

TWS NPWMWG

Newsletter



Our Mission

The Native Peoples Wildlife Management Working Group promotes improved relationships between state / provincial / federal wildlife managers and tribal wildlife managers through improved communications. The Working Group provides a forum for tribal and agency wildlife professionals to discuss wildlife management on reservations and aboriginal lands and to share viewpoints on proposed policies affecting wildlife management in Indian Country. The Working Group works to enhance wildlife management on and off reservations through joint activities.

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Updates from the Board

Native Student Professional Development Program

The NSPD program is pleased to report that it was able to support ten native students' participation in this year's Wildlife Society Annual Conference in Edmonton, Alberta. The NSPD program was also expanded this year to offer two native students the opportunity to attend the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Conference in Riverton, Wyoming.

We are also pleased to welcome Stelle Searce as our new NSPD program coordinator for US students. We are currently seeking an NSPD program coordinator for Canada students, and a call for applications will go out in January.

The NPWMWG board is also actively seeking funding to continue supporting and expanding the NSPD program. See our [2025 NSPD Report](#) and share with your networks to support program funding, and please [reach out to us](#) if you're aware of any opportunities!



Congratulations!

The NPWMWG is pleased to congratulate NSPD program coordinator Remington Bracher for receiving *The Wildlife Society's Ronald F. Labisky Graduate Fellowship in Wildlife Policy*. This award will support Remington's research examining bison in Elk Island National Park, Alberta.



The NPWMWG is also pleased to congratulate board member Ty Werdel for receiving *Texas A&M's Montague-Center for Teaching Excellence Scholar Award*. This award recognizes Ty's demonstration of exceptional dedication to teaching and will support his efforts to implement innovative approaches to undergraduate teaching and learning.



Board Member Elections

Elections for new officers for the Native Peoples Working Group are now open!

[Please login and cast your ballot](#)

The last day to vote is January 5, 2026. Below, the candidates for each position are listed including biographies for the chair-elect and secretary/treasurer positions.

Chair-Elect

Remington Bracher is a Nêhiyaw (Cree) member of Muskoday First Nation, raised in Edmonton, Alberta. He is a wildlife biologist, hunter, angler, trapper, and graduate student at the University of British Columbia, Okanagan, in Dr. Adam Ford's Wildlife Restoration Ecology Lab. His research focuses on restoring culturally meaningful harvests in National Parks through collaborative stewardship models that weave Indigenous Knowledge and Western science. Remington's passion for conservation stems from a deep, relational connection to the land and wildlife, shaped by his lived experiences, teachings, and a commitment to reclaiming cultural practices disrupted by colonialism. He has served as the Student Director for the Alberta Chapter of The Wildlife Society (ACTWS) for the past four years, where he established the ACTWS Hunting Mentorship Program. He is currently working to develop an Indigenous branch of the program, which will support students in reconnecting with their culture and the land through wildlife, ceremony, and land-based learning. Remington has served as coordinator since 2022 for the Native Student Professional Development (NSPD) Program for The Wildlife Society through the Native Peoples' Wildlife Management Working Group. The NSPD Program supports Indigenous students from across North America by providing funding, mentorship, and community at and beyond the TWS conference.

Secretary / Treasurer

My name is David Heit, and I am the Wildlife Biologist for the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians in Manistee, Michigan. I have been a member of the Working Group for the past year and would love the opportunity to contribute more to the Group's mission. While not a Tribal Member myself, I have experience through my position in working with Federal, State, and University partners to ensure the needs, values, and treaty rights of Tribal Members are respected in the wildlife management field. I also have experience in project management and budget administration which, as a board member, I would use to help continue and expand the Group's efforts in education and professional development.

Board Member

Jamie Begay | Robert Magill | Bob Newman | Kristin Peet | Sarah Rinkevich | Paige Schmidt



TWS Annual Conference

Thanks to significant contributions by [Remington Bracher](#) (NSPD program coordinator) and many other dedicated supporters of native peoples and the NPWMWG, this year's TWS Annual Conference successfully brought great attention to Indigenous-led wildlife research and management and incorporated Indigenous cultures and peoples into the annual programming. See below for highlights from this year's conference:

Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Both the opening and closing ceremonies of the conference incorporated Indigenous drum circles and dancing showcasing the culture and talent of the local Indigenous community.



Indigenous Artisans

Conference lanyards were hand-crafted by Indigenous artisans, and the tradeshow included an Indigenous Marketplace headlined by local Nehiyaw artist and clothing designer [Dusty LeGrande](#) who offered on-site t-shirt printing and also designed this year's logo.



TWS Annual Conference

Indigenous Plenary

Plenary Speakers included: Dr. Julie Thorstenson (Lakota), Woksape Gluha Mani Winyan, Executive Director for the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society; Remington Bracher, Nêhiyaw (Cree) member of Muskoday First Nation, wildlife biologist, hunter, angler, trapper, and graduate student at the University of British Columbia Okanagan; and Dr. Allyson Menzies, of mixed Métis and settler ancestry, born on Treaty 2 territory, assistant professor at the University of Calgary. These speakers used their platform to encourage Indigenous researchers and land managers, which earned a standing ovation following Remington's emotional conclusion to the event.



NPWMWG Annual Meeting

Our membership met to discuss the NPWMWG's ongoing efforts to support Indigenous engagement in wildlife management and research including a thoughtful and spirited discussion of the NPWMWG's role in education.



Indigenous-led Research

A special session was hosted titled "Indigenous Engagement", which included presentations from Ryan Cheng, Clayton Lamb, Katharina Miller, Erin Tattersall, Katherine Wolfenden, Crisia Tabacaru, and Sarah Rinkevich. In their presentations, the speakers shared research and management efforts being led by Indigenous people and organizations. Though not explicitly focused on Indigenous efforts, many other presentations also highlighted Indigenous-led efforts.



TWS Annual Conference

Habitat Restoration Working Group Symposium

The [Habitat Restoration Working Group](#) (HRWG) hosted a symposium titled [Rewilding and Landscape-Scale Ecosystem Restoration: A Wildlife Perspective](#) supported by the NPWMWG as well as the Military Lands and International Working Groups. The HRWG had 9 excellent presentations that spanned a wide range of restoration projects and concepts. They were joined by professionals who have conducted restoration projects on private, federal, tribal, and military lands, highlighting the diversity that exists within habitat restoration and the different approaches and skillsets needed to achieve positive outcomes. The symposium included three speakers who work closely with tribal nations.

[Katie Henshaw](#) presented on the Southeastern Grasslands Initiative, whose tribal program collaborates with tribes across the Southeastern U.S. to facilitate the restoration of culturally and ecologically important plants and animals across the region.

[Carmen Richter](#) presented on restoring the Klinse-Za caribou to their traditional range within the West Moberly and Sauteau First Nations in Canada. Her presentation focused on how working with on-the-ground partners contributed to the success of the restoration.

[Tiana Williams-Claussen](#) spoke on a watershed restoration initiative led by the Yurok Tribe in Northwestern California.



These three presentations gave great insight into how partnerships with native peoples can contribute to very successful restoration outcomes for land, wildlife, and people. Collectively, the presenters gave a wide look at the different facets of restoration, from the scientific perspective and from the manager perspective of working with different partners to achieve restoration goals. It also gave us a good impression of what it is like to work on different landscapes, with an ecologically diverse range of projects, and different tribal, governmental, and private lands stewards.



Aquatic Mammal Health on Blackfeet Reservation

Conservation Dogs Help with Environmental Contamination Monitoring In Aquatic Ecosystems

Michele Lovara, Ngaio Richards, Souta Callinglast, and Crystal Sharlow-Schaefer

An environmental justice project on the Blackfeet Reservation is utilizing specialized detection dog-handler teams in a noninvasive approach to monitor environmental contamination. The initiative is a partnership between [Indigenous Vision](#) and [Working Dogs for Conservation](#) (WD4C). The project, which began in 2021, has conducted three consecutive years of fieldwork, focusing on utilizing the dogs to noninvasively survey wildlife for environmental contamination by locating their scat (fecal samples) along waterways. Mink and otter scats were targeted for testing due to their primarily aquatic diet and nature. This work was an expansion of prior proof-of-concept work by WD4C using mink and otter scats (described in Richards et al. 2018 and Laguardia et al. 2020) to test for heavy metals, pharmaceuticals, personal care products and PBDE flame retardants.

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Aquatic Mammal Health on Blackfeet Reservation

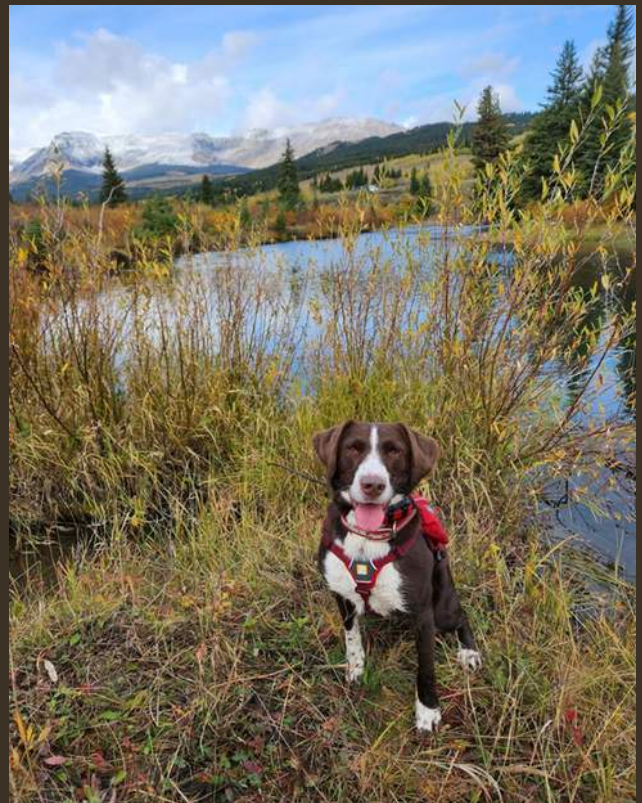


WORKING DOGS for CONSERVATION

The fieldwork has yielded significant scientific outputs, particularly in contaminant detection and noninvasive contaminants monitoring. The project pursued innovative proof-of-concept work to detect PFAS, often called "forever chemicals," in the environment. In 2024, a specialized laboratory method for PFAS analysis was developed in partnership with Colorado State University at the specific request of Indigenous Vision and WD4C. Using this method, scat and soil samples were collected, and mink scat was shown to be a viable sample for collecting PFAS contamination information. Beyond PFAS, the project also screened for 20 heavy metals of concern. New project partners are also interested in working on increased pharmaceutical testing through scats.

An important element of this initiative is its capacity-building component. As part of the environmental justice program, five successful tribal student internships have been completed. This program ensures that Indigenous voices and expertise are directly engaged and centered in the scientific and conservation efforts. The project's findings help inform efforts to noninvasively monitor and protect local aquatic ecosystems, wildlife, and human health.

See below (pg.10) for more information on this year's Indigenous internship opportunities!



Oregon Chapter Annual Conference



The Oregon Chapter of The Wildlife Society will be hosting their annual conference February 23–25, 2026 in Seaside, Oregon.

The [annual conference](#) will include many ways to engage—especially for professionals, early career folks, and students—including concurrent scientific sessions, a poster session, [wildlife photography contest](#), student welcome event, trivia night, a student/early career mixer, workshops, vendor tabling, and [artists' displays](#). There were 400+ attendees at the 2025 Annual Conference, and we anticipate high turnout in 2026.

At our upcoming event, we're pleased to offer a [tribal registration rate of \\$200](#) (at cost to the society; membership encouraged but not required). Early [registration](#) ends January 17, 2026.

Additionally, we will be awarding our [scholarships](#) and [grants](#) during the Annual Conference; the application deadline is December 31, 2025.



Conservation Internship for Indigenous and BIPOC Students



[Working Dogs for Conservation](#) (WD4C) is seeking Indigenous and BIPOC students and early career professionals interested in dogs, dog training, and conservation for our summer internship program.

Ideally, candidates will start in June and finish in September, working ~35 hours a week, but timing and specific content are flexible. Individuals interested in learning about training and using dogs for wildlife conservation and environmental justice are encouraged to apply. A monthly allowance (\$20/hr, up to \$3,000/month), a travel stipend (TBD, depending on location and duties), on-site housing, and necessary equipment will be provided.

Interns are trained as valued members of our team and will be active participants in field preparation and planning, canine care, fieldwork, and follow-up for conservation projects. Our staff will provide direct supervision and all training needed. Our dedicated staff provides you with thorough training. There are no educational or professional prerequisites, and all applications will be considered. Applications will be evaluated based on the individual's interest in and long-term potential to contribute to environmental justice or natural resource management and to apply both in support of traditional and rural livelihoods.

To apply, please send a resume and cover letter with the following:

- Why are you interested in the position?
- What skills, perspectives, and/or lived experiences you will bring to an internship
- How an internship can help or influence your life, community, and career
- Any other things you would like us to know in considering your application

Letters can be sent via Email to

TribalInternship@WD4C.org or [Facebook Messenger](#)

Must be authorized to work in the United States, we are unable to offer sponsorship or work visas at this time



Discounted Online Wildlife Capture Course

Dr. Mark Johnson is offering Foundations of Wildlife Chemical Capture as an online self-paced course in 2026.



Register before the new year to receive a 50% discount using this QR code:
(was \$580 now \$290 USD)



By registering for the course, you will receive:

- Access to the online course and associated materials for a full year
- Demonstration videos and images
- A 150-page downloadable course notebook including handouts
- Year-long support through the online course
- Monthly Q&A sessions

By completing the course you will be eligible for:

- A Certificate of Training
- 16 continuing education hours in The Wildlife Society Professional Development Program

This course is:

- NACA-approved for field services / animal control personnel
- RACE-approved for continuing education credits for veterinarians and veterinary technicians

For more information:

- Check out the [registration link](#)
- Review the [course outline](#)
- Visit Global Wildlife Resources' [website](#)
- Contact Dr. Mark Johnson at info@wildliferesources.com



Recent Publications

The Benefits of Indigenous-led Social Science: A Mindset for Arctic Sustainability

Brooks JJ and Renick HE

[Humanities and Social Sciences Communications](#)

The Peoples of the Arctic and Arctic health and sustainability are highly interconnected and essentially one and the same. An appropriate path to a sustainable Arctic involves a shift away from individual learning and achieving toward community leadership and the betterment of society. This article draws upon mindset theory from Western psychology and Indigenous relational accountability to propose and outline a model for achieving sustainability in the Arctic. The geographic focus is the North American Arctic. The principles of the argument and the foundations of the model may apply across the Circumpolar North. The paper is a call to action for social scientists and policy makers in the Arctic to implement an Indigenous-led and self-determined social science. Empowering and supporting Indigenous leaders and scholars to direct and conduct autonomous social science research would inherently produce well-being and sustainability for Indigenous communities and regions. The arguments are supported by an inductive analysis of peer-reviewed literature, and the model is organized and illustrated using a schematic of concentric circles. The foundational elements of the model include: Indigenous sovereignty, Indigenous ontology, Indigenous models of sustainability, and Indigenous scholarship. Environmental scientists, resource managers, and policy makers are directed to better understand, accept, and support Indigenous science as a comprehensive and valid knowledge system; change...

A Path to Reconciliation Between Indigenous and Settler-Colonial Epistemologies

Gazing Wolf J, Simmons E, Blanchard P, Jennings LL, Ignace DD, David-Chavez DM, Smiles D, et al.

[Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution](#)

There is a movement across settler-colonial institutions of education and research to engage with Indigenous Peoples and Knowledges. Many settler and Indigenous governments are pursuing pathways to move forward together to address global problems such as climate change. However, given the pervasive history of exploitation and displacement of Indigenous communities, this development has caused some concern among Indigenous leaders and scholars. At the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Ecological Society of America (ESA) in Montreal, Canada, the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Section of the ESA hosted a 2-day work-shop. This gathering of 21 Indigenous environmental scientists included scholars from across the career and professional spectrum. By consensus, workshop participants identified three emergent themes—Engage, Heal, and Reconcile—that provide a pathway toward reconciliation between Indigenous and settler-colonial ways of knowing. This path allows for an ever-greater sharing of institutional resources and power toward a co-equal interfacing of Indigenous Knowledges and settler science.



Recent Publications

U.S. Parks and Protected Area Power Structures: From Historic Policies to Indigenous Futurities

Jacobs LA, Fisk J, Carlson AK, D'Antonio A, Hazelwood SP, Perry EE, Adams M, Newman R, Grayson R, et al.
[Earth Stewardship](#)

This study examines the historical and contemporary power structures in U.S. Parks and Protected Areas (PPAs) and proposes a framework for transitioning toward more equitable management practices that are centered on Indigenous leadership and sovereignty. As an authorship team of Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars, we critique the colonial infrastructure that has maintained settler power over Indigenous lands and waters by employing decolonial and feminist methodologies and adapting an Indigenous evaluation model to understand PPA management power paradigms along a spectrum from historic to contemporary and Indigenous futurity-based management. We highlight that despite recent federal policies that promote collaborative management, significant barriers persist for Tribal Nations to gain powers that recognize their self-determination and sovereignty in PPA management. Such barriers include the prioritization of western conservation paradigms, U.S. policies, marginalization of Indigenous Knowledge Systems, and limited recognition of Tribal Nations as sovereign rightsholders. We introduce a model for understanding and navigating a spectrum of power dynamics in PPA management and categorize sequential stages: "To" and "For," maintaining colonial dominance through structural and procedural powers and cultures; "With" and "Beside," the nexus of collaborative and co-equity-based...

Policies with Potential: Inclusive Governance for a Just Energy Transition in Alaska

Brooks JJ

[Energy Research and Social Science](#)

Alaskan communities are facing complex challenges associated with energy security and changing environmental and climatic conditions. They require access to affordable, sustainable, and renewable energy resources to navigate their changing landscapes. With unprecedented investments and commitments from the federal and state governments to bolster energy resiliency in urban and rural communities, renewable energy development in the waters offshore Alaska could become a reality within two to three decades. Offshore wind is the most feasible option for renewable energy production for the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf, including the federal waters of Cook Inlet. This paper asks: to what extent does the applicable, legal regulatory regime potentially facilitate a just and equitable renewable energy transition for Alaska's Railbelt grid? Framed in the umbrella concept of inclusive governance, the author compares conceptual tenets of energy justice, participatory stakeholder planning, and collective action against the legal framework that directs the federal decision-making process. The analysis demonstrates deficits in the current federal legal mandates and process and recommends how the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management can expand its existing tools to account for energy justice, improve participation, and proactively design and implement collective action for planning and siting offshore wind energy projects. If energy regulators expand how they apply the legal mandates and leverage innovative...



Recent Publications

A National Vision for Land Use Planning in the United States

Darracq EG, Brooks JJ, and Darracq AK

[Land](#)

The time is nigh to organize the physical landscapes of the United States under a unified land use policy and planning framework. As human populations have steadily grown, so has the urgency for agencies to plan for land uses at broader scales to overcome continued jurisdictional fragmentation and achieve sustainable and environmentally just landscapes. This paper introduces a vision, conceptual approach, and implementation strategy that applies ecoregions and proposes a unified framework for land use planning and regulation in the United States. The Sustainable Ecoregion Program (SEP) is designed to enable local landowners; public stakeholders; other land users; and state, regional, tribal, and national natural resource professionals to set and achieve future desired conditions for sustainable land uses across landscapes. The objective is to outline a comprehensive and sustainably just solution to the recurring problem of managing conflicting land uses in the face of continued degradation and multiple land tenure systems. The SEP will determine how much of the physical landscape will go to developed, agricultural, and natural landcover types. The framework includes recognition of level III ecoregions as primary boundaries, proposed secondary boundaries and shapes to enhance connectivity and movement across landscapes, a proposed structure for the environmental governance and co-management of landscapes, and definitions of physical landscape types. The benefits and challenges of the SEP are...

Status of Tribes and Climate Change, Vol. 2

Status of Tribes and Climate Change Working Group

[Northern Arizona University](#)

We, as Indigenous Peoples, continue to endure the disproportionate effects and impacts of human-caused climate change on our communities, cultures, economies, worldviews, languages, ecological relationships, and knowledge systems. At the same time, a range of forces—including laws, policies, media, and beliefs of private citizens—attempt to erase our ways of knowing, being, and doing. Yet, we continue to lead in responses to the climate crisis (Etchart, 2017). Since time immemorial, our intimate relationships with Land, Water, and the beings dwelling within them have formed the basis of our advanced Knowledges and our resilience. For those reasons, the overarching and intentional theme of this volume of the Status of Tribes and Climate Change (STACC) report series is the significance of Indigenous Knowledges.

The STACC report series elevates the voices and efforts of Indigenous Peoples, Nations, and communities and provides a space within published literature to share our own stories about the climate change impacts we are experiencing and the solutions we are implementing. The reports, now published in two volumes, are acts of resilience and self-determination intended to uplift Indigenous experiences and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) in local, national, and global conversations. In doing so, these...

