



Department of the Interior
Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Report
Fiscal Year 2021

Department of the Interior's Mission

“The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation’s natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, and affiliated Island Communities.”

Department of the Interior's Environmental Justice Vision Statement

“To provide outstanding management of the natural and cultural resources entrusted to us in a manner that is sustainable, equitable, accessible, and inclusive of all populations.”

About this Annual Report

This document is the Department of the Interior (Department or DOI)’s Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Report and highlights several programs, activities, and efforts the Department engaged in during Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) to meet the goals of the Department’s Environmental Justice Strategic Plan.

About the Cover Photos

Background photo: Slaters Mill at Blackstone River Valley National Historic Park. For more information see page 27.

Top left photo: Seed for Success Crew, part of the Fort Belknap Native Seed and Grassland Restoration Program. For more information see page 10.

Top right photo: Children participating in a Fish and Wildlife Service fishing event. For more information see page 33.

Center right photo: Community members completing the “Walk of Sorrow.” For more information see page 9.

INTRODUCTION

Executive Order (EO) [12898](#), *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-income Populations*, directs Federal agencies to “make achieving environmental justice part of their missions by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States and its territories and possessions, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the Commonwealth of the Mariana Islands.”

What is Environmental Justice?

Environmental justice refers to meeting the needs of underserved communities by reducing disparate environmental burdens, removing barriers to participation in decision making, and increasing access to environmental benefits that help make all communities safe, vibrant, and healthy places to live and work.

In addition, EO 12898 called for the creation of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Environmental Justice (EJ IWG). The EJ IWG was comprised of the Department and 16 other Federal agencies plus White House staff with the goal to fact find, receive public comments, and conduct inquiries concerning environmental justice. The role of the EJ IWG was to guide, support and enhance Federal environmental justice and community-based activities. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was the convener of the EJ IWG. The EJ IWG established committees to develop guidance and support the following topic areas: goods movement, civil rights, strategic planning and implementation, rural communities, regional committees, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Native American and indigenous peoples, and public participation.

In January 2021, President Biden issued three executive orders that strengthen Federal agency efforts related to environmental justice: EO [13990](#), *Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis*; EO 14008, *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*; and EO [13985](#), *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government*. The EO [14008](#) established the White House Environmental Justice Interagency Council (IAC) and White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council (WHEJAC) to help inform and oversee the Federal program of work on environmental justice. The IAC is led by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and replaces the EJ IWG. The IAC subsumed the committees of the EJ IWG, and work continues in these areas.



President Biden signing EO 14008 on January 27, 2021.

Annual Environmental Justice Implementation Reports

In August 2011, the Department joined other Federal agencies in the signing of the *Memorandum of Understanding on Environmental Justice and Executive Order 12898* (The [2011 MOU](#)). The 2011 MOU reaffirmed the Federal government’s commitment to environmental justice. The 2011 MOU also called on each Federal agency to “provide a concise report on progress during the previous fiscal year in carrying out the agency’s Environmental Justice Strategy and Executive Order 12898.” The 2011 MOU further noted that the annual reports include performance measures as deemed appropriate by the agency; will describe participation in interagency collaboration; include responses to recommendations submitted by members of the public to the agency concerning the agency’s Environmental Justice Strategy and its implementation of EO 12898; and any updates or revisions to the agency’s Environmental Justice Strategy, including those resulting from public comment.

To integrate EO 12898 and the 2011 MOU into the Department’s actions and activities, the Department established the Department’s *Environmental Justice Implementation Policy* ([525 Department Manual Chapter 1](#)) in 2017. The policy states that the Department will publish a report on progress during the previous year in carrying out the Department’s Environmental Justice Strategy and EO 12898. The environmental justice annual report includes: information describing how the Department is meeting the goals in the Environmental Justice Strategic Plan; identification of new and innovative approaches, methods, or examples of successful consideration of environmental justice; and revisions and updates to the Department’s Environmental Justice Strategic Plan and Departmental policies.

Consistent with the 2011 MOU and the Department’s policy, this annual report highlights the programs and activities that the Department conducted in FY21 to support EO 12898 and the Department’s Environmental Justice Strategic Plan. This document and related environmental justice information is publicly available on the Department’s environmental justice [website](#).

DOI’s Organization



The Department is comprised of eleven bureaus, each with a unique mission - Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM), Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement (BSEE), Bureau of Trust Funds Administration, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), National Park Service (NPS), Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), and U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). In addition to the bureaus, the Department has offices within the Office of the Secretary that conduct environmental justice related activities, including the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC), the Office of Diversity, Inclusion, and Civil Rights (ODICR), the Office of Wildland Fire (OWF), and the Office of Insular Affairs (OIA).



ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION AT THE DEPARTMENT

The senior appointed official charged with the Department's implementation of EO 12898 is the Assistant Secretary of Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB). The AS-PMB's responsibilities include overseeing compliance with environmental statutes and developing and maintaining internal administrative policies, standards, objectives, and procedures for the Department. Environmental justice activities are administered within AS-PMB by the OEPC. The OEPC is the lead office for advising and assisting the Department's implementation of environmental justice and EO 12898.

The Department coordinates internal environmental justice implementation activities through the DOI Environmental Justice Working Group (DOI EJWG). The DOI EJWG is chaired by the Director of OEPC, under the senior leadership of the AS-PMB, and includes representatives from each of the Department's bureaus as well as ODICR, OWF, and OIA. The DOI EJWG collaborates with OEPC in implementing the provisions of EO 12898 throughout the Department, including the development of this annual report.

The Department's Environmental Justice Coordinator is in the OEPC, and coordinates with each of the Department's bureaus' designated environmental justice coordinators. Bureau-level environmental justice coordinators are the designated bureau or office staff person whose duties and tasks include helping to integrate environmental justice throughout their bureau or office. Duties may include internal and external coordination, public outreach, public contact, and acting as the liaison with their field level and regional offices. Each bureau has regional and field level offices that assist in environmental justice initiatives. A directory of Department's Environmental Justice Coordinators with contact information is available on the Department's environmental justice [website](#).

The Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan

EO 12898 directs Federal agencies to prepare a strategic plan on environmental justice. An updated Department [Environmental Justice Strategic Plan](#) was issued in 2016 with an Environmental Justice Action Plan for 2016-2020. Updates to agencies' environmental justice strategic plans are periodically conducted to increase interagency cooperation, public participation, and opportunities for minority, low-income, Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Communities and Tribal governments.

The Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan sets forth five major goals to guide the Department in its pursuit of environmental justice:

- Goal 1:** Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of EO 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations;
- Goal 2:** Ensure minority, low-income, and tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department's decision-making processes;
- Goal 3:** Identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations;
- Goal 4:** Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities as available to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities; and
- Goal 5:** Integrate the DOI's environmental justice strategies with its enforcement responsibilities under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities.

IMPLEMENTING THE DEPARTMENT'S ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

During FY21, the Department continued to incorporate the provisions of EO 12898 within the scope of its overall mission. This section highlights work that the Department, including its bureaus and offices, conducted in FY21 to meet the five goals outlined in the Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan. These actions are not all-inclusive of the Department's efforts and highlight a few examples which show the breadth and types of activities and actions the Department undertook in FY21 to advance environmental justice. While this section contains only a few examples for each of the Environmental Justice Strategic Plan goals, bureaus and offices submitted additional examples found in the Appendix of this report. These examples show the Department's ongoing commitment and progress toward the integration of environmental justice into applicable programs, policies, and activities, and implementation of the Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan in FY21.

Goal 1: Ensure responsible officials are aware of the provisions of EO 12898 and are able to identify and amend programs, policies, and activities under their purview that may have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations.

In FY21, the Department increased visibility and awareness of environmental justice issues across the Department, including by staff that are responsible officials, through establishment of new policies, enhanced coordination, development of environmental justice resources and trainings, and accountability through performance evaluations. As noted in the White House's [Fact Sheet on A Year Advancing Environmental Justice](#), the Department renewed focus on environmental equity and justice at the Department through the Secretary of the Interior signing [Secretary's Order \(SO\) 3399, Department-Wide Approach to the Climate Crisis and Restoring Transparency and Integrity to the Decision-Making Process](#). The SO 3399 committed the Department to tackling climate change effects including actions to address disproportionate, adverse climate impacts to environmental justice communities.



Clip of Secretary Haaland announcing SO 3399 on April 16, 2021. To watch the whole video, please visit the Department's [website](#).

Examples of Department and bureaus actions and activities in FY21 that implement Goal 1 include:

NPS – Employee Training on Environmental Justice and Sociocultural Inequity

The NPS’s Interpretation, Education and Visitor Services Division conducted a two-part employee training on the origins of inclusion and exclusion in public lands, how to create safe and welcoming spaces for all to enjoy the resources NPS stewards, and the connections between sociocultural inequity and the environmental justice movement. The course also discussed how each staff member could create change by understanding equity, diversity, and inclusion and how they are connected with conservation and building awareness around environmental justice, racism, and the environmental impacts on communities of color.

USGS – Hazards, Race, and Social Justice Speaker Series

In FY21, the USGS Natural Hazards mission area held a speaker series titled, *USGS Hazards, Race, and Social Justice Speaker Series*. One of the sessions, *In Not So Plain Sight: Untangling the Roots of Hazard Vulnerability*, highlighted disaster research and new evidence emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic. The session illuminated disparities in race, ethnicity, class, and other factors as they concern people’s exposure to, and the impacts of, such events. The session also discussed understanding and responding to elevated levels of vulnerability, and the historical and political-economic factors that help to explain why disparities persist.

BLM – Environmental Justice Coordination

The BLM Environmental Justice Working Group was established in 2021 to facilitate communication and coordination with environmental justice activities across BLM directorates, programs, and geographies. The Working Group holds regular meetings to share information on policies, best practices, programs, and projects, and provide a workspace to store important documents, facilitate collaboration, and streamline data collection and distribution. Led by the BLM Environmental Justice Coordinator, the group includes officially designated environmental justice points of contact for all states with a BLM presence and is open to all BLM employees to further the goal of achieving environmental justice through the BLM’s activities.

FWS - Incorporating Environmental and Economic Justice into Staff Annual Performance Plans

At Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, staff annual performance plans include a Critical Element related to the work of the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program. In 2021, language was added to this element on the integration of environmental and economic justice into their day-to-day activities to accomplish the goals of the Department’s Environmental Justice Plan and the Valle de Oro Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan.

OEPC – Environmental Justice Webpage Updates

In FY21, OEPC updated the [Department’s Environmental Justice webpage](https://www.doi.gov/oepc/resources/environmental-justice). The updated webpage includes current policy and guidance documents related to environmental justice, provides employees with engagement resources and information on environmental justice training opportunities, and highlights environmental justice data initiatives.

Department of the Interior’s Environmental Justice Webpage:

<https://www.doi.gov/oepc/resources/environmental-justice>

Goal 2: Ensure minority, low-income, and tribal populations are provided with the opportunity to engage in meaningful involvement in the Department’s decision-making processes.

As noted in the [Department’s priorities](#), in order to “center equity and environmental justice, the Department, at every step of the way, will engage diverse stakeholders across the country, as well as conduct [formal consultation with Tribes](#) in recognition of the U.S. government’s trust responsibilities.” The Department engages with communities in a variety of ways, including through the NEPA process, Tribal consultations, listening sessions, and enhanced coordination and partnerships. Meaningful involvement in the Department’s data gathering, planning and evaluations, decision-making processes, and day to day activities is essential to achieving environmental justice.

The FWS is an active member on the IAC’s Public Participation Committee. This Committee seeks to increase transparency and language accessibility; address technological barriers; develop listening sessions and opportunities for public input; facilitate collaboration and public participation with Federal agencies and external stakeholders; use traditional means of communication and social media to build participation; and help to coordinate responses to public input.

Under NEPA, Federal agencies consider the environmental effects of proposed major Federal actions with the potential to significantly affect the human environment. The NEPA process provides a framework for considering potential, disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental effects on minority and low-income populations. NEPA review encompasses analysis of potential effects on the human environment, including human health, economic, and social effects arising from proposed Federal actions, and consideration of reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures for significant impacts, as well as public input in decision-making.

The Department, including OEPC and multiple bureaus, participates in the IAC’s NEPA committee. The NEPA Committee seeks to improve the effective, efficient, and consistent consideration of environmental justice issues in the NEPA process through the sharing of best practices, lessons learned, research, analysis, training, consultation, and other experiences of federal NEPA practitioners.

Examples of how the bureaus are implementing Goal 2 through the NEPA process include:

BLM – Conducting Environmental Justice Community-Focused Outreach for Oil and Gas Leasing

For a proposed oil and gas lease sale public comment period, the BLM’s New Mexico Pecos District Office issued a news release in Spanish to enhance public involvement within communities of concern within the analysis area (Chaves and Lea Counties, New Mexico). The communities in the analysis area included people of Hispanic or Latino origin, which comprise more than 50 percent of the population. In addition, the population living below the poverty line in Chaves County [is greater than the average for the population within the State of New Mexico](#). The BLM posted a Spanish language news release on their [website](#) and personnel in the Carlsbad Field Office posted printed versions of the news release at the Jal Public Library in Jal, New Mexico, and the San Jose Community Center in Carlsbad, New Mexico. The press release was also read aloud in Spanish on local radio stations in Jal and Roswell.

NPS – Inclusion of the Quileute Tribe in the NEPA Process

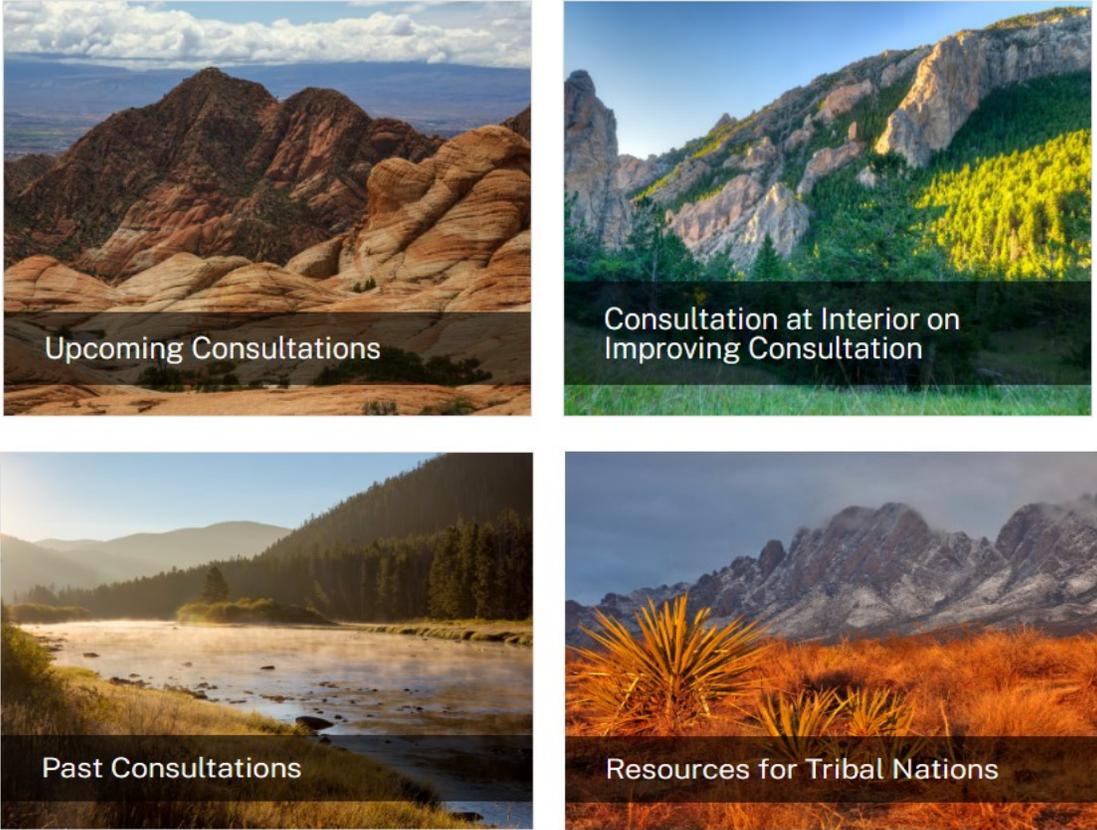
In July 2021, the NPS in partnership with the Quileute Tribe, released the Quillayute River Restoration - Reach 3 Environmental Assessment (EA) for a 30-day public review and comment period. The Quileute Tribe was awarded Federal and state funding to construct a habitat restoration and bank stabilization project on the Quillayute River in Washington State. The proposed project would be managed by the Quileute Tribe and take place mostly on tribal trust land. A portion of the project would occur within Olympic National Park. The NPS was designated as the lead Federal agency for NEPA and worked in close partnership with the Tribe to develop and publish the EA. The BIA Northwest Region and the Natural Resources Conservation Service were cooperating agencies. More information is on the project [webpage](#).

It is a [priority](#) for the Department to strengthen the government-to-government relationship with sovereign Tribal Nations. One way to strengthen this relationship is through robust consultations. Consistent with President Biden’s [Presidential Memorandum](#) on *Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships*, in August 2021, the Department published [a plan](#) for improving Tribal consultation, titled, *A Detailed Plan for Improving Interior’s Implementation of EO 13175*. The Plan identifies six actions to improve Tribal consultations, including: establishing a website that lists upcoming Tribal consultations, identifying technology to improve notice to Tribes, updating the Department’s consultation policy, creating training for staff, establishing a Secretary’s Tribal Advisory Committee, and reviewing specific policies/ processes Tribes identified as inhibiting consultation. To implement the Plan, the Department launched a [website](#) in FY21 to list upcoming Tribal consultations.

Tribal Consultation

At Interior, we fundamentally believe that honoring our relationship with Tribes and upholding our trust and treaty responsibilities are paramount to our mission.

We take our commitment to strengthening Tribal sovereignty and self-governance seriously, and we know that robust consultations are the cornerstones of Federal Indian policy.



Upcoming Consultations

Consultation at Interior on Improving Consultation

Past Consultations

Resources for Tribal Nations

The Department’s Tribal Consultation Website. Images taken on April 22, 2022.

The BIA is co-chair of the IAC’s Native American and Indigenous Peoples (NA/IP) Committee and other Departmental and bureau staff are active participants. The NA/IP Committee seeks to facilitate the effective coordination and collaboration of Federal agencies in identifying and addressing issues of environmental justice of concern to federally recognized tribal governments and to tribal and indigenous communities.

Examples of how the bureaus are implementing Goal 2 through Tribal consultations and listening sessions include:

BIA – Environmental Justice Tribal Consultation and Listening Sessions

In FY21, the BIA and the Department held several Tribal consultations and listening sessions, including sessions focused on climate change impacts, the Federal Subsistence Management Program, implementation of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, lease agreements under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, sacred sites, the missing and murdered Indigenous people crisis under the Not Invisible Act, the BIE Strategic Plan, and the Indian Business Incubators Program.

BLM – Outreach and Data Sharing Collaboration at the San Emidio Geothermal Field, Black Rock Field Office, Winnemucca District Office

The geothermal development in the San Emidio Geothermal Unit in Nevada, which encompasses approximately 20,400 acres of BLM administered public land, was completed in 2021. The development is located near the border of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT) reservation and near areas where the Tribe has geothermal resources. Following the draft EA comment period, the Black Rock Field Office began an extensive consultation period with the PLPT. Through consultation, the BLM and PLPT entered into a data sharing agreement. The PLPT shared their geothermal data with the BLM and the result was a modified hydrological monitoring plan which includes sites on both Tribal and public lands. Additional information is on the [project webpage](#).



San Emido Geothermal Unit

BOEM – Tribal Ocean Summit

BOEM held a virtual Tribal Ocean Summit on March 2-4 and March 16-18, 2021, facilitated by the Udall Foundation’s National Center for Environmental Conflict Resolution. The Summit was organized with substantive input led by Tribal representatives as part of a steering committee. The objective of the Tribal Ocean Summit was to enable a mutual exchange of information and learning to improve working relationships and meaningful consultation practices going forward.

There were 187 registered participants that included Tribal representatives and BOEM and DOI staff. This included at least 70 distinct Tribal representatives from at least 53 different Tribal nations along the U.S. coastline. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna, joined the Tribal Ocean Summit on her first day as Secretary and gave remarks. Secretary Haaland spoke about President Biden’s commitment to fulfill the Federal trust and treaty responsibilities and to conduct regular, robust, and meaningful Tribal government-to-government consultation. Secretary Haaland emphasized her intention to strengthen engagement and relationships with Tribes.

Beyond the NEPA and Tribal consultation processes, the Department also engages with communities through enhanced coordination and inclusion in our planning process and day-to-day activities.

Examples of other community coordination and collaboration that implements Goal 2 includes:

FWS – Enhanced Community Coordination and Collaboration

In FY21, the FWS’s Harris Neck National Wildlife Refuge, in Georgia, formalized a [partnership](#) with the Direct Descendants of Harris Neck Community (DDHNC) through an MOU to enhance communication and collaboration on areas of mutual interest. In 1942, the United States condemned the area in order to build a World War II airfield. In 1962, the property became part of the FWS’s National Wildlife Refuge System. Displaced landowners and their descendants claim oral assurance was given that their land would be returned after the Federal government no longer needed the airfield. The FWS entered into a partnership with the descendants of the community to ensure that their ties to the land are not forgotten. After signing the MOU, the FWS and the DDHNC coordinated on the following in FY21:

An American Conservation Experience Intern was hired to serve a year-long position to strengthen the partnership between the FWS and the DDHNC. The Intern was interviewed by the President of the DDHNC who was asked to provide input in the FWS’s hiring decision. The FWS also hired a Directorate Program Fellow (DPF) with specialized experience in environmental anthropology. The Fellow gathered oral histories and compiled a comprehensive report and toolkit that will guide the FWS and DDHNC future activities. Both the Intern and the Fellow collaborated with the DDHNC and the FWS to coordinate a historic partnership event, *The Commemoration of the 1942 Diaspora of the Harris Neck Community* (the Commemoration).

The Commemoration was a three-day event that took place in July 2021, marking the 79th year since the Harris Neck Community was displaced by the U.S. Department of Defense. The event brought FWS together with members of the Harris Neck Community to acknowledge the history of the land, honor community landmarks, and amplify the voices of the community. The culmination of the event was the *Walk of Sorrow to Hope*, where the community reenacted the displacement of the community in 1942.

The FWS and the DDHNC co-designed a proposed environmental education center at the Refuge resulting in a replica of the original Harris Neck Rosenwald Schoolhouse. The Schoolhouse was built in 1921 and was a valued asset in the community. The Savannah Coastal Refuges Complex was granted \$10,000 for a conceptual design of the building.

The FWS and the DDHNC co-designed Junior Refuge Management booklets, new kiosk panels, and a self-guided tour for the Refuge to educate visitors about the community’s history and the significance.



The FWS’s Intern and DBF working with the DDHNC President on the Commemoration event planning.



The FWS Regional Chief and a community leader standing at the sign installed at the entrance of the Refuge to honor the Harris Neck Gullah Community. Wreaths were placed in honor of various community landmarks

FWS, in conjunction with NPS and USGS - Recovering Hawaiian Forest Birds with Community Assistance

The FWS, in conjunction with the NPS, USGS, the State of Hawaii, and other partners, is coordinating recovery actions for four species of endangered Hawaiian forest birds: the ‘akikiki and ‘akeke‘e on the island of Kaua‘i, and the kiwikiu and ‘ākohekohe on the island of Maui. These four forest bird species may be functionally extinct within two to ten years unless action is taken to address the threat of avian malaria, which is spread by invasives mosquitoes and exacerbated by climate change. While work toward landscape-level mosquito control proceeds, emergency conservation actions may be necessary to prevent imminent extinction.

The FWS assessed the crisis from a cultural perspective, recognizing and giving voice to the significance of forest birds to Native Hawaiians. The relationship between Native Hawaiians, Hawaiian forests, and forest birds is centuries old. The FWS convened a group of Native Hawaiian participants with a strong connection to the forest birds, forests, and the integration of Native Hawaiian culture in natural and biocultural resource management. The FWS invited the Native Hawaiians to provide their perspectives on the ‘akikiki, ‘akeke‘e, kiwikiu, and ‘ākohekohe and potential management actions that could be undertaken to prevent their extinction

FWS - Kodiak Refuge Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act Contract

In 2021, Koniag, Inc., an Alaska Native Corporation (ANC), entered into a Title I contract under Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act with the FWS’s Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge, the first Title I contract in all of FWS and the first with an ANC. This agreement supports Koniag in providing the functions of a community affairs liaison to the Refuge. By supporting this new community affairs liaison position at Koniag, the Refuge is supporting self-determination of Indigenous peoples whose homelands encompass the Refuge and ensuring that Tribes and culture bearers have a more meaningful voice and role in FWS decision-making processes.

BLM - Fort Belknap Native Seed and Grassland Restoration Program

In FY21, BLM entered a 5-year partnership with the Fort Belknap Indian Community and the Society for Ecological Restoration to implement a native seed and grassland restoration project on BLM and adjacent tribal lands in north central Montana. In the summer of 2021, the project trained tribal youth from the Aaniiih and Nakoda Tribes on native plant identification, assessment, inventory, and monitoring protocols, along with seed collection. Additionally, the BLM hired a tribal elder to develop a traditional ecological knowledge restoration guide for the Tribes. The next phase of the project will incorporate tribal elders’ traditional ecological knowledge to better understand the role of native plants from both a cultural perspective and for use in restoration.



Seed for Success Crew

OIA - Technical Assistance Program Grant Application Process

In FY21, through the OIA Technical Assistance Program grant application process, the Governors of the territories and the Presidents of the freely associated states were provided with the opportunity to rank and prioritize all the grant applications relevant to their respective island area and provide their input and feedback on the applications submitted.

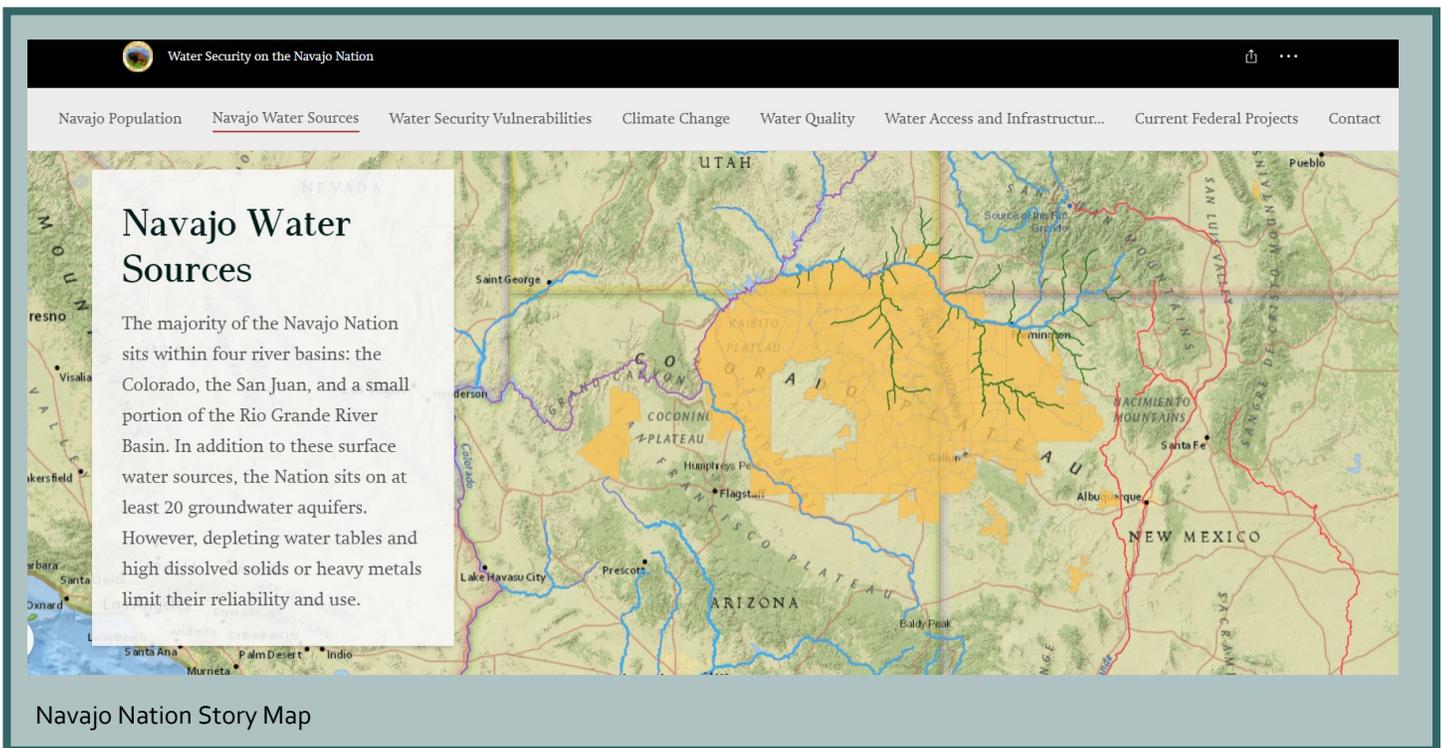
Goal 3: The Department will, on its own or in collaboration with partners, identify and address environmental impacts that may result in disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority, low-income, or tribal populations.

To advance environmental justice, the Department took steps to evaluate and address existing environmental impacts to minority, low-income, and tribal populations. Activities under Goal 3 include interactive and dynamic data analyses and display of relevant and culturally significant sites and resources. Some of the activities in FY21 directly examined environmental stressors and contaminants.

Examples of Department and bureaus actions and activities in FY21 that implement Goal 3 include:

USGS and OEPC - Project to address hydrologic data gaps in identifying vulnerabilities to water insecurity and environmental injustice

USGS, in cooperation with OEPC, conducted a data gap analysis in an ongoing effort to address environmental stressors affecting marginalized and underrepresented communities and tribes across the United States, including in the Navajo Nation and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania metropolitan statistical area (MSA). The [Navajo Nation Story Map](#) identifies vulnerabilities to water security, access, and quality on the Navajo Nation and its connection with public health issues in Navajo residents. The [Philadelphia MSA Environmental Justice Web Application](#) is designed to show demographic and environmental justice indices within the Philadelphia MSA, allowing users to interact with different layers and create their own views and stories impacting communities experiencing environmental injustice.



BIA - Project to upgrade water infrastructure serving Hopi villages and BIA facilities to reduce high arsenic levels in drinking water

On October 28, 2020, the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs met with the Chairman of the Hopi Indian Tribe to sign a commitment letter providing \$5 million dollars towards an infrastructure project to reduce arsenic levels in drinking water on the Hopi reservation. Additional information is in the BIA [press release](#).

NPS – Anacostia River

In FY21, the NPS collaborated internally with the FWS and with external natural resource co-trustees, the District of Columbia’s Office of Energy and Environment and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, to complete a Pre-Assessment Screen (PAS) for the Anacostia River per the Department’s Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration (NRDAR) regulations for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) (43 CFR Part 11). Through the PAS, the natural resource trustees determined that NPS could proceed with a natural resource damage (NRD) assessment and claim for the Anacostia River regarding injuries to natural resources and their services, such as recreation and subsistence fishing, from various hazardous substances.

Throughout FY21, NPS continued to coordinate with the District of Columbia to develop and prepare for implementation of response actions to address the Anacostia River sediment contamination. This contamination adversely impacted fish in the river, resulting in the issuance of fish consumption advisories. Fishing surveys document that a significant number of people from environmental justice communities surrounding the river rely on fishing to supplement their food supply. By addressing the contaminated sediments, the remedial actions, which will likely start in 2023, will take steps required to move the river towards becoming “fishable and swimmable” in the future.

BLM – Basin and Range National Monument 3D Documentation: Making Cultural Heritage Accessible

In collaboration with indigenous communities, the BLM’s Basin and Range National Monument, in Nevada, developed the 3D Documentation Pilot Study. The study used cutting edge, three-dimensional geospatial technology to create 360-degree virtual tours of the monument’s unique cultural resources. The pilot study was completed in FY21 and captured high-resolution “tours” of two indigenous cultural sites and a 19th century company mining town. The pilot created a “snapshot in time” to preserve digital records of endangered cultural heritage sites connected to environmental justice communities.

Project coordinators worked in consultation with members of the Duckwater Shoshone, Western Shoshone, and Southern Paiute tribes. Tribal liaisons voiced strong support for the project, especially because it provides visualization of the site to Tribal members who could not visit the site in person due to the extreme terrain and/or distance. The project was made possible through the support of the Lincoln County Archaeological Initiative – administered by the BLM - and funding from the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act. Tours and more information are provided on the [project website](#).



A view of a prehistoric site in within the Mt. Irish Archaeological District as seen through the 3D Documentation Pilot Study online tour

BOEM – Alaska and Pacific Tribal Studies

In FY21, BOEM funded three studies that will aid understanding of environmental impacts on Alaska Native peoples and Native American tribes: 1) The Coastal and Submerged Historic Properties and Precontact Sites on the Alaska Outer Continental Shelf; 2) Subsistence Harvest and Iñupiaq Knowledge of Beluga Whales for Kaktovik, Alaska; and 3) Tribal Cultural Landscapes of the California Coast. Final reports are due in 2023.

Reclamation and OIA – Water Projects and Drought Resilience in Insular Areas

Reclamation is working with OIA to provide technical assistance for water projects and drought resilience in the Freely Associated States and Territories, such as helping to increase availability of potable water supplies for underserved communities, assessing reservoir capacity for operational, storage, and flooding purposes, and increasing resilience to intensifying drought and water scarcity by improving rural water access.

In addition, in October 2020, Reclamation finalized a hydraulic model with GIS data and completed an assessment report analyzing and making recommendations for system improvements to the Majuro Water and Sewer Company's (MWSC) water supply and distribution system on Majuro in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. Funding support for this work was provided by OIA. The report is on the OIA's [website](#).

OWF – Evaluating Smoke Impacts

OWF initiated interagency agreements with EPA and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in FY21 to conduct analyses of wildfire and prescribed fire emissions through the intergovernmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council. As part of this agreement, the OWF, in partnership with the CDC, began collecting and analyzing data on smoke impacts to communities and particularly disadvantaged communities who may not be able to evacuate and avoid wildfire and smoke threats.



The Summit Trail Fire in 2021

Goal 4: Use existing grant programs, training, and educational opportunities as available to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities.

In FY21, the Department continued to provide training and funding opportunities and vital services to students and communities. The provision of energy, the recovery and management of culturally and ecologically important species and habitats, and nature-based educational opportunities for students are a few of the examples of the Department's activities under Goal 4.

In addition to the Department's activities, the FWS is the co-chair and the OEPC is an active participant of the IAC's Regional Committee. The Regional Committee provides targeted and coordinated technical assistance; develops relationships between federal field and regional staff; develops best practices for prioritizing environmental justice concerns; develops community resource materials and strengthens education, training, and/or engagement on environmental justice among local and state agencies.

Examples of bureaus and offices actions and activities in FY21 that implement Goal 4:

FWS - Tribal Wildlife Grants Program

The FWS's Tribal Wildlife Grants (TWG) program provides technical and financial assistance to federally recognized Native American tribes for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat. The FY21 appropriation and prior fiscal year carryover enabled the FWS to award 37 TWG proposals, totaling \$6,611,832. The awards will support projects that benefit a wide range of wildlife and habitats, including species of Native American cultural or traditional importance and species that are not hunted or fished. Below are a few examples of the awarded FY21 TWG projects:

Hoonah Indian Association in Alaska (Strategic Stream Restoration through Hoonah Native Forest Partnership) – \$199,817 to benefit Tribal fish and fish habitat and increase capacity to assist with fisheries management of culturally important anadromous species.

Pechanga Band of Luiseno Mission Indians in California (Audie Murphy Management) – \$193,989 to implement a wildlife management project for the biologically and culturally sensitive southwestern pond turtle and burrowing owl.

Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians in Minnesota (Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians golden-winged warbler and American woodcock monitoring, critical habitat restoration and young forest education project, Phase II) – \$199,770 to address large-scale declines in several important bird species that require multiple age class forest habitats to thrive.

Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe in Virginia (Mattaponi River Cultural Species Assessment and Fisheries Training Project) – \$200,000 to plan and train Tribal citizens with the FWS's Harrison Lake National Fish Hatchery in hatchery operations and fish and mussel culture, assessing barriers to fish migration, and surveying and monitoring species with the goal of building a Mattaponi River hatchery that meets their aquatic species recovery needs.

A complete list of the TWG awards approved in FY21 is available [online](#). To learn more about the grant program and application process, please visit the TWG [website](#).



OIA - Renewable Energy Technical Assistance Grants

In FY21, through their Technical Assistance Grants (TAP), OIA funded renewable energy projects for underserved communities in the Marshall Islands. One project installed solar energy power for 100 homes in the Marshall Islands and provided installation training and education to low-income Marshallese adults on the benefits of renewable energy in helping them reduce their dependency on fossil fuels. Two additional TAP grants installed solar-powered streetlights in downtown Majuro and in the Namo Atoll of the Marshall Islands. In Majuro, the streetlights improved the safety and security for the residents of two of the poorest “wetos” or villages on the island, and in the Namo Atoll, the streetlights enhanced the safety of pedestrians and vehicles at night, especially improving the livelihoods of women weavers by increasing their time to work and generate income for their families. These TAP grants benefit homes and families in the Marshall Islands atolls that previously had little to no reliable energy resources.

NPS – Grants that Aid Low-income and Tribal Populations

In FY21, the NPS awarded a wide range of grants to aid and empower low-income and tribal populations:

NPS [distributed \\$150 million](#) to local communities through the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grant program. The program, established in 2014, enables urban communities to create new outdoor recreation spaces, reinvigorate existing parks, and form connections between people and the outdoors in economically underserved communities.

NPS [awarded nearly \\$570,000](#) to American Indian Tribes, Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian Communities to support 12 preservation projects from across the country to support the protection of America’s Indigenous cultures.

As part of the new History of Equal Rights grant program, the NPS [awarded \\$2.4 million](#) to help preserve America’s civil rights history for six projects in six states.

The NPS [granted \\$16 million](#) to 19 projects to develop new or improve 15 parks and 4 trails in economically disadvantaged urban areas in 13 states.

The NPS [announced \\$9.7 million](#) in grants to assist 20 preservation projects for historic structures on campuses of Historically Black Colleges and Universities in 10 states.

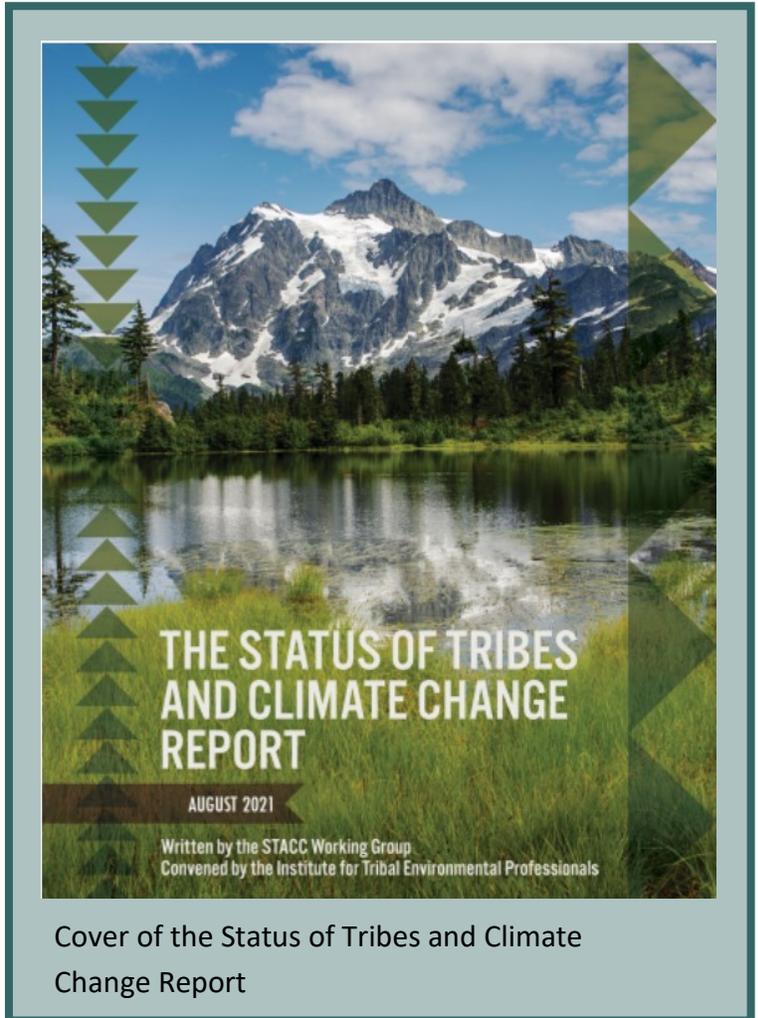


BIA – Tribal Climate Resilience

In FY21, the BIA awarded \$13.84 million through 135 awards supporting 79 tribes and 13 tribal organizations related to tribal climate resilience. Awards provided support for: climate adaptation planning; ocean and coastal management planning; capacity building and relocation; managed retreat; and protect-in-place planning for climate risks. The tribally designed and delivered training and awards are expected to benefit nearly 255,000 tribal people. In addition, the adaptation planning, and data development awards are estimated to benefit over 444,000 tribal people, and the ocean and coastal work funding is estimated to benefit almost 55,000 tribal people. Additional information is in BIA's [news release](#) and on the BIA's Tribal Climate Resilience Program [webpage](#).

Also, in FY21, through a cooperative agreement with the Institute of Tribal Environmental Professionals, the BIA funded the development of the first ever [Status of Tribes and Climate Change Report](#), which was released in September 2021.

In addition, the BIA provided related technical support and training such as conducted two Climate Change 101 trainings and one Climate Change 202 training, began a cohort course on Tribal Hazard Mitigation Planning (approximately 100 applicants from 70 tribes applied for year-long course), provided a Grant Writing 101 training (248 attendees across 140 Tribes/Tribal Organization), and supported the development of two new climate profiles for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Seminole Tribe of Florida.



Cover of the Status of Tribes and Climate Change Report

OSMRE - Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) Program

The OSMRE/VISTA program addresses economic, social, and environmental challenges and aims to build sustainable capacity in communities impacted by pre-regulatory coal mining practices. The OSMRE/VISTA Team supports non-profit, community associations, and other agencies that work with state programs, federal agencies and others to engage their communities in identifying reclamation challenges, develop partnerships to implement solutions, directly engage youth in the environment, and address related watershed/community reclamation projects. OSMRE/VISTA Members focus on building the capacity of organizations that fight to foster economic development, reclaim abandoned lands, restore degraded ecosystems and waterways impacted by pre-regulatory coal mining, and otherwise assist low-income communities. VISTA Members leverage community support and build volunteer networks to drive projects in resource-scarce regions. OSMRE/VISTA Members live and serve in the nation's poorest areas, creating and expanding programs designed to bring individuals and communities out of poverty.

During FY21, 32 OSMRE/VISTA Members served in sites across the country, securing over \$737,000 in grant funding and more than \$47,000 of in-kind donations for programs supporting economic development, healthy food access, and environmental restoration initiatives. Furthermore, OSMRE/VISTA Members recruited and supported nearly 600 volunteers who served approximately 3,000 hours and reached nearly 1,000 disadvantaged youth.

BLM – Educational Programming for Underserved Communities in Alaska

The BLM [Campbell Creek Science Center](#) (CCSC) in Anchorage, Alaska supports an array of dynamic educational programs to enrich science education and build connections with nature for underserved audiences. In FY21, the BLM CCSC provided 36 distance learning programs across the state of Alaska – from highly diverse urban Title 1 schools in Anchorage to rural school and afterschool programs for Alaska Native students in communities like Iditarod. The programs reached 363 K-12 students and 26 adult educators. These programs enhanced participant's engagement in natural science-based subjects, such as biology, ecology, and hydrology. In addition, the BLM CCSC collaborated with Refugee Assistance and Immigration Services to provide wildlife awareness in-person training for 11 adult learners who have immigrated to Alaska and who maintain vegetable gardens in Mountain View, one of the most culturally diverse neighborhoods in Anchorage. The CCSC's programming supported the participants' engagement in science education, outdoor enjoyment, teambuilding, and safety in Alaskan outdoor environments. CCSC provides virtual programs, [distance learning](#), and self-guided resources. Explore the [activity calendar](#) and [Nature Learning Resources](#).



A BLM employee providing distance learning from the Campbell Creek Science Center

USGS – Virtual Classroom Visits

The USGS initiated Virtual Classroom Visits (VcV) with a pilot program in the Pacific Northwest. The program brings USGS scientists into classrooms using remote meeting technologies. The VcV program is designed to target schools that USGS scientists cannot easily reach, particularly those in underserved communities. The 2021 pilot reached about 300 elementary school children. Information gathered from scientists, teachers, and children will inform the full roll out of VcV across the country.

Reclamation – Fish-ABLE Fun with Reclamation

Reclamation’s Dakotas Area Office in Bismarck, North Dakota hosted Reclamation's first Fish-ABLE Fun with Reclamation event on September 10, 2021. Fish-ABLE Fun with Reclamation is a pilot program that continues Reclamation’s tradition of providing fishing opportunities for underserved youth, with an emphasis on those with disabilities who may never have experienced the joys of outdoor fishing. Reclamation coordinated with the partner organization, Pride Incorporated, to organize the Fish-ABLE Fun with Reclamation event to take 20 children on a day of fishing and education at Reclamation’s Heart Butte Reservoir in southwest North Dakota. Among the many activities, the children learned how to bait a fishing hook and how to cast a line.

Pride Incorporated is a local non-profit organization that works with children and adults in their community within North Dakota. Under the Fish-ABLE Fun with Reclamation pilot program, Reclamation funded the purchase of fishing items and supplied the recreation site to host the event. Each child received a life jacket, sun hat, fishing pole, tackle, and tacklebox. Reclamation’s Heart Butte Reservoir is equipped with fishing ramps approved under the Americans with Disabilities Act. The children enjoyed a day of fishing, along with playground access, water safety coloring books, and yard games.



Children fishing at the inaugural Fish-ABLE Fun event held on September 10, 2021.



View of ADA compliant fishing ramp at Heart Butte Reservoir, North Dakota

Goal 5: Integrate the DOI’s environmental justice strategies with its Title VI of the Civil Rights Act enforcement responsibilities to improve efficiencies while preserving the integrity of Title VI and environmental justice activities.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VI”) prohibits race, color, or national origin discrimination by recipients of financial assistance from the Department. Environmental justice issues may arise in programs and activities supported through federal financial assistance.

The ODICR leads the Department’s compliance efforts to assure that its federally assisted programs, including those that affect human health or the environment, do not discriminate based on race, color, or national origin, and comply with the affirmative requirements of Title VI and is a member of the IAC’s Title VI Committee. The Title VI Committee serves as a resource to help agencies connect their civil rights enforcement responsibilities with their other efforts to achieve environmental justice.

To ensure adherence to Title VI, and specifically its prohibition against national origin discrimination, recipients of financial assistance must take reasonable steps to provide meaningful access to its programs and activities for limited English proficient (LEP) persons. In carrying out enforcement of Title VI, it is critical for the Department to identify the intersection with environmental justice as well as to educate recipients on fulfilling their language access obligations. To that end, integrating LEP persons into environmental justice efforts, such as through multilingual outreach and the regular use of competent interpreters at meetings and in other interactions, supports environmental justice goals and Title VI compliance. In addition to ODICR, the bureaus have offices that implement civil rights and Title VI compliance at the bureau-level.

Examples of bureaus and offices actions and activities in FY21 that implement Goal 5:

USGS – Title VI Program

During FY21, the USGS Office of Diversity and Equal Opportunity (DEO) initiated a Title VI Program that includes Environmental Justice, Limited English Proficiency, and Federal Financial Assistance.

FWS – Compliance Reviews

The FWS’s Office of Diversity & Inclusive Workforce Management (ODIWM), Public Civil Rights (PCR), is responsible for providing consultation and guidance while implementing federal public civil rights laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination in programs, activities, and services conducted by the FWS, or on behalf of the FWS, by recipients of Federal financial assistance. ODIWM-PCR conducts an onsite or desk Title VI civil rights compliance review of States (including the Trust Territories) recipients on a rotating basis at least once every 5 years. ODIWM-PCR conducted 11 desk compliance reviews in FY21. The compliance review comprises 10 areas, including LEP, environmental justice, employment, complaints, private sector participation, outreach programs, advisory board, commissions and committees, physical facilities, program administration, and desegregation of buildings and physical facilities.

OSMRE – Compliance Reviews

In accordance with OSMRE’s Five Year Compliance Review Schedule, OSMRE’s Office for Equal Opportunity (OEO) conducted three PCR compliance reviews of state agency recipients of federal financial assistance - Virginia, Alabama, and New Mexico. The reviews have a Title VI element which includes the Abandoned Mine Land (AML) Reclamation Program that addresses the hazards and environmental degradation posed by AML sites. Title VI programs intersect with environmental justice as it addresses legacy pollution in often underserved communities. The OEO concluded the Virginia's Department of Mines, Minerals & Energy is in compliance with anti-discrimination laws, regulations, etc., as required by the Department; the audits for Alabama and New Mexico are still in review.

Department's Environmental Achievement Award Spotlight

The Department's Environmental Achievement Awards recognize employees and partners who have made exceptional contributions through projects in eight categories aimed at fostering the protection and preservation of cultural and environmental resources. The environmental justice category recognizes the exceptional efforts of individuals or partners who advance the goals and objectives of the Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan, including leadership, guidance, and training that advances environmental justice knowledge and understanding; meaningful engagement of low-income, minority, or tribal communities in decision-making processes; evaluation of actions and how they may impact low-income, minority, or tribal communities; and work that aids and empowers communities to help build environmentally and economically sound communities. For FY21, in the environmental justice category, Amy Coffman, Refuge Manager of National Bison Range, received the award.

The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 restored the National Bison Range (Bison Range) to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). The leadership and coordination of Amy Coffman, Refuge Manager of the Bison Range, was vital to the transfer. Amy's stellar leadership, passion, and skills were instrumental in leading the FWS Bison Range staff through this change, while continuing to build and maintain vital tribal relationships and ensuring a positive outcome for the wildlife and habitat at the Bison Range. Her honesty and compassion helped the staff remain positive through this transition, which has included many uncertainties. The relationships that Amy built with the Tribes during the prior two years as Refuge Manager were valuable to the transition process, and the trust that she continued to build with CSKT staff on the ground and with the Council made this historic event a success. On January 2, 2022 the FWS formally left the Bison Range and turned over full management to CSKT. The transition to tribal management has been smooth and that is largely due to the efforts of Amy.



Amy Coffman, former Refuge Manager of National Bison Range



Bison roaming at the National Bison Range

JUSTICE40 INITIATIVE IMPLEMENTATION AT THE DEPARTMENT

EO 14008 sets a goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of Federal investments for covered programs flow to disadvantaged communities. The Justice40 Initiative (Justice40) is a whole-of-government approach to advancing environmental justice. To implement Justice40, in July 2021, the Office of Management and Budget, the Council on Environmental Quality, and the National Climate Advisor issued [Memorandum M-21-28](#), *Interim Implementation Guidance for the Justice40 Initiative* and launched the Justice40 Pilot Program. The Department's work to implement Justice40 pursuant to the interim guidance is ongoing.

The Department's Justice40 pilot program is the OSMRE's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization Program (AMLER). The AMLER Program explores and implements strategies to return legacy coal sites to productive uses. In FY21, the AMLER Program provided \$25 million each to Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, \$10 million each to Alabama, Kentucky, and Virginia, and \$3.33 million each to the Navajo Nation, Hopi Tribe, and Crow Tribe \$3.33 million, for a total of \$114.9 million in funding, to accelerate the remediation of abandoned mine land sites with economic and community development end uses. The Navajo Nation's Shonto Hotel is an example of the use of AMLER funding. The Navajo Nation is working with the Shonto Community Governance Chapter and OSMRE to construct a hotel. The hotel is in a well-traveled corridor of Shonto, AZ with travel destinations including the Grand Canyon, Lake Powell and Monument Valley. The AMLER funding will contribute to the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning equipment, and electrical and plumbing of the over \$15 million project. Additional information on the AMLER program is on the OSMRE's AMLER [webpage](#).



Leaders of the Navajo Nation join local Shonto leaders to break ground on a new hotel facility in Shonto, Ariz.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

As noted in the 2011 MOU, consistent with EO 12898, section 5-5, each Federal agency will ensure that meaningful opportunities exist for the public to submit comments and recommendations relating to the agency's Environmental Justice Strategy, Annual Implementation Progress Reports, and ongoing efforts to incorporate environmental justice principles into its programs, policies, and activities.

No public comments were received on the Department's FY20 Environmental Justice Annual Implementation Progress Report or the Department's Environmental Justice Strategic Plan in FY21. The Department remains open to public comment on its Environmental Justice Strategic Plan and Annual Environmental Justice Implementation Reports. Comments and questions on this annual report and the Department's implementation of environmental justice can be submitted to: environmental_justice@ios.doi.gov.

CONCLUSION

During FY21, the Department continued to work to incorporate the provisions of EO 12898 within the scope of its overall mission. The Department also continued to be an active member in the IAC and its committees and participates in its collaborative efforts to support healthy and economically viable minority, low-income, and tribal communities.



APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF IMPLEMENTATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE STRATEGIC GOALS

BLM – Environmental Justice Trainings and Resources

In FY21, the BLM's Socioeconomic Program provided multiple educational opportunities and resources to further environmental justice at the BLM and this presentation is now available as an on-demand short video for BLM staff. In addition, the Socioeconomics Program developed a pilot for a BLM-wide geographic information systems (GIS) tool to assist staff with identification and documentation of environmental justice communities. An example of the training provided includes:

The BLM's Socioeconomic Program staff coordinated and produced a webinar titled *Outreach and Engagement with Environmental Justice Communities*, with presentations by BLM Socioeconomics, DOI's Office of Collaboration and Dispute Resolution (CADR), BLM Hazardous Materials, and BLM Siuslaw Field Office staff. The training provided details about EO 12898, the spirit of meaningful involvement, principles for engagement with environmental justice communities, resources available in the Socioeconomics and CADR programs to support outreach and engagement, and examples and best practices from Hazardous Materials and the Siuslaw Field Office. This webinar, featured as part of the Socioeconomics Webinar Series, is available for on-demand viewing by BLM staff.

FWS – Employee Workshops on Connecting with Minority Landowners and Underserved Communities

The FWS's Region 4 conducted a workshop series titled *Connecting with Minority Landowners and Underserved Communities Workshops*. The workshop series consisted of four workshops for 60 staff. The workshops explored the minority experience and land ownership in the U.S., from original indigenous peoples to current conditions. Topics related to unconscious bias were also discussed. Staff described the workshops as “eye opening” and “powerful.” The workshops enhanced staff awareness of concepts related to Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

OWF - Coordinating Science to Document Differential Wildfire Impacts Across Communities

The OWF is coordinating science data with the interagency Joint Fire Sciences Program to document environmental justice impacts of wildfire and wildfire emissions, particularly due to changing wildfire occurrence and climate change. In FY21, OWF began coordinating analyses of environmental justice concerns with the Wildland Fire Leadership Council which includes land management and regulatory agencies.

BOEM – Environmental Justice Methodologies Working Group

BOEM developed an internal Environmental Justice Methodologies Working Group comprised of environmental justice practitioners across all BOEM Regions and Programs to address the need for robust environmental justice analysis in NEPA reviews and to provide consistency across BOEM in conducting analysis. In FY21, BOEM contracted support for development of best practices for environmental justice methodologies; a BOEM-wide environmental justice science and policy research library in EndNote; a suite of quick reference guides for environmental justice screening and data analysis tools; and a communications and training package for internal and external communications.

BLM – Buffalo Field Office Tribal Engagement Meetings - Exploring Best Practices

In FY21, the BLM Wyoming Buffalo Field Office (BFO) held a series of Tribal engagement meetings to discuss their Resource Management Plan Evaluation, upcoming projects, and management of the Welch Ranch Special Recreation Management Area. The BFO Field Manager made it a priority to travel to Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to allow maximum flexibility for participation, including incorporating Zoom where feasible and conducting outdoor site visits. Trips were taken to Riverton, Wyoming; Poplar, Montana; and Fort Yates, North Dakota. The meeting involved six Tribal Nations and the knowledge and information shared will guide and inform the BFO in upcoming management decisions.

OSMRE – Increasing Tribal Consultation and Awareness

In FY21, the OSMRE initiated ongoing formal consultation with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, the Cherokee Nation, and the Choctaw Nation in Oklahoma related to the *McGirt v. Oklahoma* Supreme Court decision. OSMRE prioritizes keeping the Oklahoma Tribal Nations informed on surface coal mining or abandoned mine land issues on lands within their reservation boundaries, as well as seeking concurrence from the Tribal Nations on major decisions, such as performance bond releases and permit revisions.

BOEM – National Ocean Mapping Exploration Characterization Listening Session

In FY21, BOEM staff held a listening session intended to meaningfully engage and boost collaboration with indigenous communities in the context of the *National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone* (NOMECS Strategy). The NOMECS Strategy was called for in a Presidential Memorandum and prepared by the Science and Technology Subcommittee of the White House Ocean Policy Committee in June 2020. The January 2021 listening session provided an opportunity to discuss communication mechanisms and best practices for sustained tribal community involvement with more than 50 individuals that will help to define shared goals in ocean mapping, exploration, and characterization data and activities and determine communication or collaboration mechanisms that can best provide sustained community input and feedback into NOMECS planning and implementation.

FWS – Summer Newsletter Highlighting Environmental Justice

In 2021, the FWS published their summer [Fish and Wildlife News](#) which spotlighted environmental justice. The edition included a message from FWS's Principal Deputy Director on the importance of environmental justice.

NPS – Public Input Requested on the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument

In 2017, [Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument](#) was created by presidential proclamation to commemorate, preserve, and interpret the struggle for human and civil rights that played out in Birmingham in the 1950s and 1960s. In June 2021, National Park Service [sought public input](#) to support development of a [General Management Plan](#) (GMP) for the Birmingham Civil Rights National Monument. The NPS developed a [civic engagement newsletter](#) to provide information to the community on the GMP and the planning process.

BLM – Tribal Consultations for the Twin Metals Minnesota Proposed Copper-Nickel Mine

In 1854, the United States government signed a treaty with the Ojibwe Tribes of Lake Superior and the Mississippi ceding lands in northern Minnesota to the United States. The Tribes retained the usufructuary right to hunt, fish, and gather from the ceded territory. Twin Metals Minnesota, LLC's proposed copper-nickel mine falls within the ceded territory. In FY21, the BLM coordinated with Tribal resource staff on MOUs to establish cooperating agency status for the three resident bands of the Chippewa: Boise Forte, Fond du Lac, and Grand Portage. Other interested Tribes coordinated with Federal staff in bi-monthly resource-focused meetings. The BLM, in cooperation the U.S. Forest Service, worked with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to map out an Area of Potential Effects and to conduct necessary cultural studies. Through these consultation and coordination efforts, the BLM strengthened its relationships with the Tribes and is now transitioning efforts from analyzing a Mine Plan of Operations to considering an application for a proposed withdrawal of Federal lands and minerals from disposition under the mineral and geothermal leasing laws, subject to valid existing rights.

NPS – Yellowstone National Park Engages with Tribes to Improve Partnerships

As the Yellowstone National Park approaches its 150th anniversary in 2022, the NPS is working with Tribes to expand tribal presence and representation of their important cultural heritage in Yellowstone during the anniversary and beyond. In FY21, the NPS engaged Tribes on various project proposals and initiatives such as on bison management and the recent transfer of Yellowstone bison to the Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes at Fort Peck, Montana. The NPS also initiated a multi-year partnership with Salish Kootenai College, a tribal college, to provide unique understanding of the cultural importance of archaeological resources within the Yellowstone National Park.

BIA – Policy and Process Changes to Address Fee to Trust

In April 2021, the Secretary of the Interior signed Secretary’s Order [\(SO\) 3400](#), *Delegation of Authority for Non-Gaming Off-Reservation Fee-to-Trust Acquisitions*, that returned the Fee to Trust (FTT) off-reservation approval authority to the BIA Regional Directors. The Regional Director delegations allow BIA to process off-reservation FTT more effectively and expeditiously. To implement SO 3400, BIA updated 52 IAM 15, *Off-Reservation Fee to Trust Decisions* and 3 IAM 4, *Delegations of Authority*.

In FY21, to address concerns from Tribes and individual landowners regarding the processing and timing of their FTT applications at various regions, the Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs (AS-IA) established a FTT Strike team to address the backlog of cases. The FTT Strike Team comprised of experienced realty staff across the BIA and are tasked with reviewing and expediting FTT applications as well as providing technical support to BIA regions.

NPS - Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument Established

In December 2020, the NPS established the Medgar and Myrlie Evers Home National Monument in Jackson, Mississippi as the 423rd unit of the National Park System. Acquired by the NPS by way of conveyance from Tougaloo College on June 18, 2020, the new monument commemorates the legacies of two civil rights activists who, from their modest, 3-bedroom ranch home, devoted their lives to ending racial injustice and improving the quality of life for African Americans. Additional information is in the NPS’ [press release](#).

OIA - Insular Critical Infrastructure Design and Hospital Maintenance Assessments

In FY21, the OIA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) partnered to improve Pacific Island medical facilities that are identified as failed or in failing condition. The OIA and USACE also collaborated to ensure that building codes are updated for critical infrastructure that are subject to hurricanes or typhoons and other climate-related impacts such as high temperatures, humidity, and corrosive salt laden air. Poor designs and inappropriate building materials have led to premature failure of many facilities in the Insular areas. The loss of function and unsafe conditions have degraded the standard of living. Insular areas are vulnerable to climate change and need more resilient and sustainable facilities to avoid repeated reconstruction and high capital outlays for maintenance and repairs.

BIA – Safety of Dams

In FY21, the BIA Safety of Dams Program performed routine activities for high-hazard dams, including periodic reviews, comprehensive reviews, early warning system maintenance, emergency preparedness, and non-routine design and construction activities. The Safety of Dams Program also conducted non-routine design and construction projects: Ghost Hawk, Dam Rosebud Indian Reservation, SD Design; Menager’s Dam, Tohono O’odham Nation Indian Reservation, AZ Design; Neopit Dam, Menominee Indian Reservation, WI, Design; Antelope Dam, Rosebud Indian Reservation, SD, Design; Oglala Dam, Pine Ridge Reservation, SD, Construction.

BIA – HEARTH Act supports Tribal Self-Determination

In FY21, the BIA continued work regarding the Helping Expedite and Advance Responsible Tribal Home Ownership (HEARTH) Act of 2012 that amended the Indian Long-Term Leasing Act of 1955, to include Tribal Approval of Leases at 25 U.S.C Section 415(h). The HEARTH Act provides a mechanism for federally recognized tribes to approve, manage, and enforce leases of their tribal trust and restricted lands for business, residential, agricultural, and other purposes without review of tribal leases by the BIA, or approval of tribal leases by the Secretary. Since the beginning of 2021, the Department has submitted five HEARTH Act regulations to the Assistant Secretary for approval:

- *Cahuilla Band of Mission Indians (Bus/Res) January 6, 2021*
- *Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians (Business) April 5, 2021*
- *Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North & South Dakota (Bus/Res/WSR/WEEL) April 14, 2021*
- *Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians (Ag/Bus/Res/WSR) April 27, 2021*
- *Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (Ag/Bus/Res/WSR) May 3, 2021*

BIA – Water Resources Assistance

In FY21, the Water Management Planning & Pre-Development Program received 107 program funding requests from Tribes and Regional Offices for a total requested funding amount of approximately \$12 million. The approximate \$9 million in available funding enabled BIA to fund 96 projects. These projects assisted the tribes with activities such as data collection of surface and sub-surface hydrology, technical studies to determine the best water use methods, and drought management plans for developing water conservation techniques. In FY21, the Water Rights Negotiation/Litigation Program received 67 program funding requests from the Tribes and Regional Offices, totaling \$13.7 million. The \$11.1 million in available funding allowed BIA to fund 55 projects.

BIA – Irrigation

In FY21, design and construction projects funded by the BIA Irrigation program included:

- Flathead Indian Irrigation Project (MT): Jocko K Canal Rehabilitation
- Fort Hall Irrigation Project (ID): Portneuf Pump Station Rehabilitation
- Wapato Irrigation Project (WA): Wapato Diversion Construction
- Fort Hall Irrigation Project (ID): Bannock Pump Station Rehabilitation
- Wind River Indian Irrigation Project (WY): North Fork Diversion Headgate Rehabilitation
- San Carlos Irrigation Project (AZ): Coolidge Dam modification

BIA – Reserved Treaty Rights Lands Programming

The Reserved Treaty Rights Lands (RTRL) Program supports Tribal efforts to protect, enhance and preserve their ancestral homelands and the associated values that are sacred to the cultures of Native Americans. In FY21, the BIA approved seven new RTRL projects. The RTRL funded projects reported over 20,250 treated acres in FY21. Acres treated consisted of 6,709 acres of prescribed fire, 8,528 acres of mechanical treatments and 5,016 acres of other treatment types.

OWF – Listening Sessions Conducted through the Intergovernmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council

The Department, through OWF and other member agencies of the Intergovernmental Wildland Fire Leadership Council, sponsored listening sessions in 2021 on improving implementation of the goals of the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy. The sessions were held with local and state governments and Tribes and provided significant insights for implementing wildland fire management equitably and efficiently.

BIA – Environmental Program

In FY21, the BIA’s Environmental Program:

- Reduced BIA Environmental Disposal Liabilities (EDLs) from 122 to 47 and BIA liabilities by \$1.4M
- Completed 78 Environmental Management Assessment and Performance (EMAP) Audits
- Completed and conducted 10 On-Site Environmental Audits
- Reviewed seven tribal remediation project requests for cleanup to comply with environmental requirements and provided recommendations for approval

NPS – Adding sites to the African American Civil Rights Network

The [African American Civil Rights Network Act of 2017](#) authorizes the National Park Service to coordinate and facilitate Federal and non-Federal activities to commemorate, honor and interpret “...the history of the African American Civil Rights movement; the significance of the civil rights movement as a crucial element in the evolution of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and the relevance of the African American Civil Rights movement in fostering the spirit of social justice and national reconciliation. “

The African American Civil Rights Network (AACRN) encompasses properties, facilities, and interpretive programs, all of which present a comprehensive narrative of the people, places, and events associated with African American Civil Rights movement in the United States. In FY21, the NPS added 25 resources to the network, bringing the total to 52 sites. For examples, on September 23, 2021, the NPS announced the addition of four new sites from California and South Carolina to the [AACRN](#). This addition further strengthens the connection between public and private organizations to honor and preserve the people and stories of the civil rights movement and educate the public about its diverse and complex stories. The sites include: the [Mojave National Preserve Lanfair Settlement Archive](#) in California and [the Penn Center](#); [the Progressive Club of Johns Island](#); and the [Sandy Island School](#) in South Carolina. More information is in NPS’s [press release](#).

NPS – Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park – Acquisition and Contaminated Site Restoration to Benefit Underserved Communities and Future Generations

Following more than a century of intense industrial development, the Blackstone River Valley, the birthplace of America’s Industrial Revolution, was left with a legacy of contaminated soils and blighted landscapes; creating health and environmental concerns for indigenous peoples and communities marginalized. Subsequent industrial decline left struggling communities to bear the brunt of industrial contamination as financial resources dissipated. In March 2021, the NPS [added three historic properties](#) to Blackstone River Valley National Historical Park – America’s earliest factory and first successful water-powered cotton spinning mill, the Slater Mill (1793); the Wilkinson Mill (1810); and the Sylvanus Brown House (1758) – along with legacy contamination. In collaboration with the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and other key stakeholders, NPS is leading the investigation and remediation of contaminated soils and removing asbestos and lead-based paint from property structures to protect the local population, site visitors, and the iconic cultural resources.

Reclamation – Funding a Grant with Rocky Mountain Youth Corps

Reclamation’s Albuquerque Area Office funds a grant with the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps (RMYC), an AmeriCorps program for youth crews and internships where corps members engage in community service while achieving their personal and professional goals. In the summer of 2021, Reclamation and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD) utilized the RMYC to rehabilitate an acequia on the Pajarito, Gallegos, and Pierce laterals (irrigation canals) in the Albuquerque, New Mexico area. An acequia is a community-operated watercourse or ditch, used for irrigation. Some of the acequias on the Rio Grande are more than 400 years old and date back to the earliest Spanish settlements. The RMYC conservation crew made the improvements, including vegetation removal, culvert work, and ditch-shaping.

Reclamation – Supporting the Yakama Nation’s Efforts to Improve Bull Trout Numbers

To return bull trout numbers to self-sustainable levels, the Yakama Nation Fisheries, and its partners, including Reclamation and the State of Washington, released 531 bull trout into Kachess Reservoir and 61 bull trout into Gold Creek, a tributary to Keechelus Reservoir located in south central Washington State. The goal of this adaptive management approach is to maintain bull trout viability consistent with the [Yakima Basin Integrated Plan](#) to restore degraded spawning and rearing habitat.

NPS – Tribal Historic Preservation Agreements

The NPS has the responsibility under the National Historic Preservation Act to administer the Tribal Historic Preservation Program. The program assists Indian tribes in strengthening their historic preservation programs managed through Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) on tribal lands. Once signed, THPO agreements transfer certain historic preservation responsibilities to Tribes that would otherwise be the responsibility of the state. The NPS completed and signed seven new Tribal Historic Preservation Agreements in 2021:

- Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Washington
- Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Texas
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe of the Southern Ute Reservation, Colorado
- Resighini Rancheria, California
- Ute Indian Tribe of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation, Utah
- Santo Domingo Pueblo, New Mexico
- Moapa Band of Paiute Indians of the Moapa River Indian Reservation, Nevada

FWS – Collecting Fish Tissue Samples for Heavy Metal and Toxicity Analysis

Since the 2006-2007 sampling year when a pilot project with the USGS was completed, the Meskwaki Natural Resources Water Program has conducted stream and river water quality and biological assessments. Since then, biological sampling with the FWS – La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office has included biannual fish monitoring at five sites on the Iowa River. The primary focus is to collect fish tissue plug samples of harvestable fish to determine mercury consumption limits for Settlement anglers. The secondary focus is to track fish community trends. Tissue from the most abundant species caught at each site is analyzed for mercury levels. Each individual fish is counted, measured, weighed and observed for any visible abnormalities. In FY21, the FWS worked with Tribal staff on surveys on the Meskwaki Reservation in Tama County, IA to collect fish tissue samples for heavy metal and toxicity analysis.

USGS – Identification and Monitoring of Metal and Trace Elements

The USGS is working in cooperation with the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency to identify and monitor the sources of metals and trace elements to the San Juan River, which is a vital source of water for the Navajo Nation and the Four Corners Region. Potential sources of metals and other elements may come from natural and anthropogenic sources including oil and gas development, coal mining, coal-fired power plants, urban areas, illegal trash dumping, abandoned uranium mines and mills, overgrazed areas, natural geology, and leaching from subsurface agricultural return flows. Determining the sources of these constituents will help the Navajo Nation in their efforts to protect human health and the environment along the San Juan River. Data collection and processing of water quality samples occurred in FY21, and the project is continuing through FY22 with one more year of data collection and processing, and analysis of the data.

BIA - Preservation of Native American Language

In October 2020, the Department’s Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development approved \$3 million in Living Languages Grant Program funds to 18 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages to document, preserve, and revitalize Native languages. Additional information is in the Bureau of Indian Affairs’ [press release](#).

NPS - Learning Goes the Distance

The distance learning program at Homestead National Historical Park (HOME) provides opportunities for teachers and students to connect with the resources and stories of both the park and their local communities. Each year thousands of students from a variety of backgrounds participate in programming that brings to life Homesteading stories and relates those stories to students experiences today. During the first quarter of FY21, staff at HOME participated virtually with classrooms in seven states. The programs are presented for free, and the only specialized equipment needed is a device with a camera and microphone and if in a classroom a way to project it for the class. For information on the distance learning, please visit HOME's [distance learning webpage](#).

OIA – Coral Reef Fellows Program

In FY21, OIA placed a coral fellow in each of the Territories to provide needed capacity in the Territories for both coral reef conservation and invasive species management. Coral fellow activities included raising community awareness and knowledge of coral restoration techniques and practices, building local technical capacity, and developing resilience-based management strategies. Fellows also promoted reef fish habitat restoration in efforts to support sustainable subsistence and commercial fisheries and have implemented a sustainable fishing outreach campaign targeted at local fishers, village communities, and school students.

FWS – Advancing Environmental Justice at Valle de Oro Wildlife Refuge

In FY21, the FWS continued to advance the Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge's Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan through:

- Hiring an environmental justice coordinator. The Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge Environmental and Economic Justice Leadership team, which includes FWS, the Friends of Valle de Oro and the Los Jardines Institute, received funding in 2020 from the Environmental Protection Agency through their Environmental Justice Small Grants. Using these funds, in 2021, the Leadership Team hired an Environmental Justice Coordinator employed through the Friends of Valle de Oro to assist the Leadership Team with carrying out the activities in the Valle de Oro Environmental and Economic Justice Strategic Plan. In FY21, the Coordinator assisted in providing two environmental justice training for staff, interns, and partners at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge.
- Partnering with the Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps to offer a new Hiking Club with the Pueblo of Isleta. This program lasted six weeks in all with three different sessions that each lasted two weeks. Within each two-week session, the crew leader and a FWS Intern, led all the participants, 7-10 youth in each session, to explore and hike locations that had cultural meaning or ancestral ties to the Pueblo. These places included Petroglyph National Monument, Bandelier National Park, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, and places located on the reservation such as the Isleta Mountains and the Mesa Ruins.
- Hosting two interns as part of the City of Albuquerque's Mayor's Creative Youth Corps program. The interns worked on projects to implement the community's request to have an environmental justice library as part of the Valle de Oro visitor center, such as developing and seeking local artwork and connecting to local artists and a timeline of the environmental justice movement to include in the library.
- Collaborating with partners at the Apprenticeships for Leaders in Mosaic Arts (ALMA) to complete a pair of mosaic tile sculptures featuring community stories of the land to be installed at the Refuge. Representatives from ALMA interviewed neighbors of the Refuge throughout the Mountain View and Pueblo of Isleta communities and then hosted neighborhood tile making workshops to bring those stories to life. Apprentices hired through the New Mexico Youth Conservation Corps program worked with the mosaic artists throughout the summer to complete the designs, mosaic tiles and the full sculptures.
- Hosting the annual Environmental Justice Community Day. The event was mainly virtual and featured musical performances, poetry reading and videos about the Refuge. Event information is on the [event website](#) and a full list of videos for the event is [here](#).

FWS – Education Programming

In FY21, the Visitor Services program for Leavenworth Fisheries Complex worked with partners to provide nature-focused educational experiences that addressed the needs of students and educators cut off from field-based opportunities, including:

- Live online presentations ([example video](#)). The FWS supplied online resources or sent materials to the teachers to distribute to their students and use during the programs.
- Loans of equipment, such as backpacks pre-loaded with investigative gear and snowshoes. The FWS offered a range of materials to any educator, and particularly targeted students from schools serving low-income and/or minority students as well as Tribal schools.
- Evergreen videos ([video library](#)), primarily posted on the Friends of Northwest Hatchery YouTube channel for maximum accessibility. These included Spanish-language videos, hatchery tour lessons, salmon anatomy and aquatic education programs, and adult-oriented explanations of our hatchery programs.

OSMRE – Funding for Applied Science Projects

In FY21, OSMRE reinitiated their applied science grant program through the announcement of the availability of \$1.6 million in funding for applied science projects through cooperative agreements with higher education, non-profit organizations, for-profit organizations, Native American tribal organizations, and federal, state, and local governments. Applied Sciences funding results in the improved protection of the public and the environment by advancing technology development and transfer related to surface coal mining and reclamation. Such efforts are needed to better protect endangered species, improve reforestation, protect prime farmland, and mitigate harmful environmental hazards, while improving the lives of environmental justice communities throughout coal country. More information is in OSMRE's [press release](#) and OSMRE's [applied science webpage](#).

OSMRE – Regulatory and Administrative Enforcement Grants and Abandoned Mine Land Grants

OSMRE provides both Regulatory Administrative and Enforcement (Title V) and an Abandoned Mine Land (AML) (Title IV) Grants to the Navajo, Hopi, and Crow Tribes annually to aid and empower minority, low-income, and tribal populations in their efforts to build and sustain environmentally and economically sound communities. The Regulatory Administrative and Enforcement Grants ensure that the Tribes have funding to develop Coal Regulatory Programs to permit and inspect mines on Indian Lands. The AML Grants provide funding for Tribes to abate the hazards related to historic mining, and to develop public facilities projects for disadvantaged communities. Additionally, the grants fund programs that employ 22 FTEs, benefitting the local economies. In FY 21 OSMRE provided AML Grants to the Navajo Nation, \$591,928 and the Crow Tribe, \$282,539, for a total of \$874,467. In FY21, OSMRE provided a total of \$2,471,983 in Title V Grants. The Crow Tribe received \$576,007, the Hopi Tribe received \$376,841 and the Navajo Nation received \$1,519,135.

BLM - National Scenic and Historic Trails Indigenous Mapping and Research Project

The National Trails System was established in 1968 and now includes 30 National Scenic and Historic Trails. Many of these trails were first Indigenous sacred landscapes and they still contain the stories of the ancient and historic trade routes of present-day Indigenous cultures. In 2021, an Indigenous Mapping and Research Coordinator position for the National Trails System was created in partnership by Partnership for the National Trails System (PNTS), Native Land Digital (Native-Land.ca), Ancestral Lands Conservation Corps, and Federal land management agencies. This project intends to help agency staff and partner organizations advance their knowledge of ancestral lands and increase meaningful partnerships and collaboration with Indigenous communities along the countries National Scenic and National Historic Trails (NSHT). Through mapping analysis and outreach, the project will highlight these traditional territories along National Trails and start a dialogue with Indigenous communities that will help promote their involvement in future conversations, projects and decisions made on National Trails.

BLM - Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC)

BLM Arizona sponsored Native American college students to attend the Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC) held at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. NYCALC is a weeklong environmental conference for Native American, Alaskan Native, and Pacific Islander high school and college students interested in addressing environmental, natural resource conservation, and climate change issues in their communities. The summer program provided native youth training in leadership principles, foundational concepts, practical applications of S.T.E.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), western and traditional conservation principles, and outdoor skills. For more information on BLM's involvement, visit the [BLM website](#). For information on the NYCALC, please visit their [website](#).

NPS – Supporting Local Food Banks

In FY21, the NPS provided several thousand pounds of venison to local food banks and nonprofit organizations, such as in [Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia](#), [Pennsylvania](#), and [New York](#).

NPS – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program

Listed below are some of the actions conducted by the NPS's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation (RTCA) Program in FY21:

- RTCA assisted Backyard Basecamp, a 501(c) organization that strives to connect people of color to land and nature, with organizational development, planning, and partnership development to launch the Baltimore Living in Sustainable Simplicity (BLISS) Meadows project. The project's goal is to transform a 10-acre vacant property into a community park, garden, meeting, and environmental education center in the Frankford neighborhood of Baltimore, MD.
- The Cheyenne River Youth Project developed the Waniyetu Wowapi Art Park in Eagle Butte, South Dakota to provide youth and community members with an opportunity to express themselves and explore their Native connection to art. To further develop the 5-acre park, the Cheyenne River Youth Project applied for assistance from the RTCA to make the space more accessible and incorporate opportunities for outdoor recreation. The NPS partnered with the North Dakota State University Landscape Architecture Program to create six different designs for the park. The designs feature skate parks, signs, and shipping containers, all of which could be used for urban art and will slowly be implemented after funding is secured. The NPS also mapped a trail system within the art park which was recently constructed by volunteer groups.

More information on the RTCA is on the NPS's [website](#).

FWS – Indigenous Collaborations Program

In FY21, the FWS collaborated on the design and piloting of a new, innovative course – *Indigenous Lands Stewardship: Creating Meaningful Collaborations across Alaska* – with the Alaska Pacific University (APU), Northern Latitudes Partnership, and Alaska Conservation Foundation. The advanced course in APU's professional development series evaluates the history of land ownership and management, equity and inclusion, Indigenous stewardship, and Indigenous collaboration. Thirty students—including FWS employees, non-profit organizations, Tribal staff, and other agency employees—completed the course in 2021. The course drew on both the expertise of Indigenous Elders and Native youth leaders. For more information visit the FWS's [new release](#).

FWS – Working with Historical Black Colleges and Universities

The FWS staff gave a presentation to a Field Biology class at Bowie State University, a Historic Black University in Maryland, about wildlife biology career paths, the relevance of urban wildlife biology, and urban ecology. The FWS then led a field trip for students at Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge. The students learned how to do point count surveys for birds and setup a passive acoustic recording device.

BOEM – Local Ecological Observations

The BOEM’s Local Ecologic Observations (LEO) is a volunteer program of mostly tribal environmental professionals who share information about environmental events where they live, post observations on public sites and coordinate with technical experts to identify appropriate actions. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Inc. (ANTHC) serves as the hub for the LEO Network. Since the program was initiated in January 2012, more than 800 individuals in 234 communities have enrolled across Alaska. In FY21, BOEM provided funds to ANTHC to enroll and train new members in the observation network protocols; manage and evaluate observation content; transfer observation content to data systems; connect observers with technical experts in partner organization to evaluate observations; distribute new observations via Google maps, the LEO network, and social media; hold monthly webinars to review observations; and synthesize data for dissemination through the Alaska One Health System.

FWS – White-nose Syndrome Grants to States and Tribes program

Through its competitive grant opportunity, the FWS’s White-nose Syndrome Program provides support to Tribes to engage in bat population monitoring, white-nose syndrome surveillance, and conservation actions to protect bat habitat and improve survival of bat species susceptible to the deadly disease. These funds build capacity for Tribes to monitor the status of bat populations, a potential indicator species for environmental health, and contribute data to the North American Bat Monitoring Program to improve our understanding of bats at the local and range-wide scale. A total of \$207,000 was awarded to six Tribes across four FWS regions in 2021.

FWS – Stocking Tribal Lakes

To assist Tribal governments in managing their resources, the FWS’s La Crosse Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, La Crosse Fish Health Center, and the Rydell National Wildlife Refuge collaborates with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Minnesota Tribes on walleye rearing at Clifford Lake, Minnesota. Netting of fingerling walleye for stocking in Tribal lakes occurred in September 2021. The total number of fish stocked in Tribal lakes: Bass Lake - White Earth Tribe: 7,094; North Twin Lake - White Earth Tribe: 2,312; Bass Lake - Red Lake Tribe – 9,924; and Sandy Lake - Red Lake Tribe: 14,290.

FWS – Advancing Environmental Justice through Community Engagement

- The Providence Parks Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership held a bilingual fishing event in June 2021 that provided an opportunity for participants to learn to fish and connect with their local law enforcement officers. This is one of a series of existing fishing events that are being reimagined through diversified partnerships, additional collaboration with underserved communities, and recognizing and dismantling the barriers that these communities sometimes face when it comes to engaging in conservation and/or outdoor recreation.
- The FWS’s Chesapeake Bay Field Office and the Masonville Cove Urban Wildlife Refuge partners held a Latino Conservation Day event on July 17, 2021. Event activities included exploration by kayak, the annual BioBlitz, fishing, hiking, animal ambassador presentations, and tours. The BioBlitz included 88 volunteers that made 279 observations and identified 137 different species. BioBlitz events allow volunteers to contribute to community science while exploring the flora and fauna that thrives at the Refuge.
- In partnership with NonTypical Outdoorsman and Outdoor Afro, the Patuxent National Wildlife Refuge hosted a special mentored hunt in October 2021 with the goal to inspire more diversity in outdoor recreation. The seven participants learned hunting ethics, hunting etiquette, shooting fundamentals, deer behavior and even a how to cook wild game with a local chef.

FWS – Youth Engagement

- Through partnerships with MobilizeGreen, the Alliance for Watershed Education, Student Conservation Association, American Conservation Experience, Pennsylvania Game Commission, and Hispanic Access Foundation, in FY21, the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge provided paid educational experiences for more than 30 high school and college interns, with the focus of providing opportunities for people of color. Their work focused on restoration and design projects on the Refuge, like bird and habitat restoration, as well as additional community green space assets.
- In the summer of 2021, the Stewart B. McKinney National Wildlife Refuge’s Hispanic Access Foundation intern provided environmental education to the City of New Haven Day campers, engaging hundreds of urban youth in wildlife-dependent recreation. The intermediate and middle school-aged children received hands-on lessons that focused on ecosystems of coastal Connecticut, urban wildlife species, animal migration and adaptation, insect lifecycles, and other topics.
- In FY21, the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge and the Chute National Wildlife Refuge partnered with Boys Town of Omaha, Nebraska to provide environmental education programming to the students while also engaging them with conservation related hands-on experiences. Boys Town of Nebraska is a non-profit organization that works with at risk youth providing homes, schools and career development to those that have failed in other systems. DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge was able to host 80 Boys Town students for four different refuge related activities that included monarch butterfly tagging, milkweed and pollinator seed collection, facility maintenance projects and a fishing clinic.
- The FWS’s Neosho National Fish Hatchery (NFH) partnered with the Urban American Outdoors (UAO) and the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity to help inner city youth experience nature through fishing. Neosho NFH supported UAO’s Urban Kids Fishing Event Series by supplying gear and equipment, donated by The Friends of Neosho NFH, along with supporting fishing camps and fishing derbies in the Kansas City, MO, metro area reaching over 1,200 individuals annually. In 2021, Neosho NFH along with the Columbia Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office, partnered with Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity to host a fishing derby at Binder Lake in Jefferson City, MO. It was the first experience fishing for many of the kids.
- In FY21, in response to the pandemic, the FWS’s Alaska Region External Affairs program transitioned an existing urban fishing program in Anchorage—aimed at underserved youth—into the virtual Alaska Youth Fish and Wildlife Club. The Fish and Wildlife Club provides an opportunity for young people to meet scientists, learn about careers in the conservation field, and build an understanding and appreciation for Alaska’s fish, wildlife, and public lands, empowering them to make a difference. With this new online platform, the in-person Anchorage youth fishing program, founded in 2011, grew into a larger online community where youth, mentors, and professionals could continue to safely interact during the pandemic. For more information on the Alaska Youth Fish and Wildlife Club visit the FWS’s [website](#).
- In FY21, the FWS’s Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge initiated a High School Youth Intern Crew and a Refuge Apprenticeship Program. Both programs were funded through partnership with the Minnesota Valley Trust and through a 5-year grant from the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources. The High School Youth Intern Crew provides 12 local minority, low-income high school students with the opportunity to learn about conservation careers through a unique 2-year paid internship program that includes access to new outdoor recreation experiences. Historically, the minimal stipend or low wages accompanying conservation internships, have excluded minorities and low-income high school students from participating. The Refuge Apprenticeship Program empowers minority and low-income college graduates by providing a living wage while gaining valuable work experience and mentoring.

USGS – Fellows Working on Educational Resources

The USGS engaged two Albert Einstein Distinguished Educator Fellows in late FY21. Both teachers come from minority-serving schools, one from a predominately Hispanic serving elementary school in the agricultural region of California, and the other from the Hawaiian native school in Hilo. Each of these fellows is working on educational resources grounded in culture and place. These resources will be available on the USGS Education website in FY22.

BOEM – Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program

The BOEM finalized a cooperative agreement with the University of Alaska, on the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP). The ANSEP provides educational and training opportunities to Native American and Native Alaskan people to develop the next generation of scientists and engineers. The goals of ANSEP are to move Native American and Alaskan Native students into science, technology, engineering and mathematics degree programs, and to foster a stronger Indigenous American representation within the science workforce of BOEM.

