



# CONNECT + SUPPORT + MOBILIZE



2023

ANNUAL REPORT



# LETTER FROM JUDITH LEBLANC

Executive Director of Native Organizers Alliance

In recent years, we have seen a rise in Native political power that is changing the way the general public views Native peoples. In 2023, we celebrated the Supreme Court's decision to protect the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), which was a momentous victory for our children, families, and sovereignty. We witnessed long overdue efforts to begin changing the names of historical sites that contained racist slurs targeting Native peoples. We also saw government-to-government relations strengthened through partnerships to co-steward and re-indigenize public lands.

**These historical moments were created out of the power of grassroots organizing efforts and Indigenous leadership.** Efforts like these have sparked the imagination of Native communities, giving hope and inspiration to mobilize around the fight for our lands, our rights, and our traditions. Through the dedication of the Native Organizers Alliance (NOA) team—and the unwavering commitment of our tribal and Native partners—we have made significant contributions to advancing Indigenous grassroots initiatives, emphasizing the crucial role of sovereignty in addressing climate change and the ability to mobilize to defend our multiracial democracy.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated team, partners, and supporters who have made our 2023 achievements possible. We cherish our relationships with tribal leaders and Native organizers who invite us into their communities to learn from and support their advocacy for the health and wellbeing of their communities.

With your continued support, NOA will remain at the forefront of empowering Indigenous communities and advocating for a more just and sustainable world

*Judith LeBlanc*

Hawwih (thank you),

**Judith Le Blanc (Caddo)**  
**Executive Director**



# WHAT'S NEXT?

## NATIVE VOTE IN 2024

NOA is committed to building a multiracial democracy. With our country at odds politically and socially, voter education and engagement has never felt so critical. The Native vote holds the potential to sway the outcome of 77 elections in 10 states, and our goal is to have 200 moccasins on the ground in these areas. NOA is partnering with Tribes and organizations like IllumiNative, the Native American Rights Fund (NARF), and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to ensure our communities have access to accurate information and resources, equitable access to the polls, and are prepared to vote.



## A HOME FOR INDIGENOUS ACTIVISM

We are thrilled to announce our plans to build the first ever national Native organizing training center in Oklahoma. This facility will serve as a home for grassroots organizers, Indigenous leaders, NGOs, and Tribal Nations to support each other through training and intertribal co-learning. We have engaged Dyron Murphy Architects, a Navajo architecture firm, to design a state-of-the-art center. NOA will launch a capital campaign in 2025.

# ABOUT NOA



NOA taps into the political power of our communities. As a network of Native organizers and tribal leaders, we offer partnership to tribal communities, grassroots Native organizations, and like-minded groups from a place of shared values and connection. We offer training, resources, and connections that give Native organizers the tools they need to drive change within their own communities and with the federal government. Through our nationwide network, we have the power to mobilize in the protection of our lands, waters, resources, and ways of life.

## NOA'S IMPACT AND REACH IN 2023:

**5** sacred sites  
protected

**8** grassroots organizing  
trainings conducted

**33%** staff  
growth

**220,975**  
subscribers to email lists

**805,000**  
messages to Congress and the  
Biden administration



## MEET THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF NOA'S TEAM



**Shea Vassar Gomez  
(Cherokee)**  
Social Media & Digital  
Coordinator



**Brandon Barela (Diné)**  
Development Operations  
Manager



**Tremayne Nez (Diné)**  
Policy Director



**Wicanhpi Mountain  
(Pawnee/Dakota/  
Ojibwe)**  
NOA Organizer



**Miengun Pamp (Ojibwe)**  
NOA Organizer

## OUR FOCUS

# ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE & SACRED PLACES

Historic injustices have left our traditional homelands desecrated by the climate crisis and harmful development projects, and the fossil fuel industries like pipelines, mining activities, and resource extraction. Time after time, corporations and agencies have ignored the nation to nation status and the requirement to consult with Tribal Nations on projects that impact land and resources,


In 2023, NOA was actively engaged in a number of campaigns to protect sacred places throughout the country. We supported efforts by tracking and analyzing legislation, providing comments to agencies, and amplifying the collective voices of affected communities through letter campaigns, petition drives, and educational initiatives on policy issues that affect Indian Country.

**“For the sake of Mother Earth and all living things, Native people need to be directly involved in decisions made about our sacred places and public lands.”**

**-Judith LeBlanc (Caddo),  
NOA Executive Director**







STAND WITH TRIBES  
BREACH SNAKE DAMS  
SAVESALMON.ORG

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NOA HAD THE HONOR OF SUPPORTING  
GRASSROOTS, TRIBAL, AND SOVEREIGN  
LEADERS TO PROTECT SACRED LANDS  
AND WATERS AT:

Oak Flat

Grand Canyon

Bears Ears

Lower Snake River

Thacker Pass

Missouri River

Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta

## OUR FOCUS

# TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY AND NATIVE RIGHTS

For too long, the U.S. federal government has failed to recognize Native peoples' inherent and constitutionally guaranteed right to self-determination. In recent years, we have seen more of our Tribal Nations assert their sovereign status and strengthen government-to-government relationships with local, state, and federal governments in a number of ways, including agreements to co-steward public lands at Joshua Tree, Canyon de Chelly National Monument, and the Redwood State and National Forests. We see these efforts as re-indigenizing our national parks, which NOA continues to promote with the U.S. National Park Service for places like Yellowstone National Park.

In 2023, NOA had the honor to work directly with a number of Tribes across the country, including the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in their ongoing battle against the Dakota Access Pipeline. Three years after a federal judge revoked the pipeline permit and ordered an environmental review, the oil still flows as it has since the pipeline began operating in 2017. NOA organized over **100,000** public comments to show the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers that this project is an unacceptable violation of tribal sovereignty.

Listening carefully to our communities, we are able to identify which levers of change will have the most impact. Whether it's strategic campaign planning or meeting with elected officials, **we're committed to working alongside Native communities and Tribal Nations on the issues that matter most.**







## OUR FOCUS

# ADVOCACY AND POLICY CHANGE

For hundreds of years, racist policies have been used to remove Native peoples from their lands, destroy family and community structures, and make us ashamed to speak our languages and live our traditional ways. We are forced to work within a system that was counting on us no longer being here today. That is what we are up against on a daily basis. **NOA is dedicated to reversing the harm done to Indian Country by working with tribal and Native communities to advocate for policies that empower Native peoples and are informed by Indigenous knowledge.**

In 2023, we closely monitored legislation that could impact tribal lands, while connecting tribal and Native organizers to Congressional leaders and gathering hundreds-of-thousands of petitions and letters. We collaborated with members of Congress and the U.S. Committee on Indian Affairs around various pieces of legislation.

NOA is able to expand our advocacy reach using digital channels, such as our email list, which has more than **220,000 subscribers**. We sent **581 emails** in 2023, encouraging subscribers to take action around numerous initiatives. We also reached more than **340,000 people on social media** and participated in **26 panels, webinars, podcasts, and interviews** that allowed us to educate a variety of audiences about issues and our movement building work.

In 2023, NOA partnered with IllumiNative and Kauffman and Associates, Inc to **conduct the largest Native-led survey of Native peoples—the Indigenous Futures Survey. With more than 5,000 Native people surveyed**, we will have a deeper understanding of Indian Country's priorities and concerns, which will help inform tribal leaders and members of Congress. The survey results will also be invaluable information to inform our future Native Vote work.





## ***LEGISLATION FROM THE 118TH CONGRESS THAT COULD IMPACT TRIBAL LANDS:***

- Advancing Tribal Parity on Public Land Act (S. 3186/H.R. 6148)
- Wounded Knee Massacre Memorial and Sacred Site Act (S. 2088/H.R. 3371)
- Indian Buffalo Management Act (S. 2908/H.R. 6368)
- Mount Blue Sky Wilderness Act (S. 3044/H.R. 5962)
- Tribal Cultural Areas Protection Act (S. 3185/H.R. 6147)
- A. Donald McEachin Environmental Justice For All Act (S. 919/H.R. 1705)
- Save Oak Flat From Foreign Mining Act (H.R. 1351)
- Ruby Mountain Protection Act (S. 706)

## OUR FOCUS

# TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Effective organizing requires continuous learning of new skills and strategies for the issues we face today. Grassroots organizing is happening both on the ground and in digital spaces, and while NOA has evolved with the times, we have stayed grounded in traditional practices and values. And one of the most traditional ways Indigenous communities thrive is through knowledge sharing.

For over 10 years NOA has been offering trainings on organizing and campaigning for policy change. This helped to build a network of Indigenous organizers and leaders across Indian country who are able to mobilize their communities around issues. **In 2023, NOA conducted one national training and seven state-based trainings with 245 individuals from 43 different tribal backgrounds.**

NOA's emerging Native Organizing Fellowship Program pays Native organizers to mobilize their communities around specific issues. In 2023, We invited 13 Native Organizing Fellows to build out a three-month campaign to advance issues and policy, in partnership with local groups, tribal entities, or NGOs. NOA is looking to add 200 new Native Organizing Fellows to the program, where they will play a role in key states in the 2024 presidential election.

Today, we are seeing a resurgence of Native political power thanks to the dedicated organizers on the ground who are committed to protecting the rights and dignity of Native peoples. Our voice and power as Native peoples is strongest when we stand together as elected and traditional leaders, community organizers, and grassroots people to fight for our lands, waters, resources, and rights.



## IN 2023, NOA TRAINED 245 INDIGENOUS GRASSROOTS ORGANIZERS IN:

- Phoenix, AZ (youth training)
- Federal Way, WA
- Washington, D.C.
- Farmington, NM
- Carson City, NV
- Rapid City, SD
- Phoenix, AZ



# CASE STUDIES



## ALL OUR RELATIONS SNAKE RIVER JOURNEY

The lower Snake River dams have violated tribal sovereignty and curtailed salmon populations since they were built. Restoring a free-flowing Snake River would honor the promises made to Tribal Nations and their lifeways, open up cold water habitat, fight the effects of climate change, and allow the river to fulfill its role in caring for the salmon as it did for thousands of years.

In September 2023, NOA partnered with community leaders including the Nez Perce Tribe, Se Si' Le, Sierra Club, and Save Our Wild Salmon for a two-week, Indigenous-led campaign to bring attention to the urgent need to remove the four lower Snake River dams as part of a comprehensive solution.

The journey culminated in Seattle's Town Hall, where NOA's Executive Director Judith LeBlanc joined a keynote panel to call for the restoration of a healthy traditional way of life and for clean salmon for all people.

**"For the sake of Mother Earth and all living things, Native people need to be directly involved in decisions made about our sacred places and public lands."**

**-Judith LeBlanc (Caddo),  
NOA Executive Director**





- 81,339 letters sent to the Biden Administration
- 5,313 letters sent to Congress and the Senate in WA, OR, and ID
- 150,000 remote viewers of NOA's Town Hall event





# CASE STUDIES



## THE NATIVE AMERICAN VOTING RIGHTS ACT COALITION

It was just 100 years ago that the Indian Citizenship Act passed, granting citizenship and the right to vote for Native peoples. It took decades longer for the promise of the right to vote to be fully realized.

Today, Native people still face unique challenges when accessing their fundamental right to vote. In recent years, states like Arizona have passed laws that restrict Native voters by limiting ballot boxes near reservations and banning individuals from submitting ballots on behalf of a group, as is common practice on behalf of community Elders. That is why the Native American Voting Rights Act (NAVRA) must be passed.

To protect the sacred right to vote, NOA joined a coalition with the Native American Rights Fund, the National Congress of the American Indians, and other tribal and local Native voting rights groups to ensure that NAVRA is passed. Together, we are convening Native groups who will form the moccasins-on-the-ground ecosystem in 2024. We are working with Tribes and community groups to protect the right to vote through grassroots mobilizing to carefully assess what is needed in order to guarantee the right to vote, build awareness of the power of the Native vote, and educate voters on the key issues.

**Together, we are building a movement that will protect and expand Native voting rights.**





“Native Americans have the power to decide this presidential election. They can swing that vote. They make up big enough margins in really key, crucial swing states.”

-Jacqueline De Leon (Isleta Pueblo), Attorney at Native American Rights Fund (NARF)





# CASE STUDIES



## FREE LEONARD PELTIER

Leonard Peltier, a citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (ND), is the longest-incarcerated political prisoner in our country. This year, he turned 79 years old behind bars. Targeted for his leadership role in the American Indian Movement for Indigenous rights, he's been locked up for a crime he did not commit. This is an outrageous injustice, and it also illustrates the ongoing racist mistreatment of Native people in this country.

This year, we partnered with Arizona Representative Raúl Grijalva to show President Biden that it is long past time for Leonard Peltier to be free. Rep. Grijalva organized a letter with his colleagues in Congress and **NOA secured over 200,000 signatures that were sent to the White House demanding for Leonard Peltier's release from prison.**

The only way Leonard Peltier can get his freedom restored is through public pressure on President Biden. Fortunately, we're not alone in this fight. The Democratic National Committee's Native American Caucus, the National Caucus of Native American State Legislators, the National Congress of American Indians, and human rights leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Coretta Scott King, and the Dalai Lama are calling for Peltier to be released. Peltier should be able to live out the rest of his life in dignity, with his family on his ancestral homelands.





**"Our voice, our collective voice, our eagle's cry, is just beginning to be heard. We call out to all of humanity. Hear us!"**

**-Leonard Peltier, Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance**

**"We are the Original People. We are one of the fingers on the hand of humankind. Why is it we are unrepresented in our own lands, and without a seat — or many seats — in the United Nations? Why is it we're allowed to send our delegates only to prisons and to cemeteries?"**

**-Leonard Peltier, Prison Writings: My Life Is My Sun Dance**



# CASE STUDIES

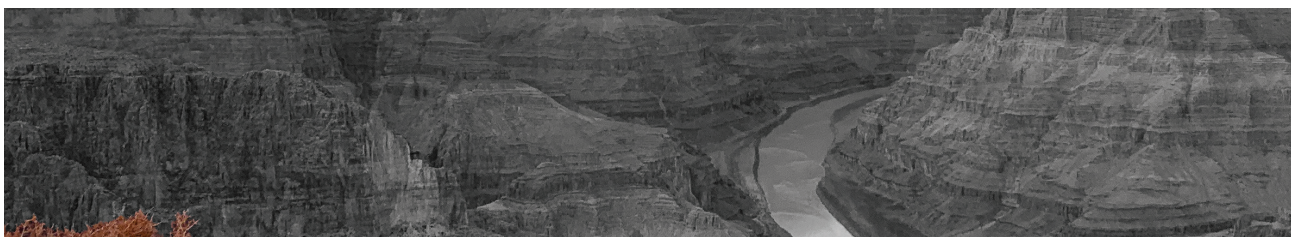


## PROTECT BAAJ NWAAVJO I'TAH KUKVENI GRAND CANYON

The Grand Canyon has been removed from the consent and care of the Tribal Nations that have called it home for more than a century. The designation of the National Park and the scourge of uranium mining have taken Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni, a sacred place, away from tribal communities.

To support the Grand Canyon Tribal Coalition, **NOA sent 46,801 letters to members of the House and the Senate through a joint action effort in support of the permanent protection of the Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni Grand Canyon National Monument.**

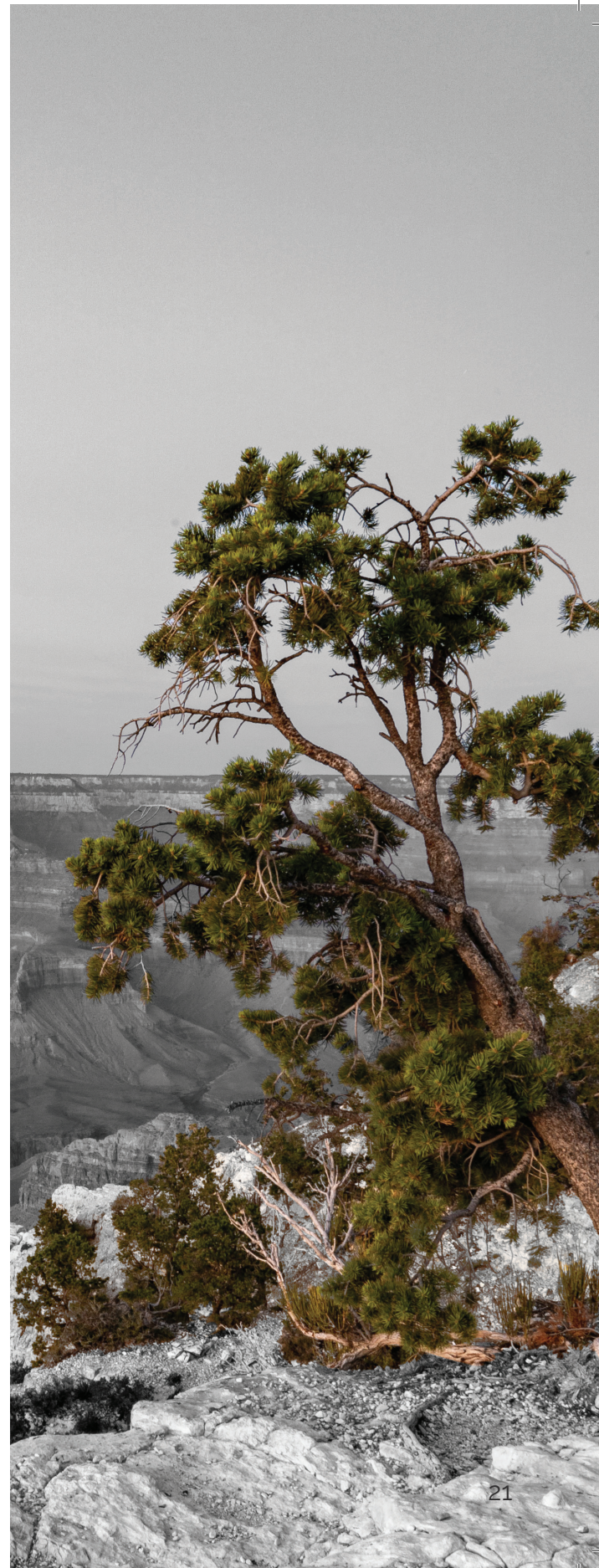
As a result of decades of efforts by Native activists and organizers, President Biden designated Baaj Nwaavjo I'tah Kukveni and National Monument on August 8, 2023. The Grand Canyon will now be preserved for the Tribal Nations and the millions who have come to reconnect with the beauty of the natural world. The Tribes who led this struggle have carried out their vision to preserve this sacred land.





## CO-SPONSORS OF JOINT ACTION EFFORT:

- Rep. Raúl Grijalva
- Win Without War
- Democracy for America  
Advocacy Fund
- Daily Kos
- Democratic Values PAC
- People Power United
- FC PAC
- TakeltBack.org
- Global Warming Solutions
- National Campaign for Justice
- The Other 98
- HollywoodDemocrats.com





# STRONGER TOGETHER, OUR PARTNERS





**OUR WORK DEPENDS ON THE TRADITION OF  
BUILDING AND SUSTAINING RELATIONSHIPS.  
WE HAVE THE HONOR OF WORKING  
WITH NATIONAL, STATE, AND REGIONAL  
COALITIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS:**

- Mother Kuskokwim Coalition
- Patagonia
- Native American & Indigenous Studies (NAIS) at UMass Boston
- Native Americans in Philanthropy
- All Our Relations Snake River
- EarthJustice
- Se Si Le
- Sierra Club
- The Wilderness Society
- Save our Wild Salmon
- Native American Rights Fund
- National Congress of American Indians
- IllumiNative
- Greater Chaco Coalition
- Native American Voting Rights Coalition
- Coalition for Outdoor Renaming and Education
- Nevada Indian Commission
- Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition
- Movement Strategy Center
- Utah Diné Bikéyah
- Protect the Sacred
- U.S. Census Advisory Committee
- NDN Collective
- Native American Women's Dialogue on Infant Mortality
- National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- National Indian Child Welfare Association
- Greater Yellowstone Coalition

*SCAN THE QR BELOW  
TO MAKE A DONATION*

