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The vast Sonoran Desert

Amodei's public land bill dropped from House funding package

Senate panel wary of states managing National Park sites

McMahon lays out Education Department 'final mission' to House appropriators

No one voted for more pollution — so why is the EPA trying to cut half its budget?

From Amy Alonzo, Nevada Independent Environment Reporter

Extreme weather cycles change underwater light at Tahoe

Trump administration will evaluate request to sell leases for seabed mining of critical minerals

Here's a look at the highest and lowest-paying industries in America

mur taraaxtak—Ohlone Skies

Experts: Arizona and other states need to stop fighting over water and do something now

Tule Mats and the Importance of Wetlands

NATHPO responds to “[Secretarial Order 3431 - Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History](#)”

*Reminder: **deadline for comments on Tribal consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking***

Ditto: Tribal Consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking per Executive Order 14154

The Latest News in the Fight for Native Rights

Front Range cities step up opposition to \$99 million Colorado River water rights Fort Yuma Quechan

Tribe to heal ailing Colorado River ecosystem, planting one native seed at a time



**The vast Sonoran Desert covers most of the southern half of Arizona
(Image credit: Myles McGuinness for Experience Scottsdale)**

Amodei's public land bill dropped from House funding package

Rep. Mark Amodei's amendment to sell more than 93,000 acres of Nevada public land has been dropped from the House GOP funding package.

Senate panel wary of states managing National Park sites

Interior Secretary Doug Burgum defended proposed cuts to his department's fiscal 2026 budget before a Senate panel on Wednesday as lawmakers questioned an administration suggestion that some parts of the National Park Service could be managed by the states. [Read more...](#)

McMahon lays out Education Department 'final mission' to House appropriators

Education Secretary Linda McMahon on Wednesday defended the Trump administration's proposed cuts to her agency as part of an overall effort to shutter her department — a goal she described as its “final mission.” [Read more...](#)

Opinion - No one voted for more pollution — so why is the EPA trying to cut half its budget?

https://currently.att.yahoo.com/news/opinion-no-one-voted-more-130000447.html?.tsrc=daily_mail&uh_test=1_11&.tsrc=daily_mail&segment_id&ncid=crm_-1295960-20250522-400--A&bt_user_id=7xda%2FJOXg0WHx2g7TRAGGQ5ZlfGUPvU1iGdtr0RIgSW%2BHJDJLCjY8FZXRBjI41pe&bt_ts=1747902243912

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*Construction at Lithium Americas' Thacker Pass mine near Orovada on March 18, 2025. (David Calvert/The Nevada Independent)*

#### **ICYMI:**

'Beholden to the mine': [Does rural Nevada depend on mines' goodwill](#) to foot hidden costs?  
Bill spotlight: [Solar consumer protections](#)  
[NV Energy overcharged customers](#) by millions over last two decades, state agency finds  
[NV Energy CEO departs](#) after 6 years; switch comes after news of utility overcharging



### In the weeds:

*Privatizing environmental cleanup* — The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has [completed its final analysis](#) for a planned transfer of more than 2,000 acres of public land within the Anaconda Mine site to Atlantic Richfield Company. The transfer will facilitate cleanup, according to the agency, although [opponents argue](#) it leaves little federal oversight over one of the state's most polluted areas.

Check out [my story from 2018](#) for more on the history of the site.

*Trail openings and closings* — Trail closures including Marlette Lake Trail and the popular Flume Trail overlooking Lake Tahoe are in effect in the [Spoonerville State Park](#) backcountry through 2026 as the Nevada Public Works Division repairs Marlette Dam. Across the lake, most of [D.L. Bliss State Park](#) is closed pending completion of a water system refurbishment project.

In Southern Nevada, the Deer Creek Picnic Site and Cathedral Rock Trail at Spring Mountains National Recreation Area are reopening after being damaged in Tropical Storm Hilary, although other popular trails including the Mary Jane Falls, Trail Canyon and Upper Bristlecone trails remain closed. Mary Jane and Bristlecone are set to reopen in 2027 and 2029.

*Deforestation lawsuit* — Western Watersheds Project and the Center for Biological Diversity are [appealing](#) a federal court decision that allows the BLM to remove more than 380,000 acres of pinyon-juniper forest in Spring Valley near Great Basin National Park.

The project would use bulldozers to remove the trees and destroy an important cultural landscape for the Western Shoshone people and sagebrush habitat for greater sage-grouse, pygmy rabbits and pinyon jays, according to the appeal.

*Geothermal expansion* — [Ormat](#) is in the process of acquiring the 20-megawatt Blue Mountain geothermal power plant near Winnemucca from Cryq Energy. Originally built with Ormat technology, Ormat intends to increase the plant's capacity by 3.5 megawatts and add 13 megawatts of solar. The \$88 million purchase includes a power purchase agreement with NV Energy through 2029.

*Wet and wild spring* — With 1.44 inches of rain so far this month, Las Vegas has shattered its previous record for the wettest May. In 1968, the city received 0.96 inches of rain, according to State Climatologist Baker Perry. The wet and cool spring helped keep Mojave Max, Southern Nevada's version of Punxsutawney Phil, in his burrow until May 8, 14 days later than his previous record on April 24, 2023.

The emergence of the desert tortoise typically marks the beginning of springlike weather in Southern Nevada; this year's rain, wind and cool temperatures contributed to his late emergence. The earliest Max has ever emerged was Valentine's Day in 2005.

*Lawn care goes green* — The Washoe County School District has transitioned one quarter of its lawn and garden equipment from gas-powered to electric using a \$250,000 Northern Nevada Public Health Air Quality Management Division grant funded by state smog check fees. The transition provides a healthier and quieter environment for students and staff, according to the [school district](#).

**Here's what else I'm reading (and listening to) this week:**

[KUNC](#) describes how Colorado River bigwigs make 'disturbing' retreat from the public eye amid tense talks

From [The New York Times](#): A Clean Energy Boom Was Just Starting. Now, a Republican Bill Aims to End It.

EPA terminates \$20 million Walker River Paiute Tribe water infrastructure grant, per [The Nevada Current](#)

Bill offers Nevada's side of Lake Tahoe avenue to develop local funding source, from [The Tahoe Daily Tribune](#)

The National Park Service will not open Yosemite's popular High Sierra camps this summer, according to [SF Gate](#)



*Colorado River seen at Hoover Dam on June 25, 2021. (Jeff Scheid/The Nevada Independent)*

**All the above from Amy Alonzo, the Nevada Independent**

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Extreme weather cycles change underwater light at Tahoe

“Lake Tahoe is experiencing large-scale shifts in ultraviolet radiation (UV) as climate change intensifies wet and dry extremes in the region. That is according to a study led by the University of California, Davis’ Tahoe Environmental Research Center and co-leading collaborator Miami University in Ohio. For the study, published in ASLO, the journal of the Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography, scientists analyzed an 18-year record of underwater irradiance at Lake Tahoe, which is renowned for its clear blue waters. They found up to a 100-fold difference in UV radiation between a wet and dry year. These large fluctuations were associated with wet and dry extremes in the local climate, which caused variations in particulate matter and colored dissolved organic matter in the lake. UV radiation penetrates most deeply in clear water bodies, such as alpine or polar lakes, so the research carries implications for those water bodies. In less transparent lakes, UV radiation may reach only a few inches into the water. In clear systems like Lake Tahoe, it can reach dozens of feet down. ... ” [Read more from UC Davis.](#)

- Trump administration will evaluate request to sell leases for seabed mining of critical minerals~~~~



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**Here's a look at the highest and lowest-paying industries in America:**

| Industry                              | Average annual earnings |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Utilities                             | \$113,823               |
| Information                           | \$99,602                |
| Mining and logging                    | \$92,065                |
| Financial activities                  | \$92,021                |
| Professional and business services    | \$82,639                |
| Construction                          | \$80,191                |
| Wholesale trade                       | \$77,749                |
| Manufacturing                         | \$73,498                |
| Transportation and warehousing        | \$62,118                |
| Private education and health services | \$59,701                |
| Retail trade                          | \$38,757                |
| Leisure and hospitality               | \$30,167                |
| Other services                        | \$53,728                |

[www.visualcapitalist.com/ranked-the-highest-paying-industries-in-the-u-s-2025/](http://www.visualcapitalist.com/ranked-the-highest-paying-industries-in-the-u-s-2025/)

## **mur taraaxtak—Ohlone Skies**

by [Vincent Medina](#) [March 26, 2025](#)

As the founder of Cafe Ohlone in Berkeley, the only Ohlone restaurant in the world, I have long worked to see the complex layers of my East Bay Ohlone culture better represented for the benefit of my community and better understood and respected by the public. Since my partner, Louis Trevino, and I established Cafe Ohlone in 2018 as a way of representing Ohlone culture through sophisticated Ohlone culinary traditions, our work has spread into connected spheres: place-based land restoration, more necessary than ever in this time of changing climate; the historic ‘*ottoy* Initiative at the University of California, Berkeley, which aims to spread awareness of Ohlone culture on campus; and amplifying Ohlone knowledge throughout Bay Area cultural institutions where our voices were not included before. These efforts are interlinked in order to uplift Ohlone identity while simultaneously teaching the public about living Ohlone culture. Recently, another monumental moment arrived, one that teaches that our knowledge of Ohlone astronomy is dynamic.

Last spring, after more than a year of development with our Ohlone people and our fantastic partners at the Chabot Space and Science Center in Oakland, history was made: the premiere of the first-ever Ohlone planetarium show, *mur taaraxtak—Ohlone Skies*. Our goals with *mur taaraxtak* were to build respect for and understanding of our Ohlone people and our intimate knowledge of the astronomical beings above us. We wanted to elevate the specificity of our culture: to teach that the East Bay is an ancient place and that the Ohlone people have always been right here in our beloved, gorgeous homeland.

**To continue reading this story ... :~(**

**Access**

to the current issue of Bay Nature magazine and Bay Nature Talks are a benefit of Bay Nature Membership. Get the award-winning Bay Nature magazine quarterly in print and online, plus live educational talks and naturalist-led hikes by becoming a Member. **[Join / Renew](#)**

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## **Experts: Arizona and other states need to stop fighting over water and do something now**

“Overcoming conflicts among water users — especially across borders — is the first obstacle to securing Arizona’s water future, and if leaders don’t act now, they may miss critical solutions. That was one of the clear messages from water managers and state officials at the University of Arizona Water Resource Research Center conference. Experts drew on the challenges and the importance of studying, managing and crafting policy around a common resource. Whether it’s coming from a river or an [aquifer](#), speakers said, Arizona’s water is shared across boundaries: the seven states relying on the Colorado River, tribal nations, counties in the same basin, or across the international border with Mexico. “It doesn’t belong to anyone, it belongs to the whole of us,” Tohono O’odham Nation Chairman Verlon Jose said May 21, talking about the 2025 conference theme: “Shared Borders, Shared Waters: Working Together in Times of Scarcity.” ... ” [Read more from the Arizona Republic](#).



### **Tule Mats and the Importance of Wetlands**

Join Diana Almendariz, a cultural practitioner and member of the Wintun/Maidu community, and Geoff Attardo, a medical entomologist from UC Davis, for a virtual talk about the cultural and scientific importance of wetlands on **Wednesday, June 4, from 12–1pm**. Learn about traditional indigenous stewardship practices, the biology of wetlands, and the mitigation of mosquito-borne diseases. **Free for Members, \$5 for Non-Members. [Sign Up »](#)**

After their talk, go deeper by joining Diana and Geoff for an immersive visit to the Cache Creek Conservancy on **Saturday, June 14, 2025 from 9–11:30am**. Participants will tour the Tending and Gathering Garden, a space cultivated through collaboration with local Native American communities to sustain native plants used for food, medicine, fiber, and ceremony. **Free for Members. [Sign Up »](#)**

Join bee specialist Diony Gamoso for a virtual talk about native bees and what people can do for them on **Wednesday, May 28, from 12–1pm**. Learn what makes a bee a bee, their “lifestyles”, why they’re so important, and what you can do to help them. **Free for Members, \$5 for Non-Members. [Sign Up »](#)**

**Today, the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (NATHPO) responded to the Department of the Interior (DOI)'s recently issued "[Secretarial Order 3431 - Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History](#)."** The order instructs Bureaus and offices within DOI "to ensure that all public monuments, memorials, statues, markers, or similar properties within the Department's jurisdiction do not contain descriptions, depictions, or other content that inappropriately disparage Americans past or living (including persons living in colonial times), and instead focus on the greatness of the achievements and progress of the American people or, with respect to natural features, the beauty, abundance, and grandeur of the American landscape."

This instruction is especially troubling because of the risk it will hide from public view acknowledgment of the wrongs done to Indigenous peoples in the United States, as well as other historically marginalized communities. THPOs are among the leaders within their communities in preserving this history and sharing these stories, but they cannot and should not do it alone. These stories can only be preserved if they are shared with the public, and America's public lands and National Parks are some of the most visible and, therefore, important places for that storytelling.

**"In order to do true justice to the history of the United States of America, its government must acknowledge and tell its entire history,"** said NATHPO Executive Director Dr. Valerie Grussing. **"There is no denying Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities across the United States suffered violence and oppression at the hands of the Federal Government, and of the colonial powers who preceded it. This Secretarial Order is deeply concerning because it appears to instruct federal agencies to obscure the efforts on the part of those governments to eradicate vibrant Indigenous cultures, causing the deaths of untold numbers of people and threatening the very existence of peoples who have called this land home since time immemorial. We call on Secretary Burgum and the Interior Department to engage in real consultation with those Tribes and communities to ensure he does not preside over the erasure of stories that so desperately need to be told."**

Preserving and publicly retelling the stories of America's Indigenous peoples – in their entirety – is a necessary part of healing for Tribal Nations and other Native communities, a critical part of ensuring their health and vitality and allowing them to thrive both now and in the future. NATHPO will write to Interior Secretary Doug Burgum in the coming days to provide constructive suggestions about how best to ensure those stories continue to be told, including by engaging in meaningful nation-to-nation consultation with the descendant communities whose stories this Secretarial Order threatens to erase.

Who we are – NATHPO is a national non-profit 501(c)(3) membership organization, founded in 1998, of Tribal preservation leaders protecting culturally important places that perpetuate Native identity, resilience, and cultural endurance. Connections to cultural heritage sustain the health and vitality of Native peoples. We provide guidance to preservation officials, elected representatives, and the public about national historic preservation legislation, policies, and regulations. We promote Tribal sovereignty, develop partnerships, and advocate for Tribes in governmental activities on preservation issues. For more information visit our website at [www.nathpo.org](http://www.nathpo.org).



**BREAKING: NATHPO'S PROTECTING NATIVE PLACES GRANT PROGRAM HITS APPLICATION LIMIT IN RECORD TIME!**

As of today, May 22, 2025, NATHPO's [Protecting Native Places program](#) hit its 25-application limit after launching earlier this month. This is the quickest NATHPO has reached the maximum number of applications in the four-year history of the program.

Thanks to a grant from the Mellon Foundation, we were able to increase the award amount to \$40,000, and now NATHPO is in the process of reviewing these first 25 applications. We will review any additional applications as needed in order to ensure we distribute all 25 \$40,000 grants this year.

Many thanks to all of the THPOs who have applied for Protecting Native Places Grants this year, as well as the applicants and recipients in years past who made this program the success story it has become. We look forward to announcing the recipients once the list has been finalized.

**Register Today for NATHPO's Annual Conference!**

[Registration is now open for NATHPO's 25th Annual Conference](#), happening **September 8-12, 2025!** We would like to thank [Reno-Sparks Indian Colony](#) for hosting us in 2025! We look forward to seeing everyone in Reno at the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino!!! You can find more details about the conference and register [HERE](#). If you or your organization are interested in becoming a sponsor, you can access our sponsorship deck [HERE](#)

**NATHPO Community Calendar & Job Board & Grant Opportunities**

Stay current on important happenings using our new [Calendar of Events](#), and post your own to share! And let us know if you have a job posting you would like to share and we'll post it on our [Community Job Board](#). AND don't forget to browse our listing of relevant [Grant Opportunities](#).

*Thank you for all you do to protect culturally important places that perpetuate Native identity, resilience, and cultural endurance, and to empower Tribal preservation leaders.*



Valerie J. Grussing, PhD  
NATHPO Executive Director  
[valerie@nathpo.org](mailto:valerie@nathpo.org) | 202-628-8476

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In case you missed it, the **deadline to submit comments for the Tribal consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking per Executive Order 14154 is May 25, 2025.**

Please submit all consultation comments to consultation@hud.gov. Please include “Tribal Consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking per EO 14154” in the subject line with your submission. HUD will consider all consultation comments received within 30 days of the issuance of this letter and will consider comments received after 30 days to the greatest extent possible.

Read more in the Dear Tribal Leader letter below.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING
AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT**
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-5000

April 29, 2025

SUBJECT: Tribal Consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking per Executive Order 14154

Dear Tribal Leader:

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order (EO) 14154, [Unleashing American Energy](#). In furtherance of EO 14154, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) provided guidance to Federal agencies on revising their National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing regulations in a manner that expedites permitting approvals, meets deadlines established in the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Pub. L. No. 118-5, § 321, 137 Stat. 10), and prioritizes efficiency and certainty over any other objectives that could add delays and ambiguity to the permitting process. Consistent with CEQ's guidance, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) intends to revise its regulations at [24 CFR parts 50 and 58](#), which relate to NEPA and other environmental requirements.

Pursuant to HUD's Tribal consultation policy, HUD is committed to seeking Tribal comments and feedback to revise HUD's regulations at 24 CFR parts 50 and 58. HUD is working to complete its 24 CFR part 50 and 58 rulemaking by February 19, 2026, as set by CEQ's guidance.

Specifically, HUD is interested in feedback on the following questions:

1. What challenges do Tribal governments face when carrying out HUD environmental reviews, and how can HUD reduce these challenges?
2. How can HUD enhance its coordination with Tribal agencies and departments overseeing environmental reviews to minimize duplication and ambiguity?
3. How can HUD streamline its environmental review process to prioritize efficiency for Tribal communities?
4. How can HUD's regulations be improved to identify a lead agency, joint lead agencies, cooperating agencies, and participating agencies to develop a unified Federal review pursuant to [Section 107 of the National Environmental Policy Act](#)?

Please submit all consultation comments by May 25, 2025 to consultation@hud.gov. Please include "Tribal Consultation on HUD Environmental Rulemaking per EO 14154" in the subject line with your submission. HUD will consider all consultation comments received within 30 days of the issuance of this letter and will consider comments received after 30 days to the greatest extent possible.

Thank you for your continued partnership in serving Indian Country.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Hobbs
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of Public and Indian Housing

The Latest News in the Fight for Native Rights



Native voters lose path to protection

Voters in Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota no longer have the right to sue to enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

[What Happened →](#)



Tribal Nations Have Colorado River Interests

How many of the 30 Tribal Nations with ties to the Colorado River Basin have secured water rights and have interests in the health of this critical watershed?

[Learn This & More →](#)



Your impact in 2024

The Native American Rights Fund accomplished so much in 2024 powered by donor contributions and your support!

[Read the Annual Report →](#)

Front Range cities step up opposition to \$99 million Colorado River water rights purchase

“Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs and Northern Water voiced opposition Wednesday to the Western Slope’s proposal to spend \$99 million to buy historic water rights on the Colorado River from Xcel Energy. [Read more from the Colorado Sun.](#)

Fort Yuma Quechan Tribe working to heal the ailing Colorado River ecosystem by planting one native seed at a time

“A pelican descends through a canopy of green cottonwood leaves. The frost-plumed bird lands upon an exposed sandbank in a thin ribbon of blue water flanked by lithe willows. Gorgeous as it is, this lush Sonoran Desert oasis is but a relic of a time when the water was much more than a sliver. Here, the once-mighty Colorado River swelled across the Fort Yuma Quechan Reservation, straddling California and Arizona near the U.S.–Mexico border. Frank Venegas, the Quechan Tribe’s water technician, looks out on the river and shakes his head. He grew up fishing here with his uncles and laments not being able to do the same with his nephews. Now, not only has the water been reduced to a trickle through the reservation, but in many areas, just beyond this stretch of shoreline, invasive plants choke out river access. The Quechan people have relied on the Colorado River and its riparian ecosystem for spiritual, cultural and material needs since time immemorial. “If we don’t have a living river, who are we as people?” ... ” [Continue reading from Reasons to be Cheerful.](#)