

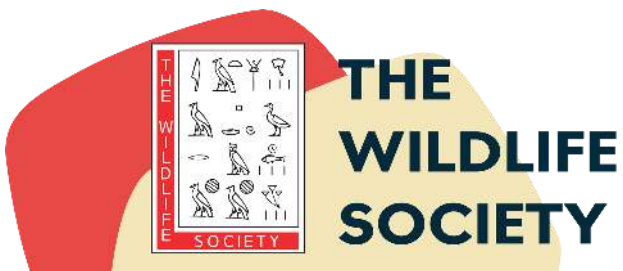
MARCH 2025

# Native Student Professional Development Program

## 2024 Report



A COLLABORATION:





## Native Student Professional Development Program



**20+**

We received 22 applications in 2024



**>46%**

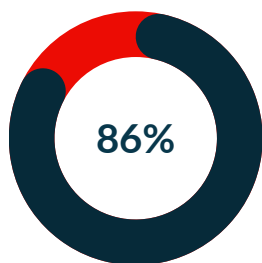
Nearly half of the applicants were pursuing advanced degrees



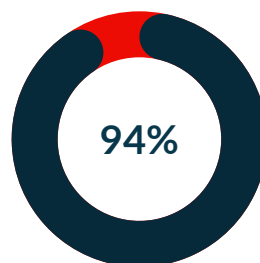
**7**

Applicants were from seven different Native American Tribes

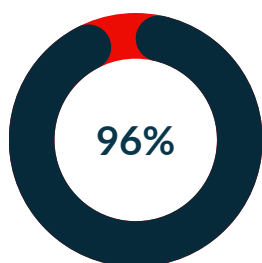
### 2024 Participant Results:



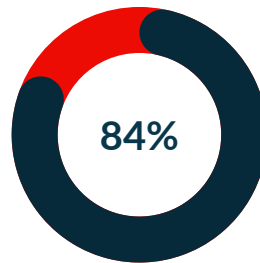
Overall Program Satisfaction



Satisfaction of Mentorship



Satisfaction of Application Process



Improvement of Professional Skills



# 2024 Native Student Professional Development Participants

## Keolohilani H. Lopes Jr.

Keolohilani H. Lopes Jr. is a PhD student at the University of Hawaii at Mānoa's Natural Resources and Environmental Management Department. Lopes Jr. is working on detecting invasive marine algae in the state using computer vision and robotics. Lopes Jr. is a native Hawaiian/Kānaka Maoli.

*"I hope this program is just the beginning of my work with TWS and the NSPD program. It is nice to connect with other students and working professionals with the same mindset and indigenous views of ecosystem management."*

*"The program has broadened my knowledge of Native American projects and regional differences between tribes. It gave me motivation to keep going in the field and advocate more for our voices to be heard at the table. I aim to do this by trying my best to end up working at a government agency to assist in the management of my native lands and waters."*



## Marie Taylor

Marie Taylor is majoring in zoology at Utah Valley University, just south of Salt Lake City. Taylor is from the Muscogee (Creek) Tribe.

*"Being at the TWS conference was a really amazing opportunity to be able to meet professionals and learn about their experiences. My favorite part was the field trip at the U.S. Geological Survey Eastern Ecological Science Center. It was very helpful and informative to see what different agencies are actually doing. Also talking to the mentors and having the Sloan dinner."*

*"The NSPD program was really beneficial to hear more about grad school it made me think way more about grad school. Before I was very unsure of the process, so it was super helpful to talk about it and even hear from the other students. It made the process seem like a less daunting thing."*

*"The program helped me think about the future and the different paths I could take. It was really helpful to talk to Dom and learn what working for an agency like US Fish and Wildlife actually entails and how to get there. This will help me make decisions in the future."*





## Stelle Searce

Stelle Searce is studying for a Master in Environment, Natural Resources and Society and is a Distinguished Graduate Scholar in their master's program at the University of Wyoming. Searce is from the Cherokee Nation.

*"The NSPD program felt so special, in that I felt surrounded by folks who were there to support me, both personally and professionally. So many meaningful conversations took place with peers and mentors that challenged me to think deeper about science and indigeneity. The mentors were a wonderful part of the program and I really enjoyed listening to their advice and the perspective they shared. This program allowed me to attend the 2024 TWS conference, that I otherwise would not have."*

*"Through the program I was able to connect with other scholars and professionals to get my name out there as well as learn about different opportunities for a future career path. I was able to get my name out there with other professionals as well as build my knowledge of different career opportunities."*



## Hunter Grove

Hunter Grove recently graduated with a Bachelor's of Science from Oregon State University. Grove is currently conducting an assistantship program funded by TWS, and is working on a collaborative project with the University of Montana and the U.S. Forest Service's Rocky Mountain Research Station. Grove is a descendant of the Karuk Tribe.

*"My favorite aspects of the program were getting to experience the conference/ the city with fellow Indigenous peoples, touring the wildlife refuge/ national aquarium, and trying new foods! I heard from many different professional about their career path which helped me solidify my own. I love being connected to a professional field, it makes me feel welcomed and accepted."*





## Nadira Mitchell

Nadira Mitchell is studying natural resources at the University of Arizona. Mitchell is from the Navajo Nation.

*My favorite part of the program was being able to navigate the conference as an Indigenous cohort. I loved the field trip and different networking opportunities. I was able to connect with mentors who were willing to give their time and energy to talk and give advice. This program has opened my eyes to different opportunities that TWS promotes. I definitely feel like I have a place in this field as a Native American professional.*



## Ryleigh John

Ryleigh John is majoring in biology and minoring in sustainability at the State University of New York at Albany. John is from the Seneca Nation.

*"The networking events were fantastic and introduced me to people I never would've met otherwise. It gave me a lot of guidance on my future path to work in the field. Connecting with other professionals and specifically Native American professionals in the field was inspiring. It showed me that our voices belong in science."*



# Donate to Support Future Indigenous Wildlife Leaders

The Wildlife Society and Native Peoples Wildlife Management Working Group need support through donations to help nurture the next generation of Native American wildlife leaders. Every contribution you make will create a significant impact.

## Types of Donations

- Monetary Donations
- In-kind (wildlife gear)
- Conference Sponsorship
- Volunteer Support from Indigenous leaders

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