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Subject: Your campaign USDA Office of Tribal Relations News has been sent
Date: Friday, June 28, 2024 10:02:15 AM

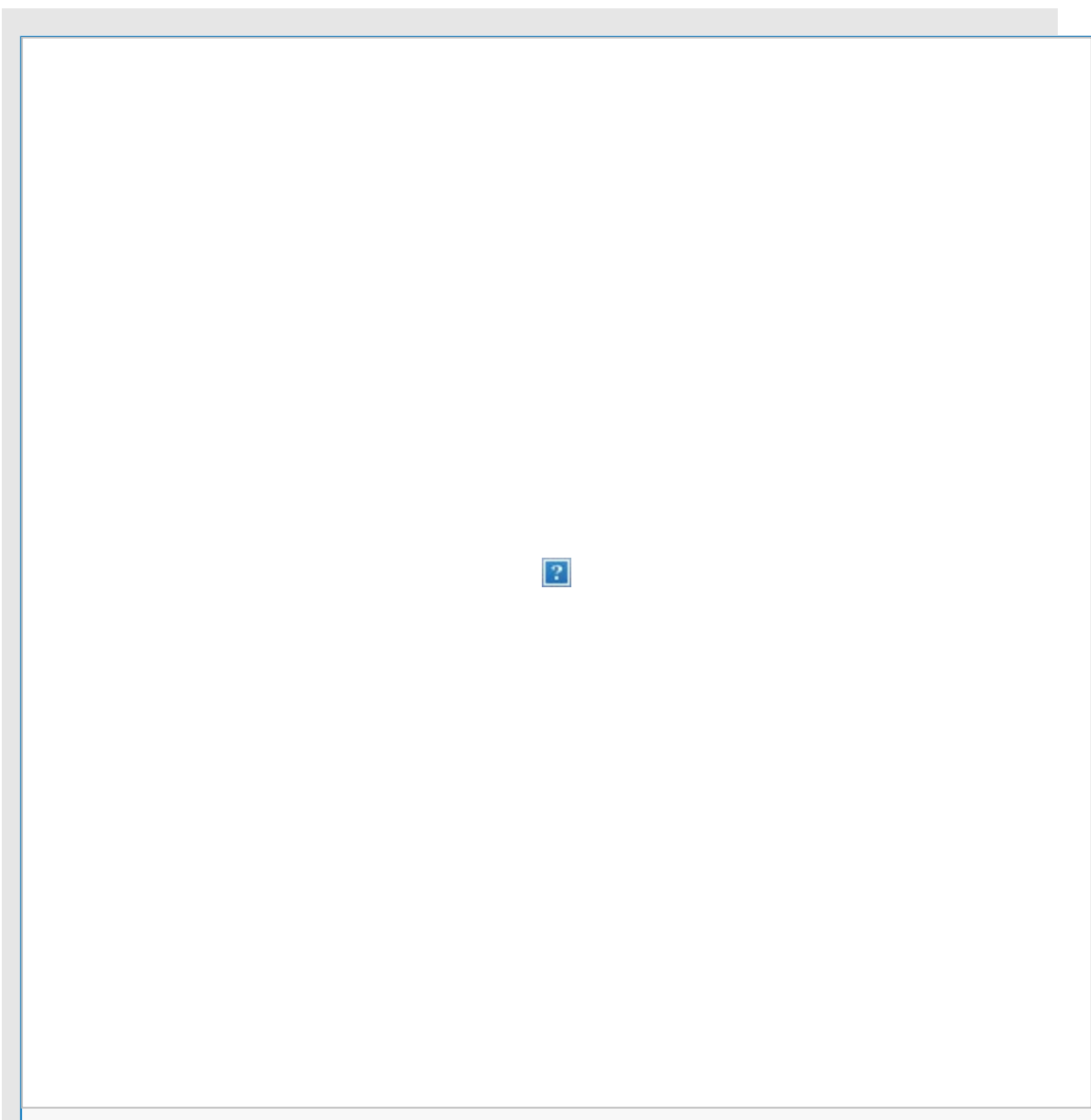


Dear Peter Rhee,

Your campaign '**USDA Office of Tribal Relations News**' was sent on 6/28/2024 around 10:00 AM EDT.

Below is a copy of the message your subscribers received. See how your campaign is doing by visiting Reports [in your account](#) to get real-time results and stats.

Subject: USDA Office of Tribal Relations News



USDA's Office of Tribal Relations Newsletter

If you are not subscribed to this newsletter, [sign up at this link](#).

Happy Summer!

In June, USDA hosted a historic set of consultations on furthering Tribal self-determination in forestry, meat inspections, and food and nutrition. We want to thank the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) for hosting us for these substantive Nation-to-Nation discussions, where we identified opportunities for deepening Tribal engagement within USDA's existing legal authorities, as well as what additional flexibilities Tribes see as necessary for fulfilling [Executive Order 14112](#). The framing papers for those consultations are available on our website at [Tribal Consultations | USDA](#), and USDA will accept written comments through July 5 at Tribal.Relations@usda.gov.

Finally, it is with a mix of sadness and gratitude that our office announces the departure of USDA Office of Tribal Relations (OTR) Director Heather Dawn Thompson, effective June 28, 2024. As a Presidential appointee, Heather Dawn has served since January 2021, and has been instrumental in removing barriers to access, incorporating Indigenous values and priorities, growing Tribal self-determination, and has fundamentally changed how we do business with Indian Country. Her inspiring leadership and friendship have not only left a lasting impression on our office, but a permanent legacy at OTR. While we will miss her and her passion to help Indian Country, we wish her the best of luck in her new endeavors as the Vice President, Native Nations – Conservation and Food Sovereignty at the World Wildlife Fund. We thank her for the years of dedicated service to growing our mission which involved many significant accomplishments, including:

USDA Tribal Accomplishments

- [USDA Indigenous Food Sovereignty](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Tribal Producers](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Tribal Buffalo Partnership](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Tribal Colleges, Students, and Youth](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Tribal Barriers Removed](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Forests & Tribes](#): Progress Report, Spring 2024
- [USDA Wide Tribal Accomplishments](#), Tribal Nations Summit Report, Winter 2023

Again, we cannot thank Heather Dawn enough for the dedication, passion, enthusiasm, and motivation she has given our office since 2021. As we continue the important work to build our Nation-to-Nation relationship, we are incredibly lucky to have the leadership of OTR Acting Director Betsy Rakola. Betsy rounds out our Tribal policy team by bringing deep expertise about how USDA works to help OTR, Tribal leaders, and producers navigate and improve USDA's complexities. Prior to joining the Office of Tribal Relations, Betsy was the second in command at the Agricultural Marketing Service's Transportation and Marketing Program, where she led the development of the Indigenous Animals Meat Processing and Harvesting Grant Program, as well as the Tribal Seafood Processors Pandemic Relief Grant Program. Betsy has managed multi-million-dollar budgets, and her financial and management acumen will strengthen the team. Betsy is from Minnesota and holds a master's degree in agriculture and environmental policy from the Tufts University and a bachelor's degree in international relations Boston University.

If you have any questions during this transition process, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office at Tribal.Relations@usda.gov.

OTR CONTACTS

[Betsy Rakola](#), Acting Director (June 28)

Administrative Team

Elena Krajeski, 771-216-2277, Administrative Officer

Ariel Williams, Administrative Assistant

Tribal.Relations@usda.gov, General Mailbox

Policy Team

Jeff Harris, 202-768-0812, Policy Advisor, Food, Indigenous Food Sovereignty Initiative, Research, Consultation, and Youth

Josiah Griffin, 202-720-1999, Policy Advisor, Economic Development and Food Systems

Taylor Schad, 202-875-9236, Policy Advisor, Forest Service and Natural Resources

Audre Etsitty, Policy Advisor, Farm and Conservation Programs

Jim Wabindato, 202-805-2208, Special Advisor, Tribal Agricultural Lands

Katie Riley, Guest Advisor, USDA Native Fish Initiative (Cooperator-Sitka Conservation Society)

Tribal College and Outreach Team

Lawrence Shorty, 202-870-8035, Director, Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) Program

Lisa Yellow Luger, 202-845-5646, Deputy Director, TCUs and Tribal Liaison, Great Plains

Kellen Palmer, Tribal Liaison, Central Plains

Raymond Benally, Tribal Liaison, Southwest

Ryhal Rowland, Tribal Liaison, Rocky Mountain

USDA Hall of Tribal Nations

USDA Requests your Tribal Flag for the Hall of Tribal Nations!

In recognition of the diplomatic Nation-to-Nation relationship, between Tribes and the federal government, USDA is proud to host a Hall of Tribal Nations, akin to our sister agency, the Department of Interior's Bureau of Indian Affairs. Agriculture Secretary Vilsack shared a [video dedicating this new space](#) during the November 2021 White House Tribal Nations Conference.

USDA invites more Tribal Nations to contribute flags to this growing collection. Please contact Tribal.Relations@usda.gov to learn more. You may send your 3 ft. x 5 ft. tribal flag to:

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Attention: Tribal Flags/Office of Tribal Relations
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Room 501-A Whitten Building
Washington, DC 20250

White House and USDA Initiatives

White House Initiatives and Executive Orders

- [Historic Executive Order to Usher in the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination](#), Reforming Federal Funding to Better Embrace our Trust Responsibility and Tribal Self-Determination (Dec 6, 2023).
- [Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#)
- Executive Order on Strengthening the Nation's Forests, Communities, and Local Economies

[White House Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships](#)

- [White House Memorandum on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge \(ITEK\) and Federal Decision Making](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Tribal Treaty Rights and Reserved Rights](#)
- [Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Interagency Coordination and Collaboration for the Protection of Indigenous Sacred Sites](#)
- [Memorandum of Agreement on Native Languages \(Inter-Agency\)](#)

USDA Initiatives

- [USDA Food Sovereignty Initiative](#)
- [USDA Tribal Self Determination Initiative](#)
- [USDA-Department of Interior \(DOI\) Joint Secretarial Order on Tribal Homelands](#)
- [USDA-DOI Tribal Treaty Database](#)

News

Tribal Participation Encouraged for 2024 FSA County Committee Nominations

The 2024 USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee election season is officially underway. Do you know an agricultural producer interested in serving on a local FSA County Committee? Now is the time to submit that person's name as a nominee. Tribal participation in FSA's election process is an important part of the county election system — a system that serves all agricultural producers. Learn more [at the Farm Service Agency website](#).

[USDA and Reinvestment Fund Launch New Program to Increase Access to Healthy Foods in Underserved Communities](#)

[USDA Announces Enhanced Resources to Support Businesses Interested in Procurement Opportunities](#)

[USDA Forest Service Seeks Public Comment on Draft Guidance for Old Growth Management on National Forests](#)

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces Nearly \\$66M for Conservation Work with States, Tribes, Private Landowners as Part of Investing in America Agenda](#)

[Biden-Harris Administration Announces Actions to Strengthen Tribal Food Sovereignty, Co-Stewardship, and Knowledge of Tribal Agriculture Policy](#)

[USDA Celebrates National Homeownership Month](#)

[Biden-Harris Administration to Invest \\$50 Million in Projects that Restore Natural Functions and Values of Wetlands As Part of Investing in America Agenda](#)

[USDA Opens Application Period for Composting and Food Waste Reduction Cooperative Agreements](#)

USDA Indian Country Success Stories

Learn more about USDA's work in Indian Country through [USDA blogs](#) and OTR's [Video and Radio page](#).



Department of Agriculture | 1400 Independence Ave., S.W. | Washington, DC 20250 US

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