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*Tapir at the Minnesota Zoo*

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*These 5 lesser-known species may vanish. If they do, we're all in trouble.*

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Baby Malayan tapir *Tapirus indicus* (EN) at the Minnesota Zoo

This six-day-old stocky baby is native to the swamps and tropical forests of Southeast Asia.

While adult tapirs have white backs and rumps with black heads, shoulders, and legs, the young are speckled, better to blend in with the s... National Geographic Explorer [Joel Sartore](#)



You've probably heard about Executive Orders - official actions issued directly by the President. But do you know how these orders uniquely affect Native communities?

For most Americans, Executive Orders can seem distant or abstract, often affecting broad policy areas. But for Native nations, these orders can have immediate, profound impacts - shaping everything from land rights and resource management to education, healthcare, and tribal sovereignty.

Because Native communities have a government-to-government relationship with the United States, the consequences of an Executive Order are deeply personal. They can either uphold crucial treaty promises or, when misused, undermine tribal rights that generations have fought to protect.

To truly support Native nations, it's essential to understand these nuances. We've created a concise guide exploring how Executive Orders impact Indian Country differently, why this matters, and how you can help uphold the rights and dignity of Native peoples. [Learn More](#)



## **What Is an Executive Order? and How Do the EOs Enacted Impact Indian Country**

*Connecting the Dots: Executive Orders are powerful tools that allow presidents to enact policy changes without congressional approval. For Native communities, this means funding for education, healthcare, and infrastructure can shift and even disappear overnight. Unlike laws enacted by Congress, citizens and our elected representatives are often unable to override these orders except through extreme coordinated action, undermining a check on the power of the executive branch.*

*From land use laws to education funding freezes, executive orders can directly and immediately impact Native communities. When EOs limit funding for Title I schools, Pell Grants, and Native education initiatives, Native students lose access to critical scholarships and academic resources, making it harder to graduate and enter the workforce.*

It's easy to hear about executive orders and think of them as abstract policy changes happening far away in Washington. But for Native communities, these decisions are anything but distant.

A single executive order can determine if Native families have access to clean water, if Native students can afford college, or if sacred lands are protected or opened for development. With the stroke of a pen, tribal sovereignty can be strengthened or weakened, and treaties – contractual agreements made generations ago – can be honored, eroded, or dismantled entirely.

The impact of executive orders isn't theoretical. It's not about signing a piece of paper for the cameras and handing out pens. It's personal. It's about **whether Native languages continue to be spoken, whether Native-owned businesses can thrive, and whether future generations have the same opportunities as we do today.** Policies may be written in legal jargon, but their consequences are written into the daily lives of Native people.

Here are just a couple of examples of how the executive orders passed affect real people across Indian Country:

Exec utive Order Name	What Does It Do	Who It Affects
Protecting the Meaning and Value of Birthright Citizenship	This order seeks to define citizenship as solely belonging to those born in the United States to mothers who, at the time of the birth, were <b>permanent</b> legal residents of the United States	Any non-white person in the United States may be impacted by this order due to increased scrutiny and profiling by skin color. Additionally, anyone who is a US citizen by being born in the US to non-permanent US residents may find that they are no longer citizens of the United States. Native Americans find themselves under threat as some people argue their Tribal sovereignty means those on Tribal land do not live in the United States, were not born in the United States, and therefore are not citizens of the United States.

Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing	This order seeks to remove federal funding for any program deemed to exist solely to further diversity, equity, or inclusion. While the effects have been wide reaching, immediate impacts have been a loss of funding for some federal programs, and the loss of thousands of jobs.	Thousands of federal employees have lost their jobs, the majority of them brown and black Americans. Federal programs which should not be seen as DEI initiatives, like funding for Tribal food assistance, have been caught in the crosshairs. As funding is rolled back, reduced, or canceled, services that Americans everywhere, including Tribal Nations, depend on are disappearing overnight.
Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity	This EO cancels the Equal Opportunity guidelines that most companies use while hiring and encourages attorneys general and federal law enforcement agencies to target, fine, or prosecute corporations deemed to be hiring based on diversity, equity, and inclusion principles.	As DEI programs are cut at corporations across the country, nonprofit partners, and the people they support, find themselves left behind. So far, the College Fund has lost scholarship funding for more than 100 students, as our corporate funding comes primarily from corporate DEI budgets. Several of our students with internships have lost their jobs as companies stop hiring minority candidates and terminate existing minority hires out of fear of fines and lawsuits. The vagueness of this EO means that further actions expanding its effects are likely.

**For much more:**

**[https://standwith.collegefund.org/issues-impacting-indian-country/what-is-an-executive-order-and-how-do-the-eos-enacted-impact-indian-country/?utm\\_id=25NAL9000C5](https://standwith.collegefund.org/issues-impacting-indian-country/what-is-an-executive-order-and-how-do-the-eos-enacted-impact-indian-country/?utm_id=25NAL9000C5)**

## As federal environmental priorities shift, sovereign Native American nations have their own plans

“Long before the large-scale Earth Day protests on April 22, 1970 – often credited with spurring significant environmental protection legislation – Native Americans stewarded the environment. As sovereign nations, Native Americans have been able to protect land, water and air, including well beyond their own boundaries. Their actions laid the groundwork for modern federal law and policy, including national legislation aimed at reducing pollution. Now the Trump administration is seeking to weaken some of those limits and eliminate programs aimed at improving the environments in which marginalized people live and work. As an environmental historian, I study how Native Americans have shaped environmental management. Tribal nations are the longest stewards of the lands today known as the United States. My work indicates not only that tribal nations contributed to the origins and evolution of modern environmental management on tribal and nontribal lands, but also that they are well poised to continue environmental management and scientific research regardless of U.S. government actions. ... ”

[Read more from The Conversation.](#)

### Indian Country Advocacy: Recent Coalition Letters

A coalition of national Native advocacy organizations, including NCAI, has sent a series of letters to federal officials to educate and urge them to protect legally mandated Tribal programs from harm while implementing policy priorities.

Some recent letters include:

- [Joint Tribal Organization Letter to DOGE](#) – March 14, 2025
- [Joint Tribal Organization Letter to DOJ](#) – March 14, 2025

#### [Coalition Letters](#)

#### [Coalition Website](#)

NCAI has submitted a letter opposing [Executive Order 14191](#), which threatens to divert federal funding away from Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) and tribally controlled schools. The letter urges the Administration to uphold its trust and treaty obligations by fully funding Native education.

#### [Read Here](#)

Additionally, NCAI recently submitted a comment letter in response to the executive branch’s [Request for Information \(RFI\) on the AI Action Plan](#), highlighting key recommendations on Data and Digital Sovereignty. The letter emphasizes the importance of Tribal Nations’ rights in AI data governance and urges federal policymakers to uphold Tribal sovereignty in emerging technologies.

#### [Read Here](#)

**Drawing the lines that created Nevada's borders took decades, and still might not be done.**

**BY ROBERT D. TEMPLE**

A treaty with Spain, a skirmish with California, gold strikes, frontier astronomers, a stubborn surveyor, and plenty of errors combined to create Nevada's unmistakable shape.



Congress carved Nevada Territory out of Utah Territory in 1861, and President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed statehood in 1864, but it took three more years for the state to expand to its current size. The boundaries were poorly understood then and may still be uncertain. The courts were settling arguments in 1980, and change could still be coming in the east.

### **THE MISPLACED NORTHERN LINE**

The northern edge where Nevada meets Idaho and Oregon is the oldest boundary line in the West. In 1819, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams negotiated a wide-ranging treaty with Luis de Onís, special envoy from King Ferdinand VII of Spain. The Adams-Onís Treaty set boundaries between Spanish and U.S. claims across the continent and the 42nd parallel became a line of division in the West. In the 1850s, it was the unsurveyed boundary between Utah Territory and Oregon Territory.

While it may be easy to decree a line in a treaty, marking it on the ground is not. In 1871, surveyors with the U.S. General Land Office, using astronomical observations, determined the position of Nevada's northeast corner and marked the point with an 8-foot cedar post. Modern measurements show it was about 600 yards south of the intended position on the 42nd parallel. In 1873, a survey party started at the post and began tracing the line westward, marking it with mounds of earth and wooden posts. After walking and measuring for 310 slightly crooked miles, the party reached another post set in 1869 to mark the northeast corner of California. That placement was better, only about 160 yards too far south—excellent accuracy with the methods available at the time.

As a result of errors along the northern boundary, however, Nevada is about 50,000 acres smaller than Congress intended.

### **THE DISPUTED WESTERN LINE**

Settlers in the foothills and lakes northwest of today's Reno were uncertain about what political jurisdiction they were in. Most thought they were in Utah Territory, even though Salt Lake City



was very far away. They had little connection with California, beyond the high Sierra Nevada Range.



*1872 California-Nevada State Boundary Marker, in Verdi*

California had defined the northern section of its boundary with Utah Territory as the 120th degree of longitude. To the settlers, the crest of the Sierra seemed a more logical dividing line. The 120th meridian was just a line on a map, established with little consideration of geography.

Beginning in 1856, settlers repeatedly petitioned Congress to form a new territory east of the Sierra. Politics and the great Comstock silver boom led Congress to act in 1861, and they called the new territory “Nevada.”

The enabling act set its western boundary at “the dividing ridge separating the waters of Carson Valley from those that flow into the Pacific,” which is to say the crest of the Sierra, sensibly awarding Nevada the land east of the mountains. However, the act also stated that this area “shall not be included within this Territory until the State of California shall assent to the same.” California did not assent. The parties seem to have neglected even to discuss the matter, and the area remained in dispute and its residents in limbo.

Amid squabbles over elections and tax collection, the dispute reached a crisis in the winter of 1862-1863 with a series of incidents known as the Sagebrush War. In spite of antagonism between the two sides, it seems to have been one of the friendliest border wars in history.

The climactic battle took place on Feb. 15, 1863. A California sheriff brought a posse of 100 armed men to Susanville and laid siege to settlers defending the log residence of their leader, Isaac Roop. The sides exchanged some random shots. After one man received a bullet wound in the leg, the combatants decided to call the whole thing off, had dinner together at a boarding house, and turned the dispute over to their governors.

California kept the land between the Sierra crest and the 120th meridian.

That troublesome boundary line caused continuing controversy. Lines of longitude were much more difficult for surveyors to locate than latitudes because in addition to astronomical observation, the determination depends on time. A one-second time error translates to a quarter-mile error in staking out a meridian.

Between 1855 and 1900, six surveys attempted to locate the 120-degree line, with results differing by more than three miles.

Alexey W. Von Schmidt made a survey in 1872 that ended up being the accepted one. Von Schmidt (whose given name sometimes appears as Alexis), an immigrant from what is now Latvia, was a civil engineer who had worked extensively mapping public lands and Spanish land grants. He later became a controversial figure in California–Nevada water battles.



### *Roop's Fort*

Von Schmidt made observations timed with telegraph signals from San Francisco received at the Central Pacific station at Verdi. He quickly became convinced that work completed three years earlier had placed the 120-degree line too far west by some 3.25 miles. Although ordered to base his line on that earlier work, Von Schmidt decided that, since Congress had specified the 120th meridian, he was going to follow the 120th meridian regardless of instructions. His resulting line wanders considerably, as was characteristic of survey work at the time, but modern measurements show he was right about the longitude, within about 450 feet.

But things remained unsettled. Neither state officially accepted the line, and questions about land titles persisted. In 1977, California sued Nevada in federal court to bring an end to the confusion. The states vigorously argued the validity of various surveys carried out more than a century earlier. In 1980, the Supreme Court ruled that Von Schmidt's line was the official boundary.

If Von Schmidt had followed orders, Nevada would today be larger by half a million acres.

## **THE DIAGONAL LINE**

Nevada's slanted line with California is one of the most surveyed boundaries in the country. California's constitution describes it as a straight line from the intersection of longitude 120 degrees with latitude 39 degrees down to the Colorado River at latitude 35 degrees. The calculations for an oblique line are complex, with continuous change in latitude and longitude as well as correction for the curvature of the earth. It took five painstaking tries to get it right.

At the north end of the slanted line, a California surveyor, trying to locate the angle point in the boundary, discovered in 1855 he was unable to mark it because it lay within Lake Tahoe (then called Lake Bigler). This surveyor, George H. Goddard, apparently did a careful job, establishing sight points on the shores to define lines within the lake. However, California never paid him for the work, so he never turned over his detailed records.

At the south end of the line, Lt. Joseph C. Ives, U.S. Army Topographic Corps, determined in 1858 the point where the 35th latitude intersected the Colorado River. He also re-established the end point on the shore of Lake Tahoe and marked sections of the line. But in 1861, Ives quit his job and joined the Confederate army. With that, his work fell into obscurity, and later the marker he placed on the riverbank washed away.

In 1863, the two governments appointed a new boundary commission, with J. F. Houghton representing California and Butler Ives for Nevada Territory. They assigned fieldwork to John F.



Kidder, a prominent civil engineer who later became a wealthy owner of railroads and mines. Indians and a blizzard interrupted Kidder's work, his funding ran out, and the survey remained unfinished for a decade.

In 1872, Nevada and California hired Alexey Von Schmidt to survey and mark their entire shared boundary. Following his work on the northern segment, Von Schmidt moved to reproduce the incomplete Houghton-Ives line. After running a trial line south, he found that a change in course of the Colorado River required that he shift his line about a mile and a half to the east. He worked back northward, making corrections, but ran out of money and left the job unfinished. This left a kink in the line near today's Pahrump.

By 1889, improved methods had allowed the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey (USC&GS) to lay out a national grid. This led a new team of surveyors to discover Von Schmidt's errors. Observing that the various surveys differed by nearly a mile at the south shore of Lake Tahoe, USC&GS started over and reran the line in 1893-1899. Both states accepted this straightened-out version.

Topo maps continue to show the historically important Von Schmidt line. Its acceptance along the entire 405-mile oblique boundary would have made Nevada about 100 square miles larger.

### **THE SOUTHERN TIP**

The first southern boundary of Nevada Territory was the 37th parallel, about 60 miles north of present Las Vegas. Nevada achieved its current southern limits on Jan. 18, 1867, when it absorbed the portion of Arizona Territory west of the Colorado River. This is the entire southern tip of the state, including all of Clark County. Congress decided Nevada would be better able to oversee the population boom expected following the discovery of gold in the area. Arizonans protested vigorously, but their alignment with the Confederacy during the Civil War won them little sympathy.

Originally, the Arizona boundary followed the middle of the Colorado River. However, rivers have the inconvenient habit of changing course, a frequent problem along the Colorado's lower stretches. Confusion caused when bits of land migrated between the states following flood events wasn't resolved until 1961. A compact between Nevada and Arizona redefined the boundary below Davis Dam as a series of straight-line segments running between 31 monuments placed along the river.

### **THE MIGRATING EASTERN LINE**

When Congress created Nevada Territory, the eastern boundary was the 39th degree of longitude west of Washington. That line, about 2 miles west of the more familiar 116th Greenwich meridian, would today exclude Elko and Ely.

With discovery of gold east of the 39th Washington meridian, the Nevada territorial delegation to Congress requested moving the boundary one step farther east, to the 38th meridian, which Congress granted in 1862. Four years later, a new gold strike prompted another step, and the border shifted east to the 37th meridian, where it remains. These eastward shifts took about 37,000 square miles away from Utah Territory.

Nevada is unique in this large expansion of its borders after admission to the Union. Missouri acquired additional territory in 1836, though less than a tenth the area of the thick slices added to Nevada. The additions of 1862 and 1866, plus the southern tip in 1867, about doubled the size of the state.

The survey of Nevada's eastern boundary took place in 1870. The starting point was in the middle of the Central Pacific Railroad track near where Nevada Route 233 crosses the line today near the town of Montello. Astronomical observations and triangulation from an observatory in Salt Lake City had established the position of Pilot Peak, close to the boundary line in Elko County. Direct measurement east from Pilot Peak determined the longitude at the railroad, the 37th Washington meridian (114 degrees 2 minutes 48 seconds west of Greenwich). From there, surveyors ran the line north to the approximate 42nd parallel of latitude as determined by sextant observations. Back at the initial point on the railroad, the survey party headed south, reaching the Colorado River at a distance of 356.3 miles.

Modern measurements show the line wavers by plus and minus half a mile or so because of survey errors, averaging about 700 yards too far east. Because of this, Nevada gained some 120 unintended square miles from Utah.

A change may be coming along this boundary, however, if local voters and Congress can ever agree to it. A 15-square-mile piece of Utah could transfer to Nevada some day, uniting the town of Wendover, Utah, with larger and more prosperous West Wendover.

Local voters agreed to the change, and enabling legislation went to Congress in 2002, where it died in the Senate. Wendover's City Council reconsidered the matter in 2006 and narrowly voted to halt the annexation process.

There are no current measures before voters today, but stay tuned because Nevada just might grow again.



**[These 5 lesser-known species may vanish. If they do, we're all in trouble.](https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/endangered-species-act-photo-ark-animals)**  
**<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/article/endangered-species-act-photo-ark-animals>**

## History Bits

- 1208 Apr 5** Quetzacoatl died.
- 1513 Apr 2** According to anglocentric history, Ponce De Leon “discovered” Florida. (It was right where its inhabitants thought it was all along-Humor from Dennis M)
- 1864 Apr 5** Raids began in Paradise Valley on white settler by aiute, Bannock and Shoshone Indians led by “Black Rock Tom”.
- 1864 Apr 5** Reese River Reveille: Pinenuts are certainly a new thing to the American people, and...an excellent thing they are, too, in the absence of fruits and nuts we were formerly accustomed to. The Indians do a good business here in selling them.”
- 1867 Mar 30** Treaty of purchase signed in DC, beginning process of US purchase of Alaska from Russia: no one bothered asking native inhabitants of region if they wanted lands sold (treatment of natives became more brutal under U.S. occupation—again, DM)
- 1884 Apr 2** Brothers McCoy ad Everette Pyle discover Tatavian Indian artifacts in Bowers Cave.
- 1886 Apr 1** Carson Appeal: private letter from DC...Nevada will have some trouble getting the appropriation for her Indian School....it could at any time have been had for the asking but nobody cared enough about it to ask, so of course we wait another year”.
- 1897 Apr1** Walker River Reservation and Day School transferred to Carson Indian School jurisdiction.
- 1906 Apr 3** Reno Evening Gazette reported a copper strike: will rival Butte and Ely” has be made near Pyramid Lake.
- 1914 Apr 1** The streets of the Native American village in Lovelock were being outfitted with electric lights and a pumping plant for irrigation was being considered.
- 1934 Apr 4** In Los Angeles, Annie Barnett filed notice of an appeal that she and her husband, **Jackson Barnett**, a Creek tribe member, were pursuing against a federal court ruling invalidating their marriage.
- 1934 Apr 6** A Californua grand jury was investigating charges that white man purchased water-bearing land at the Mono Basin at \$40/acre from Native Americans and then sold it to Los Angeles for \$200-250/acre.
- 1980 Apr 3** The US reinstated federal recognition of Utah Paiutes that had been dropped 26 years earlier. (No word on whether the Paiutes returned the favor.....again, DM)

Year not given: *“Even the Piute Indians along the street heartily enjoyed his efforts to joke with them in their native langauage, which he sympathetically admired for its natural oddity”.*  
,...Alf Doten on Dan Dequill

## **Beautiful tribute to Vinton Hawley**

Thank you for everyone who came to send Vinton off on his next travels. The love and support for him was incredible but I always knew how special he was. Like my son said the stories could fill a book and maybe one day we will write a little Paiute boy story.

Vint is at peace now. Vint was one of those who burned too bright for others. How many gifts and talents can one person hold? How many lives can one person touch?

BUT Vinton was felled by the infamous crabs in a bucket. One day he yelled I tried so hard to be a good Chairman and they hate me. My people's hate cuts me to my soul Les! I am damaged. All I could do was say I know, I see it but you've got to be strong.

People be good to each other. Be good human beings. Treating each other bad is a choice. He made choices and they took him to the top and then the bad took him away.

Again we all have our own path. I learned to let go and stay on my own. Our paths came back together for a bit but it was home to each other. Like he said, Les we are still connected, you will always be my wife. One of our close friends pointed out that I was the stability in his life of uncertainty. He could always point home and say see that is my family. That is where home is. Made sense but home was missing our pops. Like my kids and dots say, we got our dad back in the end. Sober and real. Our hearts have been hurting for the past few years watching him become someone else. But for a brief few weeks he was here with us, laughing and bossing, promising trips to AZ and Ft. Hall.

And for that we understood we were blessed. Life doesn't always give you happy endings but that ride can be some of the best times of your life. I choose to remember the best and to love Vinton, Ekooma for who I know him to be.

Thankful to Creator because I understood what gift I had been given and I knew that the sacrifice would be painful, but that didn't matter. It was my job to lift him up, to share my strength. Les I need this, this and this (indian medicine) ok let me go home and grab it. Poor nurses couldn't figure out what that red was on him. I am protecting him I would say... from his head to his feet. So many things to help heal but his body had taken too much.

He went home to the ones he missed the most. I will see him in our next life. Creator bless Vint.

Nu u supedya...

Les Williams