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**Native American Affairs Committee**

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America the Beautiful Initiative

*Attachment:* ACHP Letter to Secretary Deb Haaland, April 5, 2021

Update on Major Activities

***Please see the following paper in Tab 1 for the Native American Affairs Committee discussion:***

Tribal Climate Resilience Discussion Paper



**MEETING**  
**NATIVE AMERICAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**  
**Thursday, July 22, 2021**  
**3 p.m.-4:30 p.m. EDT**

Join ZoomGov Meeting  
<https://achp.zoomgov.com/j/1605262387?pwd=L2hYTtMxbUp2QzRZcEZNeGIWUlh4QT09>

Meeting ID: 160 526 2387  
Passcode: 135324  
Dial by phone  
+1 646 828 7666 US  
Meeting ID: 160 526 2387  
Passcode: 135324

**PROVISIONAL AGENDA**

- I. Call to Order and Introductions
- II. Tribal Climate Resilience
- III. America the Beautiful (30x30) Initiative
- IV. Updates:
  - Traditional Knowledge Guidance
  - NHPA as a Model for the Protection of Sacred Sites in Other Nations
- V. Adjourn



**AMERICA THE BEAUTIFUL INITIATIVE**  
**Office of Native American Affairs**

**Background.** Executive Order 14008 directs the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to develop initial recommendations on how to advance an inclusive and collaborative conservation vision. It also includes a call to action to conserve, connect, and restore 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 (30 X 30) for the sake of the economy and public health well-being. The report is available at <https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/report-conserving-and-restoring-america-the-beautiful-2021.pdf>.

The Biden-Harris Administration also launched “America the Beautiful,” a decade-long challenge to pursue a locally led and voluntary, nationwide effort to conserve, connect, and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife upon which we all depend. A recent report outlines the key principles that will guide conservation efforts, including the following:

- Pursuing a collaborative and inclusive approach to conservation;
- Conserving America’s lands and waters for the benefit of all people;
- Supporting locally led and locally designed conservation efforts;
- Honoring tribal sovereignty and supporting the priorities of tribal nations;
- Pursuing conservation and restoration approaches that create jobs and support healthy communities;
- Honoring private property rights and supporting the voluntary stewardship efforts of private landowners;
- Using science as a guide; and
- Building on existing tools and strategies with an emphasis on flexibility and adaptive approaches.

On April 5, 2021, the ACHP wrote to Secretary Deb Haaland with a number of suggestions for the report including the prioritization the conservation of lands containing important cultural resources as a way to advance the protection of traditional cultural landscapes and sacred sites of importance to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations (NHOs). The letter, attached, further points out that doing so would fulfill the government’s trust responsibility to Indian tribes as well as the goals of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EO 13007: Indian Sacred Sites, and other federal mandates.

**Discussion.** While the report focuses on natural resource conservation, it does suggest that “federal agencies should seek to support and help advance the priorities of American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and Indigenous leaders, including those related to sustainable land management and the conservation of natural, cultural, and historical resources.” Therefore, the ACHP has an opportunity to continue to advance the conservation of traditional cultural landscapes, sacred sites, and historic properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes and NHOs.

**Action Needed.** Committee members should review the Department of the Interior’s report and the ACHP letter and discuss the following:

- Should the ACHP, as a member of the White House Council on Native American Affairs, advocate for the inclusion of tribal and Native Hawaiian sacred places in the “America the Beautiful” initiative?
- In what other ways could the ACHP advance historic preservation goals in the “America the Beautiful” initiative?
- Should the ACHP urge federal agencies to consider crediting protections afforded to historic properties as part of their efforts to meet the requirements of Section 106 and 110 of the NHPA toward the 30 X 30 conservation goals?

*Next Steps.* ACHP staff will develop further recommendations to the Department of the Interior and other federal agencies on the consideration of cultural resources in the “America the Beautiful” initiative based on member input.

*Attachment:* ACHP Letter to Secretary Deb Haaland, April 5, 2021

*July 14, 2021*

Rick Gonzalez, AIA  
Vice Chairman

Reid J. Nelson  
Executive Director, Acting



April 5, 2021

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

Acting as chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) during that position's current vacancy, I am writing to you regarding Executive Order 14008's directive that the Department of the Interior (DOI) report to the National Climate Task Force on steps that the federal government should take toward conserving at least 30 percent of America's lands and waters by 2030 (30x30 initiative). Established by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, the ACHP's mission is to promote the preservation, enhancement, and sustainable use of our nation's diverse historic resources, and to advise the President and the Congress on national historic preservation policy. The ACHP encourages DOI to address in its report the benefits of giving priority to conserving lands and waters that contain not only important and strategic natural resources but also significant cultural resources.

The NHPA established as policy that the federal government would encourage the balancing of modern societal needs with preservation of its historic places; be a national preservation leader; manage and care for prehistoric and historic resources under its control; and foster both nonfederal governmental and private preservation activities. Building upon this foundation, other legislation and Executive Orders have since added to the specific responsibilities of the federal government to promote preservation of cultural resources that reflect the nation's diversity and history. However, cultural resources do not exist in a vacuum, and many are integral to natural landscapes. Promoting conservation of lands rich in cultural resources as a fundamental part of the 30x30 initiative would support the goal of that initiative while also advancing the objectives of federal historic preservation law and policy.

Prioritizing the conservation of lands and waters containing important cultural resources would also advance the protection of traditional cultural landscapes and sacred sites of importance to Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations. Such protection would help to fulfill the federal government's trust responsibility to Indian tribes as well as the requirements of the NHPA, Executive Order 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites," and other federal policy and regulations. The needed collaboration between federal, tribal, state, and local governments envisioned in the 30x30 initiative also suggests the importance of addressing tribal co-management of certain lands as an effective strategy for the protection of both natural and cultural resources. Accordingly, the ACHP fully supports the inclusion of sacred sites and landscapes in the federal government's implementation of the 30x30 initiative as a way to further the protection of such places.

Executive Order 14008 requires that DOI's report to the National Climate Task Force include proposed

guidelines for determining whether lands and waters qualify for conservation. I hope that DOI will include the presence of cultural resources as an important criterion supporting conservation. Doing so will have the dual benefit of advancing both the goals of the 30x30 initiative and the protection of our nation's cultural resources.

The ACHP stands ready to assist DOI in achieving these goals. Should you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please feel free to contact me, or your staff may wish to follow up with acting ACHP Executive Director Reid Nelson at [rnelson@achp.gov](mailto:rnelson@achp.gov). Thank you.

Sincerely,



Rick Gonzalez, AIA  
Vice Chairman



**UPDATE ON MAJOR ACTIVITIES**  
**Office of Native American Affairs**  
**April—July 2021**

***Section 106 course for Indian Tribes.*** The online, on-demand Section 106 course for Indian tribes launched in May. It was developed to assist Indian tribes in fully participating in the Section 106 review process and is part of a toolkit The Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) is developing that includes guidance and other products. This course will prepare tribal staff and leadership to understand their role in the Section 106 process and to participate more effectively. In addition to explaining tribal rights at each step of the process, the course includes tips and strategies for effective participation.

***Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation.*** In accordance with the Presidential memorandum, the ACHP consulted with tribal governments on draft procedures for tribal consultation pursuant to Executive Order 13175 and submitted [a new plan](#) to the Office of Management and Budget on April 26, 2021. The ACHP also sent individual responses to each of the tribal commenters explaining how their comments were addressed.

***Sacred Sites Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).*** In 2012, the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, Defense, and Energy and the ACHP entered into a memorandum of understanding to collaborate on the protection of Indian sacred sites. A great deal of work has been done under the MOU, but there remain important tasks to complete. The ACHP called a meeting of the signatory agencies on May 5, 2021, to re-establish the Core Working Group (CWG), after a three-year hiatus, and continue implementation of the MOU. The CWG is comprised of staff level representatives of the five signatory agencies. The CWG will continue work on a guidance document with a target completion of late September 2021.

***Traditional Knowledge Information Paper.*** ONAA, in collaboration with tribal government and Native Hawaiian organization representatives, *kanaka maoli* (the indigenous people of Hawaii), and intertribal organizations, completed the information paper on traditional knowledge in the Section 106 process. It has been widely distributed among the preservation community and is available on the ACHP's website at <https://www.achp.gov/sites/default/files/2021-05/TraditionalKnowledgePaper5-3-21.pdf>. ONAA staff has begun offering presentations about the paper and will host a webinar this summer for Federal Preservation Officers.

*July 14, 2021*