys completed.
- Gathered timber cruise data on 258 plots as well as cruising 3,281 individual trees designated for harvest.

- Marked timber for harvest and boundaries across 483 acres of permit sales.
- Completed over 100,000 acres of forest cover type mapping for Southern Plains Region using GIS.

These accomplishments don't come easy. The Team works in all types of field conditions including steep terrain, winter conditions, insect infested woods, and poison ivy just to name a few.

The Timber Team started off the fiscal year of 2023 with just two foresters and one remote BIA Pathways intern that assisted with GIS forest cover type mapping during their fall semester of college. Trips between December and April including added assistance from foresters in Forest Inventory and Planning, Northwest Regional Office, Southwest Regional Office, and various BIA agencies across the nation. Beginning in May, two more foresters joined the Timber Team full time, and an additional three foresters were onboarded at the beginning of July. The Timber Team is officially back to full capacity and have a full schedule planned out from now through January of 2024.

The Timber Team's webpage has more information on completing and submitting requests. <https://www.bia.gov/service/timber-team> The Division of Forestry is seeking proposals for CY 2024 and any federal/tribal staff that would like to work with the Timber Team on any assignments.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Policy Action

Policy: We need to begin forming a 25 CFR 163 Review Team to make much needed updates and revisions this CFR. The CFR is well out of date in a number of areas.

Policy: Develop policy on updating Non-Expiring Forest Management Plans. Non-expiring plans serve a purpose but establishing them has diminished the motivation to update them and is inconsistent with NIFRMA.

Policy: Extending the ITARA Demonstration Project will be key to getting more tribes operating their Forestry programs under an approved Indian Trust Asset Management Plan. The extension has been requested by the Inter-Tribal Timber Council (ITC) and is one of the recommendations in the recently published Indian Forest Management Assessment Team Report. The Secretary has the authority to extend the Demonstration Project.

Policy: We need to develop policy relevant to roles and responsibilities after a tribe has been selected to participate in the ITARA Demonstration Project and operating their Forestry program under an Indian Trust Asset Management Plan (ITAMP).

Dashboards

Completing our work on the dashboards for Tribal Greenhouses, Timber Team Projects, and Portable Infrastructure projects.

Tribal Forestry Youth Camps

Twenty-seven Tribal Forestry Summer Youth Camp proposals were submitted to the DOF by the August 25, 2023, deadline. The total amount requested is \$1,355,018.07. The DOF reviewed the proposals, which were reviewed and ranked by the Regions, and funded eight proposals totaling \$300,587.89. The Division is also collaborating with the Assistant Secretary's Office to identify additional financial resources. The DOF submitted funding documents which should send funds to the Tribes before the end of October 2023.

CHALLENGES

Workforce

Forestry GIS Specialist is needed to implement the GIS initiative and provide ongoing data control and maintenance.

Forest Products Marketing Specialist / ITARA is needed to fill the gap that currently exists. Tribes are looking for ways to make their forest products marketable and we lack that position. We will also need a forester to work more closely with ITARA tribes, in anticipation the Demonstration Project will be extended, and more tribes will participate.

We need to ramp up our efforts to recruit Pathways students. This may be a part of our internal strategic plan for Forestry, which could include coordinated, planned visits to college campuses. At the same time, we could contact non-IP students to generate interest in working for the BIA to fill the gap when we don't get Indian Preferences applicants on a Certificate of Eligible Candidates from Human Resources. Perhaps not just an issue for Forestry, but we need a person who can update our Forestry webpage and manage social media accounts so that we can better tell our success stories.

Co-Management

Co-management has become an important issue. Other agencies have staff that are dedicated to outside coordination. The Forest Service and BLM both have this for forestry and natural resources, but the BIA does not. If we truly want to be involved in Co-Management, this will be a necessary addition to the forestry org chart.

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.

OPPORTUNITIES

Tribal Forestry Youth Programs

The Assistant Secretary's Office is working with DOF to identify potential collaborations with nonprofits, such as American Forests, and other federal agencies and to provide financial resources, outreach, and technical assistance for Tribal Youth Programs.

Student Outreach and Workforce Recruitment

The DOF has identified the Society of American Foresters (SAF) as a key partner in reaching prospective future employees and desires to develop a more complete recruitment and retention effort. BIA Forestry and Pathways lack national recognition with forestry and natural resource management students and entry-level candidates, and many of the current Forestry students and young professionals are SAF members. The SAF can help BIA Forestry showcase and highlight our programs and career opportunities with their established network, educational activities, outreach events, and their ability to assist with recruitment.

Workforce Capacity Building

Workforce development opportunities are lacking for BIA and tribal forestry programs. Partnerships with Tribal Colleges, such as Salish Kootenai College which is funded through the Inter-Tribal Timber Council Cooperative Agreement to assist with Workforce Development, would provide subject matter experts and facilities to train field foresters and forestry technicians. Skills training in the following disciplines is needed:

- Timber Sales Management
- Forest Inventory Design
- Silviculture
- Technical Writing
- Public Speaking

Small Infrastructure and Timber Harvest Initiative

The DOF will continue to provide the Regions and Tribes the opportunity to submit Portable Milling Infrastructure and Timber Harvest Initiative (THI) Proposals given adequate Forestry Projects funding levels. This opportunity is intended to increase the ability of the receiving Tribes to harvest the Allowable Annual Cut, improve forest health and resilience to wildfire, create new markets for tribal forest products, and provide jobs in tribal communities.

Lidar

The DOF will continue to support Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) projects through the Forestry Projects budget activity. New high-resolution Lidar, along with other GIS and aerial imaging technologies, provides BIA and tribal forest managers the opportunity to inventory forest and woodland tracks that would otherwise be too expensive or time consuming to inventory using traditional methods. The use of Lidar will also assist tribes as they update their forest inventories in their Forest Management Plans.

BEST PRACTICES

Budget Execution and Accomplishment Tracking

The Division of Forestry continues to improve internal tracking tools for the discretionary Forestry Projects and the discretionary Forestry Program, Tribal Priority Allocation budgets. Each fiscal year, detailed projections are developed for DOF operations. These, along with the funding request data and forestry accomplishments data collected annually from each Region, are used with the Forestry Projects funding formulas, to provide Regions and Self Governance Tribes funding in a timely manner and to minimize year-end carryover.

Forestry Program Data

Through coordination with the Regions, the DOF updated Forestry Program information in Infodat in FY 2023. The DOF continues to refine forestry data collection and strives to keep forestry program information updated, organized, and readily available to all staff members to answer data calls effectively and efficiently.

Collaboration

The Division of Forestry continues work with the Timber Sales Operation Group and the Inventory and Planning Operation Group to collaborate with BIA Regions, Agencies, and Tribes on policy, special projects, and updates to standard operating procedures.



Tree Coring on the Chehalis Stand Exam



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



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

BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Forest Inventory Projects

The total number of projects has consistently been around 50 to 54 projects this year. Of those projects the branch has continually managed less than 30% of the total projects national wide and more than 70% of the projects have been at the region, agency, or tribe.

- Successfully developed and completed 5 Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) materials. Delivered to the regions and tribes the Mescalero, Zuni, Alabama Coushatta, Crow, and Nez Perce CFI materials to initiate the field data collection well in advance of the scheduled time frame.
- Successfully completed 6 data cleaning/processing and analysis verification and returned these projects to the Region to initiate the Forest Inventory Analysis. Returned project include Hoopa Valley, Standing Rock, Cheyenne river, Sisseton Lake Traverse, Yakama, Taos, Menominee, and Coeur d'Alene.
- Closed out three CFI projects after the signed Yankton Forest Inventory Analysis was received from the Rocky Mountain Region and closed Quinault and Santa Clara Pueblo Stocking project after the reports were received and cataloged into the National Indian Forestry Library.

- Provided four on-site technical assistance for the Mescalero and Alabama-Coushatta for the CFI kickoff meeting and field data collection assistance; Hoopa Valley Tribe with the analysis program and Forest Vegetation Simulator, forest growth and yield model for the tribe's timber inventory analysis report; and Mi'kmaq Tribe with the forest inventory design since the forest characteristics were different on each track that on the ground forest walk throughs and conducting a quick cruise and compiling the data to determine the appropriate inventory design.
- Cross walked 4 projects to the national standards for the field names and codes. With the standardization completed all projects will be verified and cross walked for the upcoming re-inventory. All projects coming up for remeasurement are a priority. In addition, the historical data will be archived in the master database.

National Standardization Project

Completed the national standardization of inventory field names and codes with the collaboration from the Inventory Planning Operations Group (IPOG). The FIP foresters compiled over 90 inventories to recommend a national standard which was presented to the IPOG for comment, recommendation, and approval. Once the national standards were finalized the branch completed the national master database, field manual, and reports. All projects nationwide will be developed using the new applications to streamline the inventory process.

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 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.

Stand Exam

Foresters have provided support to the Timber Team with the completion of the Chehalis and Nisqually Stand Exam.

Staffing

Successfully filled three vacant GS-13 positions and one vacant GS-11 positions with talented foresters. The branch is currently working with HR to fill another vacant GS-11 forester position.

National Advanced Silviculture Program (NASP)

Four out of the five candidates that we sponsored and were sent to NASP 16 successfully completed all four modules (the fifth will complete their final module in FY24). Students matriculated with an average GPA of 3.84. We are sending four students to NASP 17, and they have already completed the first of the four modules and will complete the second module this month, before the end of September 2023. The Call Letter for NASP 18 candidates will be sent out to the Regional Foresters before the end of FY 2023.

Silviculture

The Silvicultural Certification program is being "stood up" during FY 2023. The Certification Task Book is in the process of being edited to make it more "BIA-Centric" by removing references to Forest Service specific e.g., Handbooks, Databases, etc. and replacing them with BIA equivalents so that the task book is more user-friendly to those completing it in their effort to become certified. Four BIA employees have started to complete individual tasks in the certification task book.

Silviculture Policy

53 IAM 53 Chapter 9 Manual has been updated and is Section 508 compliant. The final document has been published. The Chapter 9 Handbook has started the updating process.

Data Sharing

The branch worked with the IT team to develop a Team's site for file sharing, and we have successfully established subfolders that can only be accessed by the tribes to safely share files. In the past, IT had restrictions that did not allow electronic file sharing with the tribe, tribal contractors, and contractors making it hard to share inventory databases, applications, and analysis programs outside the BIA with Tribes to provide technical support. This is no longer the case.

A-123 Forest Management Inventory and Planning

The FMI&P Review Team, consisting of four Central Office Forest Inventory and Planning (FIP) Foresters and one Regional Office FMI&P Forester, prepared and routed memos notifying each BIA region of an FY 2023 FMI&P A-123 which included the following attachments: A-123 Schedule, Field Test Forms, and Field Test Form Instructions. Additionally, memos identifying four regions selected for the FY 2023 FMI&P A-123 were prepared and routed accordingly.

The FMI&P Review Team completed and submitted all Division of Evaluation and Assessment (DEA) Data Calls ahead of deadline.

The data calls included providing updates to the Component Inventory, preparing a programmatic Integrated Risk Register identifying the program's risk level, preparing a Control Matrices Test Plan for use in assessing regional programs served, and a compilation of Control Matrices results.

The FMI&P Review Team scheduled site visits to four regional offices in FY 2023, including the Great Plains, Eastern, Navajo, and Eastern Oklahoma. During each site visit, the regional program audit consisted of a thorough review of the Mapping for Inventory being maintained at the region, Inventory Planning remaining on schedule, Forest Inventory Analyses being conducted and documented with all minimum content and accuracy standards, Forest Management Planning being completed with all minimum content standards and Regional Director approval, and Data Management Performance to ensure that inventory and planning documents are being submitted for inclusion in the National Indian Forestry Library.

The FMI&P Review Team also compiled Regional Certifications and identified to regions warranting a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to remedy notable control deficiencies.

Site Visits included in-briefings and out-briefings with Regional Directors and other regional leadership. These briefings included a schedule of what to expect during the review and the findings and observations, as well as review team recommendations for bringing programs into compliance.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Continuous Forest Inventory projects in-progress

Preparing 5 Continuous Forest Inventory materials for projects scheduled to begin in fall/winter 2023 and spring 2024. The branch will complete the databases, field manuals, Tatum guides, and tally sheets/field data collectors before the CFI kickoff and field data collection. Some of the projects are near completion.

- Seminole, Eastern Region 2023
- Miccosukee, Eastern Region 2023
- Mi'kmaq, Eastern Region 2024
- Anadarko Agency, Southern Plains Region 2024
- Ute Mountain Timber and Woodlands, Southwest Region 2023

NASP

Continue to coordinate closely and promptly with David Gwaze, US Forest Service National Silviculturist, as well as the Universities that host the four NASP modules to facilitate efficient communication on class participants, housing, and invoicing for the yearly NASP offerings.

Silviculture

An analysis of the number of certified silviculturists was sent to the Regional Foresters two weeks ago with a request for review and comments. Currently, there are three certified silviculturists in the entire BIA. One in central office and two at Ft. Apache Agency. It is expected that by the beginning of calendar year 2024, due to transfers to other Agencies and retirement, there will only be one certified silviculturist at Ft. Apache. This could be viewed as a step backwards, as soon, the BIA will once again need to rely on the Forest Service to initiate and sign task books as well as to mentor BIA employees through the certification process.

A policy decision should be made at the Regional or Agency level as to whether silvicultural certification is a requirement for foresters signing silvicultural prescriptions. This will provide clarity to both those seeking silvicultural certification and to line officers as well in their decision-making process.

The certification process should not be taken lightly. An understanding needs to be made clear to the line officers on the large time commitment that is needed by foresters to complete the certification task book as well as by those who will be mentoring them and evaluating their certification tasks.

A-123 Forest Management Inventory and Planning

The FMI&P Review Team noted several revisions and inclusions that would benefit the FMI&P A-123 review process in the future. Some of the changes that have been made and that are still in the process of being updated include: better aligning the Field Test Form control items with the Control Matrices, updating Field Test Form control items based on an on-going policy revision to the 53 IAM Chapter 8 Manual, updating the A-123 Schedule to be more understandable for users, and adding validation rules and conditional formatting to the Field Test Forms.

Continuous Forest Inventory future projects

The FIP Branch will soon be a year to two years ahead on inventory projects. The three projects scheduled this fall are over 80% completed, and the foresters will start working on the calendar year 2024 to 2026 projects.

- Hualapai, Western Region, 2024
- Eastern Cherokee, Eastern Region 2025

- Isleta Timber and Woodland, Southwest Region, 2025
- Laguna, Southwest Region, 2026

Policy Revision

The 53 IAM Chapter 8 Handbook team has continued to meet regularly to put a significant push into completing the revised draft of this handbook section. Throughout the revision process, they identified several parts of the corresponding manual that need updating. Because of this, they have revised the Chapter 8 manual ahead of the handbook and are preparing to submit the revisions to RACA in the coming week. In addition to working on reviewing the handbook sections individually and in person, they are also meeting every other week over Teams meetings. They plan to do so through the calendar year.

FIP Application Suite

The application suite continues to progress through its development cycle. The tablet and desktop components are adjusted to match a revamped and more standardized CFI project database schema. Updated report formatting and capability on the analysis results are planned to follow this new database schema. In addition, the tablet and desktop components continue to receive operational corrections and improvements as needs are identified.

National Forestry Library and National Forestry Archive

The National Library quality control and electronic scanning were completed last year. However, there is a need to redo the quality control since FIP foresters are finding discrepancies in some naming schema of the documents, and the number of documents does not match the number of records in the master Library database. The Administrative Officer will continue to update the library.

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OPPORTUNITIES

Forest Inventory Projects

Most of the Continuous Forestry Inventory projects are at the Region, Agency, or Tribes where they are actively collecting forest inventory data, conducting their forest analysis, or writing their forest inventory analysis report. Therefore, this is an excellent opportunity to work with the Regions with custodial plans for smaller tribes to start an inventory and write a Forest Management Plan with the assistance of the FIP Branch.

NASP

No changes are anticipated to the number of students the BIA can sponsor for their employees and Tribal foresters. The current informal agreement with the US Forest Service reserves five slots for the BIA. It would foster silvicultural professionalism in the BIA and Tribal organizations to make use of all these openings in every NASP class in the future.

Silviculture

Once there are additional certified silviculturists in the BIA, it is vital that these individuals be given an opportunity to mentor the next group of silviculturists seeking certification. This will provide a solid knowledge and experience base to facilitate the continuation of the certification process.

A-123 Forest Management Inventory and Planning

Several opportunities for improvement were noted by the FMI&P Review Team and compiled below for implementation on future reviews:

- Provide training to regions and their staff on understanding the A-123 Schedule and who is responsible for what and by when, as well as training on completing self-assessments.
- Provide timely updates to regions on when things are due according to the A-123 schedule.
- Bring a mobile hotspot on site visits to assist where office Wi-fi is not very good.
- Recommending that Regions maintain FMI&P documents for review in electronic format.

Forest Research

After receiving the Fort Belknap Tribal Council's approval to share their CFI data, researchers from the University of Montana and the USFS Forest Health and Protection worked with FIP staff to obtain the most recent CFI data. This data was used to create a suite of models and data-visualization tools to inform the tribe about risks to their forestland. This research used a variety of CFI variables such as plot density, tree diameter, crown ratio, and other factors to estimate how at-risk stands were to mortality due to overstocking. In addition to maps of the forest risks, the researchers also developed data-visualization tools that will provide the Tribal Council with summary-level statistics and graphics that can be filtered on-the-fly. The tool has a ton of potential benefit to using and developing a similar tool for other CFIs. The researcher will demo the tool to the FIP staff soon.

BEST PRACTICES

Forest Inventory

Our continuing efforts in streamlining the Continuous Forest Inventory process of standardizing the field names and codes and incorporating those standards in the master database will lead to optimal efficiency and results. In addition, we are currently working on standardizing a national analysis program and a national field manual to help implement best practices.

A-123 Forest Management Inventory and Planning

Through coordination with the 53 IAM Chapter 8 Working Group, update the Field Test Forms with control items that are applicable to all Regions and the programs they support. In doing so, ensure that control items are tied to laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

CHALLENGES

Software

The Microsoft Access application is a requirement when using the USFS Forest Vegetation Simulator for forest growth simulation modeling. However, Microsoft Access is not a standard program installed on BIA-issued computers.

Shortages of Adobe Acrobat Pro licenses, team members must wait months for an available license and install.

A-123 Forest Management Inventory and Planning

Some challenges were noted throughout the FY 2023 FMI&P A-123. One of the challenges included the timelines in the A-123 Schedule associated with who is responsible for delivering what documents by when and to whom. Some overlap existed between when a document should be received by one office and when it is to be compiled for reporting purposes by another office.

The review team noted that it seems like Regions, Agencies, and Tribes needed some additional guidance while completing the Field Test Forms. Not all forms were submitted according to the Field Test Form Instructions. This caused the review team some challenges in compiling the results in the end.

Another challenge noted by the review team was that office Wi-Fi availability was limited in several circumstances while conducting site visits.



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

FY 2023 STAFF

5 Full Time Employees
 2 Vacant Positions

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

FY 2023 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 and 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 budgets (est. \$174 M) for the Branch of Fish, Wildlife and Recreation (BFWR) and Agriculture Programs. 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 (Tribal Interior Budget Council (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 (Endangered Species Act (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.

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 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.

Government Performance and Results Act

Facilitating A-123 performance measures with Agriculture, Assessable Units (AU) for Internal Control Reviews (ICRs) annually and monitoring GPRA measures for annual reporting schedule.

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.

BRANCH OF AGRICULTURE & RANGE

FY 2023 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 midst 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.

Distribution of Hemp Rules

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

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

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.

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.

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.

BRANCH OF FISH, WILDLIFE & RECREATION

FY 2023 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.

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.

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.

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.



Photo credit: Intertribal Bison Council

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](#).



Gray wolf on Endangered Species list. Photo credit FWS.gov

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.

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

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.

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.

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.



Brown trout reared at the Lac du Flambeau hatchery

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.



Aerial view of Mole Lake Tribal Fish Hatchery. Each pond produces 65,000 walleye fingerlings, D. Dumas

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.

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.

Conservation Law Enforcement Officer Program (CLEO)

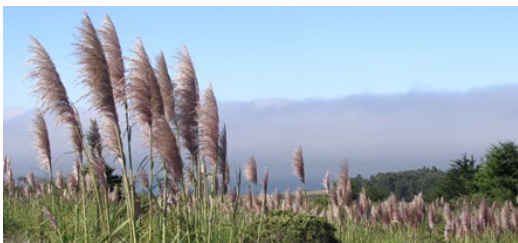
A total of 20 CLEO programs were funded, supporting the sound management of tribal trust resources and enforcement of tribal natural resource laws on trust lands.



Conservation Law Enforcement officer training provided by Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS)

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

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.



BIA Fort Apache Agency wildland fire staff, BIA Mescalero Agency wildland fire staff, Zuni Interagency Hotshot Crew and Vulcan Peak Helitack take a photo with Secretary Deb Haaland in May during her visit to the Southwest Region.

FY 2023 STAFF

41	Full Time Employees
45	Vacant Positions
\$158M	FY 2023 Enacted
\$11,1	FY 2023 Office of Wildland Fire
\$75M	FY 2023 BILS Funds

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

At the end of FY 2023, the Division of Wildland Fire Management had 41 filled and 45 vacant positions with staff in duty locations nationwide. Positions in WFM range from our central office staff; administration, operations, fuels, and aviation program managers; to regional prevention staff and fire technicians. BIA federal and Tribal wildland fire management staff are strategically hired to support the nation’s response to and preparation for the ongoing wildfire crisis throughout the United States.

In FY 2023, Congress enacted \$158M in appropriations for BIA wildland fire management. These funds included fuels and preparedness and excluded suppression funding. Additionally, \$75M in funding was appropriated from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), which included \$47M in rollover from FY 2022. These funds benefitted Tribes, landowners, trustees and partners through prescribed burning, wildland fire prevention support, post-wildfire recovery planning, technology-based land management initiatives and staff compensation.

Additionally, \$11.1M was appropriated from the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) to pay 896 Tribal wildland fire personnel (including 555 full-time employees) the same incentive compensation provided to eligible federal wildland fire staff under the BIL for FY 2022 and FY 2023. As fiduciaries, this act, which ensured Tribal wildland fire staff received the same compensation as federal wildland fire staff, supports the BIA mission to enhance the 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.

Public Website

The WFM website has been fully updated with the completed project consisting of 117 reviewed pages and 100 published pages. The website update provided us the opportunity to review the public facing website based on our audiences, use of information to help our audiences achieve their information gathering needs and providing consistently up-to-date information. The new WFM site can be found at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dwfm>.



Left to right in photo above: WFM Fire Management Specialist Reeve Armstrong, Eastern Oklahoma Regional FMO Forest Blackbear, Assistant Fire Director Jacqueline Martin (retired), Rocky Mountain Regional FMO Bryce Rogers, WFM Administrative Officer Juliette Jeanne, WFM Training Specialist Michael Black, Navajo Regional FMO Johnson Benallie, WFM Natural Resources Specialist Adrian Grayshield and Southwest Regional FMO John Cervantes.

Employee Engagement and Development

In May, seven staff attended the L-580 Leadership in Action course held in Gettysburg, PA. The course provided advanced leadership training to participants through a staff ride. A staff ride is three-phased approach to experiential learning that involves an extensive preliminary study of a historical event, a multi-day visit to the actual event location and guided group integration lessons derived from historical accounts and the lay of the land.

Government organizations regularly send their senior fire leaders and Incident Management Teams to the Battle of Gettysburg staff ride because it was a complex incident that was all about people, logistics, politics and above all else, the power of leadership.

Pending Vacancies at Year End

Currently, 15 positions are in active recruitment and 18 positions are in the process for position description development, classification, or review with the Firefighter Law Enforcement Retirement Team.

Hiring

In FY 2023, ten (10) subject matter experts were hired:

- Deputy Post Wildfire Recovery Coordinator
- Fuels Budget Analyst
- Budget Analyst
- Post-Wildfire Recovery Natural Resources (watershed) Specialist
- Prevention/Wildland Urban Interface Specialist
- National Wildfire Coordinating Group Training Specialist
- Aviation Geographic Information Specialist
- Assistant Aviation Manager
- Aviation Operations Specialist for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)
- Emergency Firefighter Payment Specialist
- Assistant Budget Director

BRANCH OF AVIATION



BIA Vulcan Peak Helitack crewmembers load a helicopter

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Aviation Program completed another successful and accident-free fire season.

Hiring

While recruitment and retention continue to be a challenge, recruitment for the aviation program increased by 28% from the previous year.

Communication

Internal aviation sites were established and have been shared to increase awareness, communications, and information flow.

Mentorship and Training

The National Aviation Office (NAO) and Southwest Regional Office established a pilot training and mentoring helicopter platform to increase applicant pool and personnel advancement.

Year-to-date, the aviation program has accounted for 24 National Wildfire Coordinating Group position advancements and continue to advance on more. We can also account for 2,190 combined hours of flight time.

Aviation is hosting and coordinating BIA's first uncrewed aerial systems remote pilot course in Albuquerque, NM in collaboration with Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), FWS, NPS, USGS, and Sandia Pueblo.

Air Attack Platform Use

The BIA exclusive use air attack contracts were awarded and flew well above the estimated accomplished hours in support of BIA, Tribes, and interagency incidents. Air attack platforms have a specialized camera underneath the aircraft that allows us to survey land, aircraft response to fires and more.



DOI inspectors inspect a newly contracted air attack platform at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID, to be used by BIA Aviation for wildfire response efforts.

BEST PRACTICES

We continue to host monthly aviation calls which include all aviation managers, users, and operators to better understand field and contractual support. The NAO conducts site visits and base reviews to ensure contract compliance and safety adherence. Reports includes deficiencies and findings which are shared with crews, program managers, and line officers. Open communication in continually which have contributed to another accident-free year.

CHALLENGES

Consistent human resources assistance to support recruitment efforts remains a major challenge.

The program needs earlier advertisement to offer jobs earlier in the Spring. Our NAO staff takes on some duties which need to be completed by regional aviation staff. NAO staff also has a variety of collateral responsibilities which reduces the time needed to complete all other primary responsibilities. The Unmanned Aircraft System program demands and duties continue to increase, and we will need additional support in the future.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Solicitations for the renewal of two exclusive use contracts to be awarded early January is in process. We are continuing to work to enhance and refine the sensor and air attack platforms to provide a more effective and efficient product in support of emergencies.

BRANCH OF BUDGET



FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Budget Office has distributed Tribal firefighter compensation funding for FY 2022 to 10 of the 11 regions involved. These funds total \$10.8M for approximately 540 Tribal full-time employees.

Budget has responded to Supplemental funding requests from regions by providing \$612K to six (6) regions using Preparedness carryover and collections funding.

BRANCH OF FIRE OPERATIONS



Zuni Interagency Hotshot crewmember drives buggy

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Supporting Interagency Efforts for the O456 Job Series

Operations staff served as fire subject matter experts for the development of the DOI GS-0456 standard position descriptions (SPDs). This includes participating in weekly calls and completing additional tasks and assignments to continue moving this effort forward. This work has led to the creation of DOI SPDs in the following functional areas: Operations, Planning, Fuels Management, Prevention and Wildland Fire Apprentices. Work is continuing for other functional areas and positions.

WFAP Implementation

Began the implementation of the Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program (WFAP). Intent is to hire 20 apprentices utilizing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding.

The Federal Fire Workforce Development Program (FWDP) is in phase 1 of its implementation. Initial staff is being hired, an up-to-date competency analysis is being performed by OPM to refine exact qualifications and characteristics needed for GS 3-9 fire personnel across many functional areas. The FWDP seeks to fill in the gap between National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) incident position coursework, day job duties and to properly prepare people for the next stage of their fire career.

Engine Operator (ENOP) Training

This required course and fire line qualification is now required to become a qualified engine boss. Successful implementation of this course will help mitigate risks and increase firefighting personnel safety by ensuring fire engines are in a good state of repair and maintenance and adhering to standardized inspection processes. Fire engine personnel also receive training on how to safely drive, operate and tactically use wildland fire engines safely and proficiently on dynamic incidents. BIA DWFM implemented, provided funding, and cadre for multiple Engine Operator Courses in the following Regions: Great Plains, Eastern Oklahoma, Midwest, Northwest, Pacific, Rocky Mountain, Southwest, and Western.

BEST PRACTICES

In late May, wildland fire responders including helitack staff, smokejumpers, fire engine operators and technicians attended a 40-hour Medical Incident Technician (MIT) training at the Jim Hall Foothills Learning Center Boise, Idaho, to gain the skills necessary to help their fellow crew members in an emergency.



Wildland fire medical incident technician training participants take part in a hands-on simulation of a medical incident on the fire line

The MIT training is a combination of lectures and hands-on real-world medical scenarios that can happen while responding to a fire, also known as an incident within an incident. Trainees practice identifying medical incidents and how to accurately respond throughout the training, including how to radio in a medical incident report to the appropriate chain of command.

CHALLENGES

WFAP regional and unit organization charts need to be updated to include apprentice positions before recruitment can begin. The human resources process has been confusing and cumbersome to young high school graduates and entry level firefighters. A lack of barracks or housing across regions continues to be a hiring issue for those participating in WFAP. The lack of housing for out of area applicants prevents them from applying to or accepting a new position.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Training staff will continue implementing and funding Engine Operator (ENOP) courses across regions through 2024. This will continue to help mitigate risks and increase firefighting personnel safety. Additionally, training staff will work with regions to begin advertising, recruiting, and onboarding Wildland Fire Apprentices.

BRANCH OF FIRE USE & FUELS



FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Funding Allocations

Tribes and Fuels have collaborated to develop and fund at least \$8.7M of Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). BIL funds were identified this spring for RTRL to increase the RTRL budget to \$15M (\$9M in BIL funding and \$6M in Base funding). Fuels projects greater than \$5.8M of RTRL Base funds will be allocated to tribes by the end of the FY23.

In partnership with the Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center (PFTC), DWFM agreed to fund and fill a new National Women's Leadership Module Lead that will work with the PFTC to expand the program.

Combined hazardous fuels reduction and BIL Fuels treatment accomplishments are at 89% of planned at 211,398 acres. Treatments are ongoing, which may increase acreage totals.

Wildland Fire Risk Methodology

The Branch completed an Interagency Agreement (IAA) with the USGS and BIA for the development of the Wildland Fire Risk Methodology that specifically addresses inclusion of Tribal non-monetary and monetary values.

Use of LiDAR in Fuels Management

Aerial Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) projects are in progress and in planning on multiple Tribal locations: Fuels, Forestry and Abandoned Mines Lands and Tribes have been collaborating to improve delivery of services for Tribes.

Fire Prevention

Prevention staff participated on National and Regional Interagency Prevention Committees, sub-committees, and other tasking groups. Prevention support and fire investigation needs were provided by staff to Tribes and agencies. Prevention staff assisted with national prevention training courses as instructors and organized coordination of the trainings in addition to assisting the National Fire Prevention and Education Teams that were assigned in the southwest by hosting one team out of the Southwest Regional Office. They provided technical support and coordination of prevention outreach and events for the Tribes and agencies in New Mexico and Arizona.



Pictured above left to right: WFM Fire Prevention Specialist Kenny Jaramillo, Red Lake Prevention Specialist Alicia Lussier, San Carlos Agency Prevention Technician Wilfred "Pie" Steel, National Fire Prevention Team Members Melanie Banton & Ludie Bond pose together at the KYAY radio station in San Carlos Apache Reservation where they had participated in a discussion regarding fire prevention at the radio station.

The National Prevention Teams were interagency teams serving all federal partners over a four-week period. Outreach by the teams included radio shows, social media posts, attending public events, in-person visits providing prevention material handouts.

BEST PRACTICES



BIA Navajo Region Prevention Technician Esmerelda Tsosie and WFM Fire Prevention Specialist Kenneth Jaramillo, provide fire prevention materials and information to visitors at the Yavapai Apache Nation Wildland Fire Department Open House in August (photo taken by Dawn Beauty).

Keeping Manuals Updated

WFM Prevention staff along with regional prevention staff have reviewed and updated the Wildland Fire Investigation Handbook and 90 IAM 6 Wildland Fire Management Wildfire Investigation Manual. The final copies have been submitted to the Office of Regulatory Affairs & Collaborative Action for approval.

Ensuring Our Customers Have Efficient Prevention Programs

Prevention Staff conducted program reviews at Tribal and Agency wildfire prevention programs. This included technical assistance with prevention planning software, development of prevention plans, and resource needs to multiple Tribal and agency wildfire prevention programs.

CHALLENGES

Retaining and hiring new staff remains the biggest challenges. Vacant positions continue to take over 12 months to recruit and fill.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment & Planning Strategies (WPSAPS) Development

Further development of the Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies (WPSAPS) software application is ongoing. BIA staff is providing the leadership and technical guidance for the development team. The staff also continues to assist interagency partners with WPSAPS by providing training support in the form of lead and unit instructors and updating student and instructor guides. To date, over 270 individuals have attended WPSAPS training with BIA supporting all the training sessions.

Supporting Interagency Efforts for the 0456 Job Series

WFM Prevention staff provided subject matter expertise to assist in the development of the Standard Position Descriptions for the Prevention GS-0456 series. These have been completed through the GS-11 grade. Development of the GS-12 grade for prevention is ongoing.



Post Wildfire Recovery staff assess burn from the 2022 Interceptor Fire on the Seminole Reservation in Florida.

BRANCH OF POST WILDFIRE RECOVERY

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Emergency Stabilization

To date, eight Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) plans have been approved and just under \$1 million in emergency stabilization funding has been authorized for Tribes.

Burned Area Rehabilitation

The Post Wildfire program has allocated \$3 million in FY2023 for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) projects such as cultural planting, reforestation, and noxious weed treatments on 10 reservations.



Post Wildfire Recovery staff review BAER plans for the 2023 Simnasho Fire on the Warm Springs Reservation in Oregon.

BEST PRACTICES

Post Wildfire Recovery staff will be working with Tribes and Agencies in the coming months to hold a virtual or in-person BAER training. This will educate local staff and give them insight on how this program works so that when a BAER team is needed for their area they will be fully equipped and ready for the process.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

Post Wildfire Recovery staff will continue to communicate and work with Tribes and Agencies to begin the implementation process of the approved projects from FY 2023.

BRANCH OF PLANNING

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

WFM Fire Management Specialist Reeve Armstrong has accepted the position of Chair for the Interagency Fire Planning Committee (IFPC), to provide national leadership in wildland fire management planning. The IFPC facilitates collaborative fire management planning at local, state, regional, Tribal, and national levels to support coordinated and consistent interagency fire management efforts across jurisdictional boundaries.

The IFPC is a committee under the National Wildfire Coordinating Group which provides national leadership to enable interoperable wildland fire operations among federal, state, local, Tribal, and territorial partners.

CHALLENGES

The Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDSS) next generation project is currently lacking a full-time dedicated representative from DOI that participates in the project daily. Operations planner Reeve Armstrong has represented DOI and BIA. The product owners are working with the business analyst and user interface designer to gather business requirements and learning about the current system. The architect and lead developer are working with agency technical subject matter experts to understand the technology landscape and architect the framework of WFDSS next generation.

Wildland fire management planning will continue to support DOI and BIA in WFDSS next generation project, support the BIA Great Plains Regional Spatial Fire Management plan, and continue to assist in the development of DOI 456 wildland firefighter position description development.



Office of Trust Services' Administrative Program Overview Training attendees in Lakewood, CO. Pictured Back Row (L to R): Cedar Wolf, Alyssa Samoy-Morris, Scott Haskie, Amanda Williams, Sam Stegeman, Shelli Grywusiewicz, Darin Begay, Payton Batliner. Front Row (L to R): Judy Jones, Christine Torres, Olivia Lucero-Nelson, Betty Pierce, Susan Smart, Velda Garcia, Juliette Jeanne, Anne-Marie Auld, Warren Armijo, Ashley Roubideaux

FY 2023 STAFFING

5 Full Time Employees
6 Vacant Positions

Services Provided

DPMC serves in a supporting role to Office of Trust Services 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 and Finance
- Acquisition, Fleet Management and Personal Property Inventories
- Human Resources and Workforce Planning
- Internal Policies and Procedures
- Performance Management Program and Internal Controls
- Communication Plans & Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)
- Storyboard Development
- Data Calls, Data Standardization and Integration, Records Management

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

FY 2023 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, Smartsheet, ESRI Insights, Teams Channel, Power Apps, SharePoint, OneDrive, etc.),
- FBMS UAR Roles and Responsibilities
- Audio-Video Production Program

Data Integration and Story Boarding

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

- Tool for Developing an Annual Spend Plan

Spend plans include a spending summary, Fund status summary, Financial Assistance Purchase Requests (PRs), Budget forecast and 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 Dashboard for Office of Trust Services offers information on purchases, invoices, vouchers, property, status of funding, summary of spending, and cost of Acquisitions

Internal Controls Updated

DPMC successfully updated the assessable units (AUs) for FY 2023 Internal Control Programs for the OTS programs. Six (6) AUs eliminated and five new AUs created for new initiatives added to support the new DOI Strategic Plan.

Administrative SharePoint Site

DPMC established 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.



Indian Trust records stored in Lenexa, KS at the American Indian Records Repository (AIRR)



Located nearly 100 feet underground in a network of limestone caves, AIRR contains roughly 750 million pieces of paper related to Indian trust, education, and other history from as far back as the 1700s

Modernizing Systems – Paperless Records Management



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

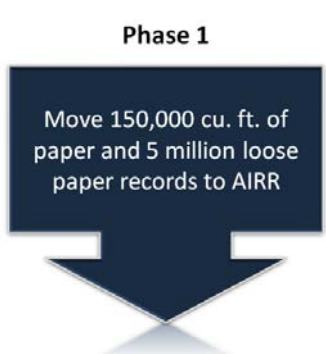
DPMC partnered with Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA) in March 2024 to develop and implement Electronic Records Management Program (ERMP) for Indian Affairs. An ERMP committee was formed with representatives from ASIA, BTFA, BIE, BIA to ensure all programs were well informed and had a voice in the planning development.

Priorities for the transition to a comprehensive paperless records management process include:

- Identify and prioritize field sites
- Inventory and ship boxed records to AIRR for digitization and storage
- Provide Education and Training on Electronic Records Management
- Update of Records Management Policies and Procedures
- Identify and map Electronic Information System (EIS) records
- Enable modernized Electronic Records Management Program

Electronic Records Management Program (ERMP), Operational Plan

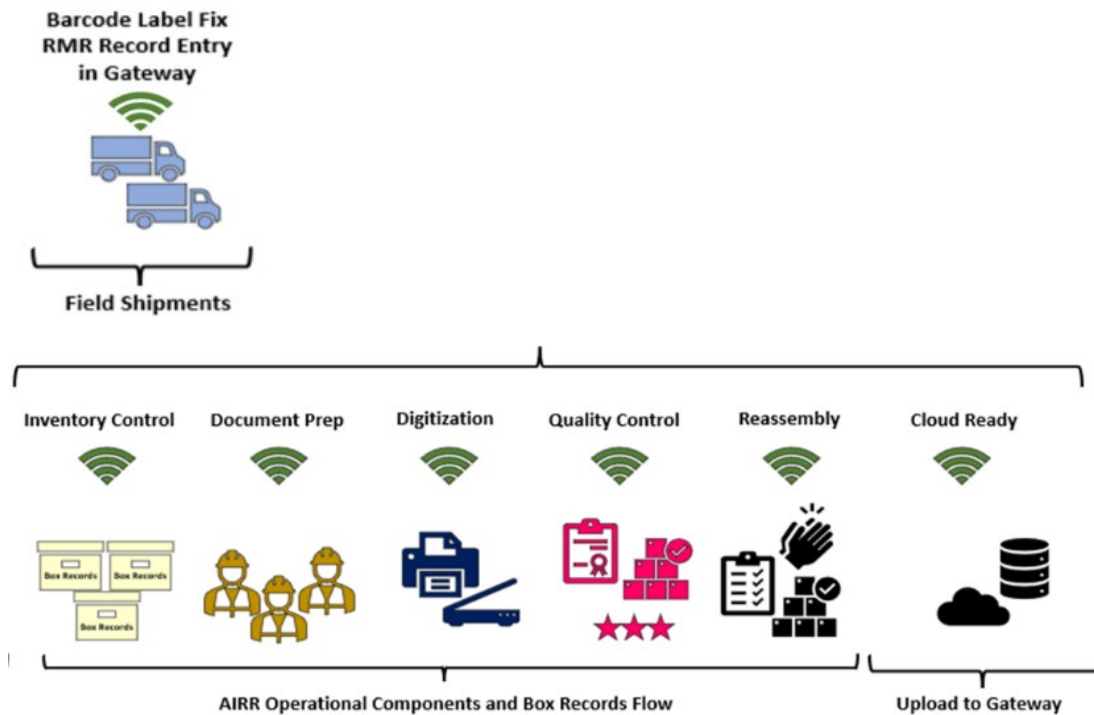
The ERMP Operational Plan will be a 3-phase approach:



- Obtain a shipping Contractor to support moving of boxed records from the field to the AIRR.
- Incorporate Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) inventory data tracking to expediate inventory and remove potential data challenges.
- Add predictive analytics to workforce planning.
- Add live statistics to logistical operations
- Remove dual entry risk
- Increase digitization production by 8%

RFID Detection

Gateway Processing – Integrated real-time Floor Map Tracking



Ship to Storage



Phase 2

Indian Affairs Training and Education on Electronic Records Management

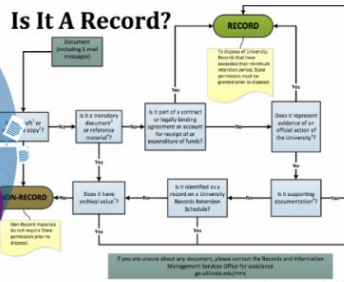
- Develop integrated online training
- Provide transitional training from paper to electronic records management
- Identify alternative solutions for tribal and beneficial training in support of Innovue 3
- Integrated User and Customer experience into the Gateway records experience



Phase 3

Identify Electronic Information System records to connect to the BTFA Gateway

- Identify records in data
- Identify relationships between systems in the Single Source of Truth (SSoT)
- Branch out to auto-identify and auto track system to system records
- Integrated Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence
- Leverage National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Digital preservation Framework
- Build out Electronic Records in the Gateway



Pilot Project Workflow

Hands-on assistance by BTFA-RIMS to help with records situation. The team followed the four steps depicted in the table below.

INPUT	Description	OUTPUT
Step 1: LCT Engagement	The Logistics Coordination Team (LCT) is the advanced team to identify the types and number of boxed records and “loose records on site to create the site assessment report and recommend personnel, length of project, and any special requirements.	Site Assessment Report (SAR)
Step 2: RIMS-T Supervisor	The Records Information Management Specialist Team (RIMS-T) Supervisor for the Region reviews and approves the Site Assessment Report and defines the File and Inventory Records Site Team (FIRST) Lead, staff, and timeline for site project implementation.	FIRST Team begins project implementation
Step 3: Shipping	BTFA will coordinate with the applicable shipper to pick up and deliver the boxed records to the AIRR or an approved federal records center/site location.	Deliver Records to AIRR
Step 4: Digital Center of Excellence (DCE)	The American Indian Records Repository (AIRR) will accept the records as storage is available and begin the process to digitize the records and provide them for access through the Gateway.	Digital Records in Gateway System

Strategic Planning Workshop

The DPMC team coordinated a much-needed Strategic Planning working session for the 14 OTS Division Chiefs. Strategic Works Inc., provided the facilitation services and shared various methods to help the team think outside the box and get to know each other by sharing their success stories, discussing their challenges, exploring innovative solutions, and inspiring one another. Together, they learned from each other’s experiences and worked towards building an equitable and sustainable road map for OTS. The team was phenomenal in formulating the revised OTS mission, vision, strategic goals, and implementation strategies. They created a road map to help the OTS team be well informed and confident in successfully executing and meeting the OTS overall mission. The goal is to publish the FY 2024-2026 OTS Strategic Plan within the first quarter of FY-2024.

OPPORTUNITIES

- DPMC continues to collaborate with DRIS and OTS programs to determine best tools to use in our modernization efforts.
- DPMC has monthly administrative calls with all OTS employees 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, BIL funding
- Sustainability Requirements
- Data and records management efforts
- SmartSheets to track all requests and data calls

CHALLENGES

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

Human Resources

DPMC continues to have challenges with human capital activities. This includes:

- 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



FY 2023 STAFFING

11 Full Time Employees
 17 Vacant Positions

Mission

The mission of the Division of Resources Integration and Services (DRIS) 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 the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Enterprise Platform, ESRI software administration and training and the GIS helpdesk support
- Branch of Resource Solutions coordinates and manages OTS data and oversees the BIA Solution Trust Accountability Tracker (BIA STAT) solution
- 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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Publishing of the BIA Tract Viewer

DRIS published a publicly viewable web application that shows the progress of the parcel mapping effort. This application is viewable by the public, tribes and other state federal and local stakeholder scan have the most up to date view of the progress we are making towards mapping Indian Country.

Migration to new GeoPlatform Portal

DRIS migrated from an OnPrem Portal to the 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
- 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.

Smartsheet.Gov Software Acquired

Smartsheet.Gov, named BIA Solution Trust Accountability Tracker (BIA STAT) will be deployed to support project tracking and promote collaboration. Our Tribal citizen stakeholders will benefit through improved efficiency and effectiveness in doing business with BIA, enhanced data quality and strengthened information security.

- HEARTH Act Accountability Tracker (HAATS) Mortgage Tracker
- Cadastral Survey Contracts
- Excess Lands/Restoring Tribal Homelands
- DWP Safety of Dams Project Tracker
- Fee to Trust Land Description Evaluation and Validation (LDEV) application

BRANCH OF GEODATA EXAMINATION &

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

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Fee To Trust GIS Strike Team

Meetings to Share Information -_A presentation on the Land Description and Examination & Validation (LDEV) updated form and best practices was made to the [Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians](#) (ATNI). GIS Description, Examination & Validation (GDEV) Acting Branch Manager served on BIA Partners in Realty Discussion Panel. GDEV staff also held an informational booth on services provided by DRIS. The FTT GIS Strike Team participated in four regional meetings on FTT.

Legal Description Evaluation and Validation (LDEV) Requests -_FTT GIS Strike team has completed 82 LDEVs in the last 6 months and currently have 11 pending LDEV applications.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

The FTT GIS Strike team will continue to prioritize FTT Land Description Review to restore Tribal homelands
Regional refresher meetings will be offered for regions with new staff

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.

PARCEL TEAM



Sample parcel map

Mapping Indian Tracts

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

The team creates/gathers TAAMS tabular data into a GIS 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 and On-Going Land Mapping

The Parcel Team has completed mapping on over 5,000 additional TAAMS records which include areas in Alaska such as Koniag_977, Cook Inlet_975, Aleut_984. Work is on-going in Sealaska_982 and Metlakatla_99J. Townsite Parcel files for areas outside of Alaska that include Myton_6R3, Randlette_6S3, and Duchesne_6Q3.

Areas updated include Eastern Cherokee Qualla_001, Narragansett_027, Aquinnah_030, Mashpee Wampanoag_035, Chitamacha_041, and Tunica Biloxi_044. Areas of continued work for the Eastern Region include Upper Mataponi_045 and Rappahannock_046.

Network Speed Issues

Network speed remain an issue. The BOGS Development Team is working with the OCIO to alleviate this critical problem. Some of these issues will be resolved by re-platforming (AWS) repository data caches, however, because this involves changing domains for the Parcel/Tract caches Authority to Operate and security documentation will need to be modified.

Non-Parcel Tracts Feature Class

Parcel processing scripts have been modified and vetted to support the new Non-Parcel Tract feature class. Additional modifications were required due to the number of SAB-based tracts found to occur with Eastern Region LACs. New training for Lot, Block and Subdivision (LBS) and Survey and Abstract (SAB) data from Eastern and AK regions is advised for those working with these types of datasets.

Other Land Mappings Projects

- Retiring the Axway Repository
- Resolving TAAMS records identified with Cannot Map status within 30 Land Area Codes (LACs)
- Match E Be Nash She Wish (LAC 484) mapping
- Uintah & Ouray Tribe (U&O) litigation requires additional GIS work identifying special mineral tracts
- Work with ESRI to develop parcel fabric methodologies by sharing existing data sets
- Initial mapping (areas previously unmapped) for the Eastern Region
- Mapping for Pokogon Band Potawatomi of Potawatomi Indians of Michigan
- Special TAAMS query requests to identify mineral acreage

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

- Replacing the Axway Repository
- Large AK LACs (having more than 1,000 records)
- Day Forward updates using TAAMS EVENT CODE methodology
- New GIS Data Requests submitted
- Map locations of American Indian Boarding Schools
- Ron Lodgepole Camp Verde_601 parcel repair request

OPPORTUNITIES

- Work with Regional staff to complete LAC area and have parcels mapped for each LAC
- Receive various project requests.
- Tribes and Agencies provided with knowledge to assist in making decisions
- Engage with the Rights of Way Team

BEST PRACTICES

Complete mapping of one Land Area Code at a time

Establish priority of projects as they are being requested based on urgency

Getting the correct data to the agencies that need it for decision making

CHALLENGES

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

RIGHTS OF WAY TEAM



Diagram of a right of way

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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.
- Coeur D'Alene LAC 182 August 2023 (6-month project) 149 contracts I was able to map 114 of the contracts. Completed a Dashboard to display the ROWs.

Project Request

- Received 1 request out of 40 for to map a Right of Way (ROW) from the NW Region to correct title defects on March 20, 2023.
- Parcel Team has received 16 data requests received 12 completed the other 3 request for data that GDEV didn't have and 1 for all Land Area Codes (LACs) from a Regional Geospatial Coordinator (RGC) that can pull them from the share drive.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

- Coeur D'Alene LAC 181 is the next LAC I will be working on 1,004 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 - FCR 201: Contracting Officers Representative Level 2 and Esri
- Worked with GDEV teams - FTT GIS Strike Team November – December 2022 and Parcel Team Lead February – July 2023
- Work with regional staff to complete mapping rights of way contracts

BEST PRACTICES

Prioritizing projects as they are being requested based on urgency.

Getting the correct data to the agencies that needs 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.

BRANCH OF GEOSPATIAL SUPPORT

Dashboard 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 and 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 Land Area Representation (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 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.

- 0 **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.

BRANCH OF RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

The Branch of Resource Solutions (BRS)'s primary mission is to coordinate, manage, and provide user support for enterprise software and geospatial data across the Office of Trust Services. The overarching goals are to integrate geospatial data and enterprise software solutions to share information more effectively, improve efficiency, and bring better service to federally recognized Tribes, our stakeholders, and the public.

BRS's current priority is implementing the Solutions Trust Accountability Tracker (STAT) throughout OTS and other groups. STAT is a cloud-based software package that works with the BIA's data spanning legacy systems through desktop spreadsheets to modernize the usage of trust land geospatial data, enable improved accountability and project management monitoring/tracking, and accelerate collaboration between business units.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The BRS cross-disciplinary team built detailed prototypes of nine (9) application tools in the STAT platform, planned for Authority to Operate approval soon, and utilized best practices from other DOI Bureaus on this platform. STAT is targeted primarily for tabular data and represents that data graphically, in a calendar style, in a Kanban/card mode, or as a spreadsheet with high-powered project management functionality. Charts and graphs display key performance metrics. Data can be input via forms, importing, or as a data shuttle for ongoing updates from other information systems. The application is valuable for collaboration, analysis, and modeling functionalities.

The Branch of Resource Solutions (BRS) is entering the Test Evaluation phase in the project to obtain an authority to operate (ATO) for the BIA STAT system built on a cloud-based instance of Smartsheet.Gov. There are eight tools slated to undergo the ATO assessment, and many more already getting prepared for the subsequent next set of tool and upgrades on the BIA STAT deployment roadmap.

TASKS CARRYING INTO FY 2024

- Achieve approvals for ATO for the platform and eight priority tools/applications - BIA STAT 1.0
- Initiate additional tools/applications for subsequent STAT 1.1 and build flexible solution roadmap for future versions
- OTS Admin automation and tracking application
- ELA Help Desk Modernization

OPPORTUNITIES

Collaborate with OTS Divisions to solve business challenges and adopt best practices

Develop support infrastructure and re-purpose existing, proven infrastructure and processes

Participate in Data Stewardship and/or Custodial activities

BEST PRACTICES

Utilize agile development techniques for additional BIA STAT tools and applications

Establish and maintain appropriate standard operating procedures for BIA STAT

CHALLENGES

Hiring, onboarding, and facilitating new hires to be the most productive in the most effective way possible

DIVISION OF WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



Branch of Pathways

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.

FY 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In FY 2023, the Pathways Internship Program employed 44 American Indian and Alaska Native Student Trainees representing 20 Tribes, 23 different educational institutions, and 15 states. Internship categories spanned 17 different mission critical hiring areas (see table to the right

FY 2023 Student Trainee Conversions

Seven (7) Native American Student Trainees converted to permanent positions with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in FY 2023. Two additional Student Trainees converted to positions with a Tribal Nation. (See table on the right).

Pathways Interns Successfully Placed

Interns	Host Program
10	Range
8	Forestry
5	Climate
2	Cultural Resource Management
2	*Facilities, Construction
2	Geographic Information Systems
2	Land, Titles, and Records
2	Real Estate Services
1	Accounting
1	Bison Program
1	Energy & Mineral Development
1	Engineering
1	Environmental/Cultural Resource Management
1	*Field Operations
1	Wildland Fire Management
1	*Indian Service
1	*Office of Information Management
1	Policy
1	*Indian Self-Determination
44	TOTAL INTERNS

**The Pathways Program successfully matched interns with Indian Affairs organizations outside the Office of Trust Services*

Snapshot of the 2023 Pathways Cohort





Supporting Pathways Across Indian Affairs

In FY 2023, the Pathways Team supported the Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) in designing an overarching Pathways Program framework for all Indian Affairs. Staff participated in weekly OHCM Pathways Working Group meetings, drafted a new Indian Affairs Pathways Programs Handbook, and designed new communications and online materials for OHCM's use.

As the only active Pathways Program in Indian Affairs, the OTS Pathways Program also broadened its reach to facilitate internships for non-OTS offices as capacity allowed.

Outreach & Public Relations

In FY 2023, the Pathways Team conducted extensive outreach on a national scale to reach a wide range of audiences and build positive relationships with federal, Tribal, academic, intertribal, nonprofit, and private sector stakeholders.



2023 American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) College and Career Fair

Pathways Staff Outreach Events

Events	Description
27	Outreach events with high schools, colleges, universities, technical schools, and Tribal colleges and Universities (TCUs)
12	Interagency Youth and Workforce Development Meetings
8	National Native Outreach Events with nonprofit and intertribal organizations
7	Formal Pathways presentations to Regions and BIA Offices
6	Tribal Presentations
2	Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs meetings
25	*Evaluation interviews with BIA and Tribal employees
87	TOTAL EVENTS

**Completed 25 evaluation interviews with BIA and Tribal employees to solicit feedback and better understand Indian Country's most pressing workforce needs.*

BRANCH OF WORKFORCE PLANNING &

Training & Development

On October 11, 2023, Workforce Planning and Development hosted the following training courses with an OPM presenter. These trainings were based on recommendations from the General Accounting Office (GAO) Audit Report 17-43 to further align organizational goals. OTS has the option of rehosting the training 2024 due to the high level of interest as demonstrated by the waiting list.

Employees Trained	Course Name
27	Teamwork in a Virtual Environment
31	Workforce Development

OPM and Workforce Planning are coordinating two training courses for November 28, 2023: Succession Planning and How to Succeed in a Virtual Environment.

Legal Instrument Examiner Competency Modeling & Gap Analysis

The Workforce Planning & Development office began work with OPM to establish a Mission Critical Occupation (MCO) for competency modeling and gap analysis for the *Legal Instrument Examiner*.

A working group has scheduled the following dates in November 2023:

- 0963-Legal Instruments Examiners (Non-Supervisory Employees), November 14-16, 2023
- 0963-Legal Instruments Examiners (Supervisors), November 28-30, 2023

BRANCH OF YOUTH INDIAN SERVICE CORP



Indian Youth Service Corps projects engage Native youth in public service projects to benefit Tribal communities

In FY23, the BIA Office of Trust Services launched the BIA Indian Youth Service Corps Program, delivering *\$3.5 Million* in Indian Youth Service Corps program grants to Tribal Nations, tribally affiliated organizations, and corps organizations working directly with Native youth. FY23 awards are positively impacting *over 20 Tribes* and Tribally affiliated organizations *across 10 states* and *5 BIA regions*.

The BIA Office of Trust Services has provided interagency leadership on this effort by developing a shared set of IYSC resources, initiating an IYSC community of practice across agencies, and establishing plans to hold formal interagency Tribal consultations in FY24.

Throughout the year, OTS staff have completed *over 80* IYSC planning and coordination meetings with federal partners, Tribal Nations, and other stakeholders.

DOI Strategy Gathering in NM

In September 2023, the BIA Office of Trust Services participated in a Department of Interior Interagency IYSC Strategy Gathering in New Mexico, visiting IYSC project sites, meeting with and interviewing Native Youth participants, and engaging a wide range of federal, Tribal, and nonprofit stakeholders in meaningful dialogue and planning sessions. Participants included youth leads from the DOI, NPS, BLM, BIA, BOR, USGS, FWS, USFS, and AmeriCorps.

ACRONYMS

2-D	Two dimensional
3-D	Three dimensional
A&D	Acquisition and Disposal
A/E	Architect/Engineer
AAC	Annual Allowable Cut
ABI	American Broadband Initiative
ACH	Automated Clearing House
AHERA	Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act
AISES	American Indian Science and Engineering Society
ANC	Alaska Native Corporation
AOTR	Awarding Official Technical Representative
ARPA	Archeological Resources Protection Act
AS-IA	Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
ATNI	Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
ATO	Authority to Operate
AU	Assessable Unit
AVSO	Appraisal and Valuation Services Office
AWS	Amazon Web Services GeoPlatform Enterprise Portal
BAER	Burned Area Emergency Response
BAR	Burned Area Rehabilitation
BBS	Branch of Business Services
BCRM	Branch of Cultural Resources Management
BES	Branch of Environmental Services
BESS	Battery Energy Storage Systems
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BIA STAT	BIA Solution Trust Accountability Tracker
BIE	Bureau of Indian Education
BIL	Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation
BILS	BLM Indian Land Surveyors
BIP	Branch of Irrigation Power
BFM	Branch of Fluid Minerals
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BOGS	Branch of Geospatial Services
BOR	Bureau of Reclamation
BMAP	Bison Management Apprenticeship Program
BRAD	Branch of Renewable and Distributed Generation
BRS	Branch of Resource Solutions
BRS	Bison Restoration Initiative
BSEE	Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement
BTFA	Bureau of Trust Funds Administration
BWFR	Branch of Fish, Wildlife & Recreation

CA	Communitization Agreement
Cal-Poly	California Polytechnic University
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
CAPER	Consolidated Annual Performance and Evaluation Report
CatEx	Categorical Exclusion
CBO	Congressional Budget Office
CDR	Community Driven Relocation
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act
CESU	Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
CFI	Continuous Forest Inventory
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CGI	Contractor managing the BIA TAAMS System
CHIA	Community and Hydropower Improvement Act
CHF	Central Hazmat Funding
CLEO	Conservation Law Enforcement Officer
CSF	Cubic Feet per Second
CSKT	Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
CTSR	Certified Title Status Report
CY	Calendar Year
DCE	Digital Center of Excellence
DEMD	Division of Energy and Mineral Development
DEQ	Department of Environmental Quality
DESCRM	Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management
DFMC	Division of Facilities Management and Construction
DEA	Division of Evaluation and Assessment
DLTR	Division of Land Titles and Records
DM	Departmental Manual
DNR	Division of Natural Resources
DOF	Division of Forestry
DOI	Department of the Interior
DOJ	Department of Justice
DPMC	Division of Program Management and Coordination
DRES	Division of Real Estate Services
DRIS	Division of Resource Integration Services
DSPR	Dam Safety Priority Rating
DTS	Data Tracking System
EDA	Energy Development Agreement
EDL	Environmental Disposal Liabilities
EFT	Electronic Funds Transfer
EIS	Electronic Information System
EMAP	Environmental Management and Auditing Program
EMDP	Energy and Mineral Development Program
EMG	Executive Management Group
EMS	Emergency Management System
ENOP	Engine Operator
EOP	Explanation of Payments

EPA	Energy Policy Act
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EQP	Environmental Quality Program
ER	Ecosystem Restoration
ERMP	Electronic Records Management Program
ESA	Endangered Species Act
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
EV	Electric Vehicle
EWS	Early Warning System
FAIR	Financial Assistance Interior Regulation
FASS-CMS	Financial Assistance Social Services and Case Management System
FAST-41	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act-41
FBIR	Fort Berthold Indian Reservation
FBMS	Financial Business Management System
FERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
FIP	Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning
FIRST	Files and Inventory Records Site Team
FISMA	Federal Information Security Modernization Act
FITARA	Federal Information Technology Acquisition Reform Act
FMP	Forest Management Plan
FMI&P	Forest Management Inventory & Planning
FMO	Fire Management Officer
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
FPA	Federal Power Act
FRA	Financial Reporting and Analysis
FRPP	Federal Real Property Profile
FTT	Fee to Trust
FWDP	Fire Workforce Development Program
FY	Fiscal Year (Government Financial Year October 1 – September 30)
GAO	General Accounting Office
GIS	Geospatial Information Systems
GDEV	GIS Description Examination and Evaluation
GDS	Geotechnical Data Services
GLRI	Great Lakes Restorative Initiative
GPA	Grade Point Average
GPRA	Government Performance and Results Act
GS	General Schedule
GSA	General Services Administration
HAATS	HEARTH Act Accountability Tracker
HCP	Hydropower Compliance Program
HEARTH Act	Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act of 2012
HISP	High Impact Service Providers
HR	Human Resources
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
HVA	High Value Asset

IA	Indian Affairs
IAA	Interagency Agreement
IAM	Indian Affairs Manual
IA-PMS	Indian Affairs – Performance Management System
IBC	Intertribal Bison Council
ICR	Internal Control Review
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
IEMSC	Indian Energy Minerals Steering Committee
IESC	Indian Energy Service Center
IFPC	Interagency Fire Planning Committee
IFMAT	Indian Forest Management Assessment Team
IHS	Indian Health Service
IJA	Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
IIM	Individual Indian Money
IMDA	Indian Mineral Development Agreement
InfoDat	Information Database
IP	Indian Preference
IPFTC	Interagency Prescribed Fire Training Center
IPOG	Inventory Planning Operations Group
IRA	Inflation Reduction Act of 2022
IRA	Indian Reorganization Act
ISBEE	Indian Small Business Economic Enterprise
ISDEAA	Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act
ITAMP	Indian Trust Asset Management Plan
ITARA	Indian Trust Asset Reform Act
ITC	Inter-Tribal Timber Council
ITEP	Institute of Tribal Environmental Professionals
IYSC	Indian Youth Service Corps
LAC	Land Area Code
LAR	Land Area Representation
LBS	Lot, Block and Subdivision
LCT	Logistics Coordination Team
LDEV	Legal Description Examination & Validation
LDR	Land Description Review
LiDAR	Light Detection and Ranging
LTRO	Branch of Land Titles and Records Office
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
M	Million
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MCO	Mission Critical Occupation
MHA	Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation
MIT	Medical Incident Technician
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRAD	Mineral Royalty Accounting Distribution
MRMSS	Mineral Revenue Management Support System

NAFWS	Native American Fish and Wildlife Society
NAGPRA	Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act
NAO	National Aviation Office
NAPE	North American Prospect Expo
NASP	National Advanced Silviculture Program
NCTC	National Conservation Training Center
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NEVI	National Electric Vehicle Initiative
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NIFRMA	National Indian Forest Resources Management Act
NIC	Notice of Inventory of Completion
NIIMS	National Irrigation Information System
NIOGEMS	National Indian Oil & Gas Energy and Minerals System
NOA	Notice of Availability
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOD	Notice of Decision
NPM	National Policy Memorandum
NPS	National Park Service
NRDAR	Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NTIA	National Telecommunications and Information Administration
NTICC	National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference
NWCG	National Wildfire Coordinating Group
O&M	Operations and Maintenance
OCIO	Office of the Chief Information Officer
OEPC	Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
OGOR	Oil and Gas Operations Reporting
OHA	Office of Hearings and Appeals
OHCM	Office of Human Capital Management
OIMT	Office of Information Management Technology
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
ONAP	Office of Native American Programs
ONRR	Office of Natural Resources Revenue
OP	Operational Plan
OPM	Office of Personnel Management
ORDA	Office of Restoration and Damage Assessment
OSG	Office of Self-Governance
OWF	Office of Wildland Fire
OWPO	Orphaned Wells Program Office
OTS	Office of Trust Services

PDS	Project Data Sheets
PFTC	Prescribed Fire Training Center
PIV	Personal Identity Verification
PMA	President's Management Agenda
POC	Point of Contact
RACA	Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action
RD	Regional Director
READI	Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative for Indian Country
RFID	Radio Frequency Identification
RGC	Regional Geospatial Coordinator
RIMS	Records Information Management System
RIMS-T	Records Information Management System Team
RLDR	Realty Land Description Review
RMP	Relocation, Managed Retreat, or Protect-in-Place
ROW	Right-of-Way
RPI	Rights Protection Implementation
RTRL	Reserved Treaty Rights Lands
SaaS	Software as a Service
SAB	Survey and Abstract
SAF	Society of American Foresters
SAR	Site Assessment Report
SARA	Superfunds Amendments and Re-authorization Act
SBA	Small Business Administration
SCCM	System Center Configuration Manager
SCIP	San Carlos Irrigation Project
SHIRA	Strategic Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SIWRO	Secretary's Indian Water Rights Office
SME	Subject Matter Expert
SOD	Safety of Dams
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
SOW	Statement of Work
SPDs	Standard Position Descriptions
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and MathematicsSA
SUA	Southern Ute Agency
TAAMS	Trust Asset Accounting Management System
TBCP	Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program
TBIC	Tribal-Interior Budget Council
TBWG	Tribal Boundary Working Group
TCR	Tribal Climate Resilience
TCUs	Tribal Colleges and Universities
TDHE	Tribally Designated Housing Entity
TEDC	Tribal Energy Development Capacity
TFAS	Trust Funds Accounting System
THI	Timber Harvest Initiative

THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Office
TLC	Division of Trust Land Consolidation
TMDP	Tribal Management Development Program
TPA	Tribal Priority Allocation
TRC	Technical Review Committee
TSOG	Timber Sales Operating Group
TSR	Title Status Report
TWG	Technical Working Group
U&O	Uintah & Ouray Tribe
UAR	User Access Review
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft Systems
UCUT	Upper Columbia United Tribes
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
VA	Veterans Administration
VCDR	Voluntary Community Drive Relocation
WFAP	Wildland Fire Apprenticeship Program
WFM	Wildland Fire Management
WFDSS	Wildland Fire Decision Support System
WHCNAA	White House Council on Native American Affairs
WPSAPS	Wildfire Prevention Spatial Assessment and Planning Strategies
WR	Water Resources