



TRUST LAND RESOURCES

RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP

RESULTS THAT MATTER

Message from the Deputy Director

As we move forward this quarter, I am delighted to share newsletter highlights from eleven OTS Divisions, reflecting our team's dedication to excellence.

The 2026 Tribal Energy Summit: Unleashing Energy Dominance in Indian Country in Houston brought together over 230 Tribal leaders, federal partners, and industry representatives. The Summit featured sessions on emerging priorities, federal process improvements, capacity building, and pathways that strengthen Tribal control over energy resources.

Our Forestry Division is expanding technical capabilities by integrating artificial intelligence into operations. Energy grant funding opportunities are closing in July and selection will begin. We are also excited to launch the new Electronic Probate System where trust beneficiaries can report a death, submit supporting documents, provide family history information, and track the status of their probate case online. Training opportunities are provided in this issue as well.

Thank you to all OTS employees for your continued professionalism and hard work. I encourage you to explore this issue, stay connected with upcoming opportunities, and continue contributing to our collective success. Previous editions of this newsletter can be found on the OTS website at <https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots>.

Johnna Blackhair, OTS Deputy Director

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**Cherokee Quote**

*"Don't let
yesterday use up
too much of
today."*

TRUST SERVICES OVERVIEW



Energy Dominance Hiring Opportunities

Position Title	General Schedule	Location	Vacancy Closing
Geographic Information Specialist	GS-0301-7/12		June 12, 2026
Administrative Assistant	GS-0301-5/7		June 12, 2026
Program Analyst	GS-0343-12/13	Lakewood, CO	July 6, 2026
Realty Officer	GS-1170-14	Multiple locations	July 6, 2026
Realty Specialist	GS-1170-13	Lakewood, CO/Albuquerque, NM	July 6, 2026
Environmental Protection Specialist	GS-0028-12/13	Multiple locations	July 6, 2026
Geologist	GS-1350-13	Lakewood, CO	July 6, 2026
Mining Engineer	GS-0880-13	Lakewood, CO	July 6, 2026
Petroleum Engineer	GS-0881-13	Lakewood, CO	July 6, 2026
Management Analyst	GS-0343-12/13	Boise, ID	July 6, 2026
Geophysicist	GS-1313-13	Lakewood, CO	July 7, 2026

Fiscal Year 2026 – 2030 Strategic Plan Framework

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) is in the process of developing its Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2030 Strategic Plan and sought consultation with Tribal Nations. A series of virtual consultation sessions were held from June 16-26, 2025, to gather input from Tribal leaders on the plan's strategic goals, objectives, and performance measures. The final plan is still pending release.

The consultation period ended July 7, 2025, and the comment deadline was November 15, 2025. The final strategic plan will be limited to a 10-page evidence-based narrative when released.

Strategic Goals	Strategic Objectives
Goal 1: Restore American Prosperity	Objective 1.1: American energy sources help lower costs and increase affordability. Objective 1.2: Americans benefit from strategic use of the country's natural resources. Objective 1.3: The country is positioned to use our natural resource assets for the future.
Goal 2: Ensure National Security through Infrastructure and Innovation	Objective 2.1: Interior resources protect people and property. Objective 2.2: Infrastructure investments and modernization serve the public. Objective 2.3: The country's water supply is clean and meets our needs.
Goal 3: Enjoy our Natural Resources While Ensuring they Remain Sound and Sustainable	Objective 3.1: Lands and waters provide opportunities for recreation and traditional use. Objective 3.2: Lands, waters, and American heritage are protected and conserved. Objective 3.3: Lands and waters are restored. Objective 3.4: Species and natural resources are protected.
Goal 4: Collaborate and Coordinate for Better Outcomes for the Country, the States, and the People	Objective 4.1: Trust and treaty responsibilities to American Indian Tribes, Alaska Natives, and the Native Hawaiian Community are upheld. Objective 4.2: States, local communities, U.S. territories, and freely associated states work with the BIA to accomplish goals. Objective 4.3: Our partners receive reliable, valuable scientific information.
Management Accountability	Key performance indicators measure Presidential priorities for efficiency and effectiveness.

NEWS YOU CAN USE

About the Permitting Council and FAST-41

Established in 2015 by Title 41 of the [Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act \(FAST-41\)](#), the Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Committee (Permitting Council) is a federal agency charged with improving the transparency and predictability of the federal environmental review and authorization process for certain critical infrastructure projects.

The Permitting Council is composed of:

- Permitting Council Executive Director (chair)
- 13 federal agency Council members
- Chair, White House Council on Environmental Quality
- Director, Office of Management and Budget

The Office of the Executive Director coordinates federal environmental reviews and authorizations for projects that seek and qualify for FAST-41 coverage, which are in turn entitled to comprehensive permitting timetables and transparent, collaborative management of those timetables on the Federal Permitting Dashboard. See <https://www.permittting.gov> for more information.

FAST-41 Covered Navajo Nation Project Completes Federal Permitting

On April 30, 2026, Federal permitting was completed for the Navajo Nation Gallup McKinley County Schools E-Rate Funded Broadband Project. This \$3.6 million project on the Navajo Nation will construct 61 miles of a fiber optic network to connect the school district, libraries, and a proposed health care facility with critically needed high-speed internet to a speed of 1 Gbps or greater.

The project is expected to deliver affordable, scalable, and future-ready broadband service to bridge the divide for the Navajo Nation in one of the most remote and underserved areas in the U.S. This project is sponsored by the Navajo Nation Broadband Office and the BIA served as the lead agency for federal permitting.

"I was new to the federal permitting landscape and quickly realized the complexity of coordination across so many agencies. The FAST-41 team brought structure, accountability, and clarity to the process and facilitated productive collaboration across, federal, Tribal, state and local partners. Thanks to their experience and guidance, we were able to align our resources, meet federal requirements, and move confidently toward construction".

**Paul Tavella, Senior Manager
Engineering and Construction
Navajo Nation Broadband Office**



Salish Kootenai Tribe (SKT) Broadband Tower Project on the Flathead Reservation

DIVISION OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (DEMD)



DEMD Leadership: Jennifer Reimann, Zane Gordon, Kyle Levin, and Ryan Montanez

DEMD Leadership and Workforce Updates

DEMD is moving forward under newly updated leadership (pictured above), with Jennifer Reimann serving as Acting Division Chief effective March 22. Branch leadership roles are now aligned to support priority operations: Zane Gordon continues to lead Fluid Minerals, Solid Minerals and NIOGEMS, Kyle Levin oversees Energy Systems, and Ryan Montanez directs Data Services. Capacity Development and Grants Deployment functions are now also under Jennifer Reimann. To meet growing program needs, DEMD is onboarding 14 new contract staff, bringing total contract staffing to 30 positions, supported by an active labor contract.

Operational priorities are advancing across all major program areas, including grant management, industry engagement, and data services modernization. DEMD is currently managing multiple open [Energy and Mineral Development Program](#) (EMDP) and [Tribal Energy Development Capacity \(TEDC\) grant](#) cycles, hosting webinars, and preparing for grant application evaluations and awards. These coordinated updates reflect DEMD's continued commitment to responsive service delivery, increased technical assistance, and strengthened program capacity for Tribes nationwide.

Highlights from the 2026 Tribal Energy Summit

The 2026 Tribal Energy Summit held April 29–May 1 in Houston, brought together more than 230 Tribal leaders, federal partners, and industry representatives to advance a shared vision for Tribal energy sovereignty and development. The event opened with a powerful welcome and prayer from Tribal leaders, followed by remarks from Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs William Kirkland and a keynote from DOI Associate Deputy Secretary Mike Olsen, who underscored the momentum, opportunity, and federal commitment driving energy development across Indian Country.



Johnna Blackhair, OTS Deputy Director addresses the Tribal Energy Summit Audience

With a theme centered on “Unleashing Energy Dominance Across Indian Country,” the Summit featured sessions on emerging priorities, federal process improvements, capacity building, and pathways that strengthen Tribal control over energy resources. Over three days, attendees engaged in Tribal leader roundtables, deep-dive panels on oil and gas, geothermal, nuclear, and data center infrastructure, and discussions on regulatory modernization and interagency coordination.

DEMD leadership was prominently featured, highlighting DEMD's technical assistance programs, Tribal Energy Profiles, and ongoing efforts to streamline mineral and energy development processes. The Summit also provided a platform for Tribes to share priorities and challenges directly with Indian Affairs leadership, culminating in a dedicated Tribal Energy Resource Agreements Listening Session, where Tribal governments discussed pathways to increase regulatory authority and long-term energy independence.



Panel discussion: Winter Jojola-Talbert, Acting Director-Indian Energy Service Center, Jennifer Reimann, Acting Division Chief, Energy and Minerals Development, Carla Clark, Division Chief, Real Estate Services. Audience members listen to presenters.

2026 Tribal Energy Summit: “Unleashing Energy Dominance in Indian Country”

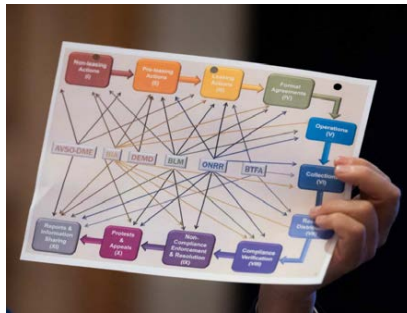
With robust participation and cross-sector collaboration, the 2026 Tribal Energy Summit showcased the strong national momentum toward Tribal-driven energy development and set the stage for expanded partnerships, policy advancements, and new economic opportunities in the year ahead.



Carla Clark, Division Chief, Real Estate Services, BIA and Chairman Bobby Gonzales, Caddo Nation welcome address



Discussion on Energy



William (Billy) Kirkland, Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs showing a slide of the complex web of our interagency coordination required to approve energy transactions



Discussion on Energy

Tribal Energy Summit Attendance in photos



Tribal Energy and Mineral Funding Opportunities

DEMD published a Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) for two major energy and mineral programs.

The **Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP)** helps Tribes assess, inventory, and develop their energy and mineral resources by funding technical evaluations and studies that provide Tribes with essential information for resource development decisions. For FY 2026, the EMDP Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was published on May 6, 2026, with an application process webinar held on May 14, 2026, and proposals due June 18, 2026. DEMD received approximately 50 applications requesting \$40 million, underscoring the strong national demand for Tribal energy and mineral development support. Administrative and merit reviews are underway to determine the expected number of awards, followed by final recommendations on July 31, 2026.

The **Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC)** program supports Tribal efforts to develop the internal capacity needed to manage energy resources and advance economic self-sufficiency. The FY 2026 TEDC NOFO was published June 2, 2026, with an application process webinar on June 11, 2026. Proposals are due July 16, 2026, after which applications will move through administrative and merit review steps.

Tribal Energy Resource Agreements (TERA) Pathways

The TERA Pathways Initiative is a coordinated effort between DEMD and the Indian Energy Service Center to help Tribes overcome long-standing barriers to adopting Tribal Energy Resource Agreements (TERAs) and Tribal Energy Development Organizations (TEDOs) by providing proactive, structured capacity building. DEMD is actively advancing this work through strategic promotion of its Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) program, which offers Tribes targeted funding to update energy codes and ordinances, strengthen administrative and regulatory frameworks, and build the technical and governance capacity needed for TERA or TEDO authority.

These activities were repeatedly highlighted in recent outreach efforts, including the Tribal Self-Governance Conference, the Indian Affairs Tribal Energy Summit, and the TERA/TEDO Pathways webinar.

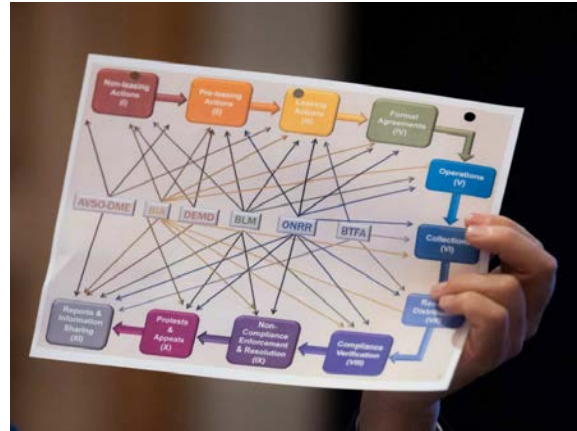


Chart showing complexity of interagency coordination required to approve energy transactions

The initiative focuses on demystifying complex regulatory requirements, expanding access to technical assistance, and offering Tribes a clearer roadmap for strengthening governance systems. By supporting activities such as assessing organizational readiness, aligning Tribal laws and permitting structures with federal requirements, and developing long-term energy oversight capacity, the TERA Pathways Initiative, bolstered by TEDC funding, helps Tribes take meaningful steps toward greater control over energy development on their lands and creates a more accessible on-ramp to these powerful yet historically underutilized tools.

Tribes interested in pursuing a TERA or TEDO can take several supported next steps, beginning with requesting a pre-application consultation with the Indian Energy Service Center, an action that does *not* obligate a Tribe to continue the process. Alongside this formal step, DEMD provides extensive no-cost technical assistance, offering access to subject-matter experts, scientific and resource data, mineral agreement support, and TERA/TEDO-focused advising, including Tribe-specific readiness checklists and Tribal Energy Profiles that assess resources, codes, and governance structures.

Tribes can also reference a growing suite of informational materials, including:

- [25 CFR 224 – Tribal Energy Resource Agreements Under the Indian Tribal Energy Development and Self Determination Act](#)
- [Onshore Indian Trust Energy and Mineral Lease Management Intra-Agency Standard Operating Procedures](#)
- List of Contractable Federal Functions from the BLM-BIA-ONRR MOA: [02.24.20-MOA-BIA.OSG .ONRR .BLM with-Annex-A-contractable-functions.pdf](#)

Together, these supports, including direct advising, readiness assessments, regulatory resources, and webinars, give Tribes a clear, well-resourced roadmap for determining whether and how to pursue TERAs as part of their long-term energy self-determination goals.

Tribal Success Story - Round Valley Indian Tribes Advancing Critical Infrastructure Using Local Aggregates

The Round Valley Indian Tribes' 7 Tribes Rock Quarry is rapidly establishing itself as a key regional supplier of high-quality crushed granite and roadbuilding materials, strengthened by DEMD's exploration funding and technical assistance.

The quarry's contractor recently presented at the Caltrans Tribal Transportation Summit, outlining the Tribe's strategy to expand into both public sector and commercial construction markets while working toward Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) certification, an essential step for securing long-term contracting opportunities. With an eye toward continued growth, the enterprise is also pursuing 8A certification, completing Caltrans contracting and product approval trainings, and broadening outreach to road construction firms, utilities, Caltrans, and federal agencies.



Round Valley Indian Tribes' 7 Tribes Rock Quarry



Crushed granite

Already contributing to local infrastructure needs through active contracts, the quarry provides meaningful economic benefits to the Tribe, including local employment and growing revenue, with several projects underway that demonstrate strong potential for future expansion. DEMD's earlier technical assistance and economic scoping identified substantial regional demand for aggregate products and projected that the quarry could sustain a stable enterprise with even a 5% market share within a 100-mile radius, an opportunity expected to increase as competing pits decline.

As 7 Tribes Rock Quarry advances toward full certification and expands its contracting capacity, the enterprise stands as a long-awaited Tribal development success story, one that is strengthening local economies, supporting critical infrastructure, and building a durable foundation for Tribal economic self-sufficiency in northern California.

International Collaboration on Indigenous Mining Policy with Brazil

DEMD is supporting global conversations on Indigenous mineral governance through its recent collaboration with the Brazilian Senate, which is drafting legislation to regulate mining on Indigenous lands. At the request of DOI's Office of International Affairs, DEMD compiled a comprehensive set of resources, including DEMD program overviews, federal statutes and regulations for mining on Tribal land, interagency SOPs, permitting handbooks, and analyses on Tribal mineral sovereignty, to help inform Brazil's policy development process.

This effort, shared through multi-part briefings coordinated with U.S. Embassy Brasília and interagency partners, demonstrates DEMD's role as a trusted source for international partners seeking to understand how the United States supports Tribal authority, safeguards resources, and manages mining activities in Indian Country.

Looking Ahead: Appreciation & Priorities for the Coming Quarter

DEMD shows an encouraging outlook on program achievements and upcoming milestones, underscoring the exceptional work and dedication of the entire DEMD team. From expanding technical assistance to strengthening program operations, staff across all branches—Fluid Minerals, Solid Minerals, Energy Systems, Capacity Development, NIOGEMS, Data Services, and Integration & Grants Deployment—continue to advance DEMD's mission with expertise, teamwork, and an unwavering commitment to Tribal energy and mineral development. We extend our sincere appreciation to every team member whose efforts made the past quarter a success and set the foundation for what promises to be an impactful season ahead.

The next quarter will be an important one as DEMD moves toward awarding the FY 2026 Energy and Mineral Development Program (EMDP) grants, with proposals currently under review and award selections anticipated for 20 to 30 new Tribal projects. Similarly, the Tribal Energy Development Capacity (TEDC) program, featuring new TERA Pathways topic areas, is on track for proposal reviews and awards expected before the end of the fiscal year, further expanding Tribal capacity for energy governance and long-term development planning. DEMD is also preparing to launch NIOGEMS v5.

Beyond these major milestones, the team will continue advancing several critical initiatives, including expanded industry engagement, onboarding new technical staff, and completing key updates to tribal energy profile workflows. Together, these efforts reflect the growing momentum in DEMD's programs and the collective dedication of a team working every day to advance Tribal energy sovereignty and responsible resource development. Thank you to everyone in DEMD for your hard work, professionalism, and commitment to excellence. We look forward to another productive and impactful quarter ahead!

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (DESCRM)



BRANCH OF CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (BCRM)

Spotlight: BIA Art-in-Office Program

The Bureau of Indian Affairs continues its commitment to celebrating culture and creativity through the Art-in-Office Program, which brings carefully selected museum artwork into administrative workspaces across Indian Affairs. Through this program, ethnographic objects, paintings, prints, and other curated pieces are thoughtfully installed to inspire staff and create welcoming, mission-focused environments.

Each artwork displayed has been reviewed and approved by the BIA Staff Curator, who ensures that pieces are properly documented, safely installed, and cared for according to preservation standards. Offices that participate take on stewardship roles, helping safeguard these meaningful cultural objects while enjoying the opportunity to connect with the history and artistry they represent.

By bringing museum collections into everyday spaces, the Art-in-Office Program strengthens our connection to the communities we serve and highlights the importance of cultural preservation throughout Indian Affairs.

Blackfeet Agency and Dormitory Site Visit

Staff Curator Rechanda Lee and Pathways Intern Clarissa Dixon visited Blackfeet Agency and Blackfeet Dormitory in Montana to conduct on-site facilities and collections assessments. The Agency maintains a small museum collection consisting of 4 objects displayed in the Superintendent's Office Suite. The purpose of the visit was to evaluate facility conditions, assess risks affecting museum objects, update collections documentation, and perform object condition assessments. During the assessment objects were cleaned, evaluated, photographed, and rehung for long term display.

The Blackfeet Dormitory, newly constructed in 2025, serves as a residential facility for students and houses several BIA museum objects on public display. There are 18 objects, eight 3-D and ten 2-D, on display in public areas including the lobby, reception, office, and hallways. A facility and collections assessment was conducted to evaluate security, environmental controls, object condition, display methods, and overall collections care practices. All objects were generally in good condition, and 15 objects were cleaned and photographed for long-term preservation.



2-D artwork at Blackfeet Dormitory



2-D artwork lines walls in the Blackfeet Dormitory

Textile Rehousing Project

A collection of 21 textiles currently housed at the Albuquerque BIA building is undergoing a full rehousing initiative to improve long-term preservation and care. Each piece has been carefully evaluated through a detailed object condition assessment, along with updated photographs to document its present state.

To ensure proper archival storage, the textiles were gently rolled onto archival tubes, supported with acid-free tissue paper and wrapped in Protective Nomex. Now that the textiles are fully rehoused, the rolls will be organized on a textile rack according to their catalog numbers, creating a storage system that enhances both accessibility and preservation.

This combination of careful display, environmental management, and upgraded storage ensures that culturally significant textiles remain protected and available for future generations.



Textile before rehousing



Textile during condition assessment



Textile after rehousing in protective Nomex

BRANCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (BES)

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Foundations and BIA Priorities Training for Internal BIA Staff

On June 3, BES hosted the *NEPA Foundations and BIA Priorities* training, bringing together over 60 participants from across BIA programs. The training provided an overview of NEPA fundamentals while highlighting recent changes affecting BIA implementation and priorities. Topics included:

- NEPA roles and responsibilities
- Accountability for timelines and document quality
- Effects analysis
- Government-to-government consultation
- Applicant-prepared NEPA documents, and
- Updates to Department of Interior guidance and procedures.

The session also offered participants an opportunity to discuss practical applications, ask questions, and strengthen their understanding of how evolving NEPA requirements impact decision-making and environmental review processes across BIA programs. Overall, the training served as a valuable resource to build consistency, improve collaboration, and support NEPA practitioners in navigating ongoing changes.

2026 NEPA Webinar Series Quarterly Schedule

BES will continue offering a quarterly webinar series focused on strengthening NEPA knowledge, consistency, and application across BIA programs. These virtual sessions are designed for internal staff, with future offerings being developed for Tribal partners. (See table of training dates below).

Fiscal Year	Quarter	Months	Webinar Training	Dates
2026	Quarter 2	January-March 2026	Navigating the NEPA Categorical Exclusion Process	March 4, 2026
2026	Quarter 4	April -June 2026	NEPA Foundations and BIA Priorities	June 3, 2026
2026	Quarter 4	July-September 2026	Indian Affairs Implementation of Energy Emergency Alternative NEPA Procedures	September 2, 2026
2027	Quarter 1	October – December 2026	NEPA Tracker & Performance Management	December 2, 2026

BRANCH OF TRIBAL COMMUNITY RESILIENCE (TCR)

Welcome to TCR's new Pathways intern, Keenan Hoffman!



Aanii, boozhoo! My name is Keenan Hoffman, and I'm a recent graduate from Michigan State University with a bachelor's in civil engineering! I'm from the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Sault Ste. Marie, located in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. My focus is on structural engineering. This fall I will pursue a master's program at MSU! I have worked with the Midwest Region's Roads department as my host in the Pathways Program. I am excited to work with TCR, learn from other staff, and grow my experience this summer!

Reflections from Community Resilience Projects Underway in the Northwest Region

Keenan shared a few observations from the trip, amongst them, the deep importance of developing relationships with Tribes when it comes to fulfilling the responsibility of an Awarding Official's Technical Representative (AOTR). "With limited AOTRs available, establishing working relationship with the Tribes is perhaps more important to fulfilling trust responsibilities than being present at the site itself.

The visit also showed obstacles and practical questions TCR faces right now, such as:

- How broad is the definition of Tribal resilience?
- When does the responsibility of TSR end and where do other agencies begin?
- How should we consider this when we prioritize the projects funded?

"Overall I think the Hoh and Makah Tribes trip was a wonderful introduction into the practical workings of the TCR branch and its work across Indian Country." - Keenan



Keenan Hoffman and Coral Avery on a site visit with the Hoh and Makah Tribes in BIA Northwest Region. Note: Tribal members face blurred for privacy.



Site preparations are ongoing for construction of new homes at the Hoh Highlands, a key infrastructure project of the Hoh Tribe's relocation program



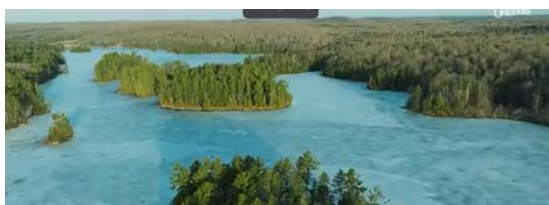
Site plans for construction of new homes at the Hoh Highlands

DIVISION OF FORESTRY (DOF)



“Forests of the First Stewards” Episodes Premiere on PBS

Over the weekend of June 13 and 14, 2026, the “Forests of the First Stewards: Menominee Nation” episodes debuted on Midwest channels. BIA is a proud sponsor of these episodes that tell the inspiring story of the Menominee Nation and their approach to sustainable forestry. This educational film series and companion curriculum for K–12 and higher education was developed by the Society of American Foresters and its #forestproud program, in partnership with Menominee Tribal Enterprises and Discover Mediaworks, and takes viewers on a journey from ancient traditions to modern-day stewardship. The full episode can be viewed on YouTube: [Forests of the First Stewards: Menominee Nation](#)



Aerial view of the Menominee River and Forest

BIA Timber Team and Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) Launch New Tribal Forestry Partnership

To enhance its capacity to deliver professional forestry services nationwide, the Timber Team is actively seeking assistance from Tribes to assist with Timber Team project work, fostering a collaborative approach where Tribes support one another. Through a new partnership between BIA Forestry and ITC, participating Tribes are reimbursed for the full cost of their involvement with the Timber Team.

Timber Team assignments typically last two weeks and cover a variety of projects: timber sale preparation, contract administration, forest development, forest inventory, timber salvage, and geographic information system (GIS) support on Tribal lands. This partnership also includes a mentoring component to support professional development among Tribal forestry professionals.



Timber Team forester marking leave trees for the Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation in Washington

Internship Opportunity

An internship opportunity is available, open to Tribal members and those interested in pursuing a career serving Indian country. Internships are paid and fully reimbursable through the Intertribal Timber Council, ensuring participants incur no costs. Specialized field equipment is provided for the summer, offering interns the resources they need to gain hands-on forestry experience in the field.

These collaborative efforts directly support [Executive Order 14225: Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production](#) by encouraging timber production, strengthening Tribal self-determination, and fostering economic growth.

The Partnership covers participation expenses and provides paid internships, furthering EO 14225's objectives to empower Tribal governments, promote professional development, and ensure sustainable management of Tribal lands.

For more information, contact Cal Mukumoto (cal@itcnet.org) or Ryan Frandino (philip.frandino@bia.gov).

Extending the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA): Implications for Tribal Forestry

On June 18, 2026, the Secretary of the Interior approved a 10-year extension of the Indian Trust Asset Management Demonstration Project (authorized under Title II of the [Indian Trust Asset Reform Act \(ITARA\)](#), Public Law 114-178). This extension will carry the program forward until June 22, 2036.

The extension provides:

- More time for Tribes to apply and develop Indian Trust Asset Management Plans (ITAMPs).
- Regulatory continuity and certainty.
- Continued access to streamlined, tribally driven management authorities offered under ITARA.

The extension reaffirms the Department of Interior's continued support for Tribal self-determination in managing trust forest lands and Tribal capacity-building in the stewardship of trust resources.

Utilizing Open AI Codex to Advance and Automate Forestry Operations

This spring, the Branch of Forest Inventory and Planning (FIP) has been exploring the use of OpenAI Codex as an AI-assisted development tool. The results are already showing strong potential to streamline field data collection, database review, and project preparation. With rapid development efforts, FIP has created several internal applications that reduce manual processing, improve consistency, and support more repeatable workflows.



Tablet used in field for data collection



One new tool supports offline, tablet-based field data collection for plot, tree, and regeneration data used in stand exams. Crews can enter data directly on a tablet, export crew packages, and merge field data back in the office. The tool supports CSV exports, master data packages, forest inventory & analysis (FIA) species lookups, and project/crew metadata for traceability. Early testing suggests this workflow could save one to two weeks per field project by reducing paper handling, duplicate data entry, and manual cleanup.



Timber Harvest notice on Menominee Reservation

New! Desktop Application for Quality Review of Forest Inventory Databases

FIP also developed a new internal desktop application to accelerate quality review of forest inventory databases. The application connects to Microsoft Access databases, runs standardized data checks, and exports results into an organized Excel workbook without modifying the original database. Built using Codex as the primary AI coding assistant after the May 29th GSA training, the application improves consistency, repeatability, and audit readiness. The initial application, including the interface, automation, documentation, and packaging, was completed in roughly two working days, with additional refinements added in the following days to improve functionality and the user interface.

Early testing indicates that major review tasks that previously took approximately six weeks can now be completed in minutes to hours, depending on database size and complexity.

New! Codex- Assisted Tool for Measurements and Remeasurement Cycles

Another Codex-assisted tool is being tested to prepare project databases for new measurements and remeasurement cycles. This workflow is intended to reduce setup time from several days to a few hours while improving consistency in database structure, project setup, and validation steps.

New! Quality Assurance Tool

FIP is also testing a tablet-based quality assurance tool that connects to a project database, opens assigned plots, runs Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) Quality Assurance (QA) checks, and calculates pass/fail results automatically. This would reduce reliance on paper forms, printed plot sheets, and manual QA tracking while giving reviewers a more consistent process in the field.

These tools remain under internal testing and refinement, with human review built into the workflows. Codex is helping FIP move from concept to working prototype much faster, while staff continue to validate outputs, document procedures, and ensure the tools support BIA data quality and field operations requirements.

Timber Team Assists the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin

In June, the Timber Team assisted the Menominee Tribe of Wisconsin with planting swamp white oak seedlings and marking red pine thinning plantations. The Timber Team worked with Menominee Tribal Enterprise staff and the Midwest Regional Timber Sale Forester to plant about 350 seedlings along the edges of black ash wetlands to replace any dead or dying black ash infected with emerald ash borer (EAB).

After planting, the crew marked cut trees within red pine plantations where they removed trees with low vigor and defects such as forks and broken tops. In total, they marked about 127 acres of red pine plantations. While in Keshena, Wisconsin they also marked a hardwood single tree selection stand that would be later used as a demonstration during the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) 49th Symposium field tour. The Timber Team continued to assist the Menominee Tribal Enterprise staff throughout the ITC Symposium.



Timber Team forester painting a cut tree within a red pine plantation.



Timber Team forester and Midwest Region forester planting swamp white oak along the edge of a black oak wetland



Timber Team supervisory forester planting a swamp white oak seedling

NASP Module 3: Silviculture – it just gets more complex

Oak trees are a classic part of the American landscape. Acorns, fall colors, fine cabinetry and legislation advancing through Congress ([The White Oak Resilience Act](#)), the species remains an ever-present part of our culture. I grew up in Oakland Country, Michigan which was aptly named. Although it was my boyhood love of chasing brook trout in the cedar swamps of Northern Michigan that started an interest in the woods, my first memories of trees are likely of oaks back in suburban Detroit. I am sure many Americans who grew up east of the Mississippi hold a similar fondness for the tree.

Challenges facing oak species are used as the lens for teaching objectives of the third module of the National Advanced Silviculture Program titled, “Advanced Silviculture Topics”. Across the eastern US, oaks are failing to recruit into dominant crown positions, and one could walk for miles in an Appalachian forest without coming across a pole-sized tree. The causes are multiple and compounding, ranging from lack of fire to some believing the extinction of passenger pigeons has a role. Today’s generation of foresters has a major challenge in finding solutions to keep a strong component of oak in tomorrow’s forest.



White Oak Tree

Virginia Tech and the University of Kentucky came together to put us to the test. The first few days are spent getting familiar with the rich biodiversity of the Blue Ridge Mountains and understanding the stand dynamics of oak regeneration. After visiting a mixed hardwood stand near Virginia Tech’s campus, students were tasked with accurately summarizing inventory data and modeling future growth outcomes. Yellow poplar and red maple are the main competitors. Teasing out the differences in success to the overstory for these species is why this “diagnosis” of stand conditions is so important. Subtle differences in height or density can sway a silviculturist’s decision for treatment. As many a silviculture professor has said, “Silviculture is not a cookbook” and your inventory tells you why.

For many NASP students, I am sure their time at the University of Kentucky's Robinson Forest is a high point of the whole program. This 14,000-acre school forest is comprised of rich hardwood stands and has been isolated from the mining activities so prevalent in the region. Meals from the dining hall are hearty southern fare and every evening ends with a forestry school tradition, a campfire after the day's fieldwork is done.



Bloodroot (Sanguinaria canadensis)

Those of you following my NASP journey know understory plants and non-timber forest products are a keen interest of mine. Much of time walking through the Robinson's cove forests I was looking down at my boots. I quickly spotted an old favorite – bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*). A spring-blooming herbaceous perennial, bloodroot has a beautiful flower and leaf architecture. It has also been important to the people of the Appalachians for generations. Eastern Tribes used its dark-red sap for dyes to color skin and baskets while more current uses have been for dental hygiene and veterinary products.

Increased focus on the management of non-timber forest products was one of the major recommendations of the fourth Indian Forest Management Assessment Team (IFMAT) report and current research suggests certain plants serve as indicators of forest resilience to disturbances.

Discussions in the field on the Robinson were often about white oak. Its importance as barrels for the spirits industry and recent bourbon boom is frequently the topic of conversation when foresters discuss white oak, but our silviculture instructor from the University of Kentucky had different ideas. "If we're managing for merch specs, it's hard to win on that bet", he said and went on the reference an old article from the *Journal of Forestry* titled, *The Fallacy of Preferred Species* by Walton Smith. He tells the story of foresters treating stands to favor current stumpage values which proved irrelevant decades later. Does anyone remember when dogwood was the favored species for thread looms or imagine girdling 30-inch hickories to release yellow poplar saplings? Such management ignores the larger complex ecological framework we work in as silviculturists. Understanding this framework is at the heart of NASP. Smith ends his article by stating, "Foresters must accept the challenge of professional care of the entire forest for the multiple uses demanded by the future".

Module 3 concludes with a final group project presented "World Café" style. Each group was tasked with writing a comprehensive silviculture prescription to promote oak dominance. By comprehensive, I mean the prescription had to thoroughly address concerns of other resource areas such as wildlife, rare plants, and social license to operate (SLO). SLO is often an afterthought for many of us, but this module provided strong training in building trust with outside stakeholders.

In our groups we debated the finer points of European shelterwood terminology (Bavarian versus Swiss *Femelschlag*) and how to best convey our reasons for treatment to the public. As is the case with each module, the project work lasted long into the evening. But the final morning came quickly as we loaded into vans for the last time and headed to the stand, we wrote the prescription for to begin the World Café.

The “café” consisted of multiple stations hosted by each of the module instructors where students had to defend their prescription before an expert. Stations consisted of silviculture, prescribed fire, wildlife, forest health, logging systems, and social license to operate. If you chose to use herbicide over fire for controlling red maple, you better be prepared to defend yourself at the prescribed fire station. The instructor at SLO might have you do an improv conversation describing your reasoning for harvesting to a concerned hiker on the Appalachian Trail. All things to show students the complexities we navigate in this career.

Not all of us will be faced with the challenges of oak silviculture, but each of us will have what feels like a nearly intractable social or silvic-based problem to contend with during our careers. By the end of this module, the camaraderie of the class and instructors felt strong, and I believe that makes us all more confident practicing the “art and science” of silviculture in this ever-changing world.



Cove forest type at the Robinson Forest



BIA Forester at the Robinson Forest

Intertribal Timber Council Honors 2026 National Forester of the Year

The Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) held its 49th National Symposium from June 8–12, 2026, in Keshena, Wisconsin. Co-hosted by the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohican Indians, the symposium brought together forestry and natural resources professionals from across Indian Country. One of the most anticipated events of the week—the annual Awards Banquet—took place Thursday evening, celebrating outstanding leadership and service in tribal forestry.

Awards presented included regional recognition, the Bright Star Award, the President’s Award, and the prestigious National Forester of the Year. The National Forester of the Year Award, the highest honor bestowed by the ITC Awards Committee, recognizes an individual who has made significant, lasting contributions to forestry in Indian Country. It is a once-in-a-lifetime honor.

This year's recipient is Pete Wakeland, an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in Oregon. Known for his perseverance, inclusive leadership style, and innovative problem-solving, Pete has made exceptional contributions during his nine-year tenure with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), where he served as Chief Forester.

Pete's ability to bring diverse natural resources staff together has led to transformative accomplishments. His vision to convert Tribal engines into contract engines—staffed by BIA firefighters—required cooperation across disciplines. By emphasizing the shared value of fire as a resource management tool, he successfully encouraged hydrologists, wildlife and fisheries biologists, park managers, and soil scientists to complete wildland firefighting training. What began as a strategic idea grew into a comprehensive program that now includes contemporary engines, a tactical tender, a Type Two Initial Attack Hand crew, and even a certified Unmanned Aerial Systems operator.



Peter M. Wakeland with National Forester of the Year Award

At the Central Office, Pete recognized the need for renewed capacity and modernization. Under his leadership:

- Long-outdated handbooks and manuals began undergoing comprehensive updates, guided by teams including BIA employees and ITC member tribes.
- New Forest Management Inventory and Planning software was developed to support tribal forest management plan updates.
- A Special Forest Projects Forester established a successful six-person timber team, inspiring the creation of a second team.
- Staff were hired to secure interagency funding for portable milling infrastructure and forest health initiatives.
- Expertise in Trust Asset Accounting Management Systems (TAAMS) was strengthened, resulting in a cadre of skilled trainers capable of delivering instruction with minimal contractor support.

Although many BIA Chief Foresters have served only briefly, Pete remained in the role long enough to initiate meaningful, structural improvements. Only one other forester has served longer. While he did not expect to leave the position, his community recognized a new calling for him—returning home to serve on the Tribal Council of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

Pete's departure marks a significant moment for BIA Forestry; however, his legacy is firmly established. In recognition of his achievements, he was honored with the Earle R. Wilcox Memorial Award. Named for a leader remembered for groundbreaking accomplishments on behalf of Indian people and their forests, this award celebrates individuals who have made substantial, lasting contributions to Indian forestry, fire, or natural resource programs.

As Pete transitions to serving his own people, the impact of his dedication, leadership, and vision will continue to strengthen tribal forestry efforts for years to come.

INDIAN ENERGY SERVICE CENTER (IESC)



Mission

The mission of Indian Energy Service Center (IESC) is to fulfill the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Indian trust responsibility in the energy and mineral development arena. We do this by modernizing business processes to efficiently develop the Indian energy and mineral estate while protecting trust assets by removing barriers to energy and mineral development on Indian lands.

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 and mineral, leasing and development activities, and actions including drafting of policy.

IESC requests a [Referral Form](#) be completed detailing the type of assistance requested.

TERA Signing Ceremony for the Southern Ute Tribe May 11, 2026

The historical ceremonial signing of the first approved TERA took place at the DOI Main Interior Building in Washington D.C. on May 11, 2026. The Tribe sent a delegation of governing council members including the Chairman and Vice Chairman along with staff and representatives from the Tribe's Department of Energy.



Pictured above Secretary Doug Burgum and Chairman Melvin J. Baker (centered) with Federal and Tribal representatives



Melvin J. Baker, Chairman, Southern Ute Indian Tribe and Doug Bergum, Secretary of Interior at signing ceremony



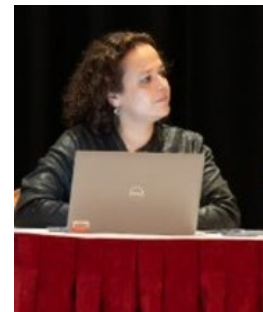
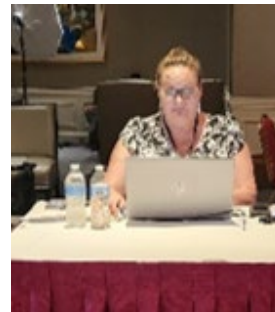
Tribal Energy Summit

On April 29 – May 1, 2026, the IESC Division Chief, along with several IESC team members, attended the Tribal Energy Summit in Houston, Texas. This strategic gathering, held in the "energy capital of the world," facilitated collaborative discussions on the critical role of Tribal lands in the national energy landscape.



IESC BLM Team, Christopher Kostelecky, Petroleum Engineer, Mitch Hasbrok, Petroleum Engineer, Jack Savage, Supervisory Petroleum Engineer, Craig Williamson, IESC BLM Branch Chief, Abdinur Salad, Petroleum Engineer at the IESC Outreach table.

Federal priorities focused on streamlining the review and approval processes for a wide range of energy projects, including exploration, leasing, production, and generation. These efforts are designed to support community-driven growth while strictly upholding Tribal sovereignty. The Summit served as a primary venue to foster intergovernmental coordination and information sharing across Tribal, federal, and industry regulatory frameworks.



Shelli Grywusiewicz, IESC Administrative Specialist working at the registration table and Winter Jojola-Talbert, IESC Acting Division Chief serving on a discussion panel



Genevieve Giaccardo, BTFA Acting Director, Melinda Huser, BTFA Beneficiary Contact Representative

Congratulations

The IESC extends its congratulations to IESC BLM Branch Chief Craig Williamson on the successful completion of the Executive MBA program at the University of Florida. This 21-month program, offered through University of Florida's Warrington College of Business, is a management-focused curriculum designed for experienced professionals. It integrates on-campus coursework, leadership development, and a global immersion experience to strengthen strategic and organizational leadership capabilities.



Craig William, BTFA-BLM Branch Director, University of Florida Executive MBA Program

Shout Outs

- Shout out to Katrina Brown for successfully completing her detail to the Fort Berthold Agency on June 6, 2026. Katrina made significant contributions throughout her assignment, ensuring BTFA activities—as well as both Tribal and beneficiary transactions—were processed accurately and in a timely manner. Her professionalism, strong work ethic, and dedication to duty are a direct reflection of her commitment to service and the high standards she brings to the organization

- Shout out to Jack Savage, IESC Supervisory Petroleum Engineer, who will be detailed as the Fluid Minerals Branch Chief, BLM Utah State Office, May 31 – September 27, 2026
- Shout out to Christopher Kostecky, IESC Petroleum Engineer, on his temporary promotion as the IESC Supervisory Petroleum Engineer, Lakewood, Colorado, May 31 – September 27, 2026
- Shout out to the SOP Training team for the praise and recognition they received during the Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC) meeting in Lakewood, CO

Farewell

The IESC would like to bid a warm farewell to Barbara (Barb) Hamersma, Production Accountability Specialist (PAS) with BLM NOC–IESC. She joined the IESC in January 2024, bringing with her more than 17 years of experience from the BLM Buffalo Field Office in Wyoming, where she served as a Production Accountability Technician for 16 years and as a Legal Assistant for 1 year. Thank you, Barb, for your dedication, professionalism, and outstanding service. Your contributions have made a meaningful impact, and you will be greatly missed.

Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee

On June 9th the IESC hosted the Executive Management Group (EMG) Meeting, and on June 10th, the Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (IEMSC) Meeting in Lakewood Colorado.

The EMG provides guidance on how to navigate the multi-agency aspects of strategic planning and may assist in prioritizing future projects. The EMG is comprised of the following: IESC Division Chief, BIA Director or their delegate, Director, ONRR, or their delegate, Assistant Director for Energy, Mineral and Realty Management, BLM, or their delegate, and Director, BTFA, or their delegate.

To support the importance of the IESC's mission and energy development, in attendance was Mike Olsen, Associate Deputy Secretary, US Department of Interior, Janel Broderick, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs, and Ken Bellmard, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs for Policy and Economic Development.

The IEMSC is comprised of senior level management representatives from bureaus and offices within the Department of the Interior with direct responsibility for managing Indian energy and mineral resources and revenue management.



IEMSC Meeting attendees, Lakewood, CO



The IEMSC's goal is to share information and solve issues involving energy and mineral development and revenue management on Indian lands at the lowest level feasible and to raise issues that cannot be resolved or that would require policy changes to the attention of the appropriate Assistant Secretary(s) or the Special Trustee.

TAAMS Mineral Training

Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS) is the DOI's integrated land management system. TAAMS is a contractor maintained, and contractor operated major applications. It is the system of record for title and land ownership data for land held in trust by the DOI for Tribes, American Indians, and Alaska Natives. The system manages the leasing process including the invoicing and distribution of income to the Department's beneficiaries on the land held in trust for Tribes, American Indians, and Alaska Natives.

Upcoming TAAMS Training:

- September 9-10, 2026 (virtual)
- November 17-18, 2026 (virtual)
- February 23-24, 2027 (virtual)

For more information on upcoming training visit: [DOI Talent | U.S. Department of the Interior](#)

SOP Fluid Minerals Training: July 28-29, 2026 – Lakewood, CO (In Person)

Registration: Access course registration in DOI Talent <https://doitalent.ibc.doi.gov>

Target Audience: BIA, BLM, ONRR, and OST Employees. This course is also open to OS, OIG, Office of the Solicitor and States and Tribes under Sec 202/205 of FOGDMA.

GAGAS CPE: 13

Summary and Objectives: This is a Condensed 2-day Course of the OS-ONRR-1182/BIA-SOPFM-375. Employees attending the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Indian Fluid Minerals will gain an understanding of the interdependent roles and responsibilities among DOI Bureaus and Offices involved in the development and operations of fluid minerals on Trust Lands across the United States. The course will convey an outline of the roles and responsibilities of each agency with the primary focus on the interdependent responsibilities and handoffs between agencies for fluid mineral development (oil and gas) on Trust Lands.

DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)



BRANCH OF FISHERIES, WILDLIFE, AND RECREATION (BFWR)

Participation at Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Conferences

BFWR Central Office and Regional staff attended the 43rd Annual Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) National Conference in Verona, New York on May 4-7, 2026. The event was co-hosted by the Oneida Nation of New York and gathered Tribal fish, wildlife, and natural resource professionals for a week of workshops, youth engagement, federal partner updates, and presentations focused on fish and wildlife work.



BIA's Ryan Portalatin presenting at the NAFWS Annual Conference

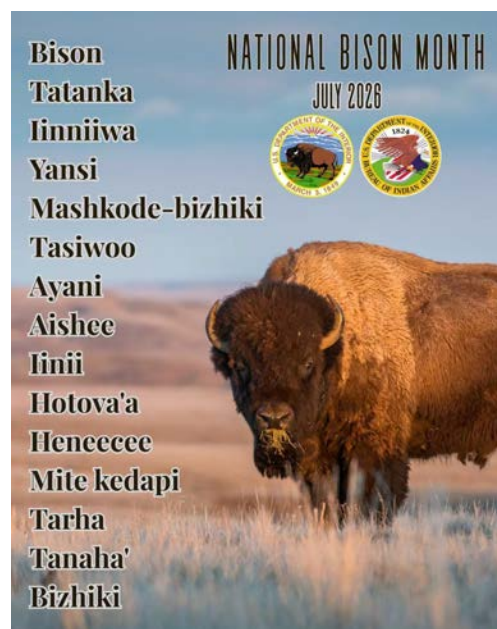
Ryan Portalatin, BFWR Central Office Fish and Wildlife Resources Specialist, provided an overview of DNR programs and BIA updates during the conference's Federal Partner Updates section. During the presentation, Ryan also spoke about BFWR program criteria and application processes, as well as answered questions from conference attendees.

Jordan Miteff, Central Office Natural Resources Specialist, and Mikail Kane, Eastern Region Natural Resources Specialist, were also present as DNR representatives. Throughout the week, staff attended general session presentations, youth poster sessions, networking events, and Tribal co-management panel discussions.

General session presentations featured BFWR-funded projects from across Indian Country focusing on Tribal youth, wildlife health, biodiversity, fisheries, invasive species, and Conservation Law Enforcement training.

National Bison Month

Every July, the U.S. celebrates National Bison Month to honor the American bison's historical, ecological, and cultural significance. The DOI's Bison Conservation Initiatives is a coordinated effort to restore and protect bison across their historic range.



Invasive Species Funding

The Seminole Tribe of Florida received BFWR invasive species funding in 2025 to assist with the establishment of the Tribe's Invasive Species Program, supporting two biologist positions through FY 2027.



STOF Invasive Species Biologist with a large female Burmese python. Photo courtesy of STOF Invasive Species Program Funding Narrative Report

New Addition to our DNR Team

The Division of Natural Resources announces the addition of Sheena Schemm to the Central Office team. Sheena is serving as a Program Analyst supporting DNR. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Wildlife and Range Management and brings more than 15 years of experience in the areas of natural resource management, conservation planning, program coordination, and working with Tribes.



Sheena Schemm, Program Analyst

Prior to joining BIA, Sheena spent 14 years with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service serving as a Conservationist, and Planner. She has been with BIA for the past four years, assisting in program coordination/program delivery, technical assistance, and Awarding Official Technical Representative (AOTR) responsibilities supporting Tribal natural resource and resilience initiatives. Welcome, Sheena!

The Miccosukee Tribe's Aquatic Reproduction Center (ARC)

With the support from BFWR and in partnership with the USFWS Welaka National Fish Hatchery, the Miccosukee Tribe of Florida is working toward restoring and strengthening native aquatic species on Tribal lands. The Tribe's Aquatic Reproduction Center (ARC) was constructed in 2010 and has been used to produce mercury free fish, namely Florida gar and bowfin.



Florida gar



Florida bowfin

The ARC is also used to assist with the survival of the federally endangered Everglades Snail Kite by growing the only prey item: the native Florida apple snail. In recent years, the Tribe added the production of Everglades crayfish and slough crayfish, both an important food source for Florida gar and bowfin.



Photo shows the Aquatic Reproduction Center (ARC) water table facility, including new LED lighting, motion sensors, and circulating fans, all of which protect against the elements, reduce moisture and mold, and predation from small rodents and birds.

Over the years, normal wear and tear has degraded and disintegrated the hatchery's shade clothe, resulting in hazardous algae blooms in the tanks. A significant hurricane that passed over the area in 2024 shredded what was left of the existing shade cloth and uplifted sump tanks, damaging multiple pumps and the main PVC pipes.

The Miccosukee Tribe received FY 2025 BFWR Hatchery Maintenance Program funding which has assisted with facility repairs and infrastructure upgrades, species production activities, and research initiatives. ARC is currently preparing the site for the installation of a 32' x 72' open pole barn structure with a metal roof that will provide long-term protection of the hatchery's tanks. These improvements enhance operational efficiency, expand production capacity, and strengthen long-term sustainability.



Image shows one of three sump holes being prepared for concrete and water proofing resurfacing for ARC's recirculation systems. Waterproofing the walls and floors improves durability and reduces maintenance needs.

Soon, the hatchery will begin providing largemouth bass, bluegill, and a variety of native minnows to fuel the development of their growth tanks and move ARC closer to operating as a fully successful reproduction and replenishment center.



Native apple snails

ARC is preparing for the release of both crayfish species and native apple snails in late July in the Miccosukee Reservation. These releases will help stabilize aquatic food webs and drive ecological recovery throughout the reservation, as well as reflect the Tribe's commitment to the restoring native species, enhancing wetland resilience, and protecting the natural resources that sustain cultural traditions.



Miccosukee Tribal fisheries staff with largemouth bass during electrofishing event with USFWS. Photos courtesy of Miccosukee Tribe's Fisheries Manager, Andre Daniels

DIVISION OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES (DRES)



Trust and Restricted Land Conveyances

DRES supported Probate Surge Teams, Realty Acquisition & Disposal through onsite outreach with Gila River Indian Community (AZ), and the Ute Indian Tribe (UT), resulting in 16 gift conveyance cases initiated, 3 deeds sent for recording, and 13 cases completed.

DRES, in coordination with the TAAMS A&D User Group, finalized **52 IAM 18** and its companion handbook **52 IAM 18-H**, both signed May 27, 2026.

- [52 IAM 18: Processing Acquisition and Disposal \(A&D\) Applications](#) - established policy for timely review and processing of Trust and Restricted Fee Land Acquisition & Disposal (A&D) Conveyances.
- [52 IAM 18-H: Trust and Restricted Land Acquisition and Disposal Conveyances Handbook](#) - provides detailed procedures and step-by step guidance for BIA and Tribal realty staff to prepare, review, and process A&D conveyances across Trust and Restricted Fee lands. Trust lands and restricted fee lands are administered under the jurisdiction of the BIA.

Training

DRES, in coordination with the Office of the Solicitor, hosted Virtual Trust and Restricted Land Acquisition and Disposal Conveyances Handbook Overview/Training for BIA field staff and Tribal Contract/Compact staff.

The TAAMS A&D User Group meets monthly to discuss and prepare TAAMS enhancements for efficient processing as outlined in the Trust and Restricted Land Conveyances Handbook.

Ongoing TAAMS A&D Training is offered for Realty staff throughout the year with the next session being offered July 21-22, 2026.

The A&D Dashboard for internal tracking is live, and the A&D SharePoint site is continually updated to streamline materials and provide information needed in the field.

Recognition of Data Cleanup Efforts

Preliminary A&D data clean-up efforts focused on addressing aged gift deed cases as part of estate planning initiatives and have been ongoing. Since the launch of the A&D Dashboard, staff have successfully closed 1,579 aged gift deed cases because of data analyzed.

Five agencies are highlighted this quarter for exceptional progress:

- **Uintah & Ourah Agency** reviewed and updated 30 gift deed cases previously marked as Cancelled or Withdrawn, bringing them to completed status. An additional 4 gift deed cases are currently in Probate (31 Pending, 2 Approved, and 1 Acceptance of Conveyance)
- **Pima Agency** reviewed and updated 99 TAAMS cases formerly marked as Cancelled or Withdrawn and finalized 19 additional cases with deeds recorded.
- **San Carlos Agency** addressed outstanding cases that removed the agency from the list of Top Ten Agencies with the Longest Average Case Processing Timelines.
- **Eastern Nevada Agency** resolved outstanding cases that removed the agency from the list of Top Ten Agencies with the Longest Average.
- **Warm Springs Agency** completed outstanding case actions that removed the agency from the list of Top Ten Agencies with the Longest Average Case Processing Timelines and advanced it to the list of agencies maintaining the shortest processing timelines.



Agencies with the shortest case processing times:

- Fort Totten Agency
- Great Plains Region
- Minnesota Agency
- Pawnee Agency
- Turtle Mountain Agency
- Yankton Agency

In addition, four agencies recently moved into the short-timeline category:

- Chickasaw Agency
- Eastern Nevada Agency
- Spokane Agency
- Warm Springs Agency

Ongoing Clean-Up Efforts

To date, the field has updated 647 withdrawn or canceled cases to completed status and recorded 29 overdue deeds. This progress reflects an ongoing clean-up effort supported by the Central Office, OTS-DRES.

Informational Flyers

Informational flyers are available for public use. DRES will continue to work ensuring there are flyers available for the various aspects of A&D. (Screenshots of two flyers to the left).

Informational Flyers available for public use include the

- [Fee-To-Trust Quick Reference Guide - Discretionary Trust Acquisitions](#)
- [Fee-To-Trust Quick Reference Guide - Mandatory Acquisitions](#)
- [Fee-To-Trust Quick Reference Guide - Mandatory AIPRA and](#)
- [Reservation Proclamation Flyer](#)



Click here for full informational flyer entitled [Gift Conveyance – How to Transfer Ownership Without Compensation flyer](#) and [Negotiated Land Sale flyer](#) depicted above.

Fee to Trust Status

The TAAMS FTT User Group meets monthly to identify user needs for TAAMS and develop enhancements to ensure processes are streamlined for Realty Staff efficiency.

Ongoing TAAMS FTT Training is offered for Realty Staff throughout the year with the next session being offered September 15-16, 2026.

The internal FTT Dashboard was updated so it is consistent with the latest dashboards released for internal tracking. The FTT and Proclamation SharePoint sites are continually updated to streamline materials and provide information needed in the field.

To date for calendar year 2026 BIA has approved 124 fee-to-trust cases to place approximately 26,000 acres into trust for Tribes and Individual Indian landowners.

DRES continues to coordinate with regional offices and agencies in the ongoing effort to keep FTT cases current and moving along to meet implemented timelines. [Fee-To-Trust Quick Reference Guide - Discretionary Trust Acquisitions](#)

It goes without saying all regions and agencies are recognized for their work and recent efforts at the following locations are to be highlighted for coordinating on Tribal updates and case processing:

- **Pacific Region** currently maintains 157 cases and continues to provide ongoing updates to maintain transparency and communication with the tribes.
- **Eastern Region** currently maintains 93 cases and coordinates internally with a monthly workload status call where all programs involved coordinate. In addition, they maintain a monthly call with one of the Tribes they service to provide status updates.
- **Western Region** currently maintains 40 cases and continues to provide ongoing updates to maintain transparency and communication with the tribes.

Reservation Proclamations

DRES would like to recognize the Tribes, regions, and agencies for the thoroughness in submitting completed Proclamation request packages. All proclamation request packages received for Fiscal Year 2026 have been deemed complete packages and were able to move along in the review process without needing to be returned for additional information.

DIVISION OF RESOURCE INTEGRATION AND SERVICES (DRIS)

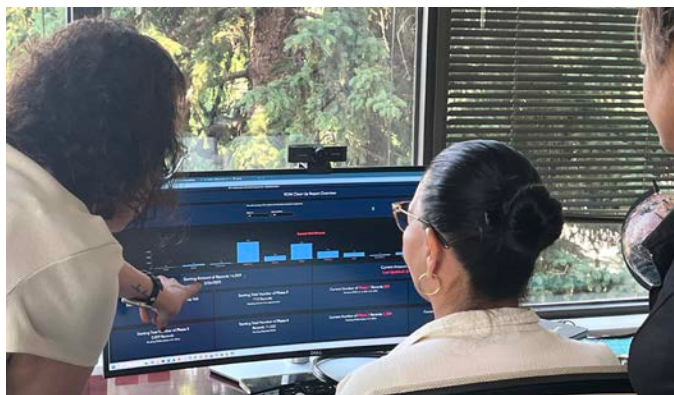


BRANCH OF RESOURCE SOLUTIONS (BRS)

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

The Branch of Resource Solutions (BRS) continues to lead the way in assisting BIA business units with modernization efforts. BRS is primarily utilizing advanced Low-Code / NoCode (LCNC) systems spanning Microsoft SharePoint/Power Apps, the BIA-STAT (Solution Trust Accountability Tracker, aka, SmartsheetGov) platform, as well as the BOGS Geospatial platforms and Bureau of Indian Education's (BIE) Box tool.

BRS specialists are building and deploying tools that augment the traditional Systems of Record with useful functions the legacy systems were not originally designed or built to address. Specifically, tracking of requests and transactions with multiple steps and reviewers are good candidates to layer on top of existing systems, as well as gathering program performance metrics over certain periods of time. These assist in answering multiple findings pointed out by General Accounting Office (GAO) audits and are a step in the right direction for accountability, especially given BIA's short staffing reality.



Winter Jojola-Talburt, Johnna Blackhari and Carla Clark discuss the Right-of-Way Clean Up Metrics Year-to-Date

DocBuilder for BIA-Stat

The long-awaited DocBuilder tool has been released into the BIA-STAT SmartsheetGov environment and enables a licensed user to map fields in a sheet to a pdf with fillable fields. There are a couple of approaches from mapping sheet columns to a fillable pdf, to generating documents from row data.

BRANCH OF GEOSPATIAL SERVICES (BOGS)

Tribes Trial Access to Login.gov

BOGS has successfully begun working with Tribes to provide tribal access to login.gov, making a major milestone for the Division/Office of Trust Services. This achievement is particularly significant because securing access to login.gov has been an ongoing objective for DRIS for several years.

By enabling this trial access, DRIS is helping to open new doors for improved collaboration and more seamless interactions between the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal governments. This initiative has the potential to streamline authentication processes, reduce technical barriers, strengthen trust and grow tribal governments.

DocBuilder for BIA-STAT Graphic

← Test master database / Mappings / Mapping for Student Information Form.pdf

Drag and Drop Columns

Click and drag fields onto your document

Columns

- ☒ Student Name
- ☐ GPA
- ☒ Last Transcript
- ☒ School
- ☐ Anticipated Graduation Date
- ☐ Declared Major

Output Document Name
Mapping for Student Information Form.p

Student Information Form

Student Name	Student Name
GPA	GPA
Last Transcript	Last Transcript
School	School
Anticipated Graduation Date	Anticipated Graduation Date
Declared Major	Declared Major

Preview

← Test master database / Mappings

Saved Mappings

Showing 1 mapping

Search by mapping name...

Filter by all

Mapping for Student Information Form.pdf
Modified a few seconds ago

Generate

Download

Attach to 1 Row

Screen shots: Setting up Doc Builder in BIA STAT

Geospatial Training

BOGS is pleased to offer MSU online training through the GEO Project, with sessions running from June 8 – July 5, 2026, and another beginning in August.

Courses include:

- Introduction to ArcGISPro
- Intermediate ArcPro
- Introduction to ArcGIS Online
- Introduction to Python and ArcPro

In addition to these offerings, on-demand trainings are available from Geospatial Training Services.com. BOGS will also partner with other vendors to provide virtual trainings throughout the second half of the year and is planning to arrange one or two in-person GIS trainings next year, potentially in Albuquerque or the Oklahoma City Region.

Consolidation to Portal

BOGS has partnered with the NIOGEMS team to launch NIOGEMS Version 5 and migrate it to the Open Data Portal. This upgrade will allow users and tribes to access NIOGEMS and GIS data through a single login.gov account, providing a streamlined, one-stop shop for geospatial resources.

The Division of Water and Power (DWP) is also preparing to migrate its data to the portal, ensuring broader accessibility. The new NIOGEMS version will deliver significant improvements and expanded capabilities. DRIS anticipates that both NIOGEMS and DWP data will be available in the portal by October 2026.

Graphic: Summary of Business Benefits of Tools in BIA STAT



Initial Results: Productivity Metrics

The DRIS System Analysts have leveraged Smartsheet expertise in validating workflow baselines prior to development and deployment of tools in STAT, and the before and after scenarios are being confirmed. The initial cost savings due to increased productivity are being analyzed, and the ability to track cases or requests that might have ‘fallen through the cracks’ yields significant benefit.

TAPS Final Testing

DRIS is approaching the end of its TAPS solution project and is currently in the final testing phase before rollout. The TAPS project will replace the legacy Oracle system with a STAT solution that features a service request framework that accommodates 4 steps with the capability of handling up to 3 potential reviewers within each step, 6 end-of-workflow automations, and 8 correction loops.

DRIS has worked closely with the LTRO team to ensure the solution will meet the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) requirements of the program, so that it includes activity tracking, notifications, and monitoring of team member accomplishments/ performance monitoring.

Mortgage Dashboard Project Begins

BIA mortgage dashboard development is underway to enhance transparency and reporting for stakeholders. The team is streamlining data exports from TAAMS into STAT, enabling automated weekly updates and robust metrics—including processing times, quarterly and annual trends, and compliance tracking under the Homeownership Act.



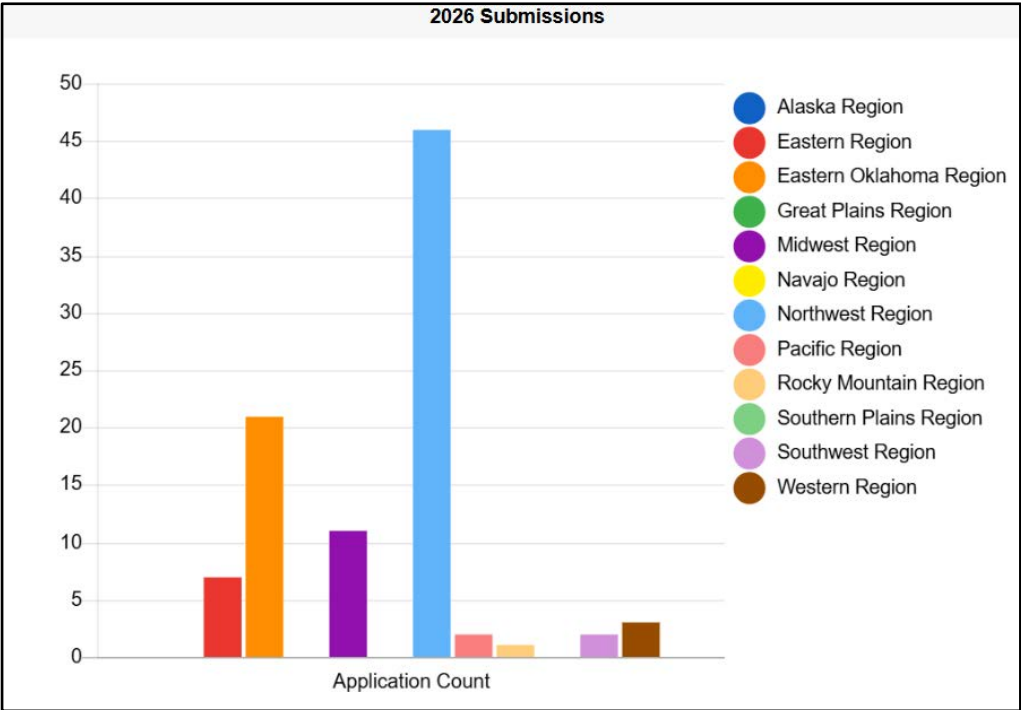
New home construction at Suquamish Tribe

Proclamation Tracking System Under Development

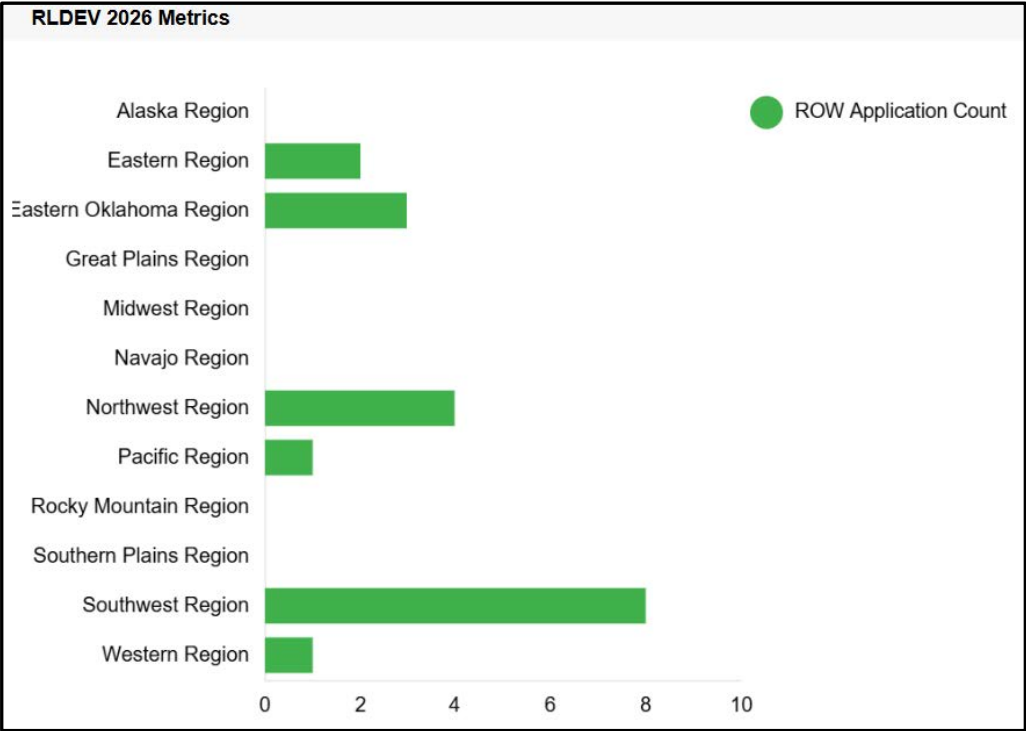
The team is advancing development of a new STAT-based workflow designed to streamline submissions, automate notifications, and improve regional coordination. Recent updates include refining the STAT form’s wording, adding logic-based questions, and integrating required file uploads to align with established toolkit and routing processes. The team also confirmed visibility and sharing settings to ensure appropriate access for all participants.

Geodata Examination & Validation (GDEV)

Fee to Trust - The Fee to Trust GIS Strike Team has completed 100 Legal Description Evaluation & Validation (LDEV) submissions.



Right of Ways (ROW) - The ROW team has completed 19 Right of Way Legal Description Evaluation & Validation (RLDEV) submissions.



DIVISION OF TRUST ASSET OWNERSHIP AND TITLE (DTAOT)



BRANCH OF PROBATE SERVICES

The Department of the Interior (DOI) manages probate for thousands of estates each year belonging to American Indian and Alaska Native individuals with trust or restricted property. The Branch of Probate Services coordinates the BIA's probate program, ensuring protection of trust lands, assets, resources, and treaty rights.

The American Indian Probate Reform Act (AIPRA), as amended, changed how trust property or Indian lands are distributed by the federal government. AIPRA established a standardized process for distributing and managing trust property, aiming to reduce land fractionation.

Approval of Tribal Probate Codes

AIPRA provides that any Indian Tribe may adopt its own Tribal probate codes to govern the descent and distribution of trust and restricted within the Tribe's reservation or otherwise subject to the Tribe's jurisdiction subject to the approval by the Secretary of the Interior.

Nine Tribes have approved Tribal Probate Codes:

- Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Northern Cheyenne Tribe
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians
- Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community of the Salt River Reservation

- Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation
- Yurok Tribe of the Yurok Reservation
- Three Affiliated Tribes of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation (Approved Single Heir Rule only)

Electronic Probate System (EPS)

The Electronic Probate System is an effort to modernize trust services and improve how Indian Affairs serves American Indian and Alaska Native families.

For decades, the probate process has relied on paper files and manual workflows that have made case management more time-consuming and contributed to delays. With the introduction of EPS, we are taking a significant step toward a more efficient, transparent, and customer-focused approach.

As the first module of the Department's new [eNative Trust platform](#), EPS provides a secure, end-to-end digital workflow that supports both the public and our workforce. Through the Family Portal, trust beneficiaries can report a death, submit supporting documents, provide family history information, and track the status of their probate case online. The Specialist Portal guides BIA probate staff through each stage of the probate process, from validating death notices and gathering documentation to preparing complete electronic files for submission to the Office of Hearings and Appeals.

This modernization is designed to support the work, not replace it. EPS includes artificial intelligence-assisted tools that help organize, extract, and validate information, reducing administrative tasks while ensuring that all case decisions remain under the review and authority of qualified Indian Affairs employees.

BRANCH OF LAND TITLES AND RECORDS

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 Green, Branch Chief

Amber has been with the 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 her BIA experience she then transitioned to a Realty Specialist position at the Northwest Regional Office. Amber then had the opportunity to head back to Rocky Mountain to work with the Land-Buy Back Program (now the Division of Trust Land Consolidation) as a Management Analyst. Amber has enjoyed the opportunity and experience in working with a diverse group of team members, Tribes, BIA programs, and inter-agency offices.

Outside the office of Amber enjoys spending time with her husband, family and fur babies. She also enjoys trying new recipes, making homemade goods, road trips, reading and baking.

DIVISION OF TRUST LAND CONSOLIDATION (DTLC)



Our Mission

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

About the Division of Trust Land Consolidation (DTLC)

The Division of Trust Land Consolidation works with individual Indian landowners who choose to voluntarily sell their fractional land interests at fair market value. By bringing these interests back under Tribal ownership, DTLC helps address the long-standing challenge of land fractionation—where reservation lands are divided into many small ownership shares held by numerous individuals.

Through these purchases from willing sellers, DTLC restores land to Tribal trust ownership, reduces fragmentation, and supports stronger, more effective land management.

Fractionation affects roughly 150 reservations across Indian Country, with more than 100,000 fractionated tracts containing nearly 2.4 million ownership interests—representing the equivalent of over 5.6 million acres.

DTLC's efforts strengthen Tribal sovereignty by increasing Tribal control over reservation lands. Consolidated land allows Tribes to plan more effectively for economic development, conservation, cultural initiatives, and other community priorities.

Headquartered within the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Trust Services, the DTLC operates out of the Rocky Mountain Region in Billings, Montana, and the Great Plains Region in Aberdeen, South Dakota. The program works closely with Tribal governments and landowners to support these essential land consolidation initiatives.

Who we Serve

The Division of Trust Land Consolidation (DTLC) provides opportunities for individual Indian landowners to voluntarily sell fractional land interests, at fair market value for consolidation under Tribal ownership. The 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.



Cheyenne River Reservation, South Dakota

What Offer Types are available to Tribes?

- **Trust Land Consolidation**, appropriated funding to purchasing fractional land interests from willing sellers.
- **Tribally Funded Offers** uses its automated valuation and acquisition process and tribal funds for payments to willing sellers.

Implementation Schedule – FY 2026

The Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO) have received the tentative FY 2026 implementation schedule for land consolidation mass appraisals.

The schedule includes the following Tribes and land area codes:

- 124 – Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- 345 – Rosebud Sioux Tribe
- 344– Pine Ridge Sioux Tribe

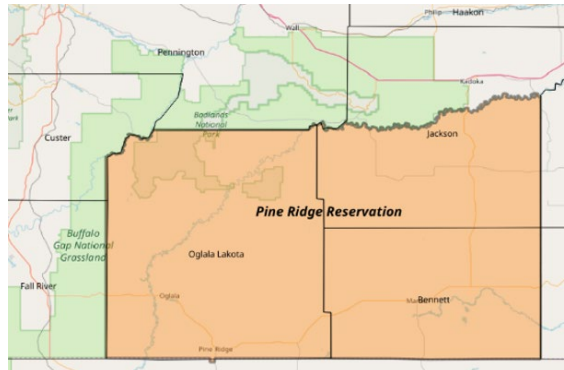
Interested in Participating as a Willing Seller

Landowners are encouraged to contact their local Bureau of Trust Funds Administrator (BTFA) or to the Trust Beneficiary Call Center at 1-888-678-6836, to ensure their contact information is up to date.

More information on the Division of Trust Land Consolidation is available at <http://www.bia.gov/ots/dtlc>

Pine Ridge Research Project

Our DTLC Supervisory Realty Specialist is guiding the realty team as they review approved Pine Ridge applicants to verify that payments were correctly made to individuals who sold their interests under the Land Buyback Program (LBBP) between FY 2013 and 2022. This work spans 14 Offer Sets and over 16,500 Indian Landowners. So far, 9 Offer Sets have been reviewed.



Contact Us

BIA OTS Division of Trust Land Consolidation, 2021 4th Avenue North, Billings, MT 59101, Office: (406) 247-7913 or

115 4th Avenue, Southeast, Aberdeen, SD 27401 – Office: (605) 226-7636



DIVISION OF WATER AND POWER (DWP)



Tufa Stone Dam, San Carlos Reservation, Gila County, AZ

SAFETY OF DAMS PROGRAM (SOD)

Menager's Dam Rehabilitation

Background and History

Menager's Dam is a 30-foot-tall embankment dam located within the Tohono O'odham Nation in southern Arizona. Originally constructed in the early 1900s, its primary purpose was to provide irrigation and to support ranching in the region. The dam was built mostly from highly erodible silt, sand, and clay, and was not engineered to withstand the severe flood events that can occur in the area.

Tropical Storm Rosa Incident

In October 2018, tropical storm Rosa brought up to 5 inches of rain to the 112-square-mile basin upstream from Menager's Dam. This extreme rainfall event nearly caused the structure to overtop and fail. A local resident went to explore and investigate the dam and discovered that the normally dry reservoir was almost full, with water levels just one foot below the dam crest. The Tribe was notified and the downstream community of Ali Chuk was evacuated as a precaution. BIA installed emergency siphons to assist with drawing down the lake. Although the dam managed to hold back the flood, if it had overtopped, the structure would have eroded rapidly and released more than 9,500 acre-feet of water directly towards the downstream community.

Immediately following this near disaster, a multi-day effort commenced to inspect and monitor the dam, and the BIA Safety of Dams Program began to explore ways to mitigate the risk of failure during large flood events which will certainly occur in the future.

Although Menager's Dam did not fail during the 2018 storm, the event underscored the vulnerability of the structure and prompted the planning and design of a replacement embankment dam.

Background and History

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Menager's Dam during Tropical Storm Rosa, October 2018



Construction of the new Menager's Dam, October 2025

Design and Construction of the New Dam

Between 2021 and 2023, new designs for Menager's Dam were developed. Construction began in late 2024 and concluded in March 2026. The new dam was designed according to modern engineering standards and features an impervious central core made from compacted clay, an outer shell of riprap and rockfill, and transition zones between the different materials. The design also included a combined concrete outlet works and spillway structure. Additionally, all soil was removed from the foundation, and the dam is now founded on robust basalt bedrock.

The height of the dam was increased by over 12 feet, enabling it to store more water and better withstand future flood events. BIA was also able to mill and grade BIA Route 1, which in terrible condition and as the only road to the dam and Village of Ali Chuk a critical route to keep open.

Environmental Protection and Cultural Considerations

Menager's Dam is situated in the ecologically sensitive and diverse Sonoran Desert, which is home to several endangered and threatened species. The area is also rich in cultural history, with the Tohono O'odham people having lived there for thousands of years. Notably, significant efforts were made throughout the project to safeguard environmental resources and honor local traditions and customs.



Environmental Protection and Cultural Considerations, Construction of Menager's Dam nearing completion, January 2026

SAFETY OF DAMS PROGRAM – EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN FUNCTIONAL EXERCISES

Overview of EAP Functional Exercises

The SOD Program's Emergency Management (EM) Team is responsible for conducting exercises for each of its 80 Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) on a five-year cycle. The approach alternates between Tabletop and Functional Exercises for dams with high-hazard potential, while significant-hazard potential dams are assigned a Workshop and Tabletop Exercise.

A Tabletop Exercise is an informal discussion focused on actions to be taken during described emergency situations. In contrast, a Functional Exercise involves participants responding in a coordinated manner to a timed, simulated incident that mirrors a real operational event as closely as possible. Due to virtual Tabletop Exercises conducted from 2020 to 2022, there has been an increase in the number of Functional Exercises held. This shift has prompted redevelopment in how Functional Exercises are developed, structured, facilitated, and evaluated for EAPs.

Exercise Planning and Scenario Development

During the Initial Planning Meeting, the EM Team gathers crucial information needed to develop an exercise scenario. The goal is to create a realistic dam safety scenario to effectively test the EAP. Following the Initial Planning Meeting, the EM Team crafts a Master Scenario Events List (MSEL), which outlines the entire scenario from beginning to end. Scenarios feature dam safety emergencies such as overtopping caused by severe rainfall, structural harm resulting from earthquakes, and seepage issues on the dam. They also incorporate real-world challenges encountered during dam safety events, including restricted communication options, unavailable personnel, delays in acquiring critical resources, equipment failures, and difficulties accessing the dam.

Exercise Setup and Execution

On the day of the Functional Exercise, a large room is arranged to allow key groups involved in a dam safety response to be spread throughout the space. This setup encourages physical interaction between agencies, realistic movement between stations, and real-time coordination. The Exercise Director reviews the purpose, goals, roles, responsibilities, and rules of the Functional Exercise with all participants. During the Functional Exercise, participants received timed cue announcements with ongoing updates about the incident,

requiring them to make decisions, communicate, and engage with one another as they would during a real event, but without the need to physically deploy resources.

Exercise Evaluation and Improvement

Throughout the exercise, Evaluators document participant performance, decisions, and assess the usefulness of the EAP in responding to and managing the simulated dam safety incident. The evaluation process helps refine the exercised EAP, guides the development of future EAPs and exercises, and strengthens overall program direction.

Benefits and Feedback

During a Functional Exercise, participants have the opportunity to play out a complex, realistic scenario; facilitating real-time decision-making and developing strong communication between agencies. Through evaluation of the exercises, participants often site appreciation for the knowledge they have gained, the interactive nature of the exercise, relationship building, and increased communication with other agencies.



Ray Lake and Washakie Functional Exercise

DIVISION OF WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (DWYD)



Indian Youth Corps participants on their way to Training Site

BRANCH OF PATHWAYS

Student Spotlight

Savannah Slayton (Cherokee Nation) has served in the Pathways Program since 2024, completing internships with the Hydropower Compliance Program and the Special Assistants Office. She is currently completing her 2026 summer placement with the Kickapoo Tribe of Oklahoma, supporting the Johnson-O'Malley Program.

This spring she earned her bachelor's degree in Native American Studies from the University of Oklahoma. She will continue her academic journey this fall at the University of Colorado Boulder, where she has been pursuing a PhD in Critical Ethnic Studies.



"My area of emphasis was on Tribal/Education Policy, settler colonialism. After graduation, I'll be attending CU Boulder for PhD in Critical Ethnic Studies. I am also a rider for the Cherokee Nation's 2026 Rember the Removal Bike Ride. My ideal job would be a Policymaker and Researcher." - Savannah

Outreach and Partnerships

During Q3, Pathways Program staff attended the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC) April Board Meeting to participate in ITC's first Workforce Development Meeting. This meeting included ITC Board Members, ITC Education Committee members, and other partners to discuss topics related to Tribal Forestry workforce needs as well as potential opportunities to support workforce growth. Attendees were briefed on ITC's BIA Forestry and Natural Resources Workforce Initiative, learned about a training model developed by the Native Youth Firefighter Training Program, and were updated on the current status of the Salish Kootenai College's Tribal Research and Education in Ecosystem Sciences program. Pathways staff also shared a general program update and expressed interest in continuing partnerships. The meeting provided a great opportunity to touch bases on some of the history, current state, and potential future for collaboration while identifying some key action items moving forward.

Pathways Program staff are currently coordinating with other external partners for upcoming Summer events. This includes partnering with federal credit unions to develop and co-host the next Pathways Program Enhancement Session where current Student Trainees will be able to participate in a workshop and gain resources regarding financial literacy and wellness. Pathways staff are also coordinating with United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY) staff to provide a workshop at the UNITY National Conference to highlight the BIA Office of Trust Services, raise general awareness of the Pathways Internship Program, and network with other potential partners or prospective student interns.

Process Improvements

The Pathways Program has continued updating and improving internal Program processes which has included all staff completing the "Effective Practices for Intern Recruitment, Onboarding and Development" training provided by the Public Service Leadership Institute. The training provided several tools, templates, and other educational materials relevant to managing internship programs. Upon completion of the training, staff have held follow-up sessions to identify areas within the training framework most relevant to the current needs of our Program, discuss lessons learned, and move towards implementing improvement strategies.

BRANCH OF YOUTH SERVICES

BIA's Indian Youth Service Corps

The BIA's Indian Youth Service Corps (IYSC) has successfully prepared its upcoming Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and continues to anticipate its release. In preparation, the branch has developed a working outreach library of approximately 40 Tribal nonprofit organizations to notify once the NOFO is published. This year, the program aims to expand its outreach footprint by 80% to further strengthen engagement with Tribal Nations and Native-serving organizations.

For this funding cycle, \$2 million in project funding will be available. If you would like to recommend a Tribal Nation or nonprofit that should be made aware of this upcoming opportunity, please feel free to reach out to Anne-Marie Blackhorse Begay at anne-marie.blackhors@bia.gov or Cheyenne Runsabove at cheyenne.runsabove@bia.gov.

We appreciate your partnership in helping us broaden awareness and support for this important opportunity

Branch of Workforce Development

The Division of Workforce Planning & Development (DWPD), in partnership with the Office of Employee Development (OED), is creating a centralized DOI Talent course that consolidates all mission-critical competency training into one easy-to-navigate location. This effort streamlines access to general and gap competencies for supervisors and employees across ten mission-critical occupations, supporting 479 staff with a clear, consistent development pathway. DWPD and OED will continue coordinating to ensure all training requirements remain aligned and readily accessible within DOI Talent.