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NEWS FROM A NATIVE AMERICAN PERSPECTIVE

44 Years of Serving the Native American Community

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Hundreds gather to honor Ojibwe who died 175 years ago

Paddlers begin their four-mile trip across Big Sandy Lake in remembrance of the 175th anniversary of the Sandy Lake Tragedy on July 30 in McGregor, Minn. (Photo by Erica Dischino/MPR News.)

BY CHANDRA COLVIN/MPR NEWS

For many, summertime activities such as boating and swimming are first to mind when visiting Big Sandy Lake near McGregor in northern Minnesota. However, to several generations of Ojibwe people, the shoreline of the lake is described as a "graveyard."

Every year on the last Wednesday of July, Native communities and allies from Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan gather for the annual Sandy Lake Memorial, a ceremony also called Mikwendaagoziwag.

In the Ojibwe language, Mikwendaagoziwag means "they are remembered." The day honors what is now known as the Sandy Lake Tragedy, an event that led to the deaths of more than 400 Ojibwe tribal members in the winter of 1850-51.

The morning begins with a commemorative canoe paddle starting at Big Sandy Lake's eastern side in the morning. Participants set their canoes alongside the lakeshore before standing together in a circle for a morning prayer led by Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa band member Misty Shogaabawiikwe Nordin.

"Looking around and seeing everyone gathered here for the same purpose, right, to acknowledge what had happened and to come together for some healing," said Nordin.

Canoeists then offer tobacco to the lake's waters before embarking on a four-mile paddle to the northwestern corner of Big Sandy Lake, where a Mikwendaagoziwag Memorial site sits on top of a small hill overlooking the waters.

"There are many tragic things that have happened to Indigenous people and their encounters with European nations, but we pride ourselves in surviving," said Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission executive administrator Jason Schlender, a member of the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin.

The organization has been holding a remembrance ceremony for over two decades, which has grown from an attendance of about 15 to more than 300.

'It was a scheme that was concocted'

In the fall and early winter of 1850, Ojibwe tribes living along the shores of Lake Superior in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan were ordered to gather at Big Sandy Lake to collect annuity payments. Up until then, tribal members had been going to La Pointe on Madeline Island in Wisconsin for payments, per government treaties of 1837 and 1842. In exchange for the rights of a total 23-million-acres, tribes were to receive payment as well as to retain the right to hunt, fish and gather on unceded lands.

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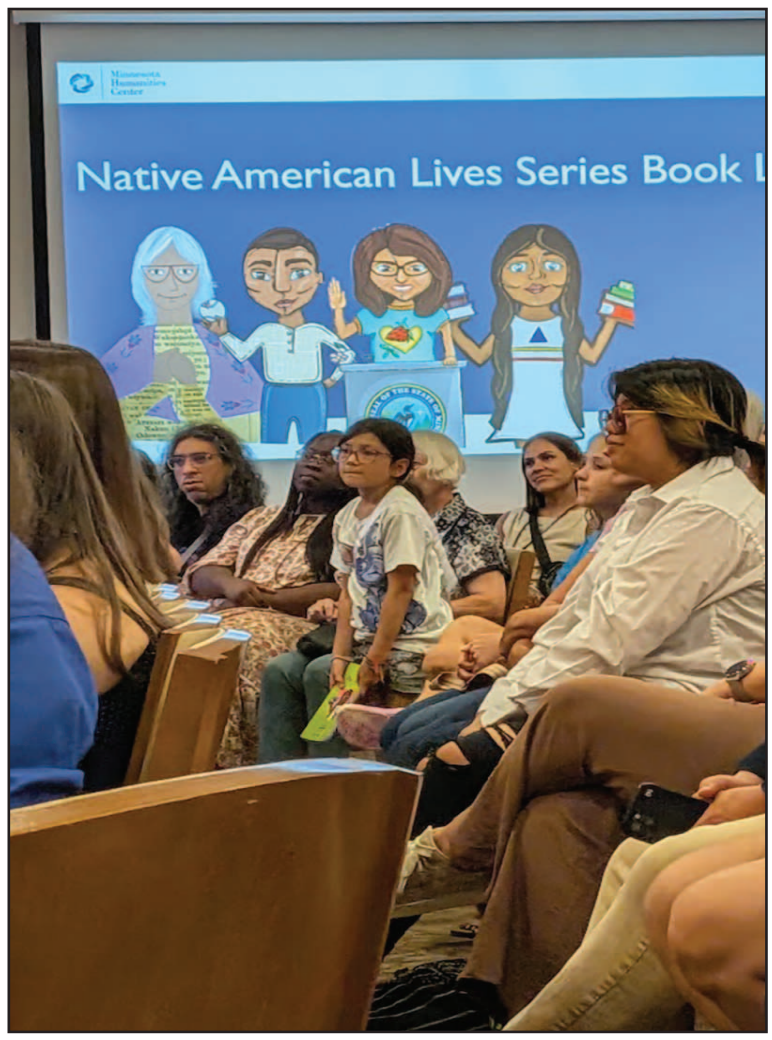
Eexpansion of book series "Native American Lives " celebrated

BY K.E. MACPHIE



On August 4th, The Minnesota Humanities Center in St. Paul hosted Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan and a crowd of writers, readers, and other supporters excited to kick off the re-release and expansion of the middle-grade book series collectively referred to as "Native American Lives."

Three stories had been released previously, but the series announced it would be expanding with nine more stories written by various authors in a similar style to the original trio.

Published by Lerner Publishing Group, the series is supported in part by the Humanities Center, which funds programming and grants for various humanities projects - Native and otherwise - as well as support from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund and generous funding from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community as a part of its new "Understand Native Minnesota" campaign.

The kickoff featured giveaways and readings from the first of four books in the series, all of them written by Native authors and all of them that tell the stories of both modern and pastime influential Native people from Minnesota such as Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan (1979-); Baseball Hall of Famer, Charles Albert Bender (1884-1954); Dakota language protector, Ella Cara Deloria (1889-1971); and Dakota language teacher Carrie Cavender Schommer (1930-).

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Help Shape a Better Future for Minnesota's Youth

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families is looking for Qualified Individuals to conduct culturally responsive assessments for children in foster care.

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Sometimes We Win Some

BY WINONA LADUKE

I recently spoke with seventeen-year-old Keeya Wiki about the first descent of the Klamath River, a 263-mile river in Oregon and California. Keeya, who is Yurok and Māori, was one of thirty youth who kayaked the river for the first time in one hundred years. She reminded me of what it feels like when you protect something sacred.

In 2024, four dams came down on the Klamath River, the largest dam removal in U.S. history, and the river was free. The youth trained for the descent on white waters throughout the region, and even in Chile, to make sure they were safe. Then this summer they joined the river and traveled for a month of freedom, joy, and renewal as the youth were met by their community members at the mouth of the river.

Wiki comes from a Yurok family which had been battling to restore the Klamath for decades. Native people, as she remembers, have been "jailed, beaten and killed for fighting for this river," she said.

"We really do carry history and trauma on our backs," Wiki told a reporter. "Paddle Tribal Waters is completely changing this narrative from fear and anxiety to fun and smiles and giggles," Wiki said. "We're changing an entire generation's story. It's like a deep breath where I can see the world how I want to see it and not be questioned for it. … I'm my highest, happiest self on the river."

In 2024, the Klamath River Restoration Project became the largest dam removal in U.S. history, freeing a river, and a salmon — nur, the fish of a people. The Klamath River winds 263 miles from the volcanic Cascade Range to the Pacific in Northern California. The Klamath River was once the third-largest salmon-producing river on the West Coast, with a basin of 9.4 million acres. Dams kill salmon. The Hoopa, Karuk, Klamath, Modoc, Shasta, and Yurok have thrived in this bountiful watershed for thousands of years, the river providing both physical and spiritual sustenance. They are upriver and downriver people. The river, Heyhl-keek 'We-roy in Yurok, is the center of their lives.

That epicenter was to become an industrial energy producer with the installation of massive dams beginning in 1918: the J.C. Boyle Dam, Copco No. 1 Dam, Copco No. 2 Dam, and the Iron Gate Dam. The dams were massive tourniquets. The salmon died off, hitting their heads against the iron gates, and the warming water in the river from hotter temperatures and stagnant pools caused massive kills of more salmon — a heartbreaking 70,000 of them bellied up in a 2002 disaster.

The people did not leave their river or end their dream. Litigation, prayers, Earth Renewal ceremonies, endless negotiations with Berkshire Hathaway and Pacific Power and Light, persistence through ten or more presidents — this is how they won.

In 2019, the Yurok passed a resolution granting the Klamath River legal personhood, making it the first river in North America to receive such rights under tribal law in the "Rights of the Heyhl-keek 'We-roy Ordinance," formalized in 2024 to establish and implement these rights.

This initiative provides a legal framework, rooted in Yurok culture and Indigenous law, to protect the river's health, natural evolution, and a stable environment free from pollution and human-caused climate change impacts. (This is similar to a resolution passed by the White Earth Anishinaabe recognizing the rights of wild rice, or manoomin.) The Klamath Tribes hold the most senior water rights in the Klamath Basin, meaning their rights to water are senior to other rights, including agricultural water rights for upstream farmers.

The loss of the salmon meant a loss of nutrients and life. Over the last hundred years, these landscapes have been drastically altered. After the first dam began operating in 1918 — one of four that would eventually be forged in the lower Klamath to provide hydroelectric power to nearby communities — the course of the river was changed. The dams obstructed the migration of salmon and other native species, which help carry nutrients into the systems from the ocean, with cascading effects.

This is the first time in 100 years the river has been dam free. Amy Bowers Cordalis, attorney for the Yurok Tribe, talks about the deep transformation spiritually and emotionally: "I thought we were going to be the generation that witnessed the collapse and complete death of the river. … But now we will be the generation that sees the rebirth and restoration of our ecosystem, our culture and lifeblood."

Already it's been among the most hopeful environmental stories of recent years. "It has been more successful than we ever imagined," said Ren Brownell, the spokesperson for the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, a nonprofit created to oversee and implement the removal, adding: "There's an incredible amount of joy."

Then came the land back. First, 2,800 acres of land sacred to the Shasta Indian Nation that had been drowned under a reservoir was returned to them. Native seeds that had been strewn along the bank reemerged. And in June of 2025, the Yurok Tribe, California's largest federally recognized tribal nation, reclaimed 73 square miles of land — or 47,097 acres — along the eastern side of the lower Klamath River. That's the largest single "land back" in California history, the result of work with the Western Rivers Conservancy and California state agencies with the tribe. The 73 square miles of land is now owned and managed by the Yurok Tribe as the Blue Creek Salmon Sanctuary and Yurok Tribal Community Forest. By 2025, coho salmon were seen on the river for the first time in many years.

Take a Breath

It is Coos territory, a place where once shellfish were in huge abundance, deep brackish estuaries and coves teemed with fish, birds, whales, seals, and more. The tall trees once stood here; the forests are small now, but the water remains. This is the place where the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw people are from. It is peaceful looking out on the bay, a long hook of complex channels and an ecosystem which was threatened with the Jordan Cove Pipeline Project.

That Canadian pipeline project did not happen, and it will not happen. Take a breath. And then another. Be grateful and listen to the birds, not the sound of a combustion engine, an oil pipeline project. Take another breath — they are not here.

Sometimes silence is everything. Sometimes, the people fight hard, and they win. The Jordan Cove Pipeline was one of several Canadian oil pipelines, in this case liquefied natural gas, headed to the coast. This is the Pacific Coast, and this oil was headed to China. That's some super explosive stuff. And it came from the dirtiest oil in the world and into a complex estuary system of shellfish and fish. That's a bad idea.

So bad, Pembina, the Canadian company, received exemptions to kill marine mammals and trash ecosystems. NOAA, the federal agency, issued an "authorization to take marine mammals incidental to pile driving associated with construction of the Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal and ancillary projects." That's some ecologically violent action. And that's in part why it didn't happen. Oil destroys life.

The Jordan Cove Pipeline project, and the Northern Gateway Pipeline (Enbridge's tar sands to Kitimat, B.C.), did not happen, nor did the Constitution Pipeline, Enbridge Sandpiper, or the Keystone pipeline across the Dakotas. Sometimes the people, the water, and the land win. There are places where there are no pipelines.

The Jordan Cove LNG Export Terminal and pipeline battle was fought for more than fourteen years — from 2007 to 2021. This was a 229-mile-long natural gas pipeline that would have run from Malin, Oregon, on the California border, over the Coast Range to Coos Bay. The gas would then have been super-cooled into a liquefied form (LNG), loaded onto ships, and exported to Asia. That's a lot of energy, a lot of oil, and a lot of dangerous stuff. And it's not there. On December 1, 2021, the pipeline project was cancelled. Pembina, the Calgary-based corporation, pulled the permits and notified the federal agency that they would not continue.

This was a battle fought by Indigenous nations and grassroots organizations. And it's worth it. It's worth it to walk out on land and see the wild things there, to see life as it should be. Sadly, the Trump Administration is looking to revive a project which should have never been proposed.

Where There Is No Mine

This past spring, I went to visit Mole Lake Reservation in Wisconsin for a Cannabis Summit, where Tribal Chairman Robert Van Zile pointed out a mine which never happened. That was the Exxon Crandon Mine. That was a 28-year battle of the Sokaogon Anishinaabe against the largest mining corporations in the world. That's to say, there's a big ore deposit under and adjacent to Mole Lake, the heart of their territory. That ore attracted the attention of Rio Tinto Zinc (the same company trying to build the Tamarack Mine near Sandy Lake and the Apache Oak Flats Mine).

As Al Gedicks, a sociologist who worked with Van Zile and the tribe, explained: "The victory over the proposed metallic sulfide mine was significant not only because a grassroots group defeated what was the world's largest energy company (Exxon) and the world's largest mining company (BHP Billiton), it represented the emerging power of alliances between Native American tribes, environmentalists and sportfishing groups that later worked together to block other destructive projects…"

As to be expected, Gedicks points out that "The mainstream political consensus at the time was that the mine was inevitable, given the large size of the zinc-copper deposit, promised jobs and taxes, as well as Exxon's political influence in the state…"

Sometimes the people and the wild rice win. In this case, years of litigation, environmental challenges in federal court, and finally, in 2002, the Mole Lake Ojibwe and the Forest County Potawatomi tribes purchased the 5,000-acre Crandon mine property and mineral rights for $16.5 million. Land back ended the story. The land is now managed as a conservation area devoted to sustainable land-management practices, tribal cultural values, and tourism suitable to this environmentally sensitive area.

I stood there with Robert Van Zile and looked at the land and did not hear the sound of a big truck or a tree falling. I took a big breath, because sometimes we win. Remember that.

MN sex ed programs could lose federal funding due to Trump changes

BY DEANNA PISTONO/MINNPOST

The Minnesota Department of Health received the demands from the Trump administration over the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP).

The Trump administration is threatening to cancel funding for a program that provides sex education to young Minnesotans unless references to so-called "gender ideology" are removed within 60 days.

The Minnesota Department of Health, which administers Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) grants to local organizations and schools, confirmed it was one of 46 states and territories that received the request. A department spokesperson said no funds had been cut and that officials were determining next steps.

The administration's targeting of Minnesota's program comes after the federal government stripped California of PREP funding when the state refused to comply with a similar request.

The program focuses on various populations of young people, including those in foster care or aging out of foster care, those who are unhoused, American Indian youth, teens who live in rural areas and teens from communities of color and/or LGBTQ+ communities.

Minnesota PREP's goals include reducing teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections in young people aged 15-19, as well as "increas[ing] healthy behaviors," according to a description of the program on the health department's website.

"There's a lot of things that go into (PREP programs in Minnesota)," said Jill Farris, director of training and education for the University of Minnesota-based Center for Healthy Youth Development, who trains the educators administering PREP programs. "If (PREP funding) were to go by the wayside, it wouldn't just affect the health department. This is going to affect the different communities where this funding lives."

Farris said Minnesota received $690,000 from the federal government in fiscal year 2024 for PREP programs. The dollars are distributed to local programs across the state that target various populations of young people, who receive relevant and specific education based on the realities of what they face, she said. For example, Evergreen Youth and Family Services in Bemidji administers a culturally specific program led by Native facilitators for Native youth, along with a program centering youth development in a corrections facility. Other PREP funding grantees across the state focus on different populations of young people, from those in foster care and those with disabilities to those using drugs or alcohol.

These programs and their curricula are evidence-based, Farris said — not just in terms of the information they share, but in terms of promoting healthier behavior in young people. As a result, cutting gender from PREP projects would "compromise the outcomes," she said.

Young people learn how to navigate not just their own understanding of their gender and what it means for their identity, but how to respect and understand the different genders of those in their communities, Farris said.

"We want folks to be able to get the kind of information that empowers them and makes them feel like they're whole and doing a great job of being human beings," she said. Taking out mentions of gender would "not only do young people a disservice by not giving them information, (but) we (also) mess with the formula of why a curriculum like this gets the results we want to see," Farris said, adding that if this funding is removed, there is "nothing to step in and do this work."

This is not the first time the administration has threatened efforts across the country to support young people based on Trump's views on gender and what young people are taught. In April, Attorney General Keith Ellison filed a lawsuit in federal court against executive orders that targeted trans and gender nonconforming youth by saying federal funds could not be used to promote "gender ideology" and that the federal government opposes trans women and girls (referred to in the document as men) participating in sports alongside (cisgender) women and girls.

While it remains to be seen whether PREP funding will be pulled from Minnesota, one thing is certain, Farris said: Teenagers here and everywhere else will continue to have questions — about their bodies, about sex, and about their gender identities.

"What happens when students from diverse cultural and gender backgrounds don't have access to culturally appropriate and responsive materials in schools?" asked Kat Rohn, executive director of OutFront Minnesota, an organization that advocates for and provides resources to LGBTQ+ community members. "They get bad information, and they tend to get information about their bodies and their lives from sources that are less reliable and don't allow for good conversation around important topics."

Farris agreed: "Young people still need this information," she said. "Those questions about gender don't go away just because there's a disagreement or an ideological difference in how we see (gender)."

Crisis Hotlines for Native youth

Native and Strong Lifeline: Calls are answered by Native crisis counselors who are Tribal citizens. They are fully trained in crisis intervention and support, with emphasis on cultural and traditional practices related to healing. It is confidential, free, and available 24/7. Call "988" and press 4.

• LGBT National Youth Talkline: youth serving youth through age 25. Provides elephone, and online private one-to-one chat, and email peer-support. 800-246-7743.

• Trevor Project: Text us from anywhere, anytime. Text 'START' to 678-678. Reach out to hear a live voice on the line. Call us at 1-866-488-7386 or get help online at: https://www.thetrevorproject.org

MYSTIC LAKE AMPHITHEATER MYSTIC LAKE AMPHITHEATER TO OPEN IN SHAKOPEE IN 2026

SHAKOPEE, Minn. – The Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community has purchased the naming rights to a new outdoor music venue under construction in Shakopee, Live Nation announced.

The 19,000-seat venue will open in summer 2026 as the Mystic Lake Amphitheater, located about five miles north of the tribe's casino and hotel of the same name.

Live Nation estimates the amphitheater will contribute more than $70 million to the local economy and create about 700 jobs. The venue will host national headliners, international performers, and local talent, according to the company.

Live Nation Entertainment, parent of Ticketmaster, is a multinational company specializing in live events.

GRAND CASINO ARENA RENAMED

ST. PAUL, Minn. — State Rep. María Isa Pérez-Vega joined Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe Chief Virgil Wind, St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter and Minnesota Wild CEO Craig Leopold Sept. 3 at a ceremony renaming the city's NHL arena.

The downtown venue, formerly the Xcel Energy Center, is now the Grand Casino Arena under a new partnership with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe. It remains the official home of the Minnesota Wild.

TRIBAL FLAG PLAZA OPENS AT MN CAPITOL

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Gov. Tim Walz, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and the Capitol Area Architectural and Planning Board joined tribal leaders September 5 for a historic flag-raising ceremony at the Minnesota State Capitol.

The new Tribal Flag Plaza permanently displays the flags of all 11 sovereign tribal nations whose land overlaps with Minnesota. State officials said the plaza honors tribal sovereignty and affirms government-to-government relations between the state and tribal nations.

The event, held on the Capitol's Lower Mall, marked the first time all 11 tribal flags were raised on the Capitol grounds.

MINNEAPOLIS LAUNCHES FIRST MOBILE MEDICAL CLINIC

MINNEAPOLIS — The city's first Mobile Medical Unit is now on the streets, offering health care, addiction treatment and recovery resources in underserved neighborhoods.

Mayor Jacob Frey and city leaders introduced the state-of-the-art vehicle Aug. 22 at Elliot Park before it headed to the Summer Health Fair on East Lake Street. The clinic is funded with more than $1 million from national opioid settlement dollars and is part of the city's response to the fentanyl crisis.

"Healthcare shouldn't be a privilege tied to your ZIP code," Frey said. "Our Mobile Medical Unit is breaking down barriers, saving lives and making sure every Minneapolis resident can get the care they deserve."

Run by the Minneapolis Health Department's Opioid Response Team, the unit provides screenings, wound care, mental health referrals, youth services and, soon, medications for opioid use disorder and vaccinations. Officials said it will focus on neighborhoods with the greatest health care gaps.

ZIMMERMANS WIN HEARTLAND BOOKSELLERS AWARD

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Travis Zimmerman and his cousin Sam Zimmerman, or Zhaawanoogiizhik, have won the 2025 Heartland Booksellers Award in the Children's Picture Book category for How the Birds Got Their Songs, published by Minnesota Historical Society Press.

The bilingual book, in English and Ojibwemowin, retells a traditional Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa story passed down through the Zimmerman family about a contest among birds judged by the Creator.

Travis Zimmerman manages the Mille Lacs Indian Museum and Trading Post, while Sam Zimmerman is a Duluth-based artist whose work is widely exhibited. The award, presented by the Midwest Independent Booksellers Association and the Great Lakes Independent Booksellers Association, recognizes outstanding regional storytelling.

The authors will be honored at the Heartland Fall Forum in Indianapolis, Oct. 14–16.

Tribal nations scramble to save clean energy projects as federal support vanishes

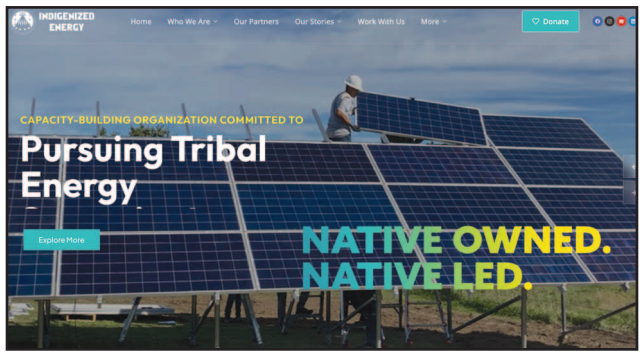
BY MIACEL SPOTTED ELK/GRIST

As federal programs are frozen or eliminated, Indigenous communities are seeking new ways to fund and finish urgently needed renewable energy plans.

Cody Two Bear, who is Standing Rock Sioux, served on his tribal council during the Dakota Access pipeline protests in 2017. Growing up in a community powered by coal, the experience was transformative. "I've seen the energy extraction that has placed a toll significantly on tribal nations when it comes to land, animals, water, and sacred sites," said Two Bear. "Understanding more about that energy, I started to look into my own tribe as a whole."

In 2018, Two Bear founded Indigenize Energy, a nonprofit organization that works with tribes to pursue energy sovereignty and economic development by kickstarting clean energy projects. Last year, with nearly $136 million in federal funding through Solar for All, a program administered by the Environmental Protection Agency, the nonprofit launched the Tribal Renewable Energy Coalition, which aims to build solar projects with 14 tribal nations in the Northern Plains.

But when Donald Trump took office in January, those projects hit a wall: The Trump administration froze Solar for All's funding. That temporarily left the coalition and its members earlier this year without access to their entitled grant (it was later released



in March). However, the EPA is considering ending the program entirely.

The coalition is back on track with its solar plans, but now tribes and organizations, like the ones Two Bear works with, are bracing for new changes.

When Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill, or OBBB, became law in July, incentives for clean energy projects like wind and solar tax credits and clean energy grants were cut — a blow to the renewable energy sector and a major setback to tribal nations. Moves from federal agencies to end programs have shifted the project landscape as well.

The current number of impacted projects run by tribes is unknown. According to the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy, at least 100 tribes they have worked with have received funds from federal agencies and the Inflation Reduction Act; however, those figures could be higher. "Without that support, most of, if not all of those projects are now at risk for being killed by the new unclear federal approval process," said John Lewis, the Native American Energy managing director for Avant Energy, a consulting company.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, for instance, has planned solar projects reliant on federal tax cuts. The projects were designed to power a community health clinic, schools, and a radio station that broadcasts emergency notices during winter storms. However, with the passage of the OBBB, the tribe must now begin construction by July of next year or lose credits, a feat that doesn't account for the time it takes to secure capital in various stages, seek a complete environmental review, and navigate long permitting timelines through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

"Some of these projects, at a minimum, have stalled, or they're having to be reworked in some way to fit within the current parameters that have been laid down by the administration," said Verrin Kewenvoyouma, who is Hopi and Navajo, and a managing partner at Kewenvoyouma Law, a firm that assists tribes with environmental permitting, cultural resources, and energy development. "We have clients that are looking at creative solutions, trying to keep them alive."

In June, the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, a joint organization representing 12 federally recognized tribes in the state, joined a class action lawsuit against the Environmental Protection Agency, alongside a tribe in Alaska, arguing that the agency illegally froze access to promised project funds from the Environmental and Climate Justice block grant program. The now-defunct program promised $3 billion to 350 recipients to fund projects addressing pollution and high energy costs. Plaintiffs hope the program will be reinstated so that pending projects can be restarted.

Tribes are now seeking philanthropy, short-term funding, and conventional financing to cover delays and gaps in project costs. After the Guidiville Band of Pomo Indians in California lost access to a $3.55 million BIA award to the tribe for solar microgrid development in March, the BQuest Foundation, which specializes in covering expenses needed to continue housing or climate-related projects, gave the tribe $1 million to resume the project's timeline.

Currently, the self-funded Alliance is covering tribal projects that have experienced a sudden loss in tax credits, rescission of federal funds, and uncertainty of direct pay. "We're helping try to navigate this challenging period and continue on their self-determined paths, whatever it looks like for them — to energy sovereignty," said Shéri Smith, CEO of the organization. At the moment, the Alliance is offering a mix of grants from $50 to $500,000, and loans up to $1 million, which will be converted to grants should a tribe default.

"Tribes need to build up internal capacity to carry that out and to have control of their energy situation, for their at-risk members, and members in general," said John Lewis from Avant Energy. "At such a critical stage, access to affordable, reliable electricity is paramount. The country is getting hotter. The world is getting hotter. It's warming."

This article originally appeared in Grist at: https://grist.org/indigenous/tribal-nations-scramble-to-save-clean-energy-projects-as-federal-support-vanishes/.

"Native books" continued from cover

Some of the upcoming stories being penned include modern artist, George Morrison (1919-2000); political pathfinder Marie Lousie Bottineau Baldwin (1863-1952); and water walker, Sharon Day (1951-) to be released in 2026.

Each of the book covers features an illustrated version of the titular person as drawn by various artists like Tashia Hart, a Red Lake author and illustrator known for her recipes, essays, poetry, and short stories, or Cole Redhorse Taylor, a graduate of the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and citizen of the Prairie Island Indian Community.

The stories are written by a collective of Native writers who served as the panel at the book kickoff event. They included the inaugural Minneapolis poet laureate, Heid E. Erdrich; Seedkeeper author and former executive director of Dream of Wild Health, Diane Wilson; Gwen Nell Westerman; and social media manager of the Great Plains Action Society, Jessica Engelking.

The night celebrated all of those contributions by hosting the panel of authors for a question and answer session, facilitated by Corey China of the Minnesota Humanities Center, about how they made the books, chose the Native American Lives to feature, and what their plans and hopes for the future books would be.

The common theme reiterated by panelists, Humanities staff, and the Lieutenant Governor herself, was the hope that more Native kids would learn the real stories of inspiring Native people that shaped Minnesota history, not just the stereotypes of Indians versus immigrants or using our Tribes as a footnote to the innovation and development of Minnesota. Being able to tell true Native stories from Native writers will allow students across Minnesota to view the impact and expanse of influence that Native people have had through all eras and industries of our shared history.

Native authors gathered for the re-release and expansion of the middle-grade book series collectively referred to as "Native American Lives." Among the attendees was Lt Gov Peggy Flanagan (photo on right.)

The night ended with audience question and answer from some academics, some young learners who are the target audience of the books, and other community supporters excited for the launch of what's to come. All together, it was an inspiring evening of Native storytelling and a glimpse of the potential of what is happening and what is possible, both in writing and historical storytelling.

If you want to be a part of the next event celebrating the series, the Minnesota Humanities Center and Heid E. Erdrich will be hosting a panel of illustrators at the Minnesota Marine Art Museum (800 Riverview Dr. Winona, MN 55987) on Friday, September 19, from 6-9pm. Stay tuned for more books to be released and contact the Corey China at the Minnesota Humanities Center (corey@mnhum.org) to learn how to get the Native American Lives series into your school or library.

According to some historians and tribal leaders, then-territorial governor of Minnesota Alexander Ramsey and Indian sub-agent John Watrous “concocted" a plan that would move the distribution site after an initial failed attempt at removal of Wisconsin and Michigan tribes.

A removal would open Ojibwe territory to settlers alongside access to natural resources — a violation of treaties. Band members and allies alike opposed the removal effort and refused to leave their lands.

“The entire mission of the U.S. government, and what they what they were trying to do to us and remove us and to kill us off, just to get our land,” Nordin said. “We have a right to exist. And we had a right to exist even then.”

Ramsey and Watrous then informed tribes the payment site had been changed from La Pointe to Big Sandy Lake, an approximate 285-mile canoe ride west. Moving the site into Minnesota would also allegedly bring economic benefit to the state, which at the time was petitioning to join the union.

“5,000 Ojibwe people showed up. When they arrived, there was nothing there,” said Schlender.

Jean Skinaway-Lawrence is the chairwoman of the Sandy Lake Band of Mississippi Chippewa, located around Big Sandy Lake and near Savanna Portage State Park in McGregor. She says Minnesota tribes aided those who came to Big Sandy Lake, but resources were scarce.

Paddlers begin their four-mile trip across Big Sandy Lake in remembrance of the 175th anniversary of the Sandy Lake Tragedy in McGregor. (Photos by Erica Dischino/MPR News.)

“[We] had to help our brethren from Wisconsin when they came. So, we were part of that tragedy,” she said.

Schlender says other than sparse amounts of rotted food and minimal supplies, annuity payments did not arrive until December. Approximately 150 people died at Big Sandy Lake, including women, children and elders.

By the time snow was on the ground and waterways had frozen over, many families began to return to Wisconsin and Michigan by foot, where another 250 died along the way.

In total, some 400 people died due to starvation, illness and harsh weather conditions. A Mikwendaagoziwag Memorial site now sits at the Sandy Lake Recreation Area, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The memorial is located on Big Sandy Lake’s northwestern side, facing the lake with a backdrop of pine trees.

A large stone includes the names of the affected present-day Ojibwe tribes. A commemoration stone for each person who died is embedded into the memorial, all hand-picked by early founders. The memorial reads, "We remember the 400 Anishinaabeg who died in the winter of 1850-51.”

‘Our ancestors still deserve for us to remember them’

An afternoon feast and gathering is held near the site as canoeists arrive within 45 minutes to an hour of their morning departure. Before the paddle started, leaders emphasized that it was not a race, but some took it as a challenge regardless with lighthearted fun.

As people began to appear in their canoes off in the distance, those waiting for them clapped for their arrival.

Tom Maulson is a member of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians in Wisconsin. He is a former chairman of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission and was there when the organization held its first canoe paddle and ceremony.

“It was unique. It was sad. It was happy. I remember paddling across the lake where we show our recognition for the ones that passed,” Maulson said while recalling that first year. “We know that we're by their sides here. We want to make sure that they're not forgotten.”

For many attending, the memorial ceremony is a testament to the survival and perseverance of their ancestors. For others, it proves to be a reminder to lessons

Left: An opening ceremony is held before a memorial paddle across Big Sandy Lake in remembrance of the 175th anniversary of the Sandy Lake Tragedy July 30 in McGregor.

Right: A memorial stands along Big Sandy Lake in remembrance of the of the Sandy Lake Tragedy.

of past mistakes.

Tribal president of Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians John Johnson Sr. participated in the canoe paddle this year. He emphasized the need to remember past broken treaties, and to ensure treaty rights are respected going forward.

"It's good for reminders, so our kids don't have to repeat the past. We're trying to teach them to be better people, better educated when time comes for the future," Johnson said.

The afternoon began with song and prayer, as well as a recognition of those involved in the founding of the memorial. Tribal leaders and members took turns speaking in front of everyone, acknowledging the events of what happened at Big Sandy Lake. Some teared up as they spoke, while others shared stories of previous Mikwendaagoziwag ceremonies with lightheartedness.

While the events of 1850 hold somber, the gathering itself is filled with feelings of hope and self-reflection.

"[We] just have to keep feeding those spirits, feeding our spirits, their spirits and just keep honoring those yet to come. And that's my belief, and we most certainly do that here at Sandy Lake," Skinaway-Lawrence said.

In the following years after the Sandy Lake Tragedy, Ojibwe bands and allies continued to oppose attempts at removal from Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Schlender says continuing to tell the story is important, so people never forget what happened.

"People will sometimes say, you know, have we mourned enough? Have we grieved enough for them so that we move on?" he said. "I would say no, because we still have social issues and health issues and things that still impact us that are directly related to those things."

Schlender says that while many Ojibwe people are flourishing now, trauma can last years, even centuries. However, attending ceremonies such as the Sandy Lake Memorial can be a path in the right direction to healing for many.

Hunt is on the NCAA D1 U of St. Thomas Volleyball Team

There are two NCAA D1 volleyball teams in Minnesota. One is the Minnesota Gophers and the other is the University of St. Thomas Tommies. Tommie volleyball began its 23rd season under head coach Thanh Pham and the Tommies played the Gophers on August 31 at the Golden Gopher Invitational. This is the University of St. Thomas' first full season of NCAA D1 postseason-tournament eligibility.

Among the 14 upperclasswomen is 5-11 senior Keya Luta Win Hunt. Her full first name is Keya Luta Win which means Red Turtle Woman in Lakota. She is enrolled in the Ho-chunk Nation of Wisconsin but is also Leech Lake Ojibwe and Oglala Lakota.

"One of my proudest accomplishments is competing as a Division I volleyball player," said Hunt. "Reaching this level reflects years of commitment, discipline, and resilience, both on and off the court."

While at Breck School in Golden Valley, MN, Hunt was recognized as the IMAC Player of the Year. "In college I have continued to grow as both an athlete and a teammate, contributing to a program that is steadily building success through our collective hard work," said Hunt.

Hunt has developed her academic and athletic goals toward team goals and when achieved she and they add higher order goals.

"Being an athlete, you will always be a student of the game, and a lot of that knowledge comes from your coaches," said Hunt. "Listening to what your elders have to say is a key part to being successful. Sometimes their advice may be hard to hear, but having respect for their knowledge and guidance will set you apart from those who don't."

"Playing any sport, especially volleyball, you need to put yourself out there and be vocal, said Hunt." Being brave and pushing yourself past my limits socially and physically definitely made my game better but gave me more confidence. My grandpa called me ogichidaa-kwe meaning a resilient strong woman. I think this very much applies to practice and competing."

Senior setter Keya Luta Win Hunt. (Photo courtesy of the Tommies.)

"Last season we came in third in our conference, which was a huge jump from past years. This season we have the opportunity to participate in post-season competition which we are excited to pursue. Improving our team in every aspect of the game is always a goal of ours, but we do this by strengthening our on and off the court relationships, having intentionality and focus in practice, and holding each other to higher expectations," added Hunt.

Hunt is a Public Health major and plans to graduate in the spring of 2026. She also plans to go to grad school for Healthcare Administration after college and pursue a career in that field.

Oftentimes a coach is a mentor to the athlete. This is also the case with Hunt and her head coach.

University of St. Thomas head volleyball coach Thanh Pham has coached Hunt the past three seasons. "In the beginning of my collegiate career our team was making the transition from NCAA Division III to Division I," said Hunt. "Through this change I saw how much the coaches had to change and it inspired me to continue to follow their lead and push myself to change as well."

"Keya has been an adored member of this program," said University of St. Thomas head volleyball coach Thanh Pham. "Her effort on the court has been remarkable. Off the court, her humor keeps everyone on their toes. Her ability to run our offense and keep her teammates involved have directly lead to our growth as a program. I'm excited to share in her journey and savor one more season together."

Hunt has words of wisdom for the up and coming young native athletes. She said, "My advice to young Indigenous players off the court is to always be authentic and genuine. During my own journey as a volleyball player, I rarely played with or against other Indigenous athletes. At times, I felt different because I didn't look the same or because I carried myself in ways that reflected my culture. For a while, I hid parts of who I was, worrying that others wouldn't understand or value them."

"Over time, I realized that my identity and perspectives are strengths. Being true to who you are not only brings value to your wellbeing but also your game," added Hunt.

She continued to talk about encouraging young native athletes. She said, "On the court, my advice is to stay open to change. Growth as an athlete requires adaptability. Change can look like adjusting your technique when asked by a coach, stepping into a new role for the good of the team, or shifting your mindset in the middle of competition."

"The ability to embrace change is one of the most important skills for becoming a stronger athlete," added Hunt.

Keya Luta Win Hunt bio: https://tommiesports.com/sports/wvball/roster/keya-luta-win-hunt/10793

UST 2025 Volleyball Schedule: https://tommiesports.com/sports/wvball/schedule.

THE CIRCLE is a 501(c)3 non-profit newspaper and is governed by a board of directors from the American Indian community.

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The Circle is dedicated to presenting news from a Native American perspective, while granting an equal opportunity to community voices. The Circle is published monthly by The Circle Corporation, PO Box 7506, 3045 Bloomington Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55407. Editorials and articles are the sole responsibility of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the opinion, attitude, or philosophy of The Circle. The Circle does not endorse any product or service accepted as advertising, and reserves the right to reject any advertising, material, or letters. The Circle encourages the submission of Letters to the Editor, which must include the writer's name and address. Letters may be edited for language and length.

Member of Minnesota American IndianChamber of Commerce and the Minnesota Newspaper Association. Circulation: 8,000

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A visit to Gichigami

In early August, I traveled with my wife, Maj-Britt, up to Gichigami (Lake Superior) — it's my favorite area in Minnesota. We enjoyed the beaches, state parks and the sound of wind through the trees. Our base camp for three nights was a resort up in the hills north of Lutsen.

I was going to write about enjoying fresh air Up North, but the air became hazier as we approached Duluth. There had been air quality alerts in the Twin Cities due to smoke from Canadian wildfires. In late July, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) extended an air quality alert for all of Minnesota through Aug. 4 (later ended on Aug. 3): "The affected area covers all of Minnesota and the Tribal Nations of Upper Sioux, Mille Lacs, Prairie Island, Leech Lake, White Earth, Red Lake, Grand Portage, and Fond du Lac."

Of course, the situation was even worse north of the border.

"Thousands of people in Eastern Canada are under evacuation orders and thousands more have been warned to be on high alert as quick-moving wildfires burn out of control during what has become Canada's second-worst wildfire season on record," the *New York Times* reported in mid-August.

"There are over 700 active fires in Canada, according to the Canadian Interagency Forest Fire Center, the national firefighting coordinating body, and many large wildfires are occurring in parts of the country where fires typically stay small."

A spokesperson for the center told the *Times* that provinces in the western half of the country, especially Saskatchewan and Manitoba, have seen the most intense wildfires. "The largest fire is the Shoe fire, in Saskatchewan, which has been burning since May 7," according to the newspaper. "At 1.4 million acres, it's larger than Grand Canyon National Park in Arizona."

This is our world in the midst of climate change. Over the summer, when the rains stopped and we could get back to outdoors recreation, we were warned to stay inside because the air quality posed a health hazard. Leaders of the incipient fascist regime in the United States believe that global warming is a hoax propounded by Al Gore; and the subject is rarely discussed by Democratic Party elected officials.

Still, you have to live your life.

I usually jump into the frigid water of the big lake, but in August I only waded in the water at Black Beach by Silver Bay. Grand Marais was packed with tourists, as the Cook County Market was operating on the weekend. We visited the North House Folk School, where a gaggle of elders was chopping away on hunks of wood.

A highlight of the vacation was a visit to Grand Portage State Park, the only Minnesota state park on reservation land. In 2000, Minnesota returned ownership of the 300-acre park to the Grand Portage Ojibwe Band. More than 50 years ago, the area was taken from the band in a tax forfeiture. The park is now co-managed by the Grand Portage Band and the state. The Anishinaabe history of Grand Portage is explained at the park's visitor center.

On our short trek to the High Falls, the tallest waterfall in Minnesota, we encountered a fox with a mouse in its mouth. On the return trip, the same fox was lingering by the paved trail.

And we stopped at the Grand Portage Trading Post, where I bought manoomin (wild rice). The grain was packed in unmarked plastic storage bags on a rack near the front of the store. The clerk said that the manoomin was from White Earth.

We didn't travel with our passports, so we couldn't cross into Canada. We looked over into Canada.

Trump boosts sulfide mining

The Timberjay newspaper (timberjay.com) recently reported that NewRange Copper Nickel (formerly known as PolyMet Mining) plans to reveal plans for the NorthMet copper-nickel project near Babbit in September.

The destructive sulfide mining scheme was given a boost by the Trump administration in May, when NorthMet was designated "as one of 20 mining projects in the country to qualify as a FAST-41 'transparency project,' which is designed to streamline permitting on infrastructure-related projects," according to *The Timberjay* story.

The Biden administration revoked a Clean Water Act permit, "previously granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the mineral-rich Duluth Complex," according to the Institute for Energy Research. The federal action in 2023 was "based on claims that the permit did not comply with the water quality standards set by a sovereign downstream tribe, the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa."

Apart from the benighted policies of the Trump regime, there is still the matter of acquiring state permits that would allow NewRange to start digging.

Lt. Gov. Flanagan steps out on her own in Senate race

BY MADISON MCVAN
MINNESOTA REFORMER

The divide among Democrats this year is as much attitudinal as it is ideological.

Rank-and-file Democrats are thirsting for leaders who will fight rather than fold in the face of the Trump administration's unprecedented power grabs.

Annie Wells, whose crop art recreation of Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan's Senate campaign poster hung in the State Fair Agriculture Horticulture building, doesn't want a candidate who tries to meet Republicans in the middle.

"She's one of the Democrats that's actually trying to stand up and do things," Wells said. "I'm frustrated with a lot of the Democrats that are not being bold enough in response to what's happening at the federal level."

If there's one thing Flanagan's campaign wants Democratic voters to know, it's which side of the fight/fold divide she's on.

Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan speaks at a Senate campaign rally in Minneapolis on Friday, Aug. 22, 2025. (Photo by Madison McVan/Minnesota Reformer)

"Peggy is the most dedicated fighter for kids in America, y'all," Attorney General Keith Ellison said at a packed rally in Minneapolis.

"I'm here to fight for a woman who has the courage to fight for all of us," said U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

Democrats across the country continue to grapple with what went wrong in 2024 — when Flanagan's governing partner, Gov. Tim Walz, was on the national ticket — and how to win voters back in 2026.

For Flanagan, it starts with a fighting stance.

"I know resiliency, and survival, and fight, and overcoming challenges and any obstacle that people put in our way," she said.

Flanagan's opponent in the Democratic primary is U.S. Rep. Angie Craig, a moderate who has represented the south metro in Congress since 2019. As Flanagan courts the party's progressive grassroots, Craig has long appealed to centrist suburban and rural voters, emphasizing her record supporting law enforcement, border security, agriculture and collaboration across the aisle.

After years spent cultivating that political persona, Craig has pumped up her anti-Trump rhetoric since launching her first statewide campaign. In an April video announcing her Senate run, Craig called out Trump for the "chaos and corruption coming out of Washington, crashing down on all of us, every day," and "a president trampling our rights and freedoms, as he profits for personal gain."

Still, listen to how Flanagan recently framed her campaign against Craig —in classic Midwestern style, without naming or directly attacking Craig — in front of more than 1,000 supporters at at a brewery in northeast Minneapolis: "Will we send Washington the same old people and the same old solutions — or will we be bolder and fight harder and get more done for people?"

A 'lived experience' candidate

Flanagan is an enrolled member of the White Earth Nation and the daughter of Anishinaabe activist Marvin Manypenny, a fierce advocate for tribal sovereignty. If elected, she will be the first Native woman elected to the U.S. Senate.

She was raised by her mother in St. Louis Park, where they relied on public assistance to survive. In speeches, Flanagan tells stories of walking home from the food shelf, cradling government surplus cheese under her arm like a football; holding a different-colored lunch ticket to indicate that she qualified for free or reduced-cost lunch; relying on Medicaid for health care and Section 8 vouchers for housing.

"If we had more people serving in the U.S. Senate who relied on SNAP for nutrition and who relied on Medicaid for their health care, we probably wouldn't have passed this big, ugly bill," Flanagan said, referring to the GOP mega-law Trump signed on July 4.

After working on the late Sen. Paul Wellstone's campaign in 2002, Flanagan won her first election in 2004, when she became the Minneapolis School Board's youngest member at age 25.

She became the director of the Native American Leadership Program at Wellstone Action, an academy started by the Wellstone family after the senator's death. The organization trained influential Minnesota Democrats including Walz and Ellison.

Flanagan met Walz at a three-day "Camp Wellstone" and knocked doors for his first campaign in Minnesota's 1st Congressional District. (Walz won that race and the following five.)

As executive director of the Children's Defense Fund of Minnesota, she co-chaired a coalition pushing to raise Minnesota's minimum wage. The coalition scored a major win in 2014 when the DFL-controlled Legislature raised the minimum wage to $9.50 by 2016, and adjusted for inflation after.

Flanagan won a seat in the state House in 2015, representing the west metro district that includes her hometown of St. Louis Park.

Walz selected Flanagan as his running mate in 2017. She was an olive branch to the left wing of the DFL and a counterweight to Walz's perceived centrist leanings — he'd represented a purple (now red) district in Congress for more than a decade and had an A rating from the NRA.

Walz and Flanagan both claim credit to the slate of DFL priorities passed in the 2023 legislative session: paid family and medical leave, free school meals, and universal background checks for gun purchases, among others.

– CONTINUED ON PAGE 15 –

Ongoing

Dakota Sacred Hoop Walk

Experience the Dakota Sacred Hoop Walk, an immersive augmented reality art exhibition by Marlena Myles, a Spirit Lake Dakota artist. Located at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the walk begins in the Harrison Sculpture Garden and features five stops, each offering digital images and audio narratives that honor Dakota history, culture, and the significance of the land. Indigenous peoples receive waived admission by calling 612-301-6775 to reserve. Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, 3675 Arboretum Drive, Chaska. Contact: arbinfo@umn.edu | 612-624-2200 or see: https://arb.umn.edu/SacredHoopWalk.

MAIC Events

See events at the Mpls American Indian Center on their updated website. MAIC events listings: Sewing Circle, Running Club, Drum and Dance, Pickup Basketball, Volleyball, Congregate Dining and more. MAIC, 1530 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis. See more at: https://www.maicnet.org/upcoming-events.

Virtual Native Exhibit

The Minneapolis Institute of Art offers a virtual tour of its Americas Galleries, allowing viewers to explore artworks from Indigenous cultures and other parts of the Americas. This self-guided, 3D tour provides an immersive experience of the museum's collection. Accessible anytime. Free. Contact: visit@artsmia.org | 612-870-3000 or see: https://discover.matterport.com/space/cbvQ4TefkEh.

Thru Sept 21

Mary Sully: Native Modern5

Born on the Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota, Mary Sully was a reclusive artist who, between the 1920s and 1940s, created highly distinctive works informed by her Native American and European ancestry. This first solo exhibition of Sully's groundbreaking production highlights recent Mia acquisitions, works that complicate traditional notions of Native American and modern art. Free. Minneapolis Institute of Art, 2400 Third Ave S, Gallery 276, Minneapolis. For more info, see: https://new.artsmia.org/exhibition/mary-sully-native-modern

Sept 5–7

Sagasweiwe Traditional Powwow

Traditional Ojibwe dance and drum competition hosted by Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Public welcome. Veterans Memorial Pow Wow Grounds, Cass Lake. Contact: Leech Lake tribal offices. https://www.llojibwe.org/powwow/schedule.html

Sept 11

P/RESERVE Exhibit

P/RESERVE brings together new and recent works by Audie Murray (Métis and Cree, Flying Dust First Nation) and Nico Williams (Ojibwe, Aamjiwnaang First Nation) whose respective contemporary beading practices honor ancestral knowledge that has always been personal, relational, and responsive to change. From fully beaded sculptures to multimedia installations, the exhibition centers how beads' ceremonial, utilitarian, and social functions are activated and extended, disrupting colonial notions of care to amplify sovereign expressions of p/reservation today. Opening Reception: September 11, 6:15 to 7:30 pm. Exhibition on view through November 8. Gallery hours: Tuesday through Saturday, Noon to 5:00 pm. Bockley Gallery, 2123 w 21st St, (west of Lake of the Isles, near Franklin), Minneapolis. For info: https://bockleygallery.com.

Sept 12

Resource Directory Giveaway Breakfast

The printed version of our resource directory is available and we are proud to share it with everyone! NACDI is hosting a Resource Directory Giveaway Breakfast. Stop by, grab a muffin and some coffee, pick up a directory, and get any questions you may have answered! The Resource Directory is an online and printed resource that hosts contact information for Indigenous and Indigenous-serving organizations and businesses. The goal of the directory is to connect the many helpful resources in our community and make it easy for folks to find the support they need. 10am - 12pm. Visit the online resource directory or submit your organization and business at nacdi.org/directory. Gatherings Cafe, at MAIC, 1530 E Franklin Ave, Minneapolis.

Sept 12–14

Mendota Mdewakanton Dakota Traditional Wacipi Pow Wow

Annual Dakota Wacipi, dance, music, cultural gathering. Free admission. St. Peter's Church grounds, Mendota. (near MSP airport.) Contact: Carol LaBine, 651-247-3265 or vicechair@mendotadakota.com. https://drumhop.com/mnpow-wow.php

Sept 13

Learning from Place: Bdote

Day-long immersive walking tour with Dakota community members exploring Bdote, historically and culturally significant sites. Registration required. Fort Snelling State Park, St. Paul, MNhttps://www.mnhum.org/events/tag/dakota.

Sept 13

East Franklin Corridor Arts Festival

All My Relations Arts is excited to partner with our neighbors Bench Pressed for the first ever East Franklin Corridor Arts Festival. The event will be a free, family-friendly art street fair where local artists affiliated with local organizations can share their work and, importantly, offer hands-on art experiences to the broader community. The "open street" style fair will allow residents to engage directly with different art mediums offered among local Franklin vendors and businesses, some of which our neighbors may not have encountered before. Artist and activist Courtney Cochran will be engaging attendees with a free, hands-on, screen printing activity focused on an original, community-forward design (pictured above). FREE for all ages! 26th Ave S (between East Franklin Ave and Pautz Place), Minneapolis.

Sept 17

Native Elder Day

The 2nd Annual Native Elder Day will take place from 10am to 30pm at the Veterans Memorial Park at Portland Ave & Crosstown 62 in Richfield, MN.

Sept 18

September Gifts of the Plant Nation (online)

Join us for this free webinar and learn from Indigenous environmentalists and knowledge holders who will share their stories, medicinal uses and environmental benefits of these beloved plant relatives. Our fall Gifts of the Plant Nation webinar will focus on the four sisters garden: Wamnaheza (Corn), Waȟcazi (Sunflower), Wamnu (Squash), Omnica (Beans). This month's guests are Randilynn Boucher-Giago (Diné Nation, Sissituŋwaŋ and Bdewakaŋtuŋwaŋ Dakota) an d Teresa Peterson (Upper Sioux Community). 6:00 - 7:30pm. Registration is required: https://www.wakantipi.org/events.

Sept 19–21

Mahkato 53rd Annual Traditional Wacipi

Annual Dakota powwow honoring the 38 Dakota with dance contests, vendors, Grand Entries. Admission $8. Land of Memories Park, Mankato. Contact: info@mahkatowacipi.org or 507-387-3572. https://calendar.powwows.com/events/mahkato-annual-traditional-pow-wow

Sept 19–21

Battle Point Traditional Pow Wow

Hosted by Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe with traditional dancing, singing, community celebration. Sugar Point. https://www.llojibwe.org/powwow/schedule.html

Sept 21

Wild Rice Festival

Harriet Alexander Nature Center in Roseville hosts this free fall festival from 10am–4pm, celebrating Dakota and Ojibwe culture. Events include wild rice harvesting demonstrations, native plant tours, honey and cider tastings, ecological booths, craft sales, and performances by the Little Earth Singers and Dancers. Contact: 651-792-7012.

Sept 25

MAIC 50th Anniversary Gala

The Minneapolis American Indian Center is celebrating 50 years of being the heart of the Twin Cities urban Native community. All are invited to celebrate half a century of community, culture, and connection at our newly renovated and expanded building. The evening will feature performances by Native artists and will be MC'd by Bobby Wilson (Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota) of the hit television shows Reservation Dogs and Rutherford Falls and the Indigenous comedy group The 1491s. There will also be a silent auction and dinner catered by Gatherings Cafe. Attire: The evening includes a plated dinner, and we invite people to dress up for the occasion. This includes clothes that reflect and honor attendee's culture, like ribbon skirts and shirts. Support the event: We also looking for silent auction items and have numerous opportunities for event sponsorship. Doors open: 5pm. Entertainment, silent auction, and mocktails: 5-7pm. Dinner and program: 7-9pm. MAIC, 1530 EFranklin Ave, Minneapolis.

Sept 26

Artist Talk & Reception

You're invited to the opening reception of Emerging Portraits and Indigenous Abstractions, two new exhibitions at Two Rivers Gallery. Artist Talk & Reception: 5:00-7:00 p.m. Emerging Portraits highlights the photographic works of Scott Kutney, (Oglala/Oneida) whose practice explores textures, nature, and unexpected imagery, sometimes arranged with mixed digital media. These works reflect both challenges and triumphs of life's journey, guided by intuition and spirit. Also on view are works by P.E.F. Hobot (Standing Rock Sioux Nation) in Indigenous Abstrations, whose abstract artistic vision and work as an arts educator uplifts Native voices in contemporary expression. Join us for an evening of art, conversation, and community. Appetizers and refreshments will be available and as always this event is free and open to all! Two Rivers Gallery, 1530 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis.

Sept 26 (deadline)

Science Warriors Fellowship

The Science Warriors Fellowship cultivates scientist-organizers within Indigenous Nations and their communities, bridging the gap between grassroots organizing and science-based interventions. The fellowship is open to Indigenous Peoples who are passionate about environmental health concerns caused by development and colonialism in Indigenous communities, focusing on projects that could protect communities and lands. Fellows receive a stipend of up to $10,000 for a 10 month project, with additional funding of up to $5,000 available for research materials, gas, etc. The program seeks to train scientist-organizers who can use scientific knowledge to protect their lands and communities from extractive development. Fellows participate in regular check-ins and workshops, with one speaker per month covering different topics relevant to their projects. Applications are due by September 26. For info, see: https://www.honorearth.org/science-warriors.

Oct 3

Native American Artist-in-Residence program

The Minnesota Historical Society has opened applications for the next round of Native American Artist-in-Residence program. Artists will receive $30,000 for collections study and development of community programs as well as extensive support and training from MNHS staff, interns and consultants. Applications can be submitted online at https://www.mnhs.org/residencies/naair through October 3, 2025.

Oct 10 (deadline)

Call for Artwork

Honor the Earth is inviting Indigenous and Black artists across the globe to hel envision a Sovereign Indigenous Future — a future that has grown beyond colonization, genocide, imperialism, prisons, white supremacy, ableism and all the other modern systemic oppressions. HTE is collecting digital submissions of original artworks across various media that respond to this prompt: what does a Sovereign Indigenous Future look like? Winners will receive a cash prize of $2,000-$3,500. Applications are due Oct. 10. See info at: bit.Ly/Radical Art.

Ninham inducted into Minnesota Lacrosse Hall of Fame

BY THE CIRCLE

Dan Ninham, a longtime advocate for Native education and Indigenous games, has been named to the inaugural class of the Minnesota Lacrosse Hall of Fame.

Dan Ninham, PhD, is a retired physical education teacher and coach, and co-founder of the North American Indigenous Athletics Hall of Fame.

Ninham (Oneida Nation) is one of 12 inductees honored by the newly established Minnesota Lacrosse Hall of Fame Foundation. Two additional people were recognized with Unsung Hero awards.

"These distinguished individuals — comprising players, coaches, officials and administrators — exemplify excellence and leadership in Minnesota's lacrosse community," the foundation said in a news release.

Ninham is the only Indigenous member of the first class. He said the recognition is meaningful, but emphasized that it reflects the efforts of many.

"Even though I was recognized, I think there's so many other people involved with it as well — from the young kids playing the wooden stick game, the traditional game, as well as the modern stick game," Ninham said. "I often reference 'we,' because there's a number of people involved that I believe are part of me representing them. I think of those who have come before us and those who continue to play this game, and it's nice to have that recognition."

Ninham, a writer for *The Cirle,* has promoted Indigenous games throughout his career in physical education. He said the sport carries deep cultural meaning.

"The spiritual connection of the Creator's game — the Creator gave us the game to play for his amusement," Ninham said. "It's a medicine game. When everybody plays in a good way, with strong exertion and skill, I think that's the medicine."

The Minnesota Lacrosse Hall of Fame Foundation was established in June by founder and president Mark Hellenack.

"It's time for Minnesota to have a Hall of Fame of its own to honor our best men's and women's players, coaches, referees and the most impactful growers of the sport," Hellenack said in the release.

Lacrosse surged in popularity in the early 2000s and was considered one of the fastest growing sports in the country. Participation slowed during the COVID-19 pandemic, but Ninham hopes young athletes will continue to embrace the game and its history.

He is also looking ahead to the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, where he hopes the Haudenosaunee Nationals will be allowed to compete under their own flag.

Both the men's and women's teams already compete in international tournaments. Olympic recognition, Ninham said, would be "so significant."

"It's been going on for almost 45 years, starting with the Iroquois Nationals, and Indigenous people played prior to that as well," he said. "But to be playing at the international level is the elite of the representation mode."

The Minnesota Lacrosse Hall of Fame's first class was introduced at a Premier Lacrosse League playoff game on Aug. 23. The formal induction ceremony is scheduled for Sept. 14 in Minneapolis.

– FLANAGAN CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12 –

The almost-governor

The day Vice President Kamala Harris selected Walz to join her on the Democratic ticket for the highest executive offices in the nation, Flanagan's life changed, too.

This time last year, Flanagan was sampling the new State Fair foods with chef Andrew Zimmern and serving all-you-can-drink milk.

Behind the scenes, she was preparing to ascend to the governor's office, meeting with donors and prospective staffers. In public, she campaigned for Walz and Harris at 77 stops in 90 days. She stepped into the national spotlight as the successor to Walz, pending his and Harris' victory; Politico profiled her, and top party leaders asked her to speak on day one of the 2024 Democratic National Convention.

But when Harris and Walz lost, Flanagan's shortcut to the governor's office abruptly closed.

Walz returned to Minnesota and stepped back from public life for a couple of months. Flanagan, for her part, returned to the stream of appearances that define the public role of lieutenant governor: packing meals at food shelves; gaveling in the state Senate; meeting with the Future Farmers of America and small business owners and social workers and

Gov. Tim Walz and Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan. (Photo by Michelle Griffith for the Minnesota Reformer.)

labor unions and community college students.

After nearly a decade joined at the hip, Walz and Flanagan stopped appearing together in public. Flanagan wasn't in attendance at Walz's homecoming speech or routine events she had attended in the past.

Walz administration officials, granted anonymity by the *Star Tribune,* said in December that Walz wasn't happy with the steps Flanagan took to prepare for governorship, including planning for a potential run in 2026 and tapping into Walz's campaign funds without authorization for some campaign work. (Walz publicly downplayed the division and praised Flanagan; Flanagan never commented publicly on the rift, and says she'll support Walz with his next steps.)

And then, in February, U.S. Sen. Tina Smith announced she won't seek reelection in 2026, creating an opportunity for Flanagan to set out on her own.

Flanagan's role in the frenzied 2024 campaign was to support Walz and Harris; but it also formed the foundation for a future statewide run.

"I do think it was an opportunity for me to get to know more Minnesotans to get to know folks nationwide," Flanagan told the *Reformer.*

Walz has not yet announced whether he will run for a third term. Flanagan's Senate bid means he would have to find a new running mate.

Despite the political separation from Walz, Flanagan will be forced to defend their shared record and — not unlike Harris with Joe Biden — decide when to publicly break from the administration she has served. From flagging school test scores to a looming budget deficit, fraud in public programs to population stagnation, Republicans — and Craig, depending on how she wants to run her campaign — will have fodder.

Eschewing corporate money

Standing in the way of Flanagan's aspirations are a primary election, a general election and a president with a firm grasp on Congress and the courts.

Trump and Republicans have "ransacked our government" and are "spitting in the faces of millions of people" who stand to lose health care or food assistance, Flanagan said at the recent rally with Warren.

Flanagan also lobbed attacks at corporations and big-money politics.

Voters need to elect people who "have the guts to fight against these powerful corporate interests who are pulling the strings these days," Flanagan said.

Flanagan has promised not to accept donations from corporate political action committees.

By the end of June, she had raised nearly $1.4 million, with most of the money coming from individual donations of $200 or less.

Many of the largest donations — most in the amount of $3,500 — were from tribal nations from around the country.

Standing on a platform surrounded by Democratic-Farmer-Labor voters at the party's state fair tent, Flanagan introduced herself in Ojibwe, as she does in most public appearances. Then she switched to English:

"My name is Peggy Flanagan. My Ojibwe name is 'speaks in a loud and clear voice woman.' How am I doing?"

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