



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2025 SPF:009

MITIGATING CLIMATE CRISIS CHALLENGES COASTAL TRIBAL COMMUNITIES FACE THROUGH LIVING SHORELINE RESTORATION PROJECTS

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET SPF Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribal Nation, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribal Nations' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** USET SPF's membership includes Tribal Nations located in the south and eastern United States, many of which reside or have traditional homelands along coastal areas that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate crisis/climate emergencies such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion, and habitat loss; and
- WHEREAS,** the use of living shorelines, which employ natural elements such as wetlands, marshes, oyster reefs, and other aquatic species, offers a sustainable and ecologically sound alternative to traditional hard infrastructure in addressing the challenges of coastal erosion and habitat degradation; and
- WHEREAS,** aquaculture practices, when applied responsibly, can play a key role in the restoration and maintenance of living shorelines by enhancing biodiversity, water quality, and providing vital coastal ecosystem services such as storm surge mitigation, the de-acidification of the ocean, and carbon sequestration; and
- WHEREAS,** many Tribal Nations possess deep knowledge and historical stewardship of coastal environments, and are well-positioned to lead and implement living shoreline restoration projects using aquaculture techniques, in collaboration with federal, state, and academic entities; and
- WHEREAS,** the adaptation and use of living shorelines through aquaculture has the potential to strengthen Tribal resilience to climate change, provide economic opportunities for Tribal communities, and restore critical marine and estuarine ecosystems upon which Tribal peoples depend for sustenance, cultural practices, and livelihood; and
- WHEREAS,** a growing body of research supports the effectiveness of living shorelines through aquaculture, particularly through the cultivation of oysters, mussels, seaweed, and other species that provide natural defenses against erosion while supporting local fisheries and marine biodiversity; and

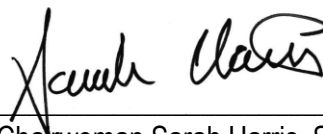
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** that USET SPF affirms the importance of living shorelines as a priority coastal management strategy, and supports the pursuit and implementation living shoreline restoration projects through aquaculture practices, in a manner that reflects their traditional knowledge and-values; and be it further
- RESOLVED** that USET SPF calls upon federal, state, and local agencies to provide technical assistance, funding opportunities, and policy support for Tribal Nations engaged in the development of living shoreline projects, with a particular focus on the integration of aquaculture and sustainable practices; and be it further
- RESOLVED** that USET SPF encourages the establishment of partnerships between Tribal Nations, scientific organizations, and the aquaculture industry to promote research, share best practices, and strengthen capacity for living shoreline initiatives that foster environmental sustainability and economic growth for Tribal Nations; and be it finally
- RESOLVED** that USET SPF supports the development and adoption of Tribal-specific policies and frameworks for the management and use of aquaculture in living shorelines, ensuring Tribal sovereignty and community involvement in all stages of planning, implementation, and monitoring.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting held in Arlington, VA at which a quorum was present on March 13, 2025.



Chief Kirk E. Francis, Sr., President
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund



Vice Chairwoman Sarah Harris, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund

Because there is Strength in Unity