

Native American Program

Mission Statements

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

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

Overview

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

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

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

Reclamation's overall leadership comes from a Commissioner, located in Washington, DC. Reclamation has five regional offices, each lead by a regional director. Each region is further divided into several area offices with each headed up by area managers.



Native American Program

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

Reclamation is endeavoring to increase opportunities for federally recognized tribes in the Western states to benefit from the Reclamation Program. In fiscal year (FY) 2010, about \$208 million, or 20% of Reclamation's enacted budget of \$1,053 million, were used for work benefitting Tribes. Of this \$208 million, about \$113 million (54%) was for work carried out under Title I or Title IV of P.L. 93-638, the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. Additionally, in FY2009-FY2010 about \$220 million, or 23%, of Reclamation's \$950 million Recovery Act funds were used for work benefitting Tribes. Of this, about \$181 million (82%) was carried out under P.L. 93-638.

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

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

Native American and International Affairs Office (NAIAO): The NAIAO, located in the Commissioner's Office, provides leadership and central coordination for Native American Program issues throughout Reclamation, including providing policy guidance to Reclamation for issues pertaining to Reclamation's work with Tribes, including those concerning government-to-government relationships with tribal governments, the Indian trust responsibility, and Indian sacred sites. The NAIAO also leads Reclamation's participation in Interior's Indian water rights settlement program, and leads and supports a Technical Assistance to Tribes program. Activities funded by the NAIAO that focus on tribal issues are collectively referred to as the "Native American Affairs Program" (NAAP). All of Reclamation's regional offices and most area offices have NAAP leads.

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

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