Stewarding Native Lands Webinar

Scanning the Horizon: Opportunities For Environmental Justice and Stewardship in Indian Country

August 25, 2021
All attendees will be muted throughout this webinar.

If you have questions, please enter them in the Question box.

Audio Tab: Choose Computer audio to use your computer microphone and speakers. Change your microphone and speaker options using the dropdown menu. Choose Phone call to dial using the information provided to switch to phone audio.

Questions Tab: Ask questions to the staff and panelists about the webinar material or request technical help.
For 41 years

STRENGTHENING American Indian
COMMUNITIES & ECONOMIES

Our Mission...
to strengthen American Indian
economies to support healthy Native
communities. We invest in and create
innovative institutions and models that
strengthen asset control and support
economic development for American
Indian people and their communities.
What Drives First Nations’ Land Stewardship work?

• Native lands occupy over 55 million acres in the United States
• These lands hold 15 million acres of potential energy and mineral resources & nearly 90% of those resources are untapped
• From 2014-2019, foundations gave $2B to environmental causes annually, but only 0.5% was awarded to environmental organizations and causes in Native communities
• Solutions need to be community driven
• Investment needs to be long term
Summer 2021 Tribal Stewardship Webinar Series

• August 4th - Tribal Stewardship in the Northern Great Plains Part 1
• August 12th - Tribal Stewardship in the Northern Great Plains Part 2
• August 19th - Tribal Stewardship Grant Opportunity Q&A Webinar
• August 25th - Scanning the Horizon: Opportunities For Environmental Justice and Stewardship in Indian Country
Goals of Today’s Webinar

• To share outcomes from a broad scan conducted in August 2020, of the tribal land stewardship and environmental justice landscape, including areas such as climate change, land conservation, land buy back, and more.

• To highlight opportunities for potential partnership, collaboration and funding available to Native communities.

• To engage you in solutions-driven dialog to advancing land stewardship in Indian Country.
Introductions

Mary Adelzadeh  
(Diné)

John Phillips, PhD

Brett Ramey  
(Iowa Tribe of Kansas and Nebraska)
Why Start with Land?
Why Start with Land?

• Nation: a community of people... possessing a more or less *defined territory* and government

• Land is central to Tribal Sovereignty.

• Land is central to tribal identity, values and cultures.

• Access and control of land is prerequisite to tribal management and conservation.

• Healthy lands = healthy people.
The Land: The Historical Foundation to Understanding

America: Then and Now

Native American groups once lived throughout what is now the United States. As colonists arrived on the East Coast, they began forcing these groups off their lands. This map shows the amount of land Native people lived on in 1784, soon after the U.S. officially became a country. It also shows the amount of land they have now.

**KEY**
- Native American lands in 1784
- Native American lands today

Note: Alaska and Hawaii do not appear on the map.
Dawes Act of 1877

- Designated 80/160 acres of land to the head of each Native American family.
- Tribes controlled about 150 million acres of land before the Dawes Act, they lost the majority of it due to these allotment divisions and selling of surplus.
- Moved tribal land into private ownership.
- Created checkboard tribal land within reservations.
Types of Land

• Trust land, in which the federal government holds legal title, but the beneficial interest remains with the individual or tribe.

• Fee land purchased by tribes, in which the tribe acquires legal title under specific statutory authority.

• Privately held Fee Simple Land (Indian or non-Indian owned).

iltf.org/resources/red-tape/
Land Tenure Issues

• Fractionation: When a trust parcel is owned by more than one owner as undivided interests. By law, a majority of owners must agree to a particular use of the land.

• Trust land: Can’t sell it, can’t borrow against it, can’t develop it

• BIA vs. Tribal Land Management

• Conservation easements, Rights-of-way, etc.

• Short-term vs. Long-term leases

• Restricted fee land
Current Issues & Opportunities

• Land buy-back programs.
• Alternative land leasing
• Reparation (e.g., The Land Grab Universities)
• Native American Land Trusts
• Land Giving
Stakeholder Input

• “Tribes are still sitting on sidelines and letting the government dictate heirship of tribal lands and inheritance...Many tribes don’t have their own probate code. It cripples agricultural operations.”

• “Tribes and tribal members need access to land to have the ability to make management decisions. Next, you need a land department. Some tribes have robust land offices, others none or they have off and on staff. You need someone there to make the management decisions. BIA will want owners of record to approve all management decisions.”

• “Tribal leases are moving to longer term leases...That’s the biggest issue—you need those who have ability to make conservation management decisions...you have a certain lease term to make those management practices.”
Leading Organizations

- Indian Land Tenure Foundation
- NDN Collective LANDBACK Campaign
- Trust for Public Land’s Tribal Lands Program
Q&A

Please submit your questions in the question box
Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Reciprocal Relationships

- Take only what you need
- Use everything you take
- Never take all that you see
- Minimize harm
- Be grateful
- Reciprocate the gift
- Listen for the answer
- Ask permission

Illustrations by Nicole Marie
@nicoleMcomix

First Nations Development Institute
Trenches around pine trees maintained by Paiute people for capturing pandora moth larva

Legacy canyon live oak maintained by Indigenous stewardship

Burning to cultivate beargrass and other understory plants

Gathering soaproot and tending the meadow

Photos courtesy of Slaton et al, 2019, *Natural Areas Journal*

Photo courtesy of Amanda Rocha

Photo credit: Reina Rodgers, NRCS

Photo by Michael Hentz, Mid-Klamath Watershed Council
Supporting TEK

First Nations Development Institute
How Giving Native Americans Their Land Back Helps Protect Nature

Across the nation, territory is being returned to tribes in return for their stewardship.

JIM ROBBINS

Trends in Conservation

Biden to nominate Umatilla tribal leader Chuck Sams to direct National Park Service

Sams would be the first Native American to hold the post, serving under the first Native American Interior secretary

Treaty rights prevail in Supreme Court

In a 5-4 vote, the court disagreed that Wyoming’s statehood nullified a Crow Tribe hunting treaty.

Elena Saavedra Buckley | NEWS | May 21, 2019
Funding Opportunities

Tribal Stewardship in the Northern Great Plains Grant

Improving Habitat Quality in Western Big Game Winter Range and Migration Corridors – Spring 2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

First Nations Development Institute
Q&A
Please submit your questions in the question box
Environmental Justice
Environmental Justice: A Definition:
“...all people have access to clean, healthy, and safe environments where they can practice cultural ways and exercise political sovereignty and self-determination”
Tribes and other frontline communities experience environmental injustices through:

**Immediate threats**

**Long Term Impacts**

Photo: Duluth News Tribune
Environmental Injustices can be addressed through:

- Direct Resistance
- Just Alternatives
Environmental Justice:
Current and Emerging Issues and Opportunities

**Direct Resistance:**
- Defense of Lands and Waters
- Ceremonial Support
- Policy and Legal Support

FIRST NATIONS DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE
Environmental Justice:
Current and Emerging Issues and Opportunities

**Just Alternatives**
- Just Transition
- Environmental Clean up/Mitigation
- Coalition Building
- Narrative Change/Storytelling
Environmental Justice: Funding Opportunities and Gaps

*Identified by interviewees

- Support For Direct Resistance
- Just Alternatives
  - Technical assistance AND Infrastructure
- Remediation
  - Environmental and cultural
- Communications and Messaging
  - Narrative change
Climate Change
Climate change can adversely impact every aspect of tribal culture, sovereignty, economy, and health.

And...
Climate Change: Overview

“It’s not time to come from a place of fear (or urgency) it’s time to come from a place of power” - NDN Collective
Threats

- Extreme Weather
- Disaster Preparedness
- Public Health
- Food Security/Sovereignty
Climate Change:
Current and Emerging Issues and Opportunities

Opportunities

○ Just Transition
○ Education
○ Land restoration/protection
○ Climate Resilience Planning
*Identified by interviewees

- Implementation of climate adaptation planning
- Technical Assistance in climate resilience practices
- Food systems Infrastructure
- Culturally-based master planning and development
- Other?
Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Funding Opportunities and Gaps

Funding Process Considerations: (from interviewees)

- Support Indigenous-led efforts
- Flexible, Multi-year Funding
- Participatory Grantmaking process
- Spoken instead of written proposals
- Make funding supplemental to existing work
- Other? (feel free to write in chat!)
Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Leading Organizations Examples

Earth Justice: Tribal Partnerships Program;
Environmental law organization that fights to ensure their Tribal and Indigenous clients’ natural and cultural resources are protected for future generations.

Native Movement supports grassroots-led projects that endeavor to ensure social justice, Indigenous Peoples’ rights, and the rights of Mother Earth. Just Transition.
Environmental Justice and Climate Change: Leading Organizations Examples

**Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)**
Long time leader in confronting extractive industries and building alternatives grounded in Indigenous principles and values.

**Rising Voices Center for Indigenous and Earth Sciences**
A network of Indigenous, tribal, and community leaders, atmospheric, social, biological, and ecological scientists, students, and educators...Their mission is to center Indigenous knowledge systems in the Earth sciences for more innovative responses to extreme weather and climate change.
Tribes and Native-led organizations are positioned to assume leadership roles in all land-based work:

- Young people
- Elders
- Existing and New Alliances
“Through our work, we are trying to create a new world. We are making and remaking our creation stories right now, preparing the world for the people yet to come.”

- Roger Fernandes, Lower Elwha Band of the S’Klallam Tribe
Q&A

Please submit your questions in the question box
Panel Discussion
Presenter Contacts

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• John Phillips, PhD
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• Brett Ramey
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Next Steps for First Nations

• Expand grants to Native communities working on stewardship in the Northern Great Plains
• Continue grants to Native-led environmental justice organizations on the frontlines
• Conservation planning support to Native ranchers in the Southwest
• Tribal Lands Conservation Fund (TLC Fund)

For more information about our Stewarding Native Lands program visit our website at www.firstnations.org
How You Can Support This Work

1.) Educate Yourself and consider Indigenous approaches to stewardship (https://nonprofitquarterly.org/series/fall-2020/)
2.) Connect with Native organizations
3.) Invest in Native organizations
Funding Opportunity for Forest Land Acquisition

Funder: USDA Forest Service

Opportunity Name: Community Forest & Open Space Conservation Program

Grant Amount: Up to $600,000 (50% match required)

Eligibility: Local governmental entity, Indian Tribes (including Alaska Native Corporations), or a qualified nonprofit organization that is qualified to acquire and manage land

Applications Due: January 10, 2022

Request for Applications: https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2021-17317

For more information about technical assistance,

email Emilie Ellis at eellis@firstnation.org
Tribal Stewardship in the Northern Great Plains Grant Opportunity

Grant Amount: $25,000-$30,000
Geographic Focus: Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota
Applications Due: Tuesday, September 14, 2021 by 5 pm MDT
RFP: https://www.firstnations.org/rfps/tribal-stewardship-in-the-northern-great-plains-grant/
Contact and Social Media

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The recorded webinar can be accessed on our website under the First Nations Knowledge Center at https://www.firstnations.org/fnk
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You could win a $25 VISA Gift Card
Thank you!