



**2024 Annual Convention
Ridgefield, Washington**

RESOLUTION #2024 – 48

**“INCREASING CAPACITY FOR A WASHINGTON STATE
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT OF RECREATIONAL
IMPACTS”**

PREAMBLE

We, the members of the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants rights secured under Indian Treaties, Executive Orders and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and constitution of the United States and several states, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution:

WHEREAS, the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) are representatives of and advocates for natural, regional, and specific tribal concerns; and

WHEREAS, ATNI is a regional organization comprised of American Indians/Alaska Natives and Tribes in the states of Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Nevada, Northern California and Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the health, safety, welfare, education, economic and employment opportunity, and preservation of cultural and natural resources are primary goals and objectives of ATNI; and

WHEREAS, after record-setting visitation during the pandemic, recreation use on Washington state-managed lands continues to intensify and remains significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and it's increasingly important for the state land managing agencies to assess the condition of state recreational lands; and

WHEREAS, over the past several years, Tribes with treaty and reserved rights in Washington have advocated through the annual Centennial Accord meetings for creation of an Interagency-Tribal process to address impacts of recreation on natural and cultural resources and on protected Tribal rights across state-managed lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, the 2023 Legislature provided funding in the operating budget for State Parks, Fish & Wildlife, and Natural Resources to develop a new statewide resource assessment and policy for public lands development which this request supports the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs' convening role and cross-agency costs for the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative begun by the Governor and previously funded in the 2023-25 operating budget; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs (GOIA), at the direction of the Governor, convened a first of its kind effort together with federally recognized Tribes with protected rights in Washington (Tribes, the State Parks and Recreation Commission (State Parks), Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), and the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) to assess and improve management of recreation impacts across state-managed lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, work to date has been productive and has included development of a working charter that sets a vision for the initiative, communication principles, organization structure (steering committee and workgroups), decision-making processes, and a technical framework; and

WHEREAS, work has also included securing a \$1 million planning grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to provide technical and financial assistance to Tribes to support participation in this effort; and

WHEREAS, it is anticipated that work during the current biennium will result in cooperative development of standardized ecological inventory assessments, new process to identify appropriate adaptive management tools, and criteria to establish priority areas in which to apply and refine the methodology; and

WHEREAS, although each participating state agency has developed an agency-specific budget request addressing this work, together these requests represent a coordinated – and complementary – body of work in which each agency fulfills unique and integral functions; and

WHEREAS, agency budget requests for the 2025-2027 biennium will enable collective, ongoing participation by state agencies and Tribes in the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, as well as application of resource assessment and adaptive management tools in at least three priority areas on DNR, DFW, State Parks-managed lands and waters to be selected by the initiative's Steering Committee; and

WHEREAS, successful implementation will depend on deliverables within, and unique to, each agency-specific budget request. Funds requested by DNR, DFW, and State Parks include:

1. Continuation of the coordination and technical staffing and natural resource assessments in requests submitted by DFW and State Parks
2. Natural resource assessments submitted by DNR (DNR funding for staffing for this effort in the 2023-25 biennium budget was funded as on-going)
3. Contracted services for acquisition and management of recreation use data submitted by DFW (\$250,000); and

WHEREAS, funds requested by GOIA necessary to continue and enhance its role as the convener of the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative and support Tribal participation include:

1. Contracted facilitation and intermediary services (\$275,000)
2. Two annual State-Tribal leadership and information sharing conferences (\$50,000)
3. Pass-through funds to Tribes to support participation and provide technical consulting services (\$3,400,000)
4. Grant and contract management support for the identified project agreements and to build out this capacity within GOIA (\$180,000)

WHEREAS, work of the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative during the current biennium would not have occurred without professional facilitation and intermediary services provided by the Whitener Group (TWG); and

WHEREAS, TWG is a native-owned consulting group based in Olympia, Washington. TWG is currently under contract with State Parks, through legislatively approved funding through the end of the current biennium; and

WHEREAS, requested funding is intended to retain the services of TWG for the from July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2027. [Facilitation and Intermediary Services – \$275,000]; and

WHEREAS, work during the 2025-27 biennium is anticipated to include analyzing and developing recommendations to enhance timing and sharing of recreation-related initiatives between participating state agencies and Tribes; and

WHEREAS, requested funds will allow GOIA to convene two annual in-person leadership and information sharing meetings which include opportunities for Tribal and state agency leaders to assess progress of the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative, consider high-profile issues for decision making, and provide ongoing direction to the initiative; and

WHEREAS, meetings would also provide an opportunity for state agency and Tribal representatives to discuss recreation-related budget and policy proposals and bring forward potential recreation-related projects and initiatives for early input, discussion, and coordination. [Two Statewide Leadership and Information Sharing Meetings – \$50,000]; and

WHEREAS, work of the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative has during the first eighteen months has included twenty-six Steering Committee meetings and twenty meetings of the three established workgroups collectively; and

WHEREAS, Tribal representatives have indicated that Tribal staffing capacity remains the largest barrier to full participation in the initiative; and

WHEREAS, the state has already recognized the need to support tribal capacity to collaborate with the state through the HEAL Act and the creation of a grant program at the Department of Ecology to support energy siting work; and

WHEREAS, in response, DFW worked with Tribal representatives to secure a \$1 million grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to provide subgrants to Tribes to support participation in State-Tribal initiative and to contract a consultant to provide technical support for Tribal representatives on the State-Tribal Technical Workgroup but that Funding from NFWF expires in September 2025; and

WHEREAS, requested funding will provide \$100,000 for each of the thirty-one eligible Tribes to dedicate 0.5 FTE in staff time to participate in the State-Tribal Recreation Impacts Initiative during the course of the 2025-27 biennium and it would also continue funding for consulting services for technical support to Tribal representatives on the Technical Workgroup. [Pass-Through Funds for Tribal Participation – \$3,100,000 and Technical Consulting Services – \$300,000]; and

WHEREAS, GOIA is not staffed to manage grant programs however the agency will hire one dedicated Grants and Contract Coordinator to develop and administer the pass-through funds for tribal participation; and

WHEREAS, GOIA will also create and manage the facilitation and intermediary services agreement. Recent tribal communication and 2024 Centennial Accord feedback has identified a desire for GOIA to grow into a more supportive structure for Tribal interests; and

WHEREAS, funding this position ongoing creates a foundation for GOIA to more directly support Tribal pass-through grants and a centralization of these agreements over time will provide greater consistency and service, while removing burden that other state agencies are shouldering through the current ad hoc approach the state has for tribal pass-through funding. [Agency Grant Management Support - \$180,000]; and

WHEREAS, not funding this request risks disrupting an established, highly significant and timely state-Tribal undertaking and further impacting or losing significant natural or cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, if the extent and condition of natural resources is not fully understood, the ability to protect and restore them in a manner consistent with best available science, state agency missions/policies, and federal/state laws would be diminished; and

WHEREAS, decisions to defer these investments would increase the potential for irreversible damage and/or loss of natural or cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, delaying or abandoning the established Interagency-Tribal effort is inconsistent with the State's commitment to Washington Tribes, risks resource degradation and interference with the exercise of protected Tribal rights resulting from insufficiently managed recreation on state lands and waters; and

WHEREAS, the alternatives to funding this request include:

1. Continuing management of recreation impacts without coordination with Tribes and other state agencies through the Interagency-Tribal Recreation Impacts effort and relying on ad-hoc coordination with individual Tribes and Agencies. This alternative may injure relationships between the state agencies and Tribes, continues inconsistent or conflicting recreation management practices across state lands and waters, and increases the risk of miscommunication, conflict, and potential legal action by Tribes related to treaty and other protected rights.
2. Continuing management of recreation impacts without application of resource assessment and adaptive management tools developed through Interagency-Tribal Recreation Impacts effort. This alternative reduces the effectiveness and defensibility of management decisions, decreases efficient direction of state staff and financial resources, and increases the risk of losing public support and voluntary compliance with resource management actions.
3. There may be costs and workload efficiencies realized through alternative implementation methods. Below are solutions explored but not requested in favor of proposals that better align with tribal interest and objectives.
4. Facilitation and Intermediary Services could be directly appropriated to State Parks. This would not result in a decrease of direct costs, but it would reduce agency effort by avoiding GOIA having to establish a new contract with the vendor, or creating a pass-through, inter-agency agreement between GOIA and State Parks for an extension for the current agreement.
5. Pass-Through Funds for Tribal Participation could be administered through RCO or one of the three project agencies. The work associated with the pass-through grant is real but can be more easily absorbed by a larger agency with established grant management policies and process. Similar to the Department of Ecology's 23-25BN appropriation for pass-through energy site surveys funding, GOIA would develop the grant distribution methodology and provide the administrating agency the specific amount of funding to distribute for each applicant for these grants, which will be offered under a single consolidated program. The administrating costs for this effort would be one-time, likely ranging from \$20,000 - \$100,000; now

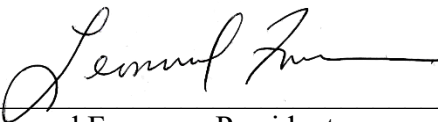
THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that ATNI supports the inclusion of the GOIA’s recreation impacts decision package; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that ATNI supports the inclusion of GOIA’s recreational impacts decision package in the Washington’s 2025-2027 biennial budget; and

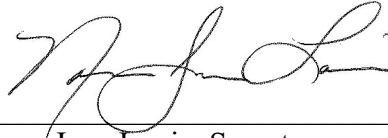
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of ATNI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2024 Annual Convention of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians, held at ilani Casino Resort, Ridgefield, Washington on September 29 – October 3, 2024 with a quorum present.



Leonard Forsman, President



Norma Jean Louie, Secretary