



# NATIVE AMERICANS IN PHILANTHROPY

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**First of its Kind Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge and Fund to Distribute Millions to Native American Tribes for Environmental and Conservation Work in the U.S.**

San Francisco – Native Americans in Philanthropy today announced a first-of-its-kind pledge and fund that allows philanthropy to directly invest in Native American Tribes who are conserving and protecting ancestral lands and waterways in the United States. Native American peoples have long held sustainable practices and knowledge critical to a healthy environment. This pledge and fund will go a long way in providing much-needed coordination, support, and funding directly to Tribally led conservation work. The Christensen Fund provided a seed donation of \$1 million, as well as pledging 25 percent of its U.S. charitable giving to the Tribal-led conservation efforts.

The latest global assessment and recommendations from the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) revolve around habitat restoration and conservation as a major solution to climate change. Federal executive orders on the 30 x 30 Initiative, the efforts by the global community to conserve 30% of the terrestrial and marine habitat by 2030, have committed the U.S. to tangible action on climate change emphasizing protection and preservation of biodiversity as priorities in achieving the initiative’s goals.

Direct funding to Tribes and Tribally led collaboratives will enable large-scale deployment of traditional ecological knowledge to combat species extinction, equip Tribes to co-manage federally owned lands using traditional practices, build capacity for inter-Tribal coordination, repatriation of traditional lands, and track key metrics of preservation measures for land and waterways.

Native Americans in Philanthropy will convene Tribal leaders and inter-Tribal organizations to advise the fund and pledge, partner with existing Native-led funding organizations to help distribute funds, and coordinate closely with federal agencies to support Tribes in public-private partnerships that support Tribal conservation efforts.

As its first major action, The Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge and Funding Collaborative partnered with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to fully fund the non-federal matching requirement for all successful Tribal applications to its soon-to-be released allocation of \$91 million from the Biden Administration’s America the Beautiful Challenge. This investment will help Tribes leverage federal investments in conservation and co-management projects while removing key barriers to accessing funding.

Native Americans in Philanthropy is also partnering with the Biodiversity Funders Group to educate and organize funders around Tribal conservation opportunities. In addition to the Christensen Fund, other foundations joining this collaborative have pledged support and funding to Tribally led conservation

work including: The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Packard, Walton Family Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Walton Family Foundation, Re:Wild, Indigenous Earth Fund, Seventh Generation Fund for Indigenous Peoples, Water Foundation, Kalliopeia Foundation, Vadon Foundation, The Wilderness Society and the Wilburforce Foundation.

The conservation funding collaborative and these new partnerships represent a significant shift in philanthropic support of Tribally led conservation work. Historically, only [0.4 percent](#) of large U.S. philanthropic giving is directed to Native communities, and even fewer of those dollars are directed to Tribal-led conservation efforts to protect and preserve the variety and variability of life on earth.

“Many global philanthropic investments in Indigenous conservation efforts neglect U.S. based Tribes. Despite underfunding, Tribes consistently demonstrate that they are the best stewards of their lands and waterways, using Indigenous ecological knowledge and their unique legal and political relationship with the U.S. government,” said Erik Stegman, CEO of Native Americans in Philanthropy.

“Since time immemorial, Native and Indigenous Peoples have sustained biodiversity and healthy ecosystems,” said Christensen Fund CEO Carla Fredericks. “We are calling on the top foundations and environmental funders in the U.S. to commit to increasing funding of Tribal nations in their tireless work to protect their homelands, and fully achieve their inherent rights of sovereignty and self-determination.”

Foundations are invited to commit to increasing funding of Tribal-led biodiversity protection and preservation by pledging a percentage of their annual programmatic dollars to these efforts or by donating directly to the fund. For more details contact Greg Masten, VP of Tribal Nations Engagement at Native Americans in Philanthropy, [gmasten@nativephilanthropy.org](mailto:gmasten@nativephilanthropy.org) and Dawn Knickerbocker, VP of Communications & External Affairs for press inquiries.

#### **About Native Americans in Philanthropy**

For over thirty years, Native Americans in Philanthropy has promoted equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities. They do this through leadership development, education, research, and strategic partnerships with funders and philanthropic organizations. The cornerstone of their work is their relatives and their networks. NAP supports several communities of stakeholders that work together to build knowledge, community, priorities, and power in the sector. These networks include Native professionals in philanthropy, elected Tribal leaders, Native youth leaders, Native philanthropic executives and board members, and Native nonprofit leaders

#### **About the Christensen Fund**

The Christensen Fund is a private foundation founded in 1957. It is a nonprofit, nongovernmental organization governed by an independent Board of Trustees. Christensen works to support Indigenous peoples in advancing their inherent rights, dignity, and self-determination. Its seven core values are: self-determination, reciprocity, solidarity, resilience, accountability, trust, and diversity. Christensen’s core values are centered on relationships, on its institutional strengths, and on a rights-based approach to philanthropy.