



TRUST LAND RESOURCES • RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP • RESULTS THAT MATTER

### Message from the Deputy Director

In FY 25, project monitoring staff are managing a portfolio of 50 Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) grant projects with 47 Tribes nationwide. OTS issued a Notice of Intended Repatriation for a valued cultural item from its collection and transferred the item to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, signifying a meaningful advancement in the recognition of cultural heritage.

Our Branch of Environmental Services a goal of leveraging NEPA expertise and acting as lead on FAST-41 permitting projects. In the first half of the year, BES team members have successfully assumed the lead role for two FAST-41 projects, convening multiple bureaus and agencies, and achieving 100% compliance on project milestones with expedited timelines.

OTS maintains nearly 1.25M GIS records for the mapping of Indian lands. Data files for these mapped lands update daily and a visual representation can be found on the BIA Open Data Page.

OTS believes in transparency through these quarterly newsletters and a deeper dive into our program successes in the BIA [OTS Mid-Year Accomplishment Report](#) (October 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025) now available on our website. Enjoy!



### Contact Information

BIA Office of Trust Services  
1849 C Street, NW, MS-4620-MIB  
Washington, DC 20240  
Office: (202) 208-3615  
Email: [OTS@bia.gov](mailto:OTS@bia.gov)  
Website: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots>

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*John Black Hair*

## TRUST SERVICES OVERVIEW

### TRAINING EVENTS

<u>Event</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Target Audience</u>
TAAMS Forestry for Beginners	March 10-14, 2025	Ashland, WI	BIA Forestry
Safety of Dams Workshop	March 11-12, 2025	Fallon, NV	Water & Power employees
TAAMS Forestry Pre-Sale	April 10, 2025	MS Teams	BIA Forestry
TAAMS Forestry Pre-Sale	April 30, 2025	MS Teams	BIA Forestry
TAAMS Forestry for Beginners	TBD	Portland, OR	BIA Forestry
TAAMS Forestry for Beginners	TBD	Ashland, WI	BIA Forestry
TAAMS Forestry Advanced	TBD	Portland, OR	BIA Forestry
TAAMS Forestry Advanced	TBD	Ashland, WI	BIA Forestry

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

#### FY 2025

Timber Team Project Proposals

#### Application Deadline

Continuously open

### Branch of Land Titles and Records Welcomes Amber Green



Amber Green joined the Division of Trust Asset Ownership and Title (DTAOT) as the Branch Chief of Land Titles and Records in late 2024. She is a member of the Pawnee Nation in Pawnee, Oklahoma. Amber has been with BIA for 20 years and began her career as a legal examiner in the Land Titles and Records Office at the Rocky Mountain Region. Eager to grow, she then transitioned to a Realty Specialist at the Northwest Regional Office.

Next, Amber had the opportunity to head back to the Rocky Mountain Region to work with the Land Buy-Back Program (now the Division of Trust Land Consolidation) as a Management Analyst.

Amber has enjoyed the experience in working with a diverse group of team members, Tribes, BIA programs, and inter-agency offices. Outside of the office, she enjoys spending time with her husband, family and fur babies and trying new recipes and baking, making homemade goods, taking road trips and reading.

### Farewell and Best Wishes to Lorna Babby

The Bureau bids farewell and best wishes to Lorna Babby, who retired on Friday, March 21, 2025, with 22 years of federal service. Ms. Babby directed BIA's Land Buy-Back Acquisition Center, which ended on November 22, 2022, and continued to carry out the land consolidation effort under the Office of Trust Services, Division of Land Consolidation.



Lorna hiking Zion National Park in Utah





*The Albuquerque Trust Services team attended Sherry Kircher's retirement luncheon.*

## Retirement Luncheon for Sherry Kircher

Sherry Kircher, Environmental Biologist, retired from federal service on Wednesday, April 30, 2025, with 30 years of government service. Ms. Kircher worked in the Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management, Branch of Environmental Services. Her service was celebrated in a luncheon with her OTS colleagues.



*Myles Lytle unfolding blanket as a retirement gift and presentation to Sherry Kircher*



*30-year certificate of service presentation by Trina Locke, Directorate Environmental & Natural Resources*



### Interim Strategic Performance Priorities for Interior Senior Executives

April 23, 2025, guidance on the implementation of Senior Executive Service Performance plans for FY 25 was released by the Interior Director, Office of Human Capital identifying twelve top priorities for all Interior programs.

Item	Performance Elements
1	Energy production & delivery for current and future needs
2	Strategic use of & fair market value for resources on public and tribal lands
3	Management and delivery of water
4	Safety and protection for our people, property and resources
5	Recreational and traditional use of lands and waters
6	Conservation of lands, water species, and heritage
7	Upholding treaty obligations to Tribes, American Indians, Alaska Natives
8	Service to communities that rely on Interior's capacity for science, data, and technologies
9	Delivery of information, ease of doing business, public and other engagements
10	Efficiency, effectiveness, security, and accountability of Government operations
11	Customer experience, user experience, digital experience
12	Implementing Secretarial and Administration priorities, legislation, and directed initiatives



Field Day Wildland Firefighter Apprenticeship Program

### Federal and Tribal Firefighters Receive Permanent Compensation Increase

On March 15, 2025, DOI announced permanent pay increases for federal and Tribal wildland firefighters across the United States. As wildfires grow larger and more destructive—threatening communities, livelihoods, and infrastructure, wildland fire personnel face growing demands. Improving firefighter pay will help address this challenge by enabling the Department and Tribes to hire and retain top employees in this critical field.

The permanent pay increases were included in the Full Year-Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act (2025; H.R. 1968) which Congress passed on March 14 and President Trump signed into law.

### Secretary Burgum Swearing in Statement on Tribal Nations

On February 3, 2025, Doug Burgum was sworn in as the 55<sup>th</sup> Secretary of the Interior. In his speech, Secretary Burgum highlighted his experience working with Tribal nations as Governor of North Dakota.



Stewart Lee Udall Department of the Interior Building, located in Washington, DC.

*“In North Dakota, we share geography with five sovereign Tribal nations. The current partnership is historically strong because we prioritized Tribal engagement through mutual respect, open communication, collaboration, and a sincere willingness to listen. At Interior, we will strengthen our commitment to enhancing the quality of life, promoting economic opportunities, and empowering our Tribal partners through these principles.” – Secretary Doug Burgum*



## DIVISION OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT



*Grinding Rock Aggregates is a sand and gravel quarry owned and operated by the Fort Independence Indian Community in Independence, CA*

### Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) Grant

TEDC offers funding for Tribes and Tribal Energy Development Organizations (TEDOs) to build management, organizational and technical capacity needed to maximize the economic impact of energy resource development.

#### *TEDC Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)*

Every year, DEMD solicits proposals from Tribes through a NOFO. Numbers and the status for the FY 25 NOFO are provided in the table below. As shown, the TEDC program continues to see growth in demand by Tribes seeking to build their energy development capacity. FY 25 NOFO requests resulted in a ~45% increase over FY 24, and a ~75% increase over FY 23. Unmet requests average \$4-5M annually, and this is expected to increase with increased demand.

### *TEDC Post-Award Monitoring*

DEMD monitors awarded TEDC projects to ensure funds are prudently spent and offers technical assistance (TA) to grantees throughout the life of the project. In FY 25, project monitoring staff are managing a portfolio of 50 TEDC grant projects with 47 Tribes nationwide.



*Geotechnical mapping of Tribal Resources*

**Table 1: TEDC Notice of Funding Opportunity Results, FY 25 Mid-Year**

Activity	FY 2024/2025	FY 2023/2024	FY 2022/2023
NOFO Posted	October 18, 2024	October 19, 2023	
Applications Due	January 16, 2025	January 11, 2024	
Total Applications	41 proposals received	28 proposals received	34 proposals received
Funds Requested	\$12.1 million requested	\$8.3 million requested	\$6.9 million requested
Average Request	~\$300,000/proposal	~\$300,000/proposal	~\$200,000/proposal
Total Awarded	<i>Pending review</i>	21 projects selected (75%)	19 projects selected (55%)
Funds Awarded	<i>Pending review</i>	\$3.6 million awarded (43%)	\$2.8 million awarded (40%)
Average Award	<i>Pending review</i>	~\$170,000/project	~\$150,000/project
Unmet Requests	<i>Pending</i>	\$4.7 million	\$4.1 million
Notice of Grant Awards Issued	<i>Pending</i>	7/8/2024	2/27/2023

**Table 2: EMDP Notice of Funding Opportunity Results, FY 25 Mid-Year**

Activity	FY 2024/2025	FY 2023/2024	FY 2022/2023
NOFO Posted	<i>Pending</i>	2/22/2024	1/31/2022
Applications Due	<i>Pending</i>	5/24/2024	5/13/2022
Total Applications	<i>Pending</i>	37 proposals received	79 proposals received
Funds Requested	<i>Pending</i>	\$15.9 million requested	\$44.9 million requested
Average Request	<i>Pending</i>	~\$430,000/proposal	~\$550,000/proposal
Total Awarded	<i>Pending</i>	30 projects selected (80%)	32 projects selected (40%)
Funds Awarded	<i>Pending</i>	\$10.4 million awarded (65%)	\$11.2 million awarded (25%)
Average Award	<i>Pending</i>	~\$350,000/project	~\$350,000/project
Unmet Requests	<i>Pending</i>	\$5.5 million	\$33.7 million
Notice of Grant Awards Issued	<i>Pending</i>	8/12/2024	5/24/2023

**Table 3: EMDP Active Project Portfolio, FY 25 Mid-Year**

Commodity Group	Total FY 2025 Projects	Total Portfolio Funding Value
Fluid Minerals	12 (14%)	\$7.4 million (30%)
Solid Minerals	16 (19%)	\$7.7 million (30%)
Renewable and Distributed Generation	58 (67%)	\$10.7 million (40%)

## Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) Grant

EMDP offers funding for Tribes and TEDOs to complete energy and mineral assessment projects around pre-construction planning activities and subsequent development project phases.

### EMDP NOFO

Every year, DEMD solicits proposals from Tribes through a NOFO. The FY 25 EMDP NOFO has not yet been released and is pending Departmental approvals. Numbers and the status for previous years' NOFOs are provided in the table below. FY 24 NOFO requests show a ~65% decrease in requests over FY 23. However, while there was a decrease in overall demand, DEMD was only able to award 65% of FY 24 NOFO requests made due to budget limitations. Unmet requests vary significantly year over year, ranging from \$5-30M annually.

### EMDP Post-Award Monitoring

DEMD monitors awarded EMDP projects to ensure funds are prudently spent and offers TA to grantees throughout the life of the project. In FY 25, project monitoring staff are managing a portfolio of 86 EMDP grant projects with 70 Tribes nationwide.

## National Indian Oil & Gas, Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS)

The National Indian Oil & Gas, Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS) is an ESRI-based application with modifications and data additions that serves to support efforts by Tribes and federal offices to manage Indian energy and mineral resources. It contains data profiles for Tribal databases, including monthly collection, analysis, and processing of data for well production, land ownership, leases, agreements, high-resolution imagery, soil surveys and other geospatial administrative, energy and resource datasets. NIOGEMS, a key element of DEMD's TA toolkit, currently resides on the Department's server and is directly accessible to internal Department employees.

## **NIOGEMS Cloud-Based Replacement**

ESRI ArcMap 10.8x, which serves as the NIOGEMS 4.x base application, sunsets on March 1, 2026, and the NIOGEMS team is developing the new 5.x cloud-based replacement. DEMD has engaged federal users for feedback and enhancement requests and will engage Tribal users at the end of January for their requests. While the redevelopment is in the planning stages, the team plans to have a working NIOGEMS 5.x version published by Q4 25.

## **DEMD Continues Ongoing Support of National Tribal Critical Mineral Initiative**

Executive Orders in 2017 and 2021 expressed a desire for increased reliability of the critical minerals supply chain; this resulted in multiple federal government actions that are ongoing.

In response to Tribal inquiries about the U.S. government's actions on critical minerals, particularly related to increased domestic mining, the White House Council on Native American Affairs ([WHCNAA](#)) created a Critical Minerals Working Group in the summer of 2024.

The working group held Tribal consultations to collect recommendations to improve mining on public lands and increase Tribal engagement in the domestic critical minerals supply chain.



*Assortment of Minerals*

DEMD prepared and circulated consultation scoping materials and compiled the Tribal input received. This final report is expected to be released early 2025 and will summarize comments received from Tribal Leaders and Alaska Native Corporations during the government-to-government consultations. The information therein will be available for government and industry stakeholders seeking to improve Tribal consultation, engagement, and outcomes in the mining sector. Follow our website for updates at [Tribal Critical Minerals Initiative](#).





## DESCRM Young Tribal Leaders Art Contest

The Division celebrates its first collaborative initiative, the 2024 DESC RM Young Tribal Leaders Art Contest, after the gallery display at the Main Interior Building concluded as scheduled in January 2025. All art pieces have been returned to the artists and planning is underway for the contest to return for 2025/26 with the support of the three DESC RM Branches.

The themes for 2025/26 will include culture, environment, and community resilience. Submissions of any art medium are accepted. An official announcement will be shared on the DESC RM website with contest dates and details. When announced, OTS offices are encouraged to support outreach for this opportunity and can request outreach tools at [Youth.Art.Contest@bia.gov](mailto:Youth.Art.Contest@bia.gov).



*Art pieces being prepped for display at the 2024 National Tribal & Indigenous Climate Conference. Image provided by BTCR staff.*



*The winning pieces and selected gallery artworks are packaged up for their return following their display in the Main Interior Building. Image provided by BCRM Museum Program staff.*

## BRANCH OF TRIBAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

### Combined FY 25/26 Annual Awards Program Solicitation

BTCR will not be hosting a solicitation for FY 25 and will instead offer a combined FY 25/26 annual Awards Program solicitation that will be announced in 2026.

### Annual Awards Dashboard Updated!

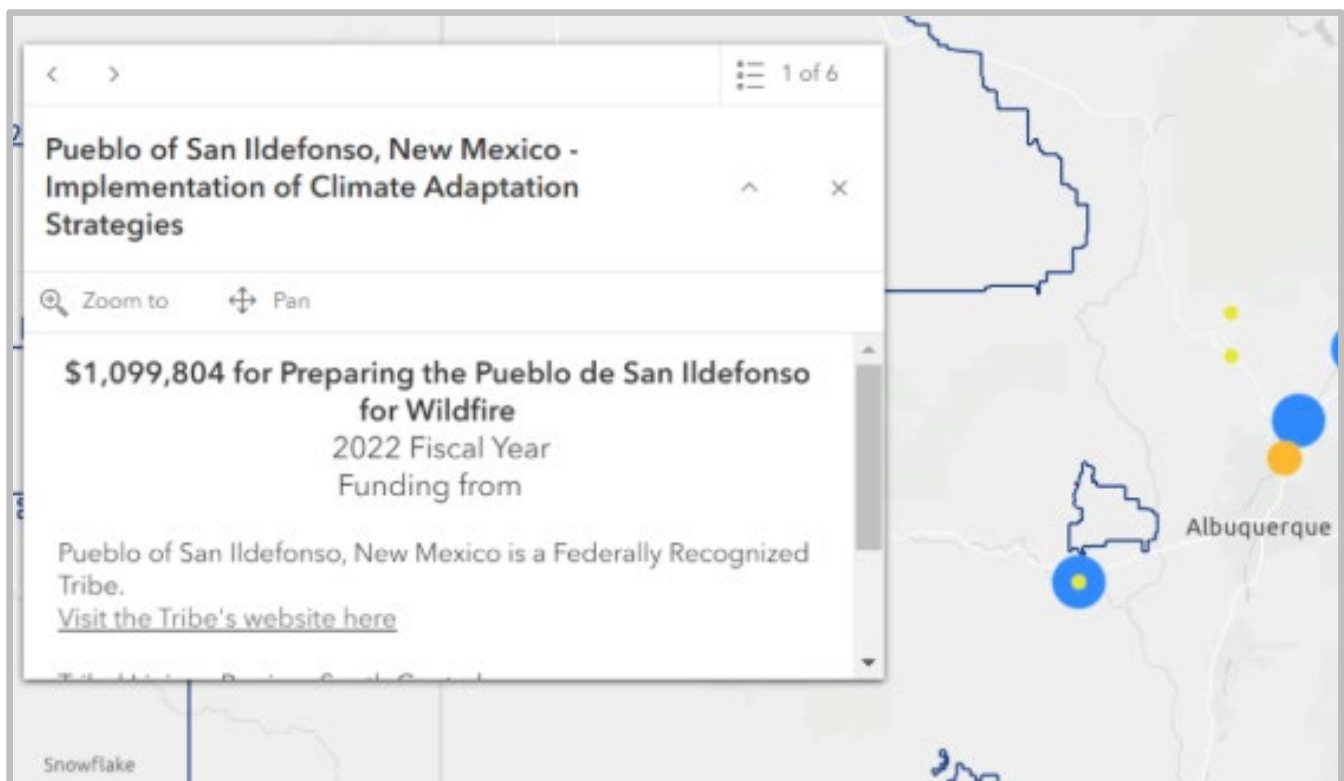
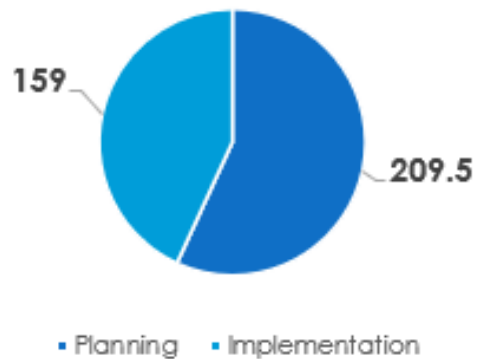
BTCR has updated its annual Awards Dashboard, now reflecting all awards through FY 24. This interactive tool provides a comprehensive look at funding allocations, helping Tribes and partners track resilience projects over time. Check out the latest updates and explore the dashboard here: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/49f7458ad70c4bac949f421ddf5081c3/>.

## Tribal Community Resilience Annual Awards Dashboard

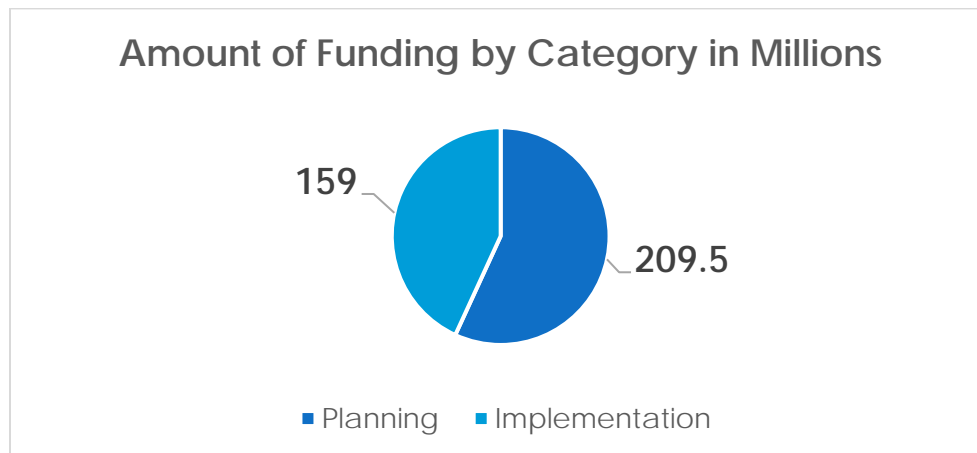
The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Branch of Tribal Community Resilience (TCR) provides financial support for federally recognized Tribal Nations and authorized Tribal organizations through a competitive funding opportunity to build Tribal resilience capacity.

Funding categories cover a range of activities including community adaptation planning, community-led relocation, managed retreat (i.e., partial relocation), protect-in-place efforts, and ocean and coastal management. Since 2011, TCR has distributed over 900 awards totaling almost \$120 million.

Amount of Funding by Category in Millions



TCR Annual Awards Dashboard showing a detailed view of the Pueblo of San Ildefonso implementation project to prepare for wildfires



*Chart of Funding by Category, \$209.5M Planning and \$159M for Implementation*

### Amount Awarded per Funding Category

\$12.7M	Implementation for Relocation, Managed Retreat & Protect in Place
\$27.9M	Habitat Restoration
\$3.4M	Capacity Building & First time Awardees
\$2.7M	Capacity Building
\$40.8M	Adaptation Planning
\$115.4M	Adaptation
\$1.6M	Implementation, Managed Retreat & Protect-in-Place Planning Coordinator
\$10.5M	Training & Workshops
\$4.3M	Travel Support for Community Adaptation Planning
\$1M	Travel Support for Ocean & Coastal Management
\$1.2M	Youth Engagement

### Top Ten Awards to Tribe/Organization

Lummi Tribe of the Lummi Reservation

Native Village of Kwinhagak

Village of Chefornak

Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewards Point Rancheria, CA

Maka Indian Tribe of the Makah Indian Reservation

Quinault Indian Nation

Chugach Regional Resources Commission

Native Village of Shishmaref

The Chickasaw Nation

Eastern Shoshone Tribe of the Wind River Reservation, WY





Left: Students gather in the Potomac River for the NYCALC rafting trip to connect with the water, learn about native species, and develop team-building skills. Right: A student organizes sticky notes with ideas on community resilience that center youth engagement. Images provided by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS).

## Agenda Revamp for NYCALC 2025

In December, the Native Youth Community Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC) Core Planning Team gathered at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia for its very first in-person planning meeting. NYCALC began in 2015, and this year marks a celebratory decade of the congress! During the three-day gathering, Tribal and federal members of the NYCALC Core Planning Team coordinated to address longstanding programmatic feedback and considered possibilities for future NYCALC agendas and activities.

The program is currently on hold for 2025 pending changes to federal funding. However, the planning team and BOCR are optimistic about the future of the congress and its role in facilitating Indigenous cultural exchange, empowering young Indigenous leaders, fostering federal career pathways, and developing solutions for Tribal community resilience.

NYCALC is organized by USFWS in partnership with BOCR, and in collaboration with multiple federal, Tribal, and non-governmental organizations.

## BRANCH OF CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT & MUSEUM PROGRAM

### Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Ongoing Efforts and Milestones

The Branch of Cultural Resources Management (BCRM) is working alongside the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), and more than twenty Tribes from Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado to tackle the delicate issue of Native American human remains and associated funerary objects removed during the Glen Canyon Dam Project. A joint Notice of Inventory Completion (NIC) was filed on March 6, 2025 by BOR and BIA with the National NAGPRA Program, and it is set for publication in the Federal Register. We anticipate the respectful Ancestors' reburial on April 30, 2025.

On January 17, 2025, BCRM issued a Notice of Intended Repatriation for a valued cultural item from its collection. Subsequently, on March 10, 2025, BIA formally transferred the item to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, signifying a meaningful advancement in the recognition of cultural heritage.

BCRM has received 47 NAGPRA statements from museums nationwide, each representing museum holdings of Ancestors and their cherished belongings under BIA's stewardship. This remarkable achievement highlights our significant progress in accounting for and enriching BIA-controlled museum collections for repatriation.

BCRM is excited to share that it finalized and submitted a Notice of Intended Repatriation to the National NAGPRA Program pertaining to a collection housed at two National Park Service facilities: the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Collection Preservation Center in Townsend, Tennessee, and the Southeast Archaeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida. We're looking forward to its inclusion in the Federal Register!

BCRM finalized and submitted a NIC to the National NAGPRA Program regarding a collection at the Museum of American Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe, New Mexico on March 17, 2025.

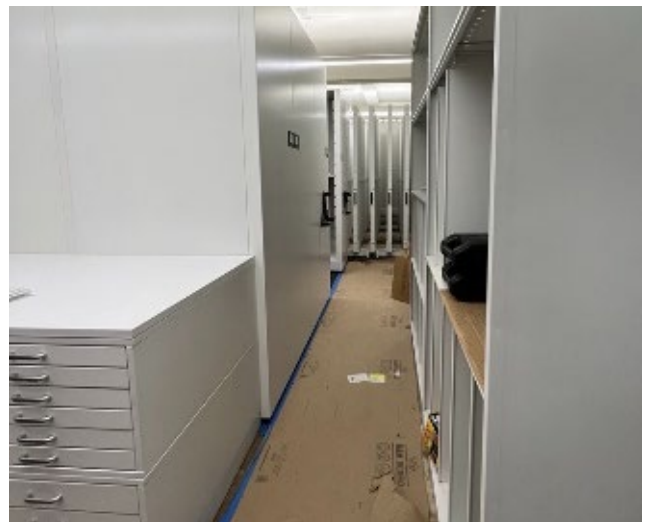
### **Museum Program Updates**

BIA's Museum Program curates and preserves an extraordinary collection of over 3 million items encompassing archaeological artifacts, ethnographic objects, archives and artworks that illuminate the rich history of BIA, the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), and the diverse cultures of Native Americans. This collection serves as a beacon of education and inspiration for current and future generations, celebrating our world's vibrant traditions and histories.

The FY 25 Annual Museum Inventory inquiries have been distributed to all IA facilities displaying or housing BIA museum collections. The inventories must be submitted to the Museum Program by June 30, 2025. A museum inventory is a list that aids in tracking objects for physical accountability. The IA offices responsible for exhibiting or housing museum objects complete annual inventories and report on condition assessments.



*Newly renovated Room 1071 - Museum Collections room at the Main Interior Building (MIB). The next phase is to install permanent flooring.*



*The Museum Program is streamlining the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the Art in Office Program. Out of the 3.2 million objects within the Museum Program, a designated selection will be used for the Art in Office Program.*

## **A Refreshed Collections Room at the MIB**

BCRM is excited to share the ongoing upgrades to the Collections Room at the MIB in Washington, DC! The museum shelving units have been fully installed. The project is ready to move into the planned second phase, which involves laying down new flooring specially designed for museum collections and is a healthy building material, with low levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Once the flooring is complete, our dedicated Museum Program staff will carefully transfer the BIA collections to their new home. The flooring installation is currently in the contracting phase, and we're hopeful it will be wrapped up by the end of May 2025!

## **Welcoming a new Pathways Team Member**

The Museum Program is excited to introduce its newest team member and Pathways Intern, Clarissa Dixon.



Clarissa is from the Pueblo of Isleta, NM and graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa with a degree in anthropology in December 2024. She is interested in anthropology because she wants to learn more about Indigenous cultures, their development over time, and ways to preserve their culture and traditions.

In 2019, she worked for the Pueblo of Isleta Department of Natural Resources as a Student Trainee on various projects related to forestry, wildlife, rangeland management and cultural and historic preservation. She has been in the Pathways Program for about three years and worked with various agencies such as the South-Central Climate Adaptation Center; Pacific Islands Climate Adaptation Center; SWRO Division of Environmental, Safety, and Cultural Resource Management; the Tribal Climate Resilience Program; and now, the Museum Program. Clarissa's goals include gaining cultural awareness of other Tribes, learning more about conservation of natural resources, and being able to apply her current knowledge. In the future, she plans to attend an archaeology field school and then pursue a master's degree in cultural resource management.

## **BRANCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

### **FY 24 Solid Waste Diversion Report Completed**

The Branch of Environmental Services (BES) completed the annual Bureau Solid Waste Report for FY 24 during Q1, which outlines diverted waste across 49 Bureau facilities nationwide. The response rate for FY 24 was 82%, an improvement over 57% reported in FY 23. Key findings include a successful year for Construction and Demolition (C&D) waste targets, with 53.5% of C&D waste diverted from landfill, exceeding the goal of 25.3%. However, the overall Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) goal fell short, with 15.2% diverted in FY 24—far from the 52.1% Bureau-level goal.



There are several factors that impact this metric, including the fact that offices are often located in remote areas, frequently with no recycling center availability within a reasonable proximity. Additional challenges noted by respondents include vacancies in the facility manager position leading to solid waste buildup, illegal dumping on BIA property, and a general need for training.

#### **Permitting Updates: FAST-41 and NEPA**

BES set an FY 25 goal of leveraging NEPA expertise and acting as lead on FAST-41 permitting projects. In the first half of the year, BES team members have successfully assumed the lead role for two FAST-41 projects, convening multiple bureaus and agencies, and achieving 100% compliance on project milestones with expedited timelines.

An ERIF Environmental Contract was established to work in partnership with the BES Permitting Team. The team assisted contractors with obtaining training and software, such as Google Earth Pro and Arc GIS Pro, to ensure they complete tasks successfully. These contractors are currently developing two Biological Assessments for the two ongoing FAST-41 projects.

The Permitting Team has written and implemented a Technical Writer contract. This contract will assist with updating NEPA/ environmental regulations that will help to shorten the environmental permitting process for the Regions.



### Overview

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 Resource Management Act of 1990 (NIFRMA) (Pub.L. 101-630, Title III, 104 Stat. 4532).



*Timber ready to transport*

Forests provide a key source of revenue and jobs for Tribes and individual Indians and play an important role in sustaining Tribal cultures and traditions. Management activities within forest lands are governed by forest management plans which outline ecologically, and biologically sustainable forest management practices formulated to meet Tribal objectives. Forest management activities include timber sales, timber stand improvement (thinning and pruning), and reforestation.

In 2024, 308 million board-feet of timber volume was harvested, generating \$50 million in Tribal income. Reforestation (tree planting) was completed on 30,831 acres and 11,800 acres were pre-commercially thinned to improve the health, stocking, composition, and productivity of forest stands.

### Executive Order 14225 – Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production

The production of timber, lumber, paper, bioenergy, and other wood products (timber production) is critical to our nation's well-being. Timber production is essential for crucial human activities like construction and energy production. Furthermore, as recent disasters demonstrate, forest management and wildfire risk reduction projects can save American lives and communities. [EO 14225](#) will help streamline permitting on forest management activities.

BIA Forestry has been actively investigating ways to enhance forest product levels and forestry revenue for Tribes, and considering various strategies to maximize the economic benefits derived from forest management practices. One specific focus is increasing the volume of the allowable annual cut (AAC) that is prepared and offered for sale.

The AAC represents the maximum annual harvest level permitted during an operational planning period. Determining the AAC involves either a scientific calculation of the Indicated Annual Cut (IAC) under a Regional Director's policy directive, or it is defined by the Tribe's preferred management alternative, which must be documented and approved in a forest management plan or integrated resource management plan. Management plans are continuously evaluated, and updates are made to harvest plans and forest development plans accordingly.



*Attendees participating in the work capacity test at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge*

## BRANCH OF FOREST INVENTORY AND PLANNING

### FIP Foresters: Preparing for BAER Assignments

On February 26, 2025, Branch of Forestry Inventory and Planning (FIP) Forester Chris LaCroix attended the RT-130 Wildland Fire Safety Training Annual Refresher, a key requirement for maintaining qualifications for DOI's National Burn Area Emergency Response (IBAER) team. Hosted by USFWS at the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge just outside Denver, Colorado, the course aims to enhance fireline safety by addressing operations and decision making to recognize and mitigate risks, maintain safe practices, and reduce accidents. This session primarily focused on incident reviews and lessons learned from both local and national incidents during previous fire seasons, with several attendees sharing their insights.

The training concluded with a review of fire shelters, covering topics such as shelter use, deployment site selection, inspections, and a field exercise for practicing shelter deployment (see photo to the right).

This practice helps create muscle memory for deploying a fire shelter in life-threatening situations on the fire line.



*2025 RT-120 Fire Refresher Course attendees practicing fire*

Additionally, several attendees completed a work capacity test to remain eligible for fire assignments during the 2025 fire season, as both the RT-130 course and the work capacity test are required annually for maintaining qualifications. The photo above shows an attendee running on a course.



## Forestry Trainees

For the 2025 fire season, FIP foresters Chris LaCroix and Jesse Wooten are on the DOI BAER team roster, marking their second year as team members. Chris will serve as a Forester Trainee on BAER assignments while Jesse will be eligible to assist as either a GIS Specialist Trainee or a Forester Trainee.

## BAER Team Assignments

BAER team members are expected to be available for at least two(2) 14-day assignments. DOI BAER teams are interdisciplinary, typically consisting of members specializing in forestry, soil science, hydrology, GIS, archaeology, media communication, recreation, and documentation/report writing. The team may also include members from various agencies within DOI or US Department of Agriculture, such as BIA, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service. US Fish & Wildlife Service and US Geological Survey, along with administratively determined staff members. Since the DOI BAER team operates nationally, its members may be assigned to incidents occurring on any DOI-managed land.



*BIA BAER Foresters collaborating with the Mescalero Natural Resources Department to identify concerns from the 2024 Salt & South Fork Fire in Mescalero, NM.*

While on a BAER assignment, foresters collaborate with local staff, such as the Tribal natural resources department, to address forestry-related concerns arising from fires such as:

- Reforestation needs on burned commercial timberland that cannot regenerate naturally
- The removal of hazardous trees damaged by fire near high-occupancy areas (homes, roads, campgrounds, water tanks, etc.)
- Damage to property boundary fencing and range infrastructure
- Damage to small infrastructure (such as campground tables, signage, and guard rails)
- The threat of noxious or invasive weeds introduced by firefighting operations; and damage to permanent inventory plots

## Emergency Stabilization & Burned Area Rehabilitation Funding

After all team specialists complete their individual assessments, these reports are compiled into a single BAER report for the incident, which includes a funding request for Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Burn Area Rehabilitation (BAR) funds to address the identified issues.

ES funds must be used in the current fiscal year of the fire while BAR funds can be utilized over a three-year period and are competitive with other BAR funding requests. Examples of ES funds include hazard tree removal, drainage stabilization, and aerial mulching and seeding; BAR funds may cover invasive species monitoring, small infrastructure repair, and permanent inventory plot restoration.

The BAER program is crucial for Tribes as it provides essential support for post-fire recovery on Tribal lands affected by wildfires. By assessing damage and developing rehabilitation strategies, BAER helps Tribes quickly restore their land, which often contains significant natural resources vital for cultural practices, subsistence, and economic activities. Additionally, the program plays a critical role in preserving cultural heritage by safeguarding sacred sites and traditional practices that depend on healthy ecosystems. BAER measures also enhance community safety by addressing hazards such as flooding and erosion that can arise after wildfires, ensuring the resilience of Tribal communities.

Furthermore, the federal funding associated with BAER alleviates the financial burden on Tribes during recovery efforts while promoting collaboration with federal agencies and enhancing capacity building for future emergency responses. Ultimately, BAER supports both immediate recovery efforts and the long-term health of ecosystems, which are essential for maintaining biodiversity and sustaining the cultural and natural resources on Tribal lands.



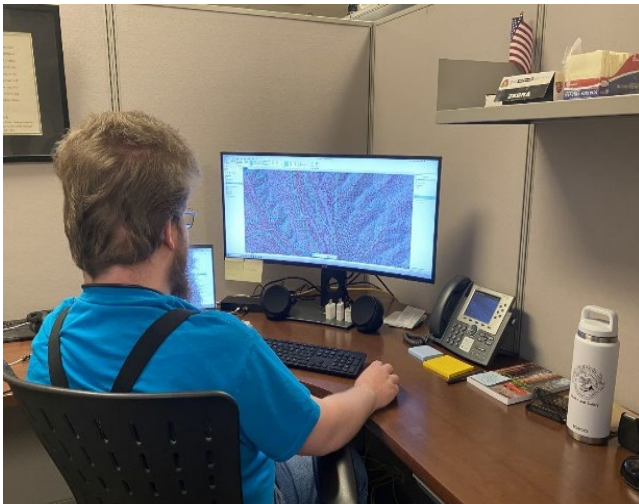
*Left: Assessing commercial timberland for natural reforestation potential after the 2024 South Fork Fire in Mescalero, NM. Right: Assessing hazardous trees and damage to campground amenities from the 2024 Salt Fire in Mescalero, NM.*



## TIMBER STRIKE TEAM

ArcGIS Pro forest cover type mapping is crucial for Tribes, and the BIA Timber Team has been instrumental in this effort as they provide accurate data that significantly enhances resource management, supporting sustainable practices aligned with cultural and ecological values. This mapping plays a vital role in land-use planning, ensuring a balanced approach between development and conservation efforts. Understanding various forest cover types aids in biodiversity conservation and habitat protection, which are essential for ecological health.

Tribes have deep cultural ties to their land, and mapping assists in identifying and preserving sites of cultural, spiritual and historical importance. Identifying different forest types can reveal opportunities for economic development through sustainable forestry and other forest-based enterprises. Additionally, access to up-to-date spatial data fosters collaboration and partnership building with other organizations, governments, and stakeholders in joint conservation and resource management efforts. Overall, the BIA Timber Team's work in utilizing ArcGIS Pro for forest cover type mapping empowers Tribes to make informed decisions that promote their sovereignty, sustainability and community well-being.



*Timber Team Forester working on forest cover type mapping using ArcGIS Pro.*

Foresters perform forest cover type mapping in ArcGIS Pro involves in a comprehensive process that begins with data acquisition through high-resolution satellite imagery and existing GIS layers.

This includes pre-processing images for clarity and integrating various datasets to create a multi-layered map. Field data collection, or ground truthing, is essential for verifying remote-sensing interpretations, often utilizing mobile GIS tools for real-time data capture. Foresters then classify forest cover types using advanced image classification algorithms, followed by validation and accuracy assessments to ensure the reliability of the mapping results. The BIA Timber Team has been conducting this important work for the Colville Reservation of eastern Washington and the Kewa Pueblo of New Mexico. With validated data, detailed maps are produced, supplemented by spatial analyses to inform management decisions. Finally, findings are documented and presented to the Regions while all data is systematically stored for ongoing monitoring and future updates, facilitating effective resource management and conservation efforts.

The BIA Timber Team should prioritize traveling again to conduct field inspections of the forest cover type mapping they have been working on in ArcGIS Pro, as these on-the-ground inspections are essential to validation of their mapped data. Ground truthing allows the team to verify that their classifications accurately reflect the diverse and complex forest ecosystems, addressing any discrepancies that may arise from remote-sensing technologies. Additionally, firsthand observations can uncover unique ecological features, assess overall forest health, and identify localized issues such as disease or invasive species that may not be evident from aerial imagery alone.



Engaging directly with the forest enhances the team's ability to incorporate local traditional knowledge and cultural values into their management strategies, fostering collaboration with local communities and promoting shared stewardship of these vital resources. Ultimately, these field inspections will lead to more informed decision making, improve the quality of resource management efforts, and ensure that conservation initiatives are effectively tailored to the actual conditions of the forest, thereby preventing further backlog of forestry projects in the field.

Accurate inventory data not only supports responsible harvesting practices but also empowers Tribes to engage in timber sale activities, thereby generating revenue and fostering economic growth within their communities. Additionally, the insights gained through these inventories will assist Tribes in aligning their forestry management goals with EO 14225, making this ambitious goal more attainable for Indian Country.

The Timber Team has had to cancel three (3) inventory projects due to recent travel restrictions across BIA and DOI.

- Forest cover type mapping involves hours of intense ArcGIS Pro but also requires Tribes to begin their inventory analysis in their forested lands.
- Conducting stand-based inventory through stand exams and continuous forest inventory is essential for Tribes, as strong and accurate inventory data is crucial for assessing forest resources effectively.

This process provides Tribes with the necessary information to determine a realistic annual allowable harvest percentage, ensuring that timber management practices are sustainable and aligned with ecological health.

## INDIAN ENERGY SERVICE CENTER



### Mission

The mission of the Indian Energy Service Center (IESC) is to fulfill DOI's Indian trust responsibility in the energy and mineral development arena. IESC develops policies, standardizes procedures, and implements best management practices for all types of energy and renewable energy and mineral leasing, permitting and development.



*Fort Berthold Oil Well in Operation*

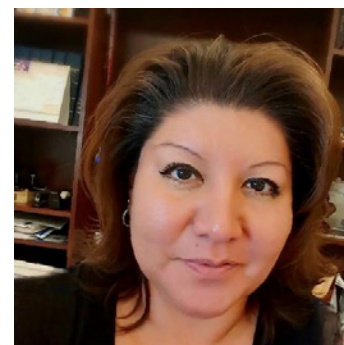
### Who We Serve

IESC serves as the primary point of contact for coordinating Indian mineral and renewable energy projects—which often require coordination with, and assistance from—multiple DOI bureaus, such as BLM, the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), and/or the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA). The center coordinates with various federal partners, states and Tribal governments. IESC provides technical assistance (TA), guidance, and training to bureaus and offices within the department and to other federal agencies.

IESC facilitates nationwide cooperation between government offices to expedite Indian oil and gas development, standardize processes, and improve the efficiency of Indian energy, renewable energy, and mineral development management to better serve Indian beneficiaries and Tribes.

### New Division Chief – IESC

IESC would like to recognize and welcome Johnna Oberly Spriggs as the IESC Division Chief as of January 2025. Johnna is Comanche, Osage, Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho. She has dedicated over 25 years to DOI, serving in various key positions such as Trust Reform Liaison, Director of IESC, Director of the Federal Indian Minerals Office, and Deputy Superintendent at the BIA Pawnee Agency and Southern Ute Agency. Johnna began her federal career serving as the Realty Officer at Wind River Agency. She holds a Juris Doctorate from the University of Oklahoma College of Law and a Bachelor of Science in Political Science and Government from the University of Wyoming.



*Johnna Oberly Spriggs*

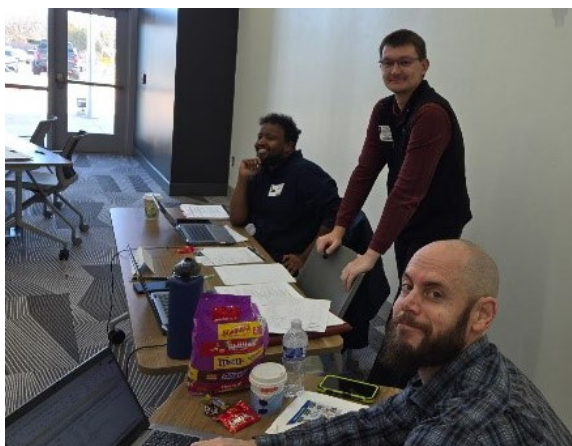


*SOP Fluid Minerals Training Classroom, Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Edmond, Oklahoma.*

## **IESC Training Opportunities**

### *SOP Fluid Minerals Training*

On January 28-29, 2025, IESC conducted the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) Training for Indian Fluid Minerals at the Francis Tuttle Technology Center in Edmond, Oklahoma. Over 50 participants attended the training, which provided a comprehensive overview of each agency's roles and responsibilities with a particular emphasis on the collaborative obligations and transitions between agencies for fluid mineral development (oil and gas) on Trust lands. Future virtual SOP Trainings are scheduled to be held in April and July 2025.



*SOP Training IESC Staff pictured left to right: Abdinur Salad, Petroleum Engineer; Christopher Kostecky, Petroleum Engineer; and Craig Williamson, IESC BLM Branch Chief.*

### *TAAMS Mineral Leasing Training*

TAAMS Mineral Leasing Training (virtual) was held February 25-27, 2025, with 13 students in attendance. The next such training is scheduled for July 15-17, 2025. For more information contact the Acting BIA-IESC Branch Chief, Katherine Stevens, at [katherine.stevens@bia.gov](mailto:katherine.stevens@bia.gov).

### *Special Recognition*

The IESC would like to acknowledge and extend a special thank you to Christopher Kostecky, Petroleum Engineer, for stepping up during the absence of the Supervisory Petroleum Engineer for the IESC in the second quarter of FY 2025. In his role as Acting Supervisor, Chris attended supervisor-level meetings, addressed Lander Field Office Statements of Work, assisted with Osage Agency Plugging Permit Reviews, and reviewed OKFO Written Orders. Thank you, Chris, for your dedication to the team; you truly deserve this recognition. Keep up the great work!





*Christopher Kostelecky, Petroleum Engineer*

In his role as Acting Supervisor, Chris attended supervisor-level meetings, addressed Land Field Office Statements of Work, assisted with Osage Agency Plugging Permit Reviews, and reviewed OKFO Written Orders. Thank you, Chris, for your dedication to the team; you truly deserve this recognition. Keep up the great work!

### **Great Job Kerri Gallant**

IESC would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Ms. Kerri Gallant pictured in group photo on the next page.



*Kerri Gallant, ONRR-IESC Minerals Revenue Specialist*

ONRR-IESC Minerals Revenue Specialist. Kerri has been a part of ONRR for 12 years, contributing across various areas of the organization, as well as performing multiple functions within ONRR-DISC. A proud member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe of South Dakota, Kerri is also a devoted mother to one son.

Throughout her time with ONRR-IESC, Kerri played a pivotal role in several energy projects, including the Indian Lease Review Project, updates to standard operating procedure document attachments, training support and IESC referrals. Thank you, Kerri, for your dedication to the team, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

### **BTFA Landowner Outreach Event**

On January 15, 2025, IESC took part in and supported a live virtual Landowners Outreach Event. This event was organized by BTFA for Fort Berthold Agency and included information on topics such as the impact of taxes on IIM accounts and how to obtain a 1099 form. The session attracted 20 participants.

### **Ute Mountain Ute Annual Financial Meeting**

On February 19, 2025, IESC-BTFA participated in and presented at the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe Annual Financial Meeting. This virtual outreach involved IESC-BTFA staff alongside BTFA Financial Analyst Doug Billey, who met with the Tribal Chairman, governing Council members, and Tribal representatives. During the session, the Tribe delivered a presentation on the Tribe's current investment strategies for all Tribal accounts, followed by a question-and-answer segment that addressed topics such as disbursements, drawdowns, transfers, and investment transactions.



### Revised Security Clearance Process

Favorable screening by the Personnel Security Division is required for appointment to a BIA position or recommendation for access to the DOI Network. The DOI Access/BIA eAPP Request form was revised due to system application changes. See [DOI Access Template.pdf](#).

Additions to the eAPP form:

- Non-U.S. citizenship document and associated serial number
- Federal employment association within the last 24 months
- New KA sub-region and associated organizational chart
- Associate end date
- Involvement with children under the age of 18

Funding codes are no longer required on the eAPP. Submit completed forms to the new email/inbox address at [OHCM\\_PERSEC\\_BI\\_Submissions@bia.gov](mailto:OHCM_PERSEC_BI_Submissions@bia.gov).

### FY 25 New Performance Measures

Probate Case Preparation and Realty Land and Leasehold Mortgage Processing Times are two new FY 25 OTS performance measures.

### FY 25 OTS Administrative Workshop

The target audience for this workshop are OTS administrative staff. The session is tentatively scheduled to be held in-person at the BIA Eastern Regional Office in Nashville, TN.



Proposed agenda topics:

- Team building
- Communication skills
- Time management
- Customer service
- Correspondence/Department Tracking System (DTS)
- Human Resources
- Budget formulation and execution (Financial Business Management System, BERT, and WebBP)
- Web tools (STAT, OneDrive, SharePoint, Tableau, dashboards)
- Travel and charge cards
- Records management
- Personal property/fleet management



### BRANCH OF RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

The BRS team has been working to enable usage of OneDrive with BIA STAT. This will enable STAT users to offload data to OneDrive and automate critical data backup per the respective records schedules; it will also allow data to be used in SharePoint lists to enhance automated functions and/or SharePoint communications.

OTS staff have started to utilize the Staff Dashboard for submitting and tracking travel charge card submissions. Three demo/information sessions were held to guide staff in submitting and tracking their travel card statements and certifying no travel statements were received. Written instructions have been added to the DPM&C Sharepoint site along with an instructional video.

Key features of using STAT to track submissions for OTS are the live data available to supervisors and leadership, identifying gaps in the process for improvements, and successful participation among divisions. Division Chiefs are also responsible for monthly Approving Official Certifications, which are monitored with STAT, allowing for compliance with DBIA regulations.

The Office of Justice Services has been working with the DRIS team to build a Missing and Murdered Unit (MMU) tracker tool in BIA STAT. The tool focuses on tracking activities to resolve cases and ensure that required activities occur in a timely manner. It is initially for internal use only and replaces a complex Excel workbook that augments the IMARS system.

### BRANCH OF RESOURCE SOLUTIONS

The Right-of-Way (ROW) IT System Feasibility Study continues to make progress and add values to the new administration's energy dominance priority.

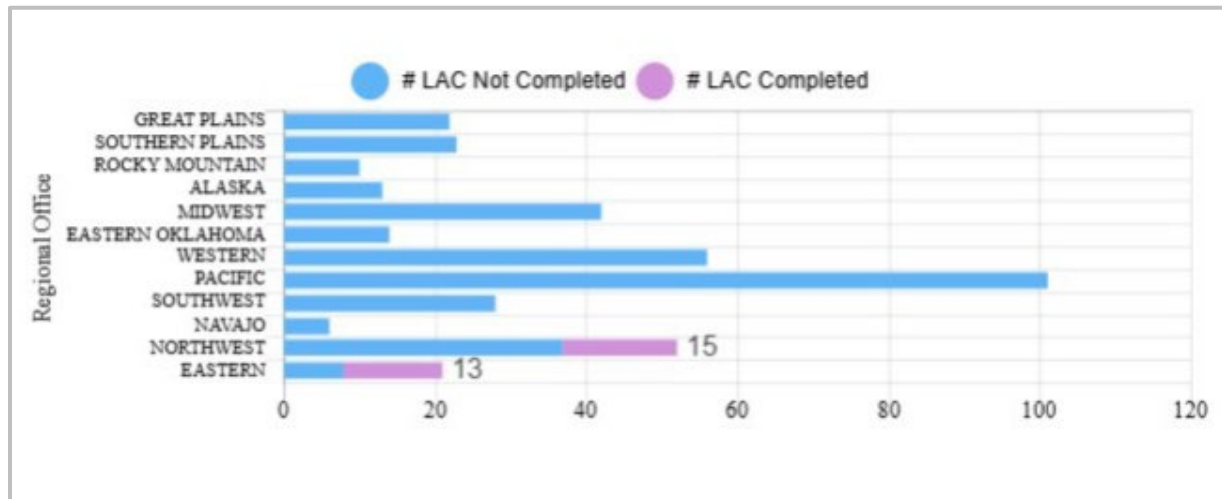
Three vendor responses for the requirements gathering project have been received and DRIS has scheduled an integrated project team working session to review and rank the proposals. Discussions continue for the implications of pivoting aggressively toward 'permit by rule'.

### BRANCH OF GEODATA EXAMINATION & VALIDATION

#### Parcel Fabric: Parcel Mapping Project

Currently the Branch maintains nearly 1.25M GIS records for the mapping of Indian lands. Data files for these mapped lands update daily and a visual representation can be found on the BIA Open Data Page. The Branch is working to implement an ESRI Parcel Fabric environment and workflow in ESRI Workflow Manager to allow field office employees mapping Indian Country to contribute to the nationwide dataset.





Graph of Land Area Codes completed or not completed by BIA Region

## Parcel Fabric: Rights of Way (ROW) Mapping

1,586 total ROWs Mapped

BIA Tract View Application

- Working on Parcel Fabric migration after the AWS was down for three weeks.
- Rocky Mountain Region migration is 77% complete.
- Pacific Region migration is 12% complete.
- 31 Land Area Codes (LACs) have undergone the process, amounting to 107,746 migrated parcels.
- Currently building out the workflow manager.
- Mapped 193 contracts in the Northwest Region and completed 2 LACs.
- Mapped 98 contracts in the Eastern Region and completed 13 LACs.
- Testing and implementing Parcel Fabric on the 14 previously completed LAC ROWs.
- Completed GDEV ROW Statement of Work.

## Fee-to-Trust (FTT)

FTT Land Description Examination and Validation (LDEV)

2025 LDEV Summary

- 55 LDEV applications submitted
- 10.45455 days average processing time

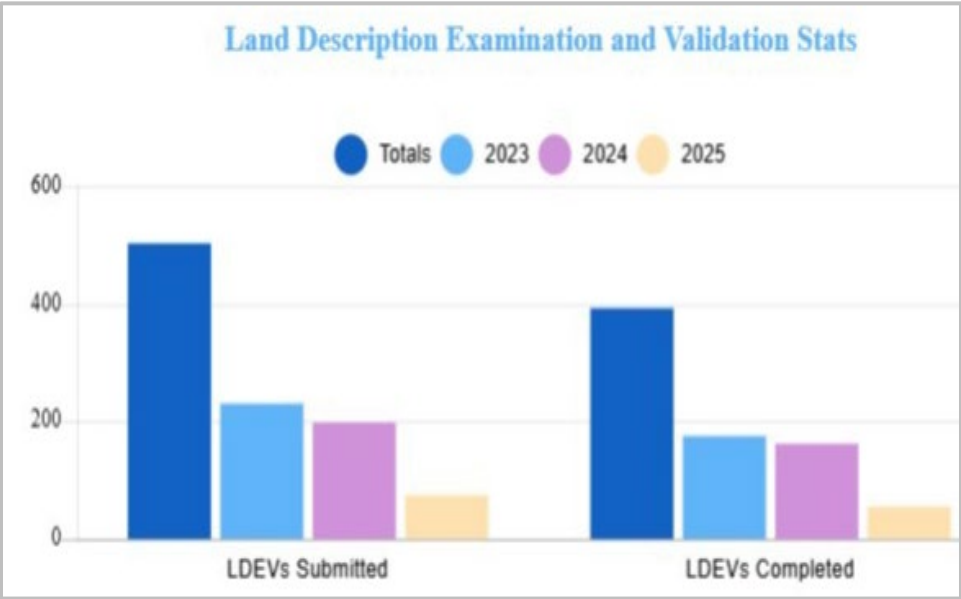
LDEV

- 66 LDEV reviews completed.
- Met with DRES for FTT legal description coordination.
- Trained another GISS to assist in LDEV reviews.
- Panelists at the OTS FTT Acquisitions and Reservation Proclamation trainings.
- Planning regional trainings to provide
- LDEV and RLDR training to Agency and Tribal staff.

Technical Support and Training

- Providing ongoing support to Regional, Agency, and Tribal staff with LDEV submissions
- Met with Pacific RGC to provide guidance and workflow to map backlog of FTT cases
- Testing and implementing Parcel Fabric
- Completed one training virtually with the Pacific Regional Office

FY23-FY25 Land Description Examination & Validation (Submitted/Completed)



2025 LDEV's Submitted by Region

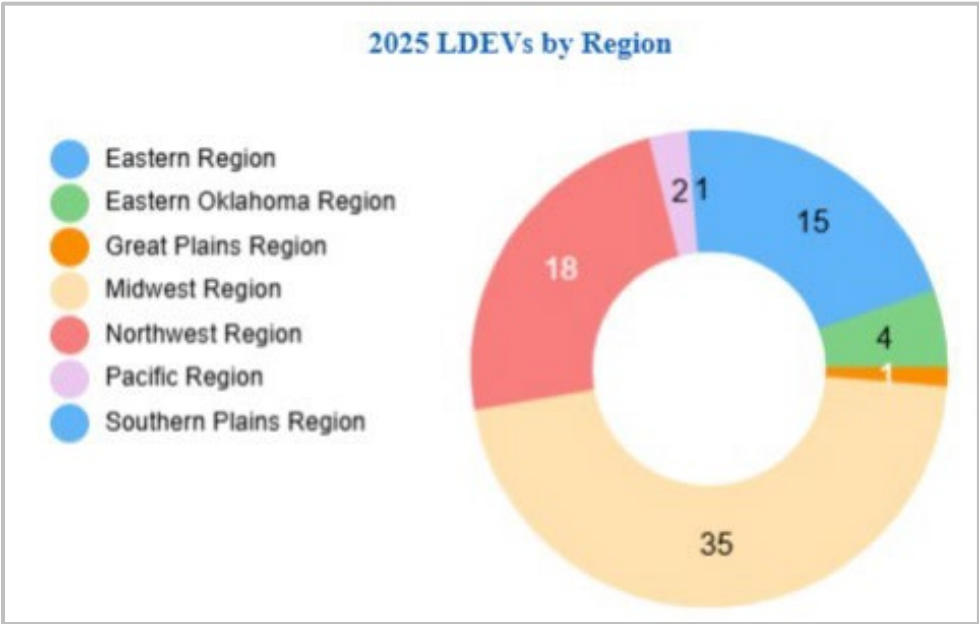


Chart shows LDEV's by Region - 1 Eastern, 15Southern Plains, 4 Eastern Oklahoma, 1 Great Plains, 35 Midwest, 18 Northwest, 2 Pacific

## Data Management and Enhancements

- Developed web app to capture Realty Land Description Reviews (RDRs) completed by realty staff
- Wrote standard operating procedure for capturing RDRs via the application
- Greatly improved multi-use environment via BIA AWS ArcGIS portal, allowing real-time sharing, managing and editing

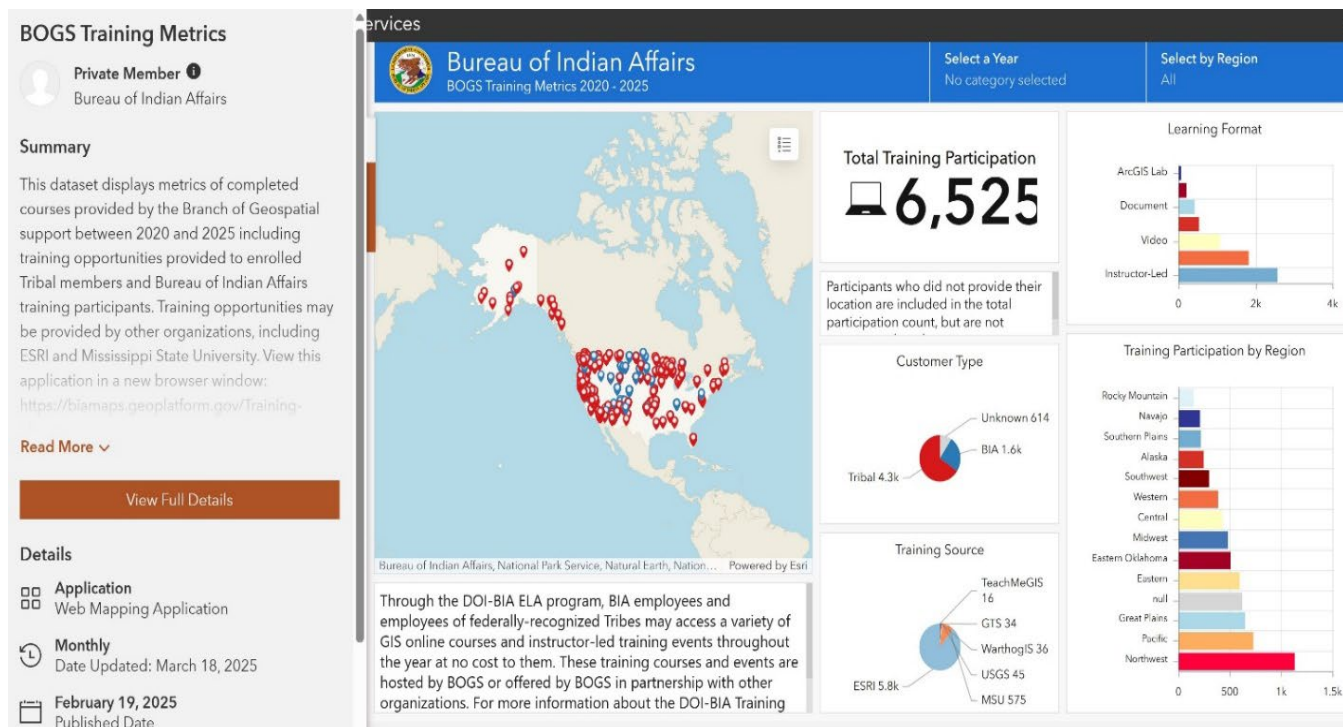
## Open Data Page

A training metrics dashboard is now publicly available on our open data page. This shows the training participating by region, customer type and BIA training source using data from the past five (5) years. During the past two (2) years, BOGS has spent a great deal of time getting more training partners to provide various types of training to BIA staff and Tribes. This dashboard helps show how those sources aside from our regularly provided ESRI training – are being utilized more. We will continue to update and refine this dashboard.

## BOGS Training metrics site

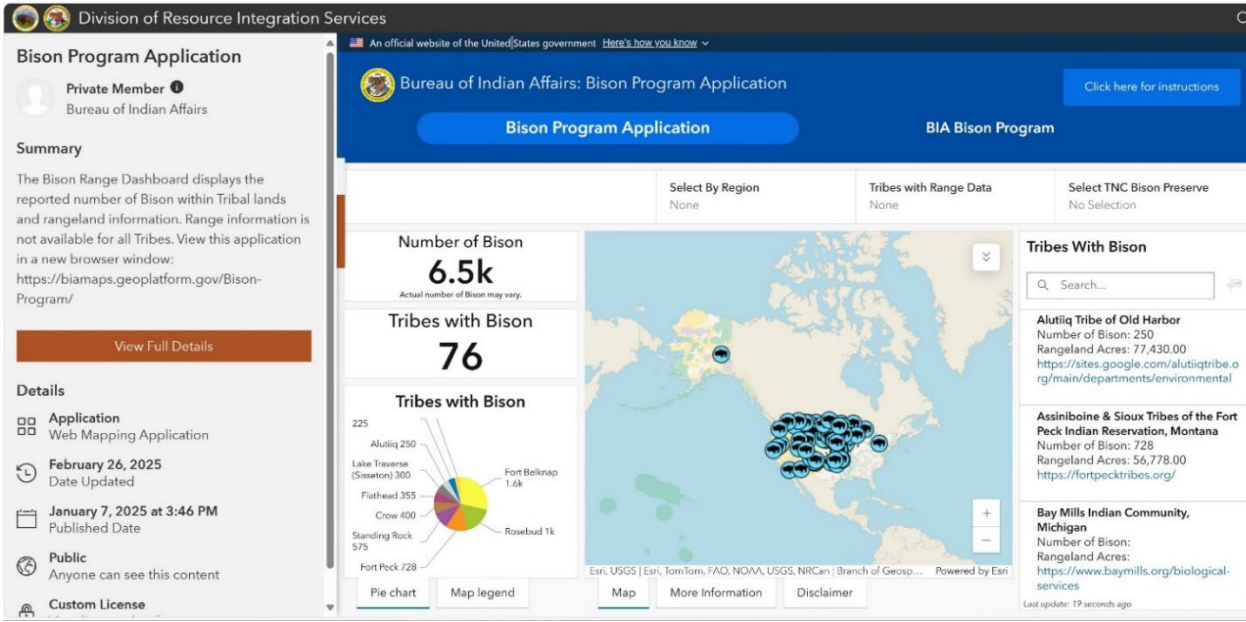
This dataset displays metrics of completed courses provided by the Branch of Geospatial support between 2020 and 2025 including training opportunities provided to enrolled Tribal members and BIA training participants. Training opportunities may be provided by other organizations, including ESRI and Mississippi State University.

Through the DOI-BIA ELA Program, BIA employees and employees of federally recognized Tribes may access a variety of GIS online courses and instructor-led training events throughout the year at no cost to them. These training courses and events are hosted by BOGS or offered by BOGS in partnership with other organizations.

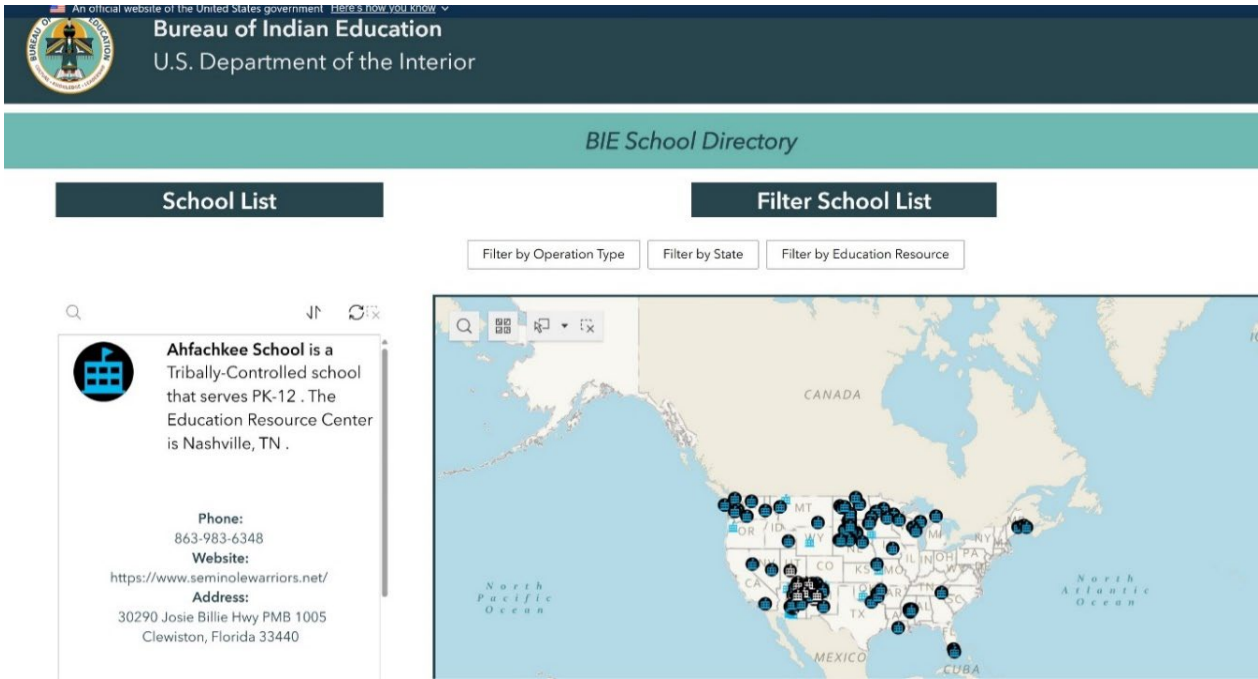




The Bison Program Application was made public earlier this year. It shows Tribes that have provided information on the number of bison on their land. This is not conclusive as it only shows Tribes that gave us data on bison on their land, but BOGS is continuously working with partners to update the application.



The BIE Schools Directory will soon be published on the " Open Data Page" as well. This will be like the Tribal Leaders Directory and ICWA Agents Directory, for example. It will show BIE school information and provide contacts and administrator information.



We will also be publishing a Tract Viewer User Guide in the next few weeks. We hope that this will help Tract Viewer users to analyze and examine data in the application, as that has been requested by various stakeholders over the past couple of years, especially at our listening session last summer.

## Available Training

### BOGS/BIA Training Resources

- BIA GIS Training Page
- ESRI eLearning

### Upcoming ESRI Trainings

- Preparing Data for GIS-Virtual-Priority for Navajo Region – April 1-2, 2025
- Working with Parcel Data in ArcGIS Pro-Virtual-Priority for all Regions – April 1-2, 2025
- Field Data Collection Management Using ArcGIS-Virtual-Priority for Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions – April 2-3, 2025
- Spatial Analysis with Arc GIS Pro-Virtual-Priority for Alaska and Pacific Regions – April 22, 24, 2025
- ArcGIS Enterprise: Configuring a Base Deployment-Virtual-Priority for All Regions – April 30-May 1, 2025
- Preparing Data for GIS Applications-Virtual-Priority for Great Plains and Rocky Mountain Regions – May 7-8, 2025

- Working with LiDAR Data in ArcGIS-Virtual-Priority for Eastern Oklahoma, Eastern and Southern Plains Regions – May 14, 2025
- Upcoming Mississippi State Trainings – At Your Own Pace
- Introduction to Python with ArcGIS Pro-Virtual-Priority for All Regions – May 5-25, 2025
- Introduction to ArcGIS Pro-Virtual-Priority for All Regions – May 5-25, 2025
- Intermediate ArcGIS Pro-Virtual-Priority for All Regions – May 5-25, 2025
- Introduction to ArcGIS Online-Virtual-Priority for All Regions – May 5-25, 2025

## Licensing

Click the link below to inquire about becoming an active participant in the ELA program.

[Apply to Participate in the DOI-BIA Enterprise License Agreement Program](#)

## DIVISION OF TRUST LAND CONSOLIDATION



*Badlands in South Dakota*

### Mission

The mission of the Division of Trust Land Consolidation (DTLC) is to facilitate sound land management and administration, support Tribal sovereignty and self-determination, and promote economic opportunity in Indian Country by reducing Indian land fractionation.

### Who We Serve

The DTLC provides opportunities for individual Indian landowners to voluntarily sell [fractional land interests](#), at fair market value, for consolidation under Tribal ownership. DTLC provides opportunities for individual Indian landowners to voluntarily sell [fractional land interests](#), at fair market value, for consolidation under Tribal ownership. DTLC supports Tribes by increasing Tribal management control over reservation lands, better enabling Tribes to protect and utilize lands for purposes benefiting the Tribal community.

### Land Acquisition Reservations

The DTLC implemented land consolidation efforts at the following reservations in FY 24 and have continued in FY 25:

- Oglala Sioux Tribe, South Dakota
- Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, North and South Dakota
- Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe of the Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota

### Program Success

In the first half of FY 25, DTLC accomplished the following:

- 266 purchase offers generated and mailed
- 59 sales approved
- 163 fractional interests acquired, increasing Tribal ownership in 154 tracts
- 2,263.470 equivalent acres consolidated under Tribal ownership

This brings DTLC's total sales approved to date to 255, with 1,304 interests acquired and 7,102.489 equivalent acres consolidated at six (6) locations.

### Tribally Funded Offers

DTLC has developed the capability to facilitate Tribally funded acquisition of fractional trust land interests using its automated valuation and acquisition processes and Tribal funds for payments to willing sellers. Although not all Tribes have their own resources for land consolidation, partnering with those that do to quickly and efficiently consolidate lands under Tribal ownership is an especially cost-effective approach for reducing fractionation. The Division successfully partnered with its first Tribe in FY 25, consolidating the equivalent of 1,137.541 acres to date, and has initiated discussions with a second interested Tribe. The Division fully intends to pursue more such partnering opportunities going forward, and to ensure broad awareness of this opportunity among Tribes.





Left: Interns at Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery gaining experience tagging fish, conducting spawning events, and releasing over 50,000 Striped Gulf Bass fry into a pond. Right: Art at a cleanup event in Bristol Bay. WRTT interns in Alaska assisted local youth at this event.

### BRANCH OF WATER RESOURCES

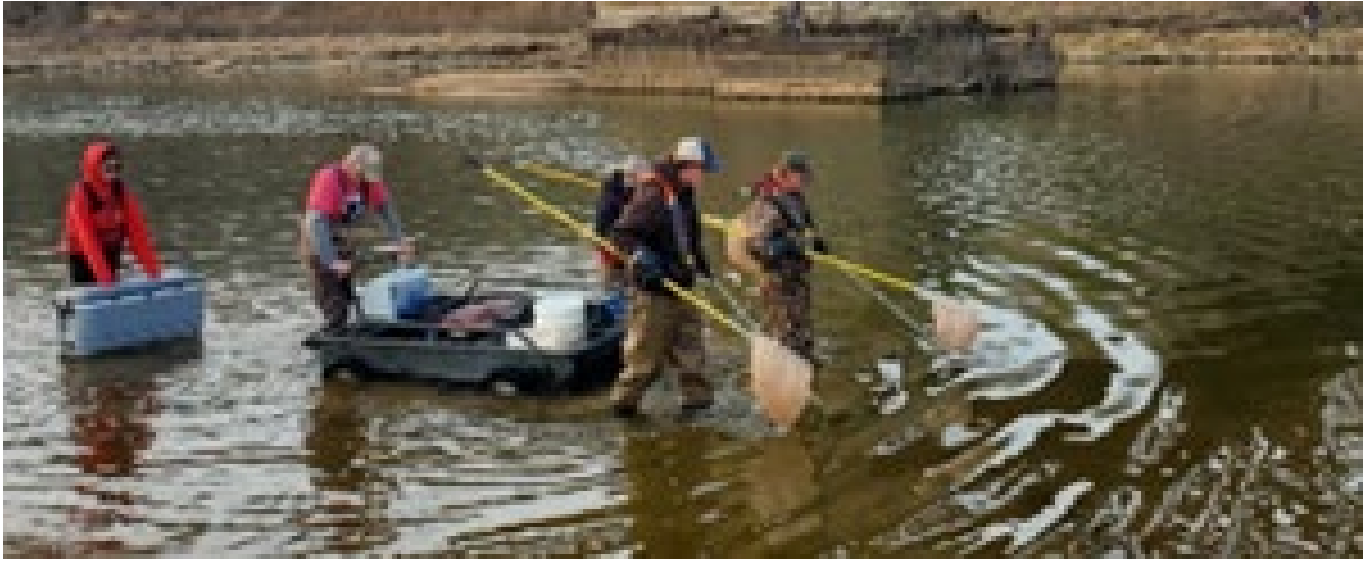
#### Empowering the Next Generation: BIA Water Resources Technician Training Program Shines Across Indian Country

As part of BIA's Division of Water and Power, the Branch of Water Resources (BWR) provides funding for the Water Resources Technician Training Program (WRTT) Program, which has been operating for more than 32 years. BWR administers WRTT through a cooperative agreement with Conservation Legacy, a national nonprofit youth placement organization, and its partnership with AmeriCorps, which serves as the funding arm for the education awards made available to WRTT interns. The WRTT Program is designed for enrolled members of federally recognized Tribes, bands, or villages between the ages of 18 and 34. This competitive program provides hands-on technical training, career mentorship, and professional development. The goal is to equip participants with high-quality field and analytical skills while supporting Indigenous stewardship of water and natural resources.

WRTT continues to make significant strides in preparing Native youth for careers in water resource management. This year, we saw tremendous growth across all BIA Regions with host sites now actively recruiting youth for approximately 20 internship placements. Host sites range from Tribal governments to federal partners like USFWS, USGS, USFS, BLM, and NPS.

WRTT includes exciting placements such as the California Water Science Center, Warm Springs Fish Health Center, Northern New Mexico Wildlife Complex, and BLM El Centro Field Office. The program emphasizes local engagement, and students receive \$700 per week, insurance, mentorship, and career-building resources.

Success stories from recent WRTT interns illustrate the impact of this program. At the Warm Springs National Fish Hatchery, interns gained experience tagging fish, conducting spawning events, and releasing over 50,000 Striped Gulf Bass fry into a pond—all while collaborating with state and federal biologists.



*Interns participated in acoustic telemetry studies on invasive carp in the Red River and conducted larval fish sampling alongside ODWC staff.*

### **Mora National Fish Hatchery**

At the Mora National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico, interns assisted with Gila Trout spawning and water quality assessments, proudly contributing to critical conservation work despite some onsite training challenges. In Alaska, interns brought together their passion for conservation and culture, organizing Earth Day cleanup projects with local youth in Bristol Bay and advocating for traditional values through community engagement.

Meanwhile, another intern participated in acoustic telemetry studies on invasive carp in the Red River and conducted larval fish sampling alongside Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) staff.

Host sites also play a vital role in intern success. The program emphasizes the importance of meaningful mentorship and support. While students receive housing assistance and funds for further training opportunities, host sites are expected to cultivate a positive, skills-based learning environment. For many interns, the experience has been transformative—not only expanding their technical knowledge but reinforcing their connection to ancestral lands and ecosystems.

Upon successful completion of their terms, WRTT participants also receive a \$3,500 AmeriCorps Education Award, helping them further their academic or vocational goals. The WRTT Program exemplifies how federal-Tribal partnerships can meaningfully invest in Indian Country's future leaders. As we continue to develop the WRTT network, we remain committed to cultivating a new generation of Native professionals who will steward the waters and lands for generations to come.

For more information contact the Branch of Water Resources at:

[Waterresources@bia.gov](mailto:Waterresources@bia.gov),  
[Michael.whitehead@bia.gov](mailto:Michael.whitehead@bia.gov) or  
[Brenda.hatathlie@bia.gov](mailto:Brenda.hatathlie@bia.gov).



Above: BIA operations staff members Bradford LeCompte, Joshua Simmons and Shane Santos pictured in front of a newly inspected Model 662 Type 6 engine in Weatherford, TX, on December 12, 2024. Photo taken by Brian Williams, BLM.

### BIA Makes Strides to Modernize Fire Fleet Across Indian Country

New and modernized fire engines are finally in process for the Division of Wildland Fire Management (DWFM). Recently, four Model 662 Type 6 engines replaced aging and outdated engines (Model 52 Type 6 engines) within Indian Country, which is something for DWFM to celebrate.

The need to replace the Model 52 Type 6 fire engines that have been used by BIA and Tribal fire programs since the 1980s is significant. The current life cycles established for replacement of Type 6 fire engines is eight (8) years or once 100,000 miles have been reached. Many engines that surpass these life cycles are still being used by programs for fire suppression today, and most of these vehicles are utilized for off-road purposes. This wears the vehicles' efficiency down more quickly than vehicles used on routinely maintained public highways for their entire life cycles.

The prescribed life cycles established for these vehicles are to ensure that the engines are efficient—a key component for safe fire suppression operations. As a vehicle depreciates, so does its effectiveness in being utilized in safe fire suppression operations. Additionally, having older fire apparatuses like the Model 52 Type 6 makes it difficult to keep pace with advancements in technology. As vehicles age and depreciate, operating costs associated with maintenance increase.

In 2024, DWFM joined forces with the BLM National Fire Equipment Program (BLM-NFEP) to support the effort to standardize and modernize all wildland fire fleet including command vehicles, utility vehicles, hotshot crew carriers, water tenders and more. Working with the BLM-NFEP enables DWFM to collaborate with other National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) agencies in the procurement of a more modernized fleet, collaborating on issues associated with maintenance and safety recalls, and keeping up with advancements in technology, such as the implementation of telematic devices.

"By ordering this equipment through BLM-NFEP, it gives DWFM the ability to standardize engines utilized in wildland fire suppression with the other DOI agencies," stated Steven Chumley, BIA national fleet manager. "BLM-NFEP collaboration benefits overall BIA fire fleet management to keep equipment safe and up to date for our wildland firefighters to do their jobs safely."





Fire engine designs from BIA's fire fleet centers. Photo taken in 2011 by Bradford LeCompte, BIA.

The Model 662 Type 6 engines that BIA is purchasing are being built by a contractor who has been building and manufacturing quality and reliable products, including engines built and designed for wildland fire suppression, since the 1980s. The new engines standardize BIA equipment with other federal fire suppression agencies' equipment that have also had equipment built by the same contractor. The newer, modernized engines provide BIA and Tribal wildland firefighters the means to respond to and suppress fires in a better and safer manner, reducing the threat of wildland fire for communities throughout the United States. The modernized equipment boosts firefighter morale because they have more reliable, safer equipment compared to equipment that has surpassed its life cycle. Additionally, the Model 662 Type 6 engines are modernized, allowing DWFM to keep pace with current advancements in technology related to wildland fire suppression.



Pictured above: BIA staff receiving fire engine training and engine acceptance at the contractor location in Weatherford, TX, on March 11, 2025. Photo taken by Bradford LeCompte, BIA.



DWFM currently has a total of 42 Model 662 Type 6 engines on order with the intent to continue purchasing new engines and fire apparatuses annually to replace all outdated equipment that have surpassed their recommended life cycles.

## DIVISION OF WORKFORCE & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



*Interns visit Colville Tribe*

### PATHWAYS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



This quarter, the Pathways Program continued its mission to connect students and communities with career opportunities in Trust Services. The team participated in key outreach and recruitment events across Indian Country to advance the mission. The first stop was in Lawrence, KS in early February at the Haskell Indian Nations University Career Fair. The team provided valuable insights into the broad spectrum of job opportunities available and networked with university staff, Tribes, and federal partners to raise awareness about the program's objectives.

The following week, Pathways traveled to Washington, DC for the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Executive Winter Session and Youth Leadership Summit. During this event, the team met with Tribal leaders, representatives, and youth leaders, showcasing how the program offers a career path for those pursuing higher education.

A notable highlight of the summit was a speech by newly confirmed Secretary of the Interior Doug Burgum, who shared his experience working with North Dakota Tribes and provided insight into the new administration's priorities.

In addition to these events, the Pathways Program is grateful for the support of partners in the field. Melvin Hunter Jr., Supervisory Regional Forester for the Navajo Region, represented the program this quarter at the Northern Arizona University Career Fair. Building and maintaining an in-person presence at events across Indian Country is pertinent to the success and growth of the Pathways Program. We value any opportunity to share the mission of Trust Services and to engage with youth and students who will shape our future.

If you have outreach opportunities or suggestions, or if you want to learn more, please contact us at [OTSPathways@bia.gov](mailto:OTSPathways@bia.gov).





## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

### **Workforce Development: BIA and OPM Partnership**

OTS has partnered with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to develop competency models and conduct gap analyses for nine (9) mission-critical occupations (MCOs).

These roles include:

- Environmental Protection Specialist
- Archaeologist\*
- Rangeland Manager
- Irrigation System Operator\*
- Forester\*
- Forestry Fire Tech\*
- Civil Engineer
- Legal Instrument Examiner
- Realty Specialist\*.

There is progress, with technical reports completed for the five (5) emphasized occupations, providing valuable recommendations for BIA. Reports for Environmental Protection Specialist, Civil Engineer, and Legal Instrument Examiner are still in progress, and OPM is currently distributing questionnaires and organizing working groups for Rangeland Manager.

Workforce Development has begun working to address competency gaps and collaborating with various Division Chiefs to prioritize strategies for improvement. These meetings will continue to be scheduled in the next quarter. This ongoing collaboration between BIA and OPM aims to enhance workforce capabilities and ensure that mission-critical roles are well-equipped to meet future challenges.