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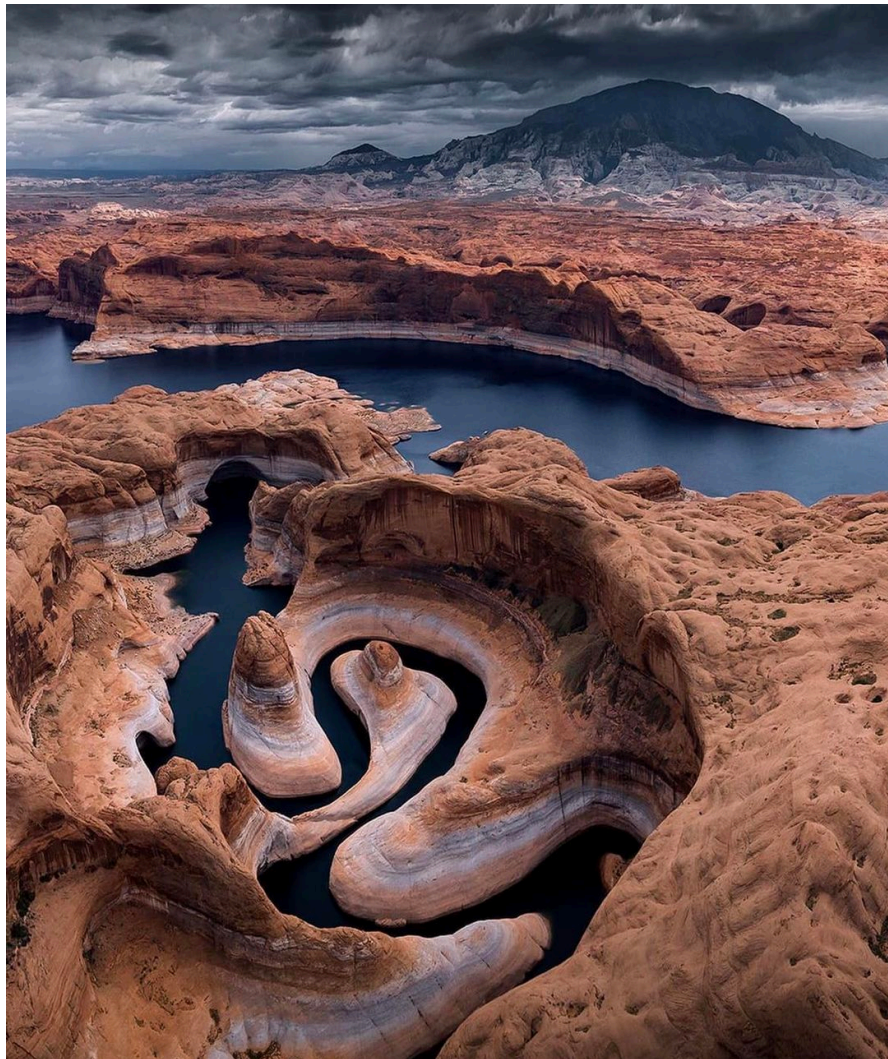
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From the Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund



Reflection Canyon, Utah

The Nuxalk Nation's totem pole was stolen and sold to a museum. After waiting 110 years, they finally have it back

By [Alaa Elassar](#), CNN

[Updated 10:37 PM EST, Sun February 19, 2023](#)



An Indigenous tribal member wearing their clan's regalia, embroidered with their family crest, watches as the totem pole is lifted out of the Royal BC Museum and lowered to the ground. Courtesy Trevor Mack CNN —

A totem pole removed from an Indigenous burial site more than a century ago and kept on display in a Canadian museum has been repatriated to the Nuxalk Nation.

More than 100 Nuxalkmc traveled more than 600 miles from Bella Coola, British Columbia, to Victoria to reclaim their totem pole from the Royal BC Museum on Monday and bring it back to its rightful home.

As the totem pole was lifted out of the museum and lowered to the ground, its first time returning to Mother Earth, Nuxalkmc sang the Thunder Song – followed by women blessing and reawakening the totem's spirit.

“We all cried when it landed on the ground,” Nuxalk Hereditary Chief Deric Snow told CNN. “It was the feeling when your emotions reach the highest point of your life. I’ve never dreamed we would be able to do this.”

The totem pole was carved in the mid-1800s by Snow's great-grandfather Snuxyaltwa Louie Snow, whose spirit remains in the totem pole and will not be at rest until it is returned to its ancestral home, the chief said.

"The people who carved their totem poles were so spiritual, they were chosen to be carvers, they asked the tree to give itself up to them before carving it, they had visions on what to put on there," Snow said. "Everything in the Royal BC Museum is sacred because they were created by gifted people and their spirits are still in them."

The totem pole, which was used as a longhouse entrance pole and then a grave post, was removed from a burial site and sold to the museum in 1913 for 45 Canadian dollars, according to museum records. The pole was one of many artifacts left behind when the smallpox epidemic drove Indigenous people out of their homelands in 1900, according to Snow.

Since tradition says the spirit of the carver forever remains in their totem pole, keeping it inside a museum for 110 years meant Snow's great-grandfather's spirit has been trapped in a gallery room, Snow said.

"To us, museums are just like the residential schools where our children were killed," Snow said. "They have human remains in the Royal BC museum, and the spirits of these human remains are there. It's a type of pain that we can't put into our words."

Museums should prepare for artifacts to be 'called home'

During his fight to get the totem pole back from the museum – as well as a second totem pole and a war canoe that he says his great-grandfather also carved – Snow lost his wife, brother, and sister in 2022.

"It was a very difficult time and we weren't supposed to be doing any work," Snow said. "But we got through it by remembering who we're doing it for and doing it with love. I know my wife is in heaven smiling down and rejoicing with us. "

Snow first requested the repatriation of the totem pole after seeing it in the museum in 2019. After years of discussions, he filed a lawsuit against the museum in February 2022 in hopes of hastening its return.

"The museum committed to repatriation of the pole in 2019 but this particular case has presented some challenges that have lengthened the process," the Royal BC Museum told CNN. "There was a diligent process to confirm ownership and the need to create a plan to remove the pole located on the third floor of the museum. Covid-19 also caused a delay."

The museum said staff worked closely with Snow "to create a secure plan for the removal of the pole from the First Peoples gallery," which involved a team of engineers, conservationists and experts.

“We will continue conversations regarding other belongings with the Nuxalk Nation as soon as we are able to do so,” the museum said, adding that they have repatriation requests from 30 other Indigenous tribes in the province.

A convoy of more than 60 cars followed the vehicle carrying the totem pole during its 14-hour drive back home. On the journey, the Nuxalkmc stopped to visit seven other First Nation tribes so they could see the totem pole, feel its energy. and bless it with sage and cedar bow.



An Indigenous tribal member blesses the totem pole during its stop by Williams Lake First Nation in Secwepemc territory. Courtesy Julie Palmantier

“Totem poles tell you everything in your life and why you’re here on Mother Earth. We are here to live but also to be the voice of all life,” Snow said. “We speak for every living thing on Mother Earth, including the water, the air, the mountains, all the animal kingdom, and every nation is reminded of that just by us going by them with a totem pole.”

Some of the tribes also hosted the Nuxalkmc, celebrating together with feasts, singing, drumming and dancing to honor the reawakened spirit and rejoice in the victory of the totem pole’s return.

“This is the beginning,” Trevor Mack, a member of the Tsilhqot’in Nation who attended one of the celebrations as the pole made its journey, told CNN. “Museums all throughout the western world – whether they be in Victoria, Chicago, New York, London, Paris – will need to prepare for the stolen objects in their glass cases being called home, to where they belong.”

‘This totem pole is a beacon of hope for all of us’

While the healing process for Indigenous people includes the repatriation of everything taken from them, celebrations like those inspired by the return of the totem pole are just as important.

Its impact was visible in the laughter and cries of the hundreds of tribal members who came out to honor the pole’s journey at the Williams Lake First Nation in Secwepemc territory, one of the tribes the convoy visited along the way.

The celebration began outside with two fires lit as elder tribal women blessed everyone with a healing song. They then took fur bows and blessed the pole while the elders drummed.



Indigenous members of numerous tribes, including Williams Lake First Nation, host and celebrate with the Nuxalk Nation the return of their totem pole. Courtesy Julie Palmantier

“As we were drumming the welcoming song, the elder women from our nation suddenly, without being asked, got up and began doing the welcoming dance,” Williams Lake First Nation Chief Willie Sellars told CNN. “It broke me down. It got very emotional for a lot of people because we don’t see these things happen often.”

“The legacy and history of residential schools and the trauma that was inflicted on my ancestors and elders that are still alive today has never left us,” he added. “To see them still be able to hold on to our traditions and pass it down from generation to generation makes you so proud to be Indigenous.”

Recently, most large gatherings in Indigenous communities have been for funerals, especially following the Covid-19 pandemic, which ravaged Indigenous communities who struggled to get resources and medical care.

For so many different tribes to unite in joyous celebrations rather than mourning, Sellars said, was a “moment that meant everything.” It was also a reminder of what life once looked like for their ancestors before so much was taken from them.



Williams Lake First Nation tribal members celebrate with Nuxalkmc through song, dance, and drumming. Courtesy Julie Palmantier

“Historically, we would gather as nations and we would celebrate, until we weren’t allowed to have the ceremonies or speak our language or sing our songs,” Sellars said. “It’s so emotional because it means we are finally heading in the right direction. This totem pole is a beacon of hope for all of us.”

The following day, the pole was blessed by elders at the Tsilhqot’in community of Tl’etinqox. After, the pole and convoy trekked down a snow laden mountain road back into Bella Coola.

The totem pole will be at the Acwsalcta School on the reservation in Bella Coola until a final ceremony to reawaken Snow’s great-grandfather takes place on May 5, 2024, in honor of his wife who passed away on that date last year. The totem pole will then be returned to its original site in South Bentinck.

“Every time something returns to us, we get more and more of our stories back,” Snow said. “It’s time for the Canadian government to see us as people. They all know what’s been stolen and they have to give back what they have taken.”

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The Nazi invasion of Austria was one of the main reasons why Freud eventually left the home he had built for decades. When Austria was invaded, the Nazis took Freud’s books and burned them alongside other known thinkers’ lifelong works. Once Freud even said to a friend: "What progress we are making, in the Middle Ages they would have burnt me; nowadays they are content with burning my books."

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[Nevada Department of Transportation](#)

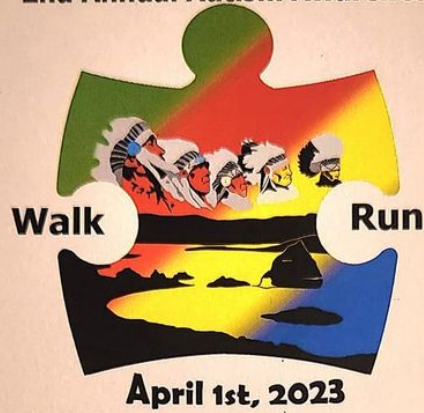
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Visit careers.nv.gov and search “Public Service Intern”. Apply soon—positions fill quickly!

SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES AND PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE TRIBE

2nd Annual Autism Awareness



T-SHIRT SIZES - YOUTH: M, L

ADULT: M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL, 4XL

ADULT NAME: _____ RACE DISTANCE: _____ T-SHIRT SIZE: _____

ADULT NAME: _____ RACE DISTANCE: _____ T-SHIRT SIZE: _____

CHILD NAME: _____ RACE DISTANCE: _____ T-SHIRT SIZE: _____

CHILD NAME: _____ RACE DISTANCE: _____ T-SHIRT SIZE: _____

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****WAIVER: I HEREBY RELEASE SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES, THE PYRAMID LAKE PAIUTE TRIBE, AND ALL OTHER SPONSORS (UCAN-UNR, NVLEND, GREAT-BASIN WELLNESS & ADVOCACY, TOO SOUL TEA CO., AND KOYOOE PA'A DESIGNZ) FROM ANY AND ALL LIABILITY FOR PERSONAL INJURY, PROPERTY DAMAGE OR ANY OTHER CLAIMS ARISING OUT OF THE 2023 AUTISM AWARENESS FUN WALK & RUN. (WAIVER MUST BE SIGNED BY A LEGAL PARENT/GUARDIAN FOR PARTICIPANTS UNDER 18)**

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

CERCLA PFAS Enforcement Listening Sessions

These listening sessions will focus on an enforcement policy related to responsible parties' financial obligations under PFAS contamination response actions. The session will not focus on the actions needed to address PFAS contamination or EPA's progress in the Agency's PFAS Strategic Roadmap commitments. The sessions will be recorded and available on this web page once both sessions have taken place: <https://www.epa.gov/enforcement/cercla-pfas-enforcement-listening-sessions>.

These listening sessions are separate from EPA's perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) hazardous substance designation rulemaking process. The input provided through the listening sessions are not part of the rulemaking comment docket. The hazardous substance designation rulemaking comment period has closed.

Also, EPA is holding separate Regional PFAS Community Engagement Sessions to update Progress on the PFAS Strategic Roadmap. To learn more about EPA's Regional PFAS Community Engagement Sessions, please visit our website at <https://pfascommunityengagement.org/>.

Visit EPA's [PFAS website](#) to learn more about PFAS and EPA's commitments to address PFAS.

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## Native American Culture

She is Half Navajo from the Navajo Nation of the Hon'agha'ahnii Clan and half Sans Arch Lakota Sioux of the Cheyenne River Tribe....made history as The First fulltime college student (Male or Female) to ever come out of the state of Kansas and win a National Intercollegiate Championship title and Belt!..Not Kansas University, not Kansas state university, or Wichita state university but from lil ol' Haskell Indian Nations University!!!!!!...She fight out of the Haskell Boxing Club in Lawrence, KS...





## Frozen Girl Found 500 Years After Death



[https://en.lastnighton.com/view/?id=inca-girl-found-mummy-lno&src=facebook&utm\\_source=facebook&utm\\_campaign=lno\\_a\\_us\\_charmss\\_lno201146707\\_inca-girl-found-mummy\\_all\\_conv-tv40\\_conv\\_dynamic\\_both\\_18p\\_i-0\\_cost-0.5\\_287491238&utm\\_medium=23853145456980379&page=20](https://en.lastnighton.com/view/?id=inca-girl-found-mummy-lno&src=facebook&utm_source=facebook&utm_campaign=lno_a_us_charmss_lno201146707_inca-girl-found-mummy_all_conv-tv40_conv_dynamic_both_18p_i-0_cost-0.5_287491238&utm_medium=23853145456980379&page=20)

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USA TODAY

[Student loan payments are set to restart in 2023. Here's how borrowers should prepare.](#)

Some borrowers have never made a payment. Many await word on President Joe Biden's student loan forgiveness plan.

[State treasurer proposes baby bonds to reduce 'prolonged effects of generational poverty'](#)

<https://www.nevadacurrent.com/2023/02/22/state-treasurer-proposes-baby-bonds-to-reduce-prolonged-effects-of-generational-poverty/>

EPA's Office of Policy is Hiring a Senior NEPA/Environmental Justice Coordinator!

EPA's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Compliance Division (within the Office of Policy's Office of Federal Activities) is hiring an Environmental Protection Specialist to serve as a Senior NEPA/Environmental Justice Coordinator. This announcement closes **March 1, 2023**.

In this role, you will:

- Review and advise on National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents to ensure that environmental effects are considered and documented for proposed actions;
- Advise on the integration of environmental justice and civil rights into EPA's NEPA programs, policies, and procedures;
- Liaise with internal and external partners on initiatives and work groups related to the integration of environmental justice and civil rights compliance into NEPA;
- Lead panels and work groups studying the impacts to communities with environmental justice concerns, including various scientific studies of adverse impacts;
- Conduct training with other federal agencies and the public related to the integration of environmental justice and NEPA.

You will spend less than 25% of your work time on contracts, grants/cooperative agreements, and/or interagency agreements.

One or more positions may be filled (in the organization advertised and/or in other organizations), if appropriate to the position.

Learn more and apply here: <https://www.usajobs.gov/job/707578800>

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### **The Dictionary Project      [www.dictionaryproject.org](http://www.dictionaryproject.org)**

The mission of The Dictionary Project is to ensure that everyone will be able to enjoy the benefits of owning a [dictionary](#). This program assists people in becoming good writers, active readers, creative thinkers and resourceful learners by providing them with their own personal [dictionary](#). The dictionaries are a gift. The project believes that a dictionary is an essential tool for a quality education and that a student cannot do his or her best work without one. The program is typically implemented in the third grade each year.

The project continues to expand and now includes sponsors in all fifty [United States](#), [Puerto Rico](#), the [US Virgin Islands](#), Canada, and various other countries. The program has been adopted by [civic organizations](#) and adapted to local communities through the sponsorship of [Rotary Clubs](#), [BPO Elks](#), [Kiwanis Clubs](#), [Granges](#), Pioneer Volunteer groups, [Lions Clubs](#), the Republican Federation of Women and other service organizations, by educational groups such as [PTAs](#), by businesses, and by individuals. Anyone can participate in this project by sponsoring a program to give dictionaries to children in their community.

*How many communities present their little people with a traditional language dictionary?*

## How Ukrainians Are Defending Their Cultural Heritage From Russian Destruction

The Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative and its partners are aiding in the fight to protect the country's history and to document attempts to erase it

[https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/ukrainians-defend-their-cultural-heritage-russian-destruction-180981661/?utm\\_source=smithsonianmag&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=editorial&spMailingID=48015728&spUserID=OTYyNTc5MzkyMTQyS0&spJobID=2402636079&spReportId=MjQwMjYzNjA3OQS2](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/ukrainians-defend-their-cultural-heritage-russian-destruction-180981661/?utm_source=smithsonianmag&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial&spMailingID=48015728&spUserID=OTYyNTc5MzkyMTQyS0&spJobID=2402636079&spReportId=MjQwMjYzNjA3OQS2)



### The First Fossil Finders in North America Were Enslaved and Indigenous People

## NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN

### How Shared Stewardship Is Bringing to Light One of the World's Most Significant Holdings of Mi'kmaw Cultural Items

How do two institutions work in partnership across borders and time zones to care for cultural items? More than 25 years ago, the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre (MDCC) in Nova Scotia and the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian began a partnership that continues today.



We know that Tribes must retain their inherent powers and legal right of self-government. Treaties, Supreme Court decisions, executive orders, and laws have created a fundamental contract between Tribes and the United States. Tribal nations, sometimes willingly, other times under duress, gave up millions of acres of land that now make up the United States and, in return, received the guarantee of ongoing self-government on their own lands.

In order to maintain the right to our sovereignty, we have to never stop fighting to protect it and all of our rights as they continually come under attack.

A white state lawmaker **in Montana** is questioning whether land set aside long ago for Native peoples should even exist anymore, calling on Congress to consider doing away with reservations altogether.<sup>[1]</sup>

**In Nebraska**, Native organizations are fighting elected officials in Thurston County for adopting county supervisor districts that intentionally dilute the Native vote and do not comply with federal *Voting Rights Act* protections even though Indigenous people comprise nearly 60% of the total population and a majority of voting-age residents in that county.

**In South Dakota**, a 2020 investigation uncovered rampant state-wide noncompliance with the *National Voter Registration Act*, which requires driver's license offices and public assistance agencies to provide voter registration services to their clients during applications, renewals, and change of address requests.

Specifically, agencies serving predominantly Native communities reported disproportionately low numbers of voter registrations completed at their offices compared to other communities. Our community fought back and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Oglala Sioux Tribe, and voters Kimberly Dillon and Hoksila White Mountain sued -- **and won critical new protections to ensure the right to vote for all.**

*"Ignorance will no longer be an excuse in South Dakota as the agreement specifies the state must create guidance, ensure accurate training materials, and actually train state agency staff on Motor-Voter responsibilities"<sup>[3]</sup>*

- McLaughlin City Councilmember Hoksila White Mountain

**This is what it looks like when we build Native power in our communities across the country.**

**Whether it's a resolution in Montana attempting to take away our land, legislation in Nebraska designed to limit our representation, or the racist and illegal actions of county officials in South Dakota, our sovereignty and rights are under attack. The good news is -- we stand together and fight back.**

Hawwih (thank you) for being with us in this fight.

Judith Le Blanc (Caddo)  
Executive Director, Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund