



TRUST LAND RESOURCES • RESOURCE STEWARDSHIP • RESULTS THAT MATTER

Deputy Director Message

Greetings,

The Bureau of Indian Affairs turned 199 years on March 11, 2023. The BIA was first formerly established within the Department of War in 1824. Our employees are focused on a uniquely important mission today of enhancing the quality of life in tribal communities by promoting a Tribe’s sovereign right to self-governance.

In this issue we highlight grant programs available for Energy and Mineral Development, Development Capacity, and Climate Resilience. Local energy and solid mineral production meets many Tribes desires to strengthen their sovereignty, to utilize local materials for the benefit of their own people, and to strengthen local economies.

Technology such as GIS mapping and data management through Smartsheets are innovating our operations and decision making. I hope you enjoy our OTS highlights and find our list of upcoming meetings and training helpful.

Trina Locke
Acting Deputy Director-Trust Services

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“It does not require many words to speak the truth.”

Chief Joseph, Nez Perce Tribe



HUMAN RESOURCES



Job Openings

Recently Closed Job Vacancies

Program	Closed	Position Title	Grade	Location
Energy Service Center	01/23/2023	Grants Mgmt. Specialist	GS-12	REMOTE
Energy Development	01/30/2023	Geologist 1	GS-13	Lakewood, CO
Energy Development	01/30/2023	Geologist 2	GS-12	Lakewood, CO
Energy Development	02/06/2023	Natural Resource Spec	GS-13	Lakewood, CO
Energy & Minerals	02/15/2023	Mechanical Engineer	GS-13	Lakewood, CO
Environment & Culture	02/04/2023	Climate Resilience Coord	GS-11/12	Anchorage, AK
Environment & Culture	02/04/2023	Supy Natural Resource Spec	GS-14	REMOTE
Land Consolidation	02/16/2023	Tribal Relations Advisor 1	GS-13	REMOTE
Land Consolidation	02/16/2023	Tribal Relations Advisor 2	GS-13	REMOTE
Pathways	02/17/2023	Student Trainee (multiple)	GS-2-4	Negotiable

Welcome New Employees in 2022/2023

Program	Name	Title	Location
Environmental Services	Scott Haskie	Staff Assistant	Albuquerque, NM
Environmental Services	Rechanda Lee	Staff Curator	Albuquerque, NM
Environmental Services	Elisha Flores	Regional Climate Resilience Coord.	Anchorage, AK
Environmental Services	Shaina Tallas	Regional Climate Resilience Coord.	Anchorage, AK
Resource Integration	Chid Murphy	Program Manager	Lakewood, CO
Water and Power	Harold Peterson	FERC Program Manager	REMOTE
Irrigation and Power	Travis Teegarden	Branch Chief	Billings, MT
Wildland Fire Mgmt.	Jeniffer LaCounte	GIS Specialist	Pablo, MT
Wildland Fire Mgmt.	Anthony Gholson	Training Specialist	Boise, ID

Best Wishes to Employees Departing Trust Services in 2022

Program	Name	Title	Date	Reason
Resource Integration	Nathan Lillie	Acting Division Chief	12/16/2022	Resign
Real Estate Services	Sharlene Round Face	Realty Officer	12/31/2022	Retired
Program Mgmt/Coord.	Cameron McCormick	Lead Budget Analyst	12/31/2022	Retired
Water and Power	David Fisher	Division Chief	12/31/2022	Retired
Wildland Fire	Joel Kerley	Aviation & Safety Director	12/31/2022	Retired
Wildland Fire	Pat McDowell	Wildland Urban Interface & Wildfire Prevention Specialist	12/31/2022	Retired



Signing ceremony for Indian Water Rights Settlements

Indian Water Rights Settlements

As part of the 117th Congress' closing activity the following laws were enacted.

- [S.4104, the Hualapai Water Rights Settlement Act of 2022](#) established a trust fund of \$312 million the Tribe can use to develop water infrastructure on its reservation.
- [S.3168 amends The White Mountain Apache Tribe's 2010 Settlement](#) authorizing the design and construction of a rural water system to address the dire need for a domestic water supply on the Tribe's Reservation.
- [S.3308, Colorado River Indian Tribes Water Resiliency Act of 2022](#) authorizes the Colorado River Indian Tribes to lease, exchange, store, or conserve portions of their decreed water rights located in the State of Arizona to off-Reservation users.

These new laws supplement more than \$13 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) resources directly to Tribal communities. This includes \$2.5 billion to implement the Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund, which delivers water resources to Tribes for future economic development for entire communities dependent on common water resources.

Secretarial Order 3409 established Orphan Wells Program Office

Secretary Haaland established an [Orphaned Wells Program Office](#) to ensure effective, accountable, and efficient implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's historic investment of \$4.7 billion to plug orphaned wells. Secretary's Order 3409 establishes the new office at the Department under the Assistant Secretary for Policy, Management and Budget to ensure timely and transparent implementation of the new program to enable better communication with states, Tribes, and other partners. The program is divided into three programs:

- \$4.3 billion to be used to plug orphaned wells on state and private lands.
- \$250 million to cap orphaned wells on public lands, including national parks, national forests, and wildlife refuges; and
- \$150 million to cap orphaned wells on Tribal lands.



Orphaned Wells

TRUST SERVICES GPRA PERFORMANCE MEASURES



What is the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA)?

The Government Performance Results Act (GPRA) is a public law that was passed by Congress in 1993 and updated in the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010. The Act requires Federal agencies are required to set long-term goals and objectives as well as set specific near-term performance goals.

The GPRA Modernization Act builds on lessons agencies have learned in setting goals and reporting performance. It places emphasis on setting priorities, cross-organizational collaboration to achieve shared goals, and the use and analysis of goals and measure to improve outcomes of federally funded programs.

Status of FY 2022 GPRA Reporting

The Office of Trust Services has a total of twelve (12) GPRA Measures with regular reporting on either a quarterly or annual basis. Ten of the targets were met for Fiscal year 2022.

Program	GPRA Measure	2022 Result	Target
Irrigation	Maintenance projects completed	Achieved	93%
Irrigation	Number of miles of functional canals	Achieved	98.4%
Forestry	Timber sales prepared & offered	Achieved	53.3%
Agriculture & Range	Percent of range units assessed for utilization	Achieved	38.1%
Agriculture & Range	Percent of grazing permits monitored	Achieved	35.8%
Real Estate Services	Increase % of submitted Fee to Trust Apps reviewed	Achieved	64%
Water Management	Percent of water projects completed	Achieved	71.3%
Probate	Percent of Estates closed	70%	93%
Probate	Percent of qualifying probate orders encoded	70%	93%
Land Titles & Records	Percent of land titles certified in 48 hours	Achieved	88.7%
Land Titles & Records	Percent of all LTRO docs accepted & processed	Achieved	88.18%
Museum Program	Percent of museum collections in good condition	Achieved	88%

BIA TURNS 199 YEARS OLD



Historical BIA photos buying sheep and Oglala Dam construction 1939, (Source NARA)

BIA Director President's Day Message

On March 11, 2023, the Bureau of Indian Affairs will celebrate our 199th birthday. The BIA was first formerly established within the Department of War in 1824. In our nearly 200-year history, employees have gone from military soldiers paid to protect settlers expanding west, to now, enhancing the quality of life in tribal communities by promoting a Tribe's sovereign right to self-governance. No other bureau in American history can claim such a complete reversal in mission, and it is a uniquely important one.

Darryl LaCounte
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
(Source: Email to employees 2/17/2023)

BIA Direction for 2023

Indian Affairs leadership has identified the following priorities for BIA in 2023.

2022 White House Tribal Summit,
<https://www.bia.gov/whcnaa>

Promoting Tribal Self-Governance,
<https://www.bia.gov/as-ia/osg>

Meaningful Consultation,
<https://www.bia.gov/service/tribal-consultations>

Placing Land into Trust,
<https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/fee-to-trust>

Historical BIA Photographs

Approximately 18,000 Bureau of Indian Affairs photographs in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration are now available in an online, searchable photo library. Nearly 13,000 of the photographs were taken on South Dakota reservations. The pictures reveal scenes of everyday life with most pictures from 1930-1949 (such as those depicted above) with some undated pictures in the collection.

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is seeking input from the public via its Citizen Archivist Program to identify photos. Online users may sign up for the program, and once enrolled, help with the process of identifying photo locations and subjects.

Site users can browse and filter images by [tribal nation](#), state, and topic.



Bureau of Indian Affairs Photographs Finding Aid home page

<https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/bia/photos/>

DIVISION OF ENERGY & MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (DEMD)



Sand and Gravel piles and oil rigs on the Fort Berthold reservation at sunset

Competitive Grant Programs

[Energy and Mineral Development Program](#)

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

Some common task areas include:

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

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

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

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

The Business Services Branch has the lead role in the implementation of the TEDC grant.

The TEDC grant can be used for a variety of projects. These are some of the frequent studies:

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

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

DEMD, BRANCH OF FLUID MINERALS (BFM)

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

Typical technical services include

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

Wind River Tribe acquires Steamboat Oil Field

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



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

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

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

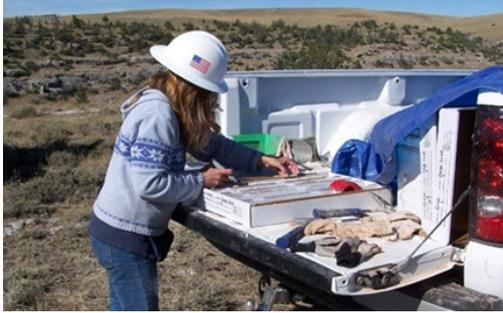
Uintah & Ouray Tribe Meeting with Ovintiv

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

Rocky Boys 3D Seismic Grant Project

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

DEMD, BRANCH OF SOLID MINERALS (BSM)



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

Construction Aggregate Development

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

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

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

Customized Aggregate Demand Reports

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

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

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



Laying down aggregate road base

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

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

Cloud Based Host for NIOGEMS

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

Benefits

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

DEMD, BRANCH OF GEOTECHNICAL DATA SERVICES (GDS)

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

Typical technical services include

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

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

DEMD Project Map

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

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

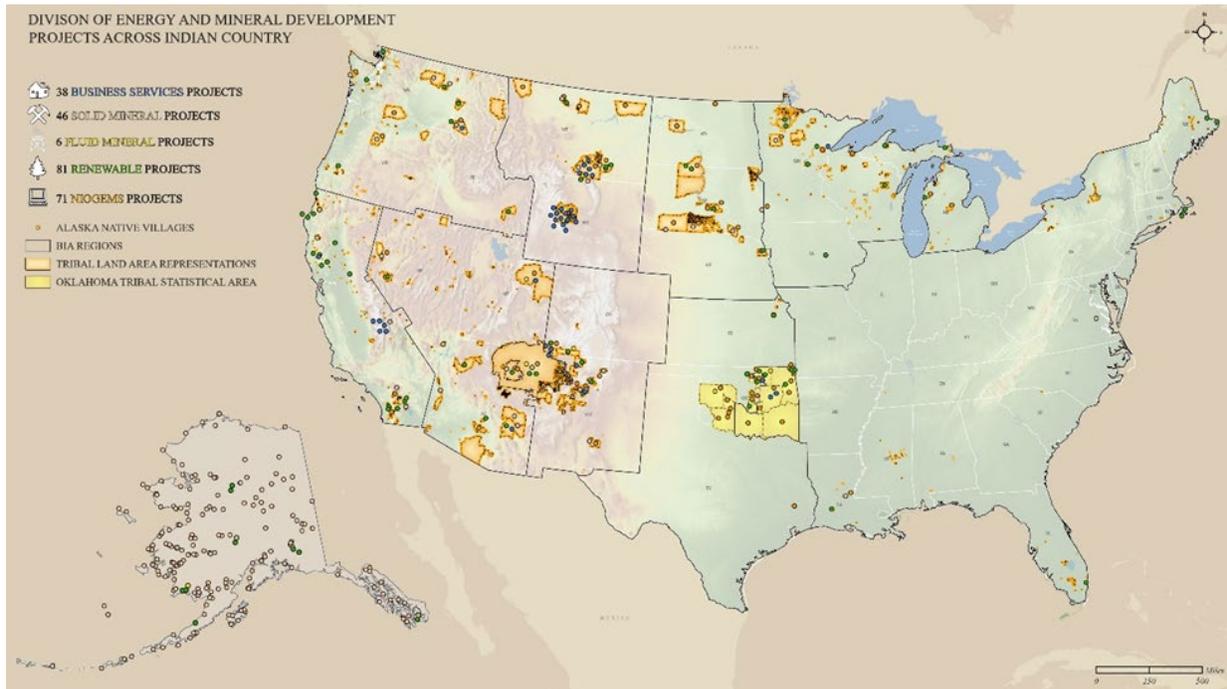
Reprocessed over 150 miles of Tribal 2D seismic lines, and additional 3D seismic surveys related to current and potential Tribal projects. Completed seismic acquisition parameter testing in advance of potential Tribal seismic project.

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

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

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

FY 2022-2023 DEMD Project Map



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

DEMD, BRANCH OF RENEWABLE & DISTRIBUTED GENERATION (BRAD)

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

Typical technical services include

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



Solar array and Fond du Lac

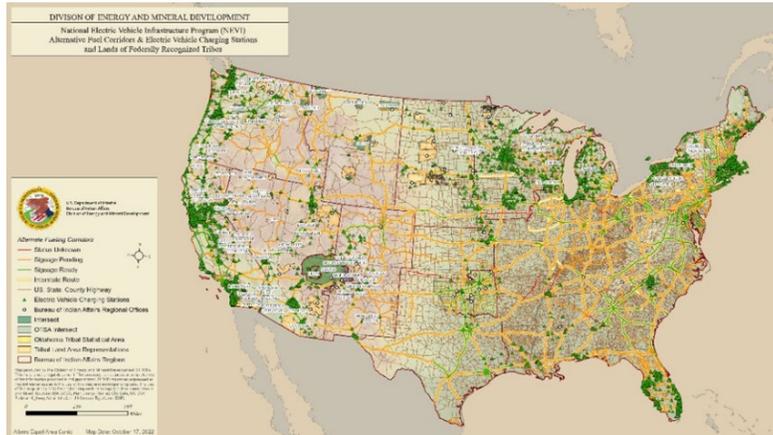
Commodities Served

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

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

- Microgrid solutions as a means of improving energy resilience and reliability at critical tribal facilities
- Technical and economic viability of solar development on or adjacent to tribal facilities
- Evaluating the development of utility-scale solar on tribal land and helping to identify and address any associated challenges
- Working with tribes to assess resource potential and economic feasibility of geothermal development and subsequent energy generation
- Proposed partnership contracts from 3rd party developers
- Technical scope of work material to ensure accurate and up-to-date analysis of renewable energy development feasibility
- Development of hydropower resources
- Identify portfolio solutions of multiple renewable energy options for enhancing tribal sovereignty and promoting cost savings and/or revenue generation for the Tribe
- Assisting tribes to understand the incentives and potential benefits associated with the installation and ownership of electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure
- Informing tribes on grant funding opportunities, both within and outside of DEMD, available for clean energy development
- Explain the many benefits provided to Tribes under the [Inflation Reduction Act](#), including incentives that are specific to tribal clean energy projects

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



Electric Vehicle Initiative

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

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

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

Next Steps

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

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

Renewable Energy Accelerated Deployment Initiative (READI) for Indian Country

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

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

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

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

DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES & CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (DESCRM)



DESCRM, BRANCH OF TRIBAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE (TCR)

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

History

The BIA, Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR) was established in 2011 to enable Tribal and BIA Office of Trust Services Programs to incorporate climate considerations into their programs' planning and decision-making. The TCR's purpose is to fulfill trust responsibility to Federal recognized Tribal Nations by supporting and building Tribal capacity for climate resilience efforts through both technical and financial assistance.

Program Realignment and Support

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

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)

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

The new infrastructure funding has allowed funding for eleven Tribal communities to participate in the White House-led interagency [Voluntary Community Driven Relocation](#) (CDR) Demonstration Projects Program. The Department of the Interior (DOI) committed \$115M to support communities facing relocation, managed retreat, and protect-in-place decisions because of climate change impacts.

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

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



Village of Napakiak, Alaska at risk of severe erosion by the nearby Kuskokwim River
 Photo credit: U.S. Air Force/Alaska National Guard 20

Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Program

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

- Relocation grants for severely impacted communities currently ready to implement relocation and managed retreat plans
- Planning grants for communities that need additional planning support in evaluating climate threats and mitigation strategies

Relocation Grant Recipients
 \$25M each over five years

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

Planning Grant Recipients
 \$5M each over two years

Tribe	State
Chitimacha Tribe	LA
Havasupai Tribe	AZ
Huslia Village	AK
Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in	AK
Native Village of Nelson Lagoon	AK
Native Village of Point Lay	AK
Passamaquoddy Indian Tribe	ME
Yurok Tribe	CA

Modernizing Annual Awards Program Software

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

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

BIA Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR) Regional Assessment

The BIA Branch of Tribal Climate Resilience (TCR) Regional Assessment aims to evaluate the effectiveness of TCR's Annual Awards Program and technical assistance and incorporate direct Tribal input to meet Tribal needs and priorities. To provide more effective assistance to Tribal communities moving forward; BIA staff, in partnership with staff from the United States Geological Survey (USGS), interviewed Tribal employees to gather their feedback on their approaches to climate adaptation as well as their experiences with TCR services. We encourage you to read the full report [TCR Regional Assessment Report December 2022](#).

Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Demonstration Project Kick-off Meetings

During the month of February, the TCR Branch organized virtual kickoff meetings for many of the Tribes that were chosen to participate in the Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Demonstration Project. The meeting aimed to give the Tribes an overview of the project and its upcoming stages. Towards the end of the meeting, the participating Tribes had an opportunity to ask questions, provide suggestions, and raise any concerns they had.

RMP Cohort Training

On February 28, through March 2, 2023, the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) hosted the 2023 Community-Led Relocation, Managed Retreat, and Protect-in-Place (RMP) Coordinator Winter Retreat, located in Anchorage, Alaska. During this three-day period, peers exchanged knowledge and brainstormed RMP decisions and processes. Funding and technical resources were also shared, along with tips on how to approach application processes. No matter what step in the RMP process communities were in, everyone walked away with resources and information that will help further current and future goals.

History of Grants Awarded

Financial Assistance includes the TCR Annual Awards in which over 700 awards have been distributed totaling more than \$74 million as of September 24, 2021. The TCR has funded over 250 adaptation plans and vulnerability and risk assessments over the last 11 years.

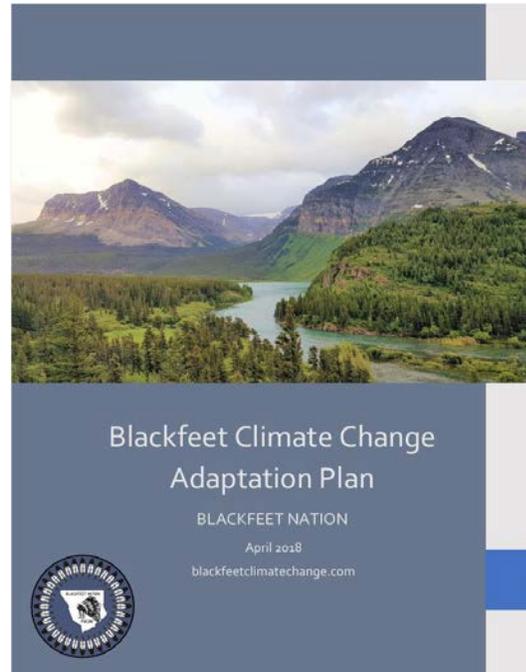
Tribes can leverage TCR programs to further support their existing operations, program planning, project design, as well as incorporate indigenous and Traditional Knowledges into their management and protection of Trust resources and Tribal economies.

Due to the availability of TCR awards and other funding, many Tribes now have climate adaptation plans. Thus, both TCR and Tribes are at a new stage compared to a decade ago and have new opportunities to pursue.

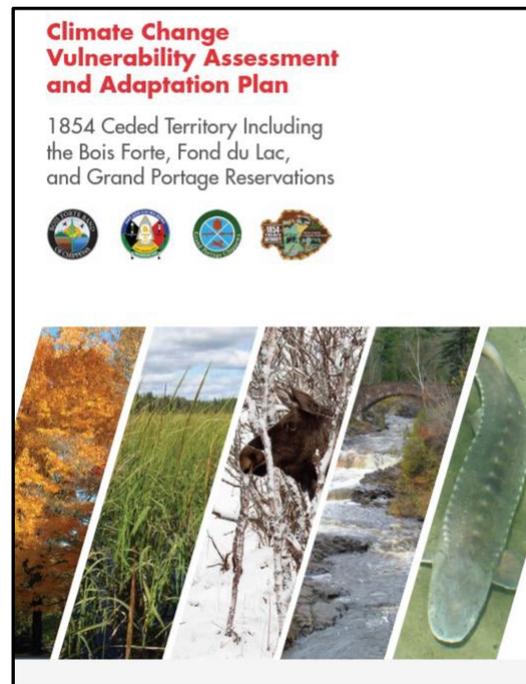
National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Library of Tribal Plans

The National Congress of American Indians website posts current formal climate assessment and adaptation plans and strategies developed by individual tribal nations and inter-tribal organizations.

[Click here](#) to visit NCAI Climate Action: Tribal Approaches page and view tribal plans such as those posted on the right.



Blackfeet Climate Change Adaptation Plan



Vulnerability Assessment for Three Wisconsin Tribes

Tribal Climate Resilience Liaisons

TCR funds a network of multi-regional Tribal Climate Resilience Liaisons to assist Tribes in addressing science-based needs available through the national and regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASC), to improve climate adaptation planning efforts. This may include offering technical assistance to Federally recognized Tribes serving as extension agents, facilitating research, linking Tribal needs to available resources, and coordinating trainings, workshops, forums, and exchanges.

Liaisons are supported through TCR's unique partnership with regional Tribal organizations that employ the Liaisons. Currently, there are 12 liaisons spanning across seven liaison regions, and the network continues to grow in capacity.

Introducing New Regional Climate Resilience Coordinators

We have 5 of 8 new regional tribal climate coordinator positions filled. Keith Candelaria, Sheena Schemm, Matthew Laramie, Jennifer Robinette (not pictured), and Shaina Tallas, Elisha Flores, and Stephen Scott Haskie. A few of the new employees are highlighted in this newsletter.



Shaina Tallas (Navajo), Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Coordinator (Navajo, Southwest, Western Regions)

Shaina joined the Division in December 2022 and has a decade of experience in tribal environmental programs, managing air quality and wildland fire smoke programs, federal grants, and environmental compliance. Shaina earned a bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences from Haskell Nations University, 2011. Her previous position was Environmental Protection Specialist (Smoke Management) with the BIA Western Region, Division of Forestry and Fire Management.



Elisha Flores (Natinixwe/Hoopa Valley Tribe), Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Coordinator (Pacific Region)

Elisha began her career as a Regional Tribal Climate Resilience Coordinator in January 2023. Prior to joining the division, Elisha worked in Tribal Forestry and brings with her experience in forestry and natural resource management, particularly related to forest health, restoration, and climate resilience.



Stephen "Scott" Haskie (Navajo), Staff Assistant

Scott is the DESCRM Staff Assistant and joined DESCRM in January 2023. Scott has executive level administration experience supporting a BIA region, directors, vice presidents, and senior executive teams. Scott has additional administration experience in Human Resources, financial management, diversity inclusion, and multitasking.

DESCRM, BRANCH OF CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & MUSEUM PROGRAM (CRM/MP)

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

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

Archaeological Resources Protection Act (ARPA)

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

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

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

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

Archaeological Resources Protection Training Program (XP)

Two [ARPA classes](#) were conducted with the Office of Justice Service's Indian Police Academy focused on the professional development of program staff working in archaeological investigations:

- Archaeologists
- Law enforcement personnel
- Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO)
- Cultural preservation programs

The five-day course is designed to provide insight into archaeological and cultural resource investigative matters, with both classroom and actual field work curriculum. The course includes a twelve-hour archeological crime scene practical exercise where law enforcement officers and archeologists work as a team to investigate and document a crime scene.

Students learn about new techniques and investigative material and will learn how to implement those techniques during actual fieldwork.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA)

Federal Register Notice

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

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

Museum Collections Move

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



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

Museum Collections Inventory

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

DESCRM, BRANCH OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES (BES)

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

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

NEPA Tracker 2.0

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

New Sanitation Lines Categorical Exclusion

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

BIE Environmental Auditing Activities

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



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

Central Hazmat Funding (CHF)

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

In FY23, received Central Hazmat Fund for ongoing cleanup work at the Tar Creek Mining Site, Oklahoma.

DIVISION OF FORESTRY (DF)



DYNA SC-14 firewood processor

Mission

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

Service Area Statistics on Management of Indian Forests

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



Processor splitting logs

Rocky Boy Tribe of Montana Firewood Processor

The Rocky Boy Tribe of Montana have been cutting and delivering firewood to tribal members since 2021 with funds furnished by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Central Office. The funds were utilized to purchase a DYNA SC-14 firewood processor. A firewood processor is a machine designed to cut and split firewood with minimal manual handling of the logs.



Seasonal wildland fire personnel operating the processor which saws logs and splits them for firewood

Wildland Fire Personnel Trained

Seasonal wildland fire personnel have been trained to safely operate the processor and they deliver firewood to tribal elders and disabled community members. The forest development department has other equipment that are also used for procuring the firewood.



They have a skid steer with a grapple attachment to handle logs out in the woods.



They also have a D38 Caterpillar dozer with a 100' cable and six chokers to safely pull logs off cull decks

Logging Contract

The tribe has contracted a local logger from Havre, Montana to deliver log truck loads to a local yard so that they can have shorter deliver distance with their trucks and an 8' x 16' dual axle trailer. Recently, 'cleats' were purchased for the skid steer so that they can operate more efficiently on frozen ground. The tribe will continue to assess their operations and determine if additional equipment is needed to be more efficient in processing and delivering firewood.

The primary wood utilized is Douglas fir trees and ponderosa pine. To date, approximately 500 loads have been processed and delivered.

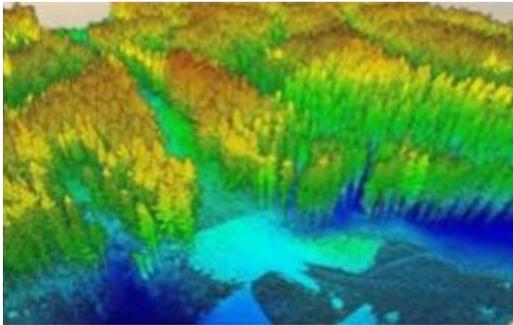


Ponderosa pine stand

Douglas-fir is ideal for residential, commercial and construction projects. Ponderosa pine is one of the tallest trees growing to over 200 feet, with trunks 3-4 feet across. It is used in woodworking for fabricating architectural woodwork, furniture, and specialty projects. It is used for doors, blinds, molding, paneling, Interior woodwork and built-in cases and cabinets.

Light Detection and Ranging (Lidar)

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



Lidar Imaging of a Forest

Forestry Geospatial Information Services (GIS)

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

Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS)

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

DFM, TIMBER TEAM

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

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

Vacant Positions

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



Tree Coring on the Chehalis Stand Exam

Timber Team Technical Assistance to Tribes

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

INDIAN ENERGY SERVICE CENTER (IESC)



IESC Services Provided

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

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

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

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

- Expediting leasing, permitting, and reporting for conventional and renewable energy on Indian lands
- Providing resources to ensure development occurs safely while protecting the environment

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

Bipartisan Infrastructure Legislation (BIL)

Orphaned and Abandoned Wells \$150 million earmarked for Tribes the IESC is coordinating with the Department and the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC). Tribes were given a closing date of February 21, 2023, to apply for funding.

IESC will be assisting OEPC with grant review and on-going technical assistance for program development. The OEPC is the lead on this BIL activity. IESC will be collaborating on these future activities:

- Tribal grant application processing
- Tribal program development (capacity building)
- In lieu of Tribal Projects (Contract services through Bureau of Land Management (BLM) indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract)
- Coordination with Direct Grant Awards to Tribes
- Support of reporting requirements of the BIL



IESC attended the Osage Regulations consultation on February 8, 2023, at the Osage Casino and hotel in Skiatook, Oklahoma

Tribal Consultation on Proposed Revisions to Osage Regulations 25 CFR 226

The Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs announced on January 12, 2023, the proposed revisions to the federal regulations at 25 C.F.R. Part 226 regarding leasing of the Osage Mineral Estate for oil and gas mining. The proposed revisions reflect modern industry standards, advances in technologies and changes to operations within the Osage Mineral Estate since the last substantive revision to the regulations in 1974. The proposed revisions make Osage Mineral Estate energy growth consistent with operations across Indian Country. The Department will accept written comments from the public through March 17, 2023.

Renewable Energy Accelerated Development Initiative (READI)

The IESC in collaboration with the Division of Energy and Mineral Development (DEMD) are developing a proactive process within the Department that supports Tribes and individual Indian owners by significantly increasing the pace of renewable energy development on Indian lands.

An executive work group, technical work group and work group planning in progress, will be established which will include key federal agency staff and Tribal leaders.

A professional services contract will be procured to start on April 1, 2023, and end on November 30, 2023. FY 2024 will implement final recommendations report.

Standard Operating Procedures Fluid Minerals – Indian Training

Multi-Agency Standard Operating Procedures Training. The Onshore Energy and Mineral Lease Management Interagency Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) establishes policies for government agency collaboration for energy and mineral leasing on federal and Indian trust land. The SOP establishes common standards and methods for creating efficient and effective working relationships between government agencies to achieve the DOI goal of accurate energy and minerals accountability for onshore federal and Indian lands. The SOP is a living document that can be adjusted to reflect the evolving needs of stakeholders. Regular reviews and coordinated updates with the impacted organizations throughout DOI improve the performance of interagency activities by eliminating procedural ambiguities, establishing clear responsibilities, and updated organizational references.

Course Name: Standard Operating Procedures Fluid Minerals – Indian Training

Dates: March 28-29, 2023

Method: Virtual class

Target Audience: Federal employees working with Indian Minerals

Federal Partnership Charter Meetings

The purpose of a Federal Partnership team is to serve as a Department of the Interior inter-bureau/office forum for Indian energy and mineral resource development, royalty management coordination, and information exchange at the local office level. The departmental bureaus and offices represented on the Partnership team operate under the Federal trust responsibility to Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Indian allottees, and Alaska Natives.

Upcoming Federal Partner's Meetings have been scheduled for the Fiscal Year.

Rocky Mountain Region, March 9, 2023

Navajo Region, April 6, 2023

Uintah & Ouray, May 4, 2023

Executive Management Group (EMG) Meeting

The Executive Management Group (EMG) will provide the IESC Director with a broader scope of expertise, technical assistance, and advocacy. The EMG may provide 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 individuals or their delegate:

- Director, BIA
- Director, ONRR
- Assistant Director for Energy, Mineral and Realty Management, BLM
- Director, BTFA

EMG Meeting: June 13, 2023

Time: 8:30 AM-1:00PM EST

Location: Washington, DC

Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee Meeting

The Indian Energy and Minerals Steering Committee (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.

The BIA, BLM, the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (IEED), the Office of Surface Mining (OSM), the Office of Natural Resources Revenue (ONRR), BTFA, and the Office of Minerals Evaluation (OME). The IEMSC's goal is to share information and resolve 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.

IEMSC Meeting: June 14, 2023

Time: 8:00 AM-4:30 PM MST

Location: Washington, DC

IESC Communitization Agreement (CA) Bootcamp Training

WebEx training provided via WebEx to BIA and Tribal Contract/Compact staff. Instructors provided by CGI and IESC Realty Specialist. Additional courses will be posted on the web site as they are scheduled.

Date: February 24, 2023

Time: 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM MST

Method: Virtual

DIVISION OF LAND TITLES AND RECORDS (LTRO)



Sunset over forested lands

Title Defect Correction Project

The Division of Land, Titles, and Records (DLTR) in partnership with the Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) started a "Title Defect Correction Project" in October 2022. The Regional LTROs were assigned to review uncorrected or active title defects appearing on Title to determine if corrections have been submitted by the Agency Office.

- If corrections had been done, the LTRO would add a corrected date to the defect encumbrance removing it from Title
- If no correction has been submitted, the LTRO will advise the Agency that a correction document is required

Spreadsheets were created using TAAMS and provided to LTRO for review. This is ongoing.

What is the Chain of Title?

The linkage of property ownership that connects the past and present owners to their original source documents of the title ownership.

A title defect on a title indicates that the conveyance or encumbering document has an error on it that may impact the transfer or encumbering of the title.

Examples of defective title issues:

- No approval date on deed/lease/other documents
- No approval signature on document
- No notary date or signature on deed
- Wrong legal description
- No landowner signature on deed
- Duplicate document
- No or incorrect approval authority or regulation cited

National Parcelization Project

The National Parcelization Project being performed by Cartographic Technicians at some Regions has progressed to 92.2% of Land Area Codes completed and 70% of Parcels and Parcels with codes completed. The project is ongoing.

What is parcelization?

Parcelization is converting PLSS Land Description Data From TAAMS/PLSS to Tract and Parcel Boundary and Attribute Data for Mapping

Lockbox Phase 3

This on-going project began March 1, 2023, to address the outstanding checks and unallocated payment amounts found in TAAMS Lockbox. To date over 271 checks have been addressed totaling resulting in over \$2.55M for distribution to owners.

DIVISION OF NATURAL RESOURCES (DNR)



Ft. Belknap Yellowstone Bison paddock and Menominee Fish and Wildlife Sturgeon recover project

Mission

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

- Natural resources
- Indian Treaty rights
- Fish and wildlife management
- Environmental Quality
- Federal regulatory direction
- Youth education and Climate Resilience

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

- Soil, water, farmland, rangeland, bison restoration
- Fish and wildlife resources
- Endangered and invasive species
- Conservation law enforcement
- Youth, education within Natural Resources
- Treaty resource protection and implementation

DNR, BRANCH OF AGRICULTURE AND RANGE (AR)

BIA Collaboration

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

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

Bison Program

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

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

New Bison Management Apprenticeship Program

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

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

Invasive Noxious Weeds

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

DNR, BRANCH OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND RECREATION (FW&R)

Invasive Species Funding obtained through Infrastructure law

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



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

Hatchery Construction Funding obtained through the Inflation Reduction Act

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



Mescalero Apache Tribe fish hatchery raises trout

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tribal Youth Initiative

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



California Condor, endangered species

Endangered Species Program

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

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

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

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

Invasive Species Program

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

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

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



Removal of invasive species from lake

DIVISION OF PROBATE SERVICES (DPS)



Trust Asset and Accounting Management System (TAAMS)

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

System Updates and Testing

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

Audits Completed

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

Collaboration with Federal Partners

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

Probate

High Impact Service Providers (HISP) Project

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

- Accessing a Probate Order
- Receiving Trust Assets

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

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

DIVISION OF REAL ESTATE SERVICES (DRES)



Monument Valley on the Navajo Reservation

Mission

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

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

Tribal Consultation on Land Acquisition

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

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

HEARTH Act

The Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership Act of 2012 (HEARTH Act) is a voluntary, more efficient land-leasing process for Tribes. Under the HEARTH Act, once Tribes' governing leasing regulations are submitted to and approved by the Secretary of the Interior, they are authorized to negotiate and enter surface leases under their approved HEARTH Act regulations without further approval from Interior.

Since the beginning of 2023 DOI approved three (3) HEARTH Acts

February 2023

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

March 2023

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

New! Indian Affairs Manual (IAM)

Finalized 52 IAM 1, Overview on February 15, 2023. This IAM establishes the policy and responsibilities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Real Estate Services (DRES) program, scope, authority, guidance, handbooks, and responsibilities.

National Policy Memos (NPM) under Revision

NPM-TRUS-42, Administrative Fees – Retention and Collection for certain goods and services for Real Estate Services. This policy standardizes internal controls for collecting, tracking, and retaining administrative fees for certain goods and services for real estate services provided by the BIA on behalf of Indian Tribes. The policy clarifies BIA's authority to collect under 25 U.S.C. 413 and retain certain administrative fees for realty transactions under 25 U.S.C. 14b.

NPM-TRUS-44, Streamlining the Rights-of-way (ROW) and Business Lease Application process for Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Telecommunication, and Renewable Energy Projects. This policy memorandum establishes Bureau of Indian Affairs policy for the efficient and effective processing of Rights-of-Way (ROWS) and Business Leases for projects funded by the American Rescue Plan Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) also known as Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), as well as Telecommunications and Renewable Energy Projects.

FTT Strike Team Re-Established

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

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

FTT Cases Accomplishments as of April 3, 2023

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

FTT Overview Training

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

Broadband

Streamlining Rights-of-Way Policy Update

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

BIA Lockbox Distributes \$3.9M

DRES worked with BIA Regions nationwide to get 418 checks completed with an unallocated balance paid out of \$3,965,730. The amount in the unallocated balances column of the table below tracks the progress made in check matching and disbursements in 2023.

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



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

DIVISION OF RESOURCE INTEGRATION & SERVICES (DRIS)



BIA Real Estate Services and Esri staff

Mission

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

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

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

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

Smartsheets Software Acquired

Smartsheets will be deployed to support the following project tracking

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

DRIS, BRANCH OF GEODATA EVALUATION AND VALIDATION (GEV)

Strategic Plan

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

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

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

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

Fee to Trust GIS Strike Team

Meetings to Share Information

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

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

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

Legal Description Evaluation and Validation (LDEV) Requests

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



Sample Parcel Map

Parcel Team

Mapping Indian Tracts

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

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

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

New GIS Data Request Form

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



Diagram of a right of way

Rights of Way Team

Services provided

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

Completed

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

DRIS, BRANCH OF GEOSPATIAL SUPPORT (BOGS)

Data Dashboards under Construction

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

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

Electric Vehicle Charging Station Application

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

Smartsheets

Continued planning, design, and prototyping of BIA OTS Solution Trust Accountability Tracker (STAT) software, aka Smartsheet.gov Software-as-a-Service.

BIA OTS STAT consists of a suite of project management, tracking, analysis, and collaboration tools that unlocks enterprise data beyond spreadsheets. Clarifying scope and specifics of BIA OTS STAT 1.0 solution for Authority to Operate (ATO) boundary.

Technical Meetings

Branch of Geodata Evaluation and Validation completed a technical meeting in Pacific region January 31 – February 1, 2023, for NPM-TRUS-43.

Branch of Geodata Evaluation and Validation will conduct a technical meeting for NPM-TRUS-43 for Southwest and Navajo Regions on April 18-20, 2023.

DIVISION OF TRUST LAND CONSOLIDATION (DTLC)



DTLC Hosts Two Tribal Listening Sessions

The Division of Trust Land Consolidation (DTLC) hosted two virtual Tribal Listening Sessions in September 2022 to gather input regarding BIA land consolidation efforts. DTLC is using the recorded and written comments to develop a comprehensive plan that will be presented during Tribal consultations soon.

DTLC Extends Offers to Fort Belknap Landowners

After the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations ended in November 2022, DTLC worked hard to extend its initial land purchase offers at locations with current appraisals. In January 2023, DTLC extended 128 offers, with a total value of \$2.8 million, to owners of fractional trust land interests at its pilot location, the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana. DTLC purchased 91 fractional interests and consolidated 2,946 equivalent acres in trust for the Fort Belknap Tribes. In February 2023, DTLC also sent a small wave of offers to landowners on the Pine Ridge Reservation. The next planned implementation is tentatively scheduled for early May 2023.

DTLC Enters into Agreement to Obtain Additional Appraisals

DTLC and the Appraisal and Valuation Services Office (AVSO) entered into an agreement for AVSO to update mass appraisal models for three locations in 2023. DTLC will be able to use these appraisals for up to a year for additional purchase offers to further reduce Indian land fractionation.

Julius Snell Joins DTLC

Julius Snell, enrolled Navajo, joined DTLC in November 2022 on detail from the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration to provide critical assistance with planning and coordination for BIA land consolidation efforts going forward. Prior to joining DTLC, Julius last worked as a Senior Advisor – Tribal Relations with the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (LBBP). Prior to working with LBBP, Julius was a Presidential Management Fellow and worked with Real Estate Services at Central Office for two years.



Julius Snell with a 16-pound Lahontan Cutthroat Trout from Pyramid Lake Reservation. Also, teaching a group of Paiute women how to tie flies

DIVISION OF WATER AND POWER (DWP)



To'hajiilee Community School During 2022 Flooding, To'hajiilee, NM

Mission

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

The DWP includes three branches

- Branch of Irrigation and Power
- Branch of Safety of Dams
- Branch of Water Resources

The Safety of Dams Branch is the focus of this issue of the Newsletter.

Safety of Dams assists with Flood Protection Feasibility at To'hajiilee Community School

The To'hajiilee Community School, located on the Navajo Nation, was built in 1935 by BIA as a first to third grade school, and later expanded through a major construction project to accommodate grade levels from kindergarten through 12th grade.

Unfortunately, the school was built in a floodplain prone to seasonal flooding from the upstream canyon.

To keep the school safe from the frequent floods, local school, and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) staff constructed earthen berms and ditches to move water way from the campus. Over the past few years, these berms were nearly overtopped on several occasions and some flood waters were able to impact the campus, causing school officials to evacuate children and quickly move vehicles out of harm's way.



To'hajiilee Community School Earthen Berms During July 2021 Flood

During the fall of 2021, the BIE Division of Facilities and Safety Management reached out to the Safety of Dams Branch to provide technical assistance for a flood study at the Community School. BIA SOD contracted with RJH Consultants, Inc., out of Englewood, CO, to perform a detailed hydrologic and hydraulic analysis to inform feasibility level costs to construct an engineered flood protection levee around the school campus.

The feasibility level design and cost estimate were used by the BIE to quantify the costs required to rehabilitate the campus to meet minimum safety standards, in addition to other issues at the campus. Ultimately, the total estimated costs were substantial enough to justify relocation of the school entirely out of the floodplain. In December of 2022, the Congressionally approved omnibus spending bill included \$90.465M for “necessary expenses related to the consequences of flooding at the To’hajillee Community School.”

Safety of Dams assists with Interim Repair of Dam Breach on the Red Lake Reservation

On the weekend of July 4, 2022, an eight-mile-long dam embankment impounding water critical to the Kiwosay Wildlife Management Area (KWMA) within the Red Lake Reservation, Minnesota breached at the location of an outlet conduit. The 80-foot-wide by 13-foot-high breach resulted in the release of an eight-foot-high flood wave which damaged wild rice paddies downstream of the embankment and Reservation Highway 4 along the crest of the embankment. It also drained and endangered over 8,000 acres of critical wetland, aquatic, and avian habitat within the KWMA.

Constructed in the 1960s by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the KWMA first came to the attention of the BIA Safety of Dams (SOD) Branch in early 2022 when the Red Lake Nation (Nation) reported the facility for inclusion in the SOD inventory of dams. A few months later, the dam breached, and the Nation reached out to the BIA SOD Branch for assistance.

However, as a significant hazard potential facility (a facility where failure is expected to result in economic or environmental damage but no life loss), the KWMA did not qualify for immediate SOD funding which is prioritized for high hazard potential facilities (facilities where failure is expected to result in life loss). Even so, the BIA Safety of Dams Branch and the Division of Environmental Services and Cultural Resources Management worked together to procure funding and provide technical dam safety assistance to the Nation to affect an interim repair of the breach, and by early November 2022 the breach was plugged and water levels in the KWMA were rising, restoring critical habitat in time for the start of winter.



A view of a portion of the Kiwosay Wildlife Management Area



The 80-foot-wide by 13-foot-tall breach through the dam

Work at the KWMA is ongoing with installation of a new outlet conduit expected to be completed in the spring of 2023. However, additional work will be needed at the KWMA once the interim repair is completed to rehabilitate the aging structure and bring the entire eight-mile-long facility up to modern dam construction standards.

The BIA SOD Branch is continuing to work with the Nation and other BIA and federal partners to identify funding and affect repairs that will allow the KWMA to keep providing the Nation with traditional food sources, youth educational opportunities, and thousands of acres of critical wetland and aquatic habitat for decades to come.

Early Warning System and Dam Tender Training

BIA SOD Branch collaborated with the Western Region to provide hands-on Early Warning System and Dam Tender Training to 22 participants in January 2023.

- Participants spent day 1 learning fundamentals related to dams and visited the Tat Momolikot Dam on the Tohono O'odham Nation to conduct a mock dam inspection
- Day 2 and 3 training focused on the monitoring system, also known as the Early Warning System, with hands-on instruction in how to maintain the monitoring instruments, make repairs, and conduct troubleshooting when equipment malfunctions

The training was designed to provide participants with basic skills needed for their roles as dam tenders. SOD will continue to coordinate dam safety training opportunities throughout the regions. Another training session was conducted in the Great Plains Region in March 2023.



Trainees learn how to maintain EWS equipment



Photo from the 2019 Safety of Dams Workshop

Safety of Dams Workshop

The 2023 Safety of Dams Workshop will be held in-person on March 14-16, 2023, 8 am to 4:30 pm, in Albuquerque, New Mexico at the National Indian Program Training Center. The workshop includes presentations on dam safety topics, Emergency Action Plan training, and talks by invited speakers on Indian self-determination and FEMA's Dam Collaborative Technical Assistance Program. Please contact Ali Knaak by email at Allison.knaak@bia.gov for more information.

Division of Water and Power Chief

After nearly 38 years federal service, Dave Fisher, Division of Water and Power Chief, retired in December 2022. We wish him the best in his next endeavors. Rod Eisenbraun, Safety of Dams Branch Chief, will be serving as the Acting Division Chief until further notice.

DIVISION OF WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT (DWFM)



BIA Aviation Meeting and view of Hualapai Reservation lands

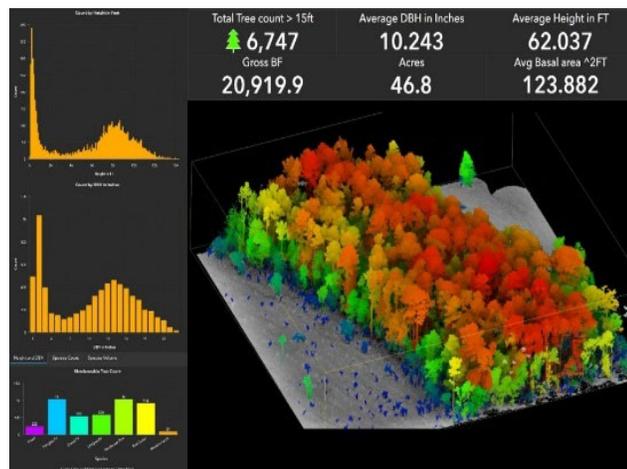
BIA National Aviation Office Meets for Annual Training Week

February 6 – 10, 2023, 64 aviation staff members ranging from squad leaders to regional staff from all BIA regions gathered in San Diego, CA for annual National Aviation Training. The weeklong training provided staff the opportunity to complete annual wildland fire refresher trainings in one trip, receive contracting, program and policy updates, leadership development training and network across regions and Tribal nations.

“The annual aviation training provides a good opportunity to receive the necessary training to comply with the various standards that aviation staff need to be successful in their various position,” said Dave Underwood, BIA DWFM Acting Aviation Director. “The training week also provides staff the opportunity to network with people we speak to but don’t see often and use tools such as those provided by SwitchBack OS for leadership development.”

Hualapai Tribe Uses Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding to Implement LiDAR in Natural Resource Management

The Hualapai (People of the Tall Pine) Tribe is in northwest Arizona with a land base that encompasses over a million acres. The land has four primary fuel types: timber – Ponderosa Pine, woodland – Pinyon and Juniper, grassland – sage, and riparian – Cottonwood and Salt Cedar. In FY2022, \$1,898,187 of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding, amounting to approximately \$1.85 per acre, was granted to the Tribe for a 5-year project called Jump Start.



LiDAR imaging taken of land within the Hualapai Reservation in the fall of 2022



American Bison graze in newly restored grasslands on the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Indian Reservation in northeast Kansas

BIA Supports Restoration of Bison Populations Through Wildland Fire Management

On March 3, 2023, the Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland announced that significant action will be taken by the Department to restore bison populations as part of the new restoration and resilience framework. The action is in effort to help restore what was once 60 million American bison in North America that dwindled down to less than 500 due to uncontrolled hunting and a U.S. policy of eradication tied to controlling Tribes through their means of sustenance, shelter, and cultural ties.

In support of the Secretary's bison initiative, over the past seven years, the Bureau of Indian Affairs Division of Wildland Fire Management has provided Tribes with Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) funding to use fire in various ways to support bison restoration.

The RTRL program's intent is to provide Tribes the opportunities to conduct Tribally determined project work on ancestral lands regardless of ownership to enhance the health and resiliency of priority Tribal natural resources with high risks of wildland fire. As a historical cultural resource dating back over 10,000 years, bison restoration is a priority for Tribes throughout the nation. [Click here to read the full story.](#)

The project is using Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) technology to capture 3D imagery of the Tribe's vegetation, infrastructure, watersheds, and overall land to help the Tribe with numerous current and future land management and use projects. [Click here to read the full story featuring the Hualapai Tribe and BIL funding use.](#)

Division of Wildland Fire Management Employee Updates



*Jeniffer LaCounte,
Geographic
Information Specialist*

Jeniffer LaCounte, Anishinaabe, Aaniiih and Nakoda of the Fort Belknap Indian Community, is now serving as the Division's new Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist. Jeniffer started her position on February 12 with the Division's aviation program. She has been tasked with creating and housing GIS data along with creating and maintaining aviation's SharePoint and ArcGIS Hub sites. She will be managing the Division's Fire GIS and Aviation Data. Additionally, she is certified as a DOI Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Pilot.



*Anthony "TJ" Gholson,
Training Specialist*

Anthony Gholson, who goes by "TJ", accepted his position as the Division's new training specialist, where he began working on February 20. TJ will be serving as the BIA representative for the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Training and Development Unit at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, ID. With over 21 years of wildland fire experience, TJ brings a wealth of operations, training, and medical knowledge with him to the BIA and will be a great asset to our workforce.



*Jennifer Hickman,
Watershed Resource
Specialist*

Jennifer Hickman, who is Navajo and Mississippi Choctaw and a Tribal member of the Navajo Nation, joined the Division in October 2022 as the new watershed resource specialist in our Post Wildfire Recovery program. Jenn holds a B.S. Degree in Soil Science from New Mexico State University. She has served as soils expert on NEPA interdisciplinary teams for projects requiring ongoing monitoring to evaluate management plan effectiveness and implementation. She recently completed certification to assist with post fire Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation (BAER) approved treatments and has many years of experience working on BAER teams.



*Jeniffer Jeanne,
Administrative Officer*

We are pleased to have Jenn, Jeniffer, and TJ on our team at the Division of Wildland Fire Management! Additionally, congratulations to George Violante who is now the Division's permanent Assistant National Aviation Manager and Juliette Jeanne who is now the Division's permanent Administrative Officer. Both staff members completed a 120-detail in their positions prior to applying and accepting offers.

DIVISION OF WORKFORCE AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT (DWYD)



DWYD, INDIAN YOUTH SERVICE CORPS (IYSC)

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

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

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

DWYD, PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Pathways Program Modernization and Data Management

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

Social Media and Online Community Management

Summer 2023

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

Fall 2023

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

Snapshot of 2023 Pathways Cohort

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

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



Pathways Program Specialist Weston Cain discusses Pathways internship opportunity with Oklahoma State University Students at college outreach event

Upcoming Pathways Outreach Events

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

Pathways Intern Success Story



Raven Mingo, Pathways Intern at work

Interview

Halito (Hello)

My name is Raven Mingo, and I am a proud member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians as well as a student at the University of Southern Mississippi. My major is Sociology with a minor in American Indian studies. I have devoted my academic career to understanding Indigenous issues and methods of research regarding this specific population. I also have an avid passion for creating music and photography.

What is your tribal affiliation?

I am a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians.

Which college are you attending?

I am attending the University of Southern Mississippi.

What is your major/minor?

I am majoring in Sociology with a minor in American Indian Studies.

Where did you grow up?

I was born in Gallup, NM, but I grew up in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

How did you hear about the Pathways Program?

My tribal scholarship program sends out internship opportunities and other academic opportunities. Pathways was one of the ones offered to us tribal college students.

What was the application process like?

The application process was a breeze. I felt supported throughout the process and the communication was very prompt.

What interested you about working for the BIA?

I have always been interested in making a change in the way indigenous people are perceived. I gladly took the opportunity for the Pathways program because I believe it was the perfect opportunity to not only be a part of this change but also to provide real assistance to indigenous groups that need it.



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

DWYD, OFFICE OF WORKFORCE PLANNING (OWP)

Human Resource Courses for Designed for BIA

A survey was sent to leadership at BIA Regions to determine interest in Office of Personnel Management (OPM) courses in the areas of Job Assessment, Classification, and Performance Management. Course tuition is a group rate and limited to 20-30 participants. A lead time of 6-8 weeks is needed to schedule either virtual or in person sessions. Regions are now able to pool resources to cover the \$15,000 tuition for the following courses:

- Best Practices in Assessment Questionnaire Development
- Job Analysis
- Structured Interviews
- Classification Overview for Supervisors & Managers
- Communicate Like a Pro: Performance & Development Feedback
- From Counseling to Taking Action: Dealing with Poor Performance

Other courses for hiring managers and supervisors, upcoming supervisors, and team leaders

- Classification Overview for Supervisors and Managers (\$25,000)
- Crucial Conversations, Crucial Accountability (Price varies)

How To Register: Complete the survey form at <https://forms.office.com/g/A5ucPKP7gf>.

OTS Funded Training Courses

Workforce Development in coordination with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has established several human resource training opportunities for Office of Trust Services employees and managers. OTS has funded the courses below which may be taken virtually or in-person by OTS employees.

Employee

- Avoiding Burnout: Managing Stress and Fatigue
- Individual Resilience

Supervisors

- Recognizing Stress, Fatigue, and Burnout in Employees
- Leadership Resilience
- How to Manage a Virtual Team

Teams

- Team Resilience
- Teamwork and Communication in the Virtual Environment

Employees and Supervisors

- Overview of Succession Planning
- Overview of Workforce Planning
- Succession Planning
- Workforce Planning for Practitioners

How To Register: Coordinate with Line Officer as participation will require supervisory approval.

FOCUS ON THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION



Contact Us

Bureau of Indian Affairs
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
2021 Fourth Ave North
Billings, Montana 59101
Office: (406) 247-7943

Service Area

The Rocky Mountain Region provides services to nine (9) tribes in Montana and Wyoming through the Region and eight (8) BIA agencies. The Region encompasses a trust surface land base of about 8,747,000 acres. There are about 79,677 enrolled tribal members within the Region. The Regional Office is in Billings, Montana.

Federal Recognition of Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians

After 41 years from its first petition to the BIA for Federal recognition, the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians was granted Federal recognition December 20, 2019, pursuant to the Little Shell Tribe of Chippewa Indians Restoration Act of 2019, as authorized by the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020.

The Restoration Act makes the tribe and its more than 6,000 enrolled members eligible for services and benefits provided to federally recognized tribes and their

members, without regard to the existence of a reservation. The service area of the tribe is designated as the area comprised of Blaine, Cascade, Glacier, and Hill Counties, Montana.

The Rocky Mountain Regional Office provides these services to the tribe and its enrolled members.

Brief History

The Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians are part of the Pemina Band of Chippewa Indians. Records show the Ojibwa held approximately 63 million acres of land throughout what is now South Dakota, North Dakota, and Canada.

The Pemina Band entered into a treaty with the United States in the 1863 Treaty of Old Crossing, together with the Red Lake Band of Chippewa. In the 1892 McCumber Agreement between the Turtle Mountain Indians and the Commission, the Turtle Mountain Indian Reservation was established, but Chief Little Shell and the future Little Shell Band of Chippewa Indians refused settlement there. Some Little Shell members eventually settled on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Others migrated north and west into Saskatchewan and Alberta, and then later made their way back south into Montana.

FOCUS ON ROCKY MOUNTAIN DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR



The Deputy Regional Director for Trust Services serves as the designated official for maintaining and discharging the trust responsibility of the Secretary of the Interior through public laws, regulations and best business practices concerning individually owned native allotments. They are responsible for fiscal stewardship of Trust lands and Trust Resources.

Working jointly with the Deputy Regional Director for Indian Services, they work in partnership with the Bureau of Trust Funds Administration to administer individual Indian money accounts and trust asset management activities within the region. They work closely with tribal governments and organizations and American Indian leaders and individuals.



Jodi Camrud, Deputy Regional Director-Trust Services

Interview

Jodi Camrud, Deputy Regional Director-Trust Services is a member of the Turtle Mountain Chippewa and earned a Bachelor of Science in Business and Information Systems and Technology Management. Jodi reached her 28-year anniversary of Federal service in 2023 and was appointed to Deputy Regional Director-Trust Services in 2018.

What is your favorite Trust program and why?

All – because each rely on the other to achieve the greatest level of success.

What was your first BIA job?

My first job with BIA was an accounting technician with the Office of Trust Funds Management.

What advice would you give others who would like to be a Deputy Regional Director?

Be consistent and fair and do not take things personally.

What skill(s) is invaluable, and all managers should have working for BIA?

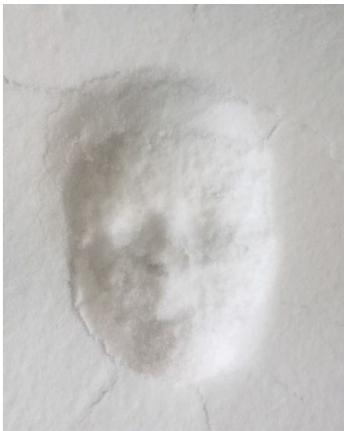
Objective and data driven decision making.

What was your biggest challenge during the pandemic and how did you address it?

The leadership team-maintained communications using MS Teams. The photo is one of our bi-annual Superintendent meetings that we would have normally held in person. We continue to use MS Teams for our weekly leadership and expanded leadership team meetings. Even after we returned to the office, meetings are always scheduled as hybrids with MS Teams and include call in options for people with intermittent or lower quality internet service.

What do you do for fun?

In Montana we have a lot of snow and outdoor activities are always fun. Recently, the snow face challenge has been bouncing around YouTube. When you have freshly fallen snow, you simply press your face into the snow to leave a cool 3D impression. Thus, the name "snow face" challenge.



Snow face challenge

Describe a memorable interaction with a tribal official, tribal council on a business matter. What was it? What were the results?

I worked for a non-profit organization that helped increase business opportunities for Tribes. While participating in a workshop for minority owned businesses, another participant asked me what type of minority I was. I said that I was Native American, and he responded with "what, in your pinky". I'm not sure how I would respond today but at that time, I laughed it off.

Shortly after, I was approached by a Tribal Chairman who overheard the conversation. He told me that if I'm asked that question again to say here, as he gestured to his heart, where it matters the most. That was more than 25 years ago and fortunately, I haven't had the opportunity to use that response.

What advice would you give others who would like to be a Deputy Regional Director?

Diverse experience is instrumental in an organization's growth. If you have an opportunity to work with a different agency, even in a detail capacity, take it. You will return to BIA or your permanent duty station with new business practices, new perspectives, and greater appreciation for the people you work with and the Tribes and communities.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION – WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT



Wildland fire burning in a forest

One Year Anniversary of Wisdom Wednesday Initiative

The Rocky Mountain Region Branch of Wildland Fire Management established a Wisdom Wednesday training series which started on February 16, 2022, with the intent of providing training on multiple wildland fire topics and providing a forum for information sharing.

Initially the series was focused on the local agency and tribal wildland fire units within the Rocky Mountain Region with topics identified and presented by the Regional Office wildland fire staff. During the past year Wisdom Wednesday has expanded and now includes Eastern, Great Plains, Eastern Oklahoma, Northwest, and Navajo Regions and has included presenters from multiple functional areas within the BIA Branch of Wildland Fire Management (BWFM) at the [National Interagency Fire Center](#) (NIFC), the [DOI Office of Wildland Fire](#) (OWF), BIA Central Office, and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

Library of Recorded Wisdom Wednesday Training Sessions

All sessions are held in MS Teams and recorded. The library of Wisdom Wednesday training sessions held to date include:

Safety Management

Fire Safety, Firefighter Health and Nutrition, Mental Health Matters, Accident Reporting and Serious Accident Investigation

Administration

Delegations of Authority, Working Capital Fund, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Wildland Fire Priorities, Federal Travel Regulations and Wildland Fire, Fire Timekeeping, Duty Officer Standards and Considerations, Training and Qualifications, Administratively Determined (AD) Hiring and Payment of emergency personnel, Procurement - Purchase Cards, Property Loss, Damage, Tracking & Claims

Collaboration

Local Government Cooperator Resources vs. Contractors, Interagency Cooperation and Agreements.



Wisdom Wednesday, January 11, 2023. Aaron Baldwin, BIA Fire Director, Branch of Wildland Fire Management Director at the National Interagency Fire Center, and Joe Majewski, DOI Office of Wildland Fire, talking about the future of wildland fire

Inter-Agency and Intra-Agency Wildland Fire Collaboration

The Wisdom Wednesday series is facilitated by RMR's Fire Business Lead and as the sessions have gained more attention, topic requests have been submitted by the field and the list of attendees has grown to include Line Officers, Regional Fire Management Officers, Agency, and Tribal Fire Management Officers, and several other Regional, Agency, and Tribal fire program staff from across Indian Country. The unanticipated growth of the Wisdom Wednesday series highlights the collaboration between BIA Regions and interagency partners that is the cornerstone of the wildland fire community and highlights the need for training and information sharing opportunities at a local level.



Wisdom Wednesday, January 11, 2023, Susan Messerly, BIA Rocky Mountain Regional Director, providing a leader's intent for 2023

Yellow Book Training

Currently the team is covering the Standards for Interagency Incident Business Management (Yellow Book) and focusing on a different chapter each week as they work through their "Wisdom Wednesday Yellow Book Series".



Wisdom Wednesday, February 22, 2023, Yellow Book Series, Chapter 20 - Acquisitions

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION – FEE TO TRUST



FTT Teams established

To focus on the Fee to Trust (FTT) case backlog in the Region, two realty specialist led teams were established: The Unstoppables and Gitter Done. These teams are comprised of regional staff from Realty, LTRO and Environmental Planning, and realty staff from Crow Agency, Blackfeet Agency, Fort Peck Agency, Northern Cheyenne Agency, and Wind River Agency.

Multi-Agency Collaboration

In August 2022, Unstoppables and Gitter Done started holding weekly Teams meetings with each agency to review their pending FTT cases. Team members and agency staff were assigned tasks for each case. In addition, members collaborated in smaller groups to resolve complicated matters ranging from creating WIP tracts with LTRO, encoding into NEPA Tracker 2 with Environmental, or preparing requests for preliminary title opinions. It was common practice for team members from one agency to assist with another agency's FTT cases.

Team Accomplishments

- Reduced pending cases from 195 to 130
- FY22 completed 31 cases – restoring 5,529 acres of homeland to trust
- First quarter in FY23 completed 4 cases – restoring 682 acres of homeland to trust
- Provided hands on cross training for agency staff on the FTT process
- Facilitated teamwork and cooperation among regional programs – Realty, LTRO and Environmental Planning.



Virtual Regional Fee-to-Trust Team Meeting on MS Teams

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION – ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING TEAMS



Wilderness Road Horse Trap (day 3) 24 degrees, 81 horses gathered in holding pen

Wind River Agency - Inter-Agency Feral Horse Gather and Removal

On January 9, 2023, the Wyoming Fish & Game (WFG), Shoshone & Arapaho Tribal Fish and Game, and the BIA Wind River Agency combined resources to fund and facilitate a horse roundup in the Owl Creek Mountains.

A helicopter roundup crew was contracted by the Shoshone and Arapaho Tribal Fish & Game to gather horses on the Western Wind River Reservation boundary and a designated Wyoming State Game and Fish Habitat Area. It was the first interagency project of this type to tackle the feral horse issue in Wyoming.

- 2001 horses were removed throughout January and February.
- The removal saves approximately 36,018 animal units months of forage annually in the 2-3 range units for authorized use.
- Additional benefits to removal are conservation to other resources on the landscape such as water and protection of range improvements such as fencing

The WFG played a big role in facilitating the holding and shipping operation. This included a sufficient water source, a heated shop, a complete office, access to tools and machinery, and a cabin for housing tribal game wardens for 24-hour security.

The holding facility held around 300 horses with separate pens for mares, studs, colts, and branded horses allowing the State Veterinarian and Brand Inspector's to look through almost daily. The helicopter was rolled into the heated shop after every run.

This winter made daily operations challenging but rewarding. Oil and Gas Company, Agricultural producers and the Tribal Roads Program did an excellent job in keeping roads open and communicated any issues. The Tribal Oil and Gas field foreman accommodated mutual objectives for keeping the roads plowed on and off major roads with their resources.

As the operation moved towards the interior of reservation, it was necessary to stage the helicopter closer to the trap sites. The Fremont County Fire Department made room for the helicopter in one of their newly built fire stations. This move made the operation efficient and safe.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided technical services including a population survey, game trail monitoring, and photo points for before and after removal. This was a successful project in removing horses and building partnerships with Tribal Government, Local, State, and Federal Agencies.