



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

Washington, DC 20240

August 10, 2023

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) invites you to participate in formal Government-to-Government consultation regarding Tribal land acquisition funded through the Land and Water Consultation Fund (LWCF). The LWCF was established by Congress in 1965 to help preserve, develop, and ensure access to outdoor recreation resources. The Great American Outdoors Act of 2020, P.L. 116-152, authorized \$900 million annually in permanent funding for LWCF.

In Fiscal Year 2024, the BIA requested \$12 million in discretionary unobligated LWCF funds for the creation of a new Tribal LWCF land acquisition program. Congress currently allocates LWCF funding to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), the U.S. Forest Service, and State and local governments. The BIA's Fiscal Year 2024 request supports acquisition of lands, waters, and interests therein for the purpose of protecting and conserving natural resource areas that may also be of cultural importance to Tribes and Alaska Natives or have recreational benefits for Tribal communities and Alaska Native Villages. The LWCF Tribal land acquisition program will thereby increase the amount of land for stewardship and other uses deemed beneficial by Tribes and Alaska Natives, consistent with purposes of the LWCF.

The BLM, NPS, and FWS currently use LWCF funding to support Federal land acquisition from willing sellers, and each agency has a defined project selection process and criteria. The BIA will develop its own process and criteria for allocating Tribal LWCF land acquisition funding in a manner which advances the BIA's mission and goals and maximizes opportunity to Tribes and Alaska Natives.


We are seeking your input as we develop a BIA-specific process and criteria which meet statutory LWCF requirements while facilitating Tribal land acquisition efforts to the greatest extent practicable. Please find enclosed a preliminary listing of potential Tribal LWCF land acquisition criteria for your consideration.

The Office of Trust Services, Division of Trust Lands Consolidation (TLC) will conduct three Tribal consultation sessions listed below and will accept oral and written comments. Please register in advance for any consultation session you plan on attending. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Please note that these Tribal consultations will be closed to the press and the public to protect confidential information that may be discussed during the sessions.

Date	Time	Location	Registration Link
September 26, 2023	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EST	Virtual	https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsd-GrrzMpHJ7NEnLejGskPX3CuWgPgZ0
September 27, 2023	1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. EST	Virtual	https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsdeGopzkjHHwwQY5Xkfv_y6CM1Vth1AI
September 28, 2023	4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. EST	Virtual	https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIscoUspzovHdLRxPnSCB4jbX2oWCgJ3bs

We welcome your written comments, which should be submitted by email to consultation@bia.gov by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on October 5, 2023. If you have any questions, please contact Trina Locke, Acting Deputy Bureau Director, Trust Services, at trina.locke@bia.gov, or Lorna Babby, Division Chief, Trust Land Consolidation, at lorna.babby@bia.gov.

Sincerely,

 Digitally signed by Darryl LaCounte
Date: 2023.08.10 13:57:12 -06'00'

Darryl LaCounte
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs

Enclosure