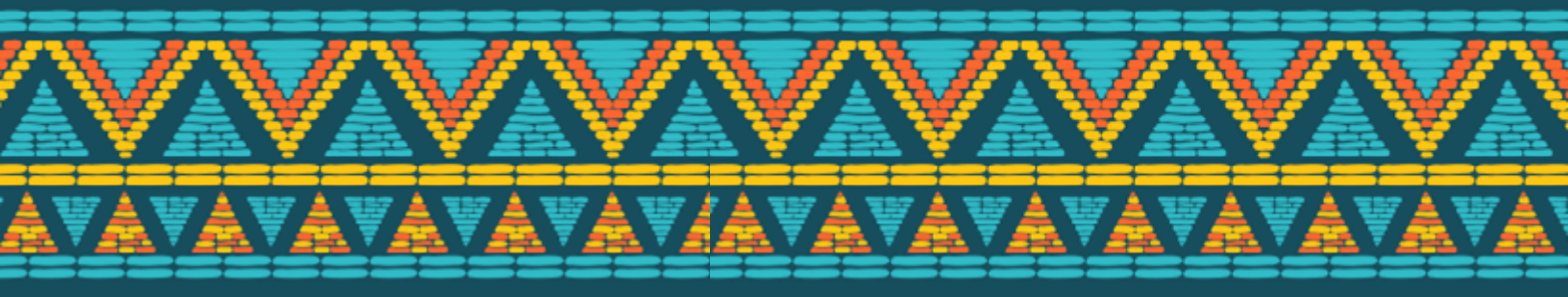




Arizona Tribal Fire & Climate Resilience Summit Summary

October 2024
San Carlos
Apache Reservation



Conveners, Sponsors, Exhibitors

Sponsors



Conveners & Exhibitors

USFS Region 3 Workforce
Development

Prescribed Fire Training Center
Southwest Hub (story map)

Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership

National Forest Foundation - Grant
Programs and Resources

Conservation and Adaptation Resource
Toolbox

AZ Dept of Forestry & Fire
Management

Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency

San Carlos Forest Resources Program

Pro Vision Video Solutions

Arizona Conservation Corps

USFS Region 5

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing & photography by The Fire Writers, Inc. | marjie@thefirewriters.com

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Overview

This summary is a *collection of key takeaways* from event presentations, workshops, and field tours, including presenter contact information and resources for learning more.

In October 2024 the Southwest Fire Science Consortium and partners hosted a three-day workshop on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. The workshop focused on Tribal and non-Tribal collaboration to enhance fire and land management capacity, adapt to climate change, and uphold Tribal sovereignty. There was no registration cost for the face-to-face gathering, which provided an inspiring learning environment for over 150 attendees representing eleven tribes, NGOs, and state and federal collaborators.

The San Carlos Apache Tribe generously offered to host the event on the 1.8-million-acre San Carlos reservation, which has unique historical, cultural, and landscape attributes:



- **Nearly every acre of the reservation has burned at least once in the last 20 years, including fire for resource benefit**
- **A 20-year history of research partnerships between San Carlos Tribal forestry and federal agencies**
- **Designation as one of twenty-one “priority landscapes” and the only Tribal land highlighted in the 2022 National Wildfire Crisis Strategy**

Over three days, Tribal land and fire managers, researchers, agency leaders, and funders spoke about their experiences of the power of partnership, navigating funding opportunities, overcoming barriers, success stories, and lessons learned. The presentations were practical, engaging, and framed by personal stories and experiences. Workshops were interactive, with enthusiastic participation. Field tours united attendees for experiences on the land, providing learning, connection, inquiry, and conversation.

The Southwest Fire Science Consortium and partners are looking to continue these efforts by hosting a second convening in 2026. The convening will continue bolstering knowledge exchange and networking among Tribes across Arizona and the Southwest. Stay informed about this opportunity by signing up for the Southwest Fire E-News [here](#). Invitations will also be sent out to each Tribe.

Event survey responses indicated that attendees learned about:



Networking and building relationships



Historical context for fire and forestry work on the San Carlos



Partnerships on the land get more work done



The wide range of expertise and opportunities in land management



The Wood for Life process and the program in general



The many funding opportunities to support work on tribal lands.



Tribally led restoration for fire resilience, including how Tribes serve as resources for one another



Fire & forestry work happening on Tribal and neighboring lands across Arizona.



The various types of work being done to strengthen fire and climate resilience on Tribal lands



More tribe-to-tribe connections are needed



Project management, collaboration, TFPA funding/experiments, RTRL, & working with NGOs



The importance of building relationships, effective communication, and early planning, and always remembering to have fun!

orts outreach and
bes and Native-led
.S. Forest Service IRA and
ms and opportunities

port Grants (up to \$25,000)
sistance
d Presentations
and Resource Guides

tw



Funding Opportunities



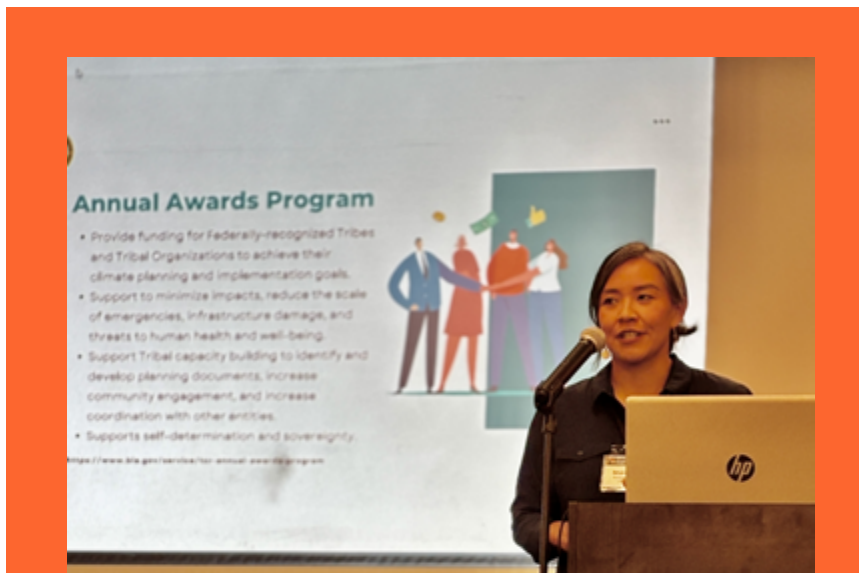
Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)

Southwest Regional Climate Tribal Resiliency Program (TRC)

Shaina Tallas (Diné) BIA Southwest Regional Climate Resilience Coordinator

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The program is an annual awards initiative for federally recognized Tribes and organizations.
- TRC partners with Tribal Nations and BIA to incorporate environmental considerations into their programs and policies by providing funding, training, technical assistance, and organizational support.
- Since 2011, TRC has provided technical and financial support to Tribes and Tribal organizations by funding over 280 Tribal adaptation plans, vulnerability assessments, and risk assessments, as well as awarding 900 grants totaling more than 119 million dollars.
- Tribes can leverage TCR programs to further support their existing operations, program planning, project design, and the use of Indigenous and Traditional Knowledge in managing and protecting trust resources and Tribal economies.
- The program provides support for planning documents, updating documents, data collection, implementation monitoring, and staffing.
- It provides internships, youth engagement opportunities, and training.
- The program must be climate-focused but is otherwise open.



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

LEARN MORE

[BIA Branch of Tribal Community Resilience](#)

[TCR Program AZ Tribal Fire Presentation](#)

[BIA Annual Award Quick Guide](#)

Shaina Tallas

shaina.tallas@bia.gov | 505-917-4087

BIA Scholarships and Internships

Melvin Hunter Jr., (Hualapai) Supervisory Regional Forester, BIA Western Region

Deborah Shirley, BIA Regional Director, Navajo Region



People are out using the forest today - picking pinon, harvesting firewood. Every Tribe has opportunities to manage their land base. Take advantage of what you learn here. Exercise sovereignty in the spirit of self-determination

- Melvin Hunter, Jr.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The program works in collaboration with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Western Region's 42 Tribes.
- Participants are encouraged to learn today and begin applying that knowledge to support the land.
- The initiative focuses on building community by sharing knowledge across the disciplines of forestry, fire, and fuels, and by applying that learning in practice.
- Tribes are encouraged to exercise sovereignty in the spirit of self-determination. Every Tribe today has opportunities to manage its land base.
- Increasing collaboration is a key goal of this effort.
- Applying newly acquired knowledge to support the land is essential.
- Participants are encouraged to take advantage of available scholarships.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES



LEARN MORE

[*BIA Bureau of Indian Education
Annual Award Quick Guide*](#)

Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs (DEMA)

Forestry and Fire Management Grant Opportunities

Destiny Colorado, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, Arizona Department of Emergency & Military Affairs

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The program helps funnel FEMA funds to the state.
- It provides technical assistance for federal non-disaster and post-disaster grants, as well as mitigation grants.
- Applicants are typically governments, non-profit organizations, fire departments, fire districts, universities, and Tribes.
- The program provides funds for on-the-ground projects and activities that focus on fire prevention, forest and watershed restoration, and other wildfire management efforts.
- Healthy Forest Initiative Grants support projects that reduce hazardous vegetation and promote forest and watershed restoration.
- Rural Fire Capacity Grants provide funding for training, equipping, and organizing rural fire departments.
- Community Challenge Grants encourage citizen involvement in urban and community forestry programs.
- Invasive Plants Grants support the integrated management of non-native invasive plants.
- Community Wildfire Defense Grants help at-risk communities with wildfire planning.
- It provides internships, youth engagement opportunities, and training.
- The program must be climate-focused but is otherwise open.

LEARN MORE

[AZ DEMA Fact Sheet](#)

mitigation@azdema.gov | 602-464-6499

Arizona Department of Forestry and Fire (DFFM)

Technical Support and Grant Opportunities

Josh Hudson, Forestry Grants Manager, DFFM

John Orana, District Forester, DFFM



Have fun with the relationships. We are dealing with some of the most complex issues ever facing mankind. It's very difficult. But solving big problems brings us to work every day. We must think outside the box. Relationships are what will get us through this.

- John Orana

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Provides technical support in forest strategic planning, due diligence, and regulatory compliance.
- Provides technical support and assistance to forest operations industry partners and assists forestry crews in hazardous fuels reduction.
- Administers grant programs to support natural resource work at the state, regional, and local levels.
- Good Neighbor Authority - Assists the USDA Forest Service in critical management work to keep our forests healthy and productive.
- Provides technical mapping and data resources to forestry staff and partners.
- Identifies and protects environmentally important private forest areas that are threatened by conversion to non-forest uses.
- Conducts surveys, evaluations, and monitors forest and woodland threats on state and private lands.
- Provides Special Forestry Program best practices and conservation education.
- Provides urban and community forest arboriculture technical assistance, and practitioner education, focusing on the stewardship of urban natural resources.
- Provides technical assistance for federal grant applications.
- Technical assistance does not require an application.

LEARN MORE

[DFFM Grants Handout](#)

[Josh Hudson AZ DFFM Presentation](#)

[AZ DFFM Tribal Summit Presentation](#)

[AZ DFFM Grants Program](#)

jhudson@dffm.az.gov | 602-761-0285

First Nations Development Institute

The Community Navigator Program

Leiloni Begaye (Diné) Associate Director, First Nations Development Institute (FNDI)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- FNDI is one of the few organizations authorized to distribute Community Navigator Program funds.
- The program focuses on providing resources and funding to Tribes, Native-led organizations, and other entities, offering non-competitive grants of up to \$25,000 for one year with rolling application deadlines.
- The program provides technical assistance during and after the grant period along with helpful webinars, presentations, publications, resource guides, and more.
- Grants cover a variety of Tribal needs including project feasibility assessments, staff capacity building, grant writing, planning, community engagement, and strategic planning.
- Allowable costs include salaries and benefits, materials, consultants, meeting costs, travel expenses, and indirect costs.

About the First Nations Development Institute

- First Nations Development Institute is a Native-led nonprofit focused on restoring, stewarding, and protecting Tribal lands in Indian Country.
- Since the 1990s FNDI has funded 3,385 grants totaling \$80 million since the 1990s.
- Core values include being Native-led, strength-based, community-centered, truth-driven, equitable, intergenerational, collaborative, and rooted in reciprocity.

LEARN MORE

[VIDEO: Stewarding Native Lands - FNDI](#)
[FNDI Community Navigator Presentation](#)
[Community Navigation Flyer](#)

Q&A: Funding Opportunities and Grant Management

What areas of your grants do applicants generally need the most support with?

NFF – Obtaining sufficient matching awards

DFFM – Some grants are reimbursements. For non-capacity building grants, applicants must be able to show that the project is shovel ready. Many applicants haven't thoroughly read the RFQ.

AZDEMA – Remembering that technical assistance does not require an application.

Do you have funding supporting youth and higher education?

AZDEMA and FNDI – “Let's do it!”

DFFM – See our grants database

NFF – Our Matching Awards Program (MAP) might be a good match.

BIA – Planning the funding. 250k maximum multi-year funding, possible up to about 5 years. You can use these funds to get the matching funds you need.

AZWI (Arizona Wildfire Initiative) – Potential new educational programs in the NAU School of Forestry may include:

- An on-line/hybrid undergraduate Fire and Forestry Certificate for professionals
- Exploring a new on-line/hybrid Applied Fire Science Degree in collaboration with community colleges across the state and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group
- Expanding our new on-line Natural Resources Graduate Certificate into an on-line/hybrid Natural Resources master's degree and increasing the capacity of our current on campus Forestry B.S. program while maintaining our high-quality field-based instruction.

GRANTS DATABASE

NAU NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY School of Forestry

SOUTHWEST FIRE SCIENCE CONSORTIUM

AZ Wildfire INITIATIVE presents

WILDFIRE MITIGATION FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES DATABASE

TO VIEW THE LIST

The list of opportunities includes:

1. Federally available funds
2. State provided funds
3. City specific funds
4. Private/NGO provided funds
5. Funds only available for Tribal governments and organizations

*Database was last updated September 2024

THE ARIZONA WILDFIRE INITIATIVE IS ALSO WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES ACROSS ARIZONA TO ACHIEVE WILDFIRE RESILIENCE GOALS AND IDENTIFY NEEDED RESOURCES TO CLOSE THE GAP BETWEEN PERCEIVED RISK AND RESILIENCE.

For questions about this database or to learn more about how to get support from AZWI, contact megan.rangel-lynch@nau.edu

PROJECT MANAGER

effective and efficient
know your project goals
hasn't been done before, try it
innovation
when all else fails
options
fun!



Grant & Program Management



Grant Writing & Project Management

Dr. Rosanna Jumbo-Fitch, Chapter President, Chinle Chapter Navajo Nation

Cassie Moses, Forest Manager, San Carlos Apache Tribe (SCAT)

Walton Yazzie, Chapter Manager, Chinle Chapter Navajo Nation



Things must be monitored to be cared for. If you can't measure it, you can't manage it.

- Cassie Moses

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The Project Manager's Role

- Ensure that each responsibility is met and that every administrator, coordinator, and supplier/vendor remain on schedule and within budget.
- Possess fluency in various project management tools and platforms
- Understand and communicate all policies and procedures
- Correspond with all stakeholders regularly, effectively, and efficiently
- Both the project manager and staff collaborate with all parties and follow established rules.

Lessons Learned from a Project Manager

- The focus should be on the product, not the process. For example, a successful “product” is firewood in every household.
- Communication is key.
- Asking questions is essential.
- Failure to plan is a plan for failure—it is a never-ending process.
- A detailed approach to budgeting and scheduling increases project eligibility.
- Knowing project goals, schedules, and budgets is critical.
- If something has never been done before, try it.
- Innovation is crucial because creativity is often necessary to secure funding.
- When all else fails, read the directions.
- Most importantly, have fun!

LEARN MORE

[Grant Writing & Project Management Presentation](#)

[Cassie Moses Presentation - Forest & Fire MGMT](#)

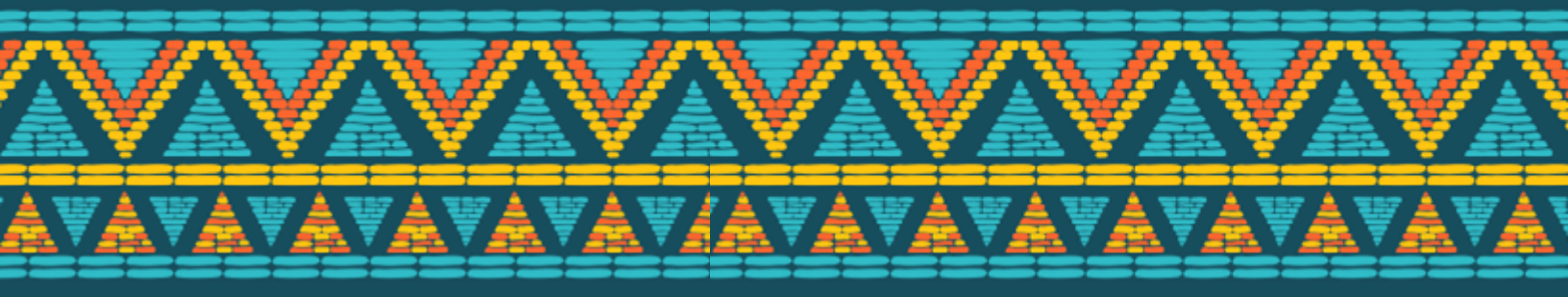
[San Carlos Apache Forest Resources Program \(FB\)](#)

[San Carlos Forest Resources Program](#)

rosanna.jumbo@naataanii.org | wyazzie@nnchapters.org



Partnerships



Research and Technology Partnerships

U.S. Geological Survey Research with the San Carlos Apache Tribe: The First 20 Years

Barry Middleton, Geographer, U.S. Geological Survey

Laura Norman, Supervisory Research Physical Scientist, US Geological Survey

Roy Petrakis, Physical Scientist, US Geological Survey

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The project has spanned 20 years of nearly continuous collaboration with the San Carlos Forestry Department, resulting in rangeland maps, LIDAR density and biomass maps, burn severity maps, and forest and woodland biomass estimates.
- Research questions related to wildfire and forest fuel treatments focus on how restoring fire to the land impacts fire severity and overall forest health.
- Current projects include studying riparian vegetation response to climate change, particularly the effects of flooding in the upper Gila River watershed. Significant findings from this work indicate that drought-stressed tamarisk contributed to high-severity wildfire, burned bridges, and combustible infrastructure during the 2021 Bottom Fire.
- **Researchers found** that tamarisk grows faster and stronger after disturbances like wildfire and exhibits greater drought stress than native species.
- Natural Infrastructure in Dryland Streams (NIDS) including rock detention structures, beaver dams and their analogs, and check dams **have been shown to be an effective restoration strategy used by the Tribe and others for increasing water retention and availability, regulating flows, and reducing flood and erosion risks**.
- Future research questions include how tamarisk leaf beetle defoliation affects fire risk, how watershed conditions are impacted by forest treatments, and additional inquiries related to watershed health and flood risk.

LEARN MORE

Please contact USGS for materials

Publications from this work can be found [here](#) and [here](#)

Testing Fuel Hazard Reduction in Pinyon Woodlands on the Navajo Nation

Lionel Whitehair (Diné) PhD student Northern Arizona University School of Forestry

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The research was inspired by two fires that negatively impacted parts of the Navajo Nation. The Assayii Lake and Wood Springs 2 fires led to research questions about the impact of fuel reduction on fire behavior in PJ Woodlands and tree stand dynamics in a forest full of culturally important pinyon pine.

- Woodlands form one of the largest biomes in the southwestern United States, providing critical ecosystem services.
- The Navajo value traditional woodland ecological services, including firewood, poles for hogans and fences, pinyon seeds for consumption and commercial sale, forage for livestock, and ceremonial and medicinal uses.
- Before treatment, there were 430 trees per hectare, primarily pinyon pine. These high densities limited forage availability and increased fire risk.
- Researchers partnered with Diné College in Tsaile, Arizona, to engage students and the community in thinning efforts. The harvested wood was provided to community elders for firewood.
- They applied a fire model using the fire and fuels extension to understand the effects of the treatment on fire severity.
- Researchers are now collaborating with the USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station to develop additional models, incorporate drone aerial imagery, and expand their research efforts.



Partnering with NGOs

The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

John Waconda (Isleta Pueblo) TNC, Indigenous Partnerships Program Director, Indigenous Peoples' Burning Network (IPBN)



The Nature Conservancy is working to acquire ancestral lands and build a multi-Tribal co-stewardship model on private lands. A place for come together, bring children, tell stories, sing, hunt.

- John Waconda

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Nature Conservancy (TNC) now works to support Tribes and Indigenous led programs and has the capacity to serve as a partner.
- Tribes represented in this discussion now have new opportunities, including partnerships with NGOs.
- The Indigenous Peoples Burning Network (IPBN) is a support network for Native American communities revitalizing their traditional fire cultures in a contemporary context.
- Native American elders and practitioners lead the network, which is centered on self-determination and Indigenous cultural burning to honor Tribal fire sovereignty and help restore fire balance.
- IPBN is managed by and for Indigenous fire practitioners and their communities.
- TNC develops Tribal forest programs using the 638 Good Neighbor Authority.
- The creativity involved in strong partnerships allows for more impactful work.
- The devil is in the details, but with passion and creativity, barriers can be overcome.

The Nature
Conservancy



National Forest Foundation (NFF) Tribal Partnership and Funding

Rebecca Davidson, NFF Senior Director of Conservation Programs



Be vocal about your challenges because you never know who might be able to step up as a new partner and elegantly solve a challenge.

- Rebecca Davidson

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The program has grown across the Southwest, with 17 staff members working with most National Forests.
- It has invested over \$14 million in the past five years and plans to invest significantly more in the next five years.
- The NFF adds value as a funding partner by providing technical support, complex agreement administration, project oversight, coordination, and community engagement.
- The program serves as a matchmaker, fostering creative partnership development by bringing people together collaboratively with a bottom-up architecture
- It provides funding pathways for both Tribal and non-Tribal communities, supports community-based program development, and focuses on capacity building for organizations.
- The match requirement is flexible.
- NFF staff can meet one-on-one with partners and stakeholders.
- Examples of successful initiatives include Wood for Life, collaborative forest management, interpretation and education efforts, native plant nursery support, Pinaleno Sacred Springs restoration, and a Washoe-language audio guide that shares the history and cultural importance of their ancestral lands.



LEARN MORE

[Contact Rebecca](#)
[Competitive Grant Programs & App Resources](#)
[NFF Tribal Partnership Session Presentation](#)

Tribe to Tribe Partnerships

Lessons Learned from Collaborative Work at Scale: Horace Mesa Wildlife Habitat and Stand Improvement Project

Shirley Piqosa, (Acoma) Forester, Acoma Pueblo



I was an inexperienced grant writer and pregnant with my first child! But this project succeeded. It brought together all these people and became something I could not imagine. It's creating big relationships with all these partners and crews. It is so awesome. We are doing this work for the children and grandchildren. It isn't even about us. I want to emphasize the 'have fun' part.

- Shirley Piqosa

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The project took place in Mt. Taylor, Cibola National Forest and Grasslands.
- Over 200 acres of forest restoration thinning were completed on U.S. Forest Service and Pueblo lands.
- Heritage clearances are continuing to be completed on the remaining 4000 acres. Acoma Pueblo contracted with Hopi and Conservation Corps to complete heritage surveys and tree thinning
- NM Forestry and USDA contributed \$520k to the project
- The project involved a steep learning curve as work was deployed on both Tribal and National Forest lands.
- Cibola National Forest initiated a Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) collaborative agreement, which led to additional funding.
- A Resilient Tribal Resource Lands (RTRL) grant facilitated the TFPA agreement, enabling collaboration with the Hopi Tribe.
- The Horace Mesa Hopi contracted with LeRoy Shingoitewa at WestLand Resources to train Acoma heritage survey monitors.
- The project explored a Wood for Life agreement with Acoma to provide fuelwood to Acoma and other communities in need.

LEARN MORE

[Horace Mesa Presentation](#)

[Pueblo of Acoma](#)

[Hopi Land Information Systems](#)

[Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps](#)

Tribal Monitor Program

LeRoy Shingoitewa – (Hopi) Tribal Monitor Program Lead, WestLand Resources

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Tonto National Forest Tribal Monitor Program (TMP) was established in early 2018 to increase Tribal participation in cultural resource baseline studies for the proposed Resolution Copper Mine near Superior, Arizona.
- The Gila River Indian Community, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai Apache Nation, Hopi Tribe, Pueblo of Zuni, Ak-Chin Indian Community, and Mescalero Apache Tribe sent over 30 Tribal members to participate in the program and receive para-archaeological training.
- Monitors serve as the “eyes and ears” of the O’odham, Apache, Yavapai, Hopi, and Zuni peoples during archaeological surveys, construction monitoring, and excavation projects.
- The program provides a Native perspective during cultural and natural resource studies and increases Tribal participation in managing shared history, land, and resources.
- On average, seventeen monitors work full-time, often with overtime.
- The program is involved in projects across Arizona, New Mexico, Idaho, Utah, and Nevada.



LEARN MORE

[Tonto National Forest: WestLand Resources Tribal Monitoring Program](#)

[Tonto National Forest Tribal UA Workshops](#)

Ancestral Lands Conservation Corp

Kyle Trujillo, Senior Program Director



It's about thinking four generations out and making the best of what you have.

- Kyle Trujillo

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps provides Indigenous youth with opportunities to work on the land, gain certifications, and earn money for school while preparing for careers in land management.
- The program prioritizes local recruitment to ensure Indigenous representation on crews, fostering a deeper connection to both the land and the community.
- Inclusion and belonging are daily goals of the organization.
- The program offers a variety of initiatives, including Adult Conservation Crews, Local Adult Crews, Local Youth Crews, the Acoma Farm Corps Program, the Individual Placements Program, and the Wood for Life Program.



LEARN MORE

[Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps](#)

Hopi Land Information Systems Hopi Cultural Preservation Office

Betty Poley - LIS Supervisor

Vanessa Taho - GIS Database Administrator

Joel Nicholas – HCPO Interim Program Manager

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Hopi Tribe has maintained a Geographic Information System (GIS) program since 1986, supported by three to four staff members.
- The program successfully converted paper forms into a mobile GIS data collection system.
- Data is linked to various Tribes and entities to facilitate knowledge sharing and promote the use of geospatial technology.
- Collaboration with WestLand Resources has further advanced the use of GIS technology.
- The program recently began incorporating drone technology into its operations.
- It now has the capability to quickly gather data through imagery and can also utilize LiDAR and other remote-sensing tools.
- The program is actively engaging in various types of monitoring in collaboration with multiple Tribes.



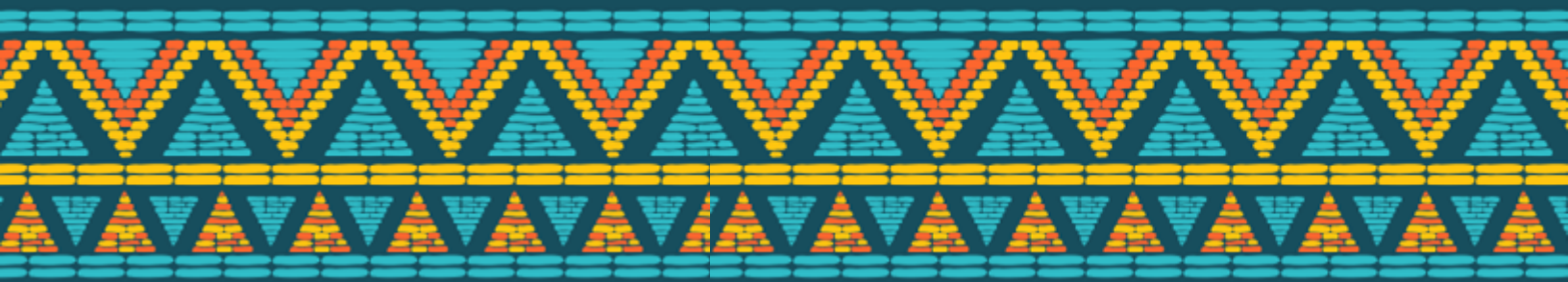
Native Land Information System

LEARN MORE

[Native Land Information Systems](#)



Policy Supporting Tribes



Key Legislation Supporting Tribes —

TFPA/638 Agreements

Patrick Moore, Special Authorities Program Manager, USDA Forest Service Region 3



Communities and ecosystems across our country face series threats from wildfire, insects & disease. These risk ratings do not incorporate cultural values from Indian Country which is under-represented when factoring risk levels. Reserve Treaty Rights lands are ancestral land management.

- Patrick Moore

KEY TAKEAWAYS

TFPA / 638 Agreements

- The Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) lays the groundwork for protecting Indian trust lands from threats originating on U.S. Forest Service (USFS) lands.
- TFPA establishes a partnership between the Forest Service and Tribes to implement Tribally proposed work on National Forest System (NFS) lands, with the goal of protecting both NFS lands and Indian trust resources.
- Signed in 2004, TFPA authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to give special consideration to Tribally proposed projects on lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the USDA Forest Service.
- Baseline requirements include that the Tribal land must be in trust or restricted status and must be forested, grassland, covered in brush or similar vegetation, or previously forested or vegetated in a way that allows for restoration.
- A Tribe must propose a project on USDA Forest Service-administered land that borders or is adjacent to Indian trust land and presents a threat to Indian forests, rangelands, or Tribal communities, or requires restoration.
- The land adjacency requirement does not require lands under different jurisdictions to share a border. For example, a project located 100 miles away may still qualify.
- TFPA emphasizes respect for the Nation-to-Nation relationship, the protection of Indian trust lands and communities, and the acknowledgment and integration of Tribes' Indigenous Knowledge in planning and management.

638 Agreements

- Once a TFPA proposal is accepted, 638 agreements serve as the financial and contractual instrument to fund and execute the work.
- These agreements provide a mechanism for meeting financial and contractual needs.
- A 638 agreement is initiated after the TFPA agreement is established between a Tribe and, often, the local Forest Service unit.

Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)

- Good Neighbor Authority enables a partnership between the USDA Forest Service and other entities to conduct work on USFS lands.
- Unlike TFPA, GNA agreements do not require adjacency or matching funds.
- Agreements can be structured as a single project agreement or as a master agreement that covers multiple projects over time.
- Any USFS funds can be allocated under a GNA agreement.
- Examples of successful TFPA and 638 agreements include projects on the San Carlos Priority Landscape in partnership with the Tonto, Coconino, and Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests.

LEARN MORE

[*Webinar: Working on Ancestral Lands: a primer on Reserved Treaty Rights Lands \(RTRL\)*](#)

[*TFPA GNA Presentation - Moore*](#)

Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL)

Mark Jackson, Branch Section Chief and lead of National RTRL Fuels for BIA
Fuels Management BIA, Division of Wildland Fire Management

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Reserved Tribal Resource Lands (RTRL) program facilitates collaborative projects between Tribal trust and non-Tribal land managers.
- 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.

LEARN MORE

[Webinar: Working on Ancestral Lands](#)

[Research: Doing work on the land of our ancestors](#)

[Video: The 2020 Medio Fire](#)

Bringing It All Together on The San Carlos

Adam Bromley, District Ranger, USDA Forest Service Region 3, Globe, Arizona



Learn from our work with San Carlos and keep moving forward. This is all dependent on the relationships we've built.

- Adam Bromley

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Prior planning matters - this project serves as an important lesson.
- The best practice is to work closely with partners and clearly define as many details as possible, even when it is challenging.
- The original agreements for this project included loosely defined goals that did not translate well into on-the-ground implementation. As a result, key needs such as heavy equipment, funding, and other resources had to be secured at the last minute.
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Tribal governments, and the USDA Forest Service each have different processes.
- Partners may not always understand these differences, making it essential for each party to clearly communicate their understanding of the process and timeline.
- A shared vision for the future is critical to project success.



A collaborator's job is to solve problems and conflicts between the plan and the land. Relationships matter, along with the importance of end-users in implementation. Fire knows no boundaries. This work is critical. Managing land for the benefit of our future generations is key.

- Adam Bromley



**Special Discussion -
Potential AZ Tribal
Working Group** —————



Special Discussion

Potential AZ Tribal Working Group

John Waconda (Isleta Pueblo) Indigenous Partnerships Program Director, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)



Self-determination at the forefront. That's the goal – for tribes to have the ability to manage their own resources, as well as elevate their voice among and within partnerships. My vision is that these partnerships are Tribally led, indigenous led, shared stewardship.

- John Waconda

Proposed Arizona Multi-Tribal Network

- The network will serve as a platform for Tribes to share knowledge, resources, and solutions.
- It is inspired by similar networks in healthcare and education.
- The initiative is designed to support resource management, fire, and forestry programs across Tribal nations.
- The network emphasizes Tribal empowerment by ensuring it is Tribally driven rather than government-led, prioritizing Tribal leadership and initiative.

Intended Outcomes

- Enable Tribes to manage their own forestry and fire resources.
- Elevate Tribal voices within partnerships and communities.
- Strengthen collective efforts by prioritizing and integrating Tribal components and priorities.
- Simplify processes to make it easier for Indigenous Peoples to accomplish their objectives.
- Improve pathways that connect with community members.
- Foster unity among Tribes by providing a space to share challenges, successes, and strategies for enhancing resilience and capacity.

Resilient Tribal Resource Lands Projects: Tribal-Led Treatments on Federal Lands

- Tribes should take the lead in planning project components.
- Projects should prioritize and strengthen any cultural connections to the area.
- Lands remain Indigenous despite federal ownership, underscoring the need for Tribal leadership in management.
- Community members should be involved in deploying Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK).
- Tribes should lead the approval process for Environmental Assessments (EA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) planning documents. This approach reduces the workload on the BIA while increasing Tribal presence, authority, and participation in projects beyond just treatment work.



To me, if we're allowing tribes to be workers on federal lands, we should be doing the planning, we should be developing projects that meet the intent of the Tribal inclusion from the very beginning.

- John Waconda

Examples of Success

- The San Carlos Tribe's fire program serves as a model of Tribal self-determination.
- Advocacy efforts have increased support for more Tribally led shared stewardship agreements with entities such as the U.S. Forest Service.

Expanding Tribal Authority

- Tribes are encouraged to manage both reservation and public lands.
- There is a growing awareness of the evolving and dynamic relationships between federal agencies, states, and Tribes, particularly in the Southwest, including New Mexico and Arizona.
- Efforts are underway to move beyond traditional Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) oversight, expanding Tribal participation and autonomy in land and resource management.
- Partnership Development
- Building partnerships beyond the federal government helps reduce dependency and strengthens Tribal self-sufficiency.
- Collaboration with a variety of partners provides additional resources and opportunities for Tribes.
- Recognition of Native communities' dedication to resource protection and national firefighting efforts is increasing.
- Collecting and sharing personal stories highlights the significant contributions of Tribes to national fire management.

Next Steps: AZ Tribal Fire Working Group and the Southwest Fire Science Consortium will be organizing the next AZ Tribal Fire Summit in 2026

LEARN MORE

[*More about John Waconda*](#)

[*VIDEO: Presentation Recording*](#)



Breakout Round Table Workshops



Culturally Appropriate Climate Adaptation Session

The Climate Adaptation Workbook Process

Conception (Connie) Flores (Pascua Yaqui), Climate Adaptation Specialist, USFS Office of Sustainability and Climate

“ Use the Climate Adaptation Framework to jump-start thinking and integrate climate change impacts into management actions. Conducting this process can help people discover and identify many potential strategies and tactics and give managers more flexibility to respond to climate change impacts than they often realized existed before applying the process.

- Connie Flores

KEY TAKEAWAYS

How Climate Change Affects Tribes

- Culturally important beings are shifting their ranges or disappearing due to climate change.
- Tribal homelands, reservations, and treaty-ceded territories remain fixed in place, limiting Tribal communities' ability to follow these shifting resources.
- The loss of access to culturally essential beings and the reciprocal relationships maintained since time immemorial poses an existential threat to Indigenous culture and community.
- Adaptation actions must be culturally appropriate and community-supported to be effective.

Why the Process Is Important

- The process helps people discover and identify multiple potential strategies and tactics for adaptation.
- Implementation is essential to move beyond status quo management actions that may no longer achieve desired outcomes in the face of climate change.
- Adaptation planning is most effective when tailored to each project, aligned with the scale of climate change impacts, and revisited every few years.



In the example of the Bay Mills Indian Community, the Tribe wanted to plant a culturally important cedar tree. After going through the process, they enhanced their plan with some of the following strategies: source plants from more southern parts of the state where genetics might be more adapted to hot/dry conditions, they were going to speak with elders, and hold ceremonies at the beginning of the workday, among other strategies.

- Connie Flores

LEARN MORE

[Climate Adaptation Workshop Presentation](#)

[Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu Summary](#)

[AdaptationWorkbook.org](#)

Fire Ecology Learning Lab (FELL) Curriculum Training

Cole Brandt and Max Yusen

Fire Ecology Learning Lab Trainers, Southwest Fire Science Consortium, Northern Arizona University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The session explored example activities in FELL lessons and how managers and informal educators can engage with the materials.

- The lessons are divided into three themes and ten lessons to structure learning effectively.
- The Fire Ecology Learning Lab (FELL) is designed to help students in New Mexico and Arizona explore the interrelationships and complexities of fire ecology in their region.
- Middle school lessons have been expanded to include activities that allow agency staff members to visit classrooms from kindergarten through high school, bringing hands-on, engaging learning experiences to students.



BREAKOUT ROUND TABLE
WORKSHOPS

LEARN MORE

[FELL Workshop Presentation](#)

[Webinar: Fire Ecology Learning Lab Teacher Training](#)

[FELL Teacher Materials 2024](#)

[Complete FELL Curriculum - Southwest Fire Science](#)

[Consortium \(English and Spanish\)](#)

Solving Post-Fire Impacts: Nature First!

The Importance of Applying Indigenous Knowledge/Nature-Based Solutions in Post-fire Recovery Work on Tribal Lands

Daniel Denipah, Forestry Director, Santa Clara Pueblo

Caitlyn Cruz, Graduate Research Assistant, Colorado State University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The presenter recalled the powerful experience of restoring Santa Clara Canyon following the Oso, Cerro Grande, and Las Conchas wildfires, as well as the subsequent extreme flooding events.
- The project focuses on innovating with process-based restoration methods that maximize ecosystem services through nature-based solutions sourced directly from the site.
- Efforts prioritize limiting the introduction of foreign materials to maintain ecological integrity.
- Restoration strategies are designed to work with the natural flow of streams rather than against them.
- Restoring the canyon can also restore the Tewa language and reconnect Santa Clara people to the land.
- Natural approaches to land management still require significant funding.
- Tribes must rely on federal grant programs, which can create limitations and slow progress.
- Tribal employees must navigate and leverage grant opportunities to effectively steward ancestral lands.

Short Film: Indigenous Wisdom to Heal from Fire: The Restoration of Santa Clara Canyon



[CLICK HERE](#)

BREAKOUT ROUND TABLE
WORKSHOPS

LEARN MORE

Daniel Denipah

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White Mountain Apache: Post-fire Recovery in the Aftermath of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire

Caitlyn Cruz, Graduate Research Assistant, Colorado State University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Flooding impacts can persist far beyond the typical Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) efforts, which operate within a 3–5-year time frame.
- Native students participated in the restoration process by conducting surveys and installing treatments.
- Thirteen years after the fire, vegetation is returning, but the soil remains highly disturbed and degraded.
- A Fort Lewis College study found that 8,000 years of soil deposition had been disturbed and transported due to the fire's impact.

Fire and Springs: Reestablishing the Balance on the White Mountain Apache Reservation

Johnathan Long - Strategic Planner, USFS Pacific SW Region - Ecosystem Planning

Greg Russell, PhD candidate, Colorado State University

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Uncharacteristically large and severe wildfires have a vast array of impacts, and recovery efforts understandably prioritize human life, health, and safety in their immediate aftermath. However, their long-term effects on natural and ecocultural systems are equally vital.
- The project featured examples from the White Mountain Apache Reservation in east-central Arizona following the Rodeo-Chediski Fire of 2002.
- Particularly damaging and persistent effects included channel erosion, which caused significant damage to culturally and ecologically critical sites along rivers and wet meadows.
- At several of these locations, accelerated erosion continued for more than 10 years after the fire.
- This damage was mitigated through the placement of integrated rock and plant structures designed to induce aggradation, revegetation of sediments, and water retention.
- These treatments were informed by traditional knowledge and values, emphasizing the use of native, natural materials.
- The interventions were made possible through proactive planning as part of the fire recovery process, which included dedicating staff to monitor fire effects and identify critical areas for treatment.
- Despite these efforts, challenges arose due to constraints associated with post-fire funding programs, which limited the ability to fully address damage.
- The inclusion of Tribal youth from a local community school helped maintain connections to these places while ensuring continued monitoring and restoration efforts.

LEARN MORE

[Read the USDA Forest Service Research Publication](#)

“Follow Your Elements” – Personal Story

Mae Burnett, (White Mountain Apache), Advisor, Tribal Historic Preservation Office

Transcript of Mae’s personal experience and perspective on natural postfire restoration



[CLICK HERE](#)



Take care of Mother Earth and She will take of you.

- Mae Burnett

BREAKOUT ROUND TABLE WORKSHOPS

Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Climate Resilience

Dominique David-Chavez PhD, Indigenous Land & Data Stewards Lab Director, Department of Forest and Rangeland Stewardship, Colorado State University



Indigenous peoples have always been data stewards. We are each other’s best resources for this work.

- Dominique David-Chavez, PhD

This workshop focused on the importance of Indigenous peoples governing their data and the impact on their communities in the face of climate change. Indigenous data include information, in any format, that impacts Indigenous lives at both the collective and individual levels.

Indigenous Data Sovereignty refers to the right of Indigenous peoples and nations to govern the collection, ownership, and application of their own data.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Indigenous data can be categorized into three main areas:

- Data about Indigenous resources and environments, including land information, history, geological data, titles, and water information.
-
- Data about Indigenous individuals, such as administrative, legal, health, and social data, as well as commercially held data, service use data, and personally generated data.
-
- Data about Indigenous nations, encompassing Traditional and cultural knowledge, archives, oral histories, literature, ancestral knowledge, and community stories.

4 CARE Principles ensure that Indigenous data governance supports Indigenous self-determination and well-being:

- **Collective Benefit:** Data ecosystems must be designed and function in ways that enable Indigenous Peoples to derive benefit from the data.
- **Responsibility:** Those working with Indigenous data are responsible for transparently sharing how the data are used to support Indigenous self-determination and collective benefit.
- **Authority to Control:** Indigenous Peoples' rights and interests in Indigenous data must be recognized, and their authority to control such data must be respected.
- **Ethics:** Indigenous Peoples' rights and well-being should be the primary concern at all stages of the data life cycle and across the data ecosystem.

LEARN MORE

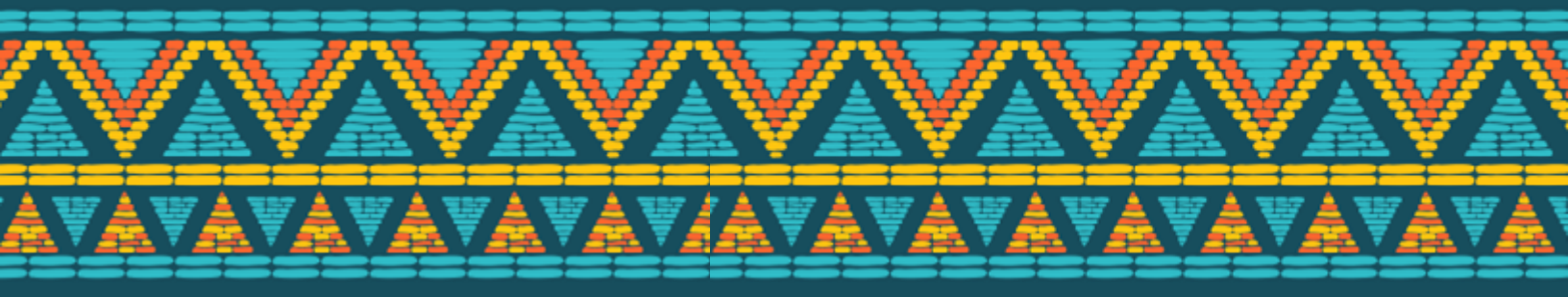
[Indigenous Data Sovereignty Presentation](#)
[Indigenous Data Sovereignty & Ethics Resource Hub](#)

Indigenouslandstewards.org

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Field Tours



San Carlos Apache Sawmill, Timber Sale Program and Cutter Woodyard

Improving forest health has become a priority for Tribal leaders who have recognized the development of a modern sawmill as a tool for facilitating active forest management and Tribal economic development.

The visionary behind this operation is Dee Randall, San Carlos Apache Tribe member, retired Forest Manager for the Tribe, and Chairman of San Carlos Apache Forest Products. The Beck Group Worked with Dee for over 20 years to achieve what was seen during the tour.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Tribal leadership retained The Beck Group to begin developing a vision and plan for a sawmill operation tailored to the Tribe's Ponderosa Pine timber resource, which spans approximately 200,000 acres of the 1.8 million acre reservation.
- The Sawmill was Phase I of the development.
- The Cutter Woodyard provides both Tribal and non-Tribal members with the opportunity to purchase firewood. Bundles are also distributed across Arizona by various Apache and other Native American vendors.
- Mexico is currently the primary market for the Tribe's timber products.
- In December 2024, New Market Tax Credit financing was arranged to fund a lumber sticker-stacker operation and additional site improvements.

- Tribal funding has been approved for two lumber drying kilns and a new wood-fired boiler replacing the originally planned natural gas boiler.
- The final phase of the sawmill will be the installation of a planer mill for surfacing/finishing lumber, purchased from a closed sawmill in Alberta.
- Preliminary planning work has also been completed for a biochar operation at the site.
- Additional grant funding provided by a USFS Wood Innovation Grant, a Community Wood Energy Grant, and others awaiting application acceptance.

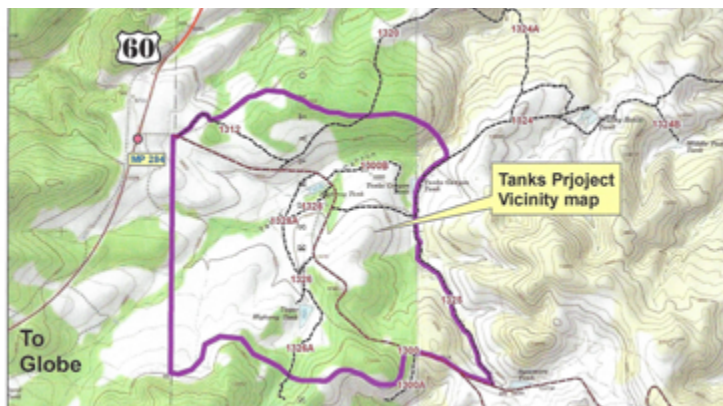


Highway Tanks Ecological Restoration Environmental Assessment Project on the San Carlos Apache Reservation

*Erwin Goseyun, Reserve Treaty Rights Lands Lead,
San Carlos Apache Tribe*

*Josh Beason, Assistant Fuels Management Officer,
Tonto National Forest, Globe Ranger District*

This RTRL collaborative project aims to improve ecological function and services across the landscape, focusing on ecological resiliency and stability. It includes objectives such as restoring Tribal lands, reintroducing fire, providing income through sustainable practices, and improving wildlife habitat silvicultural treatments and monitoring to ensure objectives are met.



DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Buffer zones for drainages and archaeological sites
- Slash treatment to reduce fuel load
- Prescribed burns to follow within two years

LEARN MORE

[Highway Tanks Field Trip PDF](#)

[Highway Tanks Field Trip Packet](#)

The Apache Natural World: Management Lessons from the Land

Seth Pilsk, Ethnobotanist for San Carlos Apache Tribe
Twila Cassadore (San Carlos Apache) Project Assistant,
Traditional Apache Diet Project, San Carlos Apache

The group spent the afternoon exploring Tribal self-sufficiency rooted in the land, waters, and plants of the San Carlos ancestral landscape. Seth guided attendees to traditional medicinal, ceremonial, and food plants, clarifying key terminology and use. Twila shared traditional foods—dried and fresh prickly pear fruit, pinyon pine nuts, and dried yucca flower—while explaining their harvesting and preparation.



“**TEK is often information about the natural world that you can take and use for western-based management, or even Tribal-based management. But the traditional wisdom goes a lot deeper. It’s about how to actually live and be. The two are very different. I’m sure all of you have seen the incident commanders who come in and say they’re going to take care of everything.**

The elders were trying to bridge that gap, trying to convince agency people to live properly in the world.

- Seth Pilsk

Nutritional analysis of the traditional, pre-reservation Apache diet showed that it was extremely healthy, containing twice the amount of protein and fiber than the USDA recommends. It was very high in healthy fats, had no processed sugar, and was rich in many micronutrients and vitamins.



“**You can go ahead and mirror those nutritional numbers with modern food, but it’s not going to make you happy. What makes you happy is living the life that supports that diet.**

- Twila Cassadore



Nest'án – The Traditional Apache Diet Program

[CLICK HERE](#)



Video: The Traditional Western Apache Diet Project

[CLICK HERE](#)

Lessons from the 2024 Toyo Fire

Mikey Gutierrez, Fire Module Superintendent, San Carlos Apache Tribe

Toyo Fire was carried by heavy winds and invasive grass through a riparian landscape, threatening the Tribal farm. Read the excellent summary below for details.

[CLICK HERE](#)



FIELD TOURS