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Salmon people pray for sacred fish to return to historic home

Calendar

Here's what happened last week at Interior

GrantStation



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Salmon people pray for sacred fish to return to historic home

Northwest tribes urge US and Canada to revise Columbia River Treaty to allow safe passage for salmon crossing dams

October 5, 2014 5:00AM ET by [Kevin Taylor](#)

KETTLE FALLS, Wash. — Along a rocky shore where his ancestors gathered for millennia at once thundering but now flooded rapids, Richard Armstrong stepped into the Columbia River to pray.

With eyes closed, Armstrong, a member of the [Okanagan Nation Alliance](#), pounded a rhythm on a small hide drum and prayed and sang in a Salish-language dialect. His prayers urged the U.S. and Canada to renegotiate the Columbia River Treaty, which has cut salmon off from this stretch of water.

For thousands of years, Native people had gathered at these [falls](#) to spear and net the [leaping fish](#). Armstrong is a descendant of the last salmon chief who regulated the bustling fishery.

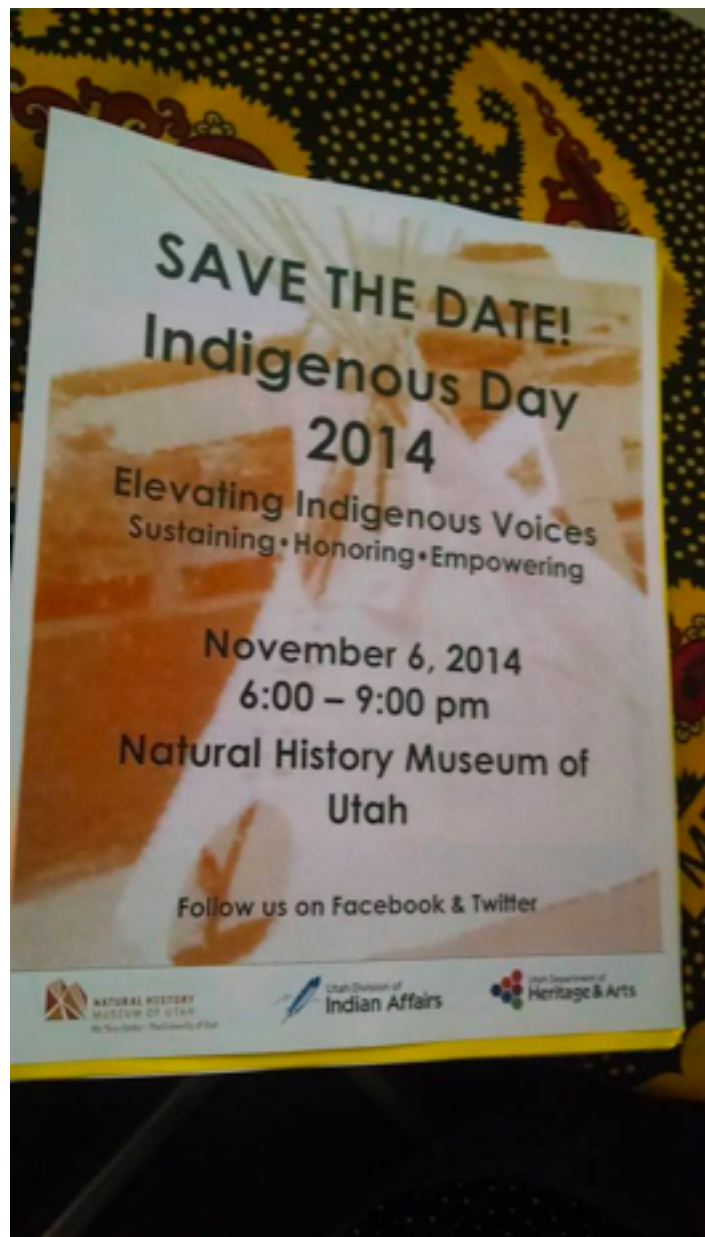
But since 1942, adult chinook and sockeye salmon returning from the ocean have been blockaded more than 100 miles downstream by [Grand Coulee Dam](#), a high-head hydropower dam with a massive concrete face 551 feet high. It was built with no provision for fish passage.

Since 1942 the Grand Coulee Dam on the Columbia River in Washington has blocked adult chinook and sockeye salmon from returning from the ocean.

Stephen Saks Photography / Alamy
The Columbia River Treaty, which was negotiated in the 1950s and signed in 1964, aimed to generate hydropower and protect cities like Portland, Oregon, from flooding by building five high-head hydropower dams. But they didn't provide for fish passage, and small bands of Native people in the U.S. and Canada weren't consulted, though they stood to lose a fishery central to their nutrition, economy, religion and culture. Some 2,300 settlers as well as Indians were flooded out of fertile valleys in Canada that now fill and empty like bathtubs by dams built to regulate downstream river flow and light distant cities.

The salmon have been absent here for 72 years — for roughly three human and 15 salmon generations. Is that long enough to seem unchangeable?

“While we've protected Portland from flooding, people forget we've permanently flooded upriver,” said D.R. Michel, executive director of the [Upper Columbia United Tribes](#) (UCUT), a coalition of Northwest tribes. Michel said the reservoirs, which can fluctuate up to 40 feet at a time, have permanently displaced thousands of



people,

“We’ve swung so far to the other side, where everything is about bottom lines and profit. It’s just a short-sighted way of looking at things,” he added.

“As a society, we really need to talk about the cost of things,” said John Sirois, a former chairman of the [Colville Confederated Tribes](#) who now works for UCUT. “Who’s really being hurt so I can have cheap power and be protected from floods?”

One might think salmon don’t have a prayer to hurdle Grand Coulee or the additional high-head dams (with no fish ladders) that were built after it.

And yet it’s been a summer of prayer up and down the river. In August alone, there were 17 interfaith vigils conducted between Astoria, Oregon, where the Columbia is nine miles wide at its mouth, to Canal Flats, British Columbia, some 1,243 river miles away in the Canadian Rockies, where it bubbles out of the ground.

A common hope expressed at the vigils was that the U.S. and Canada will modify the Columbia River Treaty by adding ecosystem-based function. This is a fancy way to say that dams should be re-engineered for salmon to pass and that water levels be managed to help with migration and to preserve the nests, known as redds, that salmon build in gravelly shallows.

The first chance either party could terminate or change the treaty is in [2024](#), with 10 years’ notice. That 10 years began this month, and since December, both the Bonneville Power Administration and Corps of Engineers and the British Columbia provincial government — the U.S. and Canadian entities involved — have endorsed adding ecosystem-based function. The endorsements came with a variety of caveats — mainly getting salmon past Grand Coulee Dam, which is often thought to be impossible or prohibitively expensive.

“I was a bit surprised,” said Matt Wynne, vice chairman of the Spokane Tribe and current chair of UCUT. But, he said, tribes had begun talking to the Corps of Engineers and BPA about returning salmon stocks as early as 2008.

Wynne, Michel and others say tribes are not relying solely on an opaque, decade-long process through the treaty, but also seek leverage via the federal Power Act and provisions of individual dam relicensing agreements.

When it came to the treaty, Wynne said the corps and BPA suggested the 15 river tribes in the far-flung Columbia River Basin, which reaches from the Canadian Rockies to Nevada via the tributary Snake River, first make a unified statement. It may have seemed reasonable enough, but Wynne and others knew how often the disparate tribes disagreed. To him, it seemed a cynical ploy to pin failure on the tribes.

This time, Wynne said, “The tribes said we’ve got to protect the river, we’ve got to protect the resource and we came up with a common views [document](#).”

‘Salmon really is one of our sacraments. It goes far deeper than just property or a resource.’

John Sirois, former chairman, Colville Confederated Tribes

Into these undercurrents of politics and history is where Armstrong waded out to pray in what has, since 1942, become known as the Ceremony of Tears. But the mood was different this summer. Rows of people lining the shore behind Armstrong were invited to pick up river rocks off the beach and knock them together, making their own private prayer.

Over the stilled water of Lake Roosevelt, the 165-mile-long reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam, stretching nearly to Canada, came a staccato sound.

Tok! Tok! Tok!

The steady clacking of rocks in dozens of hands, brown and white, beat time along with small drums. When Armstrong ended his prayer, people were invited to throw the rocks into the water so that their prayers might be heard too.

The clacking, it was said, is the sound salmon hear when a free-running river is sluicing at high flood, knocking rocks along the river bottom.

Despite their blocked passages, the salmon still come — or at least they try to. About 150 miles downriver from the ceremony, at Chief Joseph Dam, constructed below Grand Coulee in 1961, native chinook salmon this summer bumped nose-first into its concrete face.

Randy Friedlander, a tribal member and fisheries biologist for the Colville Confederated Tribes, said it's almost tragic to watch successive generations of wild chinook batter themselves against this unjumpable obstacle.

“There are still native salmon hitting the face of Chief Joe every year. They're saying, ‘When are we going to get by this thing?’” Friedlander said.

Though building a fish ladder high as a skyscraper at Grand Coulee appears daunting, Friedlander said engineering solutions are probably simpler than political solutions.

The venerable practice of trap and haul is already an option. For decades, salmon have been netted and transferred into trucks or barges to get around dams. It's low-tech but cheap.

More complicated systems known as [floating surface collectors](#), or gulpers, have been constructed to get downstream-migrating juvenile salmon past the dams. The tiny smolts are guided through a complicated network of raceways and tanks with the aid of cranes and cable-guided barges.

While gulpers have dramatically reduced smolt mortality, they can cost tens of millions of dollars.

Late this summer, fish cannons have made bemused headlines from [Gizmodo](#) to [NPR](#). But Vince Bryan III, CEO at Whooshh, said his company's [innovative solution](#) to fish passage is gentle. The “cannons” are flexible tubes originally designed to move freshly picked fruit without

bruising. The tubes work almost like pneumatic tubes in old office buildings, with a slight lowering of pressure in front of an object to create steady movement.

“Clearly the fish needed help, and we had this technology we thought was pretty good at moving stuff very gently,” Bryan said. As Whooshh has gotten more involved with testing and redesigning its tubes to handle live fish, salmon appreciation has deepened as well.

“The Native nations and the First Nations of Canada, certainly what you hear from them is that salmon is a spiritual thing. It’s fundamental to their culture. I think we as humankind have to be looking at it the same way,” Bryan said.

Right now, a projected record return of 1.6 million fall chinook salmon are swimming up the Columbia and Snake rivers. Despite billions of dollars spent on fish passage and endangered species protection, Bryan said that’s only 10 percent of the historical population.

Friedlander, the Colville Tribes biologist, said he is confident that salmon, which turn red when about to spawn, will spread like scarlet fire into the thousands of miles of tributary habitat and reclaim their place. They will overcome slackwater reservoirs, silt at gravel nesting sites and toxic heavy metals from smelters. “Salmon seem to be very determined,” he said.

Still, he conducts a private ritual for this outcome.

When he catches some of the first chinook to bump against Chief Joseph Dam each summer, he drives the 40-odd miles to the upriver side of Grand Coulee, where he cleans the fish and returns their remains to the stretch of river that was once their home.

“An elder explained to me one time we have to respect the salmon and take care of it, return it back to the river where it came from rather than throwing it away,” Friedlander said.

“Salmon really is one of our sacraments,” said Sirois, the former Colville chairman. “It goes far deeper than just property or a resource.”

Calendar

November 1 - Pueblo Grande Annual Navajo Rug & American Indian Art Auction. Free & all are welcome. Pueblo Grande Museum, 4619 E. Washington, Phoenix. For information call (602) 495-0901 or check the [website](#).

November 1-2 - 28th Annual Red Mountain Eagle Pow Wow. Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community Baseball Field, 1839 N. Longmore Road, Scottsdale. For information call (208) 241-2175.

November 3-7 - Native Fitness Week. Personal Trainer Certification, Medical Conditions & Exercise Certification. Flagstaff. Fee. Scholarships available. For information about scholarships call (928) 774-3048. For conference information click [here](#).

November 4 - Arizona American Indian Excellence in Leadership Awards. Hilton Scottsdale Resort & Villas, Scottsdale. Hosted by Phoenix Indian Center. For information call (602) 264-6768.

Nov. 4-6 Occupancy/Income Eligibility (HUD/ONAP) Albuquerque, NM

FREE 3-day interactive course for staff and other tribal housing professionals covers Admissions and Occupancy program management, application and selection process, eligibility for housing assistance, calculating annual income, determining monthly rental or homeownership payments, occupancy standards, collections practices & compliance, effective communication techniques with residents, lease agreement compliance and more. Participants should refer to copies of their own Admissions and Occupancy policies so they can practice applying them to case studies and role playing exercises presented during the course. Course also examines how maintaining high standards in the Admissions & Occupancy program affects the overall management of tribal housing programs. For more visit <http://www.naihc.net/index.php/training/HUD-Trainings-Delivered-By-NAIHC>

November 5 - 22nd Annual Nonprofit Conference on Sustainability Strategies - Nonprofit Next: Taking Charge of Change. Black Canyon Conference Center, Phoenix. 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Fee. For information check the [website](#).

November 5-7 - 11th Annual "Fatherhood is Leadership" National Conference, Phoenix Marriott Mesa Hotel, Mesa. Native American Fatherhood & Families Association. For information call NAFFA at (480) 833-5007 or check the [website](#).

November 7 - Vision Rehabilitation and Assistive Technology Expo. Phoenix Convention Center, South Building, 33 S. 3rd Street, Phoenix. 9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Free. For information check the [website](#).

Nov. 7 Tribal Employment Rights & Law Annual Conference Rancho Mirage, CA Law Seminars International's 2nd annual conference on "Tribal Employment Rights & Law" examines current legal, regulatory and business developments that impact the complex relationship between Tribal employees and employers. Our faculty includes leading practitioners, Tribal officials and others with special expertise on the issues that significantly impact Tribal sovereignty and the employer-employee relationship in Indian country. Register at Tribal Employment Rights & Law

November 8 - ASU West, Veteran's Day Traditional Pow Wow. ASU West Campus, 4701 W. Thunderbird, Glendale. Free. Call (602) 543-5300.

November 11 - Pueblo Grande Veteran's Day Gourd Dance and Community Potluck. Gourd dancing and community event honoring our Veterans. Free admission. Pueblo Grande Museum, 4619 E. Washington, Phoenix. Call (602) 495-0901 or check the [website](#).

November 12-14 - 5th Annual Native American Healthcare Conference (merged Native American Healthcare and Wound Care Conference with Semi-Annual Diabetes Conference). Morongo Casino Resort & Spa in Cabazon, California. For information click [here](#).

November 15 Deadline Nike N7 Grant Fund

Click on the “Apply” option at <http://n7fund.com/the-n7-fund-grant-cycle-is-now-open/> to view the online application. For more info., contact N7.Fund@nike.com.

November 15 - Elder Brother Storytelling Event. South Mountain Community College, 7050 S. 24th Street, Phoenix. Noon-3:00 p.m. Storytelling workshop \$25.00. 4:00-9:00 p.m. Free. Storytelling and snacks beginning at 4:00 p.m. Snacks might include frybread and kettle corn. Native American focused storytelling and feature Native American storytellers. Open to all ages and children friendly. For information contact Liz at (602) 243-8026, Storytelling Institute Director.

November 15 - Early Intervention Conference. Arizona Department of Education/Exceptional Student Services, 3100 N. West Street, Suite 300, Flagstaff. No cost for families. Registration required. No child care. For information call Raising Special Kids at (800) 237-3007 or check the [website](#).

November 15 Deadline - American Association on Health & Disability Frederick J. Krause Scholarship on Health & Disability. For full time undergraduate students (junior standing or above) or enrolled as a part time or full time graduate student. For information check the [website](#).

November 16 - Arizona Indian Living Treasures Awards (AILTA) Ceremony. 1:00 p.m. Heard Museum, Steele Auditorium, Phoenix. For information check the [website](#).

Nov. 18-19 Tribal Housing Executive Directors’ Refresher Course Salt Lake City, UT HUD’s Office of Native American Programs offers this 2-day FREE training. More info to come soon. Visit <http://www.naihc.net/index.php/training/HUD-Trainings-Delivered-By-NAIHC>

Nov. 18-19 New Trends in Construction (HUD/ONAP) Seattle, WA
This course will highlight new trends in construction that are both energy efficient and cost effective. The course will highlight cost savings that could be achieved with new approaches to design, project management, and occupancy planning during construction. Life cycle cost savings of using green materials vs. conventional, particularly as impacts utility costs will be reviewed. To register, visit <http://www.hud.gov/emarc/index.cfm?fuseaction=emar.registerEvent&eventId=2183&update=N>

Nov. 18-20 Environmental Reviews/Lead Base Paint Albuquerque, NM
Save the Date! More details and registration info. coming soon.

Here's what happened this week at Interior: Nine new landmarks are added to the National Historic List; Secretary Jewell convenes the fourth meeting of the White House Council on Native American Affairs; Deputy Secretary Mike Connor tours fire and flood damage in New Mexico; four whooping crane chicks raised by their parents in captivity are released into the wild; President Obama and Secretary Jewell will be on hand this weekend for the dedication of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington DC; and this month marks the opening of the "Out of Many, One" exhibit -- a human face on the National Mall that can be seen from space. [Click here to watch this week's episode.](#)

[Secretary Jewell, Director Jarvis Announce \\$500,000 in Matching Grants to Support Diversity in National Register of Historic Places](#) THU, OCTOBER 2, 2014

WASHINGTON – On the heels of a meeting of the American Latino Scholars Expert Panel and in honor of National Hispanic Heritage Month, Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis announced \$500,000 [Read More >](#)

[Interior Transfers Another \\$1 Million from Land Buy-Back Program to Cobell Education Scholarship Fund](#) OCTOBER 1, 2014

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The U.S. Department of the Interior today announced that an additional \$1 million has been transferred to the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund, bringing the total transferred in 2014 to more than \$4.5 million. [Read More >](#)

[Secretary Jewell Convenes Fourth Meeting of the White House Council on Native American Affairs](#) TUE, SEPTEMBER 30

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell today convened the fourth meeting of the White House Council on Native American Affairs (Council), formed by Executive Order of the President [Read More >](#)

GrantStation

[United States Handball Association Grant Programs](#)

The United States Handball Association (USHA) supports youth handball programs throughout the United States. USHA awards grants in two categories: Annual First Ace Grants and Special Purpose Grants. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and application process.

[Shaw Media-Hot Docs Funds](#)

The Shaw Media-Hot Docs Funds, an initiative of the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival, provides Canadian documentary filmmakers with financial support at critical stages in their projects. Support is provided through two funds. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and the application process.

Department of Commerce: NOAA Marine Debris Program

The NOAA Marine Debris Program provides funding for prevention, assessment, and removal projects that will benefit coastal habitat and waterways. Click above to learn more about the funding guidelines and the application process.

National Funding.

Support for Artists Involved in Social Engagement

Surdna Foundation: Artists Engaging in Social Change

The Surdna Foundation seeks to foster just and sustainable communities throughout the United States. The Foundation's Thriving Cultures program has issued a request for proposals (RFP) for the Artists Engaging in Social Change funding area, which supports programs that help artists and culture bearers of all artistic disciplines deepen our cultural understanding or help communities achieve social change. Grants will be provided for compelling projects that artists develop in response to their communities' specific challenges, as well as projects of artists whose long-term, deeply-rooted work has increased social engagement without necessarily being explicitly defined as "activist." Grants awarded will range from \$25,000 to \$150,000 over one- to two-year periods. The RFP is open to both nonprofit organizations and individual artists and culture bearers, but artists and collectives that are not incorporated as 501(c)(3)s must apply under a fiscal sponsor. The application deadline is November 12, 2014. Visit the Foundation's website to review the RFP.

Family Literacy Programs Funded

Wish You Well Foundation

The Wish You Well Foundation provides private funds to nonprofit organizations that promote family literacy in the United States. The focus of the Foundation is on the development and expansion of new and existing literacy and educational programs. Grants generally range up to \$10,000. Requests may be submitted at any time and are reviewed four times per year. Visit the Foundation's website to download the Donation Request Form.

Grants Advance Principled Media Programs **Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation**

The mission of the Ethics and Excellence in Journalism Foundation is to invest in the future of journalism by building the ethics, skills, and opportunities needed to advance principled, probing news and information. The Foundation provides grants to journalism schools and other nonprofit media organizations, with special preference given to programs focusing on ethics and new media. The Foundation focuses its giving on the following program areas: investigative reporting, professional development, youth education, and special opportunities. The upcoming deadline for letters of inquiry is November 15, 2014. Visit the Foundation's website to learn more about the grant program and to submit an online letter of inquiry.

Child-Centered Garden Programs Supported

KidsGardening.org: Youth Garden Grants

KidsGardening.org, a resource of the National Gardening Association (NGA), awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations throughout the U.S. with child-centered garden programs. Applicant schools and organizations must plan to garden with at least 15 children between the ages of 3 and 18. Twenty programs will receive a \$500 gift certificate to the Gardening with Kids online store. Each winning program will also receive a tool package from Ames, plant starts from Bonnie Plants, and seed donations. The top ten winners will receive a raised bed from New England Arbors. The selection of winners is based on the demonstrated

relationship between the garden program and education related to the environment, health and nutrition issues, character education, and entrepreneurship in the United States. The application deadline is December 5, 2014. Application guidelines and forms are available on the NGA website at KidsGardening.org.

Regional Funding

Funds for Marine Education Programs in California

[Whale Tail Grants Program](#)

The goal of the Whale Tail Grants Program, an initiative of the California Coastal Commission, is to support projects that teach California's children and the general public to value and take action to improve the health of the state's marine and coastal resources. Funded projects should fall into one of the following categories: Adopt-A-Beach programs, youth programs, or programs for the general public, including projects addressing climate change and/or ocean acidification. Priority is given to projects that reach communities that are currently poorly served in terms of marine and coastal education. Nonprofit organizations, schools, and government entities may apply. Grants will range up to \$50,000; one-quarter to one-half of the funding will be allocated in small grants under \$10,000. Applications must be postmarked by November 1, 2014. Application guidelines and forms are available on the California Coastal Commission's website.

Grants Enhance Georgia Communities

[Georgia Natural Gas Corporate Giving Program](#)

The Georgia Natural Gas Corporate Giving Program supports a wide range of nonprofit organizations in the communities throughout Georgia that the company serves. Grantmaking areas of interest include the following: children and youth services, education, senior services, energy assistance for consumers in need, environment and sustainability, and meaningful educational and cultural opportunities for the entire community. Funding requests may be submitted throughout the year. Visit the Georgia Natural Gas website for more information.

Support for Initiatives Enriching the Lives of New Mexicans

[Albert I. Pierce Foundation](#)

The Albert I. Pierce Foundation supports nonprofit organizations that enrich the lives of the citizens of the state of New Mexico. The Foundation provides grants for initiatives that 1) expand community-based programs related to education, the arts, and the environment; 2) encourage public participation in educational, environmental, and art projects; and 3) develop or conserve valuable environmental and cultural resources for public use and posterity. Applications for grants of up to \$10,000 must be submitted by November 15, 2014; applications for grants of up to \$5,000 are due February 15, 2015. Visit the Foundation's website to learn more about the Foundation's guidelines.

Fire Departments in Massachusetts, New York, and Detroit Funded

[Leary Firefighters Foundation: Jeremiah Lucey Grant Program](#)

The mission of the Leary Firefighters Foundation is to provide funding and resources to fire departments to obtain the highest level of equipment, technology, and training. The Foundation's Jeremiah Lucey Grant Program supports the training and equipment needs of uniformed firefighters. Grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$50,000 are currently provided to professional, uniformed fire departments in the states of Massachusetts and New York, as well as Detroit, MI. Letters of inquiry may be submitted at any time. Visit the Foundation's website to learn more about the Jeremiah Lucey Grant Program.

Federal Funding

Funding for Economic Development Programs and Centers

[Department of Commerce](#)

The Regional Innovation Strategies Program is funding capacity-building activities that include Proof of Concept Centers and Commercialization Centers, feasibility studies for the creation and expansion of facilities such as science and research parks, and supporting opportunities to close the funding gap for early-stage companies. The application deadline is November 3, 2014.

Support Available for Rural Economic Development

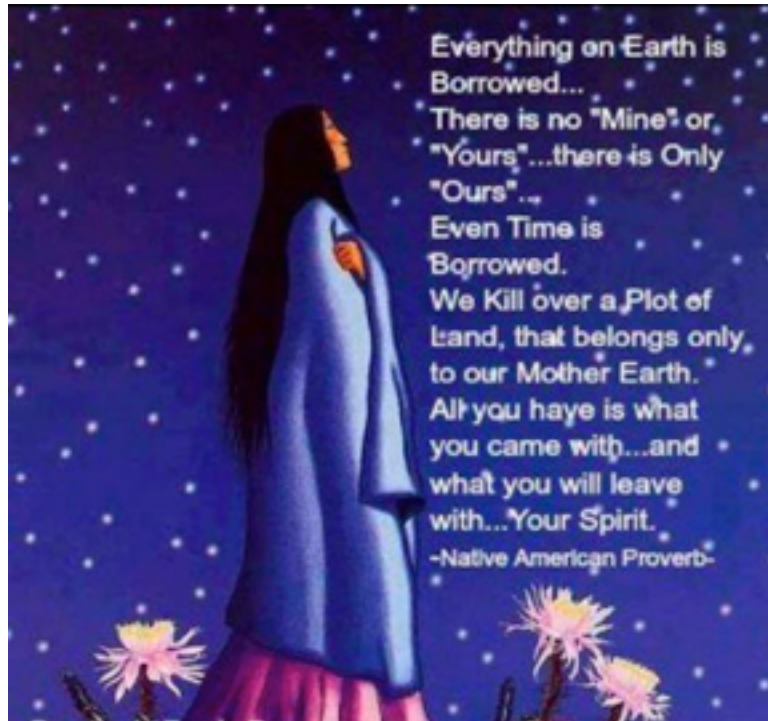
[Department of Housing and Urban Development](#)

The Delta Community Capital Initiative program is granting funds to assist in increasing access to capital for business lending and economic development in the chronically underserved and undercapitalized Lower Mississippi Delta Region. The program will provide direct investment and technical assistance to community development lending and investing institutions (which may be local rural nonprofit organizations) so that funding opportunities will be more effective and economic development services will expand to the underserved residents of the region. The application deadline is November 3, 2014.

Substance Abuse Center Programs Supported

[Department of Health and Human Services](#)

The National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network program offers funding to develop and test interventions for the management of substance use disorders. The program is looking to create treatment programs and interventions through this funding opportunity. The deadline for submitting an optional letter of intent is November 3, 2014. The application deadline is December 3, 2014.



Funding for Tropical Forest Conservation Programs

[Agency for International Development](#)

Through the Tropical Forest Alliance (TFA) 2020 in Central and South America funding opportunity, the Global Development Alliance program is seeking to engage with interested parties to develop initiatives that can mobilize expertise, talent, funding, and other resources to invest in sustainable business practices that reduce Central and South American tropical deforestation related to key agricultural commodities. The deadline for concept papers (pre-applications) is December 15, 2014.

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