

# TOGETHER STRONGER GROWING



*"Because there is Strength in Unity"*

## 2016 ANNUAL REPORT

United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)  
USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)



# A Letter from USET President, Kirk Francis

Dear Friends,

As we begin what is sure to be a busy 2017, it is important to reflect on the tremendous growth and progress that this organization has experienced since its inception by our founders in 1969. This report serves as a glimpse into the breadth of our programmatic, policy, legislative, and litigation activities over the past year. As you will see, our organizational growth and progress has positioned us to better respond to the expanding needs of our membership and to ultimately fulfill our mission of protecting and promoting our inherent sovereign authorities and rights.

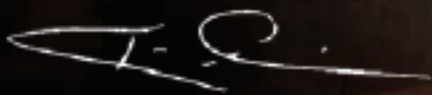
I am so proud of the positive impact that our collective efforts are having on improving the lives of our citizens and strengthening the capabilities of our Tribal Nation economies. It is through the consistency of our sustained efforts and actions that we will achieve the vision as set forth by our ancestors to ensure our continued perseverance and prosperity.

While there is much to celebrate, we must also remain vigilant and steadfast in our determination to ensure that we continue to make progress in the years ahead. Together, we will continue to ensure that the interests and priorities of our region are voiced and prominent within the national dialogue. So the time is now to continue building the foundations of change; creating a solid and bright path for the generations who follow.

I hope that you enjoy this report and I look forward to an engaging and productive 2017!

In Brotherhood

Notalonapemanawak (All my relatives),

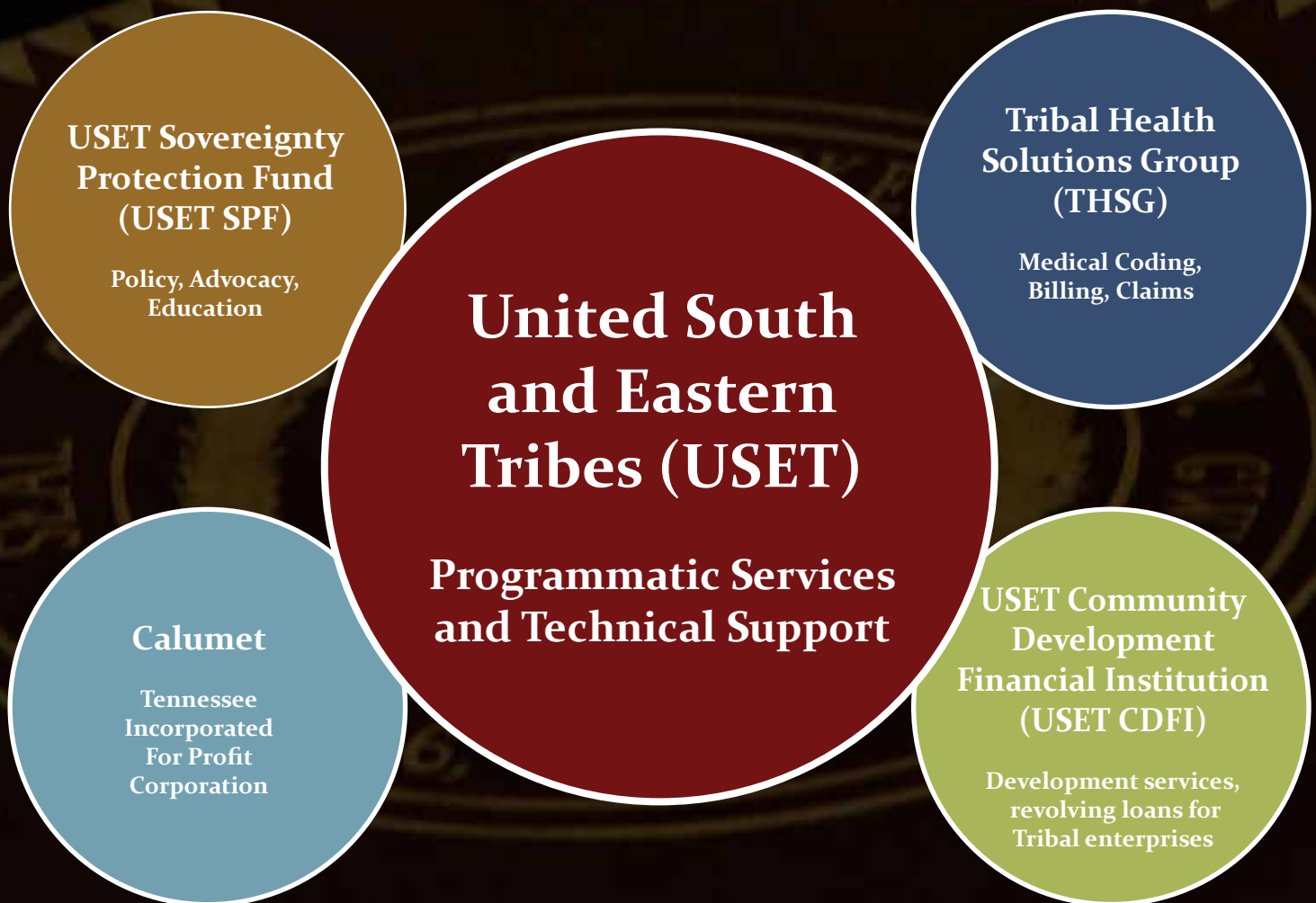


Improving the quality of life throughout Indian Country and protecting the sovereignty of Tribal Nations have been central goals for United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET). Since its incorporation, USET's membership has grown to 26 Tribal Nations. It has assisted member Tribal Nations with building capacity, influenced policy and legislation and provided a unifying platform to uphold, protect, and advance Tribal sovereignty.

USET is growing and developing to expand and strengthen its work of American Indian social advocacy and advancement. In order to build strong and effective resources for policy and legislative affairs, economic development, and operational support, additional sister organizations have been established since USET's inception: Calumet Development Corporation (Tennessee Incorporated

for profit corporation, established in 1983), USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (501(c)4 organization focusing on policy and legislative affairs, established in 2014); and USET Community Development Financial Institution (501(c)3 economic development organization, established in 2016). On the horizon, Tribal Health Solutions Group is currently being incubated as a program with the intention of growing and evolving into a professional incorporated business enterprise.

This year's annual report reflects how USET is growing and developing to support the mission of its founding members (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, and Seminole Tribe of Florida) and developing new opportunities to build capacity among its 26 member Tribal Nations.







## **President**

### **Kirk Francis**

*Tribal Chief, Penobscot Indian Nation*

Kirk Francis has served as Chief of the Penobscot Indian Nation since 2006 and holds the distinction of being the Nation's longest-serving Chief since the electoral system began in 1850. Prior to becoming USET President, he served as Treasurer.



## **Vice-President**

### **Robert McGhee**

*Vice-Chairman, Poarch Band of Creek Indians*

Robert "Robbie" McGhee serves as the Vice Chairman of the Poarch Band of Creek Indians Tribal Council and has been an advocate for Native American issues at all levels of government.



## **Secretary**

### **Lynn Malerba**

*Chief, Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut*

Chief Mutáwi Mutáhash (Many Hearts) Marilynn "Lynn" Malerba became the 18th Chief of the Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut in August of 2010, which is a lifetime appointment, and is the first female Chief in the Tribal Nation's modern history.



## **Treasurer**

### **B. Cheryl Smith**

*Chief, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians*

B. Cheryl Smith has spent her professional career working in various capacities for the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, including as a member of Tribal Council from 1975 until 1998, 2004 through 2010, elected Chief in 2010.

*The Executive Officers Committee was elected by the Board of Directors to serve the 2016-2018 term.*





**Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas**

JoAnn Battise, Chairwoman  
Ronnie Thomas, Vice-Chairman

**Aroostook Band of Micmacs**

Edward Peter-Paul, Tribal Chief  
Jennifer Kiandoli, Vice-Chief

**Catawba Indian Nation**

William Harris, Chief  
Jason Harris, Assistant Chief

**Cayuga Nation**

Clint Halftown, Nation Representative  
Sharon LeRoy, Nation Secretary

**Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana**

O'Neil J. Darden, Chairman  
April Wyatt, Vice-Chairman

**Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana**

Lovelin Poncho, Chairman  
Jerold Poncho, Secretary-Treasurer

**Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians**

Patrick Lambert, Principal Chief  
Bill Taylor, Chairman

**Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians**

Brenda Commander, Tribal Chief  
Linda Raymond, Tribal Council

**Jena Band of Choctaw Indians**

B. Cheryl Smith, Tribal Chief  
Libby Rogers, Tribal Council

**Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation**

Rodney Butler, Chairman  
Fatima Dames, Vice-Chairwoman

**Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe**

Cedric Cromwell, Chairman  
Jessie Baird, Vice-Chairwoman

**Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida**

Billy Cypress, Chairman  
Roy Cypress Jr., Assistant Chairman

**Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians**

Phylliss J. Anderson, Tribal Chief  
Ronnie Henry, Vice-Chief

**Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut**

Kevin P. Brown, Chairman  
R. James Gessner, Vice-Chairman

**Narragansett Indian Tribe**

Matthew Thomas, Chief Sachem

**Oneida Indian Nation**

Ray Halbritter, Nation Representative  
Dale Rood, Council Member

**Passamaquoddy Tribe – Indian Township**

William Nicholas, Tribal Chief  
Leslie Nicholas, Vice-Chief

**Passamaquoddy Tribe – Pleasant Point**

Vera Francis, Tribal Chief

**Penobscot Indian Nation**

Kirk E. Francis, Sr., Tribal Chief  
Lee Francis, Tribal Council

**Poarch Band of Creek Indians**

Stephanie Bryan, Tribal Chairwoman  
Robert R. McGhee, Vice-Chairman

**Seminole Tribe of Florida**

James Billie, Chairman  
Jim Shore, General Counsel

**Seneca Nation of Indians**

Todd Gates, President  
Maurice John, Treasurer

**Shinnecock Indian Nation**

Brian Polite, Chairman  
Daniel S. Collins, Sr., Vice-Chairman

**Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe**

Eric Thompson, Tribal Chief  
Beverly Cook, Tribal Chief

**Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana**

Joey P. Barbry, Chairman  
Marshall Ray Sampson, Sr., Vice-Chairman

**Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head  
(Aquinnah)**

Tobias Vanderhoop, Chairman  
Richard Randolph, Vice-Chairman



**Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians – one of the four founding members in 1969**  
Working on behalf of all Tribal citizens, through the leadership of the Tribe and in partnership with Tribes across the country, the Tribe was able to secure updated National Park Service regulations that recognize the right of federally-recognized Tribal citizens to gather and remove plants/plant parts for traditional purposes at locations within National Park areas; including the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.



## Impact Week

Washington, DC

USET leadership discussed its priorities for 2016, implementation of the Tribal Law and Order Act, the updating of the Quiet Crisis Report with the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the Native-specific provisions included in the Every Student Succeeds Act, and placed focus on taxation issues facing Indian Country with the U.S. Department of Treasury. This Impact Week Meeting included updates and discussions regarding Trust modernization efforts, economic development, housing, health, Tribal historic preservation, and gaming. USET SPF leadership also visited with members of Congress to discuss a wide range of issues. Students from various USET member Tribal Nations attended the Tribal Youth Summit.



***"When I started working for my Tribe's transportation department, I had a \$1200 budget. But, coming to USET and learning from others and getting valuable assistance and advice, I later was able to build my budget to more than a half million dollars. My only regret as a Tribal leader is we have not used USET even more. USET is valuable for us!"***

*-Edward "Charlie" Peter-Paul, Chief, Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians*

## Semi-Annual Meeting

*The USET fire passes from the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians to the Poarch Band of Creek Indians*

USET leadership met in Atmore, Alabama, in May to hear updates from the Indian Health Service and the Bureau of Indian Affairs; to discuss protecting the Indian Child Welfare Act and renewing USET's strategic alliance memorandum with the Small Business Administration; and to learn about topics including food sovereignty, native youth issues, and the International Repatriation Project. USET leadership also participated in an emergency response exercise and honored Mitchell Cypress, Seminole Tribe of Florida President, for his service in the U.S. Army, and Edna Fay, a USET employee who retired after 17 years of service.



### Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida – one of the four founding members in 1969

Located along the Miami River, the Miccosukee Tribal Embassy was re-inaugurated in September 2016. Built above limestone caverns that were once a refuge for Miccosukee ancestors as well as an important trading point for goods and commerce products in the Miccosukee culture, the Embassy is a symbol of consistency of the presence and diplomacy of the Tribal Nation. The Embassy will foster Miccosukee sovereignty and government-to-government relationships throughout the world.





## Annual Meeting

*The USET fire passes from the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians*

Leaders from USET's 26 member Tribal Nations met in Cherokee, North Carolina, in October to receive updates and take action on issues that make an impact on their Tribal Nations and throughout Indian Country. The USET Board of Directors heard an update on the status of the Dakota Access Pipeline from Standing Rock Sioux Tribe

Chairman David Archambault; held discussions with the Indian Law Resource Center about the impact and value of international economic development, healthcare, best practices, and diplomacy; and heard presentations on topics including current policy and legislation priorities, USET's organizational growth and development, and the impact of the presidential election on federal Indian law. During the Annual Meeting, USET leadership honored U.S. armed forces veterans Wayne George, former Assistant Chief of the Catawba Indian Nation, who passed away in January, and Jerry Wolfe, Beloved Man of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.



### Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians – one of the four founding members in 1969

On June 23, 2016, the U.S. Supreme Court, by a 4-4 vote, let stand the favorable decision of the Fifth Circuit in *Dollar General Corp. v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians* which upheld Tribal jurisdiction over tort claims against a nonmember corporation doing business on the reservation. The Supreme Court's tie vote means that the Fifth Circuit decision remains guiding precedent in the Fifth Circuit, but is not binding on other circuits.



## Bi-Coastal Climate Change Adaptation Workshop

The eastern workshop of a climate change adaptation collaboration between USET and the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) was held at the Oneida Turning Stone Resort, Verona, New York. The workshop brought together representatives from Tribal Nations; Tribal organizations; and scientists from the North Carolina Arboretum, Northeast and Southeast Climate Science Centers, and University of Maine, to study climate science; and examine climate change impacts,

vulnerability assessments, strategies to incorporate traditional ecological knowledge and western science into climate adaptation planning, and effective Tribal engagement in regional and national climate change forums.

Tribes in the USET region have experienced SuperStorm Sandy, extreme weather conditions, flooding, and drought conditions.

***“Thank you all for the wonderful time at the Bi-Coastal Climate Change Workshop, and an especially big thank you USET and ATNI!! I really enjoyed meeting everyone and learning about the impacts of climate change on Tribes across the nation. I particularly enjoyed the hands-on portion, as it gave me a good framework from which to build future plans and proposals.”***

*-Asha Ajmani, Environmental Scientist, Passamaquoddy Tribe - Pleasant Point*

***“We have come together in a good way at the Bi-Coastal Climate Change Workshop in my homeland to advance the caretaking of Mother Earth. The collaboration between Tribal Nations from USET and ATNI is critical on many levels. We have a daunting challenge to understand climate change impacts and implement adaptation strategies. Let us see where our collective efforts will lead us. Our children will inherit the best of our actions.”***

*-Brian Patterson, USET Past President, Oneida Indian Nation*



### Seminole Tribe of Florida – one of the four founding members in 1969

In September 2016, the Tribe purchased the remaining rights of the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino brand, assuming global ownership and unifying the Hard Rock brand under one controlling entity for the first time in more than 35 years. In doing so, the Tribe is building upon its economic success and solidifying its place within the global marketplace.



## Tribal Utility Summit

The 7th Annual Tribal Utility Summit was hosted by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI), with 146 attendees, including 80 operators and 31 managers from 16 Tribal Nations, along with federal agency personnel, USET staff, and vendors. Training highlights included wastewater process control and microbiology, asset management, drinking water regulatory update, and demonstrations for water chemistry, a vacuum truck, and backflow prevention. Operators were able to earn 15 contact hours for continuing education units to maintain their Operator Certifications. Thanks to Indian Health Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Health and Human Services Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service, and EBCI.



## USET Tribal Nations Fighting To Reduce Opioid Abuse and Misuse



***“Substance and alcohol related death rates for American Indians and Alaska Natives are more than 3 times higher than all other races. Tribal leaders, clinicians, first responders, and law enforcement have come together to share resources and best practices to reduce the impact of drug abuse in our communities.”***

*-Tihtiyas (Dee) Sabattus (Citizen of the Passamaquoddy Tribe) THPS Director, USET*

***“I’ve never seen anything like it in my lifetime. How is this not our number one priority in all of our communities, and across the U.S.?”***

*-Bob Bryant, Chief of Police, Penobscot Indian Nation*

USET hosted an Opioid Abuse and Misuse Summit in Nashville, an initiative to improve the health of Indian Country. During the 2-day Summit, participants discussed strategies on how we, as Tribal Nations, can take back our communities, our families, our health, and our culture from the alarming and increasing drug abuse epidemic. The data that USET has been able to gather shows that this epidemic goes beyond the borders of our territories. Presentations on historical trauma, the science behind addiction, and data were provided on day one. The goal of the Summit was to share resources that can assist Tribal Nations in reducing the impact of drug abuse in their communities and to identify an action plan in moving forward.

USET Executive Director Kitcki Carroll moderated a session on opioid addiction at the National Congress of Indians Annual Convention. Panelists shared strategies to combat opioid addiction and some attendees shared personal stories of their experiences with addiction. Panelist Bob Bryant, Chief of Police for the Penobscot Indian Nation, discussed Penobscot’s holistic approach to helping addicts. Instead of jail, the Penobscot judicial system helps put people who are addicted, have been arrested, or are facing charges on the path to recovery.



### Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana – member since 1971

In an effort to combat its community drug abuse and domestic violence challenges, the Nation is updating its legal codes to be in a position to fully implement the pro-Tribal provisions recently secured through the passage of the Tribal Law & Order Act (TLOA) and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).



## Data Improvement Tribal Trainings

During 2016, USET worked with five Tribal Nation health facilities to improve data quality for their Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) measures (e.g., diabetes measures, cancer screenings, immunizations, and dental measures). The week-long trainings addressed basic GPRA information; developed workflows specific for each site to capture GPRA data; provided training on customizing and using features within the electronic health record; and trained clinic staff on the population health management software, iCare. Through these site visits, the five clinics improved their performance on 81 GPRA measures.



***"I work all over Indian Country with many different Tribal Nations and the level of support that USET provides is unprecedented. I have been amazed at some of the best practices taking place across the USET member Tribal Nations; from fully integrated health systems, to giant greenhouses filled with fresh vegetables. These best practices epitomize holistic care. It is great to see Tribal Nations thriving in such healthy environments and getting remarkable support from USET."***

*-James Spillane, USET Consultant, Health IQ*

## Heavy Equipment Operator Training

USET member Tribal Nations received CAT Excavator Training in Charlotte, North Carolina. Operators were provided safety training and received nationally recognized certifications. "I am proud of what they accomplished," said USET Senior Technical Assistance Specialist Scott Williams.



## Water Quality Exchange Workshop

USET provided training to Tribal Nations on new software, which is used to access the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Quality Exchange (WQX) Network. WQX provides a comprehensive water quality information system for managing and protecting water resources. The WQX has been instrumental in encouraging data sharing and helps to support analysis of water quality data collected around the country. USET partnered with the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission to tailor the software for use by USET member Tribal Nations.



### Seneca Nation of Indians – member since 1972

Seneca Nation leadership, led by President Maurice A. John, Sr and Treasurer Todd Gates, joined a diplomatic mission to Cuba to explore Cuban medical advances and economic opportunities. By expanding its relations in the international arena, using Cuba as an example, the Nation seeks to bring back new innovations, best practices, and knowledge to support its efforts to better meet the healthcare needs of its citizens and to further grow and strengthen its economy.



## USET Hosts Medicare and Medicaid Policy Committee Retreat

In June, USET hosted the National Indian Health Board's Medicare and Medicaid Policy Committee's (MMPC) annual 2-day retreat in Nashville, Tennessee. The MMPC is comprised of health policy advocates from throughout Indian Country and meets regularly to discuss pressing issues in Indian health policy and strategizes responses to various policy and regulatory proposals. During the retreat, the group discussed, debated, and addressed several important policy topics, including the employer mandate fix, 100% Federal Medical Assistance Program implementation and several other topics in Indian Health. The group initiated preliminary discussions and planning for the Administration transition, including establishing a list of top policy priority items.



## Worker Protection Standard Training

Fourteen representatives from USET Tribal Nations attended the worker protection standard training for pesticides application, handling, and storage. The

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians hosted the training, which was delivered by USET and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.



### Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana – member since 1974

The Tribe's hydroponics project produced its first successful crop in 2016. One of the main products being grown in the solar-powered greenhouses is Bibb lettuce which is grown in small patches of wool and plastic trays. The hydroponics project is an old form of crop growing that uses a constant supply of nutrient-enriched water and bees for pollination; no soil, no pesticides or insecticides, just water.



# BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND STRONG TRIBAL NATIONS

***“USET has been very helpful to me as I stepped into a new arena of work for the Tribe. I never worked specifically in healthcare. Seeing and learning from the other Tribal Nations has been so valuable to me.”***

*-Edie Jackson (Citizen of Poarch Band of Creek Indians), Health and Elder Services Division Director, Poarch Band of Creek Indians”*



For nearly 50 years USET has championed the interests of federally recognized Tribal Nations in the south and eastern United States. The organization has developed a series of core competencies that include Tribal Health Program Support (THPS), Office of Environmental Resource Management (OERM), and Economic Development (ED) to assist Tribal Nations with building capacity.

The growth and evolution of USET’s programs and services has reflected the organization’s response to the needs of its member Tribal Nations with the Board’s approval of its first, five-year long term strategic plan (FY2017-FY2021). The organization now considers a strategic direction for program growth and investment that centers on Nation rebuilding. With clear purpose and intent, USET’s programs can build capacity of member Tribal Nations that leads to self-determination and upholding, protecting, and advancing sovereignty.



## **Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe – member since 1976**

The Tribe was successful in 2016 with their efforts to remove the Hogsburg Hydroelectric Dam, which had blocked migrating fish and hindered Akwesasne citizens’ way of life for over 85 years. The removal effectively opened up 555 miles and reconnected 275 miles of main stem and tributary habitat for migratory fish while also restoring historic Tribal territory for the Akwesasne people’s way of life.

## Healthy Teeth for Healthy Families

USET's Dental Support Center's "Healthy Teeth for Healthy Families" program was created to increase clinic utilization among pregnant women and children under the age of two. Approximately 40% of American Indian/Alaska Native children have cavities by the time they are two years old. USET distributes dental boxes to women and young children through

non-dental programs (such as WIC and Head Start), health fairs, and well child visits. The dental boxes contain oral health supplies for different stages of childhood: wipes for infants' gums, a training toothbrush, a toddler toothbrush, a two minute toothbrush timer, and information for parents on the oral health needs of young children.



## USET Presents at 2016 Mid-Year Energy Forum

Jerry Pardilla, OERM Director, presented at the 2016 Mid-Year Energy Forum Conference, Washington, DC, on Tribal consultation and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Gas Pipeline Certificate Process. Co-presenters from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, FERC, and Kinder Morgan provided perspectives on the Section 106 Process of the National Historic Preservation Act, and Tribal consultation involving projects in the Northeast.



### Penobscot Indian Nation – member since 1979

Central to its identity, the Penobscot Indian Nation continued its priority work of defending the Penobscot River and its related riverine culture. By emphasizing its treaties with Maine and the U.S. during its litigation fight, which reserved islands in the Penobscot River and its sustenance fishing rights, the EPA promulgated new policies and legal requirements that serve to protect human health and aquatic life for Penobscot citizens. In doing so, the Nation is protecting the River for future generations.



***“An environmental regulation was threatening to shut down some Tribal projects. USET helped facilitate the conversations with these regulators. What resulted was a plan to save the projects; we remained compliant with the law; we built a better relationship with the government; and we built greater strength for the Tribe.”***

*-Ernie Neptune (Citizen of Passamaquoddy Tribe – Indian Township), Forest Supervisor, Passamaquoddy Tribe - Indian Township*



## USET Develops Customized Patient Education

USET works hard to develop and provide health education materials that represent member Tribal Nations and support positive behavioral changes, leading to healthy Tribal

Nations with many elders. Thirty health program updates, patient education pieces, and public health updates were created this year.



**Passamaquoddy Tribe - Pleasant Point – member since 1979**

Through SAMHSA's LAUNCH (Linking Action to Unmet Needs in Children's Health) grant, which is intended to improve system collaboration for the benefit of children and families, Pleasant Point has prioritized community strengthening by engaging young children and their families in cultural and other two-generation activities.



## Protecting Tribal Homelands – Natural Resources Committee Visits Federal Agencies

As part of USET's efforts to protect Tribal homelands, OERM staff joined the USET Natural Resources Committee for meetings with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Forest Service, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, during the USET Impact Week Meeting in Washington, DC. The Natural Resources Committee met with the Forest Service and Fish and Wildlife Service for the first time and engaged the agencies on issues of concern.

## Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country

As USET entered into the second year of the Good Health and Wellness in Indian Country (GHWIC) cooperative agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), USET partnered with GHWIC awardee Catawba Indian Nation to host a program planning and implementation workshop. The focus of the workshop was on transitioning Tribal Nations from conducting their community health assessments to identifying priority areas and community engagement and buy-in.



***"The USET team did a wonderful job at the National Indian Health Board's Public Health Summit today during our presentation on the Tribal Epidemiology Centers and data sharing. This is a clear demonstration of the positive results from USET's participation in our IHS Office of Tribal Self-Governance's GPRA Pilot Project over the past several years. The GPRA Pilot Project has generated several best practices across the IHS Nashville Area that can be replicated nation-wide."***

*-Benjamin Smith, Director, Office of Tribal Self-Governance, Indian Health Service*



### Passamaquoddy Tribe - Indian Township – member since 1979

After much planning and preparation in 2016, the Tribe will be opening and operating the Wabanaki Youth Conservation Camps. Located along Long Lake at Indian Township, the camp will provide traditional and cultural experiences in natural resources and skill based learning. The camp is comprised of 8 cabins, a full lodge, and a cooking area. Opening is scheduled for Spring 2017.



## USET Adopts a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy

The USET Board of Directors adopted a 5-year comprehensive economic development strategy (CEDS) to help guide the newly created Economic Development core competency. The CEDS was developed through a series of

site visits, interviews, and appreciative inquiry to outline the needed resources, priorities for development, asset identification, regional collaboration opportunities, and funding plan.

## USET and U.S. Small Business Administration Partnership

During the Semi-Annual Meeting, USET and the Small Business Administration (SBA) renewed their Strategic Alliance Memorandum (SAM). The SAM is designed to create a clear partnership between USET and SBA to help bring resources to promote business development, job creation, and eventually the promotion of healthy well

developed communities. This SAM will be a key resource as USET continues to build out its newest Economic Development Programmatic Core Competency. SBA Assistant Administrator for Native American Affairs David Sanborn and USET President Brian Patterson signed the SAM at Poarch Band of Creek Indians in Atmore, Alabama.



### Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians – member since 1981

The Tribe acquired three new properties in 2016 intended to be used for future business enterprises. As part of its efforts to further build out its infrastructure, the Tribe completed Phase I of the Maliseet Sports Complex, completed its work on the Meduxnekeag Overlook Tribal Cemetery, and completed a Housing Revitalization Program that included the renovation of over 28 housing units with the assistance of a tax credit program funded by private investors.

***“USET has provided a place where honest conversation is encouraged to show the various challenges we all face. In turn, this conversation has led to meaningful collaboration between committee members, which brings us closer to realizing the motto of USET - Because there is Strength in Unity.”***

*-Bryan Small (Citizen of Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas), CEO, ACT Holdings, LLC*



## Community Development Financial Institution

USET created a new organization to help its Tribal Nations gain greater access to capital and credit. The USET Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) was incorporated in September 2016 to establish a revolving loan fund and various services that will help Tribal Nations create and capitalize economic development opportunities. The vision for USET CDFI is to build the capacity of Tribal Nations to carry out economic development activities,

provide support through the process, and provide evaluations to identify new opportunities. The CDFI has a seven-member board of directors and has established partnerships with other CDFIs in the USET region. USET utilized U.S. Treasury Native American CDFI Assistance Funding. The USET CDFI, once fully deployed, will be the first-ever regional CDFI focusing on Tribal Nation lending.

## USET Goes to School at Vanderbilt University

The USET Community Development Financial Institution was created this year to help Tribal Nations with economic development. To help build strength among USET's organizational leadership, Deputy Director Wanda Janes, Chief Financial Officer Steve Adams, and Development Director Brandon Stephens participated in Vanderbilt

University's 2-day Strategic Innovations class, which is offered through the Owen Graduate School of Management. The course is designed to help further develop senior leadership skills to seek out new ideas and succeed at breakthrough innovation. Look for more great development at USET.



### Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana – member since 1984

The Tribe was awarded funds from the U.S. Department of Education to improve education and provide its students with the necessary resources to be college and career-ready. In partnership with the Avoyelles Parish School Board, Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Institute for Indian Development, Tulane University and the Tunica-Biloxi Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the grant funds will be used to reduce drop-out rates and enhance academic performance among Tribal students on the Tunica-Biloxi Reservation and throughout Avoyelles Parish.



# POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)

***“Who is going to stand up and speak for us to say ‘yes’ or ‘no’? Who is going to stand up and be diplomatic? If there is a good argument to be made then we go forward and fight our fight to protect and strengthen our sovereignty and our rights. USET has been our unified diplomatic voice in our fight.”***

*-Jeffrey Gill, Cattaraugus Councillor, Seneca Nation of Indians*



## USET Sovereignty Protection Fund

USET established a 501(c)(4) not-for-profit sister organization in October 2014—the USET Sovereignty Protection Fund. USET SPF continues to provide strong advocacy for member Tribal Nations within all branches of the federal government. USET SPF strives to protect, promote, and advance our inherent sovereign rights, and to elevate the voices of Tribal Nations in our region at the federal level.

### The Federal Budget

USET SPF continues its advocacy for the fulfillment of the federal trust responsibility – this includes full funding for federal Indian programs. During testimony before the House and Senate, USET SPF urged increased funding for the Indian Health Service and Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as direct Tribal funding to combat opioid abuse and climate change. USET SPF envisions a future in which federal funding to Tribal Nations is no longer a discretionary choice and all dollars are contractable and compactable.

***“USET SPF firmly believes that as long as the execution of the fiduciary trust obligation remains on the discretionary side of the budget, and therefore subject to the unpredictability of the current appropriations process, the trust responsibility will go unfulfilled.”***

*-USET Past President Brian Patterson in FY 2017 Budget Testimony*

### Economic Development

Economic sovereignty is essential to Indian Country’s ability to be self-determining and self-sufficient. Rebuilding our Tribal Nations includes rebuilding our Tribal economies as a core foundation of healthy and productive communities. USET SPF has identified and seeks action on a number of barriers to economic development in Indian Country, including access to capital, lack of parity in the tax code, and the indeterminate status of trust lands.

- Taxation – USET SPF remains focused on the advancement of tax reform that would address inequities in the tax code and eliminate state dual taxation. Revenue generated within Indian Country continues to be taken outside its borders or otherwise falls victim to a lack of parity. Similarly, Tribal governments continue to lack many of the same benefits and flexibility offered to other units of government under the tax code.
- Carcieri – The erroneous 2009 Supreme Court decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar* calls into question the status of trust lands across the country. Since 2009, USET SPF has engaged in strong advocacy for a legislative fix that would: (1) reaffirm the status of existing trust lands; and (2) allow the Secretary of the Interior to take land into trust for all Tribal Nations. In 2016, USET SPF continued to provide guidance to the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs as it worked to advance a legislative fix.



### Poarch Band of Creek Indians – member since 1984

In July 2016, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals issued a unanimous opinion affirming a district court decision to issue a preliminary injunction barring a county tax assessor from levying property taxes against trust lands of the Tribe. In December 2016, the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Alabama issued its final order declaring that the Tribe’s trust land is exempt from taxation and issued a permanent injunction to prevent the assessment and taxation of those trust lands.

## International Relations

As USET SPF member Tribal Nations seek the full recognition of their inherent sovereign rights and authorities and the ability to exercise these rights and authorities without interference, it becomes increasingly valuable to engage and participate in the international arena due to the realities of domestic challenges of our rights and authorities. Specifically, the United Nations (UN) presents an opportunity for expanded advocacy to ensure that the principles of the

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) are achieved. In 2016, USET SPF collaborated extensively with the Indian Law Resource Center (IRLC) to ensure that Tribal Nations are recognized as sovereigns by the UN and that the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the implementing and monitoring body for UNDRIP, is able to fully conduct its work. Following nominations from USET SPF and others, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Secretary of State Terri Henry was chosen to serve on the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.



***"When we reflect back over our history in these United States, we understand that we were once treated as the rightful Sovereign Indigenous Nations of this Turtle Island. Today, our Indigenous Nations continue to be challenged and inspired by the strength of our ancestors and legacy they left for us, that is, the inherent obligation to govern ourselves and to restore and rebuild our Indigenous Nations. Over our long-storied history in this country, our people and our governments are emerging with resilience as the rightful heirs of our cherished lifeways."***

***"Within the domestic sphere, we have proven just how resilient we are as we have worked the domestic system fiercely. However, the politics of any age being what it is, has always been a factor in our domestic successes and challenges. We have an opportunity to impact and potentially participate in the United Nations system as Indigenous Nations. As we move forward with these discussions, the increased engagement of our Indigenous Nations in international issues through a unified voice will foster more favorable circumstances for our inclusion in the larger issues that the world faces and is important in our continued evolution of resilience."***

***"This possibility, however, will not happen without our persistent advocacy with the UN to create space for us. We must challenge ourselves to reflect on who our people were, to call into our minds the greatness of our Indigenous Nations, to remember those that led our people through the most challenging times, and find within ourselves the resolve to never let what happened to us then, ever, happen to us again. Let us remember that seven generations ago, our ancestors dreamed of us, and the future we would bring. Engagement of our issues at the international level is the next step in our resilience. We must claim this time as our own and dare to dream of those yet to come."***

*-Honorable Terri Henry, Secretary of State, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians*

***"I have no doubt that Terri Henry's work with the Permanent Forum will serve to advance Tribal sovereignty, both internationally and domestically."***

*-President Kirk Francis in a press release regarding Secretary Henry's appointment*



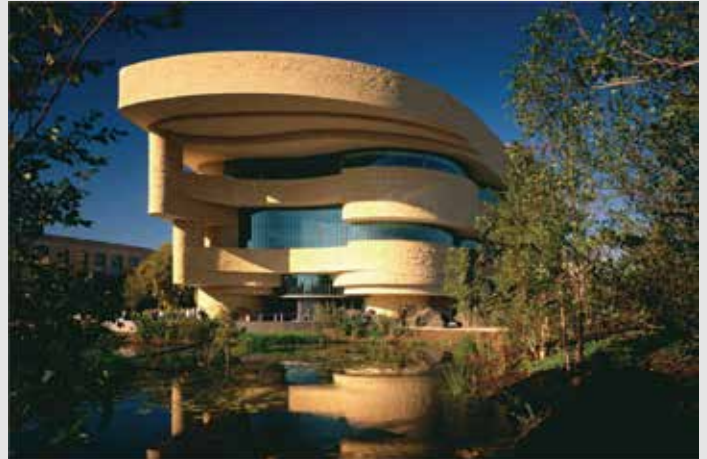
**Narragansett Indian Tribe – member since 1984**

During 2016, the Tribe finalized preparations and opened its new health care center. The new center will provide improved and expanded health care services to Narragansett citizens and other eligible American Indian beneficiaries. The new center will provide medical, community health, behavioral health and health promotion services.



## Trust Modernization

USET SPF, along with Tribal Nations and organizations, continues to seek a modernized, 21st century relationship with the federal government. In January 2016, USET SPF, NCAI, and the Trust Modernization Workgroup co-hosted the 21st Century Trust Modernization Forum at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) in Washington, DC. The forum addressed the trust system and its history, the current state of the trust system and relationship, and our vision for modernizing the trust for Indian Country in a way that respects Tribal Nations. During the last year of the Obama Administration, the Trust Modernization Workgroup identified and advocated for several short-term priorities, including the seating of Tribal leaders as full members of the White House Council on Native American Affairs and an executive statement on the trust responsibility.



***"It is time to establish a trust model that reflects a true nation-to-nation partnership built upon diplomacy that will strengthen federal trust administration, enhance federal-Tribal relations, and promote and protect Tribal sovereignty, all with the goal of building and sustaining prosperous Tribal communities."***

*-USET SPF Secretary, Chief Lynn Malerba, during remarks at the 21st Century Trust Modernization Forum*



### Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation – member since 1984

The Nation celebrated its 25th Year Anniversary of its Foxwoods Resort Casino. A pioneer in the Indian Gaming industry, the Nation's celebration served to highlight the tremendous impact that the gaming industry has had throughout Indian Country. The Nation continues to refine its business model to respond to the changing gaming landscape since its casino opening 25 years ago.

## Strategic Litigation

USET SPF remains committed to defending challenges to Tribal sovereignty in the courts. A number of cases with the potential to change the application of federal Indian law were brought up in 2016. USET SPF was a leader on an amicus brief in *Dollar General v. Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*, a Supreme Court case concerning whether a Tribal Nation has jurisdiction over tort claims brought by a citizen against a non-Indian corporation based on the consensual relationship between the store owned by Dollar General and the Tribal Nation. In June 2016, the Supreme Court issued a 4-4 affirmance of the Fifth Circuit's ruling upholding Tribal court jurisdiction.

USET SPF also worked to defend and reacquire lands for member Tribal Nations, submitting amicus briefs on two cases: *Shinnecock v. NY*, concerning whether the Shinnecock Nation had the opportunity to bring a land claim against the state and *Littlefield et al v. U.S. Dept. of Interior*, concerning whether the Department of the Interior had the authority, under the Indian Reorganization Act, to take land into trust for the Mashpee Tribe.

During the later months of 2016, USET SPF also engaged in efforts to protect Tribal sovereign immunity. In *Lewis v. Clarke*, the Supreme Court is set to consider whether Tribal sovereign immunity applies to Tribal employees conducting Tribal business outside reservation boundaries.



## Protecting Tribal Health

Indian Country, including the citizens of USET Tribal Nations, continues to suffer from lower health status and lower health outcomes than the rest of the United States. As long as the Indian Health Service (IHS) is drastically underfunded, this reality will remain. As Congress and the Administration seek to address health care crises in the Great Plains, USET SPF has continued to advocate for the full funding of IHS and the expansion of self-governance, as well

as innovative ways to stabilize and extend funding, including advance appropriations and Medicare-like rates of payment for IHS.

USET SPF also worked extensively with the Obama Administration and Congress to advance legislation and/or guidance that would ensure the Affordable Care Act's employer mandate is applied in a way that respects the federal trust responsibility to provide health care to Tribal citizens.



### Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) – member since 1987

The Tribe successfully expanded its contract health service delivery area with the Indian Health Services. In doing so, the Tribe is better able to respond to the health needs of its citizens by providing healthcare services to more than double the previous number of its citizens who were eligible to receive purchased and referred care.



# WHITE HOUSE TRIBAL NATIONS CONFERENCE

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA  
2008 - 2016

Crow Namesake Black Eagle  
"Awe Kooda Bilaxpak Kuxshish"  
"One Who Helps People Throughout the Lac"

We Honor the 44th President  
of the United States of America  
- Barack Black Eagle Obama  
Sharing our symbol of love,  
courage and protection.

***"Even after my time in this office comes to an end, I'm going to be standing alongside you because I believe that, yes, our progress depends in part on who sits in the Oval Office, and whether they're setting the right priorities, but lasting progress depends on all of us, not just who the President is. It depends on making the decisions that are good and right and just, and our willingness to organize and mobilize and keep pushing for opportunity."***

***-U.S. President Barack Obama***



***"This president has walked on the path with us, he has left his footprints as a legacy for future administrations to follow and for that we are grateful. It is up to us to continue on the path, continue this work and keep moving our nations forward."***

*-Lynn Malerba, Tribal Chief, Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut*



***"The one thing I honestly believe that will help us transition as we elect a new president is that we have to stand together as one."***

*-Phyliss Anderson, Tribal Chief, Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians*



The 8th and final White House Tribal Nations Conference of the Obama Administration brought the leaders of many USET SPF member Tribal Nations to Washington, DC. During the conference, the White House outlined its extensive outreach to and progress made in Indian Country throughout the entirety of President Obama's tenure. USET SPF celebrates these accomplishments and the President's strong legacy of advancement for Tribal Nations. As we begin a new



relationship with the incoming administration, we must work to preserve and improve upon these policies.

Mohegan Chief and USET SPF Secretary, Lynn Malerba, had the honor of introducing the President, and the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians was represented by their dancers and Chief Phyliss Anderson, who served on a Tribal leader panel.



# From Consultation to Consent

BY KITCKI A. CARROLL & LIZ MALERBA



Kitcki A. Carroll



Liz Malerba

KITCKI A. CARROLL (CHEYENNE AND ARAPAHO TRIBES OF OKLAHOMA) SERVES AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC. (USET) AND THE USET SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND (USET SPF), AN INTER-TRIBAL ORGANIZATION REPRESENTING 26 FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBAL NATIONS FROM TEXAS ACROSS TO FLORIDA AND UP TO MAINE AT THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL.

LIZ MALERBA (MOHEGAN TRIBE) IS THE DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS FOR UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND. LOCATED IN WASHINGTON, DC, SHE WORKS WITH CONGRESS AND THE ADMINISTRATION TO ADVANCE A COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY AGENDA ON BEHALF OF MEMBER TRIBAL NATIONS.

Beginning with the arrival of the colonists, who asserted a God-given right to dominance, and evolving over time to a position of superior sovereign existence, U.S. Tribal relations continue to be marred by the deeply false narrative that Tribal Nations are incompetent and unworthy of genuine diplomacy. For centuries, Tribal Nations have been attempting to reverse this false narrative.

In its early formative years, the United States often took action within our lands only after securing our consent, including through treaty-making. As it became more powerful, as maintaining strong relations with us became less necessary, as greed took over and as the courts laid their legal groundwork through the Marshall trilogy, the United States quickly moved from an approach based on consent to an approach based upon the notion of domestic dependency and plenary authority.

The United States progressively moved away from the concept of “rights-ceded” by Tribal Nations (as was the approach during the formative years of this nation) to a model of “rights-granted” by the United States to Tribal Nations. No longer was our consent necessary for the explosion of a capitalistic system. No longer were our rights within our own lands of concern or consequence. No longer were we going to be allowed to interfere with the execution and pursuit of manifest destiny. This is the summation of the deplorable actions taken in the name of progress that is most often missing from U.S. history books, but it is part of our story, which fuels our efforts to persevere and prosper despite the greatest of challenges. Despite all of this, Tribal Nations remain unified in our efforts to topple these foundational myths, as our perseverance and the sophistication of our governments reveal these to be falsehoods.

It wasn't until the passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1974 that the United States began to move away from its centuries-old practice of setting policy that sought to diminish and eradicate our sovereignty via termination and assimilation.

While the U.S. has not returned to a practice of seeking the consent of Tribal Nations, the developing Tribal consultation process begins to recognize our inherent rights and authorities when it comes to federal decisions that impact our citizens and homelands. Over the last eight years,

federal agencies have been required to develop and implement Tribal consultation policies in collaboration with Tribal Nations. While an improvement over historical practice, it requires constant monitoring and strengthening, and will always fall short as long as it fails to return to a model that requires consent.

Tribal Nations continue to experience inconsistencies in consultation policies, the violation of consultation policies, and mere notification of federal action as opposed to a solicitation of input. Time and again, Tribal Nations have expressed a desire for consultation to be more meaningful. As major failures in the U.S.-Tribal consultation process begin to take the national stage, Tribal Nations are calling for a paradigm shift in the trust relationship, including in the consultation process.

The U.S. must move beyond an approach that merely “checks the box” of consultation. It is time for a Tribal Nation-defined model, with dual consent as the basis for strong and respectful diplomatic relations between two equally sovereign nations. In the short term, we must move beyond the requirement for Tribal consultation via executive order to a strengthened model achieved via statute. In the long term, we must return to a model of Tribal Nation consent for federal action as a recognition of sovereign equality and as set out by the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Ultimately, Indian Country recognizes that dual consent results in prosperity for both parties, and that when abandoned and dishonored, one or both nations ultimately lose. The U.S. must join us in this conviction. As the U.S. continues to issue federal Indian policy based on a false premise, it is more critical than ever for Tribal Nations to assert our inherent sovereign authorities and rights in order to provide for the well-being of our people and our lands. No longer can we accept a false narrative and legal fiction that was specifically created by another sovereign to impose its will upon us. Consultation must evolve and return to consent. The current trust model, which often works against us, must be replaced with a 21st century nation-to-nation relationship model and a genuine commitment to only take action aimed at strengthening this relationship and delivering on the trust responsibility in full. ♦

**Originally published in the December 2016 Tribal Business Journal**



# PROTECTING OUR HOMELANDS AND SACRED SITES

## CELEBRATING OUR CULTURE



### Sacred Sites and Places

Sacred sites and Tribal lands across the United States have been jeopardized by numerous threats in 2016, including ceremonial stone landscapes that are commonly found in the USET region (depicted in the background). USET SPF is committed to protecting these sites, as our places of worship are central to our religion and the preservation of our culture. USET SPF stands with our Apache relations in working to protect Oak Flat from copper mining. Similarly,

USET SPF stands with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in the fight to protect what is sacred. We have engaged in extensive advocacy to protect Lake Oahe and other sacred sites from disturbance by construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline, as well as ensure that crises similar to Standing Rock never happen again. During the resulting consultation on federal infrastructure permitting, USET SPF shared regional infrastructure stories and advocated for improvements in the Tribal consultation process.



***"As our federal partner in this unique government-to-government relationship, it is incumbent upon all branches of the U.S. government to ensure the protection of sacred sites, public health, and Tribal sovereignty during every infrastructure project requiring federal approval."***

*-Eric Thompson, Tribal Chief, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe*



## Remember the Removal Riders Visit USET

The 2016 Cherokee Remember the Removal riders visited USET and Indian Health Service staff in Nashville during their 3-week journey along the northern route of the Trail of Tears. Eight riders from the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma and seven from the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians shared their experiences and talked about what

inspired them to join this year's 950-mile trip through seven states. The group stopped at historic landmarks and Cherokee grave sites along the way. Remember the Removal is an annual bicycle ride commemorating the forced removal of the Cherokee Nation from its homelands during the winter of 1838-39.



### Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas – member since 1989

In 2002, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe was forced to close a successful gaming operation after a legal challenge by the State of Texas. On June 2, 2016, the Tribe held its Grand Opening for Naskila Gaming after receiving authorization by the National Indian Gaming Commission and the Department of Interior. Naskila Gaming has provided over 200 new jobs, making the Tribe one of the largest employers in the area, while helping to provide expanded programs and services for the Tribal community.



## USET Leaders Among “50 Faces of Indian Country”

Indian Country Media Network named two USET leaders to their “50 Faces of Indian Country” for 2016. Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council Chief Beverly Cook was honored for her activism, including taking part in the occupation that led to the Ganienkeh settlement, the Longest Walk in 1978, and the barricaded encampment in Akwesasne. Chief Cook has served her Tribal Nation as an emergency medical technician (EMT), EMT instructor, registered nurse, clinic coordinator, and family nurse practitioner. Brian Patterson was honored for his service as USET’s President from 2006 to 2016 and his advocacy for federal laws and policies regarding the proper repatriation of remains and artifacts, the protection of sacred sites, and the promotion and protection of American Indian cultural identity. Others in this year’s “50 Faces of Indian Country” include authors, artists, athletes, actors, entrepreneurs, activists, educators, and Tribal Leaders.

***“Taking on a leadership position has given me the opportunity to advocate for change in the old paradigms of service delivery; to help support community based movements that include culture and endeavor to guide adolescents through puberty rites or adults through recovery or moms through their pregnancies.”***

*-Beverly Cook, Tribal Chief, Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe*



***“Each and every one of us holds purpose and duty as we place our footsteps on Mother Earth. No matter how large or small that purpose may be we advance on that path from our ancestors forward. My duty and servitude is based on the deep-rooted knowledge handed down from our great prophet, the Peacemaker. The Peacemaker taught us that unity is the principal in any advancement. Unity has never been more critical than it is now as we come together across Turtle Island, to preserve and protect our water and homelands.”***

*-Brian Patterson, USET Past President, Oneida Indian Nation, Bear Clan Representative*



### Oneida Indian Nation – member since 1991

Since the launch of the Change the Mascot campaign, a civil and human rights movement led by the Nation, great strides in eliminating the use of the racial slur ‘r\*dskins’ have been made, including a new law in California banning the use of racist mascots in public schools. The campaign even made its way to the U.K. as members of the Parliament called on the NFL Commissioner to change the name of the NFL’s Washington team mascot.





## USET Joins Federal Agencies in Observing Native American Heritage Month

USET staff joined the Indian Health Service Nashville Area Office for a cultural activity featuring Mississippi Band of Choctaw citizens demonstrating traditional dance, basket weaving, and bead work.

USET President Kirk Francis, Penobscot Indian Nation Chief, gave the keynote address at the U.S. Department of Agriculture Native American Heritage Month Observance in Washington, DC. The theme of the event was "Serving Our Nations."



***"While having a month for all to recognize and celebrate the heritage of Native Americans is a good thing, I look forward to the day where our educational system is complete, thorough, and truthful in its teachings about U.S.-Tribal Nation relations from both a historical and present day perspective. I look forward to the day where tolerance and proliferation of negative imagery and stereotypes about Native Americans is no longer acceptable. I look forward to the day where our Native American children aren't exposed to thoughts and beliefs that rob them of their pride and dignity. I look forward to the day where honoring our treaties and complete fulfillment of the federal trust obligation is no longer a discretionary choice. I look forward to the day where advocating and fighting for basic justice for Native peoples and communities is no longer necessary."***

*-President Kirk Francis during remarks at the USDA event*



### Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians – member since 1992

The Tribe's new Wellness Building, opened on August 31, 2016, was built to increase access to exercise facilities and Type 2 diabetes prevention services for all Aroostook Band of Micmac citizens. The facility offers new equipment and programming such as Zumba, yoga, and Nike Bucks Incentives. During the fall Run Your Heart Out Challenge, program participants worked to reduce their weight, body fat, blood pressure, and resting pulse rate by encouraging a long term commitment to better health and wellness.



## Tribal Emergency Relief Fund Established for Flooding Victims

In March 2016, torrential rains and the unprecedented flooding of Louisiana rivers, creeks, bayous and lakes adversely impacted the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians. The flooding caused extensive damage to Tribal citizens' homes, loss of property, and displacement to emergency and temporary shelters. USET established a Tribal Emergency

Relief Fund monetary donation site that accepted contributions to assist the families that were evacuated and set up in temporary homes while permanent solutions were sought. The flooding impacted 37 individual members of 11 different Tribal Nation households.



***"I just want to tell you that the Tribe and Tribal Council and the families that were impacted appreciate Indian Country coming forward to assist us in a time of need. When sister Tribes hurt, people come forward and they do good things. We love the USET family, we love all of you leaders, and from the bottom of our heart, we appreciate everything you've done for our flood victims. We're going to be able to help those families start their lives again."***

*-B. Cheryl Smith, Chief, Jena Band of Choctaw Indians*



### Catawba Indian Nation – member since 1993

Recognizing that successful economic development efforts are key to the Tribe's future, the Catawba Nation formed Corporate Nation, a corporation to oversee its business ventures. In 2016, the Corporate Nation board formed Red Heritage Media, a multi-media film and television production and post-production company.



# CELEBRATING OUR YOUTH



Life is a garden  
You walk along this path,  
Vibrant, and full of opportunities

But every garden has a weed,  
It takes but won't give back  
It sprouts and spreads like a plague

You amend this garden  
Planting more, and more seeds  
In hopes to put it back together again

The Sun becomes shy,  
Hiding behind gray clouds  
The garden once so beautiful,  
Is now full of thorns

Tiring of the darkness  
You push back  
Your garden once full of thorns  
Has again become a garden full of possibilities

Now blossoming all hopes and dreams  
And the gray clouds have all gone away  
Finally spring is here to stay



-Angel Williams,  
Mashantucket Pequot  
Tribal Nation

## Champion for Change

Brayden White (Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe) was selected by the Center for Native American Youth as a 2016 Champion for Change. As a first year college student, Brayden founded Helping Hands, a peer education and mentoring program focused on drug, alcohol and suicide prevention. Through the program, Brayden teaches his Tribal community about making positive choices and how to recognize and respond to signs of suicide. Helping Hands works to save lives and remove the stigma too often associated with those who seek help in restoring mental wellness. He recently began working with Tribal leaders and community mental health professionals to form a youth group of Crisis Mediators, who will serve as first responders to peers in need of immediate support. The Champions for Change program is a youth leadership initiative that highlights positive stories from Indian Country and develops young Native leaders through experience-based learning.



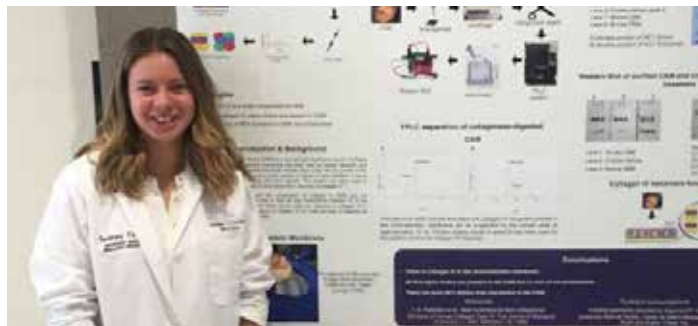
## Jena Band of Choctaw Indians – member since 1995

The Jena Band of Choctaw Indians successfully completed the debt refinancing of the Choctaw Pines Casino on December 20, 2016. In doing so, the Tribe was able to finalize and implement its General Welfare Benefit Program. Beginning on January 1, 2017, the program will better respond to the needs of Jena Band of Choctaw citizens by providing monthly elder income supplements, utility, mortgage, health, and housing benefits.



## Vanderbilt University Aspirnaut Program

USET and Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC) continued their partnership during 2016 to provide opportunities for rural Tribal youth through the Aspirnaut Summer Research Internship program for students who excel in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related fields of research. The program allows students opportunities to work on research in STEM fields by working with scientists and researchers at VUMC. In 2016 two students from USET member Tribal Nations participated in Aspirnaut: Jennard Bollin, a rising senior at Choctaw Central High School (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, Choctaw, Mississippi), who conducted research and presented on cloning of fusion proteins of collagen IV; and Sydney Farrar, a rising junior at Calais High School (Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township, Calais, Maine), who conducted research and presented on finding collagen IV in chicken chorioallantoic membrane.



## Tribal Youth Summit

About 100 high school students from 23 of the USET member Tribal Nations met in Washington, DC, as part of the Tribal Youth Summit. USET again partnered with the Close Up Foundation to promote within these students a greater learning about their Tribal Nations, gain an understanding about how the federal government works with Indian Country, and engage in a cultural exchange. A goal for the Tribal Youth Summit is to build leadership skills and foster positive development among the younger generations. Through the week, students analyzed challenges facing their Tribal Nations; developed solutions to those issues;

visited with members of Congress; and held a mock board of directors session, where they discussed issues and presented resolutions to the USET Board of Directors.

At the beginning of their Tribal Youth Summit, USET President Brian Patterson (Oneida Indian Nation) told the students the empowerment they receive through this week would help build resources for their Tribal Nations. "You, as young leaders, will build some great skills and take back with you tools and resources that will eventually make a great impact on your community, and yes for your children's future. Empowering you to make positive and lasting changes is what this week is all about," Patterson told the students.



### Mohegan Tribe of Connecticut – member since 1996

The Tribe celebrated its 20th anniversary of Mohegan Sun and was also awarded a license from the Korean Government to develop and build a first-of-its-kind integrated resort in South Korea at the Incheon International Airport near Seoul. To further expand its non-gaming business portfolio, the Tribe also opened a number of franchise restaurants in the New England area. Collectively, this growth and expansion will further strengthen the Tribal economy and provide critical services to Mohegan citizens.



# HONORING BRIAN PATTERSON

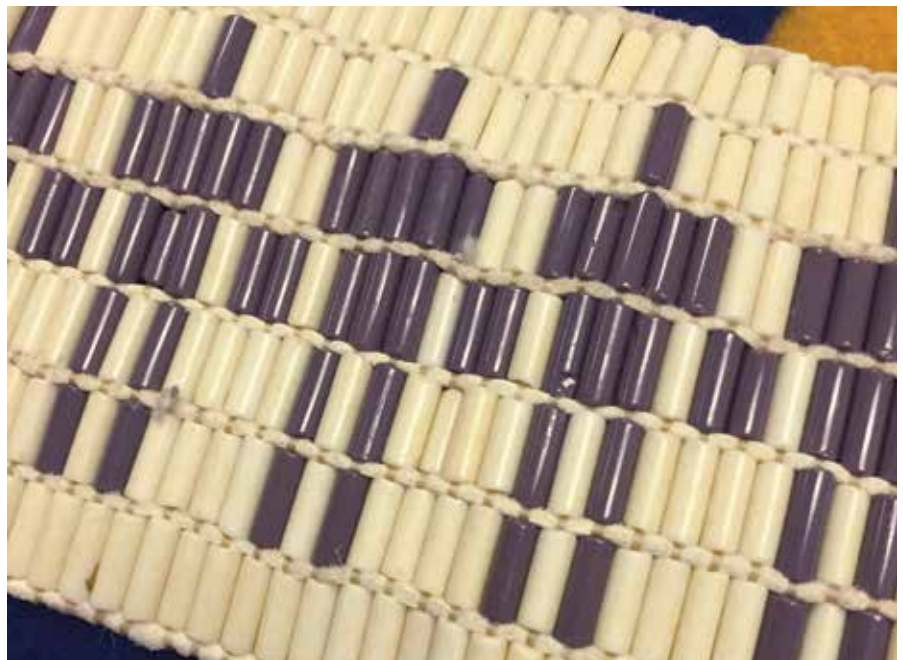


***"Brian Patterson has faithfully served as our President for the past 10 years with humility, grace, and steadfast determination. During his tenure, the organization experienced significant growth, expansion, and maturation. As a result, today we are a nationally recognized, innovative, and premier organization within Indian Country. As he was often know for stating, relationships are paramount and everything else is a derivative. Through his actions, he consistently demonstrated a true sense of care, respect, and concern for everyone that he met. It is with a deep sense of gratitude and honor that I assume the role of President for this special organization and I look forward to continuing to build upon the solid path that Brian Patterson forged on behalf of us all. President Patterson, as you have often stated to us all, now is not the time to be timid. There is too much at stake and our children are depending upon us. With the spirit in which you approached this office, we will continue to be assertive, aggressive, and diplomatic in our approach. In gratitude to your service, for all that you have sacrificed, and to your family for supporting you...Yaw^ko (Thank You)."***

*-President Kirk Francis*



The “**BALANCE OF LIFE**” Wampum Belt of USET was gifted to USET by Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Councilor Daniel Menihan Jr. on behalf of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation. The belt is an offering to seek permission for the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Family, Community, Youth/Teen Council and other forms of leadership to enter the communities of all Sister Sovereignties within the USET Family. The request is to come together within the different communities in effort to plant seeds of unity and healing through the use of cultural exchange, ceremony, community prevention, family functions and other acts of unity. The belt is a record of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Council’s commitment to our extended family within Indian Country.



### Cayuga Nation – member since 2000

After a long 5+ year leadership dispute, a decision was rendered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs that will allow the Nation to move forward and focus on meeting the needs of its citizens and further strengthening its Tribal economy.



# Statements of Activities

## September 30, 2016

### United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

#### Revenues

**2016**

Grants and Contracts	\$ 9,038,166.86
Member Dues	13,000.00
Fee for Service	148,497.50
Fund Raising	17,428.00
Other Revenue	1,273,990.87
SharServices Revenue	269,202.93

*Total Revenue*

10,760,286.16

#### Expenses

Environmental, Health, Economic Development, Admin, Scholarships, Other	<u>10,721,715.74</u>
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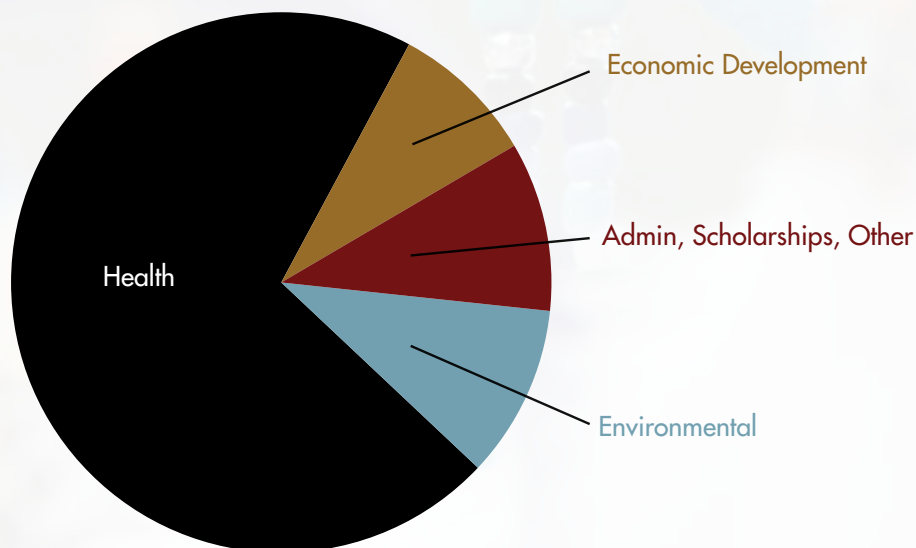
*Total Expenses*

10,721,715.74

*Change in Net Assets*

38,570.42

#### EXPENSES BY CATEGORY



# Statements of Financial Position

## September 30, 2016

### United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2016</b>
<b>Current Assets</b>	
Cash	\$ 1,153,316
Restricted Cash	290,672
Grants/Contracts Receivable	998,446
Other Receivables	142,776
	<hr/>
<i>Total Current Assets</i>	2,585,210
	<hr/>
<b>Non Current Assets</b>	
Investment Account (Scholarships Fund)	217,432
Investment (Calumet Office Park)	238,584
	<hr/>
<i>Total Non-Current Assets</i>	456,016
	<hr/>
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Total Assets	\$ 3,041,226
	<hr/> <hr/>
 <b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>	
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	\$ 300,136
Deferred Revenue	1,066,320
Flex Plan Claims Future	2,500
	<hr/>
<i>Total Current Liabilities</i>	1,368,956
	<hr/>
Total Liabilities	1,368,956
	<hr/> <hr/>
<b>Net Assets</b>	
Unrestricted - General Fund	1,153,316
Temporarily Restricted	518,954
	<hr/>
<i>Total Net Assets</i>	1,672,270
	<hr/>
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 3,041,226
	<hr/> <hr/>



# NEW FACES AND PROMOTIONS AT USET



Pamela Staples was hired in January of this year as the Public Health Program Manager within the THPS Department.



Carissa Castillo was hired in March of this year as a Technical Assistance Specialist with the Office of Environmental Resource Management.



Gail Meador was promoted to USET Account Payables Manager in January of this year. Gail has over 10 years with USET's Accounting Department.



Jessica Bertram was hired as USET's Account Clerk in June of this year and works closely with the Accounting Team in the efficient fiscal management of all programs and accounts.



John Miller was promoted to USET's Desktop Support Technician early this year with added responsibilities.



Emilee Thomas was promoted to THPS Administrative Assistant II this summer and now works closely with the THPS Director.



Scott Williams was promoted to OERM's Senior Technical Assistance Specialist and serves as USET's certification trainer in water/wastewater.



Heather Johnson was hired as USET's Staff Accountant in August of this year. Heather works closely with the Shinnecock Nation in the fiscal management of all of their programs.



## Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe – member since 2007

On January 8, 2016, the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Nation celebrated the restoration of ancient homelands when it received an official Reservation Proclamation from the Department of the Interior, designating lands in Mashpee and Taunton, MA as a reservation.



Tom Gallaher was also hired in August of this year. Tom is the new USET Grant Writer. Prior to working with USET, Tom worked several years for the Seminole Tribe of Florida.



Patti Seaberg joined the USET Team in October of this year as the Tribal Health Solutions Group's Business Manager.



Tevia Oglethorpe was hired in October of this year as THPS Administrative Assistant I. Tevia will work closely with Kate Grismala and the EPI staff in maintaining smooth daily operations.

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## Awards and Certifications



Three employees were presented with service awards in 2016. THPS Director Tihtiyas Sabattus completed 15 years of service, while OERM Senior Project Coordinator Steve Terry and OERM Administrative Assistant Jennifer Bennett completed 5 years of service with USET.

USET Senior Technical Assistance Specialist Scott Williams earned a Waste Water Class 1 Professional Certification from the American Water Works Association. This professional certification exceeds the guidelines and standards set by any state certification. Scott serves as USET's certification trainer. Earning this certification means USET has one of the best professionals working to train operators throughout our membership and gives USET a competitive advantage in its training work. It is a demonstration that Tribal operators have the same potential to achieve this type of certification and serve their Tribal Nations in greater ways.



### Shinnecock Indian Nation – member since 2011

After suffering erosion and devastation during Superstorm Sandy in 2012, the Nation began restoring its Southampton shoreline in August of 2016. With the financial assistance of a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Nation utilized environmentally sound and culturally appropriate methods to replace sand, place boulders along the shore, and plant indigenous seagrass in an effort to restore its shoreline and prevent future devastation from storms.



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# Member Tribal Nations

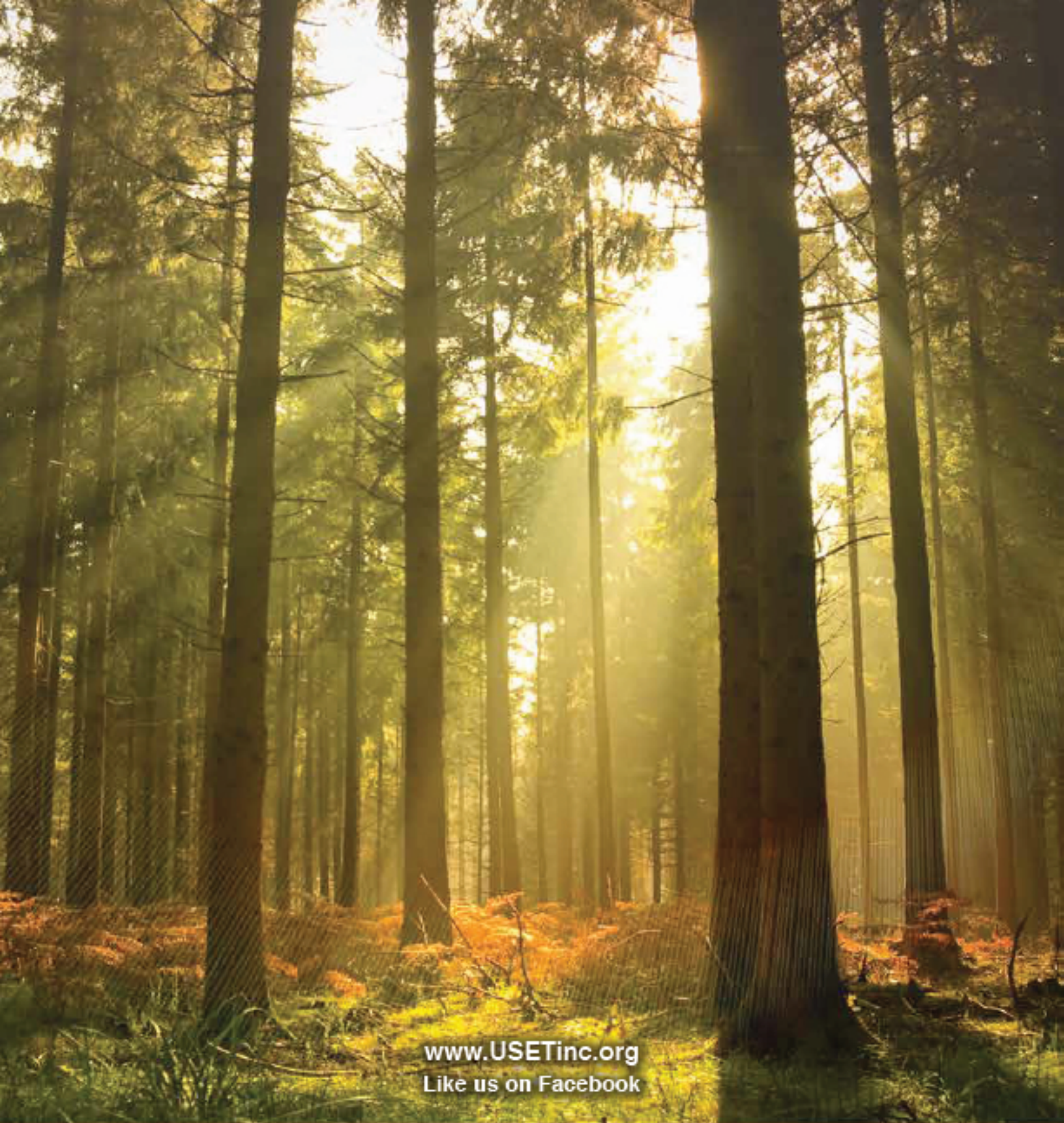


- 1 Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians  
Cherokee, North Carolina
- 2 Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida  
Miami, Florida
- 3 Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians  
Choctaw, Mississippi
- 4 Seminole Tribe of Florida  
Hollywood, Florida
- 5 Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana  
Charenton, Louisiana
- 6 Seneca Nation of Indians  
Salamanca, New York
- 7 Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
Elton, Louisiana
- 8 Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe  
Hogansburg, New York
- 9 Penobscot Indian Nation  
Indian Island, Maine

- 10 Passamaquoddy Tribe-Pleasant Point  
Perry, Maine
- 11 Passamaquoddy Tribe-Indian Township  
Princeton, Maine
- 12 Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians  
Littleton, Maine
- 13 Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana  
Marksville, Louisiana
- 14 Poarch Band of Creek Indians  
Atmore, Alabama

- 15 Narragansett Indian Tribe  
Charlestown, Rhode Island
- 16 Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation  
Mashantucket, Connecticut
- 17 Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)  
Aquinnah, Massachusetts
- 18 Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas  
Livingston, Texas
- 19 Oneida Indian Nation  
Verona, New York
- 20 Aroostook Band of Micmacs  
Presque Isle, Maine
- 21 Catawba Indian Nation  
Rock Hill, South Carolina
- 22 Jena Band of Choctaw Indians  
Jena, Louisiana
- 23 The Mohegan Tribe  
Uncasville, Connecticut
- 24 Cayuga Nation  
Seneca Falls, New York
- 25 Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe  
Mashpee, Massachusetts
- 26 Shinnecock Indian Nation  
Southampton, New York
- 27 USET  
Nashville, Tennessee





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