

TRIBAL SACRED PLACES AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

INDIAN COUNTRY'S POLICY PRIORITIES FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Across Indian country, Tribal Nations are forging impressive records of cultural and ceremonial renaissance. From Native language revitalization, enhanced ceremonial and traditional healing engagement and promulgation of repatriation of ancestral remains and sacred objects. Driving this remarkable renaissance is a family of federal Indian law that has empowered Tribal Nations to advance their culturally and linguistically unique identity while simultaneously preserving Americas cultural treasures. The federal government must fulfill its binding trust and treaty obligations to take key actions to foster and remove barriers impeding free exercise of American Indian and Alaska Native Religions, ceremonies and traditions.

PRIORITIES – ADMINISTRATION

Below are top-line policy steps the Administration and federal agencies should take to enhance Tribal Nation's ability to protect Indian Country's and Americas cultural, traditional, ceremonial heritage. The protection of Tribal Nation exercise of American Indian - Alaska Native traditional religions, ceremonies, cultures as well as rights and protocols regarding customary and cultural items, and historic and sacred places are priorities for Tribal Nations that involve a complex statutory and regulatory landscape. Successful navigation of tribal and federal laws and regulations has resulted in the repatriation of Ancestors, cultural, and ceremonial articles, and greater protection of sacred places, including conveyance, co-management, joint stewardship, and other protective agreements; yet there is critical actions to be done. In order to properly and effectively protect the religious freedoms, liberties, and expressions of Tribal Nations, as well as support cultural protection efforts, the Administration must collaborate and enter into agreements with Tribal Nations toward that National goal. We urge the following actions.

ESTABLISHING WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ADVANCING EQUITY, PROTECTION, AND PRESERVATION OF AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- *This consensus priority is endorsed by the 8 contributing Intertribal organizations below. Combined they represent over 1.5 million enrolled citizens of Federally Recognized Tribes.*
- Key Features of the Initiative:
This initiative is to ensure the free exercise of American Indian and Alaska Native religious and ceremonial practices, to protect and preserve all American Indian and Alaska Native religions and ceremonial practices, and to fulfill the commitment to the Federal Trust obligations to all Tribal Nations pursuant to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act.
- The proposed Initiative increases federal coordination for the purpose of breaking down barriers and impediments to Tribal Nation religious and ceremonial free exercise including access to plant based medicines, prayer sites, sacred lands and traditional foods.
- Strengthens the capacity of volunteer public, private, tribal partnerships and their access to federal programs that invest in conservation strategies, encourage and develop federal partnerships with public, private, tribal philanthropic and non-profit entities to improve access to sacred lands, sites, and culturally significant landscapes.
- Creating opportunities for strategic partnerships and coordination among agencies.
- Collaborating with states, private landowners, Tribes, Conservationist, and other partners advancing shared stewardship of sacred site, medicine, ceremonial habitat and culturally significant places.
- Furthering Tribal Sovereignty by supporting efforts to cooperatively identify Tribal Nations' unique religious, ceremonial, and cultural needs, concerns, and viewpoints. Utilizing the instruments of the federal government to address these needs as permitted by law.
- Exploring policies that have Tribal Nations implications and legislative proposals to expand opportunities for Tribal Nations' inclusion in federal programs for the purpose of conserving sacred lands, places, sites, and culturally significant places.



Endorsing Intertribal Organizations

