



State / Tribal Government-to-Government Report: 2024

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS

State / Tribal Government-to-Government Report: 2024

Oregon Department of State Lands

This report from the Oregon Department of State Lands to the [Legislative Commission on Indian Services \(LCIS\)](#) details projects and activities from the calendar year of 2024:

- The primary contacts who are responsible for developing and implementing programs that affect tribes.
- Our Government-to-Government policy to build and maintain relationships with the Tribal governments, as adopted under ORS 182.164.
- The process we established to identify Department programs that affect Tribes.
- Our efforts to promote communication between the state agency and the Tribes and government-to-government relations between the state and Tribes.
- Trainings provided to DSL staff on government-to-government relations and the requirements of our Government-to-Government policy

Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon

[Burns Paiute Tribe](#)

[Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw](#)

[Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon](#)

[Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians](#)

[Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation](#)

[Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation](#)

[Coquille Indian Tribe](#)

[Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians](#)

[Klamath Tribes](#)

Primary Contacts for Tribal Consultation and Coordination

Vicki Walker, Director

(503) 798-2019

vicki.walker@dsl.oregon.gov

Ellie Forness, Government Relations Manager (Tribal Liaison)

(971) 600-7800

ellie.s.forness@dsl.oregon.gov

www.oregon.gov/dsl

Table of Contents

Letter from the Director	4
Agency Introduction	5
Policy and Process	7
2024 Highlights	9
Trainings	16
Looking Ahead	17
Appendix A: DSL Government-to-Government Policy.....	18

Acknowledgements

Authors

Cait McCusker, Community Engagement Specialist (Environmental Justice Liaison)
Ellie Forness, Government Relations Manager (Tribal Liaison)

Department of State Lands: Tribal Relations Collaborative

Danielle Boudreaux, Rules and Policy Coordinator
Chris Castelli, Deputy Director of Land Management (former Tribal Liaison)
Brian Cochran, Policy Specialist, Real Property
Gary Curtis, Archaeologist
Ellie Forness, Government Relations Manager (Tribal Liaison)
Patricia Fox, Manager, South Slough Reserve
Bethany Harrington, Operations Manager, Aquatic Resource Management
Brandy McClay, Operations Manager, Aquatic Resource Management
Cait McCusker, Community Engagement Specialist
Katrina Scotto di Carlo, Communications Officer

Letter from the Director

Vicki L. Walker

Dear Governor Kotek and Commission Members:

The Oregon Department of State Lands respectfully submits our annual Government-to-Government report to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services.

This will be my final year writing to you on our work to strengthen government-to-government relations. Over the last six years my door has always remained open for direct consultation on issues important to the Tribes and will continue to be right up until my retirement on July 1, 2025. I cherish those relationships and hope they continue beyond state government.

Throughout 2024 we continued to build on an identified need to educate staff in Tribal history and sovereignty, empower relationship building between governments, and pursue opportunities for collaboration. This included staffing up our new Government and Community Relations team, breaking ground on the Wasson Creek Restoration Project with Tribal partners, and responding to needs in real time such as addressing hazardous boats threatening sensitive resources.

We look forward to continued collaboration with the Commission and the Governor's Office on these issues and appreciate the insight and expertise they share with us as we work to increase resilience to wildfire, drought, invasive species, and other climate-related threats throughout Oregon's diverse ecosystems in an enduring and collaborative effort by public agencies and Tribes.


Sincerely,



Vicki L. Walker

Director

Oregon Department of State Lands



Native Camas flowers blooming in a DSL-managed Butler Creek mitigation bank in Scholls, Oregon.

AGENCY INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Oregon's State Land Board oversees the Common School Fund, which sends millions of dollars every year to our K-12 public schools. As the State Land Board's administrative agency, the Department of State Lands (DSL) manages school lands, protects waters and wetlands, and is the state partner for South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Agency Leadership

Vicki Walker, Director

Chris Castelli, Deputy Director of Land Management

Jimmie Phillips, Human Resources Manager

Bill Ryan, Deputy Director of Aquatic Resource Management

Jean Straight, Deputy Director of Administration

State Land Board

Established by the Oregon Constitution in 1859, the State Land Board oversees the Common School Fund, which sends millions of dollars every year to Oregon's K-12 public schools. The Land Board has been composed of the Governor, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer throughout its history.

The Land Board oversees DSL and meets regularly to make decisions regarding school lands and Oregon-owned waterways, and to provide direction on Department operations.



In 2024 the State Land Board included Secretary of State **LaVonne Griffin-Valade**, Governor **Tina Kotek** (Chair), and State Treasurer **Tobias Read**.

Our Work

The Department of State Lands (www.oregon.gov/dsl) is a small agency that makes big contributions to Oregon. Our oversight benefits more natural and working lands than any other state agency. We work to protect these lands for generations to come through four main programs.



PROTECTING WATERS & WETLANDS

DSL oversees removal-fill and wetland conservation laws and use of publicly owned waterways. This work helps protect waters and wetlands for their many contributions to Oregon, like streams for swimming and fishing, wetlands to clean water and reduce flooding, and rivers where commerce thrives. [See the latest annual report.](#)



MANAGING SCHOOL LANDS

DSL manages 1.5 million acres of school lands and minerals in all 36 counties across the state. This work sends revenue to the Common School Fund and provides big community benefits – like leasing land to cattle ranchers in Eastern Oregon or helping attract family-wage businesses to Redmond through rezoning and sale of school lands. [See the latest annual report.](#)



UNDERSTANDING & EXPLORING ESTUARIES

South Slough Reserve provides research and education to support stewardship of estuaries and coastal watersheds in Oregon and beyond. Located on the South Slough inlet of the Coos Estuary in Charleston, the Reserve manages nearly 7,000 acres, including open water, wetlands, rivers, and forests. [See the latest annual report.](#)



RESEARCHING WORKING FORESTS

The Elliott State Forest was established northeast of Coos Bay in 1930 as Oregon's first state forest. Today, about 83,000 acres will now be a nationally important center for forest science research and management that also contributes to conservation, education, recreation, Indigenous culture, and local economies in Oregon. [Learn more about the Elliott State Research Forest here.](#)

POLICY AND PROCESS

Agencywide

The Department of State Lands is committed to our government-to-government relations with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribal governments. This work is aligned with our values in collaboration, inclusion and natural resource stewardship.

Government-to-Government Policy

Last updated in 2017, DSL's policy on State/Tribal Government-to-Government Relations guides our work with Tribal governments. See the attached **Appendix A** for our current Government-to-Government policy.

Some of the ways we pursue this work agencywide:

- Reaching out early and regularly to Tribal representatives about Department actions likely to affect Tribal members, natural resources, or cultural resources of Tribal interest.
- Carefully and thoughtfully consider Tribal comments concerning pending decisions and actions.
- Helping Tribes protect cultural and natural resources in Oregon through our programs.
- Providing opportunities for meaningful engagement, including government-to-government consultations, participation in Rulemaking Advisory Committees for proposed rules, and other staff-to-staff level informal collaboration.
- Meeting regularly with individual Tribal governments, participating in Tribal-state workgroups focused on natural resource management and protection of Tribal cultural resources, and attending the annual State-Tribal Summit.
- Training DSL employees on Tribal government, sovereignty and issues of interest to Tribal nations.
- Consulting with DSL's archaeologist, and the State's Physical Anthropologist at LCIS on the geographic or issue-level Tribal interests.

Tribal Relations Collaborative

The Tribal Relations Collaborative at DSL, formed as a pilot in 2023, connects the new Government Relations team with staff across all our programs to promote collaborative solutions and resource sharing. As the new Government Relations Team evolves, we will continue to advance our processes to cultivate relationships with the Tribal governments. Responsibilities include fulfilling expectations in the Government-to-Government Policy, communicating across programs on Tribal interactions happening agencywide, support relationship building, recommend process improvements and resource development such as training and guidance.

Real Property Program & Aquatic Resource Management (ARM) Program

Potentially affected Tribes are notified of proposed or pending activities on Oregon-owned land managed by DSL, giving the respective Tribe(s) an opportunity to comment, or otherwise respond. DSL staff work closely with DSL's Tribal Liaison and Tribal governments to address any concerns they may have, and the DSL Director is available for formal consultation on any agency action. Tribes are consulted on their preferred contacts and on the geographic areas they are most interested in being notified about. DSL continues to discuss our notification processes and how we can better coordinate with Tribal staff on proposed activities, and our ability to condition authorizations based on comments received.

DSL's archaeologist reviews all activities proposed on lands managed by DSL and provides consultation with the Tribes on cultural resources. For ground disturbing projects initiated by DSL, field surveys and testing are completed as needed and those reports shared with the State Historic Preservation Office, Tribes, and LCIS.

Elliott State Research Forest

Since 2019, DSL has been working in collaboration to transform the Elliott State Forest into a research forest. Tribal engagement with the five federally recognized Western Oregon Tribes has been a focus throughout these efforts and has shaped the program's foundations. [Learn more about the Elliott State Research Forest here.](#)

In addition to working with the Tribes on a project-by-project level (for example, in developing the recently adopted Forest Management Plan), DSL staff are working on formalizing frameworks for ongoing engagement. To date, DSL has communicated at the individual Tribal staff level on this subject as well as engaged in formal consultation with several Tribal nations. Further changes resulting from these efforts would be in addition to 2024 revisions to foundational plans for the Elliott, made in response to Tribal requests.

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

The [South Slough Reserve](#) recognizes its location on the traditional lands of the Miluk Coos people who have managed this area for abundance since time immemorial. To ensure ongoing and sound co-stewardship of this special place and protection of its cultural resources, the Reserve relies on regular consultation and partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI); Coquille Indian Tribe; and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI).

Reserve staff regularly partner with local Tribal staff on education and training programs, research and monitoring projects, and stewardship work. The Reserve maintains formal Memorandums of Understanding with both the CTCLUSI and the Coquille Indian Tribe. These cooperative agreements facilitate the exchange of information and data, shared use of equipment and facilities, and joint proposal development and project management. Reserve staff began conversations with CTCLUSI in 2024 to update and revise the cooperative agreement, and conversations are ongoing. It is anticipated that staff will work with the Coquille Indian Tribe beginning next year to update that cooperative agreement.

The Reserve values regular input from Tribal staff on the [Reserve Management Commission](#) and serving on technical advisory groups. Staff also work closely with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to assess potential impacts of Reserve projects on cultural resources and take measures to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts as well as measures to enhance cultural resources. The Reserve frequently collaborates with Tribal partners on grant proposals on issues such as acquiring funding to support Tribal partners with climate resiliency projects.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

Agencywide

Below are highlights from agencywide efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes:

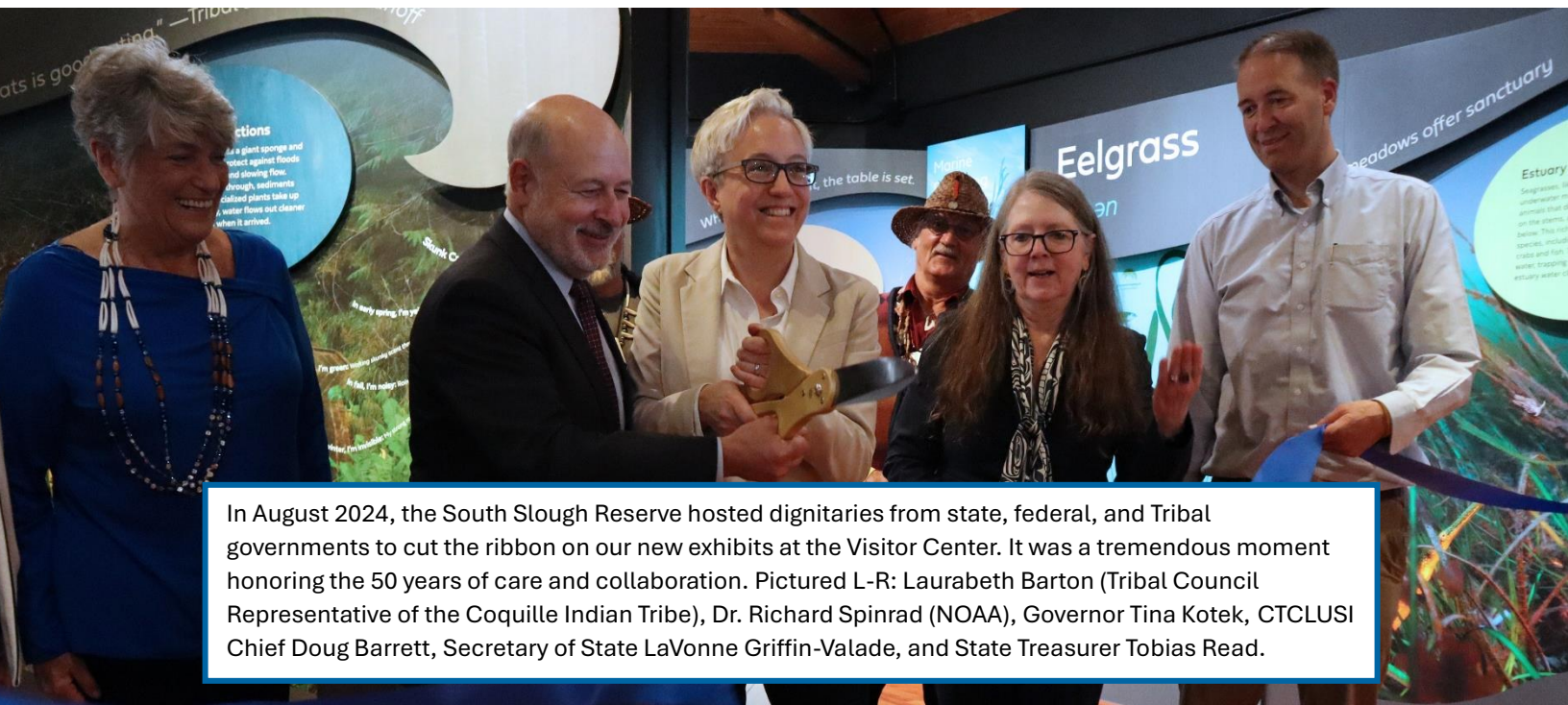
Collaborated with LCIS, the Cultural Resource Cluster, and Natural Resources Workgroup: DSL staff participated in these meetings throughout the year, and DSL provided ongoing updates on the Elliott State Research Forest, rulemakings, legislative concepts, and the new abandoned and derelict vessels program. We're always seeking ways to be a good partner and share resources when possible. For example, we hosted the February 2024 meeting of LCIS in our Land Board Room.

Invested in a new Government and Community Relations team: An idea seeded in 2023, this past year the team has continued to evolve to be better staffed and resourced to support Tribal collaboration.

Made our services and information more accessible: In 2024, we launched a new and improved website to support people in connecting with program information and our team. Two new pages were created specifically to better communicate our [government-to-government policy](#), [information about Tribal governments in Oregon](#) as well as management of [cultural resources](#).

Invited consultation on several rulemakings: In 2024, invitations for communication, participation on advisory committees, and/or consultation were sent out for the following [rulemakings \(learn more here\)](#):

- (Division 89) General authorizations in Oregon's wetlands, rivers, streams, lakes, or other waters – *Rules adopted, effective July 1, 2024*
- (Division 126) Authorizing communication site facilities on State-owned land – *Rules adopted, effective December 13, 2024*
- (Division 142) Rocky shore habitats
- (Division 82) Leases, licenses, and registrations on Oregon-owned waterways
- (Division 85/89/90/93) Removal-fill and wetland delineations



In August 2024, the South Slough Reserve hosted dignitaries from state, federal, and Tribal governments to cut the ribbon on our new exhibits at the Visitor Center. It was a tremendous moment honoring the 50 years of care and collaboration. Pictured L-R: Laurabeth Barton (Tribal Council Representative of the Coquille Indian Tribe), Dr. Richard Spinrad (NOAA), Governor Tina Kotek, CTCLUSI Chief Doug Barrett, Secretary of State LaVonne Griffin-Valade, and State Treasurer Tobias Read.



Aquatic Resource Management Program: Protecting Waters and Wetlands

Below are highlights from the Aquatic Resource Management program and efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes:

Villines Mitigation Bank

DSL is seeking to address the barriers the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians (CCBUTI) experienced when seeking approval of the Villines Mitigation Bank in Douglas County. Direct consultation began in 2023 and staff-to-staff coordination is ongoing to identify a potential new approach to mitigation bank sponsorship by CCBUTI that is acceptable to both the State and the Tribe.

Abandoned and Derelict Vessels (ADV)

DSL partnered with the Oregon Public Ports Association to apply for a federal grant funding opportunity for ADV removal (the results of the competition will be announced in 2025). DSL staff and public ports staff reached out to the CTCLUSI, the CTSI, and the members of the Natural Resource Working Group to share information about the proposal and invite feedback regarding concerns, needs, and preferences. The CTSI provided a formal letter of support for the proposal, based on the deep importance of coastal lands for spiritual, cultural, and subsistence purposes.

DSL staff maintained ongoing communication with CTGR regarding an occupied liveaboard vessel that ran aground in a sensitive area along the bank of the Columbia River. We were ultimately able to influence the owner of the vessel to follow through with a plan to move the vessel without harming Tribal resources.

CTCLUSI staff expressed support for the removal of the El Conquistador and Miss Stacey from their unauthorized moorage in Coos Bay. Due to concerns for public safety and impacts to natural resources, these vessels were removed by DSL in 2024.

Administrative Rulemaking for Rocky Shore Habitats

DSL is working to update rules in OAR 141-142 that guide the establishment and management of marine reserves and marine protected areas in Oregon's territorial sea. These rules must be amended to include updated designations of rocky habitat sites, in conformance with the community-informed work already done by Oregon's Ocean Policy Advisory Council and Department of Land and Conservation Development on updating Oregon's Territorial Sea Plan: Part Three. DSL received comments from CTCLUSI which are currently being reviewed internally, prior to any action taken towards rule adoption.

The new ADV Program is starting the long-term work to address the lifecycle of boats that may otherwise contaminate water, degrade habitat, damage property and cultural resources, and create navigational hazards. The work is complicated and requires persistent collaboration.

Real Property Program: Managing School Lands

Below are highlights from the Real Property program and efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes:

Partnerships in Land Management

In October 2024, the Land Board adopted a new ten-year Asset Management Plan which guides management of Oregon's 681,000 acres of school lands to generate revenue for the Common School Fund. The new plan includes an increased focus on renewable energy, partnership projects, and wildfire resiliency. Pursuing these priorities is already underway. DSL staff are partnering with CTUIR to acquire grant funding for fuels reduction/forest resiliency work in Umatilla County. The 320-acre Johnson Creek project would serve both CTUIR lands and adjacent lands managed by DSL. Strategic removal of vegetation that could serve as fuel is critical to mitigating wildfire risk, particularly in fire-prone areas like Eastern Oregon. The project is awaiting funding approval from the BIA Reserve Treaty Rights Lands Bipartisan Infrastructure Law program.

New Rules Guiding Communication Site Leases

Communication sites are leased on DSL-managed lands which allow entities to place facilities on those lands. Currently, the Burns Paiute Tribe maintains a facility on Steens Mountain in Harney County which aids communication services, including phone and internet, as well as service for Tribal emergency radio support. An important piece of infrastructure for the Tribe, they recently acquired funding to modernize the facility. In 2024, rulemaking was completed to update rules guiding management of these leases. An advisory committee was convened in 2021, which included representatives from the Coquille Indian Tribe and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.

Navigating Cultural Resource Concerns

DSL program staff, supported by our archaeologist, regularly address cultural resource concerns on DSL-managed lands and communicate with potentially impacted Tribes. Recent examples include an application for a geothermal license around Crump Lake, an area with sensitive cultural resources. Staff have reached out to the Burns Paiute Tribe at this early stage to invite comments.

Another example includes a location south of Prineville where there is a proposal to locate a solar farm on a few land parcels managed by DSL, adjacent to land owned by the Bureau of Land Management as well as private property. After consultation with Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs and the Burns Paiute Tribe, the area proposed to be leased from DSL has been reduced approximately 60 acres to address cultural resource concerns.



Beyond leasing rangelands for grazing, there is ongoing stewardship and management of rangelands to promote healthy functioning ecosystems. Partnerships are essential to implement habitat improvement projects like fuels reduction, seeding disturbed ground, and noxious weed management.



Elliott State Research Forest: Researching Working Forests

Below are highlights from the Elliott State Research Forest program and efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with individual federally recognized Tribes:

Forest Management Plan Establishes the Research Forest

In October 2024, the State Land Board officially established the Elliott State Research Forest with the adoption of the initial [Forest Management Plan](#). In response to Tribal requests, the plan contains intentional placeholders for addressing how Indigenous approaches to forest stewardship and research will be integrated with Western approaches. [Engagement with Tribal governments on the Forest Management Plan is summarized in a report here \(PDF\)](#).

The Elliott is both a natural and cultural resource for many Tribes. Interests range widely on opportunities for connecting with the forest – for example harvesting cedar for canoes and first foods like huckleberries.

Relationship Building and Program Development

Efforts to further develop and formalize a process for engaging Indigenous interests on the Elliott are detailed on page 8.

Elliott State Research Forest Board

The Elliott State Research Forest Board of Directors was appointed by the State Land Board in 2024 and meets regularly to ensure ongoing public accountability, transparency, and meaningful engagement. Although not formal Tribal representatives, several Board members have long standing knowledge of indigenous priorities and values in this space. This includes Mike Kennedy (retired Natural Resource Director of CTSI), Michael Wilson (retired Natural Resource Director of Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde), and Melissa Cribbins (former legal counsel for the Coquille Indian Tribe).

Shutter Creek Development and Headquarters Planning

Shutter Creek, an empty former correctional facility on the Oregon Coast, has been transferred from the federal government to the state for use as the research forest headquarters. In 2023, Senator Jeff Merkley and Senator Ron Wyden secured \$4 million for property security, maintenance, renovations, and rehabilitation. DSL will soon advance a public visioning and partnership planning process for redevelopment of the property, an effort that will include robust Tribal and community collaboration. Several Tribes have expressed interest in exploring the potential of the Shutter Creek space in supporting ceremonial needs. As part of this process, DSL has contracted with a firm which has prior experience in working with state redevelopment projects that intersect with Tribal interests.

The forest management plan, adopted in October 2024, will guide DSL in managing the research forest for multiple values, including conservation, education, recreation, Indigenous culture, and support for local economies.

South Slough Reserve: Understanding and Exploring Estuaries

Below are highlights from the South Slough Reserve program, managed in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), and efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes:

Reserve Management Commission

By statute, the Reserve Management Commission reserves one commission seat for Tribal representation at all times. The seat held by the CTCLUSI since fall of 2017 was transferred to the Coquille Indian Tribe in the fall of 2022 and continues until fall 2026. This seat is currently represented by Laurabeth Barton, who in 2024 was also voted in as the Vice-Chair of the Commission.

Water Quality Monitoring

Reserve science staff continue to collaborate with the Coquille Indian Tribe and CTCLUSI to manage real-time water quality stations and to discuss data related to water quality in Coos Bay. Reserve staff have also been providing technical support to the Coquille Indian Tribe staff for new water quality monitoring efforts in Coos Bay and to help link Tribal station data to the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observation Systems.

Education and Training

Reserve staff continue to work with Tribal staff to deliver education programs, trainings, and summer camps. For example:

- South Slough staff are working with members of the CTCLUSI to establish a traditional garden of first foods and culturally significant plants as part of the Wasson Valley restoration project.
- In November 2024, the Reserve and CTCLUSI co-developed a program to celebrate, implement and educate about co-stewardship between the Reserve and partner Tribes. The two-day Biocultural workshop taught participants, both Tribal and non-Tribal Citizens, about culturally significant plants and how they were traditionally used. Plants were then identified and planted as part of an ecological restoration project.

Partner on Projects on the Reserve

Reserve staff communicate regularly with the CTCLUSI and the Coquille Indian Tribe staff to coordinate cultural reviews for restoration and research projects, maintenance work requiring soil disturbance, and newly acquired lands in the Reserve.



Eelgrass meadows at the Reserve have declined since 2016. Staff are investigating causes of the decline, experimenting with restoration methods, and testing the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to map eelgrass in the estuary. Key to this work is monitoring data. Pictured here staff and partners go out in the field at nighttime to collect this data.

Both Tribes serve as partners on the current **Wasson Creek Watershed Restoration project**. The Tribes have been integral in providing staff support and information to meet National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 compliance for restoration planning. In 2024, the Reserve hosted our Tribal partners to share a meal and stories of the Wasson Valley, a special place that holds cultural significance for many. This event celebrated the Reserve’s 50th anniversary and breaking ground on the Wasson Creek Watershed Restoration project.

Reserve staff acquired funding for another project in partnership with other national estuarine research reserves and traveled to the He’eia NERR in Hawaii, in April 2024, with Tribal members of both the Coquille and CTCLUSI as part of the grant **Integrating Indigenous knowledge and NERR science and monitoring to improve estuarine stewardship and management, with shared benefits for birds and local communities**. The project involved The Pacific Birds Habitat Joint Venture and NERRs in Hawai’i, Alaska, Washington and Oregon and their Indigenous communities. The project also intentionally invited multigenerational participation, including Elders, parents, and children, which added to the richness and depth of the experience. Multiple generations from both the Coquille and CTCLUSI attended the week-long workshop.

The Reserve also regularly works with Tribal staff and Tribal members to provide opportunities for cultural plant gathering and Tribal program requests, as needed.



50th Anniversary and Celebration of the Wasson Creek Restoration Project

In May 2024, community members came together to celebrate the past, present, and future of South Slough Reserve and the Wasson Valley, a 530-acre watershed in the southern portion of the Reserve. Tribal members gathered with pioneer families, staff from several government agencies, and Friends of South Slough to tell stories of the past as well as acknowledge the fifty years of collaborative spirit that have forged the present.

In honor of this spirit, five spruce paddles were crafted in the traditional style and etched with an emblem of the Reserve’s 50th anniversary. The paddles were received by the Reserve’s three Tribal partners along with federal and state partners—because, as in a canoe, we pull together for South Slough Reserve.

Since the National Estuarine Research Reserve System began at the South Slough Reserve in 1974, it is fitting that the paddle received by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is the start of a new tradition. When each reserve in the National Estuarine Research Reserve System celebrates their 50th anniversary, a unique emblem of each reserve will be etched into the original paddle from South Slough Reserve to symbolize the deep collaboration between estuary reserves across the country.

The event also brought together Tribal members and government staff that have been working towards the future of the South Slough Reserve and, specifically, the Wasson Valley. “Wasson Creek Restoration Project is poised to be a globally important classroom for wetland and forest restoration science”, said Reserve Stewardship Coordinator Alice Yeates, “The aim is to restore habitat for coho salmon, lamprey and marbled murrelet as well as reintroduce native and culturally significant plant species to the area.”

For partners helping from afar, the event offered a chance to see how local and Tribal partners have been working closely with the land in preparation for the Wasson Creek Restoration Project to break ground. Some participants were visiting the Reserve for the first time, like NOAA Coastal Management Specialist, Cheryl Butner who helped the project secure over \$3.5 million in funding from the federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. While others, like Elder of the Coquille Indian Tribe, Tom Younker, shared his experience of change over his lifetime of living on the estuary’s edge.

The event began with an opening song led by members of the Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians: Ashley Russell, Enna Helms, Ashley Vandevort, and Alycia Cossey. The sound of voices and drums ringing over the Wasson Valley felt to all like the perfect way to be celebrating the past, present, and future of this place.



- Program Manager for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, **Erica Seiden**, received a paddle on behalf of the United States of America
- Director of the Oregon Department of State Lands, **Vicki Walker**, received a paddle on behalf of the State of Oregon
- Tribal Council Member and Linguist Associate, **Enna Helms**, received a paddle on behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
- Tribal Council Representative **Laurabeth Barton** received a paddle on behalf of the Coquille Indian Tribe
- The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians received a paddle in Fall 2024

TRAININGS

Across the agency, DSL encourages staff participation in state and Tribal trainings, workshops, and community events to raise awareness of Tribal interests, increase communication on work and projects of Department and Tribal overlap, and improve government-to-government relationships.

In addition to the trainings and workshops held in partnership at the South Slough Reserve, some examples of training activities in 2024 include:

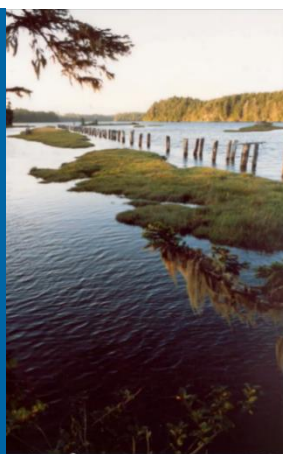


Perry Chocktoot, Tribal member of the Klamath Tribes, shared flintknapping techniques and history with attendees of the 2024 Cultural Resources and Archaeology Awareness Training. His enthusiasm for his craft was inspiring and a joy to share in. *Permission was given by Perry to take and share this photo.*

- 2024 Cultural Resources and Archaeology Awareness Training:** DSL’s Community Engagement Specialist / Environmental Justice Liaison attended this year’s weeklong training hosted by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD). This was a valuable opportunity to meet with Tribal members and staff, and connect DSL policies and responsibilities to real-world impacts. There are several DSL staff who have expressed interest in attending in 2025 if OPRD extends the opportunity to partner agencies again.
- Indigenous Data Sovereignty:** DSL’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee fosters an inclusive environment for all staff, promotes an agencywide climate of equity and anti-racism, and seeks to operationalize DEI in serving DSL’s mission. In 2024, the Committee hosted three “DEI Dialogue” events, one of which was focused on hosting a conversation with staff on Indigenous data sovereignty.
- Annual Tribal Summit:** DSL Director Vicki Walker and Deputy Director Bill Ryan attended this important opportunity to connect with Tribal leadership and staff and understand current priorities of each sovereign nation.

We’re excited about the recently released [“Heart and Spirit of Tribal Consultation” video series from the Commission](#), and considering how this resource can be shared and elevated with DSL staff to deepen knowledge on the unique perspectives of each Tribe on sovereignty and the meaning of consultation.

Sabra Comet is the Coastal Training Program Coordinator at the South Slough Reserve and a member of the Osage Nation. They have a master’s degree in Environmental Management, focusing on indigenous natural resources management. Sabra is co-authoring a paper with the NERRS Science collaborative on indigenous data sovereignty. They hosted a conversation with DSL staff on the history of exploitation of Tribes in the U.S. as well as why data sovereignty (ownership and direct input) is so important.



WHAT IS ‘DATA SOVEREIGNTY’?

- Primary policy decider, ownership, storage of primary source/original ‘raw’ data
- Dictates ethical policies and procedures
- Upkeep of permissions from data sources
- Oversees analyses/products using data



LOOKING AHEAD

Supporting and improving our Tribal relations and communications within DSL programs, policies, and practices is key to improving our customer service and public involvement practices, rulemaking outreach, and permit review processes.

DSL will continue to:

- Participate in government-to-government activities such as the Cultural Resources and Natural Resources Workgroup meetings, as well as any State or Tribal trainings offered.
- Prioritize improved communication with sovereign nations on matters of Department actions that may be of Tribal interest.
- Participate on the Governor's Environmental Justice Council.
- Track and evaluate legislative developments and evolving priorities to inform decision-making and be a good partner. For example, pay attention to the collaborative work of the Task Force on Tribal Consultation and forthcoming guidance.
- Collaborate on and/or participate in educational and cultural experiences with Tribal partners at the South Slough Reserve.

In 2025 DSL will seek to:

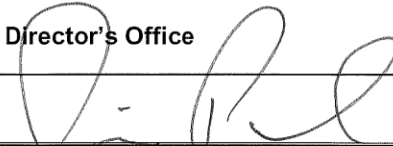
- Examine and update our government-to-government policy, last updated in 2017.
- Host an LCIS-led training for DSL staff. We'll also be exploring long-term, sustainable agencywide staff trainings on Tribal history in Oregon and best practices in consultation.
- Finalize the development of and implement a new customer service portal that will increase access to participation opportunities for DSL wetland and waterway permits and land management decisions.
- Explore Tribal interests for coordination and consultation in upcoming efforts:
 - A variety of rulemaking – notably regarding undersea cables in the territorial sea, as well updating mitigation and removal-fill rules for wetlands and waters.
 - Upcoming policy initiatives at the direction of the Land Board or Legislature.
 - Coordinating with State Historic Preservation Office and identifying strategies to better evaluate cultural resources through state permitting.
 - And other projects such as the Elliott State Research Forest and Shutter Creek facility, initiatives at the South Slough Reserve, and other projects as requested.
- Continue to strive for a better understanding of each Tribe's respective needs and priorities, and work towards stronger collaboration with meaningful and positive impacts with each Tribe.

For additional information about any of these topics or to provide feedback on this report, please contact Government Relations Manager and Tribal Liaison **Ellie Forness** at ellie.s.forness@dsl.oregon.gov.

Appendix A: DSL Government-to-Government Policy



DSL Agency Policy

Subject: State/Tribal Government-to-Government Relations	Number: 141-P-038
Division: Director's Office	Effective Date: 06/26/2017
Approved: 	

Authority: ORS 182.162 to 182.168; Governor's Executive Order 96-30

Applicability:

Executive service, management service, classified represented and unrepresented employees and volunteers.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Department of State Lands (DSL) to establish, promote and improve government-to-government relations between DSL and Oregon's federally recognized tribes in compliance with ORS 182.164 as adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 2001 under Senate Bill 770. This law directs state agencies to not only promote and cultivate government-to-government relations with Oregon's federally recognized tribes, but to develop and advance policies that take into consideration tribal interests and concerns when implementing state programs that may affect tribal interests.

Because DSL recognizes and respects the sovereign status of Oregon's federally recognized tribes, the goal of this policy is to maximize tribal relations and collaborative efforts and to resolve potential concerns by enhancing the exchange of information, ideas and resources.

Definitions:

Annual Report: Refers to the annual report by DSL to the Governor and to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services on tribal relations as required by ORS 182.166.

Authorities: Refers to the Oregon Administrative Rules and Regulations and Oregon Revised Statutes that govern the actions and responsibilities.

Cultural Resource Cluster: Refers to the Tribal-State workgroup established by Senate Bill 770 to address cultural resource issues, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and elements of the natural landscape that have cultural significance. The workgroup consists of key state agency contacts and a representative from each of Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

Legislative Commission on Indian Services refers to the 13-member agency that was created by statute in 1975 to improve services to Indians in Oregon.

Natural Resources Workgroup: Refers to the Tribal-State workgroup established by Senate Bill 770 to improve communication between the state and tribes regarding natural resources protection and management. The workgroup consists of key state agency contacts and a representative from each of Oregon's federally recognized tribes and a representative from the Governor's Office.

Oregon Federally Recognized Tribes: Refers to the 9 federally recognized tribes in Oregon as represented by their Tribal Council and other authorized representatives.

Programs: Refers to the programs that the Oregon Department of State Lands implements to execute the Oregon Administrative Rules as decreed by the Oregon Constitution.

Tribal Liaison: Refers to the DSL employee who is responsible for facilitating, promoting and ensuring communication between DSL's program managers and Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

Policy:

- A. Overall responsibility for developing and implementing DSL programs that may affect tribes rests with DSL's director and deputy directors.
- B. DSL will maintain an agency liaison (tribal liaison) to Oregon's federally recognized tribes.
- C. DSL's director, tribal liaison and appropriate division administrators will offer to meet with Oregon's federally recognized tribal leaders on a regular basis to consult on tribal interests or concerns related to DSL activities, to build relationships and to discuss any upcoming issues of interest and explore opportunities for greater state-tribal partnership and collaboration.
- D. DSL will provide regular training to agency managers and key staff who communicate or work with tribal governments.
- E. DSL will support and participate in cooperative efforts between tribal governments, federal, state and/or local government on environmental issues/concerns that cross jurisdictional boundaries.
- F. DSL's tribal liaison will actively participate as a member of the Tribal-State Natural Resource Workgroup and Cultural Resource Cluster.
- G. DSL will seek tribal representation on DSL advisory committees that are of interest to tribes. DSL will support the exchange and sharing of data collected by DSL staff or by tribal governments.
- H. DSL will ensure that agency managers and all staff are aware of the sovereign authority and self-government of Native American Tribes and of the organizational structure of tribal governments.
- I. DSL will use advice and guidance when appropriate from the Legislative Commission on Indian Services and its staff on tribal government matters.
- J. DSL's Director's Office shall be responsible for submitting an annual report by December 15th every year to the Governor and the Legislative Commission on Indian Services as required under ORS 182.166(3) highlighting DSL's government-to-government activities.
- K. DSL's tribal liaison shall provide the director with a summary of the year's activities that have been completed and an updated list of individuals responsible for management of DSL's programs that may affect tribes for the annual report.