



IAQ : Indigenous Affairs Quarterly

Update from the Baltimore Yearly Meeting IA Committee – Fall 2026

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In the News

First Native American Woman in the U.S. Senate?

Peggy Flanagan, an enrolled citizen of the White Earth Nation and Minnesota's current Lieutenant Governor, won the Democratic primary for Senator. Flanagan is Ojibwe and a member of the Wolf Clan; her Ojibwe name is Gizhiwewidamookwe, meaning "Speaks in a Loud and Clear Voice Woman." As Lieutenant Governor, she was instrumental in creating the state's first Missing and Murdered Indigenous Relatives Office (FCNL Legislative Update, 8/26).

Erasing Native History

Billy Friend, Chief of the Wyandotte Nation, objects to Trump's Executive Order renaming Lake Ontario as Lake America. The tribal nation is now headquartered in northeast Oklahoma, but has history in the Great Lakes region. He said his ancestors, who spoke Wendat, gave Ontario its name, Ontari'io, which means "the lake is big" or "the lake is beautiful" (Kosu Newsbreak, 8/26).

A Section of the Border Wall Crosses Native Land

Masked agents from the United States Border Patrol arrived on August 25 to protect workers engaged in pre-construction activities for a 62-mile border wall crossing land belonging to the Tohono O'Odham Nation. Tribal leaders cited the encounter as a direct trespassing violation. "Too many critical issues were not adequately addressed, such as inevitable impacts

construction will have on the Nation's land and the permanent destruction of sacred sites," said Native Chairman Verlon Jose. "The Nation will consider all possible options for moving forward, as this issue is simply too important to the O'odham." To date, however, legal challenges have been unsuccessful. For more information, see: <https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/masked-federal-agents-sent-to-police-border-wall-construction-site-on-tohono-oodham-nation/>

What We're Learning

It was not just the Cherokee who were forced to walk a "Trail of Tears" to allow settlers to take their land. Most of the tribes never returned home to the land that was sacred to them, but a few were successful and eventually reclaimed at least part of their traditional lands. One of these was the Navajo Tribe, or Dine'.

Beginning in 1864, the U.S. Army forcibly marched bands of Navajo from their traditional lands in eastern Arizona Territory and western New Mexico Territory to Fort Sumner, where they had no means of sustaining themselves. In total, one source (Wikipedia) estimates that 10,000 Navajos and 500 [Mescalero Apache](#) were forced to leave their land. During the forced march and internment, up to 3,500 people died from starvation and disease over a four-year period.



Juanita (Asdza'a' Ti'ogi) led Dine' women in pleading to be allowed to return to the traditional home of the Navajo. They were successful. Image displayed at the National Museum of the American Indian.

Maintaining the Indians proved costly, and when a delegation of Navajo pleaded to be allowed to their homeland, they were allowed to return home. Barboncito, a spiritual and political leader of the Navajo, told General Sherman, "Our Grandfathers had no idea of living in any country except our own and I do not think it is right for us to do so." According to an exhibit at the Museum of the American Indian, oral tradition credits the "cries and pleading" of Native women as the deciding factor in allowing the Dine to return home. "You are right," General Sherman said: "All people love the country where they were born and raised."

The Navajo signed a treaty that allowed their return to their Native land, but it was now only one-quarter of the land they considered theirs. Over time, however, they were able to regain much of what had been lost.

Resources

Did you know that National Public Radio has a special service featuring Indigenous stories?

It's called Kosu. Based in central Oklahoma, now the home for many Tribes, it features music, podcasts, and news. You can find it online at this address:

<https://www.kosu.org>

The First – Thanksgiving?

As we approach autumn and the Thanksgiving holiday, it might be helpful to become familiar with the actual story of the first Thanksgiving. There are several online sources which tell the real story. Among these are:

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/thanksgiving-myth-and-what-we-should-be-teaching-kids-180973655/>

<https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/rethinking-thanksgiving>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mCnNBf9VajI>

There are many myths about the first Thanksgiving, and for that matter about European settlers' treatment of Indigenous people in general. We encourage Friends to become aware of the truth of the first Thanksgiving and put an end to the myth. (Thanks to Bill Mims, IAC member, for this article.)

The Words that Come Before all Else

The Haudenosaunee people are led to share this beautiful celebration of true Thanksgiving with everyone. Patapsco Meeting read these words together and found them moving. You could simply make copies and take turns reading. Find them here: <https://desertreport.org/the-haudenosaunee-thanksgiving-address/>

Special Events

Nov 18 – 21: Pocahontas Reframed Film Festival

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and Virginia Museum of History and Culture, Richmond, VA

<https://www.facebook.com/prsfilmfest>

<https://www.pocahontasreframed.com/>



November 21, 11am-7pm: Baltimore American Indian Center (BAIC)

Annual Pow-Wow celebrating 50 years of the BAIC!
Maryland State Fair Grounds, [2200 York Road Timonium, Maryland](https://www.baltimoreamericanindiancenter.org/events)
<https://www.baltimoreamericanindiancenter.org/events>

December 12: Holiday Bazaar

Mark your calendar! The American Indian Society of DC will once again hold its annual holiday bazaar (and fund raiser) at Sandy Spring meeting. This year, the bazaar will be on Saturday, December 12. Don't miss it! If you have Native themed books to donate, there is a used book room. Watch the Sandy Spring Meeting calendar for exact times.

Opportunities to Partner

Oppose Rescinding the Roadless Area Conservation Rule

The U.S. Forest Service Proposes to rescind the Roadless Area Conservation Rule. On August 20, the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) published a proposed rule to rescind the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which currently prohibits road construction and commercial logging across 58.5 million acres of roadless areas within national forests. Although the USDA framed the move as necessary to reduce wildfire risk and expand timber access, tribes and conservation groups pushed back, arguing the rule's removal would fragment wildlife habitat, threaten clean water supplies, and ultimately worsen — not improve — fire conditions. These roadless areas often include ancestral and treaty-protected lands, but USFS is proceeding without required tribal consultation. The public comment period runs through September 21, 2026. The Sierra Club offers an easy way to [make your voice heard](#) (FCNL).

Virginia Quakers – Build Relationships with Local Tribes in a New Working Group!

The BYM Indigenous Affairs Committee has an invitation especially for **Virginia Quakers**. We are establishing a Working Group under the leadership of our new committee clerk, Abbey Compton, to collaborate in building meaningful, ongoing relationships with Tribal leaders and elders across the Commonwealth. We will listen to their concerns and advocate for them as we are led by Spirit. For more information or to receive a form expressing your interest, email abbeycomptonishere@gmail.com. No expertise is needed.

Address correspondence related to this IAQ or suggestions for future IAQs to susanhillrose@gmail.com, Indigenous Affairs Quarterly editor.