

Best Practices for Partnering and Collaborating With Tribes

Relationship building between American Indian Tribes and environmental and cultural professionals is mutually beneficial. It leads to greater efficiencies and understandings for implementing the NEPA and Section 106 processes. A strategic approach to building relationships maximizes the potential for meaningful collaboration between tribes and the project developer, and reduces potential risks to proposed projects.

Plan Well and Early

- Understand sovereignty and nation-to-nation consultation
- Get to know the laws, treaties, and who is involved
- Be open to project adjustments

Broad Engagement and Open Lines of Communication

- Language matters: choose your words carefully
- Listen and hear
- Be transparent in information sharing

Cultural Awareness and Competence

- Seek cross-cultural learning and understanding
- Understand how to treat the information that is being shared
- Understand and be sensitive to other world views about cultural and natural resources

Commitment and Follow Through

- Be invested in tribal engagement: it's not a checkbox exercise
- Care and try
- Be invested beyond the life of a single project



Additional Resources

GOVERNMENT & LEGAL

[Authority and Role of Tribal Historic Preservation Office \(THPO\)](#)

The Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) is a person officially designated by a federally-recognized Indian tribe to direct a program approved by the National Park Service. The THPO must assume some or all of the functions of State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPO) on Tribal lands. This program was made possible by the provisions of Section 101(d)(2) of the National Historic Preservation Act.

[1854 Treaty](#)

[1854 Treaty Authority](#)

[Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission \(GLIFWC\)](#)

The role of non-government tribal entities.

[The Anishinaabe Way: The Inherent Right of Sovereignty](#)

In this audio story, Grand Portage community leader April McCormick, former Fond du Lac Tribal Chair Karen Diver, and Nevada Littlewolf, Virginia City Councilor and Executive Director of Rural and American Indigenous Leadership (RAIL) discuss the role that women play in tribal leadership and the reasons why there is a high percentage of women leaders who have historically and currently served as Tribal Chairs throughout the eleven MN reservations.

GENERAL RESOURCES

[Why Treaties Matter](#)

A Virtual Exhibit from the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and Minnesota Indian Affairs Council

[Native Knowledge 360: Essential Understandings](#) from National Museum of the American Indian

[Seminole Tribal of Florida Selected Bibliography](#)



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