

Native American Program

Mission Statements

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

The mission of Reclamation's Native American Program is to make the benefits of the Reclamation Program available to Indian Tribes and to fulfill Reclamation's Indian Trust responsibilities.

Overview

The Reclamation Program was established in 1902 to help foster economic development in the 17 Western States by developing and building water supply projects. Reclamation has constructed more than 600 dams and reservoirs, including Hoover Dam on the Colorado River and Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River.

Today, Reclamation is a contemporary water management agency with numerous programs, initiatives and activities to help the West meet its water needs. A more complete list and descriptions of the various programs can be found at <http://www.usbr.gov/main/programs/>.

Most of Reclamation's resources support "Reclamation Projects." These are congressionally authorized water projects that typically provide water supply to an array of project beneficiaries, which may include federally recognized Indian Tribes. Reclamation Projects are usually multi-purpose, the primary purpose being water supply, while other purposes may include hydropower, flood control, environmental benefits, and recreation. Reclamation also has a wide range of programs, such as the Rural Water Supply, Drought, Water Conservation, and Water Reclamation and Reuse programs.

Reclamation's overall leadership comes from a Commissioner, located in Washington, DC, who is appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. Reclamation has five regional offices, each lead by a regional director. Each region is further divided into several area offices with each headed by an area manager.



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The "Native American Program" is an informal term frequently used to refer collectively to all of Reclamation's activities benefitting tribes. Native American Program activities have included such efforts as: irrigation projects; municipal, rural, and industrial water systems; dam construction; safety of dams; drought relief; emergency assistance; other planning and engineering studies; and activities facilitating the implementation of Indian water rights settlements.

Reclamation is endeavoring to increase opportunities for federally recognized tribes in the Western states to benefit from the Reclamation Program. In fiscal year (FY) 2015, about \$189 million of Reclamation's enacted budget of \$1.1 billion funded work that directly benefited Tribes. Of this \$189 million, about \$70 million (37%) was for work carried out under Title I or Title IV of P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. In addition to the funding that was made available out of the enacted budget, an additional \$40 million in mandatory and revenue funding was directed to Tribes in FY 2015.

Reclamation's Native American Program is a collaborative, cooperative program, with overall leadership and guidance provided by the Commissioner's Office and project implementation generally occurring through the regional or area offices.

Reclamation is committed to being respectful of tribal sovereignty and to upholding its overarching Indian policy, which states that it will "comply with both the letter and the spirit of Federal laws and policies relating to Indians; acknowledge and affirm the special relationship between the United States and Federally recognized Indian tribes; and actively seek partnerships with Indian tribes to ensure that tribes have the opportunity to participate fully in the Reclamation Program as they develop and manage their water and related resources."

Native American and International Affairs Office (NAIAO): The NAIAO, located in the Commissioner's Office, provides leadership and central coordination for Native American Program issues throughout Reclamation, including providing policy guidance to Reclamation for issues pertaining to Reclamation's work with tribes. Such issues include, but are not limited to, government-to-government relationships with tribal governments, the Indian trust responsibility, and Indian sacred sites. The NAIAO also leads Reclamation's participation in Interior's Indian water rights settlement program, and leads and supports a Technical Assistance to Tribes program. Activities funded by the NAIAO that focus on tribal issues are collectively referred to as the "Native American Affairs Program" (NAAP). All of Reclamation's regional offices and most area offices have NAAP leads.

To learn more: For more information on Reclamation's Native American Program, including the Technical Assistance to Tribes Program, please visit www.usbr.gov/native or contact the appropriate Reclamation NAAP contact, identified below. Additional information on other Reclamation programs and activities may be found at www.usbr.gov.

Bureau of Reclamation - Native American Affairs Program Contacts:

Matthew Duchesne, Program Manager,
Native American and International
Affairs Office
Bureau of Reclamation
1849 C Street, NW, Mail stop: 7060-MIB
Washington, DC 20240
202-513-0553
mduchesne@usbr.gov

Great Plains Region
Douglas Davis
Bureau of Reclamation
316 N 26th St
Billings, MT 59101
406-247-7710
douglasldavis@usbr.gov

Lower Colorado Region
Ruth M. Thayer
Bureau of Reclamation
MS NAAO 1100
P.O. Box 61470
Boulder City, NV
702-293-8426
rthayer@usbr.gov

Mid-Pacific Region
Kevin Clancy
Bureau of Reclamation
2800 Cottage Way
Sacramento, CA 95825-1898
916-978-5194
kclancy@usbr.gov

Pacific Northwest Region
Tino Tafoya
Bureau of Reclamation
1150 North Curtis Road, Suite 100
Boise, Idaho 83706-1234
208-378-5008
ctafoya@usbr.gov

Upper Colorado Region
Brian Parry
Bureau of Reclamation
125 South State Street, Room 6107
Salt Lake City, UT 84138-1147
801-524-3674
bparry@usbr.gov