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**The Future of the Ruby Mountains**

The lack of oil and gas in Nevada's Ruby Mountains hasn't stopped developer interest, and a 90-day public comment period considering its withdrawal is about to close.

The Ruby Mountains in Elko County, Nevada, has many names: “Nevada’s Hidden Sierras,” “the Swiss Alps of the West,” and “Nevada’s Outdoor Recreation Crown Jewel.” However, “rich deposits of oil” is not one of them. Unfortunately, that doesn’t mean it’s not threatened by oil and gas development. In the history of oil and gas drilling in the United States, the Ruby Mountains have never produced a drop of liquid gold.

In late 2017, a request was made [to allow leasing for oil and gas](#) exploration in the U.S. Forest Service land in Nevada’s Ruby Mountains. A groundswell of [public opposition formed](#) and thousands of individuals, state and local officials, and organizations, spoke out against the proposal. In 2019, the Forest Service [issued a no-leasing decision](#). However, within days of that decision, [expressions of interest were filed](#) on an additional 88,000 acres, many of which were the same parcels previously denied.

Nevadans are proud that we have public lands that support world class hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation, while also providing grazing and ranching opportunities. Whether it is skiing one of the 50 greatest descents [Terminal Cancer](#), angling for native Lahontan cutthroat, birding for the elusive Himalayan Snowcock or pursuing mountain goats or mule deer, the Ruby Mountains provides.

Since 2019, Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, Senator Jacky Rosen and House Representative Mark Amodei have supported legislation that would safeguard the Ruby Mountains for oil and gas exploration. Yet, every attempt has failed in Congress. Last year, with the support from the sporting conservation community, Senator Cortez Masto and Senator Rosen advocated for an administrative 20-year withdrawal from oil and gas development.

Last December, the Department of the Interior [announced](#) it was initiating the process to withdraw the Ruby Mountains from oil and gas drilling. Since then, the virtual meeting in February has been cancelled but the 90-day comment period that ends in late March is still available for the public to engage. [Over 60%](#) of Westerners prefer oil and gas companies to drill in areas with known deposits. The large majority of Nevadans also want leaders to place more emphasis on protecting water, wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities over maximizing the amount of land available for drilling and mining. Now is the time to voice your opinion of how we plan to safeguard the Ruby Mountains for everyone’s enjoyment, for current and future generations. You can voice your opinion on how the Ruby Mountains should be managed by commenting through the Bureau of Land Management’s [Federal Register](#).

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**Climate Change: Since 1880, oceans have risen 8 inches.**

NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) estimates sea level will continue to rise an additional 80 inches by 2100, and 155 inches by... ([Nextdoor](#) Southwest Vistas)

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**'Remaining Native,' a film about heritage and dreams in Reno, comes to the East Coast** ([wamc.org](#)) — The film 'Remaining Native' follows Ku Stevens, a Paiute teenager from Reno, as he honors his great-grandfather by running 50 miles. The documentary, which recently won awards, explores his journey and aspirations as a runner. The film will be showcased at the Salem Film Festival, highlighting its local roots and cultural significance.

*"It is long past time that we bring truth and healing to our Native people and help end the intergenerational trauma associated with this terrible legacy."*

This is what Republican Senator Lisa Murkowski said when she introduced the ***Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act*** of 2025 with the bipartisan support of 22 Senators, including Democrats Elizabeth Warren, Mark Kelly, and Mazie Hirono.

The history of Indian Boarding School policies continues to impact our communities. These policies removed hundreds of thousands of Native children from their families, aiming to erase Native languages, cultures, and traditions.

**At least 1,000 Native children died at over 500 schools across the country, with many buried in unmarked graves.** It's time for the U.S. government to address this painful history and its lasting impact on Native communities.

If passed, this landmark legislation would establish a federal commission to investigate, document, and acknowledge the historical harms. *(But will the records still exist?)*

[Even in these highly partisan times, Native advocacy continues to unite leaders across party lines. That's why we can make this happen. Help build support for the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act by signing and sending a message to your senators now.](#)

Until 1970, federal boarding school policies forcibly separated Native children from their families placing them in institutions where many experienced abuse, neglect, and even death. **A Truth and Healing Commission is essential to investigate the impacts of these policies and develop solutions to address lasting harm and promote healing for affected individuals, families, and our communities.**

The *Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act* establishes a federal commission that would:

- **Conduct a comprehensive investigation**  
**Create a commission to investigate the Indian Boarding School Era**  
**Hold safe, public or private convenings**  
**Make recommendations to Congress**  
**Locate Native American children and records**  
**Uplift the voices of Indian Boarding School Survivors**  
**Make a final report publicly available**

It's important to recognize and honor survivors, their families, and communities affected by these policies and work to restore Native languages and cultures that were disrupted. This legislation would help make this happen.

[Please take just a few moments to sign and send a message to your senators now, urging them to co-sponsor and pass the \*Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act\*.](#)

Hawwih (*thank you*) for everything you do in support of the work needed to help our communities exercise our power to overcome injustice.

Judith LeBlanc (Caddo), Executive Director, Native Organizers Alliance Action Fund”

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## Two Scholars Are Deciphering a Long-Lost Native Language

**A historian and a linguist, working together, revealed truths about the relationship between Spanish colonizers and the Timucua people.**

When historian Alejandra Dubcovsky was in graduate school in the early 2000s, she decided to focus her research on the Indigenous cultures of the Americas. “I asked my professors, ‘Should I learn any Native languages?’” Dubcovsky recalled. “And they were like, ‘Why? You know Spanish, you know French—you’re set for life.’” Dubcovsky laughed. “And I went to *Berkeley*!”

Dubcovsky’s teachers were just repeating what their own mentors had told them: Native languages were too hard to learn, and most pre-Columbian cultures didn’t leave behind written records anyway. Some, like the Aztec and Maya, had hieroglyphic systems, but those symbols offered little insight into the spoken languages themselves. Why shouldn’t Dubcovsky, who was born in Argentina, just study the records of Spanish colonizers the way generations before her had done?

When she connected with Aaron Broadwell, a linguistics professor at the University of Florida, she found the missing puzzle pieces she had been seeking. Broadwell was an expert on the Native languages of the American Southeast—Choctaw, Creek and others that belonged to the Muskogee family. His most ambitious project was decoding a language, spoken by the Timucua people, that is unrelated to any other known tongue.

When Spanish colonizers arrived in the 16th century, Timucua was the most widely spoken language in large swaths of Florida and Georgia. Within two centuries, by the time of U.S. independence, its speakers had all been enslaved, felled by disease or absorbed into other language groups. Despite its diminishment, Timucua left a record—it was the first Native language within modern U.S. borders to be put into writing, albeit using the Roman alphabet. Rare book libraries hold Franciscan texts that display Spanish on one side and Timucua on the other. Most historians just read the Spanish side. But Dubcovsky wanted to know what the Timucua texts really said.

Since around 2000, Broadwell has been assembling [the first comprehensive online Timucua dictionary](#), with the help of graduate students and computer programs that can search for patterns in grammar and meaning. Together, he and Dubcovsky have also made a number of startling new



discoveries that challenge the usual narrative about how the Timucua language came to be written down.

Those of us at *Smithsonian* repeated a version of that narrative [in our March 2023 issue](#), briefly crediting the Franciscan missionary Francisco Pareja with transcribing the Timucua language into the Roman alphabet. That version of the story, with Pareja at the center, has been widely promulgated for generations. As [a catalogue entry at the Library of Congress](#) puts it: “Timucuan is a dead language. Spoken by an Indigenous tribe that lived in northeast-north central Florida during the time of Spanish colonization, it was learned and recorded by Friar Francisco Pareja, a missionary and self-taught linguist. Thanks to his efforts, Timucua is now considered the best-attested language from a Native tribe in Spanish Colonial Florida.”

After our issue appeared in print, we received a letter from a reader—historian Denise Bossy from the University of North Florida—urging us to reach out to Broadwell and Dubcovsky. So we did.

“It’s not that your answer was wrong exactly,” Dubcovsky told us over Zoom from the University of California, Riverside, where she now teaches history. That is, the Spanish missionaries did indeed teach the Roman alphabet to the Timucua people for religious purposes. What was missing, says Dubcovsky, is the role that the Timucua had in authoring the first Timucua texts.

Broadwell chimed in from Florida in another Zoom square. “The traditional understanding of the way this works is that the missionary appears and learns the language and then translates the stuff himself,” he said. “But if we look closely at the text, we can see that it didn’t happen that way.”

He gave an example. The Spanish texts are filled with leading questions, phrased in a way that implied Timucua traditions were sinful superstitions. “Did you make incantations over the lake before fishing in it?” one asks. “When the owl was screeching, did you believe that it would have mercy on you?” asks another.

But not all the questions are translated word for word. “The Spanish side will say something like, ‘Do you engage in the devilish practice of whistling to the wind to make the storm stop?’” said Broadwell. “And the Timucua just says, ‘Did you whistle to the wind to make it stop?’” This happens frequently, Broadwell said: The Timucua side rephrases the Franciscan questions in ways that are considerably less judgy.

All of this strongly implies that members of the Timucua community were the ones writing these translations in the Roman alphabet. “Our favorite is the description of marriage,” Dubcovsky said. “The Spanish side asks very clearly, ‘Have the man and a woman been joined together in front of a priest?’ And the Timucua version of that sentence is, ‘Did you and another person consent to be married?’” The Timucua translation not only takes out any mention of gender, but it also removes any mention of a religious officiant. “A priest did not write this,” Dubcovsky said, “because a priest does not forget to include himself in the story.”

It makes sense, she added, that a Franciscan Spaniard wouldn't have understood enough of the language to write or even proofread the Timucua translation before he sent the manuscript off to Mexico City to be printed at the region's nearest printing press. "It's very hard to learn these languages, and Native people don't want to share everything," Dubcovsky pointed out. "And those translators aren't given any credit."

Throughout the 17th century, the Timucuas kept using the alphabet they'd learned from the Spanish to send each other letters in their own language, sharing concerns about land and water rights and lamenting the Spaniards' broken promises. Only two of those letters survive—one from 1651 and one from 1688—but their existence indicates that the Timucuas kept on writing within their own community long after their project with the priests was finished.

Going straight to those sources allows scholars to learn about the Timucuas on their own terms, says Dennis Zotigh, a cultural specialist at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. "Ever since contact, colonial powers have been interpreting the written word in their own languages to describe the Western Hemisphere cultures they came in contact with," says Zotigh, a member of the Kiowa Tribe who also has tribal affiliations with the Isanti Dakota and Ohkay Owingeh Pueblo tribes. "Times have changed. Now researchers and Native peoples are assuming the power of the pen to rewrite Native history from a more informed perspective."

In the case of Broadwell and Dubcovsky, they've unlocked sources that had long been abandoned as indecipherable. Their breakthroughs would have been impossible without their pooled knowledge of history and linguistics. In 2017, the two researchers jointly published [a paper in the journal \*Early American Studies\*](#). They also spoke at a recent meeting of the American Historical Association, advocating for more joint work between their fields. After all, it would be unthinkable to have a Classics department whose speakers didn't bother to read the original texts from Greece and Rome—or a scholar of Greek and Latin who wasn't well-versed in ancient history. "Their collaboration is unique and compelling," says Robbie Etheridge, a University of Mississippi anthropologist who is a leading expert on Indigenous history in the Southern United States. "It will inspire others to engage in similar collaborations."

As Broadwell and Dubcovsky restore credit to Timucua authors, they're raising some intriguing questions. For example, did the Timucuas who worked with the Spanish priests really embrace Christianity, or was their sly rewording an act of resistance?

"There's a little bit of everything," said Dubcovsky. "Do I think some Indigenous people in the 16th century are fully converting and finding peace and salvation in this new faith? Absolutely. Do I also think some people are skirting the line and trying to contain their own autonomy and spaces within that? Also absolutely." Broadwell added that some of the Timucua translators might be wording things extra carefully "so as not to offend all the non-Christian members of their community."

Another question: Why didn't more Native people develop writing before European colonizers showed up, considering how readily they took to it? (Most Native American languages have written forms today.) "Alphabets are kind of rare," Broadwell replied. In all of human history, systems of writing have emerged in just a handful of places—in Egypt and Mesoamerica, in China, in Babylon, in Korea. And most of these weren't phonetic alphabets with consonants and

vowels. “That has happened maybe only once in the history of the world,” said Broadwell, alluding to the Proto-Sinaitic script from ancient Canaan that dates between the 16th and 19th centuries B.C.E., “and all other alphabets were descendants of that one.”

If Indigenous groups didn’t start writing things down before the Europeans came along, maybe it’s because they didn’t need to. “The difference between a written and an unwritten language is pretty small,” Broadwell said. “Timucua was a fully formed, eloquent spoken language before the Spanish came along. From the very beginning of the written record, we can see that the language is extremely sophisticated.” There’s plenty of evidence that the Timucua were able to travel and communicate about complex issues: Even though their language is unique, its structure bears some similarities to Choctaw, suggesting that the two groups interacted and influenced each other.

Dubcovsky also noted that it’s not correct to call either the language or its speakers extinct today. Over time, many Timucua people certainly left the region. “People don’t stay in places where they’re dying or suffering,” she said. “We used to think the Timucuas moved north and west, but I’m increasingly convinced that they mostly moved south. Some of their descendants might identify as Cuban or as African American. Or maybe they identify as members of another tribe. But they’re still with us.”

So is their language—thanks in large part to unknown Native authors who adopted a new alphabet and found ways to preserve their own voices within a changing world.

*Jennie Rothenberg Gritz is a senior editor at Smithsonian magazine. She was previously a senior editor at the Atlantic.*

[https://getpocket.com/explore/item/with-their-knowledge-combined-two-scholars-are-deciphering-a-long-lost-native-language?utm\\_source=firefox-newtab-en-us](https://getpocket.com/explore/item/with-their-knowledge-combined-two-scholars-are-deciphering-a-long-lost-native-language?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us)

- **What’s happening with the Institute of Museum and Library Services after Trump’s executive order**

**For over a century, a U.S.-Canada cross-border library used a single entrance. Now, the U.S. says Canadians must build their own.**

ross-b<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/haskell-free-library-and-opera-house-canada-u-s-cross-border-separate-entrances/order-separate-entrances/>

**The US secretly detonated 928 nuclear weapons of mass destruction in violation of the peace.**

Principal Man Ian Zabarte, Western Bands of the Shoshone Nation of Indians  
Treaty of Ruby Valley (Consolidated Treaty Series Vol. 127 1863

This is the eighth of weekly updates about in-person DC Days on June 8-11, 2025! Come to Washington, DC to help address nuclear weapons and waste cleanup!

**Please note the Scholarship Application Form deadline is March 25:**

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQPYcLtrtzrXJf8Gqu\\_ULP7JGfup\\_IT5reXdWj855g\\_RdDWQ/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdQPYcLtrtzrXJf8Gqu_ULP7JGfup_IT5reXdWj855g_RdDWQ/viewform)

Scholarships are for those needing assistance who are under 30 or BIPOC or from frontline communities. The Application Form has full details. Please note:

\* Scholarship Funds are distributed to groups that then use it to support individuals. **Each group should designate one representative to submit the application form** for up to four people from that organization that need scholarship assistance. \*

Initial awards for scholarships will be made in early April before the April 8 early bird registration deadline.

Please note that if you expect to apply for a scholarship, but don't want to pay registration until you are approved for a scholarship, please check the box for planning to apply for a scholarship and submit your registration form so that we know who wants to come and is interested in a scholarship. You can also pay registration and check the box that you are planning to apply for a scholarship.

You can register for DC Days at <https://ananuclear.org/dc-days-registration/>

The registration costs are: \$150 early bird registration (by April 8) for those self-identified as under 30 or BIPOC or frontline communities; \$225 regular registration by April 8. After April 8 the costs increase to \$200 for those under 30 or BIPOC or frontline communities; and \$350 regular registration.

Some people have already made their transportation and housing arrangements. We encourage you to do that as soon as possible as prices will increase and availability will be more limited as we get closer to June.

Please arrive in DC by Saturday, June 7, in order to attend the all-day training on Sunday, June 8, starting at 9 am at the United Methodist Building, [100 Maryland Ave, NE](#) (where we had the training in 2023 and 2024). Team meetings will be Monday, June 9 through Wednesday, June 11 with congressional and administration officials.

**The awards nomination process has started:**

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1U1vY9OCnluALCLSznBQSnXdLdtXkVlCb0a4atooe6e0/edit?usp=sharing>

ANA member organizations can nominate someone to receive an award at the Reception on Tuesday, June 10. The event is always a high point of DC Days. The deadline for Nominations is April 14. The DC Days Committee decides who receives the awards.

As we have done in recent years, there's a central location for information about DC Days 2025 at: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1p5nxlw\\_6Et-oypzmfe-duMtGnaSCownlimh\\_UeVIuF8/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1p5nxlw_6Et-oypzmfe-duMtGnaSCownlimh_UeVIuF8/edit?usp=sharing)

The central location has current Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and Housing information, and Possible Meetings. If there are meetings that you want to have and are not on the Possible Meetings list, please email me about the additional meetings that you think we should try to set up.

We look forward to seeing many of you in DC on June 8!

Of course, if you have questions, please let me know.

To view this discussion visit <https://groups.google.com/d/msgid/nuclearbananas/4c10beff-0580-4a4b-b76c-4e35a8653b5c%40gmail.com>.

From: **Don Hancock** <[sricdon@gmail.com](mailto:sricdon@gmail.com)>



**Poster seen on Facebook:**

*The fact that many people can't distinguish between entomology and etymology bugs me in ways I can't put into words.*

**Tee Hee sdc**

**Game-changing sorghum varieties arrive ([agupdate.com](http://agupdate.com)) —**

Researchers at the University of Nevada-Reno have unveiled 200 new sorghum varieties that promise to revolutionize the food and biofuel industries. The project, led by Melinda Yerka, aims to provide drought-tolerant crops suitable for the semi-arid Western U.S. and beyond, with significant local support and international collaboration.

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## **Dinner and Overnight Hosting Opportunities**

Hosting international visitors in your home for dinner or an overnight stay is an excellent way to learn about the world and how people think about everything from politics to religion and everything in between! Here are some upcoming opportunities.

Contact Ryan Finnegan at [ryanf@nnic.org](mailto:ryanf@nnic.org)

Four or five Young South East Asian Leaders from Laos, Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei Daressalam, Myanmar and Vietnam would like to be hosted for dinner on May 10.

A group of 13 photojournalists from various countries would like to be hosted for dinner on May 10 or 11.

A delegation of renewable energy storage experts from Egypt would like to be hosted for dinner on May 10.

A delegation of 10 disaster preparedness experts from various countries would like to be hosted on May 17 or 18.

Soon we hope to send out requests for additional hosting opportunities for other projects, as well as calls for mentors for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program. Stay tuned for more opportunities!

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**NSF-funded mobile energy-water reuse system to support rural communities**

([unr.edu](http://unr.edu)) — A \$6 million NSF grant supports a project involving the University of Nevada, Reno to develop mobile energy-water reuse systems for rural communities. This initiative will enhance local resilience and create economic opportunities.

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**Schools In This California Town Won Acclaim For Their Pandemic**

**Comeback. How They Did It**

Early in the pandemic, school officials provided the tools needed for remote learning and made sure students stayed engaged.

<https://patch.com/california/across-ca/schools-california-town-won-acclaim-their-pandemic-comeback-how-they-did-it>

## 7 gorgeous public gardens in Las Vegas

<https://thenevadanews.com/community/gorgeous-public-gardens-in-las-vegas/>

## Probationary federal workers who were fired

Between Jan. 20 and March 14, 2025; As of March 17, 2025

Table showing the probationary federal workers who were fired between January 20 and March 14, 2025. The agencies with the largest firings were Treasury (7,605), USDA (5,714) and HHS (3,248).

## The drama isn't over for federal workers

Probationary federal workers who were fired

<b>Treasury</b>	7,605 7,605 7,605	GSA	366 366 366
<b>USDA</b>	5,714 5,714 5,714	Homeland Security	313 313 313
<b>HHS</b>	3,248 3,248 3,248	HUD	312 312 312
<b>Veterans Affairs</b>	1,900 1,900 1,900	SBA	304 304 304
<b>Interior</b>	1,712 1,712 1,712	USAID	270 270 270
<b>Commerce</b>	791 791 791	Labor	170 170 170
<b>Transportation</b>	788 788 788	FDIC	156 156 156
<b>Energy</b>	555 555 555	CFPB	117 117 117
<b>EPA</b>	419 419 419	Education	65 65 65

[https://www.axios.com/2025/03/19/probationary-federal-workers-fired-doge?utm\\_source=firefox-newtab-en-us](https://www.axios.com/2025/03/19/probationary-federal-workers-fired-doge?utm_source=firefox-newtab-en-us)

## History Bits

- 1851 Mar 28** Provisional Government of the State of Deseret ceased to exist.
- 1861 Mar 27** The Wilmington Daily Journal (North Carolina) reported the creation of the Territory of Nevada by printing the entire congressional act establishing such.
- 1867 Mar 30** Treaty of Purchase signed in D.C., beginning formal process of U.S. purchase of Alaska from Russia; no one bothered asking native inhabitants of the region if they wanted lands sold (treatment of natives became more brutal under U.S. occupation).
- 1874 Mar 23** **Kwakaka'wakw First Nations** established U'mista Cultural Society in Alert Bay (BC), its purpose - to repatriate objects that were confiscated by the Canadian Government.
- 1877 Mar 23** Mormon John Lee, former U.S. Indian agent/Utah state legislator executed by firing squad for leading Mountain Meadows massacre.
- 1878 Mar 26** Days after an Indian was murdered, procession of tribal family and friends passed through Reno to the hillside cemetery where the body was exhumed, removed from coffin and reburied in tribal rites.
- 1879 Mar 23** **Cheyenne Little Wolf**, one of the most successful military figures in U.S. history, surrendered forces.
- 1886 Mar 27** Buffalo Bill's Dramatic Combination appeared in Reno a day after it was in Carson City and two days after a Virginia City performance.
- 1890 Mar 29** from the *Nevada State Journal*: "There will have to be imitation savages in circuses the Summer, as the Secretary of the Interior has decided that no more Indians shall be allowed to leave the agencies for this purpose because of the demoralizing effects upon them".
- 1920 Mar 24** Birth of **Corbin Harney**, elder and spiritual leader from Newe Sogobia.
- 1933 Mar 25** Birth of **Vine Deloria Jr.**, historian, author, Episcopal theologian, and national leader whose seminal "Custer Died for Your Sins" and other books educated a generation on Native American history, near the Pine Ridge Oglala Lakota Reservation.
- 1977 Mar 25** Death of Superintendent Earl Wooster who considered the 1944 shutdown of Washoe Indian school and the integration of Indians into the white Orvis Ring School among his most important achievements.
- 1953 Mar 28** The Reno Sparks Indian Colony formed a planning board to prepare for release of the colony's residents from wardship and resultant securing of deeds to their properties.