



Filtration Project Engagement with Native Communities

The City of Portland has committed to engaging with Native communities in recognition of Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the land. As part of that commitment, the Portland Water Bureau (Water Bureau) has reached out to eight tribal nations to engage in informal discussions and relationship building as part of the [Bull Run Filtration Project](#)—a new water filtration facility that will be constructed in unincorporated Multnomah County, near the City of Sandy. Separately, the Environmental Protection Agency is engaging with the same tribal nations through a formal Section 106 process, including review of project Cultural Resources reports.

The Water Bureau's goals are to:

- Follow guidance the City has received from tribal nations to engage early and frequently throughout the project, enabling genuine and meaningful collaboration.
- Collaborate with tribal nations to find opportunities to honor Native culture and lifeways in the project design.

Our engagement process began in August 2020 with formal letters Mayor Ted Wheeler sent to the leaders of eight tribal nations:

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
- Confederated Tribes of the Siletz
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Cowlitz Indian Tribes
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation



Our engagement approach is based on feedback we have received from tribal leaders at the City of Portland's annual Tribal Summits.

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Since August 2020, staff from the Water Bureau and the City of Portland Tribal Relations Program have met with representatives from several of these nations to share information about the project and learn about tribal interests.

Project Opportunities

Water Bureau efforts to celebrate Native lifeways have been informed by conversations with tribal nations, learnings from the City's Tribal Summits, and input from community members through an Urban Indigenous Engagement Circle (described below). The project team looks forward to continuing this work with tribal nations in coordination with the City's Tribal Relations Program team. This section describes these efforts, including planned future engagement with tribal nations.

Initial Outreach

Mayor Ted Wheeler sent invitations to leaders of eight tribal nations in August 2020. The letters included an invitation to meet with Water Bureau and City staff to learn more about the Bull Run Filtration Project and share ideas for celebrating Native lifeways at the site. Water Bureau and City Tribal Relations staff met with representatives from interested tribal nations in 2020 and 2021.

Future Engagement. The project team is committed to regular communications with tribal nations through project design and construction, including annual updates and invitations to engage in the specific efforts described in this section.

ITECK Evaluation

Serina Fast Horse (Sicangu Lakota & Blackfeet) of Kimimela Consulting is evaluating opportunities to integrate Indigenous Traditional Ecological and Cultural Knowledge (ITECK) at the Bull Run Filtration site through collaboration with Indigenous community members. The evaluation will be based on community engagement activities, including a presentation to the City's Native American Community Advisory Council (NACAC), visits to the filtration site, and a series of workshops. Serina Fast Horse and interested community members are working closely with Water Bureau and project staff to share learnings and build relationships.

In 2023, Ms. Fast Horse will submit an evaluation report to the Water Bureau. This work will be shared with Water Bureau and City leadership to help inform decisions about potential site use after the filtration facility is in operation. This report may also help to inform City staff about the potential for ITECK collaboration on other City capital projects.

Future Engagement. Tribal nations will be invited to tour the site and learn about the ongoing ITECK evaluation in early 2022.

Urban Indigenous Engagement Circle

The Urban Indigenous Engagement Circle was led by Suzanne Donaldson (Cowlitz Indian Tribe) and included four sessions in 2021. The resulting guidance document captures Engagement Circle participants' feedback on approaches to partnering and engaging with Indigenous communities. Participant feedback was shared with project staff.

Future Engagement. The guidance document from the first Engagement Circle will be shared with tribal nations for their input. The Engagement Circle will reconvene each spring until the project is complete.

Good Neighbor Agreement

The Water Bureau developed a [Good Neighbor Agreement](#) as part of its commitment to the current community in the project site area. This document includes commitments to design the filtration facility to be compatible with its surroundings and to continue to be a good neighbor during construction and ongoing operation of the facility. Tribal nations were invited to provide comment on the draft Good Neighbor Agreement in May 2021 and the agreement was finalized in June.

No future engagement on this item is planned.

Representing Native Languages and Culture

A position for a paid college-level intern is being created on to work on the Bull Run Filtration Project. The intern's initial focus will be on finding opportunities to increase representation of Indigenous language and culture in project materials and communications. The intern will also support overall project communications.

Future Engagement. The intern will work with City Tribal Relations staff to engage tribal nations in this work.

If you have questions or want to provide additional input, contact:

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