

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR



TRIBAL
PRESERVATION
PROGRAM
2014 REPORT

CULTURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, AND SCIENCE

PATHWAYS





ABOVE AND RIGHT JAMES H. BARKER

Left, Right: Subsistence in Alaska, which grant-seekers aim to protect. With its 2014 grant, Alaska's **Native Village of Ambler** will document how traditional fishing is linked to places in the Upper Kobuk River region, an urgent need since three communities are in sight of large mining projects now underway. An industrial access road, note the grant applicants, "stands to have profound effects [on] this remote, and previously roadless area." Grant applicants from Alaska's **Igiugig Village Council** note, "Our fragile tundra landscape has supported our livelihood for centuries, supplementing our diet and lending important remedies in times of need." The council's grant, with the help of elders, will be used to identify and photograph traditional plants—organized into a color field guide—and create a garden of native specimens as an educational tool for visitors, students, and community members.

"Over the last 500 years Indian cultures have experienced massive destruction, but the tide is changing," said the *Keepers of the Treasures* report, which led to the establishment of the National Park Service Tribal Preservation Program. The program's 2014 grant awards, honored here, celebrate the work of the Keepers—native stewards "who hold not only the keys to the tribal past, but the keys to the tribal future," in the words of the report, as it marks its 25th anniversary (see page 6). A grant to Alaska's **Ahtna Heritage Foundation**, to improve digital access to recordings of elders, is an example. "Hearing directly from our ancestors truly does feed our souls," the foundation notes. "It sparks something within our people that inspires them to continue learning, not just the language, but all aspects of our culture and traditions." Almost 1,500 hours of audio are protected at Wrangell–St. Elias National Park and Preserve. California's **Hoop Valley Tribe** plans to preserve the lone historic adobe building on its reservation, once part of an Indian boarding school. The almost 150-year-old structure—at risk due to boring bees, broken windows, and a leaking shake roof—was built as an officers' quarters at Fort Gaston during the Indian Wars of the late 19th century. The grant will also fund a research guide to records of the era, when the tribe rebelled against removal, brokering a treaty to secure its homeland on a reservation. With a grant-funded oral history, the **Navajo Nation's Fort Defiance Chapter** intends to capture the centuries-old skills of Dine healers, vital given the high rate of tribal cancer and diabetes. "The songs, prayers, stories, and practices can be very intricate and complex, yet these native healers remember every detail," note the grant applicants. Connecting with homelands, and trails of relocation, is a *Keepers* theme reflected in the grants. The **Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians** intend to "recapture some of the history" lost due to European settlement, using ground penetrating radar to explore archeological sites threatened by energy development. The tribes trace their ancestry to the original inhabitants of Oregon's south-central coast, with homelands that once stretched from mountainous forest to the Pacific shoreline, some 1.6 million acres. The **Miami Tribe of Oklahoma** aims to extend research seeded by an earlier grant—"the next natural step in our journey to understanding the impact of forced removal"—creating a map and booklet. The goal recalls the words of a Yavapai Apache in the *Keepers* report: "To know what you are, and where you came from, may determine where you are going."



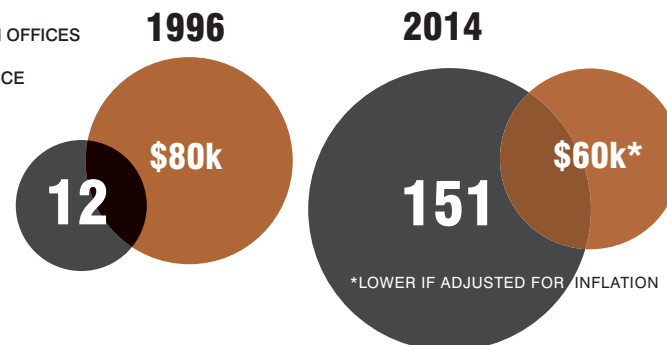
To know what you are, and where you came from, may determine where you are going.

—YAVAPAI APACHE IN THE KEEPERS OF THE TREASURES REPORT

● NUMBER OF TRIBAL PRESERVATION OFFICES
● AVERAGE ANNUAL GRANT PER OFFICE

Growing Scarcity

Since 1996, the rapid growth in tribal preservation offices—mirroring the program's popularity with native groups—has outstripped funding, the average grant dropping from \$80,000 to \$60,000.*



Program at a Glance

Origin and Purpose

In 1989, Congress directed the National Park Service to report on tribal preservation needs. The findings of that study, *Keepers of the Treasures—Protecting Historic Properties and Cultural Traditions on Indian Lands*, provided the foundation for the program, which awards grants, assists Indian tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian organizations, and approves requests from native groups to assume the duties of Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.

Grants

Tribal Heritage Grants, to preserve and promote cultural traditions, are available to all federally recognized Indian Tribes, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian organizations. **Grants to support Tribal Historic Preservation Offices**, drawn from the Historic Preservation Fund annually appropriated by Congress, are awarded to eligible Offices based on a formula agreed upon by the Offices and the Park Service.

Tribal Historic Preservation Offices

Work on the frontlines to protect resources and places vitally important to cultural identity.

Ensure activities reflect the knowledge and participation of tribal elders, culture bearers, spiritual leaders, and—when appropriate—preservation professionals.

Assist federal agencies in complying with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act on reservations and within traditional homelands.

Create oral history programs, establish and operate museums and culture centers, and develop training and education programs that preserve traditional culture.

Program Manager

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Web www.nps.gov/tribes/Tribal_Historic_Preservation_Officers_Program.htm

A Conversation with Al Downer

Preservationist for the Navajo Nation



Winner of a Secretary of the Interior's Historic Preservation Award for 20 years of innovative work with the Navajo, Downer now heads Hawaii's historic preservation division.

Q What were the challenges as the Navajo's first tribal preservation officer?

A When I arrived, my salary was the entire budget. I got tremendous moral support from the tribal council, but for two years or so, we were running on empty. I wanted to develop a program based on Navajo needs and values, not “cloning” a state preservation office. There was a lot of freedom, but we had to invent it from the ground up. There was no model.

Q What are some of your successes?

A When I left, the budget was about five times the federal support, giving the Navajo more control over preservation decisions. I also developed the idea of the “traditional historic property.” Tribes wanted to save sites that, too often—when identified at all—were called “sacred places,” not eligible for the National Register. The traditional property concept changed that.

Q You surveyed the Navajo on what to preserve. What were the “ah-ha” moments?

A The first was nearly half the places were archeological. For complex reasons, Navajos are thought to “fear” archeological sites. I thought they might want them left alone. The second was the large number of federal buildings identified as preservation-worthy. I expected the Navajo to identify them as “monuments to colonialism.” They did not. The only way to know is to ask and listen.

Tribal Preservation Toolkit

As part of the tribal heritage grant program, Rhode Island's **Narragansett Tribe**, working with the **National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers** (www.nathpo.org), is developing a toolkit for tribal preservationists. The kit is a key part of a training curriculum being developed by the association.



GREG STAATS (MOHAWK)

I wanted to develop a program based on Navajo needs and values, not “cloning” a state preservation office.

—AL DOWNER, WINNER OF THE 2013 SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD FOR TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICES

Above: Mohawk powwow. Preserving ceremonial traditions, and places, is a goal among grant applicants. Oklahoma's **Seneca-Cayuga Tribe** intends to restore an open-sided longhouse—nearly done in by time—replacing its 1960s-era floor with traditional clay. “Tribal dances should be performed on the earth, not on manmade concrete,” note the grant applicants.

Below: Apache rancher.

NPS HARPERS FERRY CENTER



Keepers of the Treasures at 25. “Indian tribes are living cultures, fundamentally different in character from other components of American society,” wrote the authors of the *Keepers of the Treasures* report 25 years ago (www.cr.nps.gov/crdi/publications/Keepers.htm). “Preservation of heritage is seen as a key to fighting such contemporary problems as alcoholism and drug abuse, which flourish where society is in stress.” Today, the *Keepers*’ vision is evidenced in these pages—in a program and policy that not only safeguard places, but revive traditions that build self-esteem, spark youth pride in elder knowledge, seek the return of ancestral objects and remains, and preserve the mother tongue. “If you can’t talk your language, you can’t relate to the land,” said Weldon Johnson of **the Colorado River Indian Tribes**, quoted in the report. NPS grants have been crucial. In the words of Mary Proctor of **the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma**, also in *Keepers*: “We have left a trail of historical places across half of the United States. We don’t have any way to really go back and recognize those places.” Steven James Davids, quoted in the report, spoke of climbing Monument Mountain near the Massachusetts burial grounds of **the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans**: “When we finally reached the top, we were out of breath and my chest filled both with pride and sorrow. Pride because my ancestors chose a most beautiful place to call home and sorrow because they weren’t able to keep it.”

A Conversation with Joe Watkins

Chief, Cultural Anthropology, National Park Service



Q The *Keepers of the Treasures* report marked a turning point in 1989.

A Tribes had the ear of a federal agency. The federal government—which spent the previous hundred years trying to get

them to melt in the melting pot—finally said, “Tribes, we want to help you maintain the things that make you distinct.” Many native peoples had been moved to urban areas, cut off from tribal support. But now you had Navajos in Los Angeles meeting with Cherokees from Oklahoma and Arapahos from Denver. It opened their eyes to shared issues. *Keepers* points to 200-year-old traditions that are now very rickety.

Q Where does the vision remain unfulfilled?

A Funding is such that tribes can often only do band-aid projects, for a week or a group of ten, say, rather than a language school, which might take \$200,000 to get started.

Q What are other countries doing?

A Indigenous people worldwide are in the same boat. Aboriginal Australians have to choose between being traditional Saturday and Sunday and working in the global economy Monday through Friday.

Q *Keepers* puts a focus on heritage tourism.

A Good points, bad points. It creates sustainable infrastructure, with jobs for guides and translators, cultural liaisons if you will. But it also creates a perception that people are tied to the past—Walt Disney characters in a sense. A native organization is helping groups create balanced programs.

Q Tribes have great knowledge of ecology.

A Tribal ecological knowledge—TEK—is not just about tribes. The basketweavers of the Gullah-Geechee, descendants of enslaved people, have deep knowledge of their tide-water islands, which will eventually be lost to sea level rise—like the islands of the Aleuts. We’re working with Interior on ways to bring this wisdom to bear.

2014 Tribal Grant Awards

Alaska

Ahtna Heritage Foundation
Igiugig Village Council
Native Village of Ambler
Seldovia Village Tribe, IRA

California

Hoopa Valley Tribe
Ione Band of Miwok Indians
Sherwood Valley Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians

Hawaii

Kohe Malamalama O Kanaloa—Protect Kaho’olawe Fund

Michigan

Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and Chippewa Indians

Minnesota

The Prairie Island Indian Community

Nevada

Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe

New Mexico

Pueblo of Santa Ana
Navajo Nation—Fort Defiance Chapter

Oklahoma

Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of Oklahoma

Oregon

Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw Indians

Front Cover: Buffalo dancers, Laguna, New Mexico. **Back Cover:** Aloha Week at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. Preserving Hawaii’s peoples—and places—is a focal goal for the National Park Service, evidenced by efforts such as this year’s grant to **the Protect Kaho’olawe Fund**. Applicants seek to save Kaho’olawe’s Pōhaku Kāneloa—a petroglyph-carved boulder, aligned with solstice and equinox—that “reveals time, space, and the seasons,” in the words of native Hawaiians. Wind and erosion threaten to topple the “earthly reflection of the sky” into a gulch that bears its name. A mold and model, created thanks to the grant, will help determine a temporary place to put the boulder—allowing a similar alignment—while stabilizing the site.

Indian tribes are living cultures, fundamentally different in character from other components of American society. —KEEPERS OF THE TREASURES REPORT

WEB www.nps.gov/tribes/Tribal_Historic_Preservation_Officers_Program.htm

BELOW RICHARD RASP COVER LEE MARMON (PUEBLO OF LAGUNA)

