State / Tribal Government-to-Government Report: 2025

OREGON DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS

State / Tribal Government-to-Government Report: 2025

Oregon Department of State Lands

This report from the Oregon Department of State Lands to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services (LCIS) details notable updates, projects, and activities from the calendar year of 2025 ORS 182.162 requires state agencies to report annually on:

- The primary contacts who are responsible for developing and implementing programs that affect tribes.
- Our Government-to-Government policy to build and maintain relationships with the Tribal governments, as adopted under ORS 182.164.
- The process we established to identify Department programs that affect Tribes.
- Our efforts to promote communication between the state agency and the Tribes and government-to-government relations between the state and Tribes.
- Trainings provided to DSL staff on government-to-government relations and the requirements of our Government-to-Government policy

Federally Recognized Tribes of Oregon

Burns Paiute Tribe
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw
Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon
Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation
Coquille Indian Tribe
Cow Creek Band of the Umpqua Tribe of Indians
Klamath Tribes

Primary Contacts for Tribal Consultation and Coordination

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www.oregon.gov/dsl

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Arin Smith, Executive Assistant & Land Board Secretary

Letter from the Director

Kaitlin Lovell

Dear Governor Kotek and Commission Members:

The Oregon Department of State Lands respectfully submits our annual Government-to-Government report to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services.

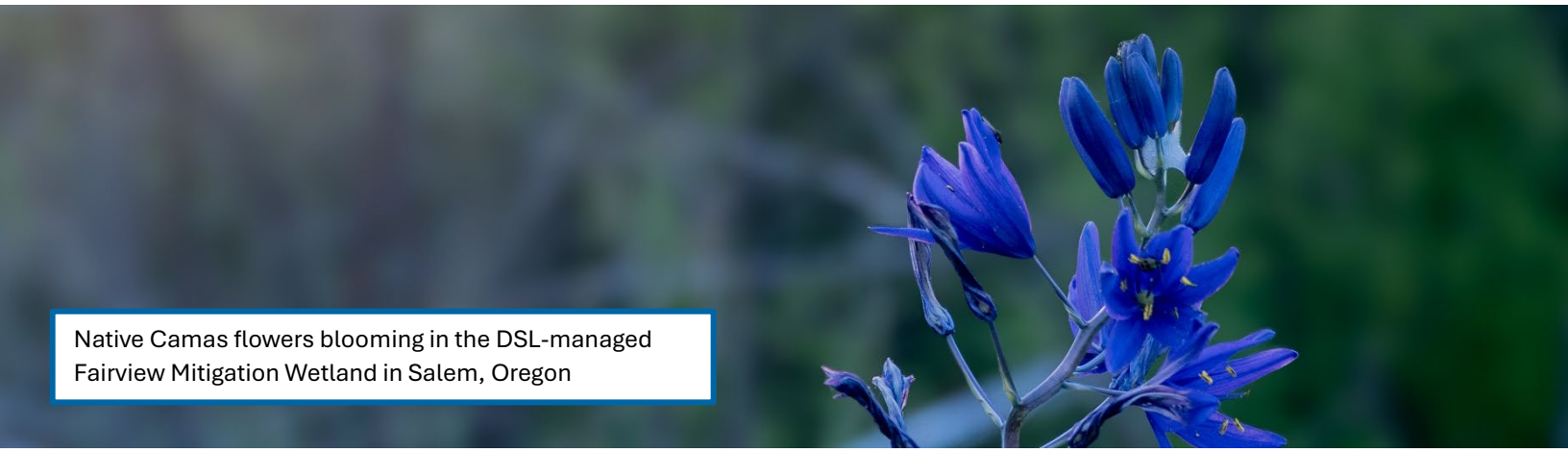
As DSL's new Director, this is my first year submitting the report and I deeply appreciate the collaboration and guidance I've already received from Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes. In my first 60 days, I prioritized meeting with each Tribe, traveling to visit the Grand Ronde, Klamath, Umatilla, Siletz, CTCLUSI, and Burns Paiute Tribes, and participating in the Government-to-Government Summit, co-hosted by the Coquille Tribe. I look forward to visiting the Cow Creek, Coquille, and Warm Springs Tribes soon. These visits are invaluable to building strong, lasting partnerships grounded in respect and shared stewardship.

In 2024 we welcomed Ellie Forness as DSL's Government Relations Manager and Tribal Liaison. Ellie has continued her work into 2025—assessing DSL's Tribal engagement, coordinating across programs, and connecting with Tribal staff and interagency partners through the LCIS clusters. Together, we are developing follow-up actions after each visit and offering regular meetings with every Tribe to strengthen partnership and accountability.

We remain committed to open communication, genuine collaboration, and meaningful consultation with the Tribes as we work together to care for Oregon's lands and waters for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Kaitlin Lovell
Director
Oregon Department of State Lands



Native Camas flowers blooming in the DSL-managed Fairview Mitigation Wetland in Salem, Oregon

AGENCY INTRODUCTION

Mission Statement

Oregon's State Land Board oversees the Common School Fund, which sends millions of dollars every year to our K-12 public schools. As the State Land Board's administrative agency, the Department of State Lands (DSL) manages school lands, protects waters and wetlands, and is the state partner for South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve.

Agency Leadership

Kaitlin Lovell, Director

Chris Castelli, Deputy Director of Land Management

Jimmie Phillips, Human Resources Manager

Bill Ryan, Deputy Director of Aquatic Resource Management

Jean Straight, Deputy Director of Administration

State Land Board

Established by the Oregon Constitution in 1859, the State Land Board oversees the Common School Fund, which sends millions of dollars every year to Oregon's K-12 public schools. The Land Board has been composed of the Governor, Secretary of State, and State Treasurer throughout its history.

The Land Board oversees DSL and meets regularly to make decisions regarding school lands and Oregon-owned waterways, and to provide direction on Department operations.

In 2025 the State Land Board included Secretary of State **Tobias Read**, Governor **Tina Kotek** (Chair), and State Treasurer **Elizabeth Steiner**.

Our Work

The Department of State Lands (www.oregon.gov/dsl) is a small agency that makes big contributions to Oregon. Our oversight benefits more natural and working lands and waters than any other state agency. We work to protect these resources for generations to come through four main programs.

PROTECTING WATERS & WETLANDS

DSL oversees removal-fill and wetland conservation laws and use of publicly owned waterways. This work helps protect waters and wetlands for their many contributions to Oregon, like streams for swimming and fishing, wetlands to clean water and reduce flooding, and rivers where commerce thrives. See the latest annual report.

MANAGING SCHOOL LANDS

DSL manages 1.5 million acres of school lands and minerals in all 36 counties across the state. This work sends revenue to the Common School Fund and provides big community benefits – like leasing land to cattle ranchers in Eastern Oregon or helping attract family-wage businesses to Redmond through rezoning and sale of school lands. See the latest annual report.

UNDERSTANDING & EXPLORING ESTUARIES

South Slough Reserve provides research and education to support stewardship of estuaries and coastal watersheds in Oregon and beyond. Located on the South Slough inlet of the Coos Estuary in Charleston, the Reserve manages nearly 7,000 acres, including open water, wetlands, rivers, and forests. See the latest annual report.

RESEARCHING IN WORKING FORESTS

The Elliott State Forest was established northeast of Coos Bay in 1930 as Oregon's first state forest. Today, about 83,000 acres will now be a nationally important center for forest science research and management that also contributes to conservation, education, recreation, Indigenous culture, and local economies in Oregon. Learn more about the Elliott State Research Forest here.

POLICY AND PROCESS

Agencywide

The Department of State Lands is committed to our government-to-government relations with Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribal governments. This work is aligned with our values in collaboration, inclusion and natural resource stewardship.

Government-to-Government Policy

Last updated in 2017, DSL's policy on State/Tribal Government-to-Government Relations guides our work with Tribal governments. As part of a larger agency-wide strategic plan project, the Tribal Relations Collaborative will begin work in 2026 to update the policy. *See the attached **Appendix A** for our current Government-to-Government policy.*

Some of the ways we pursue this work agencywide:

- Reaching out early and regularly to Tribal representatives about Department actions likely to affect Tribal members, natural resources, or cultural resources of Tribal interest.
- Carefully and thoughtfully consider Tribal comments concerning pending decisions and actions.
- Helping Tribes protect cultural and natural resources in Oregon through our programs.
- Providing opportunities for meaningful engagement, including government-to-government consultations, participation in Rulemaking Advisory Committees for proposed rules, and other staff-to-staff level informal collaboration.
- Meeting regularly with individual Tribal governments, participating in Tribal-state workgroups focused on natural resource management and protection of Tribal cultural resources, and attending the annual State-Tribal Summit.
- Training DSL employees on Tribal government, sovereignty and issues of interest to Tribal nations.
- Consulting with DSL's archaeologist, the State Historic Preservation Office and the State's Physical Anthropologist at LCIS on geographic or issue-level Tribal interests.

Tribal Relations Collaborative

The Tribal Relations Collaborative at DSL, formed as a pilot in 2023, connects the Government and Community Relations team with staff across all our programs to promote collaborative solutions and resource sharing. Aligned with DSL's Government-to-Government Policy, the Collaborative structure supports communication across programs on Tribal interactions, relationship building, identifying process improvements, and assessing agency resource needs such as training and guidance. The pilot has been ongoing for two years, and the Collaborative continues to evolve in membership, cadence, and focus. A group charter is in development to formalize processes and structure.

Cultural Items Survey

Regarding cultural items held in storage or on display at DSL: there is a canoe fragment of unknown heritage on loan from the University of Oregon's Museum of Natural and Cultural History on display at the South Slough Reserve Visitor Center in Coos Bay. This display was made possible by a partnership between DSL, OPRD, the CTCLUSI and the CTSI. DSL's Tribal Cultural Items Contact is Archaeologist Gary Curtis gary.curtis@dsl.oregon.gov.

Real Property Program & Aquatic Resource Management (ARM) Program

Potentially affected Tribes are notified of proposed or pending activities on land managed by DSL, giving the respective Tribe(s) an opportunity to comment, or otherwise respond. DSL staff work closely with DSL's Tribal

Liaison and Tribal staff to address any concerns they may have, and the DSL Director is available for formal consultation on any agency action. Tribes are consulted on their preferred contacts and on the geographic areas they are most interested in being notified about. DSL continues to discuss our notification processes and how we can better coordinate with Tribal staff on proposed activities, and our ability to condition authorizations based on comments received.

DSL's archaeologist reviews all activities proposed on lands managed by DSL and provides consultation with the Tribes on cultural resources. For ground disturbing projects initiated by DSL, field surveys and testing are completed as needed and those reports shared with the State Historic Preservation Office, Tribes, and LCIS.

Elliott State Research Forest

Since 2019, DSL has been working in collaboration to transform the Elliott State Forest into a research forest. Tribal engagement with the five federally recognized Western Oregon Tribes has been a focus throughout these efforts and has shaped the program's foundations. Throughout 2025, DSL has built up staff capacity for the Elliott program, including hiring a Forest Manager, Policy and Partnership Coordinator, Biologist, and Forester, as well as supporting the Elliott State Research Forest Board of Directors through adoption of the first Biennial Operations Plan to guide forest operations. Learn more about the Elliott State Research Forest here.

In addition to working with the Tribes on a project-by-project level, DSL staff are working on formalizing frameworks for ongoing engagement. To date, DSL has communicated at the Tribal staff level to define this framework as well as engaged in formal consultation with several Tribal nations. Towards the end of 2025, under the leadership of DSL's new director Kaitlin Lovell, DSL has invited further consultation with interested Tribes to outline a structure for meaningful engagement – in addition to formal consultation – on the Elliott. Priorities for collaboration include integrating indigenous practices into forest management and outlining co-stewardship opportunities.

South Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve

The South Slough Reserve recognizes its location on the traditional lands of the Miluk Coos people who have managed this area for abundance since time immemorial. To ensure ongoing and sound co-stewardship of this special place and protection of its cultural resources, the Reserve relies on regular consultation and partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI); Coquille Indian Tribe (CIT); and Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians (CTSI).

Reserve staff regularly partner with local Tribal staff on education and training programs, research and monitoring projects, and stewardship work. The Reserve maintains formal Memorandums of Understanding with both the CTCLUSI and the CIT. These cooperative agreements facilitate the exchange of information and data, shared use of equipment and facilities, and joint proposal development and project management. Conversations are ongoing between Reserve staff and CTCLUSI to update and revise the cooperative agreement. It is anticipated that staff will next work with the CIT once the agreement with the CTCLUSI is updated.

The Reserve values regular input from Tribal staff on the Reserve Management Commission and serving on technical advisory groups. By statute, the Reserve Management Commission reserves one commission seat for Tribal representation at all times. The seat held by the CTCLUSI since fall of 2017 was transferred to the CIT in the fall of 2022 and continues until fall 2026.

Staff also work closely with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officers to assess potential impacts of Reserve projects on cultural resources and take measures to avoid or mitigate any negative impacts as well as measures to enhance cultural resources. The Reserve frequently collaborates with Tribal partners on grant proposals on issues such as acquiring funding to support Tribal partners with climate resiliency projects.

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

Agencywide

Below are highlights from agencywide efforts to promote communication, coordination, and consultation with Oregon's federally recognized Tribes.

Engaged Tribal Leaders in Recruiting DSL's New Director

At the direction of the State Land Board, it was a priority that Tribal perspectives play a central role in recruiting DSL's new Director. In February 2025, Director Vicki Walker reached out to the leaders of Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes, inviting them to share their perspectives on DSL's next director and how they might participate in the recruitment process. In May, Tribal leaders met with each finalist for forty-minute conversations, asking questions of their choice. Afterwards, Tribal leaders shared feedback with DSL and Governor's Office staff overseeing the recruitment process. Those insights were then shared with the Land Board members as they evaluated candidates.

Connected with Tribes Across Oregon: New DSL Director Met with Tribal Leaders and Staff

After being sworn in on August 1, 2025, incoming DSL Director Kaitlin Lovell prioritized the first two months on the job connecting in person with Oregon's federally-recognized Tribes. Six Tribal governments hosted the Director and DSL's Tribal Liaison for a conversation with Tribal leaders. Additionally, one Tribe connected through staff and spent time with us virtually, and we are working to connect with remaining Oregon Tribes moving into 2026. Each meeting provided key insights into current challenges, priorities and opportunities for collaboration. In implementing the values articulated in DSL's Government-to-Government Policy, we intend these early visits to be the first of many throughout Director Lovell's tenure, ensuring we foster consistent, meaningful connections with Tribal leaders and staff. The Department is currently evaluating a list of high-priority projects in working with each of Oregon's nine Federally-recognized Tribes, and creating training and staffing plans to meet work plan capacity needs.

Collaborated with LCIS, the Cultural Resource Cluster, and Natural Resources Workgroup

DSL staff participated in these meetings throughout the year, and DSL provided ongoing updates on the Elliott State Research Forest, rulemakings, legislative actions, and the new abandoned and derelict vessels program. We're always seeking ways to be a good partner and share resources when possible. For example, throughout 2025 DSL's Tribal Liaison participated in an informal subgroup of several cluster members working on an indigenous style guide to inform state agency written materials, in collaboration with Tribal staff. This work is anticipated to continue through 2026.

Invited Consultation on Rulemaking

In 2025, invitations for communication, participation on advisory committees, and consultation were sent out for the following rulemakings (learn more here):

- **(OAR 141-142) Rocky Shore Habitats:** Incorporate new rocky habitat designations in conformance with Part III of Oregon's Territorial Sea Plan.
    - Status: Adopted and effective on February 12, 2025
    - The CTCLUSI supported the changes but requested that Tribal provisions of the Territorial Sea Plan also be included in a new Tribal stand-alone section of the rules. DSL included the new provisions with some minor changes. CTCLUSI's comments were reflected as three new sections under the General Provisions rule, OAR 141-142-0020(7)-(9).

- **(OAR 141-079) Codifying the Forest Management Plan for the Elliott State Research Forest:** In October 2024, the Land Board approved the Forest Management Plan. The adoption of the plan into rule further codified it and advanced public accountability on the Elliott.
    - Status: Adopted and effective on April 9, 2025
- **(OAR 141-85/89/90/93) Removal-Fill and Wetland Delineation Fees**: Established new fees for Oregon's Removal-Fill Program which protects the state's wetlands and waterways by requiring permits for activities that involve removing or adding material to rivers, streams, lakes, wetlands, and other waters.
    - Status: Adopted and effective on January 1, 2026
- **(OAR 141-082) Leases, Licenses, and Registrations on Oregon-owned Waterways:** Rulemaking was needed to implement best management practices to protect the health and safety of Oregon-owned waterways and achieve sustainable operations.
    - Status: Adopted and effective on July 1, 2026
- **(OAR 141-085) Permitting and Mitigation in Oregon's Wetlands and Waters:** This rulemaking focuses on improving stream mitigation accounting and mitigation banking, along with minor updates to removal-fill permitting.
    - Status: Comment period held in October 2025 and draft rules under internal review. Anticipated to be adopted and effective in early 2026.
    - See page 11 for more information on Tribal involvement. Another rulemaking will be needed in the future with a focus on Tribal concerns.
- **(OAR 141-083) Undersea Infrastructure Easements in Oregon's Territorial Sea:** Rulemaking is needed to strengthen protections for Oregon's territorial sea and marine ecosystems, while ensuring fair public compensation for use of the seafloor.
    - Status: Initial draft rules written, Rulemaking Advisory Committee is being formed and first RAC meeting is scheduled for January 2026. Updated rules will be adopted in 2026.

Left: Governor Tina Kotek stands with the 2025 Land Board Award makers: Molly Leno, Stephanie Craig, and Michael Scotto di Carlo.

Right: Close up image of the awards featuring weaving by Stephanie Craig, anqati təmtəm tənas siyaxus, (Takelma Rogue River, Cow Creek Umpqua, Santiam and Yoncalla Kalapuya, Clackamas Chinook, Wakanasisi, Mohawk, Métis, and American). Craig is a master basket weaver, anthropologist, educator, and cultural consultant.

The new ADV Program is starting the long-term work to address the lifecycle of boats that may otherwise contaminate water, degrade habitat, damage property and cultural resources, and create navigational hazards. The work is complicated and requires persistent collaboration.

Aquatic Resource Management Program: Protecting Waters and Wetlands

Reducing Barriers for Tribal Mitigation Banks

Staff-to-staff coordination is ongoing to address the barriers the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians (CCBUTI) experienced when seeking approval of the Villines Mitigation Bank in Douglas County. Staff are exploring a potential new approach to mitigation bank sponsorship by CCBUTI that is acceptable to both the State and the Tribe. Related, in 2025 DSL began work to update administrative rules (OAR 141-085) which govern mitigation banking, and the advisory committee included a representative from CCBUTI. Rulemaking is ongoing, but current draft rules address definitions of public bodies to be inclusive of Oregon's federally recognized Tribes.

Addressing Abandoned and Derelict Vessels

DSL partnered with the Oregon Public Ports Association to apply for a federal grant funding opportunity for boat removal. DSL staff and public ports staff reached out to the CTCLUSI, the CTSI, and the LCIS Natural Resource Working Group to share information about the proposal and invite feedback regarding concerns, needs, and preferences. In 2024 the CTSI provided a formal letter of support for the proposal, based on the deep importance of coastal lands for spiritual, cultural, and subsistence purposes. DSL was awarded the grant in 2025 and spending is delayed until 2026.

Monitoring the Willamette Falls Case

In March 2025, trial proceedings for the Willamette Falls case were held. The case concerns management and restoration of the Willamette Falls area. All parties are currently awaiting the court's judgment.

Supporting Tribal Restoration and Economic Development Projects

Throughout 2025, DSL staff worked closely with Tribal partners to support restoration and economic development initiatives. Collaboration with the Klamath Tribes focused on developing multi-functional restoration projects that address water quality, agricultural runoff, and c'waam and koptu (sucker fish) habitat, while integrating DSL's regulatory permitting into project planning. DSL also partnered with federal partners to present on the removal-fill permitting process and participate in site visits with the Klamath Tribes' Ambodat Department. In addition, DSL expanded its engagement in new forums and regions. DSL staff presented at the LCIS Economic Development Cluster meeting—an event DSL does not traditionally attend—on wetlands and sewer service expansion beyond Urban Growth Boundaries. DSL staff also met with Burns Paiute emergency management staff to discuss flood mitigation concerns and explore regional solutions.

Real Property Program: Managing School Lands

Partnerships in Land Management

DSL's ten-year Asset Management Plan guides management of Oregon's 680,000 acres of school lands to generate revenue for the Common School Fund. The plan, recently updated in 2024, includes an increased focus on renewable energy, partnership projects, and wildfire resiliency.

DSL staff are partnering with CTUIR to acquire grant funding for fuels reduction/forest resiliency work in Umatilla County. The 320-acre Johnson Creek project would serve both CTUIR lands and adjacent lands managed by DSL. Strategic removal of vegetation that could serve as fuel is critical to mitigating wildfire risk, particularly in fire-prone areas like Eastern Oregon. The project is awaiting funding approval from the BIA Reserve Treaty Rights Lands program.

Navigating Cultural Resource Concerns

DSL program staff, supported by our archaeologist, regularly address cultural resource concerns on DSL-managed lands and communicate with potentially impacted Tribes.

For example, in 2025 DSL engaged in ongoing collaboration with several Tribes about reinternment of cultural artifacts that had been previously stolen and then recovered in Eastern Oregon. The stolen artifacts have been successfully reinterned.

Beyond leasing rangelands for grazing, there is ongoing stewardship and management of rangelands to promote healthy functioning ecosystems. Partnerships are essential to implement habitat improvement projects like fuels reduction, seeding disturbed ground, and noxious weed management.

Elliott State Research Forest: Researching Working Forests

Elliott State Research Forest Board of Directors

The Elliott State Research Forest (ESRF) Board supports public accountability, transparency, and meaningful engagement. While current Board members do not serve as formal Tribal representatives, Mike Kennedy (retired Natural Resource Director, CTSI) and Michael Wilson (retired Natural Resource Director, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde) are two Board members who bring long-standing experience with Tribal natural resource issues. . To support next steps in Indigenous engagement and co-stewardship, the ESRF Board explored these topics during its November 2025 retreat. The session included discussion of potential engagement models and stewardship approaches used in other DSL programs, such as the South Slough Reserve, as well as examples from other state agencies like the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Initiating Consultation to Establish Meaningful Partnerships

Holding true to the commitments made in the Forest Management Plan, in the fall of 2025 Director Lovell invited the five federally-recognized Western Tribes in Oregon to resume consultation on the Elliottto explore options for Indigenous engagement and co-stewardship opportunities on the forest. To date, the CTCLUSI has responded to initiate consultation in late 2025.

Adopted the 2025-2027 Operations Plan

DSL adopted the 2025-27 Operations Plan on July 1, 2025, following the Elliott State Research Forest Board's June recommendation and an extensive public review process. The plan outlines timber harvests, restoration projects, road maintenance, and other activities planned over the next two years. It also identifies current and potential research efforts, noting that development of the forest's long-term research framework remains underway.

Shutter Creek Development and Headquarters Planning

Shutter Creek, an empty former correctional facility on the Oregon Coast, has been transferred from the federal government to the state for use as the research forest headquarters. DSL is currently advancing a public visioning and partnership planning process for redevelopment of the property, an effort that will include robust Tribal and community collaboration. Several Tribes have either visited Shutter Creek and engaged in visioning activities with DSL, or expressed interest in exploring the potential of the space in supporting ceremonial needs.

South Slough Reserve: Understanding and Exploring Estuaries

The South Slough Reserve program is managed in collaboration with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Water Quality Monitoring

Reserve science staff continue to collaborate with the CIT and CTCLUSI to manage real-time water quality stations and to discuss data related to water quality in Coos Bay. Reserve staff have also been providing technical support to the CTCLUSI staff for new water quality monitoring efforts in Coos Bay and to help link Tribal station data to the Northwest Association of Networked Ocean Observation Systems.

Education and Training

This year's Teacher on the Estuary program included Jesse Beers, CTCLUSI's Cultural Stewardship Manager, who engaged with teachers from across Oregon about Indigenous knowledge, culture, history, and the importance of including other ways of knowing into the classroom for youth. His presentation was inspiring and was viewed as a program highlight by participants.

Reserve staff engaged with the CIT to take the Kilkich Youth Corps members out on the Chmoosh canoe, so they could get outside and learn more about their historical connections with Oregon's south coast. This was the first time many of these youth had ever been on a canoe, making it an extraordinary day of sharing connections to this special space.

Partner on Projects on the Reserve

Reserve staff worked with members of the CIT and CTCLUSI on a short video showcasing co-stewardship restoration efforts of the Wasson Valley and management the South Slough Reserve. This video highlights how Reserve staff approach all their work and is part of a three-part series of short videos highlighting the overall restoration of the Wasson Valley.

Reserve staff are working with members of the CTCLUSI to establish a traditional garden of first foods and culturally significant plants as part of the Wasson Valley restoration project. A key step taken in 2025 was site selection for the traditional garden.

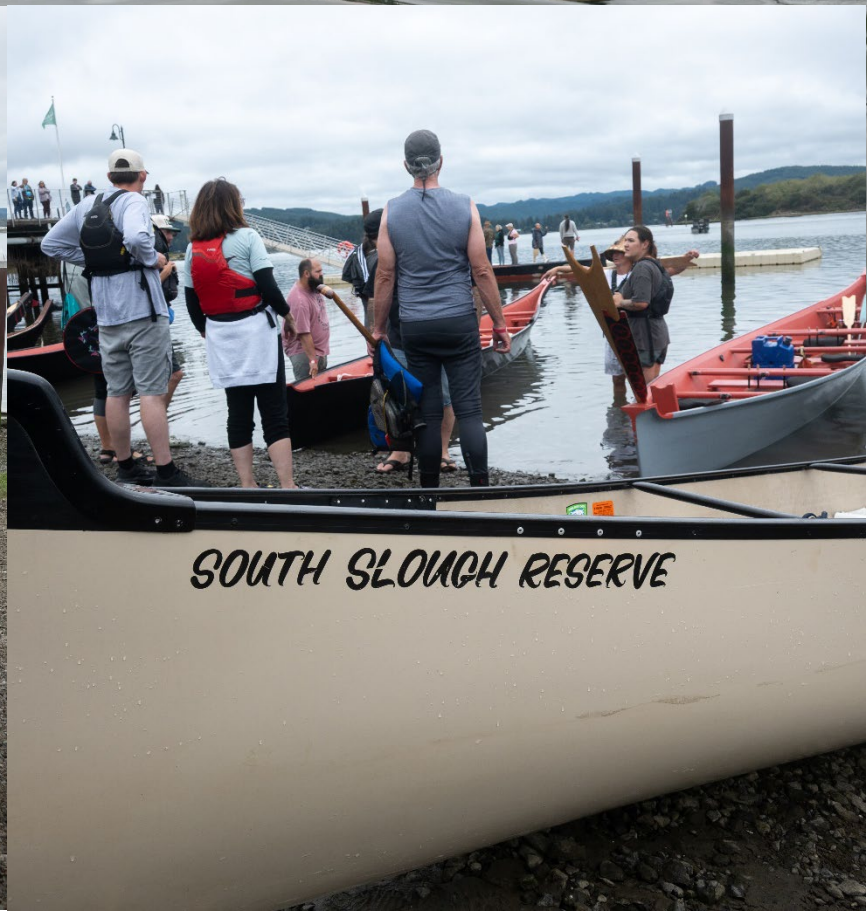
Eelgrass meadows at the Reserve have declined since 2016. Staff are investigating causes of the decline, experimenting with restoration methods, and testing the use of unmanned aerial vehicles to map eelgrass in the estuary. Key to this work is monitoring data. Pictured here staff and partners go out in the field at nighttime to collect this data.

20th Annual Mill-Luck Salmon Celebration

South Slough Reserve was honored to be invited to the 20th Annual Salmon Celebration hosted by the Coquille Indian Tribe at the Ko-Kwel Casino Resort in Coos Bay.

The biggest highlight was the salmon bake (of course), but team highs also included participating in the Tribal canoe races, making new friends at our booth, and connecting with old friends in the midst of dancing, drumming and flute playing.

Thank you to the Coquille Indian Tribe for inviting us again and congrats on twenty years!



TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Across the agency, DSL encourages staff participation in state and Tribal trainings, workshops, and community events to raise awareness of Tribal interests, increase communication on work and projects of Department and Tribal overlap, and improve government-to-government relationships.

In addition to the trainings and workshops held in partnership at the South Slough Reserve, some examples of staff training activities in 2025 include:

- **2025 Cultural Resources and Archaeology Awareness Training:** DSL's Government Relations Manager / Tribal Liaison and our Ownership Specialist attended this year's training hosted by Oregon Parks and Recreation Department in collaboration with CTUIR. This was a valuable opportunity to meet with Tribal members and staff, and connect DSL policies and responsibilities to real-world impacts.
- **2025 Annual Tribal Summit:** DSL Director Kaitlin Lovell, Deputy Director of Aquatic Resource Management Bill Ryan, and Tribal Liaison Ellie Forness attended this important opportunity to connect with Tribal leadership and staff and understand current priorities of each sovereign nation.

Implementing a Training Plan for DSL: First Steps

In finding new ways to uphold values articulated in our Government-to-Government policy, DSL's Tribal Liaison began developing a comprehensive training approach for staff in 2025. This work includes assessing the agency's long-term training needs, identifying what can be delivered in-house versus through external partners, and establishing a baseline of shared knowledge across the organization.

As an early step, the Tribal Liaison held an agencywide foundational training in December 2025 covering core principles for working with Tribes such as Tribal sovereignty, reserved rights, consultation, and collaboration. The training also ensured staff know who the agency's Tribal Liaison is, staff's role in Tribal relations, and how DSL programs engage with Tribal governments. Staff feedback on this initial training will inform the development of a long-term training plan and help prioritize additional, more specialized training needs, including permitting and field work related to cultural resources.

Family baskets and weaving traditions have been passed down through generations and are continued today through teachings and basket making. Featured at the Cultural Resources and Archaeology Awareness Training, Stephanie Craig, enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, shared her weaving creations.

LOOKING AHEAD

DSL will continue to:

- Participate in government-to-government activities such as the Cultural Resources and Natural Resources Workgroup meetings, as well as any State or Tribal trainings offered.
- Prioritize early and regular communication with sovereign nations on matters of Department actions that may be of Tribal interest.
- Track and evaluate legislative developments and evolving priorities to inform decision-making and be a good partner. For example, pay attention to the collaborative work of the Task Force on Tribal Consultation and forthcoming legislative guidance.
- Collaborate on and/or participate in educational and cultural experiences with Tribal partners at the South Slough Reserve.
- Engage in meaningful discussions with Tribal Leaders regarding a framework for ongoing Indigenous partnerships and practices on the Elliott State Research Forest.
- Maintain positive relationship with Tribal Leaders, holding regular meetings with Tribal Chairs and/or staff with each of Oregon's nine Tribes, as desired. Continue to strive for a better understanding of each Tribe's respective needs and priorities, and work towards stronger collaboration with meaningful and positive impacts with each Tribe.
- Build a strategic workplan outlining regular staff trainings and identifying opportunities for improvements to agency processes impacting Tribes.

In 2026 DSL will seek to:

- Examine and update our government-to-government policy, last updated in 2017.
- Finalize the development of and implement a new customer service portal that will increase access to participation opportunities for DSL wetland and waterway permits and land management decisions.
- Explore Tribal interests for coordination and consultation in upcoming efforts, as well as partnering with other state agencies to collaborate on projects that support Tribal priorities.
- A variety of rulemaking – notably regarding undersea infrastructure in the territorial sea, as well as further improvements in mitigation rules for wetlands and waters.
    - Upcoming policy initiatives at the direction of the Land Board or Legislature.
    - Coordinating with State Historic Preservation Office and identifying strategies to better evaluate cultural resources through state permitting.
    - And other projects such as the Elliott State Research Forest and Shutter Creek facility, initiatives at the South Slough Reserve, and other projects as requested.
- Prioritize internal process changes and shared projects with Tribes as a follow up project to each of our summer and fall introductory visits with new agency Director Kaitlin Lovell.

For additional information about any of these topics or to provide feedback on this report, please contact Government Relations Manager and Tribal Liaison **Ellie Forness at** ellie.s.forness@dsl.oregon.gov.

Appendix A: DSL Government-to-Government Policy

DSL Agency Policy

Subject:	**State/Tribal Government-to-Government Relations**	**Number:** 141-P-038
Division:	**Director's Office**	**Effective Date:** 06/26/2017
Approved:		

Authority: ORS 182.162 to 182.168; Governor's Executive Order 96-30

Applicability:

Executive service, management service, classified represented and unrepresented employees and volunteers.

Policy Statement:

It is the policy of the Department of State Lands (DSL) to establish, promote and improve government-to-government relations between DSL and Oregon's federally recognized tribes in compliance with ORS 182.164 as adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 2001 under Senate Bill 770. This law directs state agencies to not only promote and cultivate government-to-government relations with Oregon's federally recognized tribes, but to develop and advance policies that take into consideration tribal interests and concerns when implementing state programs that may affect tribal interests.

Because DSL recognizes and respects the sovereign status of Oregon's federally recognized tribes, the goal of this policy is to maximize tribal relations and collaborative efforts and to resolve potential concerns by enhancing the exchange of information, ideas and resources.

Definitions:

Annual Report: Refers to the annual report by DSL to the Governor and to the Legislative Commission on Indian Services on tribal relations as required by ORS 182.166.

Authorities: Refers to the Oregon Administrative Rules and Regulations and Oregon Revised Statutes that govern the actions and responsibilities.

Cultural Resource Cluster: Refers to the Tribal-State workgroup established by Senate Bill 770 to address cultural resource issues, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and elements of the natural landscape that have cultural significance. The workgroup consists of key state agency contacts and a representative from each of Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

Legislative Commission on Indian Services refers to the 13-member agency that was created by statute in 1975 to improve services to Indians in Oregon.

Natural Resources Workgroup: Refers to the Tribal-State workgroup established by Senate Bill 770 to improve communication between the state and tribes regarding natural resources protection and management. The workgroup consists of key state agency contacts and a representative from each of Oregon's federally recognized tribes and a representative from the Governor's Office.

Oregon Federally Recognized Tribes: Refers to the 9 federally recognized tribes in Oregon as represented by their Tribal Council and other authorized representatives.

Programs: Refers to the programs that the Oregon Department of State Lands implements to execute the Oregon Administrative Rules as decreed by the Oregon Constitution.

Tribal Liaison: Refers to the DSL employee who is responsible for facilitating, promoting and ensuring communication between DSL's program managers and Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

Policy:

A. Overall responsibility for developing and implementing DSL programs that may affect tribes rests with DSL's director and deputy directors.

B. DSL will maintain an agency liaison (tribal liaison) to Oregon's federally recognized tribes.

C. DSL's director, tribal liaison and appropriate division administrators will offer to meet with Oregon's federally recognized tribal leaders on a regular basis to consult on tribal interests or concerns related to DSL activities, to build relationships and to discuss any upcoming issues of interest and explore opportunities for greater state-tribal partnership and collaboration.

D. DSL will provide regular training to agency managers and key staff who communicate or work with tribal governments.

E. DSL will support and participate in cooperative efforts between tribal governments, federal, state and/or local government on environmental issues/concerns that cross jurisdictional boundaries.

F. DSL's tribal liaison will actively participate as a member of the Tribal-State Natural Resource Workgroup and Cultural Resource Cluster.

G. DSL will seek tribal representation on DSL advisory committees that are of interest to tribes. DSL will support the exchange and sharing of data collected by DSL staff or by tribal governments.

H. DSL will ensure that agency managers and all staff are aware of the sovereign authority and self-government of Native American Tribes and of the organizational structure of tribal governments.

I. DSL will use advice and guidance when appropriate from the Legislative Commission on Indian Services and its staff on tribal government matters.

J. DSL's Director's Office shall be responsible for submitting an annual report by December 15th every year to the Governor and the Legislative Commission on Indian Services as required under ORS 182.166(3) highlighting DSL's government-to-government activities.

K. DSL's tribal liaison shall provide the director with a summary of the year's activities that have been completed and an updated list of individuals responsible for management of DSL's programs that may affect tribes for the annual report.