



Trust Land Services • Resource Stewardship • Results that Matter



Message from the Deputy Director

I am proud to publish this first issue of our very own Trust Quarterly Newsletter. We intend to highlight our initiatives that support the highest and best use of trust land, promote positive stewardship of resources, and deliver results that matter most to our customers. In this first issue you will read about how we are modernizing our business practices and updating policies and handbooks to reflect these business practices.

We have focused on putting “Boots on the Ground” in the way of Forestry and Geographic Information System (GIS) teams in the field to improve services to the Regions and Tribes. I look forward to sharing more positive advances in Trust Services in the next issue.

Johnna Blackhair
Deputy Director – Trust Services

Contact Information

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574 Tribal entities

Number of Tribes and tribal entities recognized by and eligible for funding and services from the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) by virtue of their status as an Indian Tribe. [Current list](#) published in the Federal Register on January 29, 2021.

IN THIS ISSUE

About Trust Services	2
Energy and Mineral Development	3
Geospatial Support	4-6
Indian Energy Service Center	7-8
Natural Resources	9-11
Pathways Internship Program	12-13
Probate and TAAMS	14-15
Real Estate Services & HEARTH Act	16-18
Timber Sales and Strike Team	19-22
Tribal Climate Resilience	23-25
Land Buy Back Acquisitions Center	26-27
Land Titles and Records	28-29
Water and Power	30-32
Work Life Balance	33

About Trust Services



Trust Services Job Opportunities (Current & Future)

To apply go to <https://www.usajobs.gov/>

Safety of Dams & Irrigation Engineers, (Lakewood, CO or Billings, MT)
Senior Accountant, Water & Power, (Lakewood, CO or Billings, MT)
Geospatial Information System Helpdesk Administrator, (Lakewood, CO)
Geospatial Information System Database Administrator, (Lakewood, CO)
Program Analyst, Probate & Special Projects, (Albuquerque, NM)

Our Trust Services Organization

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Trust Services (OTS), is committed to serving Tribal communities and their members by ensuring the activities associated with management and protection of trust and restricted lands; natural resources; forestry and wildland fire management; irrigation, power and safety of dams; and real estate services are improving tribal government infrastructures and communities, along with other components of long term sustainable economic development, to enhance the quality of life for their tribal members and protect and improve trust assets of American Indians, Indian tribes and Alaska Natives.

There are 56 million acres of trust lands and 45 million acres of land held by Native Alaskan state-chartered corporations. BIA has 12 BIA Regional Offices and 82 Agencies/Field Offices.

Trust Divisions and Program Offices

- Deputy Director
- Energy and Mineral Development
- Environmental and Cultural Resources
- Forestry and Wildland Fire Management
- Geospatial Support
- Indian Energy Service Center
- Land Buy Back Acquisitions Center
- Land Titles and Records
- Natural Resources
 - Agriculture & Rangeland Management
 - Fish, Wildlife & Recreation
 - Environmental & Cultural Resources
- Probate and Special Projects
- Real Estate Services
- Tribal Climate Resilience
- Water and Power



BIA Trust Quarterly Newsletter

The Trust Quarterly Newsletter is produced collaboratively by the Trust Services Divisions under the direction of Deputy Director **Johnna Blackhair**. To find out more or to submit suggestions for future issues, please contact editor **Dawn Selwyn** by email at Dawn.selwyn@bia.gov or BIATrustQuarterly@bia.gov. Your input is welcome!

The content deadline for Issue 2 is May 1, 2021. Photos are appreciated. Newsletters are distributed to the Trust employees and BIA Regional Director email groups.

Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD)



Photos (Left to Right): Single wind turbine, various raw minerals, solar panels/wind turbines, oil rig

What is NIOGEMS?

The National Indian Oil and Gas, Energy and Minerals System (NIOGEMS) is a software system only available to tribal offices, and tribal-supporting federal entities. It allows users to track and make decisions on developing and managing resources by readily accessing the financial, realty and geotechnical information of Indian lands with energy and mineral potential.

Need a NIOGEMS account?

Email the NIOGEMS Helpdesk at IA_NIOGEMS_Helpdesk@bia.gov

NIOGEMS Virtual Training

A NIOGEMS virtual training session was held March 3-4, 2021, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. MST. If you are interested in future classes, please email Brad.tatham@bia.gov or Robert.weber@bia.gov.



Intertribal Timber Council logo, and logging equipment in operation

Branch of Renewable & Distributed Energy (BRADE) team presents to Intertribal Timber Council's Operations Committee

DEMD Mechanical Engineer, Josh Gregory, Branch of Renewable & Distributed Energy (BRADE) Team, delivered a February 10, 2021, presentation to the Intertribal Timber Council's Operations Committee on:

- DEMD's organizational move from the Assistant Secretary's Office to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Office of Trust Services and an overview of programs and services
- BRADE's Commodity Groups, focus on the Biomass Resource Development Group and their technical capabilities with woody biomass energy project analysis, and
- DEMD's interest in long-term engagement and collaboration with the Intertribal Timber Council.



Uintah & Ouray Reservation Migration to NIOGEMS Virtual Server

The NIOGEMS team worked with the Uintah & Ouray Reservation (Tribe) January 13-14, 2021, to migrate their NIOGEMS application to a new virtual server. An updated software application and data set was sent to the Tribe to ensure a smooth migration process. Five Tribal Users have used NOGEMS since 2012.

Branch of Geospatial Support (BOGS)



David Vogt on safari in South Africa 2019

"I would like to focus on growing and maintaining a robust GIS program that supports tribes and their partners"

-David Vogt

Welcome our new Program Manager

Mr. David Vogt joined the Branch of Geospatial Support on January 4, 2021, as Branch Chief. He came to us from the U.S. Census Bureau and has extensive experience in Geospatial Information Services along with experience with multiple government agencies as a GIS contractor. He has a B.S. from the University of Maryland-College Park, and a M.S. in GIS Management from Salisbury University.

He is a native of Colorado and in his free time he enjoys hiking, running, and playing with his 6-month-old daughter and dog. Contact email David.vogt@bia.gov.

336 Tribes have BIA ArcGIS Licenses

A total of **336 Tribes** (59% of the 574) assigned active GIS Enterprise License Agreements with **609 active individual tribal users** funded by BIA, Office of Trust Services. (Source: Burden Table 9/2020)

Available Resources



- Interactive Map of Indian Lands at <https://biamaps.doi.gov/bogs/staticmaps.html>
- Web, Static and Downloadable maps available at <https://biamaps.doi.gov>
- ESRI Licensing, Helpdesk and Training at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/dpmc/bogs>



2021 User Agreement Reconciliation (UAR) Process Policy Update

A National Policy Memorandum amendment is under development to guide the user agreements BIA has issued under the DOI Enterprise License Agreement with Esri for geospatial licensing, high level help desk services, and training.

BIA guidance will include an annual August audit and reconciliation process with issuance of new licenses subject to the availability of funds.

New Regional Geospatial Coordinators



12 Geospatial Coordinators Hired

"It's a new dawn, it's a new day" for all things geospatial at the BIA. After many months of planning and preparation, BIA GIS operations are no longer a Washington, DC (Central Office) function.

The Office of the Deputy Director-Trust Services has recruited for a Regional Geospatial Coordinator (RGC) at each of the 12 BIA Regions. This "Boots on the Ground" approach will focus on Region-specific GIS program development, training, and modernization.



GIS is no longer a Central Office (Washington, DC) function. The "Boots on the Ground" initiative places RGC's at each Region closer to our customers.

Regional Geospatial Coordinators (RGC's)



*Jessica Rodriguez
Alaska*



*Rebecca Coleman
Eastern Oklahoma*



*Deborah Kirk
Eastern*



*Dean Hacker
Great Plains*



*Christopher Kaczmarek
Midwest*



*Chid Murphy
Navajo*



*Caroline Rouwalk
Northwest*



*John Mosley
Pacific*



*Ken (KR) Bixby
Rocky Mountain*



*Miley Williams
Southern Plains*



*Byron Yepa
Southwest*



*Ronald Lodgepole
Western*

Regional Geospatial Coordinator Biographies

Jessica Rodriguez, Alaska Region

(Pueblo of Laguna) After serving in the U.S. Navy, Jessica received her B.S. in Environmental Science from Haskell Indian Nations University and M.A. in Geography at the University of Iowa. Prior to her current position, Jessica joined the BIA in 2015, as an LTRO Cartographer.

Rebecca (Becky) Coleman, Eastern OK Region

(Cherokee Nation) Becky's undergraduate and graduate studies at Northeastern State University in Oklahoma focused on Environmental Management and Geology. Before joining BIA, Becky was employed for ten years as a GIS analyst at the Muscogee (Creek) Nation.

Deborah Kirk, Eastern Region

(Cherokee Nation) Deborah is a doctoral candidate in Geography at West Virginia University. She earned a B.A. from Haskell Indian Nations University and M.A. in geography at the University of Kansas while teaching Introduction to GIS courses at Haskell. Deborah joined BIA in 2016 as a Cartographic Technician and GIS Specialist.

Dean Hacker, Great Plains Region

(Oglala Sioux Nation) Dean earned his B.S. in Industrial Technologies from Northern State University. Dean's career with the BIA began in 2000. Prior to his current position, Dean worked as an Engineering Technician for Transportation and a Cartographic Technician for the LTRO.

Christopher Kaczmarek, Midwest Region

Christopher began his BIA Federal career in 2017 as an LTRO Cartographer. Prior to 2017, he was a BIA contract GIS Analyst and Senior GIS Specialist in the private sector. Christopher holds a M.S. in geography from Minnesota State University, a B.A. in geography from Bemidji State University, and an A.A.S. degree in Natural Resource Technology Forestry/Wildlife from Vermillion Community College.

Chid Murphy, Navajo Region

(Choctaw Nation) Chid began his career with the BIA in 2018 as the Navajo Regional Hydrologist. Prior to 2018, Chid worked as a research hydrologist with the U.S. Geological Survey. Chid holds a B.S. in Geology and a B.S. in Environmental Science from Utah Valley University.

Caroline Rouwalk, Northwest Region

(Navajo Nation and Pawnee Nation) Caroline has two B.A. degrees from Arizona State and Portland State University, and a graduate certificate in GIS from Portland State University. Prior to joining the BIA in 2020, Caroline worked as a contract GIS analyst under the Department of Energy.

John Mosley, Pacific Region

(Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe) John also has a tribal affiliation with the Oglala Sioux, Bishop Paiute, Walker Paiute, and Fort Peck Assiniboine. John completed his undergraduate work at the University of Nevada and has over 20 years of experience working in GIS. John has used his experience to assist the Pacific Region LTRO, Realty, and Wildland Fire and Fuels programs.

Ken (KR) Bixby, Rocky Mountain Region

(Northern Cheyenne) KR completed his undergraduate degree at Montana State University and earned an MAS in Environmental Policy and Management, Natural Resource Management, and GIS at the University of Denver. KR began his career with the BIA over 16 years ago and has held the positions of GIS Technician and GIS Specialist in Forestry and Wildland Fire, and an LTRO Cartographer.

Miley Williams, Southern Plains Region

(Muscogee Creek Nation) After obtaining an A.S. in Pre-Engineering from Seminole State College, Miley earned a B.S. in Cartography and Geotechniques at Eastern Central University. She worked for the Chickasaw Nation for 11 years in the Geospatial and Transportation departments prior to joining BIA in 2020.

Byron Yepa, Southwest Region

(Pueblo of Jemez) Byron earned a B.A. degree in Geography from the University of New Mexico. He began his career with the BIA in 2009. Prior to his current position, he held the position of Cartographer for the LTRO in Albuquerque, NM.

Ronald Lodgepole, Western Region

(Chippewa Cree Tribe) Prior to his current position, Ron worked as the Forestry and Fire Management GIS Coordinator. Ron holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Land Resources and Environmental Sciences from Montana State University.

Indian Energy Service Center (IESC)



Mission

The Indian Energy Service Center (IESC) mission is to expedite energy, mineral, and renewable activities on Indian lands. The IESC strives to standardize processes, remove barriers, and provide for multi-disciplinary stakeholder engagement to maximize efficiencies in the management of energy and minerals on Indian trust lands.



IESC Denver West building in Lakewood, CO

Multi-Bureau Service Center

The IESC is a multi-bureau collaboration between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA), and the Office of Natural Resources and Revenue (ONRR).

HOW DO I REQUEST ASSISTANCE?

Email requests to IESCRequest@bia.gov

IESC subject matter experts work in all phases of energy leasing and management activities.

Technical support and guidance are available in processing all types of Indian energy, renewable energy, and mineral leasing and development activities, actions including drafting of policy.

IESC requests a [Referral Form](#) be completed detailing the type of assistance requested. The completed form can then be sent to email above.

Available Energy Services



Real Estate Services (BIA)

- Communitization Agreement Adjudication
- Lease Reviews and Modifications
- Advise on Environmental Impact Statements
- Oil and Gas Leases, Assignments, Permitting
- NEPA (Environmental) Processing Support
- Conduct Lease Sales (Local & Future Online)
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Training
- Rights of Way and Trespass
- TAAMS Title Review, Encoding & Modifications

Engineering Services (BLM)

- APD Engineering review and assistance
- Adjudication
- Cadastral Surveys
- Production Accountability Reviews
- Processing Space Orders

Beneficiary Services (BTFA)

- Requesting IIM account updates/disbursements
- Explanation of quarterly statements
- Locate Whereabouts Unknown Beneficiaries
- Information about your trust assets
- Estate planning or financial management
- OHA and probate hearings
- BIA Realty issues
- Supervised accounts or guardianships

Mineral Services (ONRR)

- Production Reconciliation
- Advise on Indian related Royalty Questions
- Identify Royalty Discrepancies, refer reviews
- Outstanding Liability Reviews
- Coordinating ONRR reviews of proposed IMDA's
- Compliance and Audit Support

Indian Energy Service Center (IESC)



Federal Partner Meeting

The Indian Energy Service Center (IESC) organizes and facilitates multiple federal partner meetings to communicate, coordinate, and resolve issues that impede energy development opportunities and provide a platform to expedite nationwide trust functions.

FY 2021 Federal Partner Charters and Meeting Dates

Fort Berthold	March 9, 2021 (Feds only)
Fort Berthold	March 15, 2021 (Feds with Tribe)
Rocky Mountain	April 8, 2021
Navajo	May 4, 2021
Uintah & Ouray (U&O)	May 21, 2021
Southwest	August 9, 2021
Oklahoma/Texas/Kansas	August 17, 2021

Virtual Indian Fluid Minerals Standard

Operating Procedures (SOP) Training

Over 900 Federal & Tribal employees have attended SOP Training since 2015

Course Description

Employees attending the SOP for Indian Fluid Minerals (oil and gas) training will gain an understanding of the independent roles and responsibilities among U.S. Department of the Interior Bureaus and Offices involved in the development of fluid minerals on trust lands across the United States.

Course Objectives

Outline the roles and responsibilities of each agency with the primary focus on the interdependent responsibilities and handoffs between agencies for fluid mineral development on trust lands.

Instructors

Subject Matter Experts from BIA, BLM, ONRR, and BTFA.

FY 2021 Virtual Training Dates

February 23-24, 2021, 8am – 12pm MST

April 27-28, 2021, 8am – 12pm MST

May and August 2021 dates TBD



Course Level: All levels

CPE: Contact Agency for Details

Cost: \$0

Registration: Access course registration in DOI Talent

<https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov>

For more information contact

U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Energy Service Center, Office: (720) 595-2000

Email: IndianEnergyServiceCenter@bia.gov

Website: <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/indian-energy-service-center>

Division of Natural Resources (DNR)



The Division of Natural Resources (DNR) includes three Branches:

- Branch of Fish, Wildlife and Recreation
- Branch of Agriculture
- Branch of Environmental & Cultural Resource Management

Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) a basis for Targeted Forest Inventories

DNR management initiatives include a cooperative focus on an inventory of birch in the ceded territories. A publication integrating Ojibwe Traditional Ecological Knowledge into scientific research was used as a basis for Targeted Forest Inventories.

Publication Citation: Emery, Marla & Wrobel, Alexandra & Hansen, Mark & Dockry, Michael and Moser, W. & Stark, Kekek & Gilbert, Jonathan. (2014). Using Traditional Ecological Knowledge as a Basis for Targeted Forest Inventories: Paper Birch (*Betula Papyrifera*) in the U.S. Great Lakes Region. Journal of Forestry. 112.10.5849/jof.13-023.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Ira New Breast, Division Chief
Division of Natural Resources
ira.newbreast@bia.gov

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

DNR facilitates multiple programs among its Branches. One noteworthy program is the [Native American Fish and Wildlife Society](#) (NAFWS) which continues to be active for more than 35 years. The NAFWS, a non-profit, addresses the needs of its 225 member tribes directly through conferences, training, youth education. Indirect assistance offered through ongoing support of, and providing venues for government consultations, discussions, and by participating with innovative projects and initiatives in Indian Country.

The NAFWS enriches tribes through its mission: Assisting Native American and Alaska Native tribes with conserving, protecting, and enhancing their fish, wildlife, habitat, and cultural resources.



[Mexican Wolf Tribal Youth Conservation Program](#) interns from White Mountain Apache Tribe present at NAFWS Regional Conference

Division of Natural Resources (DNR)



Rights Protection Implementation (RPI)

The [RPI Program](#) facilitates fish and wildlife management mitigated by the U.S. Supreme Court established Fishing and Hunting rights for 49 tribes.

BIA Central Office works with the [Great Lakes Intertribal Fish and Wildlife Commission \(GLIFWC\)](#) which is an RPI Indian Organization representing 11 Ojibwe tribes in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan who reserved hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in Treaties with the U.S. Government. Of GLIFWC's many activities **Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK)** is a focused factor in their management of the fish and wildlife resource.

Protecting “wiigwasi” – Birch Trees

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS)/Tribal partnership incorporates TEK into adaptive management to protect wiigwasi (birch) resources.



Harvesting birch bark in Wisconsin

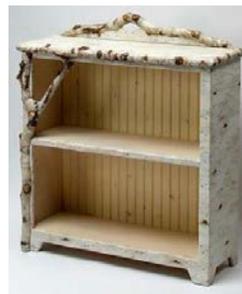


Birch bark canoes

Commercial Demand Impacts Birch Inventory

The increasing demand for birch saplings for home and business décor has led to the harvesting of young birch in certain parts of the ceded territories. This threatens the recruitment of mature birch for the purposes of traditional canoe building and other crafts.

Tribes and the USFS are concerned the overharvest of young birch for the décor industry may have lasting impacts on birch populations throughout the ceded territories, as well as the availability of birch for future generations.



Bookshelf and birch basket are examples of commercial items made from harvested birch

Division of Natural Resources (DNR)



History of Off Reservation

Gathering Rights

As GLIFWC began implementing off reservation gathering rights in the early 1990s, it developed a relationship with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's U.S. Forest Service (USFS) arising out of a mutual concern for natural resources and habitats that sustain them. Forgoing a legal battle, the two governmental bodies elected to negotiate a framework by which those rights would be acknowledged, interpreted, and implemented.

Memorandum of Understanding Ratified

After six years of consultation, the [Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\) Regarding Tribal-USDA-Forest Service Relations on National Forest Lands within the Territories Ceded in Treaties of 1836, 1837, and 1842](#) was ratified by all 11 GLIFWC member Ojibwe tribes and by the USFS's Eastern Region, Law Enforcement and Investigation Branch, and the North Carolina Research Station.

The MOU recognizes and implements treaty-guaranteed hunting, fishing, and gathering rights in ceded territories within four National Forests under tribal regulations and establishes a consensus-based consultation process for National Forest management decisions that affect treaty rights. Specifically, the MOU establishes:

- A framework for a collaborative government-to-government relationship based on consistent and timely communication and tribal participation in National Forest management through a joint Technical Working Group.
- A mutually agreeable set of regulations enacted by the tribes for regulating the exercise of treaty gathering rights; and
- A shared goal of protecting, managing, and enhancing ecosystems that support the natural resources subject to the tribes' treaty rights.

"The Ojibwe are spiritually reconnecting with the forests and passing on traditions taught by their ancestors to future generations"

The Harvard Project on
American Indian Economic
Development

Pathways Internship Program



Our Mission, Recruiting the Next Generation

Trust Services has been active in strategic and workforce planning and recruiting for critical natural resource, environmental and real estate services positions. The Pathways Internship Program is one of our outreach tools to marry the talent of college and university students in these fields of study to real work experiences within our organization. During FY 2020, we hired 56 students, who received training and developmental work assignments across 40 different programs including Agriculture, Range, Probate, Land Titles and Records, Forestry, Wildland Fire, and Tribal Climate Resilience.

Where to Apply

We are continuously recruiting to fill internship positions. We post ALL job opportunities for Pathways Internships on the USA Jobs website. For current opportunities and additional information, please visit <https://www.usajobs.gov/studentsandgrads/>



Pathways Forestry and Fire Interns touring National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID

Pathways Internships

The OTS programs offer paid internships for emerging leaders who are seeking degrees in natural resources management, forestry, and other related environmental and biological science fields. This Program not only offers students paid employment, while they continue their education, but also gives them valuable and unique work experiences. We offer rotational summer assignment with different BIA programs and work environments, where students can train and job shadow industry professionals.

- **BUILD** work skills and experience
- **LEARN** from a professional workforce
- **RECEIVE** on-the-job training
- **EXPLORE** different Federal occupations

For more information contact:

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Pathways Program
Email: OTSPathways@bia.gov



Pathways Success Story

Geospatial Services Program hires former Intern

Travis Lee Blacketter “Oozaawaanakwud” is a member of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. He originally applied for a Truman D. Picard Scholarship and was contacted about the BIA Pathways (Coop Program). At the time, he was pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Geographic Information System (GIS) at the University of Minnesota-Duluth where he graduated in 2014.

He interned with the Branch of Forestry Resources and Planning and Forestry/Fire Programs at the Midwest Region. He has supported the work of the Land Buy Back Geospatial Project, Land Title and Records Office was hired as Field Operations Coordinator for BIA’s Central Office Geospatial Information Services Program located in Lakewood, Colorado.



Travis Blacketter, University of Minnesota graduate earned a Bachelor’s in GIS and is now a BIA GIS Analyst



Travis pictured atop one of the Colorado 14ers (14,000-foot elevation peaks) from his bucket list of mountains to climb

Questions and Answers about Pathways

Travis, what did you like about the program as a student?

I enjoyed having a support network that was willing to let me travel and experience different offices throughout the BIA.

What were some of the benefits you received from Pathways?

At the time I was using my Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits to attend school. The Pathways Program paid me a small stipend and grade bonus every semester.

What would you say to someone thinking about Pathways as an option?

If you are thinking about it, just do it. The support is excellent, and if you haven’t applied for a federal job yet, getting into the government “cold” is not very easy. Applying for Pathways is very easy.

What are your hobbies and what do you like to do in your free time?

I love hiking Colorado’s 14ers (peaks that are above 14,000 feet in elevation). I currently have 22 under my belt. I also enjoy seeing my grandchildren grow up virtually! Note: The Covid-19 pandemic has restricted travel and social gatherings.

Division of Probate Services (DPS)



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Probate Regulations

The Department of the Interior is updating regulations governing probate of property that the United States holds in trust or restricted status for American Indians. See [Federal Register Notice, Vol 86, No. 4, Thursday, January 7, 2021.](#)

BIA, OHA, SOLICITOR Regulation Writing Team

For the past several years the Office of Trust Services, Division of Probate and Estate Services have been working with the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA) along with the DOI Solicitor's Office in drafting regulations to expedite the probate adjudication process to ensure that trust assets are distributed to Indian Beneficiaries in a timely fashion. The regulations were last revised in 2008.



End of Public Comment Period

February 9, 2021	Tribal Consultation
February 11, 2021	Public Hearing
March 8, 2021	Comment Deadline

What's New

Draft Regulations Identify Opportunities for Process Improvement

The Department has identified opportunities to improve the probate process. The proposed revisions would allow the OHA to adjudicate probate cases more efficiently by, among other things:

- Establishing an expedited process for small, funds-only estates
- Reorganizing the purchase-at-probate process so that estates may be closed more quickly
- Streamlining notice to co-owners who are potential heirs while adding electronic notice to all by website posting, and
- Specifying which reasons justify reopening of closed probate estates

These revisions would also enhance OHA's processing by adding certainty as to how estates should be distributed when certain circumstances arise that are not addressed in the statute.

For more information contact

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Probate and Special Projects,
Division Chief, Charlene Toledo, Email: Charlene.toledo@bia.gov

Probate Tracking System in TAAMS



Probate Tracking System to Debut in TAAMS in 2021

The Division of Probate Services, in collaboration with the Land Titles and Records Office (LTRO), the Office of Hearings and Appeals (OHA), and the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration (BTFA), has begun development on the new Probate Tracking System within the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS).

The new system will minimize duplicative data entry and scanning in multiple systems.



The Probate Tracking System is a joint BIA, OHA, and BTFA Team effort utilizing TAAMS

Department of the Interior's 12 Step Probate Process

The following flow chart details the 12 steps in the Probate process. See [25 CFR part 150](#) and [43 CFR Part 30](#) for more information. Effective September 1, 2020, the Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) was renamed the [Bureau of Trust Funds Administration](#) (BTFA).

STEP 1

An American Indian or Alaska Native (AI/AN) passes away.

STEP 2

Family of the deceased AI/AN reports the death to a Tribal program, OHA, BTFA, or a BIA Agency.

STEP 3

BIA Agency or Tribal Probate Program verifies the decedent possessed trust property at the time of death.

STEP 4

BIA Agency or Tribal Probate Program will request information and documents from surviving family members, such as death certificates marriage licenses, etc.

STEP 5

BIA Agency or Tribal Probate Program receives all of the required documents. Prepares a probate package and forwards to OHA.

STEP 6

OHA reviews file, if all required documents are included, a hearing is scheduled, or a summary probate is issued.

STEP 7

OHA conducts the hearing or summary probate and will issue a written decision or order.

STEP 8

Parties who are adversely affected by OHA's decision may request a rehearing for formal probates or a new hearing for summary probate decisions, 30 days from the decision mailing date.

STEP 9

After a judge's decision on a rehearing is issued, you have 30 days from the decision mailing date to file an appeal.

STEP 10

If no interested party files a request or appeal within the established 30-day deadline(s) go to Step 11.

STEP 11

BIA, LTRO will change the land title record in accordance with the final decision or order.

STEP 12

BTFA will pay claims and distribute funds from the Individual Indian Money (IIM) account as appropriate, in accordance with the final decision or order.

Division of Real Estate Services (DRES)



623,000 Fee to Trust Acres Acquired

The BIA has acquired over 623,000 acres of land held in fee simple status into trust in the last ten years since 2011. This is the equivalent of 973.43 square miles.

Title to trust land is held in the name of the United States Government on behalf of an Indian or a tribe. Fee to Trust applications from tribes and individual Indians are regulated by [Title 25 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Part 151](#).

Map of U.S. compares size of State of Rhode Island to BIA Trust Acquisitions

Rhode Island is the smallest U.S. state at 726,960 acre (1,214 square miles) and greater in comparison to the BIA acquired 623,000 acres (973.43 square miles) of fee simple land taken into trust over the last 10 years.



U.S. map highlighting the size of the State of Rhode Island larger in square miles than 10 years of BIA trust acquisitions

Fee to Trust Handbook

The BIA's Fee to Trust Handbook was last published in 2016. An updated version is currently going through review for publication by the Office of Regulatory Affairs and Collaborative Action (RACA).

Fee to Trust Process Automated

The BIA system of record for trust land and ownership is maintained in the Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS). The Division of Real Estate Services developed the new Acquisition and Disposal (A&D) Module for Fee to Trust (FTT) applications, deployed October 21, 2019, for all Regions and Agencies.

Trust to Trust Land Conveyances

The Acquisition and Disposal (A&D) Module for tracking and processing Trust to Trust transactions was deployed September 2018. Tribal purchases of land and negotiated sales are captured in this module. This automated process enables BIA to produce metrics on land conveyances as the A&D Module use is mandatory.

The module was developed for BIA and contracted Tribal staff to digitally track and manage land into trust transactions migrating from archaic paper forms and reports. Use of the TAAMS A&D Module requires all payments for land sales to be submitted to the Lockbox for processing to the grantor(s).

Division of Real Estate Services (DRES)



HEARTH Act supports Tribal Self-Determination

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Homeownership Act (HEARTH Act) of 2012 amended the Indian Long-Term Leasing Act of 1955, to include Tribal Approval of Leases at 25 U.S.C. §415(h).

BREAKDOWN OF 30 PENDING HEARTH CASES BY REGION *(Submissions by 27 Tribes)*

1	Eastern Oklahoma
1	Great Plains
4	Midwest
3	Northwest
12	Pacific
1	Rocky Mountain
4	Southwest
4	Western

What is the HEARTH Act?

The HEARTH Act provides a mechanism for federally recognized tribes to approve, manage, and enforce leases of their tribal trust and restricted lands for business, residential, agricultural, and other purpose ***without review of tribal leases by the BIA, or approval of tribal leases*** by the Secretary if:

- The tribe's leasing regulations have been reviewed by the BIA, and
- Approved by the Secretary of the Interior prior to execution of the lease. "Grandfathering" leases approved under 25 CFR 152 is not allowed

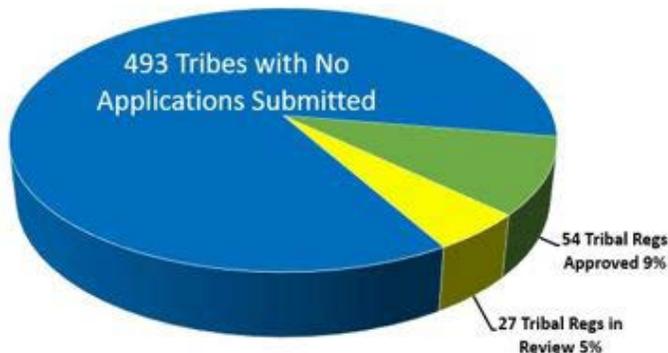
The minimum requirements for Secretarial approval of tribal regulations under the HEARTH Act are that the tribal regulations must *be consistent* with BIA's leasing regulations at 25 CFR 162, not a "meet and exceed standard".

View all 58 approved HEARTH Act Tribal leasing regulations online:

<https://www.bia.gov/service/HEARTH-Act/approved-regulations>

Tribal HEARTH Act Participation Rate

March 2021 (86 of 574 Tribes)



Division of Real Estate Services (DRES)



Oil rigs in operation at sunset

\$219,162,258 Oil & Gas Royalties

Allotted Oil and Gas royalties (income) are distributed twice per month from producing oil and gas leases. Funds are distributed to those beneficiaries who own interest in trust allotments which were encumbered by these producing leases.

Since the beginning of this fiscal year (FY 2021), \$219,162,258 has been distributed through the TAAMS MRAD (Mineral Royalty Accounting Distribution Module). *Tribal royalties* generated from *tribally owned tracts* do not go through TAAMS MRAD and not included in the distribution above.



Bi-monthly certification of Oil and Gas Royalties performed in TAAMS

DOI Broadband Inter- and Intra-Agency Collaboration

The Division of Real Estate Services has been working with three working groups on the American Broadband Initiative (ABI). For more detail see

<https://broadbandusa.ntia.doc.gov/nita-resources/broadbandusa-federal-interagency-work>.

BIA work group participation may expand to an office that has mapping capabilities. One task of the DOI working groups is to gather information on broadband mapping asset data and create an inventory of communications sites and facilities from each DOI agency.

Information gathered will be used to respond to the U.S. Department of Commerce, [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) (NTIA), to address questions they may receive from the broadband industry.

The inventory of communication sites and facilities on public lands is to provide industry with the information on DOI's assets already on public lands. Since the legislation's definition in [H.R. 7774](#), Digital Reservations Act, is limited to public lands, BIA's participation to date has been limited to attending meetings and providing information on leases and easements on Indian lands.

Handbook Updates support Broadband

A Broadband WebEx on April 30, 2020, introduced the draft Business Leasing Handbook (52 IAM 14-H) and Rights of Way Handbook (52 IAM 9-H) in support of the Secretary's priority of broadband. Click link to view [Handbook Updates](#).

Division of Forestry, Timber Sales Operations Group



Harvest of Forest Products Handbook

The Timber Sales Operations Group (TSOG) regularly works on policy development. This year the group will deliver a new “Harvest of Forest Products” guidance document to replace both the 53 Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) 3-H Timber Sales and the 53 IAM 4-H Permit Sales Handbooks found at <https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/handbooks>

The TSOG group also drafted two National Policy Memoranda in FY 2021:

- Direct Payment of Revenue from the Sale of Forest Products to Tribally Administered Accounts
- Tribal Collection and Retention of Forest Management Deductions



Harvested Timber prepared for sale

Timber Sales Operations Group Membership

The Division of Forestry and Wildland Fire Management (DFWFM) completes many important tasks with the help of the TSOG working team.

In addition to Central Office, DFWFM staff, the TSOG team membership is made up of volunteer participants from Regions and Agencies. (Tribal employees have also participated and contributed to projects in the past). The group may number from between 7-10 members at any given time.



First big log used for construction of the Plank House at Grand Ronde

For more information contact

U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Forestry & Wildland Fire Management
Division Chief Email: Peter.wakeland@bia.gov

Timber Sales Operations Group



TAAMS Streamlined Process is good news for Forestry Document Encoders

The most recent TAAMS enhancements were released on January 29, 2021, as version 5.10c. Due to the significance of the changes, the release was preceded by a 4-hour Webinar to acquaint users to the new features which have greatly streamlined the process for TAAMS forestry documents encoders. New streamlined features include:

- Automatic application of available Advance Payment
- Advance Deposit and Bid Deposit Funds available to timber scale and production of zero balance invoices.
- Automatic production of scale reports

This is a significant streamlining of processes and has been coined the “**easy button**”.



Trust Asset & Accounting Management System (TAAMS) User Group

The Timber Sales Operations Group functions as the TAAMS Forestry user group. TAAMS is the official system of record for all transactions on trust or restricted lands.

The group schedules and provides Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) for TAAMS Forestry training and develops proposals for enhancements to the TAAMS Forestry Module to meet current business needs.



Timber Sales Money Book Prototype

The Timber Sales Operations Group has developed the prototype for a new Timber Sales Money book enhancement to TAAMS. This is under review by the TAAMS Change Management Board for approval of a system enhancement. This enhancement will enable users to access an interactive ledger of all timber scale and financial transactions.

Timber Strike Team



New! Timber Strike Team in Billings, MT

The six-person Timber Strike Team is now established and comprised of Foresters with educational backgrounds from a bachelors, a masters, and Ph.D. Team members bring with them experience from the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, State, and the private sector. Member biographies are on the next page. If you have questions contact Peter Wakeland, Chief Forester by Email at Peter.wakeland@bia.gov.



Spring and Summer Field Calendar

Project requests are filling the calendar quickly. Covid-19 guidance will determine schedules as we keep the safety of the team and local program staff our number one priority. Project requests now include the following:

- **MONTANA:** Timber sale prep for Crow, Northern Cheyenne, and Fort Belknap Agencies
- **NEBRASKA:** Walnut Timber sale prep and CFI for Omaha and Winnebago Agencies
- **NEW MEXICO:** Ponderosa Pine timber sale prep at Jicarilla Agency
- **OKLAHOMA:** Trespass cruise in Okemah, OK
- **SOUTH DAKOTA:** Permit sale prep and CFI for Rosebud Agency
- **UTAH:** Twin Potts fire salvage prep for Uintah Ouray Agency
- **WISCONSIN:** Timber sale prep Bad River Agency, stand exam Potawatomi and Ho-Chunk Agencies



The Timber Strike Team home base is in Billings, Montana

Welcome your Timber Strike Team



Philip Frandino
TEAM LEADER



Connor Eckhout



Hilary Chittom



Garret McFall



Jason Roberts



Wesley Staats

Timber Strike Team Biographies

Philip “Ryan” Frandino, Supervisory Forester (Strike Team Leader)

Ryan has worked in several government agencies most recently as a pre-sales Forester with the U.S. Forest Service on the Medicine Bow-Routt National Forest Brush Creek-Hayden Ranger District, Saratoga, WY. Prior to the start of his permanent career, he was a forestry technician, Shoshone National Forest’s Wapiti Ranger District, Cody, WY; Biological Science Technician, National Park Service, Kings Mountain National Military Park, Blacksburg, SC; and an intern with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Wind River Indian Reservation, Fort Washakie, WY. Ryan received his bachelor’s degree in Forest Resource Management and a minor in Parks and Conservation Area Management from Clemson University and his associate degree in Forest Management Technology from Horry Georgetown Technical College. His hobbies include fly fishing, all types of hunting, backpacking, grilling, and traveling. He is very excited to start this new chapter in his forestry career.

Hilary Chittom, Forester

Hilary has a B.A. in Forestry Resource Management from the University of Tennessee. Her career began working as a Forest Inventory & Analysis Forester, State of Tennessee. Additionally, she worked as a seasonal Forestry Technician, Bureau of Land Management, Butte, MT. In her free time, she likes to be outdoors, rock climbing, reading, and cooking. Hilary is excited to start this new chapter with the BIA Timber Strike Team, and for an opportunity to enhance her forestry skills, travel, and meet new people.

Jason Roberts, Forester

Jason has previously worked for the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado as a Forestry Technician. He received his bachelor’s degree in Forestry from North Carolina State University. He then went on to complete his graduate degree in Environmental Anthropology at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His Ph.D. research explored logging development and sustainability issues on New Hanover Island, Papua, New Guinea. In Jason’s free time he likes to play guitar, run, and read.

Connor Eckhout, Forester

Connor has worked with the U.S. Forest Service on Medicine Bow-Rout (17’-18’) Shoshone (19’), Rogue River Siskiyou (20’) National Forests as a pre-sale timber technician. Connor earned a B.S. in Forestry from Michigan State University, a minor in environmental sustainability, and worked as a graduate research assistant in the Walters Silviculture and Rothstein Tree Research Laboratories. In his free time, he enjoys backpacking, mountain biking and rock climbing. He has anticipated relocating to Montana and is excited to support the BIA with the capacity to travel and produce quality timber sales.

Garrett McFall, Forester

Garrett earned a Forest Resource Management degree from the University of Tennessee. In 2018, he started his career with the federal government working as a Regional Forestry Technician for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (US ACE) in Texas. In 2019, Garrett was hired as a Natural Resource Specialist with the US ACE Sam Rayburn Reservoir in Jasper, TX. Garrett spends his free time traveling to new places, enjoys all types of fishing and mastering his Texas-style barbeque techniques.

Wesley Staats, Forester

Wes attended school at the University of Kentucky where he received a bachelor’s and master’s degree in Forestry, focusing his studies on Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and deriving forest characteristics from Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data. His career started as a Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) intern for the Forest Service in Kentucky. He has also worked for Louisville Metro Parks in Kentucky managing their trees geodatabase, but more recently was working as a private contract forester in Colorado. In Wesley’s free time, he enjoys rock climbing, hiking, and backpacking. He is excited to be able to help many different Indian reservations with their forestry projects through the BIA.

Tribal Resilience Program (TRP)



2021 NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Apply online at <https://www.grants.gov>

TRIBAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE GRANTS

Deadline April 23, 2021

Federally recognized tribes and authorized tribal organizations may apply directly on <https://grants.gov/>. The grants' purpose is to support Tribal and Trust resource managers to identify best management choices more accurately during project design in the following categories:

- Adaptation Planning
- Ocean and Coastal Management Planning
- Capacity Building
- Relocation, Managed Retreat, or Protect-in-Place Planning
- Internship and Youth Engagement

Application materials and the official solicitation may be found at

<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/tribal-climate-resilience-program>

Funding for Tribal Climate Resilience

Since 2011, BIA has funded 703 awards with over \$60.7 million from annual Congressional appropriations. Annual budgets averaged between \$8-\$15 million. See [BIA Tribal Climate Resilience website](#) for more details on past projects funded FY 2011 through FY 2020.



Projects Selected and Grants Awarded FY 2015-2020

2020	157 projects	\$14.4M awarded
2019	119 projects	\$8.7M awarded
2018/17	138 projects	\$12.7M awarded
2016	85 projects	\$8.6M awarded
2015	125 projects	\$12.0M awarded



Tribal Climate Adaptation Planning Training

Sign-up for BIA Resilience News Send an email to Resilience.news@bia.gov. To sign up to receive or to share useful or inspirational information with our Tribal Resilience Community.

Questions about the TRP Annual Awards Email: Resilience.funding@bia.gov

Tribal Resilience Program (TRP)



Althea Walker
Southwest

Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Liaisons (TCRLs)

The BIA funds 7 of 8 Regional Tribal Resilience Liaisons stationed at Department of the Interior (DOI), Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) throughout Indian Country.

[Click here](#) for more information about the liaisons.



April Taylor
OK, LA, TX



Casey Thornbrugh
NE & SE



Chas Jones
Northwest



Malinda Chase
Alaska



Sara Smith
Midwest



Stefan Tangen
NC



TCRLs available to provide Technical Assistance for Tribes

The TCRL's role is to help Tribal Nations and Alaska Native Villages respond to specific, yet diverse challenges faced from increasing environmental hazards and extreme weather events. Tribal Climate Liaisons serve as extension agents, facilitating research and linking Tribal needs to available resources, and coordinating forums and information exchanges.

74% of Tribal Financial Grant Requests met in 2020

On June 1, 2020, the Department of the Interior's, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) selected the FY20 BIA Tribal Climate Resilience Program (TRCP) funding award recipients. BIA provided \$14.4 million to tribes to enhance Tribal Climate Preparedness, Resilience, and Ocean and Coast Management and Planning, Capacity Building, Relocation, Managed Retreat and Protect-in-Place Planning for climate risks.

- 157 Awards granted totaling \$14.4M (194 proposals were submitted for \$19.4M)
- 113 Tribes and Tribal Organizations supported

Tribal Resilience Program (TRP)



Tribal Climate Resilience Program Youth Photo Contest

This selection of past photo contest submissions is presented to highlight the talent of our young people and to give you a perspective on climate change from the next generation.



*“Sunrise Dances may Disappear...save our Lands”
Anjolette Johnson, Canyon Day Junior High, Grade 8*



*“Only the Strong Survive” Ivan Miguel,
Tohono O’odham High School, Grade 10*



*“Water, Water everywhere but Not a Drop to Drink”
Nathan Ray Staley, Canadian, OK, Grade 6*



*“We lost most of our land, it used to be another
mile where the ocean is now” Tammy
Iyatunguk, Shishmaref High School, Grade 12*

Land Buy Back Acquisition Center (LBBC)



Over One Million Fractional Land Interests Consolidated under Tribal Ownership

The BIA's Land Buy Back Acquisition Center is now in its eighth year of operations. The Acquisitions Center was established by Secretarial Order to carry out the land acquisition and title related functions of the Land Buy Back Program for Tribal Nations, a component of the *Cobell v. Salazar* Settlement.

To date, the Acquisition Center has processed over 116,000 transactions at 53 locations across the United States, acquiring more than 1 million fractional land interests and restoring the equivalent of 2.76 million acres of land to Tribal trust ownership.

Addressing a Big Challenge

Indian land fractionation is one of the Interior Department's most costly and complex management challenges. The Buy-Back Program is charged with reducing the number of fractional interests in trust or restricted Indian land by acquiring interests from willing sellers for consolidation under Tribal ownership.

Indian land consolidation holds significant benefits for Tribes and the Government alike, enhancing Tribal Sovereignty and Self-Determination, while reducing fractionation.

Strict Time Constraints

The goal in establishing a new Acquisition Center Office within BIA was to make Indian land consolidation on an unprecedented scale possible, while minimizing impact on regular operations of the BIA Realty and Land Titles and Records Offices. A key consideration was the time-limited nature of the Buy-Back Program, which is required to complete its land consolidation work under the Cobell Settlement within 10 years, by November 2022.

Benefits of Best Available Technology

A streamlined and automated acquisition process was developed and approved by the Department for use by the Acquisition Center. The result is the ability to accurately process more land transactions in less time than previously possible, while minimizing associated administrative costs.

The automated process enabled operations to continue as usual throughout the pandemic.

ACQUISITION CENTER BY THE NUMBERS

Implementation locations	53 Reservations
Voluntary Land Sales Processed	116,101
Fractional Interests Acquired	1,018,174
Equivalent Acres Consolidated under Tribal Ownership	2,762,486

Land Buy Back Program for Tribal Nations (LBBPTN)



What is Fractionation?

Fractionation results from the repudiated Federal Indian policy of Allotment. Under the General Allotment Act of 1887, reservation land was divided up and “allotted” to individual Tribal members. The heirs of the original allottee inherited equal undivided ownership interests in the allotment.

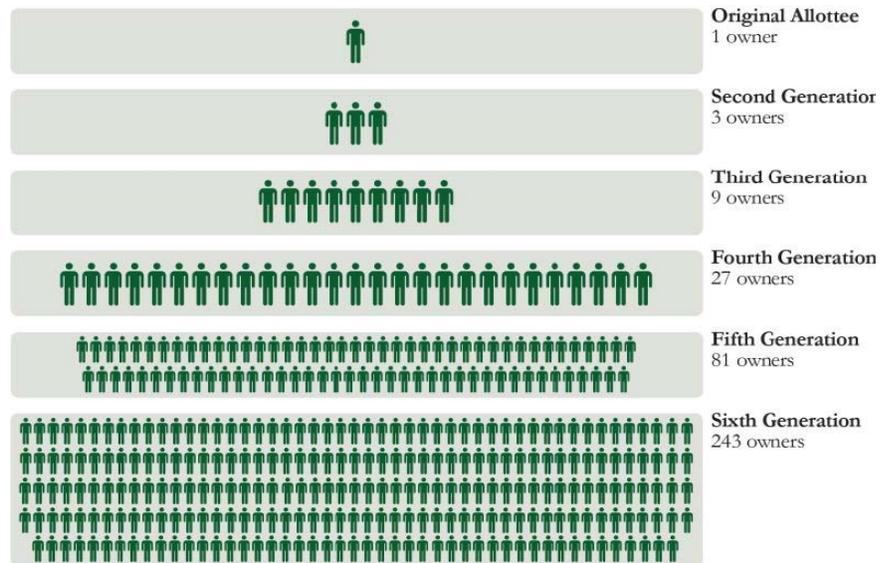
As the land passed through each generation, the number of owners of undivided interests grew exponentially, resulting in the highly fractionated ownership of much Indian land today. Many allotments now have hundreds of individual owners, as illustrated below.

Opportunities for Additional Land Consolidation

Many Tribes have already earned significant income on lands consolidated through the Buy Back Program. Other Tribes have income earned on lands consolidated through the BIA’s previous Indian Land Consolidation Program, which ceased operations in FY2014. A number of Tribes are interested in acquiring additional land interests with these funds.

Fractionation of Indian Lands

Heirs increase (fractionate) with each generation 1 through 6.



The Acquisition Center recently developed the capability to facilitate additional land acquisitions with funds made available by Tribes for payments to willing sellers, rather than Cobell settlement funds. Utilizing the Acquisition Center’s highly efficient process, and Tribal funds for land acquisition payments, is a cost-effective means for the Department to continue to reduce fractionation beyond 2022.

Division of Land Titles and Records Office (LTRO)



Mission

The mission of the Division of Land Titles and Records (LTRO) is to maintain timely and certified Federal land title ownership and encumbrance services (to record, maintain, and certify land title documents, including patents, deeds, probate orders, leases, rights-of-way, cadastral surveys, plats, subdivisions, and other Indian land title documents).

Title Status Reports

LTRO provides certified Title Status Reports (TSRs) that are accurate, timely, accountable, and efficient, and state the complete status of title ownership and encumbrances for Federal Indian trust and restricted lands.

The average time to prepare a TSR, depends upon the number of landowners, number of title documents, and the complexity of the title issues. The preparation time may range from as little as one hour to several days.



FY 2021 LTRO Handbook

The last LTRO handbook was published in 2006. Over the past 14 years there have been numerous changes to TAAMS, business processes, business rules, and processing requirements and steps. This updated FY2021 LTRO Handbook is overdue guidance and will be provided to the Regional LTROs to identify standardized processes across the country.



TAAMS Global ID Change Process Updated

The Global ID Change Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) was updated February 12, 2021. The SOP established new business rules, business processes, and required forms available for use by LTRO offices.

The policy *requires all Regions to update Global ID changes in a national Microsoft Teams tracking sheet*. For details on the SOP and to request access to the MS Teams site send an email to Richard.zephier@bia.gov.

LTRO OFFICES

9 BIA Regional LTROs

10 Tribes contracted or compacted the BIA LTRO function

Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Confederated Tribes of the Colville Nation
Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes
Morongo Band of Mission Indians
Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Soboba Band of Luiseno Indians
Cabazon Band of Mission Indians

Division of Land Titles and Records Office (LTRO)



51 IAM Chapter 2, Recording Custody of Land Title Documents updated

This Indian Affairs Manual (IAM) chapter established LTRO as the office of record for land title documents for Indian lands. It covers how documents are submitted to LTRO, what actions LTRO will take for recording; timely recording and permanent custody; and defines type of document defects and correction requirements.

51 IAM Chapter 4, Examination and Certification of Land Title updated

This IAM chapter applies to the examination and certification of title to Indian trust and restricted lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). It describes various reports such as Title Status Reports (TSRs) and Inventories (INVs) and goes into detail on the certification of documents and TSRs.

Both 51 IAM Chapter 2 and Chapter 4 were last updated April 2012.

See <https://www.bia.gov/policy-forms/manual> and 25 CFR Part 50 for Land Titles and Records regulations and policies.



Proposed Changes to 25 CFR 150, Land Records and Title Documents

Federal Register Vol. 85, No. 239, dated December 11, 2020, announced proposed rule changes to 25 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 150 to modernize regulations governing LTROs. The deadline for comments expired on February 23, 2020.

The LTRO maintains title documents for land held in trust or restricted status for individual Indians and Tribes (Indian land). These regulations have not been updated since 1981. The following proposed updates will help provide guidance to the Regional LTROs and assist in standardizing processes across the country.

- Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) identified as the official system of record
- New categories of documents that don't require Secretarial approval, but still need to be recorded
- Updates the purpose, definitions, record of title to Indian land, procedures, requirements to record documents, disclosure of documents, reports, and records

For more information contact

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Land Titles and Records Office
Acting Division Chief, Richard "Rick" Zephier, Email: Richard.zephier@bia.gov

Division of Water and Power (DWP)



Tat Momolikot Dam, Tohono O'odham Reservation

Mission and Responsibilities

The mission of the Division of Water and Power (DWP) is to provide self-determination, economic opportunities, and public safety through the sound management of tribal water resources, as well as dam, irrigation and power facilities owned by the BIA; to protect and secure Indian water rights; to strive for all program activities to be performed in an economically, technically, environmentally, and a culturally sound manner. DWP is responsible for the management, operation, maintenance, and asset management of BIA irrigation projects, power projects, and dams. The division is responsible for policy oversight, advisory and technical support to BIA regions, agencies, and projects on water resources.

Branch of Irrigation and Power

The Branch of Irrigation and Power currently administers 17 irrigation projects and 3 power projects. The goal of the irrigation program is to improve the management of land and natural resource assets through the delivery of water consistent with applicable State and Federal law, in an environmentally responsible and cost-efficient manner. The goal of the power programs is to deliver electrical power reliably and efficiently to authorized power consumers and users by operating, maintaining, and rehabilitating the power system infrastructure on each project.



Substation, San Carlos Irrigation Project



Stand-alone Early warning System Site (Water Tank Dam, New Mexico)

Safety of Dams

The mission of the Safety of Dams Branch is to ensure dams are adequately maintained, managed, and monitored to reduce the potential loss of human life and property damage resulting from dam failures. The Safety of Dams Program currently administers **141 high-hazard potential dams on 42 Indian reservations**. There are numerous additional low-hazard potential or unclassified dams on tribal lands. The hazard classification indicates the potential for loss of life or significant property damage in the event of uncontrolled releases from the dams. Benefits from BIA dams include recreation, irrigation water storage, and flood control.

For more information contact

U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Water and Power
Division Chief, Dave Fisher, Email: David.fisher@bia.gov

Division of Water and Power (DWP)



Tat Momolikot Dam, Tohono O'odham Reservation



Irrigated field with a crop growing

Solicitation for FY2022 Proposals

The Branch of Water Resources is currently soliciting Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 proposals for BIA's Water Management, Planning & Pre-Development, and Water Rights

Litigation/Negotiation Programs. Program funds are available to support regional water rights activities and water projects managed by Indian Tribes and Alaska Native governments.

Each project should be categorized as either a water management project or a water rights project according to the definitions as outlined in the [Notice of Revised Instructions for Preparing and Prioritizing Water Program Funding Requests](#), Federal Register, Vol. 70, No. 201, 60846-60849, October 19, 2005.

Submit proposals to BIA Regional Water Coordinators for review of each request to ensure the proposal type is identified correctly.

Branch of Water Resources

The Office of Trust Services manages water resources programs for the purpose of administering, conserving, and utilizing reservation water resources. The branch funds are used by the United States and tribes for activities associated with establishing and protection of Indian water rights through negotiations and/or litigation. In addition, the branch provides funding for critical tasks involving protection and management of tribal water resources.

Water Management Planning & Pre-Development

Funds support management, conservation, and utilization of reservation water resources. The priority is to provide technical research studies and other information for Indian Tribes to serve as informed water managers.

Water Rights Negotiation & Litigation

Funds support the quantification of Indian water rights through litigation and/or settlement negotiations. The priority is to provide all necessary documentation and other material deemed necessary by a Court to further the U.S. water rights claims on behalf of an Indian tribe.

If you have questions on funding proposals contact

Brenda Hatathlie, Civil Engineer, (202) 815-6534, Email: Brenda.hatathlie@bia.gov

Christina Mokhtarzadeh, Chief, Water Resources, (202) 374-5532, Email: Christina.mokhtarzadeh@bia.gov

Division of Water and Power (DWP)



Tat Momolikot Dam, Tohono O'odham Reservation

Rehabilitation at Fort Hall Irrigation Project, Tyhee Siphon Lining

All asset rehabilitation activities were eligible for tribes to accomplish under [P.L. 93-638 Subpart J contracts](#). The BIA is investing in irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation activities at the Tyhee Siphon Lining, Fort Hall Irrigation Project. A 72-inch diameter underground pipe, with an entry and exit structure to deliver irrigation water to 11,000 acres of farmland. The siphon was originally constructed in the early 1900's and was modified in the 1940's by installing a one-quarter inch thick steel liner inside the pipe.



Tyhee Siphon Lining Project installation



Tyhee Siphon Lining Project supplies

Statistics on 17 Irrigation Projects

- 15 Revenue generating projects
- \$35M Annual Receipts
- \$960M Annual gross crop revenues
- 780,000 Acres serviced
- 6,300 Miles of canals
- 52,000+ Irrigation structures

Branch of Irrigation and Power – WIIN Act Funds Distribution

The [Water Infrastructure Improvement for the Nation \(WIIN\) Act](#) (Public Law 114-322, Title III, Subtitle B) provides funding to address the deferred maintenance at the 17 Congressionally Authorized Indian Irrigation Projects (IIP). The BIA distributed the \$20 million in appropriations received in FY19-20 and will distribute \$10 million received in FY21 across all 17 IIPs. The fund distribution methodology developed in FY15 followed the Allocation Among Projects guidance in Section 3226 of the Act to address deferred maintenance needs.

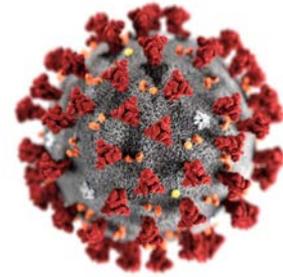


Canal on Indian land

Work Life Balance

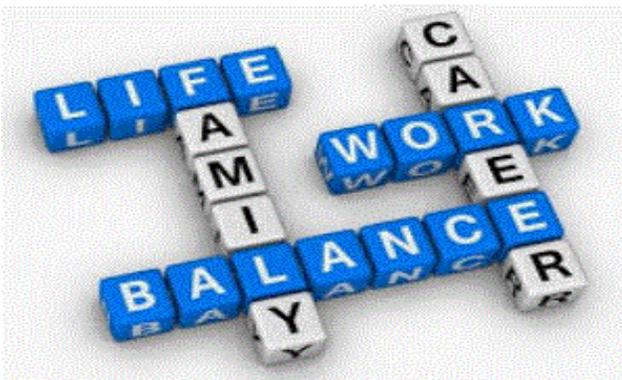
One Year COVID-19 Anniversary

It is hard to believe March 13, 2021, was the one-year anniversary of the Declaration of a National Emergency in response to the COVID-19 virus. We have successfully adapted to a new virtual working environment. The next newsletter will highlight a few of the positive changes Trust Services has implemented to benefit our customers.



Work Life Balance during a Pandemic

If you are experiencing challenges and need assistance visit the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) website, <https://Espyr.com/> or call 1-800-869-0276, for more information about confidential counseling and referral services that can help you or your family deal with life's challenges. EAP services are available to employees at no cost, as your employer has prepaid these services. Call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for confidential help with work, family, personal matters, legal or financial issues.



Employees and dependents are eligible for these EAP services:

- Legal and Financial Consultation
- In-Person Counseling
- Crisis Management
- 24-Hour Telephone Access
- Care Connection

Employee Assistance Program website, <https://Espyr.com/> or call for confidential counseling or referrals at 1-800-869-0276.

DISCLAIMER

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