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These Native Kids Were First to Witness the Astounding Comeback of the Mighty Klamath River

The dam removal and restoration is “a great David-and-Goliath story.”

THE GUARDIAN

Ruby Williams’s pink kayak pierced the fog shrouding the mouth of the Klamath River, and she paddled harder. She was flanked on both sides by fellow Indigenous youth from across the basin, and their line of brightly colored boats would make history when they reached the Pacific Ocean on the other side of the sandy dunes – they were going to do it together.

The final of four hydroelectric dams was removed last year from the Klamath River, in the [largest project of its kind in US history](#). The following July, 28 teenage tribal representatives completed a 30-day journey that spanned roughly 310 miles (500km) from the headwaters in the Cascades to the Pacific. They were the very first to kayak the entirety of the mighty river in more than a century.

It marked a new beginning for the once-imperiled river and its sprawling basin that straddles the California-Oregon border, an important biodiversity hotspot and a region that has been at the heart of local Indigenous culture for millennia. It also served as a bridge, bringing together river advocates from around the world eager to replicate the restoration happening on the Klamath.

It’s been only a year without the dams and the reservoirs created by them, and already there are successes to share.

Just days after the dams were demolished, [threatened coho salmon](#) made it farther upriver than they had in the previous 60 years. Shortly after the one-year mark, Chinook salmon were spotted in headwaters [for the first time in more than a century](#).

Native seeds strewn across the riverbanks and their adjoining hillsides began to bloom. Scores of birds and animals – from bald eagles, to beavers, to bears – returned to the waterway. Insects, algae and microscopic features of the flourishing systems that feed this ecosystem were sprouting.

“These kids will be the first generation who get to grow up alongside a clean Klamath River,” said Ren Brownell, the former spokesperson for the Klamath River Renewal Corporation, a non-profit created to [oversee and implement the removal](#). “They can now carry this momentum to other watersheds,” Brownell said.

That sentiment fueled the idea to have tribal youth be the first to navigate the river. The “Paddle Tribal Waters” program is part of Ríos to [Rivers](#), an advocacy organization that fosters environmental stewardship by connecting thousands of Indigenous students across seven countries.

For the finish, people traveled from China and the Bolivian Amazon. There were Māori people from New Zealand there and members of the Mapuche-Pehuenche tribe who live along the

Biobío river in Chile. Representatives from the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and the Nimiipuu (Nez Perce) Tribe in the Snake River Basin in the western US also joined.

While the Klamath youth cultivated a deeper connection to their wild river being reborn, they also inspired Indigenous-led movements working to protect or restore other rivers around the world.

“It is a great David-and-Goliath story,” Brownell added. “It turns out that you can win.”

Klamath’s first year

A project of this scale had never been attempted before Klamath’s dams came down, and even with an abundance of hope and extensive modeling, there was uncertainty about how the river would rebound.

Even with years of work left to do, the speed of recovery has surprised everyone.

Without the large reservoirs that kept waters stagnant and warm during the summers, toxic markers that used to consistently spike outside healthy ranges have stayed at safe levels through the seasons. Water temperatures too have returned to their natural regimes, providing the coolness fish need to migrate.

“The river seemed to come alive right after dam removal,” said Damon Goodman, the Mount Shasta-Klamath regional director for CalTrout during a meeting on the one-year anniversary. “There’s just fish jumping all over the place, bald eagles, all sorts of wildlife.”

The unprecedented project required an equally unprecedented fish-monitoring effort that relied on a range of tools, including sonar, boat surveys, netting and tagging, and video, to observe adaptation, migration, spawning and habitat.

“The data is coming out so fast it is hard to keep up with the findings,” Goodman said.

Barry McCovey Jr is the senior fisheries biologist for the Yurok Tribe and has warned local communities and the public about the challenges that still lie ahead. Two dams remain on the river and it will take decades to heal “the massive scars” left by the dams that were removed, McCovey Jr said, adding that what might seem like a happy ending is just the beginning.

That doesn’t mean he isn’t celebrating.

“We called them footballs, they were so robust and healthy,” he said, referring to the fish now completing long journeys they haven’t been able to for more than a hundred years. One year in, “the big-picture update is the river is continuing to heal”, McCovey Jr said. “It has a different feel to it now – and it is only going to get better.”

For McCovey Jr, the wins go beyond the fish getting a renewed chance to thrive, along with the ecosystems that support them. After working to restore this basin for most of his life, his son, who completed the first descent, is now connecting with the river as it rebounds.

“The river needed those kids – they are part of the solution,” he said. They will play an important role to lead restoration work needed into the future. But they are also helping to spread an important message.

“It’s always been part of the goal to show people around the world that something like this is possible,” McCovey Jr said. “You just have to look to the Klamath to see that crazy things can happen.”

A new story

The removal of the four dams was still an abstract idea when Williams first began training for the adventure of a lifetime. She was one of about a dozen in the Klamath inaugural class, launched in 2022, when she was a sophomore in high school.

Williams mastered the kayaking skills required to traverse challenging and unknown rapids that would emerge from under the reservoirs – including the harrowing and awe-inspiring [K’íka:c’é-ki Canyon run](#), more than 2.5 miles of class IV rapids that winds through an ancient and steep basalt chasm, [held sacred to the Shasta Indian Nation](#). It’s a run that sparked fear even among the most experienced guides.

She turned 18 early on in the journey, her birthday falling on a grueling day spent battling strong headwinds and sharp sunlight that left her eyes and skin burning. But the memories of exhaustion are outweighed by those of camaraderie. Williams said she still talks to the friends she made during the program nearly every day.

Weston Boyles, founder and director of Ríos to Rivers, said the program forged links among youth from across the Klamath basin: “Everyone within a basin is connected to that river. Through the love of a common sport like kayaking, you can connect communities.”

Boyles and others on his help Indigenous youth lead along with Rush Sturges, a film-maker who cut his tributary, the Salmon River. designed not only gave kids the river but also helped were studying.



team hatched the plan to the first descent in 2021 professional kayaker and teeth on a Klamath The curriculum they the skills needed to paddle them engage with what they

Students, including on trips around the world to to fighting for their rivers. Among them were youth from the Bolivian Amazon, where dams being proposed would displace more than 5,000 Indigenous people and flood a portion of biodiverse Madidi national park.

Williams, were also taken meet other youth dedicated

“Our work in these rivers is allowing [people] to jump in a time machine and go to the future to see what could happen – what their basins would look like if the dams were built,” Boyles said. “We have all the information and we know all the answers here. There are actually solutions that are obtainable.”

A group of the students are heading to Cop30 in Brazil, petitioning the United Nations to stop recognizing dams as clean energy eligible to receive carbon offset funding. They were also the first to sign the [so-called Klamath River Accord](#), an agreement made to protect rivers around the world that “recognizes that the removal of these dams should serve as a model for future climate resilience efforts and a testament to the power of collective action”.

For Williams, who is a Quartz Valley tribal member and a Karuk person, paddling the entirety of this river was a protest in itself. She recalled the tears that filled her eyes as she reached the ocean and pulled her boat on to the shore, taking in the sound of beating drums and the generations of Native people smiling as they reached the sand on that cool July morning.

“For a split second we stood there, like what do we do now?” she said. “And then all at the same moment we looked at each other and sprinted up this hill as fast as we could and full-on jumped into the ocean.”

Williams, who started college this year majoring in environmental conservation and land management, is eager to lead the charge. Along with lifelong friendships she found on the Klamath’s first descent, she’s gained a calling to fight for her river, and others around the world.

“All rivers should be free,” she said.

<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/oct/25/klamath-river-restoration-teenagers#img-5>

Financial Assistance for Road Scholar Learning Adventures

The Road Scholar Financial Assistance Program helps to increase the social, educational and economic diversity of Road Scholar groups, enriching the program experience for all, not just those who receive scholarships or financial aid.

Scholarships

For learners without the financial means to otherwise participate in on-site or online programs

[Learn More](#)

Scholarships for Educators (PEAR)

For educators with limited financial means who would benefit from attending a Road Scholar on-site program [Learn More](#)

Caregiver Grant

For caregivers to attend a Road Scholar program as a respite from the demands of caring for a loved one [Learn More](#)

Adventure Online Scholarships

For participants who are more comfortable learning from home.

[Learn More](#)

If you or someone you know would love to attend a Road Scholar learning adventure but cannot afford to at this time, we encourage you to apply for one of our travel scholarships. Our community only benefits when more learners can participate!

Our Native Connection * Group by Charlene Valenzuela

15 REMINDERS FROM THE ELDERS:

1. Get up with the sun to pray. Pray alone.
 2. Be tolerant of those who have lost their way. Ignorance, presumption, anger, jealousy and greed come from a lost soul. Pray for them to find guidance.
 3. Find yourself, by your own means. Do not let others make your path for you. It is your path, and only yours. Others may walk with you, but no one can make your way (or walk your path) for you.
 4. Treat guests in your home with great consideration. Serve them the best food, give them the best bed and, whether from a person, a community, from the jungle or from a culture. It was not treat them with respect and honor.
 5. Do not take what is not yours given or won. It is not yours.
 6. Respect all the things that are on this earth, be they people, plants and animals.
 7. Honor the thoughts, desires and words of all people. Never break them in, or make fun of them, or imitate them rudely. It gives each person the right to their personal expression.
 8. Never talk about others in a bad way. The negative energy you put into the universe will multiply when it returns to you.
 9. All people make mistakes. And all the mistakes can be forgiven.
 10. Bad thoughts cause illness to the mind, body and spirit. Practice optimism.
 11. Nature is not FOR us. It is PART of us. She's part of your family in the world.
 12. Children are the seeds of our future. Sow love in your hearts and water them with wisdom and life lessons. When they grow up, just give them space to grow up.
- American Indian Reporter, November 1, 2025 pg. 7



56:41

[Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools \[FULL DOCUMENTARY\]](#)

PBS Utah 1.1M views • 2 years ago

How the American Indian Movement Patrol combated police brutality in Minneapolis

<https://www.minnpost.com/mnopedia/2025/11/american-indian-movement-patrol-minneapolis-against-police-brutality/>

NCAI YOUTH CONVENTION

82nd NCAI Annual Convention & Marketplace

Seattle Convention Center, Seattle, WA
November 16-21, 2025



Now Available: 2025 NCAI Annual Youth Convention Know Before You Go Guide & Agenda

The NCAI Youth Leadership Program and NCAI Youth Commission are excited to share the official **2025 NCAI Annual Youth Convention Know Before You Go Guide and Youth Agenda**. These resources will help attendees prepare for an inspiring and empowering week in Seattle, held alongside the [NCAI 82nd Annual Convention & Marketplace](#) from November 16–21, 2025.

The [Know Before You Go Guide](#) includes key logistical information, behavior expectations, chaperone and cell phone policies, dress code, and details for this year's special events — including the off-site trip to the Daybreak Cultural Center on November 18, the Youth Leadership Reception on November 19, and the annual Micro College & Career Fair on November 20.

The [Youth Convention Agenda](#) provides a day-by-day schedule of all sessions and workshops designed to build leadership, policy knowledge, and professional development. Highlights include presentations by the NCAI Youth Commission, Center for Native American Youth, United National Indian Tribal Youth (UNITY), Natives in Philanthropy, and Native American Finance Officers Association, as well as panels on economic development, advocacy, and financial empowerment.

Both documents are essential for attendees, chaperones, and youth leaders preparing to engage in this year's theme of **Generational Sovereignty** — celebrating the next generation of leaders advancing Tribal self-determination and community strength.

2025 NCAI Youth Convention Registration

2025 NCAI Youth Convention Agenda

2025 NCAI Youth Convention: Know Before You Go

Native Youth Policy Dialogue at the 82nd Annual Convention & Marketplace

Join the NCAI Youth Commission for daily policy discussions during the NCAI Annual Convention & Marketplace. Native Youth will explore the convention's proposed resolutions and strategize on behalf of Tribal youth to advocate for policy that affects young people nationwide.

Who: Native youth who are ages 19-24 and are undergraduate and graduate students, youth council leaders, or grassroots leaders who are registered as Youth for the convention. *The meeting is closed to general convention attendees. Must be registered as an attendee.*

RSVP required: Contact ablack@ncai.org.



22:30

THE PEOPLE WHO WILL SAVE THE WORLD: the Kogui tribe 🇨🇴

Progetto Happiness

Scholarships with Dec 1 (S-V) - 8 Deadlines

San Francisco Conservatory of Music Scholarship	Full-Tuition	December 01, 2025
SLU Ignatian Scholarship-Billiken Award	\$56,000	December 01, 2025
SLU Presidential Scholarship	\$273,800	December 01, 2025
SLU Transfer Scholarships	\$75,000	December 01, 2025
SLU University Scholarship	\$88,000	December 01, 2025
South Carolina LIFE Scholarship Program	\$28,000	December 01, 2025
South Carolina Teaching Fellows	\$24,000	December 01, 2025
Stegall Charitable Educational Foundation Scholarship	\$1,000	December 01, 2025
STLE Jeanie S. McCoy Scholarship	\$5,000	December 01, 2025
Tarleton State University General Scholarships	\$12,000	December 01, 2025
TEDS Dean's Scholarship	\$42,240	December 01, 2025
TEDS Faithful Future Scholarship	\$4,500	December 01, 2025
TEDS International Impact Scholarship	\$31,680	December 01, 2025
TEDS Leadership Legacy Scholarship	\$42,240	December 01, 2025
Texas A&M University - Century Scholars Program	\$20,000	December 01, 2025
Texas A&M University Academic Scholarships	\$16,000	December 01, 2025
Texas A&M University Regents' Scholarship	\$24,000	December 01, 2025
Texas Tech University General Scholarships	\$500	December 01, 2025
Theodore J. and F. Elizabeth Kirsch Southern California Scholarship	\$4,000	December 01, 2025
Tommy Tranchin Award	\$2,500	December 01, 2025
University of Kentucky Bluegrass Spirit Awards	\$50,000	December 01, 2025
University of Kentucky Otis A. Singletary Scholarship	\$160,656	December 01, 2025
University of Kentucky Presidential Scholarship	\$140,656	December 01, 2025
University of Kentucky Provost Awards	\$20,000	December 01, 2025
University of Montana Presidential Leadership Scholarship	Varies	December 01, 2025
University of New Mexico Presidential Scholarship	\$56,000	December 01, 2025
University of North Texas Transfer Excellence Scholarships	\$12,000	December 01, 2025
University of South Alabama/Drama Assistantships/Scholarships	\$500	December 01, 2025
University of Texas C.R. Smith Endowed Scholarship	\$12,000	December 01, 2025
University of Texas-Arlington Presidential Scholarships	\$52,000	December 01, 2025

Vanderbilt University Chancellor's Scholarship	\$260,032	December 01, 2025
Vanderbilt University Cornelius Vanderbilt Scholarship	\$260,032	December 01, 2025
Vanderbilt University Ingram Scholarship	\$326,588	December 01, 2025
Washington State University Regents Scholars Program	\$53,488	December 01, 2025
Angelo Tagliacozzo Memorial Geological Scholarship	\$3,500	December 02, 2025
Military Child of the Year Award	\$10,000	December 02, 2025
Minority Teacher Education Scholarship	\$4,000	December 02, 2025
Southwestern University Brown Scholarship	\$168,000	December 02, 2025
Doodle for Google Scholarship	\$55,000	December 03, 2025
Adobe Education Reimbursement	\$10,000	December 05, 2025
ISL Education Lending Scholarship	\$1,000	December 05, 2025
Larry Morris Memorial Scholarship	\$2,500	December 05, 2025
Michigan American Legion High School Oratorical Contest	\$25,000	December 05, 2025
MMUF Dissertation Grants	\$30,000	December 05, 2025
Ray Stoesser Memorial Scholarship	\$5,000	December 05, 2025
Take Care of Texas Video Contest	\$2,500	December 05, 2025
The Cooper E. King Memorial AFS Scholarship	\$500	December 05, 2025
The SMART Scholarship-for-Service Program	Full-Tuition	December 05, 2025
University of Alabama National Alumni Association Crimson Scholarship	\$152,168	December 05, 2025
William Lowell Putnam Competition	\$2,500	December 06, 2025
Lyceum Scholars Program	\$60,000	December 07, 2025
WTS Indianapolis Community College/ Technical/ Trade School Scholarship	\$2,500	December 08, 2025
NJCPA High School Senior Scholarship	\$1,500	December 08, 2025
Red Cross Collegiate Leadership Program	\$3,000	December 08, 2025
SmithGroup Design a Better Future Scholarship	\$6,000	December 08, 2025
WTS Indianapolis Chapter Helene M. Overly Memorial Scholarship	\$3,500	December 08, 2025
WTS Indianapolis Chapter Sharon D. Banks Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship	\$2,500	December 08, 2025

The water war Trump hasn't blown up



Colorado River at the Grand Canyon. [Photo by DepositPhotos.](#)

“President Donald Trump loves a good water war — and the biggest one yet is about to land in his lap. A quarter century of climate change and drought has driven water levels along the Colorado River and its two main reservoirs to historic lows, threatening supplies that support 40 million people and economies from Phoenix to Denver to Los Angeles. The seven states that share the West’s most important river are locked in battle over who must make sharp cuts in their water use to avoid a catastrophe that could hit as soon as next summer, in which federal dam managers would have to decide between cutting water deliveries to Arizona, California and Nevada or losing hydropower production that is critical to the stability of the region’s electrical grid and potentially damaging one of the nation’s largest dams. ... ” [Read more from Politico.](#)

Here’s how land use patterns are changing in Arizona

“Industry-leading companies continue to choose Arizona as a worthwhile place to operate, creating new jobs and diversifying the state’s economy. These substantial investments act as a vote of confidence, making the market more tempting for other businesses. Arizona can capitalize on this surging interest thanks to having an abundance of the one resource nobody can make more of — land. Even with this natural bounty, where and how land is being developed is changing across the state. Greater Phoenix has long been an attractive place for newcomers, but the trend of where exactly they’re moving to is evolving. According to Greg Vogel, founder and chairman of Land Advisors Organization (LAO), more than half of the population growth will occur in the West Valley. This subregion is not only less built out than the East Valley, but it has recently added a slew of top-tier employers. According to LAO, TSMC, Microsoft, Amkor Technology, Amazon and Apple constitute around \$175 billion in investment and will create more than 17,000 jobs by 2028. “What we’ve created here has been coined the Silicon Desert, and we expect more investment to occur,” Vogel says. “It has become global news.” ... ”

[Read more from Arizona Big Media.](#)