

# Environmental Programs and Initiatives





# NATIVE AMERICANS IN PHILANTHROPY

For over 30 years, Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) has promoted equitable and effective philanthropy in Native communities.

The cornerstone of our work is our relatives and our networks. We support 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.





# Programs

# Tribal Nations Engagement

Our Tribal Nations Engagement work supports Tribal Nations by creating more opportunities for awareness, connection, and collaboration with each other and with the philanthropy sector. While Tribes are not new to the practice of giving and helping their neighbors, Tribal philanthropy is a growing segment to support Native American communities.

Our initiatives span several areas of work including land and water stewardship, economic development, philanthropic engagement, education, cultural preservation, and more.



# Tribal Nations Conservation Pledge & Fund Collaborative

In 2021, Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) and Biodiversity Funders Group (BFG) launched the Tribal Nations Climate & Conservation Funding Collaborative (The Collaborative) to:

- Strengthen the field of climate and biodiversity conservation projects led by Tribal Nations;
- Dramatically increase funding to Tribal projects; and
- Catalyze and leverage new sources of funding for these projects from federal, state, and private sources.

The Collaborative includes a funder learning and engagement series, a pooled fund housed at NAP, and a philanthropic pledge. It has created opportunities for direct funding in addition to a forum to strategize, learn from Tribal leaders, and share knowledge and resources to support Tribal self-governance and conservation and climate efforts.

# America The Beautiful (ATBC)

**The America the Beautiful Challenge** is a public-private grant program supporting locally led ecosystem restoration, resilience, equitable access, workforce development, and conservation projects.

Through its Tribal Nations Conservative Pledge and Funding Collaborative, NAP has **leveraged nearly \$4.5 million** over three years to meet the required cash match for each Tribal grant awarded under this initiative.

**Significant Tribal Awards:** To date, **more than \$145.8 million has been awarded** directly to Tribes through this effort.

**Tribal Conservation Projects:** A total of **62 Tribally-led conservation projects have been funded** through this impactful public-private partnership.



*Penobscot Indian Nation's project, "Prioritizing Habitat Restoration and Aquatic Connectivity in the Penobscot River Watershed"*  
(Source: Penobscot Indian Nation)

# Navigating Mining for Critical Minerals

Native Americans in Philanthropy's Conservation and Climate Fund secured support for Tribes navigating potential mining projects. Specifically, this fund assisted 7 Tribes with resources and capacity needs that support consultation and review of critical mineral projects.

This support included legal and environmental assessment needs, as well as research. This initiative supported Tribal representation in all discussions and decision-making processes for potential mining projects that impact Tribal communities.

Eligibility for this opportunity included urgency, location (in relation to Tribal territory), environmental impacts, and goals that support positive impact for the community.



# Great Lakes Initiative

Native Americans in Philanthropy's Conservation and Climate Fund has established a regional initiative that works with Tribal communities and leadership in the Great Lakes region to provide accessible and equitable resources to meet their needs.

This exciting initiative leans into regional systems of resources to uplift sustainable relationships and create lasting impact. Specifically, this work builds relationships across two networks: Tribal communities, intertribal groups, and organizations, as well as a network of funders and philanthropic partners committed to the region. NAP works to facilitate opportunities that support education, capacity building, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, nature-based solutions, and narrative shifts that give agency to Tribal communities.

NAP continues to assess resource needs identified by Tribal stakeholders, ensuring that Tribal voices drive impactful philanthropic efforts in the region. This work helps funders better understand where their investments can bolster Tribal infrastructure.



# Offshore Wind

Native Americans in Philanthropy advocates for meaningful consultation processes that respect their sovereignty. The initiative begins by identifying barriers to effective consultation and providing capacity-building funding for Tribal advocacy, especially around community benefits agreements.

With support from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, NAP is helping Tribes engage in offshore wind energy site consultations. This includes reviewing NEPA documents, construction plans, and exploring community benefit opportunities.

While NAP does not take a position on offshore wind projects, it facilitates outreach and regranting opportunities, focusing on legal, environmental, and planning activities to ensure Tribes have a strong voice in negotiations.



# Ocean & Marine Stewardship

Cultural stewardship practices extend beyond the land and into our waters. Native Americans in Philanthropy supports Tribal Nations as they safeguard the waterways of their current and traditional homelands, affirming the deep connections between marine health, community wellbeing, and cultural resilience.

Indigenous leaders are advancing knowledge systems rooted in tradition. From protecting local water sources to restoring aquatic wildlife populations and sustaining coastal ecosystems, these practices reflect a responsibility to care for waters that sustain people, the environment, and our cultures.

Through our environmental programs, we help elevate Tribal-led solutions and expand philanthropic partnerships that safeguard rivers, coastlines, and oceans. By supporting Indigenous stewardship, we ensure that ecosystems remain resilient and that future generations inherit thriving waters and strong cultural connections.

# Biodiversity Funders Group Partnership

In 2021, Native Americans in Philanthropy (NAP) and Biodiversity Funders Group (BFG) began a partnership to create programming centered on Tribal-led conservation and environmental issues in Indian Country. Since launching the Tribal Conservation Learning Program, the partnership has made significant progress toward its goals.

Together, NAP and BFG continue to develop a full day of Tribal conservation programming for the Land and Freshwater Annual Meeting, and have launched the Learning in the Field Program, which takes participants to communities like the Great Plains and Southeast Alaska. These multi-day trips feature site visits with Tribal and Indigenous organizations, focusing on sovereignty, food security, subsistence harvest, cultural practices, and climate resilience.

The partnership also established the Tribal Conservation Learning Circle to educate funders and build collaboration with Tribal leaders on conservation and co-management projects. Webinars cover key topics like Tribal co-management of federal lands, Indigenous Guardians in the US and Canada, and Indigenous-led conservation in Canada.



*Indigenous leaders at the  
“Understanding Indigenous Lifeways”  
presentation during the Biodiversity  
Funders Group 2024 Land and  
Freshwater Annual Meeting*

# Tribal Buffalo Lifeways Collaboration

The Tribal Buffalo Lifeways Collaboration is a new, historic alliance created by the InterTribal Buffalo Council, Native Americans in Philanthropy, The Nature Conservancy, and World Wildlife Fund. This collaboration aims to foster cultural, spiritual, ecological, and economic revitalization within Native communities.

The groups are partnering with the U.S. Department of the Interior and Department of Agriculture to build on the momentum created by Indigenous leaders, bringing buffalo back to Tribal lands on an unprecedented scale.

The Collaboration will provide Tribal communities with essential resources, including improved infrastructure (such as fencing), training for herd managers, and increased access to land through co-stewardship, leasing, and acquisition, to ensure the success of buffalo rematriation efforts.



# Montana Tribal Initiative

NAP is leading efforts to provide direct, ongoing strategic support to institutions and foundations committed to working across their silos to increased meaningful funding to Tribal communities that are rooted in sustainable relationships. Working with a regional funder, NAP is embarking on a listening journey to hear directly from Tribal voices in the state of Montana to better understand where there are meaningful opportunities to engage and where philanthropic support is welcomed.

The initiative aims to conduct a comprehensive landscape analysis to identify opportunities for meaningful engagement, partnership development, and investment.

Through structured research, dedicated outreach, and convenings, this initiative seeks to establish a foundation for long-term, sustainable partnerships that honor Tribal sovereignty and advance shared objectives.



# Meet Our Team



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