INDIGENOUS VISION, AN EDUCATIONAL NONPROFIT

SPRING 2025 NEWSLETTER

HIGHLIGHTS:

- **Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center Grand Opening** is scheduled for June 14, 2025 and the fundraiser is full swing.
- **The Dream Tipi Raffle Fundraiser** is heating up with the deadline set for June 10, 2025!
- **MMIWarriors Retreat** is set for the weekend of September 19th along Flathead Lake in Montana.
- **Our Donors and Funders** are amazing and give us the power to do the necessary work.
- **The Blackfoot Place Map** continues to thrive during the winter, story time season.
- **New Board Members!**
- **Cultural Humility:** our next training begins this May 20, 2025.

WELCOME TO SPRING

Indigenous Vision (IV) has been working diligently both behind the scenes and out in the world on our various projects and programs. From our latest in-person Cultural Humility training in Albuquerque, to our warm and comfy homes where we record our podcast, strategize, and spend our days grant writing, it's an honor to do the work we love with all the amazing people who are with us along the way.

We hope you enjoy our latest newsletter giving you some insight on who we are, what we do, and whom we do it with. As the season changes here on Great Turtle Island and we start to make plans for spending time on the Land for the next leg of this journey, we're excited to share it with you.



Bear Gulch, Montana Photo by Souta Calling Last



WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS

IV welcomes our newest Board member, Edith Thomas, Akimel O'otham of the Gila River Community of southern Arizona. Edith has officially joined our board and we couldn't be happier. She is a bird singer in her traditional community, and has a background in anthropology & archaeology. Featured below is a photo of Edith who along with a few others, is examining ancient footprints found along the Rillito River that have been preserved for nearly 3,500 years! Having a wonderful Elder like Edith who is passionate about her work and community is a true blessing for IV. We look forward to her insights and future contributions with our upcoming and exciting summer and fall seasons!



Edith Thomas



Don Decker

Apache Nation Elder, Don Decker has returned to the IV Board after a couple of years off. Don was the former Director of the Apache Culture Department for the Yavapai-Apache Nation (YAN) and the Director of the Public Relations Department. A fluent Apache language speaker and former teacher makes Don's sharing of wisdom with community a real gift to our board. Don is also an accomplished writer, his book 'Apache Odyssey' gives readers a stunning look into the exploits of growing up on a Apache reservation in Arizona and what life was like for Don travelling to college while simultaneously becoming a professional folk singer in the 1960's.

We treasure our work with Don and are more than looking forward to spending some time with him this Fall in his beloved Verde Valley as we move into our second leg of our project with the Yavapai-Apache Nation. Learn more about our current **Board Members** and our **Advisory Council and Knowledge Keepers** at indigenousvision.org under the *About Us & Out Team* tabs.



Robert Johnson and Edie Thomas admiring a preserved ancient footprint belonging to her ancestors.



BEAR GULCH GRAND OPENING

The Grand Opening progress is blooming! While the building is on pause due to weather, construction will continue when weather permits. A billboard has been purchased with the support of Montana Department of Commerce, who also are supporting the grand opening party, and will be placed along I-90 in Billings, MT. If you see it take a pic and tag us @indigenousvisionmedia or @beargulchpictographs.

The center is a small steel building being erected by Macie with the help of local Lewistown contractors. The visitor center will feature four exhibits including a Bear Brave heavy shield replica along with the arrows and weapons used by the warriors.

Marty Heavy Head, Blood Tribe, is helping to assemble the weapon exhibit. Souta recently drove a generous donation of a beautiful large male grizzly hide from employees of the Bozeman-Missoula offices of Montana Fish & Wildlife to Browning for Blackfeet artist Jesse DeRosier to trim for belts and wraps, and paint with the traditional ochre paints. The two mannequins, one named Heavy Shield, will be exhibited and travel to other museums throughout the winter to share what ancestral Blackfoot warriors and game rangers looked like 5-10,000 years ago.

According to the 5000 pictographs, of which about 1000 of them are heavy shields, this place was well used throughout the 23,000+ occupancy of the area. There is also a small buffalo jump and kill site complete with roasting pits at the pictograph site.



Picture: Nearly 4ft round Heavy Shield made by Souta next to Keyser Drawings of shields found in Bear Gulch, and 'Heavy Shield,' one of the Visitor Center mannequins



The presence of heavy shields depicts heavy usage or one of the primary meeting spots for paahsikoi, the hunting and war parties who carried heavy shields through what is known as the "prehistoric" era. But what's prehistoric to some, is just a very long time ago to others and the Blackfoot Nations have held onto stories of surviving ice ages, hunting for and around megafauna, watching the land change and successfully adapting to it.





Blackfeet Bear Braves 1902

Some Blackfoot Heavy Shields are depicted by the presence of grizzly feet, the claw/ear headpiece, necklaces and other weapons and symbols of the paahsikoi (bear brave)

The paahsikoi were organized as a society throughout the better part of the last 5-10,000 years and were absorbed in the late 1800s when the Blackfeet people were moved to a reservation. Ceremonies, language and most all cultural practices were banned. But that didn't stop the ceremonies from happening, many went underground and thankfully there were people who kept the langage and the old stories alive.



TOUR HISTORY



Come hear more of this distinctly Blackfoot narrative at the place called second to Writing-on-Stone. **Celebrate the Bear Gulch Grand Opening on June 14th, 2025,** we will also be celebrating our official **tenth year as a nonprofit!** We'll have refreshments and our raffle tipi set up for all to learn, experience and enjoy. **Free with your tribal ID!**

THE VISITOR CENTER CAN USE YOUR HELP!

Community Sponsors: Love history? Help us preserve and educate! Contribute financially or with an in-kind donation of a story or piece of art; winter count hides, shields etc.

We are **seeking community sponsors to help complete celebration planning, building and exhibits.** Sponsors will be permanently thanked with your name engraved in rock art displayed at the entrance of the Visitor Center. Indigenous Vision, an educational nonprofit is a 501c3 tax deductible organization. To make a donation please contact us directly: info@indigenousvision.org or scan the code to make your donation today!

Blackfoot Organizations, Storytellers and Artists: the visitor center needs art related to Bears, Bear Braves, Heavy Shields, winter counts and other story telling related material. Your donation will only be on exhibit for the summer and moved to a partner museum for winter storage. Your name, organization and donation will be permanently thanked in the display description at at the Bear Gulch Visitor Center entrance among other community sponsors.



Picture: Macie and Souta admire Fish & Wildlife Donation

Other tribes: Crow, Cree, Salish, Gros Ventre etc.: your stories about the place will also be accepted! There are of course the stories of war, however a story from a time of peace would be a beautiful addition to the effort we are putting forth at Bear Gulch. We would like to honor the land and all that have found strength and empowerment from it. Most importantly this is a story of when our people allied to trade and gift items like pipes, weapons and ceremonies.

https://www.indigenousvision.org/donate/

Along with thanking the fantastic group of people who have given their time, donations, and creativity to the new visitor center, IV will also be announcing the official winner of the Dream Tipi glamping package! As part of our fundraiser efforts, this incredible annual raffle/fundraiser is now open for all to enter and take their shot at winning an incredible off-grid tipi package. Read more about that in our next story!



DREAM TIPI GLAMPING PACKAGE

Ihe Indigenous Vision **Protect Culture - Win a Tipi** Fundraising Campaign is in support of the **NEW Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center.**

Kickoff your 2025 summer right and experience Native-crafted luxury under the stars! **Enter the Indigenous Vision (IV) Dream Tipi giveaway for a chance to indulge in the ultimate tipi retreat.** Immerse yourself in the beauty of Blackfoot and Montana Native-made luxury in this custom assembled and furnished tipi by Executive Director, Souta Calling Last.

The deadline to enter is June 10th with tickets incredibly priced at 1 entry for $50 or 3 entries for $100. Presence not required to win, you can accept partial package of jackery solar generator with charging panels, buffalo and sheep rugs, two single beds, wool bedding, coffee/tea station, lighting, and record player. This raffle is open to everyone and you must pick up your tipi by July 2025.







20 ft Blackfoot style tipi

Tipi Package

INCLUDES....

- Tipi with liners, poles, stakes,& pins
- Buffalo and Sheepskin Rugs
- Jackery Solar Generator with Charging Panels
- Lounge, Coffee/Tea Station and Record Player

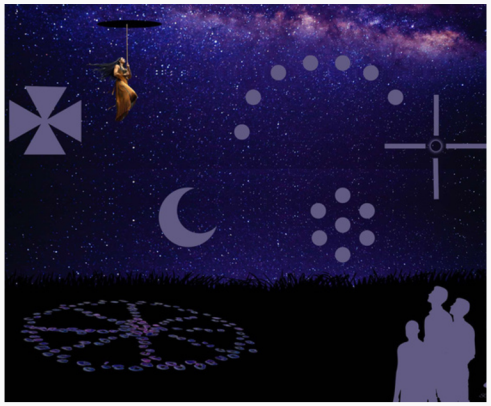




BLACKFOOT PLACE MAP

Before the big snow Souta Calling Last was able to spend some time in research mode visiting a battle site at a private property along the Sun River. In this area, Big Lake was Chief in the late 1800s and he fought hard for the Blackfoot people to continue our lifeways in the area. He was buried above the valley where the old agency existed north of Choteau so that he may always see his children trading and living. In 2005 Nancy Thorton, a local historian, told the Choteau Acantha that, "the site has never been plowed and its archaeological remnants remain undisturbed". Depressions in the ground mark where buildings were and the graves of 40 souls are still visible. The burial ground includes the grave of Mountain Chief and his son, Sitting in the Middle, Under the Bull, Cut Hand, Black Eagle, and Lodge Pole Woman. One account says that Chief Bull's Head is buried there after he was killed in a battle with the Pend O'reille tribe in 1869.

With winter comes the season of storytelling and it's been a prolific one that's included the ***"Blackfoot Perspectives on Death & Dying"*** with Rebecca Many Grey Horses; a virtual storytelling and learning session. Followed by the ***"Blackfoot Star Stories Series"*** part 1 & 2 with community members and our good friend once again, Rebecca Many Grey Horses. One of the coolest sessions was the two-part ***"Blackfoot Legends of the Cosmos"*** where Souta and Rebecca teamed up with Elder Leo Bird, highlighting the intricate relationship between the Blackfoot people and the sun, moon, stars, and beings. Part 2 was with Blackfoot astrophysicist Corey Gray and his mother Sharon Yellowfly who shared stories about naming stars, including Blackfoot Language into spacetime, and connecting to and continuing with the work of astrophysics of Albert Einstein.



The ***"Ancestral Stories of Niitsitapi (Blackfoot) Grandmothers"*** was another two-part virtual series where Souta, Rebecca and others shared stories of grandmothers who went on Buffalo hunts, owned hundreds of horses, carried the language and traditions, explored the vast area of the eastern Rocky slopes, who were powerful medicine women, counting coups on officials and more. Souta shared the story of Running Eagle, a woman warrior and was joined by Mariah Gladstone of Indi-Kitchen who shared stories about her grandmother's during the session.

Souta joined the Blackfeet Food Pantry called **FAST Blackfeet** who are a food access and sustainability team in Browning, MT, for their annual ***"Soup and Stories"*** series on March 17th where she shared some traveling and pictograph stories from the Blackfoot place map, how it's coming along, be involved, and its origins. Pictures from Souta telling the James Schultz/Tail Feathers Coming Over the Hill version of Pitahmahka, Running Eagle Meets with Blood Band War Party and unite efforts. Picture taken from Heart Butte Schools Billingual Program. Art by Shawn Running Crane.



Work with our partners at the Blackfoot Confederacy!

Open to all Blackfoot Nations members who can live in Waterton at the Blackfoot Lodge Cabin for the summer working alongside the Waterton Park Rangers. Blackoot members looking to become **Blackfoot Guardians of the Rocky Mountain Eastern Slopes** can now apply for the 2025 Summer Positions, more information below:

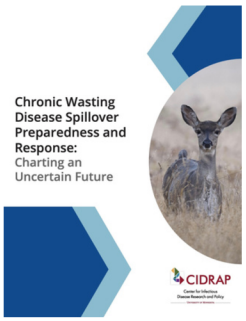
https://blackfootconfederacy.ca/



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Souta is currently taking every opportunity with Blackfoot communities to talk about CWD impacts and management efforts. She was recently asked by Blood Tribe Land Management to come talk about CWD and the Blackfoot Place Map. She is putting together a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Disease Monitoring and Management plan and training module for field employees for the Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife Department. The monitoring/management plan is based on the recommendations from the **Chronic Wasting Disease Spillover Preparedness and Response: Charting an Uncertain Future Report.** Souta was among 67 international experts and worked with the carcass disposal committee.

Her footwork for the management plan has included meeting with Penn State Vets who had previously counseled her on the estimated costs for a small lab equipment set up under $60,000 to reduce the turnaround time for CWD results. Souta Calling Last is scheduled for an upcoming training with Blackfoot Guardians on Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD).



READ THE CWD REPORT HERE:

https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/sites/default/files/CWD%20Report%202025_0.pdf



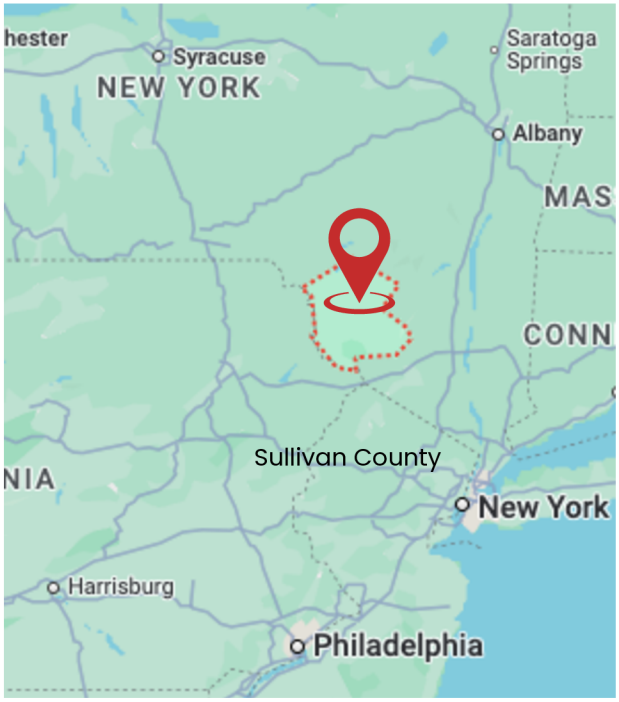
A deer in the garden. A practice we may want to reconsider if living in a chronic wasting disease contaminated area. CWD can be taken up into plants, roots and leaves. While there currently isn't a prion variation that humans are susceptible to, experts continue to recommend that minimal exposure to prions is a best practice. **The first known cultural impact from CWD** is that we can no longer brain to tan unless you've had your deer tested or are using brains from non-cwd impacted species.

FOOD FOREST

Our journey with the Food Forest continues and it has been more work than we anticipated establishing Indigenous Vision in Sullivan County, New York. The 501c3 paperwork submitted by Kenneth the caretaker was deemed insufficient by the county.

They instead required three RP420 forms, state registration, 501c3 paperwork, bylaws, list of leadership, proof of funding and for the package to be notarized for tax exempt status and we are currently awaiting their determination.

The food forest is grateful for the support of the land donor Phyllis Rodriguez who is going to be supporting the fundraising efforts and to our current funder **The Red Empress Foundation** who is helping with the initial stages of the longhouse, gardens and outdoor kitchen. We love to see the community come together to bring this to fruition. In no time, Indigenous Vision will be facilitating our community events, TEK research and cultural wellness retreats on the property.



Food Forest location



MMIWARRIORS RETREAT 2025

The IV MMIWarriors Retreat is officially set for the weekend of September 19, 20, & 21 at the Flathead Lake United Methodist Camp where our 2019 LIFEspa was held. Registration is now open for Indigenous community members who are able to join us for the weekend in sisterhood and community. Like previous years we plan on having a full schedule of events, activities, and presentations ranging from self-defense, powwow yoga, entertainment, self-care & well-being techniques, to sharing stories and enjoying the land & water.





We're still in the planning stages and will be announcing our agenda in the coming months. Until then we are encouraging those who can make our retreat to register early as space is limited. Follow us on our social feeds as we share more details about the events and presenters as we get closer to the date.

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MMIW DAY & EVENTS

Melissa Spence (MMIW Director) was recently in Salt River for the **Medicine Wheel Ride** community event, *'Addressing the Crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives (MMIR) & Building Resilience'* at the Talking Stick Resort. The Medicine Wheel Ride is a collective of indigenous women motorcyclist and allies riding for a cause that touches our communities. Their motorcycles are more than just the road; they symbolize empowerment, freedom, and resilience.



Melissa was able to cross paths with several other organizations who are passionately doing the necessary work to bring justice to their loved ones, spreading awareness on how to navigate the systems, and sharing vital information overall as a community committed to MMIR. We conducted interviews with some of the organizations like **SWIWC** (formerly known as the State Wide Indigenous Women Coalition), **Three Precious Miracles** (Supporting Native Foster Youth, Keeping Culture Connected), and **Turtle Island Woman Warriors** (who owns and operates Shush Dine Native Shop in Phoenix) for an upcoming podcast series



exclusive to the MMIW & MMIR crisis. In addition to the presentations and helpful conversations, we were treated to a very special performance by **'Bird Singing and Dancing by the River'** from our host community; Salt River Pima.



HONORING EMILY PIKE

IV took some time after leaving the Salt River community to honor the life of Emily Pike on the San Carlos Apache Nation. Emily's story is still unfolding and has shaken up Turtle Island with a new urgency for justice and awareness on the intersectionality of MMIW/MMIR and Indigenous children in foster care. With so many questions unanswered there is some relief knowing that Emily is resting in her community as of March 28, 2025. The mural below was painted by Myron Starr and several other artists who joined once he began on March 7 and is located near the Bashas in San Carlos.



This moving and very powerful tribute led to more conversations about what needs to be done to prevent any more of the youth from being taken from their communities. As of when this newsletter was published, Emily's killer(s) are still free, numerous rallys, marches, and fundraisers are ongoing along with a financial reward of $75,000 from the San Carlos Apache Tribe for information leading to an arrest for her murder. Emily Pike is bringing together our communities in a way we've never seen before in Arizona and in other states.

San Carlos community members have organized a fundraiser to place billboards on highway 60 (where Emily's remains where found on February 14, 2025) with 1 each in Superior and Globe, and 2 in Miami, AZ.

The Las Vegas community is gathering once again for the *4th annual 5K Prayer Walk/Run in honor of Debra Blackcrow, the* late mother of Deanne Blackcrow of **Her 38 Roses.** IV is co-hosting this event on May 3 (Saturday) at Lorenzi Park from 10 am to 1 pm with the Prayer Walk to honor Emily Pike & Debra Blackcrow along with dancers, speakers, food, resource & art vendors, and community care.



All are welcomed to attend the Las Vegas *National Day of Awareness For Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls* this May 3rd (Official day is May 5/Red Dress Day in Canada). Early bird registration is now open with donations tiers starting at $25 to $100+. Proceeds are going towards the **Emily Pike Billboard GoFundMe** hosted by Jolene Shorty. You can contribute to this effort below at any time from anywhere.



https://gofund.me/75c962a0

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Our year started off with another beautifully diverse cohort for our Cultural Humility *'Train the Trainer'* held virtually in February. It is always a special honor to get to know people from all across Great Turtle Island and beyond during our trainings, it truly gives us the unique perspectives we need to learn from in our ever changing social climate. Our next virtual training that is open to everyone begins on Tuesday May 20th. We'll meet from 8:00 am to 10:30 am each Tuesday & Wednesday concluding on May 28th.



Register Now

More than a concept, cultural humility is a communal reflection to analyze the root causes of suffering and create a broader, more inclusive view of the world. It's a daily practice for people to deal with hierarchical relationships, changing organizational policy and building relationships based on trust. The curriculum presented by IV is to promote a lifelong commitment to learning and developing skills to interact with others in a fair, respectful, and all-encompassing way by using the tools of dialogue and self critique.

IV was asked for a private training by the New Mexico based **Native Women Lead** this March in Albuquerque. "*Native Women Lead works at the intersections of Rematriation, economic justice, and racial equity. We aim to increase the empowerment, opportunity and agency of Native women entrepreneurs by providing support, resources, and funding*". - NWL website



It was an incredible two-day training where we shared space with an all-Indigenous-Women cohort who came from a variety of powerful backgrounds. In addition to our annual virtual trainings, we are able to customize a training to fit your organizational needs just like we did with Native Women Lead. Feel free to contact us about any potential in-person or virtual training you need to implement a positive organizational change workplace strategy with the tools and practices of cultural humility. Email: info@indigenousvision.org

IVPODCAST

The IVPodcast recently posted its 140th episode! Since we began in the spring of 2019 we've amassed a listenership with over 80K streams and wrangle in about 4 to 5 thousand listeners a month. We continue to use our audio platform to promote, educate, and share our experiences within the organization itself and as Indigenous women navigating the ever changing world. A big thank you to any who's ever listened, shared, reviewed, or commented on any of our episodes. You can find us under: **Indigenous Vision Podcast** on all major platforms.



Fun Fact: 75% of our listeners are women from California and Ontario, Canda!



THANK YOU FUNDERS & DONORS

A big thank you to all of our current and past Sage Donors! Sage donors donate between $5 - $500. These are the folks who provide the essence of community power from the ground up. Thank you to Kit Livingston who is one of our Bear Root Donors, she falls under our second tier from $600 to $5,000. Bear Root donors are the members of our community providing good medicine to these efforts. Our next and third tier is the Sweetgrass donors who contribute from $6000 to $10,000. We got an anonymous donation in this tier in the name of the late Alida Montiel who was a member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, among many other things, she was the Director of Health & Human Services Director serving tribal Nations.



Thank You

IV is very excited to partner with one of our latest funders, **The Red Empress Foundation** who support and encourage compassion, tolerance and justice for all people, creatures and the environment. They fund smaller organizations like us who are "*creating and preserving beauty in the world*", and those who are "*inspiring peace and enhancing education*". It's a next to perfect fit for IV! This timely partnership opportunity will provide support for three of our current projects: The Blackfoot Place Map, The New York Beaverlodge Food Forest, and the Conservation Working Dog; Mink and Otter Environmental Stressor and Contaminant Mapping Project. The Red Empress Foundation will provide $50,000 from their **Indigenous Catalysts for Climate Change and Environmental Resilience** grant.

Earlier this year IV was awarded $30,000 from the **Return to the Heart Foundation**, who were founded in March of 2020 to "*empower visionary Indigenous Women-led initiatives invested in healing through narrative change, civic engagement, restorative developments, and climate justice*". We specifically applied for the "*Our Sisters are Sacred*" fund for helping missing & murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2Spirit (gender expansive) people - MMIW/G2S.



This funding will be used for our upcoming **MMIWarriors Retreat** in Montana this September, the **MMIW Event in Las Vegas honoring Emily Pike**, and towards the **Free Self Defense LV** program that provides weekly free self defense classes at two locations across Las Vegas.

Our funders and partners

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT











Indigenous Vision is an educational 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Our work is community-supported and made possible by donations, grants, fee-for-service, interns, and volunteers.
Your support allows us to keep our doors open, projects rolling, and our team compensated.

Mail checks to:
INDIGENOUS VISION
2390 E Camelback Rd Suite #130
Phoenix, AZ 85016



https://www.indigenousvision.org/donate/

Work with our Partners!

WORKING DOGS for CONSERVATION

Conservation Internship for Indigenous and BIPOC Students

Working Dogs for Conservation is seeking Indigenous and BIPOC students and early career professionals interested in dogs, dog training, and conservation for our summer internship. WD4C is a nonprofit organization dedicated to protecting wildlife and wild places by training dogs in conservation work and putting them into action around the world. We consult, collaborate, and lead capacity building for detection, tracking, and scent-discrimination dogs and handlers in a wide variety of conservation work, including biosecurity and invasive species mitigation, ecological monitoring for rare and endangered species, wildlife law enforcement, and environmental justice. Our environmental justice work includes partnering with local groups to provide support in environmental contaminant monitoring, ecological data collection and research in historically underserved areas, training future conservation leaders, and more.

Ideally, candidates will start in June and finish in September, working ~35 hours a week, but timing and specific content are flexible. Individuals interested in learning about training and using dogs for wildlife conservation and/or environmental justice are encouraged to apply. A monthly allowance ($20/hr, up to $3000/month), a travel stipend (TBD, depending on location and duties), on-site housing, and necessary equipment will be provided.

Interns are trained as valued members of our team and will be active participants in field preparation and planning, canine care, fieldwork, and follow-up for conservation projects. Our staff will provide direct supervision and all training needed. Our dedicated staff provides you with thorough training. There are no educational or professional prerequisites, and all applications will be considered. Applications will be evaluated based on the individual's interest in and long-term potential to contribute to environmental justice or natural resource management and to apply both in support of traditional and rural livelihoods.

To apply, please send a resume and cover letter with the following:

- Why are you interested in the position?
- What skills, perspectives, and/or lived experiences you will bring to an internship;
- How an internship can help or influence your life, community, and career.
- Any other things you would like us to know in considering your application.

Letters can be sent via Email to TribalInternship@WD4C.org or Facebook Messenger to "https://www.facebook.com/WorkingDogsForConservation/". Anyone from any background may apply, but BIPOC students will be given priority.
*At this time, we can only take US Citizens



