

TAF Fellows explore
Locklear Farms, NC
2022 Small Farm of
the Year, with
Connie Locklear.



TAFELLOWS.ORG

TRIBAL AGRICULTURE FELLOWSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25 ACADEMIC YEAR

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Native American-led programs, like the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship (TAF), play a vital role in strengthening agricultural pathways in Native communities and expanding opportunities across rural America. These programs are shaped by the unique circumstances Native producers face — circumstances informed by the government-to-government relationship between Tribal Nations and the federal government.

Because of this unique relationship, it's important to clarify that Native-led initiatives are not simply part of broader DEI efforts. Rather, they are grounded in the federal trust responsibility — a long-standing legal and moral obligation of the United States to uphold Tribal sovereignty, protect lands and resources, and ensure access to services and support for American Indian, Native Hawai'iian, and Alaskan Native peoples.

TAF's mission is to invest in the next generation of Native agricultural leaders who are rooted in traditional knowledge and driven by a commitment to serve their communities. Over the past four years, we have seen our Fellows restore rangelands, conduct soil and animal health research, and pursue degrees in agribusiness and natural resource management. Beyond academics, these Fellows return home, mentoring future generations and uplifting Tribal food systems.

Each cohort brings a passion for sustaining Native agriculture. Each year, they join a growing network of leaders who are transforming their communities through land stewardship, policy engagement, and innovation.

Native American agriculture is guided by generations of Traditional Ecological Knowledge — knowledge that modern agriculture is only beginning to recognize and value. Through the support of our partners, funders, and friends, TAF continues to serve as a bridge between these knowledge systems and the future of agriculture in Indian Country.

Thank you for standing with us in this important work. Your support is not only an investment in Native youth, but an affirmation of the federal trust responsibility and the sovereignty of Tribal Nations.

ABOUT TAF

The mission of the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship (TAF) is to create opportunities for students to advance their education with the purpose of preserving and promoting the legacy of agriculture in Tribal communities.

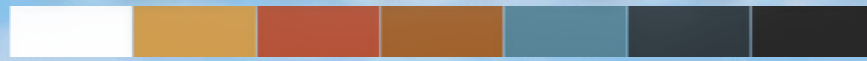
Through expanded outreach, agricultural education initiatives, and partnerships, TAF also supports career pathways, educator development, and community-driven solutions that prepare the next generation of Native agricultural leaders.

WHO WE SERVE

We serve Native American, Alaska Native, and Native Hawai'ian students, educators, and communities working to strengthen food and agricultural systems across Indian Country. From K-12 classrooms to college campuses, we support students pursuing agricultural education and empower the teachers, mentors, and schools that guide them.



YEAR FOUR



The Tribal Agriculture Fellowship was officially established by its Board of Directors in December of 2021.

This year, TAF has expanded its reach by adding a fourth cohort and providing new funding for conference participation. We have supported four ag teachers at national conferences and sponsoring 20 Native American high school students to attend the National FFA or Washington Leadership Conferences.

This outreach has enabled TAF to build interest among youth who are just getting started in agriculture to encourage them to continue with a lifelong career in ag.

**TOTAL FELLOWSHIP
SUPPORT AWARDED
IN 2024 - 25**

\$ 648,000

**SPECIAL PROJECTS
IN 2024 - 25**

\$ 250,000

TAF BY THE NUMBERS

This year, seven students were awarded Fellowships to advance their education and careers in agriculture-related fields.

The 2025 Fellows are building a future where Native agriculture thrives through innovation, tradition, and community leadership. Their work represents a powerful step forward for all of rural America.



20 FELLOWS

TAF currently supports 20 Fellows pursuing degrees in agriculture business, agriculture education, plant and animal sciences, biological engineering, forestry and conservation sciences, geography, wildlife biology, and veterinary medicine.



16 TRIBAL NATIONS

Chickasaw; Choctaw; Choctaw-Apache; Citizen Potawatomi; Coharie; Kickapoo; Lumbee; Mescalero Apache; Mandan, Hidatsa, Arakara; Navajo; 'Ōiwi [Native Hawaiian]; Osage; Pit River Tribe; Jemez Pueblo; Saint Regis Mohawk; Santo Domingo Pueblo.



11 ALUMNI

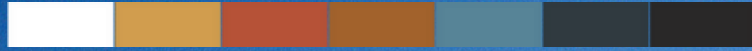
11 Fellows have graduated and are now serving Tribal communities, in fields ranging from environmental studies to veterinary services.



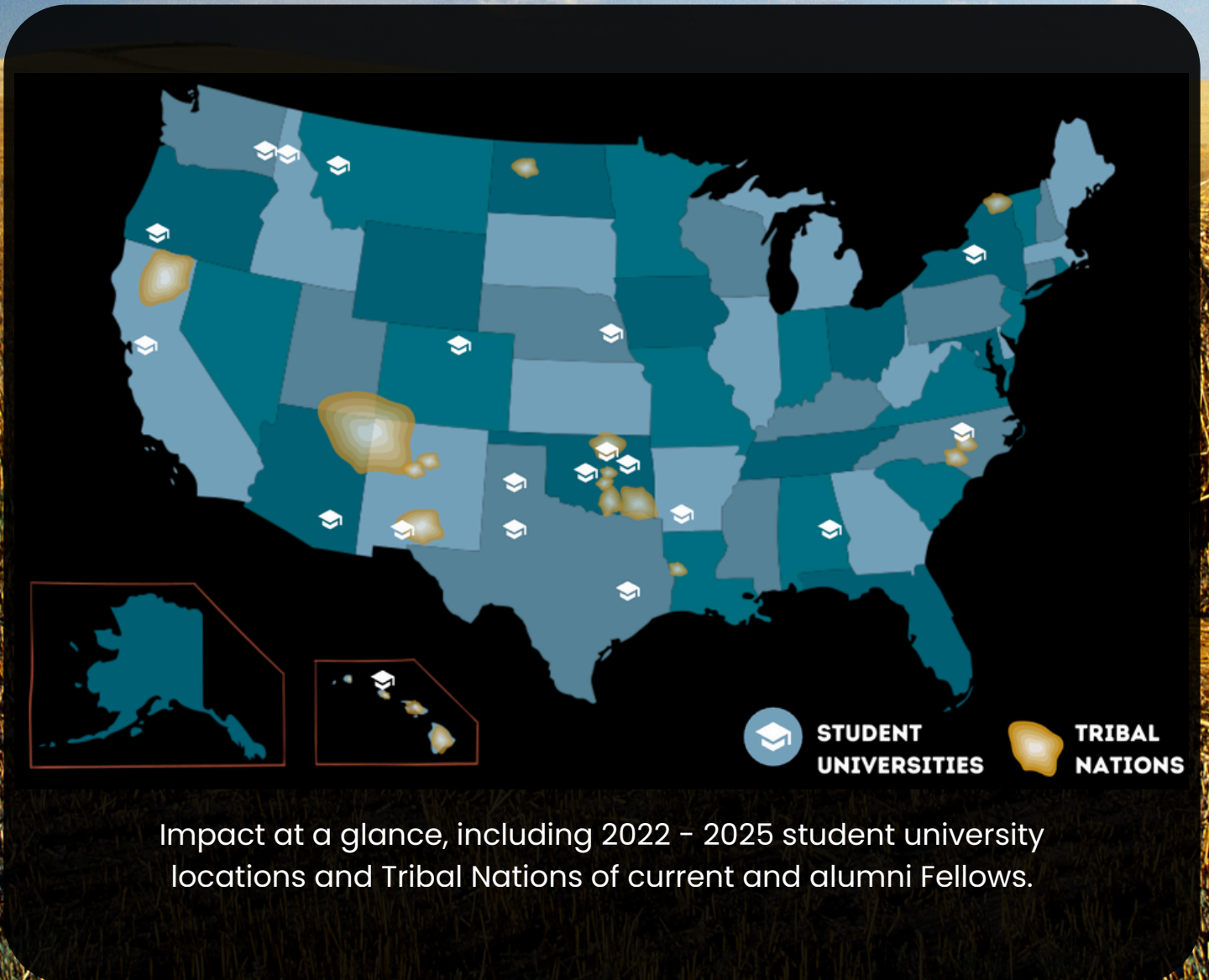
12 STATES

Our current Fellows study in universities across 12 different states: Alabama, Arkansas, Arizona, California, Hawai'i, Idaho, Montana, North Carolina, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Texas.

OUR IMPACT



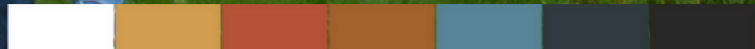
Current and alumni Tribal Agriculture Fellows represent 16 Tribal Nations and have been enrolled in a total of 15 universities across the United States. As these students progress in their education, they will generate the necessary research and data essential for Indigenous Agriculture and rural America to thrive.





OUR FELLOWS

2022-2025



2022 FELLOWS



NICOLE BENALLY (NAVAJO)

Graduate | University of Montana

Major: Ph.D. Forestry & Conservation Sciences.
Concentration: Indigenous Food Sovereignty.



MADDYLON BURRIS (CHICKASAW)

Undergraduate | Oklahoma State University

Major: B.S. Agriculture Education.
Concentration: Teaching Agriculture Education.

2023 FELLOWS



KIRSTEN BEGAY (NAVAJO)

Undergraduate | University of Arizona

Major: B.S. Veterinary Sciences.



BAILEY TOM (NAVAJO)

Graduate | Texas A&M University

Major: Master of Agribusiness.





MATEA WHITTINGTON (CHOCTAW-APACHE)

Undergraduate | Southern Arkansas University

Major: B.S. Agriculture Education.



CYNTHIA WILSON (DINÉ CITIZEN)

Graduate | University of California at Berkeley

Major: Ph.D. Environmental Science, Policy, and Management.

2024 FELLOWS



KYLE CHAVIS (LUMBEE)

Graduate | North Carolina State University

Major: M.S. Agriculture and Extension Education.



SYDNEY IVEY (COHARIE)

Undergraduate | North Carolina State University

Major: B.S. Agriculture Business Management.

Minor: Agricultural Entrepreneurship.



KRISTY KINLICHEENIE (NAVAJO)

Graduate | Texas Tech University

Major: Ed.D. Agriculture Education.

KYLE CHAVIS



“

Without TAF, I would not be in graduate school. I would have been done with my Bachelor's degree, which I was content with at the time. So TAF offers Native students a chance to pursue their education in agriculture.

We have got to keep these young people interested in ag and interested in the industry. That keeps them up to date with their history, because [their history] it's the farm, it's agriculture. TAF opens that door of opportunity to let kids go to college and study ag.

”



BREE LAMEMAN (NAVAJO)

Graduate | University of Arizona

Major: Ph.D. Health Behavior Health Promotion.
Concentration: Indigenous Food, Water, and Energy Systems.



KEONA MASON (KICKAPOO TRIBE OF OKLAHOMA)

Graduate | Oklahoma State University

Major: M.S. Agriculture Communications.



PEYTON MCMILLAN (LUMBEE)

Graduate | North Carolina State University

Major: M.S. Crop and Soil Sciences.



DAVIN MENDEZ (MESCALERO APACHE & PUEBLO OF ACOMA)

Undergraduate | New Mexico State University

Major: B.S. Rangeland Science.

2025 FELLOWS



DANIEL BIRD (SANTO DOMINGO PUEBLO)

Graduate | University of Montana

Major: Ph.D. Wildlife Biology.





JAELYN DOVE (LUMBEE TRIBE)

Graduate | Tuskegee University

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, DVM.



REEGAN DUNTEN (PIT RIVER TRIBE)

Undergraduate | Southern Oregon University

Major: B.S. Environment Science and Ag Education.



BONHAM ESLICK (CHOCTAW)

Undergraduate | Oklahoma State University

Major: B.S. Animal Science.
Concentration: Beef Genetics.



JOCELYN JAMES (CHOCTAW NATION)

Undergraduate | Oklahoma State University

Major: B.S. Plant and Soil Sciences.
Concentration: Soil and Water Resources.



SYDNIIE MARQUEZ (NATIVE HAWAI'IAN)

Undergraduate | University of Hawai'i at Manoa

Major: B.S. Environmental Science.

SYDNIÉ MARQUEZ



“

Being from Kohala, such a small town in Hawai'i, we would never hear about a full-ride scholarship, you know? Let alone a scholarship made for Native Hawai'ians, so I'm still speechless about this opportunity. So I am so grateful for everything that led up to this moment.

About the TAF retreat, in the beginning I was shy, but by the end I realized that these fellows weren't so different from me. And it's a weird feeling, because while I was across the nation, I still had this feeling that I was home. I knew that I was going to be safe because I knew you guys were there for us.

”



KAMERON RICHARDSON (LUMBEE TRIBE)

Graduate | University of Idaho

Major: Ph.D. Environmental Science.
Concentration: Soil Microbial Ecology.

ALUMNI



MARQUEL BEGAY (NAVAJO)

University of Arizona, 2024

Major: Ph.D. Ecology, Management, and
Restoration of Rangelands.



CARSON CAPPS (CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION)

Oklahoma State University, 2025

Major: B.S. Agribusiness.
Concentration: Pre-Law.



GRETA GUSTAFSON (MANDAN, HIDATSA, AND ARIKARA)

Washington State University, 2024

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, DVM.



HENRY HAINZINGER (OSAGE)

Oklahoma State University - Institute of Technology, 2023

Major: Certified Truck Technician as a Diesel
Mechanic.





GINA MCGUIRE (ŌIWI [NATIVE HAWAIIAN])

University of Hawai'i at Manoa, 2023

Major: Ph.D. Geography & Environment.

Concentration: Indigenous Geographies of Wellness.



SANTANA NEZ (NAVAJO)

University of Arizona, 2023

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, DVM.

Concentration: Mixed Animal / Food; Animal Medicine.



JONATHAN ROMERO (PUEBLO OF JEMEZ)

West Texas A&M University, 2025

Major: Masters in Agriculture.



JUSTINA SLIM (NAVAJO)

Colorado State University, 2024

Major: B.S. Animal Science & Agriculture Business.



PETER THAIS (SAINT REGIS MOHAWK)

Cornell University, 2025

Major: B.S. Biological Engineering.



BRENDAN WALKER

“

“The Tribal Agriculture Fellowship is more than a scholarship program, it's a professional development organization. They try to support and influence the way you grow as a professional and as a person, especially in academic journeys.

For me personally, TAF inspired me to take more risks, especially in my professional journey - leading me to begin creating a nonprofit veterinary organization with other vet professionals. All of this so I can begin practicing mixed medicine back home on the Navajo reservation.”

”



BRENDAN WALKER (NAVAJO)

University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine, 2025

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine, DVM.

Concentration: Mixed Animal Medicine with a focus on Large Animal Medicine.



KIMBERLYNNIBAH YAZZIE (NAVAJO)

Oklahoma State University, 2025

Major: B.S. Animal Science

Concentration: Pre-Vet.

**2025 STUDENT RETREAT GROUP PHOTO AT MILLIS FARM
MILLIS, MA**



A background image showing a person in a dark jacket and hat standing in a field. In the background, there is a house with a red roof and green trees. The image is semi-transparent to allow text to be overlaid.

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT



TAF Fellows dedicate themselves to in-depth, meaningful research aimed at uncovering innovative solutions to some of the most urgent and complex agricultural challenges facing Indian Country.

Their work not only addresses immediate needs but also deepens our understanding of the intricate relationship between traditional knowledge and modern science, paving the way for a more sustainable and resilient future in Native agriculture.

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



BREE LAMEMAN (NAVAJO)

GRADUATE RESEARCH ON INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY AND A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY ON COVID-19 AMONG NAVAJO ADULTS



Intersection of Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Tribal Agriculture Data Needs in the US.

<https://indigenoustatalab.org/policy-briefs/>



Brown, H. E., Begay, R. L., Sanderson, P. R., Chief, C., Lameman, B., & Harris, R. B. (2024). Healthcare access, attitudes and behaviours among Navajo adults during the Covid-19 pandemic: A cross-sectional study. *BMJ Public Health*, 2(1).

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjph-2023-000061>



GRETA GUSTAFSON (MANDAN, HIDATSA, AND ARIKARA)

A STUDY ON EQUINE PROTOZOAL MYELOENCEPHALITIS



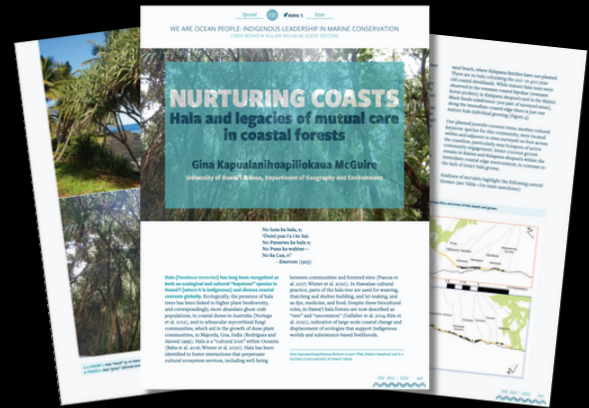
Gustafson, G. (2024). Equine Protozoal Myeloencephalitis: A Clinical Approach. Washington State University, College of Veterinary Medicine.

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



GINA MCGUIRE ('ŌIWI [NATIVE HAWAIIAN])

GRADUATE RESEARCH AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS SHARING COASTAL CARE AND CLIMATE REPORTING.



McGuire, G., & Mawyer, A. (2023). Cultivating the Unseen: Pa'akai and the Role of Practice in Coastal Care. *Ethnobiology Letters*, 14(2), 22-36. <https://doi.org/10.14237/ebl.14.2.2023.1825>

McGuire, G. K. (2022). Nurturing Coasts: Hala and the Legacy of Mutual Care in Coastal Forests. *Parks Stewardship Forum*, 38(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.5070/P538257519>



State of Hawaii. (2024). Hawai'i Climate Week 2024. Cultural Forests, Hawaiian Agroforestry and Climate. Presented by Gina McGuire. <https://climate.hawaii.gov/hawaii%CA%BBi-climate-week-2024/>



Native Climate. (2023, December 1). Native Climate reporter represents U.S. at Indigenous Research Network Workshop. [Keynote Speaker, Global Research Alliance Indigenous Research Network](#) [Keynote Speaker, Global Research Alliance Indigenous Research Network](#)

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



CYNTHIA WILSON (DINÉ)

THROUGH CONFERENCES AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS, CYNTHIA DRAWS ON HER EXPERIENCE IN THE BEARS EARS COMMUNITY, AS WELL AS HER WORK ADVANCING TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND SELF-DETERMINATION THROUGH INDIGENOUS-LED NONPROFITS AND NATIVE-DRIVEN RESEARCH.

INDIGENOUS CO-STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC LANDS: LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE FEBRUARY 21-22, 2024

GRATON RESORT & CASINO- ROHNERT PARK, CA

Wilson, C., & Noyes, G. (2024, February 21). Grassroots Strategies at Bears Ears National Monument, Utah. Indigenous Co-Stewardship of Public Lands: Lessons for the Future. Rohnert Park, CA.

Caring for Navajo Culture: In Museums and Beyond

Date and Time

November 15, 2023

06:00PM - 08:00PM America/New_York

Location

Online and Geological Lecture Hall, 24 Oxford Street, Cambridge, MA and Peabody Museum, 11 Divinity Avenue, Cambridge, MA

Wilson, C., Campbell, W., & Mach, S. (2023, November 16). Caring for Navajo Culture: In Museums and Beyond. Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology. Cambridge, MA.



Wilson, C. (2023, August 4). Indigenous Leadership Summit. Native Forward Scholars Fund. Albuquerque, NM.



RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



DANIEL BIRD

TEMPORAL HABITAT USE OF MULE DEER IN THE PUEBLO OF SANTA ANA, NEW MEXICO

Our results can help managers identify locations in and around the Pueblo of Santa Ana where future development such as highway expansion are likely to conflict with mule deer activity and locations where habitat enhancement projects such as adding water sources can have the greatest effect for the deer population.



Bird, Daniel E., et al. "Temporal habitat use of mule deer in the pueblo of Santa Ana, New Mexico." *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, vol. 88, no. 6, 11 June 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jwmg.22621>.

TAF FELLOWS AT THE MASHPEE WAMPANOAG TRIBES SHELLFISH FARM | MASHPEE, MA



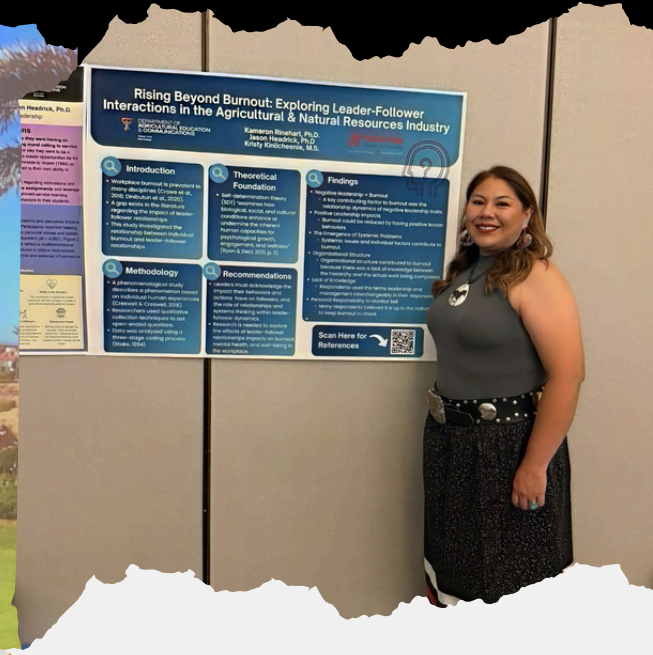
RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



KRISTY KINLICHEENIE

35TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE HOSTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF LEADERSHIP EDUCATORS

Kristy presented at the 35th Annual conference hosted by the Association of Leadership Educators. She presented on Rising Beyond Burnout: Exploring Leader-Follower Interactions in the Agricultural & Natural Resources Industry, which explored the causes of burnout and the critical role leadership plays in promoting well-being in the workplace.



RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



MADDYLON BURRIS (CHICKASAW)

JUDGING FFA AGRICULTURAL POLICY DIVISION AND DIVING INTO EDUCATIONAL LABS

"I had the privilege of serving as a judge in the Agricultural Policy division during Oklahoma State University's annual Collegiate FFA Speech Contest. In this

role, I evaluated speeches from FFA members statewide, assessing their understanding of agricultural policy issues, public speaking skills, and ability to engage with complex topics."



"The picture on the left is from the Robert M. Kerr Food and Agriculture Products Center. As part of my agricultural education class, I had the opportunity to work in a meat lab where I learned how to process and package pork sausage. The hands-on experience taught me about food safety, meat grinding, seasoning, casing, and proper packaging techniques."

"Through my agricultural education lab at Oklahoma State University, I had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience at the school farm. I participated in hand-planting potatoes, operated a transplanter to plant onions, and helped construct a deer fence to protect crops. This experience deepened my practical knowledge of crop production and farm management."



"I also had the opportunity to volunteer at NAAE Teach Ag Day in Edmond, Oklahoma, where I led an interactive game room activity. Students acted out skits based on real-life scenarios ag teachers face, such as 'messing with the radio on the way to a contest,' highlighting the diverse and unique experiences within agricultural education. I also spoke to the entire group about my passion for teaching ag and encouraged them to consider the impactful and rewarding path of becoming an ag educator."

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



KIRSTEN BEGAY (NAVAJO)

CYCLOSPORA LAB

"Last semester I had the opportunity to work in the Cyclospora Lab, within the Food Safety program at the University of Arizona. We are studying agricultural waters as they are a critical source of contamination for produce during irrigation.

Monitoring and identifying *C. cayetanensis* in these waters is essential to preventing outbreaks, ensuring food safety, and protecting public health. This research supports our lab's goal of optimizing detection methods and identifying contamination sources to reduce foodborne illness and improve public health outcomes."



PETER THAIS (SAINT REGIS MOHAWK)

GEOGRAPHICAL MAPPING AND DATA ANALYSIS ON LAND GRANT UNIVERSITIES

Thais, P. (2023). The impacts of dispossession through the Morrill Act of 1862 on Indigenous food systems: Geographical mapping on ArcGIS Pro and data analysis on Julia and R.

Thais, P. (2024). Summer research. Land Grant Universities and Indigenous Food Sovereignty, publication coming soon.



BONHAM ESLICK (CHOCTAW NATION)

OKLAHOMA STATE FFA OFFICER ELECTIONS

Bonham Eslick was elected as a 2025-2026 Oklahoma State FFA Officer.

"I feel very blessed for the privilege to serve this organization for another year. I plan to spend every day reminding FFA members that no matter what background you come from, you always have a place in this organization."

RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



SYDNEY IVEY

U.S. SOYBEAN EXPORT COUNCIL (USSEC) INTERN RETREAT | MISSOURI

During the three-day retreat, Sydney visited the USSEC headquarters, where she deepened her understanding of soybean exports and global trade. One of the highlights of her experience included a visit to the Melvin Price Locks and Dam in Illinois. Located on the Mississippi River along the Illinois-Missouri border, this site is a critical hub for agricultural transportation.



Another key part of the retreat was a tour of Bayer Crop Science's Research and Development Campus in Chesterfield, Missouri. There, Sydney gained insight into Bayer's cutting-edge work in agricultural biotechnology, plant breeding, and sustainability. She explored their greenhouses, laboratories, and innovation spaces, learning how Bayer supports global food systems through research and science.



JOCELYN JAMES

INDIGENOUS FOOD AND AGRICULTURE INITIATIVE YOUTH SUMMIT | ARKANSAS

At this summit, I was able to expand my knowledge in Tribal food sovereignty through pathways of traditional ecological knowledge, agriculture policy, land stewardship, animal husbandry, and more. This event also provided me with the

opportunity to network with other young professionals within the Tribal agriculture industry, and gain a new perspective on issues facing agriculture in Indian country.

During the summit, I visited the Muscogee Nation meat processing facility, cooked Indigenous foods with two professional Diné chefs, and worked with IFAI's staff attorneys to develop priorities for a hypothetical new Tribal agriculture department.



RESEARCH & ACTIVITIES



TAF FELLOWS AT THE 2025 AGRICULTURE FUTURE OF AMERICA (AFA) PLANT SCIENCE INSTITUTE SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA

This summer, our fellows, Reegan, Maddylyn, Matea, Jocelyn, and Davin attended the AFA Plant Science Institute, gaining a deeper understanding of the ag industry from the inside out. From roundtable discussions to one-on-one chats with producers and executives in the industry,

they explored the vital role agriculture plays in feeding the world. AFA Plant Science Institutes rotates to different regions across the US each year, providing our fellows with a unique chance to explore the country's diverse ecosystems.



TAF FELLOWS AT PEQUOIG FARM ORANGE, MA

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION



Introducing young people to agriculture through events like Career Ag Days and conferences such as the FFA Washington Leadership Conference is critical for building the next generation of agricultural leaders, innovators, and advocates. These experiences expose students to the vast range of opportunities that exist in agriculture beyond traditional farming, such as food science, environmental sustainability, agribusiness, natural resource management, and policy work.

For Native youth especially, creating these connections early is about more than just career readiness. It's about empowerment, cultural revitalization, and food sovereignty. Agriculture is deeply rooted in many Indigenous traditions, and helping students see themselves in this space allows them to reclaim and reimagine those traditions for the future.



BUILDING THE BRIDGE

9

CONFERENCES
ATTENDED IN 2025

7

EVENTS TAF HOSTED
OR HELPED DEVELOP

JUNE 2024 - NOVEMBER 2025

- National Ag in the Classroom
- Student Retreat
- Washington Leadership Conference
- New Mexico, & Oklahoma Food Inspector bootcamp
- CPER Tribal Field Day
- Cultivating Career Alliance
- Oklahoma State University
- FFA National Convention
- First American Land Grant Consortium annual conference
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society Conference
- Growing Power & Climate conference
- Agriculture Future of America Leaders Conference
- National Association of Agricultural Educators and Career and Technical Education Vision Conference
- American Farm Bureau
- Intertribal Agriculture Council Conference
- Wingate Ag Career Day
- Alliance X University
- MANRRS conference

WINGATE CAREER AG DAYS

TAF recently helped Wingate High School in Ft. Wingate, New Mexico, host its first Agriculture Career Day, drawing hundreds of junior and senior students for a full day of hands-on learning and career exploration. The event brought together 15 vendors representing a wide range of opportunities in the agriculture sector from education and conservation to food systems and natural resources.

The goal is to introduce students to the many career paths available in agriculture and inspire them to see their future in this critical and evolving field. Events like these are an important step in showing Native youth how their interests and talents can connect to meaningful careers in agriculture, whether in their own communities or beyond. By engaging students early, Wingate High School is helping to build the next generation of agricultural leaders.



FFA WASHINGTON LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE (WLC)

This summer, TAF proudly partnered with the Native American Agriculture Fund to support 15 Native American high school students in attending the FFA Washington Leadership Conference (WLC). These students joined hundreds of others from across the country to build leadership skills, connect with peers, and explore how they can make a lasting impact in their communities.

At TAF, we believe that investing in Native youth is essential to the future of Native agriculture. Supporting their growth and leadership development is part of our ongoing commitment to uplifting the next generation of Native agriculturalists.



DENVER MCBRIDE



“ When I first got to WLC and met everyone with the TAF group, I can't say that I wasn't nervous. I knew that I was the only person at the conference from Oklahoma, and I didn't know anyone. That quickly changed. I swiftly made friends with everyone in the TAF group, in my Community Group, and many people who weren't in either of these groups! I enjoyed WLC with my whole heart, and I would greatly encourage anyone to attend.

”

**SILO HIGH SCHOOL
OKLAHOMA**

KAINOA MORTON



“ WLC was incredible and the greatest event I have ever experienced in FFA.

Getting the opportunity to grow connections with members from Tennessee and make new friendships with other states and learn about their lifestyles was very interesting.

Overall, I feel WLC has shaped the person I am today and made me a better leader for the future.

”

**CAMPBELL COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
TENNESSEE**



BUFFALO TO SCHOOL

The Regional Buffalo to Schools training is working to begin or continue incorporating Indigenous foods into school meal menus. Held in collaboration with local and national organizations such as the Intertribal Buffalo Council, Great Plains Tribal Leaders Health Board, The Nature Conservancy, and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the training brought together experts, elders, and community leaders

to explore how bison and other Indigenous foods can be introduced into school menus. TAF sent five cooks from three schools to learn from Indigenous Chef Sean Sherman and Chef Mariah Gladstone about new recipes to incorporate in their kitchens.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL EDUCATORS



Sending Native American teachers and those serving Indigenous students to the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Conference provides a powerful opportunity for representation, growth, and knowledge-sharing within agricultural education.

The NAAE Conference brings together educators, administrators, and students from across the country to exchange ideas, discover new tools, and advance innovation in agricultural education. For Native American teachers, this conference is a valuable space to amplify Indigenous voices, share culturally relevant agricultural practices, and bring back resources that can directly benefit their students and communities.

TALEEK HARLEE



“

Thanks to TAF, I had the incredible opportunity to attend the NAAE conference.

I participated in hands-on professional development, learned new strategies for engaging students in agriculture, and connected with teachers from across the country. These experiences will directly impact my classroom and help me provide even more meaningful learning opportunities for my students.

**NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURE TEACHER
PURNELL SWETT HIGH SCHOOL**

”

NATIONAL AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM CONFERENCE (NAITC)

This year, the National Ag in the Classroom Conference continued its mission to provide educators with valuable tools and experiences to enrich and diversify their curriculum.

Through a series of dynamic workshops and events, the conference fosters a collaborative space for professional growth. To support this initiative, TAF proudly sponsored nine teachers working with Native American students from diverse backgrounds, helping to ensure that agricultural education is inclusive, relevant, and accessible to all learners.



NATIONAL FFA CONVENTION



The National FFA Convention gathers tens of thousands of students, educators, and ag leaders from across the country. Here, TAF can engage directly with Native youth interested in agriculture, providing support, mentorship, and connections that encourage their long-term involvement in the field.

Attending the National FFA Convention allows TAF to meet potential candidates for the fellowship and to meet with essential partners to support the legacy of Native American agriculture around the country.





BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Partnership is at the heart of everything we do. At the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship, we know that cultivating Native agricultural leaders requires more than funding — it requires connection, opportunity, and shared commitment. Whether you're in agribusiness, academia, philanthropy, tribal leadership, or production agriculture, there is a role for you in advancing this work. By partnering with TAF, you help our students gain access to the tools, networks, and knowledge needed to lead in all agriculture careers that honor both innovation and tradition.

This is more than an investment in students — it's an investment in the future of agriculture. Your support helps promote generational land stewardship, strengthen Native food systems, and ensure that rural communities across the country remain resilient for years to come. Let's work together to grow something that lasts. To discuss how you can partner with us, contact Nicole DeVon at 479-313-1535 or nicoled@taffellows.org



FRIENDS OF TAF



Friends of TAF represents the heart of TAF's mission to drive innovation and resilience in agriculture to better support Native students. This group consists of leaders and change makers dedicated to advancing our shared vision. Friends of TAF provides a diverse blend of expertise, passion, and perspective to help TAF navigate the ever-evolving landscape of agriculture and its related fields.

Through identifying emerging issues, fostering meaningful partnerships, and serving as dedicated ambassadors, Friends of TAF members amplify TAF's impact and visibility. Their guidance not only strengthens the foundation of our programs, but also extends our reach, ensuring we remain responsive, forward-thinking, and deeply connected to the communities we serve.

If you would like to join Friends of TAF, please contact Nicole DeVon at nicoled@tafellows.org.



MEET OUR TEAM



Nicole DeVon
Executive Director
(Mescalero Apache)

20+ years of experience working with Native American students in higher education.



April Parrott
Program Coordinator
(Cherokee)

Experience in youth and adult personal development. Has more than 10 years working with youth in agriculture.



Jasmine Locklear
Agriculture Education Specialist
& Special Projects Coordinator
(Lumbee)

Experienced with Native youth in agriculture education programs and in building agriculture partnerships.



Gabrielle Budder
Communications Coordinator
(Cherokee)

Experienced in Native American agriculture communications and storytelling.

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KARLI MOORE (PRESIDENT) LUMBEE

Karli boasts a varied academic background and is presently engaged in a PhD program at Stanford University. She plays an active role in promoting tribal sovereignty and economic development through sustainable agriculture, having helped secure investments surpassing \$40 million in Native food systems, all while garnering numerous prestigious scholarships.

DR. JIM HAVER (TREASURER)

Jim chairs the Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences program at Chief Dull Knife College on the Northern Cheyenne Reservation. He teaches undergraduate classes and adult education courses in welding and metal fabrication, boasting extensive experience in teaching, research, and grant-based projects within Tribal Colleges and 1994 Land Grant Institutions.



MATT DENETCLAW (SECRETARY) NAVAJO

Matthew has built a successful career in the beef industry. Earning accolades such as collegiate livestock judging scholarships, founding a show cattle operation, serving on the board of directors for the New Mexico Cattle Growers Association, and previously assisting Navajo producers at the Intertribal Agriculture Council.



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DR. JOE GRAHAM PUEBLO OF LAGUNA

Dr. Joe L. Graham, a member of the Pueblo of Laguna, is the Senior Program Officer at the Native American Agriculture Fund. He has a strong commitment to his Tribal community and extensive experience in academia and program leadership, spanning multiple land grant university systems and diverse volunteer services focused on Tribal economic development and community initiatives.

DR. LAKISHA ODOM

Dr. LaKisha Odom, a Scientific Program Director at the Foundation for Food and Agriculture Research, leads initiatives that tackle major challenges in food and agriculture. She advances innovative science through collective impact and public-private partnerships, while prioritizing diversity in cultivating the next generation of scientists. Her work spans projects in soil health, sustainable water management, plant efficiency, ecosystem services, and crop pest and disease detection.



Pictured TAF Fellows (L to R):
Johnathan Romero, Brendan
Walker, and Nicole Benally.



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2024-25 ANNUAL REPORT

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