



Welcome to the Spring 2021 Edition of the Corps Foundation Newsletter.

In this issue we have special guest columns from the Innovations Team, The Xerces Society, and Larry Beck, PhD.

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Advocacy Alert! Please Contact Legislators Immediately

If you are one of the over 255 million visitors who annually enjoy the outdoor recreation activities offered by the US Army Corps of Engineers, we, the Corps Foundation ask that you please contact your local legislator immediately. And here's why:

The U.S. House and Senate Committees and Subcommittees are now in session and considering fiscal year 2022 legislation potentially affecting the operations and maintenance activities of the Recreation and Natural Resources Management (NRM) program.

We have identified a full plate of legislative issues to tackle. We are increasing outreach to recreation and environmental stewardship community partners, visitors and the general public encouraging they voice support and contact and ask legislators to pass legislation favorable to the NRM program.

Key NRM Issues and Related Legislation include:

- Establish Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP) Dedicated Set Aside – Moving Forward Act 2022
 - ✓ Request USACE allocation of an amount equal to 9% of the total FLTP amount made available for each of fiscal years 2022 through 2025.

- Operation and Maintenance Account, Other Authorized Project Purposes - Appropriations Bill FY 2022
 - ✓ Additional funding \$30 million to continue the operation, maintenance, and repair of existing recreation facilities and public access including unfunded infrastructure maintenance needed to sustain existing facilities at full capacity.

- Reauthorization of FLREA and Inclusion of USACE - Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act 2022
 - ✓ Reauthorization of FLREA and inclusion of the USACE in the scope of its authority to charge, collect and retain fees at recreation sites. This retention of fees shall not create an offset of Administration's annual appropriations to the USACE Recreation program.

- Amend Cooperative Management Authority - Water Resources Development Act 2022

- ✓ Allow USACE to handle partner collected fees and return to partner; partners to set up agreements for multiple parks and reinvest fees; expand the authority to the private sector.

If you agree with our efforts, then please consider assisting us. Check our Facebook page frequently where we will post for action an “Advocacy Alert! Please Contact Legislators Immediately”. These posts will address each of the above four key legislative issues. We will include a suggested appeal letter which you’re encouraged to personalize and identify those U.S. House and Senate members to contact.

Please contact any Board member if you have questions or would like additional information.

Acknowledging Indigenous Peoples and Their Lands

By Larry Beck, PhD.

Editor’s Note: This article is reproduced with permission from the author and from the National Association for Interpretation. It first appeared in the NAI Magazine “Legacy” in January/February 2021. The Corps Foundation endorses this approach to acknowledging the indigenous peoples of what is now the United States of America.



Façade of the National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institution, Wash. D.C.

I begin with a story to prove an essential point. In August 2019 *The New York Times* published an extraordinary journalistic initiative titled “The 1619 Project” which ultimately won a Pulitzer Prize. The *Sunday Times* included an entire special section on the history of slavery, in partnership with the Smithsonian, and devoted all of the *The New York Times Magazine* to the topic of African American history and culture, featuring many luminary contributors such as Bryan Stevenson, the best-selling author of *Just Mercy*. The 1619 Project struck at the heart of our national conversation about accurate portrayal of the nation’s history and reckoning with our past.

An Editor’s Note provocatively introduced the 1619 Project by stating that the “country’s true birth date” was not 1776, but rather late August of 1619 “when a ship arrived at Point Comfort in the British colony of Virginia, bearing a cargo of 20 to 30 enslaved Africans...This is sometimes referred to as the country’s original sin, but it is more than that: It is the country’s very origin.”

Then, in October 2020, Bret Stephens, a *Times* columnist, wrote a scathing critique of his own paper’s 1619 Project. In a full-page Opinion piece he concluded, “The metaphor of 1776 is more powerful than that of 1619 because what makes America most itself isn’t four centuries of racist subjugation. It’s 244 years of effort by Americans—sometimes halting, but often heroic—to live up to our greatest ideal.”

Times readers chimed in with more than 1,300 comments and letters to the editor on the controversy, of which four were printed a few days later in the paper. The first letter commended the *Times* for helping Americans see beyond the date of 1776 “to understand the abhorrent realities of slavery that long preceded and followed independence.” The second letter commended Bret Stephens for a comprehensive, “brave,” and “thoughtful critique.” The third letter argued that the 1776 founding ideal “is what we should recognize...”

The fourth letter, mine, reflected on the depth of research and courage of *The Times* and their numerous contributors to advance the 1619 Project, as well as that of Bret Stephens to challenge his colleagues and employer, as well as *The Times* to publish his biting critique. My letter concluded:

However, as to a “founding” birth date, everyone got it wrong. It wasn’t 1619 or 1776. Because, as the nation celebrates Indigenous Peoples’ Day this week (October 12, 2020), we remember there were already people living on the continent before colonizers, and later the enslaved, arrived.

My letter stated what should have been obvious all along. The essential point is, recognizing Indigenous peoples through land acknowledgements and other actions is clearly necessary, lest people forget that lands cannot be discovered if they are already inhabited.

This essay examines how public parks, museums and other interpretive sites can acknowledge Indigenous presence—past, present, and future—using the State of California and San Diego State University as comprehensive models.

An Apology and Proclamation

The first step toward reconciliation is often an apology. This happened in California in June 2019 when Governor Gavin Newsom formally apologized to Native peoples for the genocidal “war of extermination” declared by the state’s first governor in 1851. A few months later in October, Governor Newsom proclaimed Indigenous Peoples’ Day (formerly Columbus Day). From his Proclamation:

Instead of commemorating conquest today, we recognize resilience. For the first time in California state history, we proclaim today as Indigenous Peoples’ Day...We celebrate the acts of resistance and persistence that have shaped the experiences of Indigenous communities since first contact with Europeans.

Governor Newsom went on to “encourage other leaders to take in good faith” actions such as his in California. Further, he created a “Truth and Healing Council” to continue on a path of reckoning with the past. These efforts in California are presented as broad examples of recognizing Indigenous history and culture.

A Land Acknowledgement and Conference

In Fall 2019 the San Diego State University (SDSU) Senate unanimously passed a resolution to adopt an official Kumeyaay Land Acknowledgement statement because the campus is located on traditional Kumeyaay land. The acknowledgement itself and related SDSU actions are presented as broad models of possibility for parks, museums, and other interpretive sites. (See sidebar.)

In recognition of the land acknowledgement decision, banners were hung along the main campus gateway that read, "You are learning on Kumeyaay land," one side in English and the other side in the Kumeyaay language. So, for example, parks could similarly display banners for their visitors who recreate on "public" lands, formerly those of native tribes.

Concurrently, SDSU created a Native Resource Center, a culturally based organization for Native students, but also to provide non-native students with opportunities to learn about Kumeyaay culture, worldviews and history. Perhaps something on a smaller scale would be possible at museums or park visitor centers.

Planning for official land acknowledgement of the Kumeyaay included an opportunity for the campus and surrounding San Diego community to attend a free four-day conference titled "Native Truth and Healing: The Genocide, Oppression, Resilience, and Sovereignty of the First Peoples of California" complete with a film festival, honored speakers, music, dance, poetry, theater, storytelling, crafts, prayer, bird singers, a healing circle and the burning of sage.

For me, the most moving event was the "Indigenous Healing Flute Music and Eagle Dance" performed by Steven Garcia (Tongva, Yaqui, Mescalero Apache, adopted Lakota) in full eagle feather regalia streaming down his arms. Garcia learned the dance in 1972, in his youth, and has been performing it ever since. He said, "I'm taking you back with me, before things went down, bringing us back to now, I'm taking you with me." The dance was so mesmerizing and so beautiful it brought some in the audience to tears.

This extraordinary conference closed with a flag ceremony in which the Kumeyaay flag was raised for the first time on campus with the intent to be flown along with the American and California flags henceforth.

As it got dark that last day a small number of participants gathered next to a fire that had been burning throughout the conference. Each person took a handful of cedar shreds to toss into the fire pit. The assembled were told that in our hearts not to forget what has happened, but also to forge ahead to make things better...to keep the fire burning.

A major conference may be beyond the scope of a local nature center, but may be within the capacity of large national parks and museums. The resources of any interpretive site will dictate the length, scope and frequency of conferences.

Keep the Fire Burning

Interpretive sites at all levels must have buy-in and support from the top to provide necessary time and resources to do the work properly and respectfully, which means collaborating closely with the tribe(s) in the area. Unilateral actions can become yet another example of imposition of one culture upon another that perpetuates the public land management tradition of leaving tribes out of the conversation.

My colleague, Dr. Kate Spilde, Chair of SDSU's Sycuan Institute, explained that ideally an institution hires a Tribal Liaison. She served on the hiring committee that brought Jacob Alvarado (Kumeyaay) to that position at SDSU. The role of the Tribal Liaison is to preserve Indigenous languages and cultural knowledge, provide education and recognition, and enhance relationships.

Similarly dedicated efforts should focus on hiring local tribal members as cultural heritage interpreters. California State Parks and the Yurok Tribe worked together for more than 30 years toward that purpose.

In autumn 2020 NAI sponsored a panel discussion webinar titled "Elevating Indigenous Voices in Interpretation." The panel included two tribal members, Skip Lowry (Yurok) and Linda Cooley (Yurok), the former employed by the North Coast Redwoods District of California State Parks. Lowry stated that the "healing process is a truth-telling process" and that amplifying Indigenous voices "must happen in all the parks across the nation."

I later spoke with panel moderator (and NAI Board Member) Erin Gates who revealed that orchestrating this webinar was the most powerful professional growth opportunity of her career. Gates told me that Indigenous hiring practices are essential and that parks must "raise the voices" of those who have cared for these landscapes since time immemorial.

Afterword

Charles Wilkinson, in *Blood Struggle: The Rise of Modern Indian Nations* wrote:

For more than 500 years, white society on this continent has discussed how long it would be before Indian people finally disappeared into the general society. Not if, but when. In a generation? Three? Five? But now we have data: five centuries of survival under the most

excruciating pressure of killing diseases, wars, land expropriation, and official government policy—forced assimilation, then outright termination...

Never has this land seen such staying power.

Now, 500 years later, may we more widely and respectfully acknowledge the land and legacy of those who were already here on this continent, are still here, and will continue to have a presence forever.

Larry Beck, Ph.D., is a professor in the Robert Payne School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at San Diego State University. He has written extensively in the field of interpretation. His most recent book, as lead author, is Interpreting Cultural and Natural Heritage: For A Better World. This is the 13th in a series addressing the rights of historically disenfranchised groups of people, perhaps especially timely in the current political climate. The series is written in allegiance with NAI's statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to represent all people and backgrounds. Contact Larry at lbeck@sdsu.edu.

Life Jacket Video Contest 2021



The poster features a dark blue background with a film reel icon in the top right corner. The title "Life Jacket Video Contest" is written in large, bold, white letters with a red and blue drop shadow. Below the title, an orange box contains the prize information: "THE PRIZE: \$5,500 for 55-second Video PSA" and "\$2,500 for 25-second Video PSA", with a small note below stating "ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY WILL BE SELECTED". To the right of the prize box is a circular logo with a red life jacket and the text "Life Jackets Worn... Nobody Drowns" and "PleaseWearIt.com". At the bottom, a white box contains the contest deadline "Contest Deadline: September 1, 2021" and the website "TO LEARN MORE: www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com".

The Corps Foundation and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) are proud to announce the 2021 Life Jacket Video Contest. The contest invites anyone 18 or older nationwide to create a video public service announcement (PSA) to help encourage

adults to wear life jackets. Deadline for submissions is September 1, 2021. Winners will receive a cash prize and the opportunity for national exposure for their winning entries. This contest was developed because every year thousands of people in the United States mourn the loss of loved ones who could have survived if they had been wearing a life jacket while spending time on or near our nation's waters. Over the last 10 years, 87 percent of all USACE public water-related fatalities were male, 86 percent were the ages of 18 and older, and 87 percent were not wearing a life jacket.

Key Information about the 2021 Life Jacket Video Contest:

- Deadline for Video PSA submissions is September 1, 2021.
- All submissions will only be accepted through the online application that can be found at LifeJacketVideoContest.com.
- Anyone within the United States who will be 18 years old or older by September 1, 2021 can enter.
- Entrants may enter individually or as part of a team consisting of no more than four (4) members. All team members must be 18 years old or older.
- Submissions will be accepted for a 55-second video and a 25-second video. A winner will be selected in each category. The winner of the 55-second video category will receive a cash prize of \$5,500 and the winner of the 25-second category will receive a cash prize of \$2,500.
- Winning submissions may be turned into PSAs and distributed nationwide to USACE lake and river projects and their partners to use on social media, websites, television stations, movie theaters, and more.
-

For full submission guidelines, official rules, FAQs, and resources, visit LifeJacketVideoContest.com. Funding for the Life Jacket Video Contest is provided by a Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund grant that was awarded to The Corps Foundation and is administered by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Be sure to follow “**Please Wear It**” on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#) for other great information and visit PleaseWearIt.com for a variety of water safety promotional materials.

Innovations Team Grows through Partnerships by Jason Knight

Editor's note: The Corps Foundation is a partner of the Innovations Team and we will include articles about their progress starting in this issue. Look for more innovations in future newsletters.

The USACE Multi-District Innovations Team has designed and produced several innovative products for our agency to use, many of which are stored on our Innovations Store provided by our partners at The Corps Foundation. Without deep pockets, innovation is almost impossible to achieve due to the cost of technology and sustainability. Our team has found ways to create and sustain many of our products, despite having a \$0 budget over the past five years, made possible through valuable partnerships.

For our newest potential partner, we only had to look across the street from the Tulsa District Office. Innovations Team Leaders Jason Knight and Abby Jones recently met with Michael Matthews, Vice President of Technology and Innovation at Oral Roberts University. Vice President Matthews gave our team leadership a tour of their facilities, showing the full capabilities of the Technology and Innovations Program. ORU is leading the charge in Immersive Learning, Humersive Learning, Artificial Intelligence, Augmented Reality, and Virtual Reality – all resources that would benefit the Innovations Team. The two sides explored ways they could strike up a partnership and are expected to develop that partnership before the Fall 2021 Semester begins.

Two innovative programs working together can accomplish great things. ORU has the technology to make the team's innovations thrive, and the Innovations Team has the ability to share and spread this technology across the nation at USACE Visitor Centers, Districts, and Lake Projects.



Inside Oral Roberts University Global Learning Center.



Our team has found ways to create and sustain many of our products through valuable partnerships

The following is reprinted with permission from the Xerces Society.



Pollinators need YOUR voice!



Help Support Pollinators Today!

Please join the Xerces Society in asking your U.S. senators and representatives to pass two bills that will provide critical protections for pollinators.

Monarch and Pollinator Highway Act of 2021

This act would provide grants to benefit pollinators on roadsides and highway rights-of-way. Funding will support pollinator-friendly roadside habitat through planting and seeding native grasses and wildflowers, and monarch host plants.

WHY THIS ACT MATTERS

Pollinators are critical to our food supply and are experiencing precipitous declines. Roadsides offer millions of acres of land that act as wildlife corridors, which can support pollinators by providing foraging, resting, nesting, and overwintering habitat.

Monarch Act of 2021

The Monarch Act will provide funding for conservation activities to restore, enhance, and manage overwintering and breeding habitats of monarch populations in the western U.S.

WHY THIS ACT MATTERS

Once common, the monarch butterfly is experiencing an alarming decline. In the western U.S., the monarch overwintering population is a mere 0.01% of its historic size. As the western monarch population edges closer to extinction—and with no federal or state protections—monarchs need the resources that this act will provide to restore their habitats at a critical time.

Your voice is needed. Please let your representatives know these two acts have your support!

Click below to learn more and send a letter of support for either of these acts to your elected officials for the benefit of bees, monarchs and other pollinators.

Join us in support of the
Monarch Act of 2021

Take Action!

Join us in support of the
Monarch & Pollinator
Highway Act of 2021

Take Action!

Share this action alert with your networks!



Photo: Pollinators visiting milkweed. © USFWS Midwest, Flickr.

Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence Coin Nominees by Amber Tilton, Park Ranger, The Dalles Lock and Dam

Summary:

The following two new partners/volunteers, Melissa Gonzales, Outdoor Programs & Communications Specialist for Friends of the Gorge and Sean O'Connor, Founder and Director of Photography & Teaching Artist for Story Gorge heavily supported The Dalles Dam Eagle Watch this year (2021).

In order to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Eagle Watch was a virtual event, instead of the traditional in-person event we've hosted for the past 10 years. Without the contribution of these two new partners, it would not have been such a success.

Thanks to them we were able to add some unique educational features to our format that drew significant interest to our event, reached a much larger audience and made a greater overall positive impact regionally.

Friends of the Gorge:

- 1) Coordinated, promoted, and hosted a live educational webinar, *Fly Like an Eagle: Exploring Winter Gorge Eagle Migration*, with featured speakers from the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and the Corps of Engineers. The webinar was a huge success with 758 attendees.
- 2) Filmed two educational videos with Corps Park Ranger Amber Tilton, *Bald Eagles at The Dalles Dam Part 1 and Part 2*.
- 3) Contracted with Story Gorge to produce a 4-minute video of bald eagles for the virtual eagle watch event; a majority filmed from The Dalles Dam.
- 4) Videos and webinar can be found on their website and You Tube page. They also actively promoted these on their Facebook and Instagram pages.

Story Gorge:

- 1) In addition to filming the Bald Eagles in the Columbia Gorge short film, which already has over 5k views and 110 shares, Story Gorge provided the Corps free use of select stills for our website and for social media use in coordination with this public education event.

All videos and webinar can be found on our Virtual Eagle Watch page here:
www.nwp.usace.army.mil/eaglewatch2021

Background:

As the population of winter roosting eagles to the green space below The Dalles Dam has grown, so have the number of visitors. This is the densest population of wintering bald eagles along the Lower Columbia River. As such, Corps park rangers and volunteers from the partnering agencies use it as an opportunity to provide environmental education, conservation, and stewardship interpretive outreach.

This year, as an alternative to an in-person event, our partners collaborated to provide visitors with a virtual experience. The eagle watch activities attracted media attention from multiple outlets including radio stations as far as Seattle, Destination Oregon (who filmed a 4-minute feature piece on bald eagles at The Dalles Dam) and an excellent article in the regional newspaper:

<https://www.columbiacommunityconnection.com/the-dalles/fly-like-an-eagle-exploring-winter-gorge-eagle-migration>

The result was an extremely well-attended webinar, an off-season boost to our local tourism economy in The Dalles and an increase in visitation to Seufert Park.

Additionally, since being launched on February 11th, our Eagle Watch webpage is the 4th most actively visited page on our website.

Friends of the Gorge and Story Gorge were instrumental in making this all possible by providing creative, interpretive videos and a live platform for us to come together to provide education that has widely contributed to public understanding of Corps missions, particularly in the area of natural resource protection, conservation and restoration.



Melissa Gonzalez chairing the webinar, *Fly Like an Eagle*.



Sean O'Connor from Story Gorge takes photos of Eagles from the top of The Dalles Dam.



Friends of the Gorge Team from left to right: Ryan Rittenhouse, Melissa Gonzalez and Stan Hall at USACE Seufert Park filming videos of bald eagles.

Pollinator News from Trinidad Lake

by Kyle Sisco, Natural Resource Specialist, Trinidad Lake - Albuquerque District

We at Trinidad Lake would like to let you know what we've got going here.

We have two beehives on our property. One is located just below the dam, and the other one is at the other end of the lake, only on the edge of our food plot. We are hoping that they will help pollinate the local plants and flowers. I am taking care of the hives by supplemental feeding and checking the hives for damage from predators. We have installed dog kennels around the hives to prevent anything from destroying our hives, and they seem to be working. We do not take any of the honey that the bee produces because they help with pollination. This spring, we are planning to put four more hives in the area.



“We would love some help with finding some partners for this adventure. And we are also planning on transforming the small island in the front parking lot to a pollinator garden, so we will be looking for volunteers for help.” Kyle Sisco

Pollinator News from Cochiti by Wes Myers, Natural Resources Specialist (Park Ranger) – Cochiti Project



I want to share with you the pollinator project we've been working on at the Cochiti Lake Project in central New Mexico. We are still in the stage where we are waiting for the native plants to sprout but we have constructed plots, outlined trails, put soil in the plots, and sowed seed as of fall 2020. There is still much work to be done, but the big picture will be a self-interpretive pollinator habitat and trail to help educate the public about the roles that native pollinators play in our ecosystem as well as help to further the overall health of the ecological community by catering to the entire lifecycle of our most prolific native pollinators.

Send Some Smiles to the Corps Foundation!

One simple way you can help the Corps Foundation is to donate to the Foundation through Amazon Smile. If you are like most people, you've been ordering more online than ever. Amazon Smile gives you an opportunity to send a small contribution every time you order.

See the website for more details:

https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/dashboard/ref=smi_se_mirp_dshb_smi

IMPORTANT See the USACE Website for updates on the COVID-19 Pandemic

https://www.usace.army.mil/Coronavirus/fbclid/IwAR0Wxq9t_2TqIm67Qnh-9IkNU27avZfXxaVWH_Q9IU317OdcUfowu2G2c58/

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You can make the difference in programs and partnerships that are critical to providing improved services to the visiting public- *like you!* We are fully managed and operated by volunteers; your support is used directly for priority program initiatives, not administrative overhead.

Please join by visiting our website at www.CorpsFoundation.org, and clicking on the "Donate Now" button takes you to our membership form.

While supplies last, if you donate at the \$50 level or higher, you'll receive a logo dry bag for your next boating adventure!



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Please indicate your contribution level:

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Many Ways to Support the Corps Foundation

Your Support Makes a Difference!

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Your donation may be tax-deductible for you as permitted by Federal law for nonprofit organizations. Your support of the Corps Foundation helps U.S. Army Corps of Engineers projects and friend's groups connect, grow, and increase their capacity to fulfill USACE's natural resource education mission on lakes and waterways across the United States. Find out more at the Foundation's website: www.CorpsFoundation.org

Contact Information:

Greg Miller, Chairperson,

Corps Foundation

Phone: 816-651-4895

Mail: Millerga50@gmail.com

Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Education Foundation

404 E. 30th Avenue, North Kansas City, Missouri 64116

Corps Foundation Newsletter is assembled by communications director and editor:

J. Patrick Barry, jpatbarry@hotmail.com Contact him with your story ideas and photos.

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