

NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

2025 UPDATE: TRIBAL AFFAIRS

BACKGROUND:

At the January 2025 Board Workshop, Supervisor Bullock, District 5, brought forward a recommendation to direct staff to develop a set of tribal affairs policy recommendations for Board consideration in coordination with an Ad-Hoc Subcommittee. The request acknowledged that over the past several years the County has increased engagement efforts with tribal communities, but those efforts have not been coordinated, resulting in multiple departments contacting Tribes without the benefit of policy guidance.

Many County departments are legally required to consult with tribes such as for development projects or fuel mitigation efforts which must comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Tribal communities also play a pivotal role in Board Objectives such as by informing strategic planning efforts under Recreation and Emergency Preparedness. Furthermore, tribal input is critical to broader efforts of interest to the community like climate resilience, sustainability, education, and the arts.

Over the last year staff have worked to identify the core framework for a County Tribal Affairs Policy with the goal of providing guidance on how and how not to engage with tribes. This effort has included the following:

- **Literature Review.** Identified existing frameworks/requirements for working with Tribes articulated at the state and federal level.
- **Standard Definitions.** Identified consistently used definitions for various aspects of Tribal Affairs to ensure that everyone is “speaking the same language.”
- **Guiding Principles.** Identified best practices for working with Tribes via a review of local, state, and federal policies for Tribal engagement.
- **Tribal Affairs Committee.** Developed preliminary list of County staff who engage with Tribes and the context of that engagement.
- **Stakeholder Engagement.** Developed list of additional community stakeholders to engage with around opportunities and constraints associated with Tribal engagement (Attachment A: Draft Tribal Affairs Stakeholders).

Given the importance of developing a transparent, consistent, and equitable process for tribal engagement and inclusion, staff recommend extending the duration of work by the Tribal Affairs Ad-Hoc by one year to achieve the following proposed actions:

- **Appoint a Tribal Liaison for the County (End of Year 2).** This will create a single point of contact for intaking and tracking requests related to Tribal Affairs. During Year 2 of the Ad-Hoc, identify the specific duties of the Tribal Liaison and determine if this would require new staff or identification of existing staff to fulfill the functions.
- **Establish a Tribal Affairs Committee.** Formalize a Tribal Affairs Committee comprised of staff from County departments/offices to gain insight into the various

ways that the County is currently engaging with tribes. Task the Tribal Affairs Committee to make recommendations on the duties of the (proposed) Tribal Liaison, identification of appropriate staff training, and the development of SOPs for communication and consultation (Attachment B: Draft Tribal Affairs Committee).

- **Implement Staff Training.** Identify appropriate training(s) and ensure that relevant County staff are aligned with and understand the Tribal Affairs Policy and receive training on best practices for working with tribes.
- **Develop Standard Operating Procedures for Communication and Consultation.** Identify best practices for communication and consultation from existing tribal consultation policies (state agencies, counties, tribes), County staff (Tribal Affairs Committee) input, and through stakeholder engagement. Based on this data, define and implement SOPs to serve as guidance to County leadership and staff around how to best engage with tribes from a legal and ethical standpoint.

These actions can be accomplished without additional funding, and the intent is to bring forward a Tribal Affairs Policy with pertinent recommendations for consideration by the Board in January 2027.



NEVADA COUNTY

C A L I F O R N I A

Tribal Affairs Ad Hoc
Stakeholder Engagement
January 1, 2026

The purpose of the Tribal Affairs Ad Hoc is to provide recommendations for a transparent, consistent, and equitable process for tribal engagement and inclusion in County projects and within County jurisdictional boundaries.

DRAFT List of External Stakeholders

- **Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E)**
 - Regarding practices around artifacts that are recovered during PG&E projects
- **Nevada Cemetery District**
 - Regarding Tribal Burials
- **Indigenous Futures Society (formerly The Sierra Fund)**
 - Regarding best practices for engagement of Tribes based on issues brought forward by County staff and identified via literature review (ex. Letters of Support, communication versus consultation etc.)
- **Non-Profit Organizations (South Yuba River Citizen's League, Bear Yuba Land Trust, Sierra Streams Institute, Yuba Watershed Institute)**
 - Regarding their experiences engaging with Tribes and opportunities, constraints, and best practices
- **Tribes (if appropriate, to gather additional feedback via informal staff-to-staff communication)** *Separate list of Tribal contacts available by request
 - Regarding whether Tribes have their own communication and consultation policies that we should be taking into consideration.
 - Regarding timelines needed for sufficient consultation
 - Regarding capacity and capacity needs



NEVADA COUNTY

C A L I F O R N I A

DRAFT

Tribal Affairs Committee

January 1, 2026

The purpose of the Tribal Affairs Committee is to gain insight into the various ways the County is currently engaging with Tribes, including the issues that are being raised, the Tribes that are involved, and the methods of communication and consultation that are being employed. Below is a draft list of staff who currently engage with tribes and the context of that engagement.

Community Development Agency

- Trisha Tillotson, Director of Community Development Agency
 - *Negotiations, project discussions, general assistance*
- Brian Foss, Director of Planning
 - *Required outreach for most proposed projects*
- David Garcia, Director of Public Works
 - *Required outreach for many Public Works projects*
- Shavati Karki-Pearl, Senior Analyst, Recreation
 - *Recreation related interactions and projects*
- Matt Kelley, Director of Code and Cannabis Compliance
 - *Code issues*

Information and General Services Agency

- Alex Keeble-Toll, Director of Emergency Services
 - *Letters of Support for projects, required outreach for fuel mitigation projects*
- Alex Geritz, Forestry Project Manager, OES
 - *Coordination of tribal fuels crew participation for fuel mitigation projects*



NEVADA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

- Alessandra Zambrano, County Wildfire Coordinator, OES
 - *Engagement around Community Wildfire Protection Plan, Land Management Plan, and Quarterly Wildfire Stakeholder Collaborative*

Health and Human Services Agency

- Paul Johnson, Director of Child Support Services
 - *Limited engagement (service process on tribal territory, Tribal TANF)*
- Jeff Goldman, Chief Probation Officer; Jeremy Vance, Probation Program Manager
 - *All juvenile delinquencies screened pursuant to the Indian Child Welfare Act*
- Phebe Bell, Director of Behavioral Health; Priya Kannall, Behavioral Health Program Manager
 - *Grant with California Heritage: Indigenous Research Project (CHIRP) for outreach; work with Chapa De for handoffs for moderate/mild mental health needs*
- Kathy Cahill, Director of Public Health
 - *Health equity team works with CHIRP; work with Chapa De for referrals for clients seen in dental, immunizations, communicable diseases and mobile health coalition.*
- Kristin Plante, Social Services Program Manager/Interim Director of Social Services; Brittany Thompson, Social Services Supervisor; Dierdre Day, Social Services Supervisor II; Cheryl Gonzales, Social Worker IV; Kelly Carpenter, Adult Services Program Manager; David West, Veterans Services Officer
 - *Eligibility & Employment work with the Washoe tribe as the tribe administers Tribal TANF (tribal version of CalWORKs)*
 - *Child Welfare works closely with tribes through the ICWA (law that governs child welfare practice involving Native families)*
 - *Adult Services work directly with Nisenan Tribal Wellness Program Manager, regarding APS/IHSS cases*



NEVADA COUNTY CALIFORNIA

- *Veterans Services works with the CalVet liaison and have trained tribes in New Mexico on veteran's benefits (Native Veterans have special VA loan benefits)*

County Counsel

- Jamie Hogenson, Deputy County Counsel
 - *County Counsel is overall resource on the issue, especially nexus with HHSA programs*
 - *Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Tribal law (implementation of the Indian Child Welfare Act etc.)*
 - *Indian Education (access to programs/resources), TANF, healthcare*

Sheriff's Office

- TBD
 - *Note: if tribes are federally recognized and on sovereign land, they have the right to their own law enforcement*

Historical Landmarks Commission

- TBD
 - *Pre-settlement nominations: there appears to be one in Western Nevada County – “Indian Grinding Rock”*
(<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/c140a2e3c6bf4d979e4c554496522d88>)

Other

- TBD