



The Wildlife Society  
Native Peoples Wildlife Management  
Working Group



**Native Student Professional Development Program  
Cleveland, Ohio  
October 7-11, 2018  
Final Report**

**Summary of Objectives and Accomplishments:**

As a scientific organization for professionals who manage and conserve wildlife and habitats, The Wildlife Society (TWS) is increasingly concerned about the lack of ethnic and cultural diversity within the profession. Diversity is essential if the profession is to grow and meet the nation's conservation challenges. To help address this concern, TWS established a professional-development program for Native students studying various aspects of natural resource management.

The indigenous community has enormous potential to enrich diversity within the wildlife profession. Native lands often consist of important wildlife habitat, and indigenous students are showing a growing interest in pursuing careers in wildlife management and conservation. Furthermore, Native American and other indigenous cultures rely heavily on wildlife resources as a source of income, basis for their culture, and subsistence living. TWS has an active Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group (hereafter, Working Group or NPWMWG) composed of wildlife professionals and students, tribal and non-tribal, who recognize native people's cultural, spiritual, and ecological connections to the land. TWS and the Working Group have been exploring ways to promote the early development of indigenous wildlife professionals. Interest in wildlife careers is growing among indigenous students, and since its inception in 2006. In 2018 the program has provided 13 students with professional development opportunities.

TWS believes one of the most-effective ways to support indigenous wildlife students is to give them an opportunity to attend and participate in TWS's Annual Conference – the largest gathering of wildlife professionals in North America. In 2008, TWS, with support from multiple federal agencies, implemented a competitive Native Student Professional Development (NSPD) Program. Individuals selected for this program receive grants of \$1,500-\$2,500 each (depending on student location, conference location and total amount of funding available) to help cover registration fees, lodging, meals and transportation to attend and participate in the annual conference. They also receive a one-year membership in TWS and become members of the Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group. As TWS members they receive all the

associated benefits, including *The Wildlife Professional*, the weekly *eWildlifer*, access to the TWS Network Online Directory (launching in December), and free online access to all TWS journals (effective Jan. 1).

The purpose of this APHIS grant was to provide Federal financial assistance to fund a symposium or provide funds for competitive students to participate in The Wildlife Society's 25th Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio.

**Eligibility:**

Candidates must be self-identified members of a Native American, Native Hawaiian, First Nations, or indigenous tribe, and currently enrolled in an undergraduate or graduate program in a relevant academic discipline such as wildlife biology or ecology. Applicants must display a record of academic excellence and a strong interest in pursuing a career in wildlife management or conservation.

**Application:**

Flyers for the Professional Development Program (attached PDF) were sent out June 2018 with a due date of August 17, 2018.

**Selection:**

Qualified applicants are evaluated by a panel consisting of the Chair of the Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group, two other working-group members, a TWS staff member, the Professional Development Program Coordinator, and at least one representative from other program partners, including the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society.

With an increase in funding from sponsors this year, the Native People's Wildlife Management Working Group had funding for 11 students to attend this year's conference.

**2018 Native Student Professional Development Program participants**



<b>Riley Etcitty</b>		<b>University</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Koa Matsuoka</b>
<b>Mikelle Ivins</b>	<b>Brandon Kittson</b>	<b>University</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Michelle Quillin</b>
<b>Michael Jordan</b>	<b>Eric Laate</b>	<b>University</b>

<b>Jeromalyn Santos</b>	<b>Nerisa Taua</b>	<b>Jose Martinez</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>
<b>Sabrina Suluai-Mahuka</b>	<b>Sattie Whitefoot</b>	<b>Fauna Nicaragua</b>
<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>University</b>

**Eleven aspiring wildlifers representing tribes and indigenous communities from across the continent traveled to the 2018 Annual Conference in Cleveland, Ohio, through the TWS sponsored program: Native Student Professional Development Program. This year’s group led the symposium “Food for thought: how tribes are sustaining wildlife through food sovereignty.**

**The presentations expressed the milestones and hardships of food sovereignty and the role of wildlife management. The talks included their respective tribes’ traditions as related to food and its preparation. It was inspiring to hear of their experiences and optimism towards a future of intertribal awareness and their roles as professionals working to overcome conflicts as related to conservation and adaptive management.**

**It was the first year that a student working group had independently performed all aspects of a symposium.**

**List of partners:**

This year, the program was funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, USDA-APHIS National Wildlife Research Center.

**Acknowledgements:**

The NPWMWG previously expressed to The Wildlife Society Council in a letter that while this is a great program, it is difficult to fund without assistance. Serra Hoagland says they’ve had much more success the past few years with TWS Business Solutions and Development Manager

Chuck Shively helping to fundraise. Next year, they plan to look for funding from corporations in addition to tribes and government agencies. Thanks to Chuck for this much needed assistance.

We would like to thank Dr. Larry Clark, Director of the National Wildlife Research Center, for his continued support for grant funding, his interest in this student program, and for attending the Working Group meeting this year.

We would like to extend a special thank you to The Wildlife Society, Chuck at TWS, Native Peoples Working Group.

**Final Report Prepared By:**

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