THE SIERRA CLUB GRASSROOTS NETWORK
YEAR-END GRANT REPORT
01/01/2021 – 12/31/2021

Your Team: Wildlands and Wilderness Team

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Total Grant Funds Received in 2021: $10,000 for Native American Land Rights Subteam Fall Gathering
Total Grant Funds Spent in 2021: $10,000 for a NALR Fall Gathering Indigenous Consultant/Facilitator and Speakers

I. GOAL AND PROSPECTIVE OUTCOMES

(a) Conservation:
Advocacy Partnering - Identify (and ideally, start working together on) specific opportunities where Sierra Club can increase its support for Tribal sovereignty, land access, co-management, and Nature protection.

Note: The Gathering identified some legislative and land conservation opportunities where Sierra Club can partner with Tribal allies (specifically regarding the RESPECT Act, co-management, FPIC, and the Red Desert campaign).

(b) Organizational:
1. Learning and Capacity-Building
   • Listen to Native peoples’ experiences and concerns—especially in their interactions with Sierra Club and other conservation organizations
   • Build understanding, respect, and sensitivity among Sierra Club volunteers and staff interacting with Native peoples, with emphasis on understanding sovereignty
   • Improve Sierra Club volunteer and staff competency to work in mutuality and reciprocity with Native communities

Note: This was the focus of the 2021 Gathering and formal and informal feedback confirms that the Gathering was very successful in this regard.
2. Relationship-Building
- Strengthen Sierra Club’s existing/potential partnerships with Native nations and communities
- Seek common ground for working together to protect nature and build ongoing, non-transactional relationships
- Open conversations on sometimes-challenging issues like the concept of Wilderness “where man is a visitor who does not remain”; cultural uses of wildlands; Tribal land management and co-management; land returns and reparations; and uplifting Native knowledge and land stewardship practices

Note: Although we made some progress in this area, we have only started this process. We have opened the conversations and in doing so have begun to work together on mutually important issues. The Indigenous focus of the Gathering was one constructive way to reach out to Native nations and communities.

II. MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENT

In November 2021, NALR hosted a two-day virtual conference with 80 Sierra Club staff/volunteers and Indigenous participants. This gathering centered Indigenous speakers and activists in all of the sessions – the planning process and gathering were led by a Native American (Diné) facilitator and almost all of the speakers and breakout facilitators were Native Americans. Topics included Tribal Sovereignty, Land Back, Co-Management, and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. Our goal was to strengthen Sierra Club’s understanding, relationships, and partnerships with Indigenous peoples through listening, discussion, and acknowledgement of Tribal histories and cultures. In this way, we built common ground with Tribal partners and greatly increased staff and volunteers’ capacity to enter into partnerships with Native Americans using the Jemez Principles. Participant response to the content and format was very positive and the formal evaluations (see Section VI) confirmed that the gathering was a success in advancing our goals. The evaluations affirm that this gathering is just the first step in a multi-year process.

III. PROGRESS ON OTHER OUTCOMES

The Wilderness Renewal & Congress Subteam held a virtual Wilderness Revival/30x30 Gathering June 25-26 with 130 Sierra Club wilderness activists and staff. We reviewed the Eight Step Guide for Wilderness Legislation and presented 30x30 building blocks - the National Forest Protection Act, Protecting America’s Wilderness and Public Lands Package, Bureau of Land Management Roadless Lands Section 202 Wilderness Study Areas, and the Oil & Gas Moratorium. We held breakout sessions on Wilderness Legislation/Proposals, National Monuments, Wild & Scenic Rivers, and State Level Initiatives. We previewed the Native American Land Rights Subteam Fall Gathering. The June gathering began with a Red Road to DC Lummi Nation presentation and ended with a keynote address by Senator Ben Ray
Lujan. Consultation on proposals and campaigns with chapter breakout participants is continuing.

The Bureau of Land Management Subteam has held four 2021 meeting calls with BLM state wilderness staff and subteam members from BLM states, leading the Club’s efforts to resume the BLM’s practice of establishing Wilderness Study Areas, the best contribution to 30x30 without congressional action. The Legislative Review Subteam has reviewed and consulted with chapters on wildlands legislation, including the Southern Nevada Lands Bill, Clearwater-Blackfoot Bill, Badger-Two Medicine Legislation, and Shenandoah Mountain Conservation Bill.

Two new subteams have been formed: National Monument Subteam and Recreation Issues Subteam, both with many new non-Core Team members. The Recreation Issues Subteam will consult with the Conservation Policy Committee on e-bikes. The Membership & Recruitment Subteam added four new core members; two team members resigned in 2021. The Wildlands Team was well represented on the Working Group led by Jackie Ostfeld that recommended renaming the John Muir Trail to Nüümü Poyo or another Indigenous name. The recommendation was approved by the Program Department and Vice President for Conservation.

The Wildlands Activist Call Subteam held monthly activist zoom calls with the following topics and speakers: Native American Land Rights, Dan Millis on Borderlands, Representative Diana DeGette, Rachel Rosenfeld on Pennsylvania Water Defenders, Jason Mark of Sierra Magazine, Bruce Hamilton, Francine D. Spang-Willis on Bison Becoming Wild Again, Joan Maloof on Old Growth Forests, Chad Hanson on Wildfire, Wilderness Revival Follow Up, Dan Chu, and Betsy Gaines Quammen on Polarization & Rebellion in America.

On April 29, the Native American Land Rights Subteam held a Grassroots Network Training on Applying the Jemez Principles in Partnership with Native American Peoples. We shared our work and the guidance we developed on applying the Jemez Principles in partnering with Native American Peoples to protect Lands, Water and Wildlife. The Subteam also developed a survey of Sierra Club staff and volunteers to assess the ways that Sierra Club has engaged with Native American peoples. We want to understand what has ‘worked’ and what has ‘not worked’ in hopes of learning, improving, and applying ‘lessons learned’ to future engagement with Native American peoples. The survey results will be summarized and will supplement the Team’s guidance in collaborating with Native American peoples on Wildlands’ protection.

IV. GRASSROOTS CAPACITY - How many people have you engaged? How have you built your team/support for your issue/project?

- # of Core Team members: 19
  - See end of document
• **# of leaders** in addition to your Core Team (some overlap between subteams) 
  (Leader = someone who has spoken for the team, helped coordinate team 
  efforts or mobilized other volunteers):
  - Native American Land Rights Subteam - 13
  - Wilderness Renewal Subteam - 2
  - BLM Wildlands Subteam - 12
  - Recreation Issues Subteam - 10
  - National Monument Subteam - 7
  - Forest Wilderness Subteam - 1

• **# of activists** (someone who has invested an hour or more of time in an event or 
  activity related to the Team):
  - 25-50 per Activist Wild Call
  - 80 at the NALR Fall Gathering
  - 120 at the Wildlands Revival Gathering

• **# of members on Team’s page** on the G.N. website (if applicable):
  - Main Page - 100
  - Training Page - 63

• **# of Facebook Followers** (if applicable): 508

• **# of email list subscribers** (e.g., listserv, Google Group) participants (if 
  applicable):
  - CONS-WILDLANDS-COMM - 47
  - CONS-WILDLANDS-INFO - 363
  - native-american-land-rights@googlegroups.com - 30
  - national-monuments-subteam@googlegroups.com - 26

V. LOOKING AHEAD

The fall NALR Gathering was an important initial step for the Sierra Club’s efforts to 
implement the Jemez Principles and build long-term and just relationships with 
Tribal nations. But it was only an initial step in a much longer process. We intend to 
hold a similar gathering in the fall of 2022 that will similarly center Indigenous 
speakers and issues and also focus on ways that Sierra Club has and can find common 
ground with Tribes across the country. In addition to hiring an Indigenous facilitator 
and intern, we need to increase BIPOC leadership and participation in NALR itself. All 
of the individuals who attended the 2021 NALR Gathering are potential activists that 
can assist in our work. In addition to reviewing the Gathering evaluations, following 
up with attendees is an important first step in our work for 2022. We will continue to 
work with Indigenous-led organizations such as the NDN Collective, the Native 
Organizers Alliance, and the Pueblo Action Alliance who participated in the 
Gathering. A specific challenge that NALR and the broader Wilderness and Wildlands 
Team face is that some traditional wildland/wilderness activists have a very narrow 
view of Native American sovereignty and Tribes’ willingness/ability to protect their 
natural resources and are reluctant to support Tribal partnerships. At the same time, 
some Tribal allies, younger staff and volunteers, and social justice focused individuals
have a very narrow and uninformed understanding of wilderness. As a result, there is some underlying tension in doing joint conservation work. Direct dialogue and mutual listening will be an important element of our work in 2022.

VI. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Native American Land Rights (NALR) Fall Gathering Overview Agenda: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BbxG6v82iqc0W6i4NPVvoSBHOX-yYhJw/view?usp=sharing

NALR Fall Gathering Agenda, Speaker & Facilitator Biographies, Suggested Links: https://drive.google.com/file/d/18yhw9PIRQFPoFvL8CJJa4ml3VAY0dWPr/view?usp=sharing

NALR Gathering Recordings, Resources, Notes: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1vcCWafVPpXKsZHqjcKnRR3xkElZYpJyc?usp=sharing

NALR Post-Gathering Survey Report: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U8bYApbwQznQXID6a2EU4W4KX180ybQ1/view?usp=sharing

Applying the Jemez Principles in Partnership with Native American Peoples – A Sierra Club Grassroots Network Training led by the Native American Land Rights Subteam of the Wildlands & Wilderness Team – April 29, 2021: Jemez Principles webinar 04-21 audio_only.m4a - Google Drive and https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1nVXT3P_GPigGTq5-M-PaYElPkmsWfdiB4Uy7U0f7m5A/edit?usp=sharing

WWT Native American Partnerships Survey (google.com)

Wilderness Revival / 30x30 Gathering – Hosted by the Wildlands and Wilderness Grassroots Network Team in Collaboration with the WILD Campaign – Agenda, PowerPoints, Recordings: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1rX20MKJRk9heY2TYbYEyw15KwzybK_dg?usp=sharing

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