

Overview of US Army Corps of Engineers Tribal Partnership Program and Working with Tribal Nations

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Nation's environmental engineers, play a pivotal role in water resources development projects, including ecosystem restoration. In recent years, USACE has been developing strong partnerships with Tribal Nations under the Tribal Partnership Program. These collaborations incorporate indigenous knowledge into USACE planning processes to better align with the diverse ecosystem needs of Tribal communities. These projects serve as a beacon of cooperation and respect for Tribal heritage while advancing the common goal of ecological and community resilience.

USACE's engagement with Tribal Nations is deeply rooted in our Tribal Policy Principles: 1) Recognition of Tribal Sovereignty; 2) Honoring the Trust Responsibility; 3) Engaging in Government-to-Government relationships; 4) Engaging in Pre-Decisional Consultation; 5) Promoting Self Reliance, Capacity Building, and Growth; and 6) Protecting Natural and Cultural Resources. The Tribal Partnership Program was first authorized in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000 and has been amended in each subsequent WRDA bills. The most significant amendments were authorized in WRDA 2016 when the study only authority was expanded to include design and construction up to a specific dollar amount authorized by Congress.

Through the Tribal Partnership Program and the integration of indigenous knowledge, restoration efforts will draw upon the wisdom passed down through generations. This approach not only enhances the effectiveness of ecosystem restoration but respects and preserves the unique cultural heritage of Tribes. Furthermore, these collaborative efforts strengthen the connection between Tribes and their natural and cultural resources. This holistic approach contributes to the overall well-being and self-determination of Tribal Nations.

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