

Narragansett Indian Tribe
Community Planning/Natural Resources Department

2024 Year-end Report

BIA PROGRAMS

Community Planning:

Community Services General provides coordinated assessment and servicing of the Narragansett Indian Tribal Reservation and Tribal Community. The mission of the program is to promote sustainable community development and ecological functions, and to expand the Tribe's capacity to exercise its sovereign rights, through planning, analysis, education, and implementation. The Department also works with all other tribal departments to assist in departmental planning and works with Tribal members to assist them in developing the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the creation of businesses.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- **Boys & Girls Club**
 - Attend CEO onboarding Training/exchange meetings/Native Summit
 - Meeting bi-weekly with Tribe's Regional Director of Development (DOD) to provide the NITBGC Team technical assistance.
 - CEO attending monthly regional calls with regional CEOs lead by DOD.
 - Submitted Financial and non-financial reports.
 - Submitted Standards of Operating Procedures report.
 - NIT BGC is on a pause until October 31, 2025 to allow Tribe to work on developing policies, hiring a Site Director and Youth Professional Director, develop program plan.
 - Northwind Building site visit/downstairs space

- **Comprehensive & Economic Develop Plan:**
 - Comprehensive and Economic Development Plan was finalized and submitted to the Tribal Government for review. Plan requires more information. The Tribe will contact consultants to discuss providing more detail in the plan.

- **Emergency Planning** - The Emergency Manager/Alternate continued to attend the local meetings that are held by the RI Emergency Management Agency and attend virtual meetings with FEMA Boston with the Tribe's liaison, Regina Marotto.

Future needs under the Emergency Planning: Continued training of staff and other pertinent departments. Continue to draft an Emergency Response Plan for the entire Tribe.

- **Hazard Mitigation Plan** – The Tribe held a number of meetings to update the Hazard Mitigation Plan. The Tribe received technical assistance from the FEMA BRIC Technical Assistance program to update the plan. FEMA/Tribe meet bi weekly to develop new plan.

Economic Development Contract:

The Tribe's Economic Development program assists the tribal community and members gain economic self-sufficiency through the development of their energy and mineral resources,

application of established business practices, and co-sponsorship of innovative training programs. This program and the Community Planning Program collaborate with the NITEDC.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- The plan/feasibility study was submitted to the Chief and Tribal Council for review. The Tribe worked with consultant on providing additional information before final approval by the Tribal Government.
- The purpose of the feasibility study is to conduct a study on the viability of an economic development project opportunities, enterprise development, business or technology economic development ventures for the Tribe.

Forestry/Wildland Fire Program:

The Forestry program is responsible for managing trust/fee lands. The department is charged with conducting sustainable forest development and management activities. The department is also charged with the overall protection and enhancement of the Tribe's forested lands, wildlife habitat, water quality, and recreational opportunities while ensuring forest protection from outside influences, insect pests and wildfire for future generations. The Tribe has an approved BIA Forest Management Plan, Fire Management Plan and Environmental Assessment. The Forestry Program has a wood cutting policies: Tribal Elder Firewood Program, Emergency Wood assistance, Adult Firewood Program. These programs have different requirements and applications as per BIA Forestry regulations.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Continue to delivery wood to Tribal Elders and Disabled.
- Continue to conduct patrols with the assistance from Tribal Police.
- Continue to conduct reservation wide clean up.
- Continue to take pictures of all illegal dump sites
- Continue to address the impacts from the Gypsy Moth infestation. Contacted BIA and RIDEM contact for technical assistance.
- URI contacted Tribe to set traps to assess the presence of Emerald Ash borer. Emerald Ash Borer was not detected. URI and RIDEM seeks to provide funding and assist setting additional traps in 2025.

Future Activities:

Update the Forest Management Plan and Fire Management Plan as per BIA Forestry Regulations. Develop Illegal Dump Ordinance, update Hunting, Fishing, & Boating Regulations. Review of the Tribe's Elder & Disable Wood Delivery Program.

Wildlife, Parks and Recreation Programs:

Wildlife and Parks manages tribal activities in the areas of fisheries, wildlife, outdoor recreation, and public use management, and conservation enforcement. Hunting & Fishing Regulations and Camping Regulations, have been developed by the Department and are enforced by the Tribe's Environmental Police Officer.

Activities/Accomplishments

- The department rented two large dumpers for the Spring and Fall to assist with reservation wide clean up.
- Patrol recreational areas
- Added new camping sites

- Department worked with RIDEM to address hunting and fishing permits and creating a tab for Tribal citizens can enter their information and enrollment number to hunt and fish within RI state lines.

Project Management Activities:

- Administration building roofing and siding installation
- Jackson Property Asbestos remediation
- Old Mill Road Drainage remediation
- CPNR facility siding installation

Tribal Transportation Program:

The Tribe's Transportation Program consists of the following activities: conducting road inventories, road maintenance, road construction and snow removal.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Transportation Planning – continue to conduct transportation planning activities: attend monthly calls, request funds for projects, updated the long-range transportation plan, add new routes, and perform overall administrative activities.
 - RI Transportation Advisory Committee: Director/Assistant Director voting members – continue to attend monthly meetings
- Road Inventory Update – the department continues to update the Road Inventory system.
- Design Phase: Contractor provided draft site and building plans to the Tribe. Contractor conducted a site visit to walk the bounds of the property where Transportation Facility will be located.
- Road Maintenance activities conducted:
 - Regrading gravel roads,
 - Filling potholes
 - repairing washouts,
 - road side maintenance,
 - cleaning and maintaining culverts,
 - removal of debris in the roadway
 - snow removal
 - curb repair on paved areas
 - sand and salt removal from paved areas
 - repair and clean drainage areas

EPA GRANT PROGRAMS:

Performance Partnership Grant (PPG):

This grant program is a compilation of grant programs into one. It allows for easier budget administration and management. Grants that fall in this category are:

General Assistance Program:

This grant program is a capacity building program to hire technical staff and conduct environmental protection activities.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Reposted Environmental Specialist position. Conducted interviews. Offered position to applicant. Applicant Declined.

- Revised and reposted Environmental Specialist Position. Seek to fill position in first quarter of 2025.
- Worked on PPG closeout and final reporting.
- Submitted new three PPG workplan and budget.
- Continue to attend bi-weekly meetings with EPA Tribal Coordinator
- Continue to attend monthly Regional Tribal Operations teleconferences with EPA Indian Program
- Continue to attend weekly reporting training with EPA Indian Program
- Address non-point source by developing an assessment and management plan

EPA Clean Water Act:

Protection of the Tribe's water resources.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Surface water sampling was conducted May to October.

Future Activities:

- Prepare proposal to obtain funds for macro invertebrate study, and to develop a comprehensive water management plan which will highlight assessment of the Tribe's Sole Source Aquifer, surface water, water resources inventory, and climate change activities.
- Obtain Treatment as a State (TAS) for non-point source pollution with EPA.
- Develop Non-point Sources assessment and management plan to obtain EPA funding.
- Write proposal for wetland protection to continue conducting assessment of the wetland health,

EPA Exchange Network Grant: New grant funding

- Held kickoff meeting with consultant.
- Coordinated with BIA Geospatial to renew geospatial license for GPS/GIS activities.
- Met monthly with consultant.

Additional EPA Grant Programs:

EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Program

The Tribe received funding under this grant program to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions for the Tribal facilities.

- Developed Priority Climate Action Plan
- Held biweekly meetings with consultant
- Consultant conducted a site visit with all Tribal Facilities
- Collected data for consultant to determine amount of green house gas produced by Tribe.

Safe Drinking Water Act:

Under this program, the Tribe monitors and tests its community wells on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis. The Tribe conducts tests for lead, copper, radon and the normal potability (drinkable) tests. Microbac Laboratory of Connecticut conducts the testing. Results of the tests are sent to the Tribe and to the EPA. This program also allowed for capacity building for the Certified Operator in the area of water system management/treatment training.

Activities/Accomplishments:

- Continue to conduct safe drinking water sampling at Tribal community facilities.
- Conduct weekly well inspections.
- Trained staff in safe drinking water management.
- Certified Water Operator conducted 3hr training to maintain license.

USDA - NRCS Contract Agreements:

Brush Management:

- Completed all activities. Contract is closed.

Cover Crop: NIT FARM:

- Completed all activities. Contract is closed.

Elder's Garden/Well – Church Grounds

- Contract is closed.

Pollinator Garden

- Completed.

Small High Tunnel

- Partially Completed
- Greenhouse fabric and door to be installed in 2025.

Tree/Shrub Establishment - Planting of Native Plants/Pruning: Farm/Tribal lands

- Continue to plant native plants to establish habitat

Tribal Spring Road

- Reconstruction of road for stormwater runoff control.
- Work to begin Spring 2025

New funding: Conservation Stewardship Program:

Activities addressed for the following listed below:

- to conduct land stewardship
- cover cropping to increase soil health and soil organic matter,
- planting of trees and shrubs for native wildlife,
- planting of trees and shrubs of cultural significance to the Tribe
- conservation cover for pollinators and beneficial insects
- site preparation for tree and shrub plantings
- improvement of forest stands
- improvements for wildlife habitat
- woody debris management

Agricultural Program

Gate House (105 Pound Road): Phase I Construction

- Gate house is completed. Certificate of Occupancy (CO) received from the Town of Westerly.

Barn (105 Pound Road): Phase II Construction

- Seeking grant funding for this phase

Hoop House (105 Pound Road): Phase I Construction

- New green house fabric installed on the 4 hoop houses.

Morton Building: Phase I Construction

- Construction began on the interior of the building

Farm Stand/Farm House: Phase III Construction

- Seeking grant funding for this phase

104 Pound Road Fields

- Cover Crop Contract Agreement ends in 2024 and will be renewed

105 Pound Road - Hoop Houses, corn and garden fields

- Corn Field next to the Gate House – site is under USDA-NRCS Contract Agreement. Site was planted with Flint Corn this year, after the corn is harvested, site will be turned back to a cover crop “Oats/Rye Grass” Contract Agreement renewed
- Three Sister’s Garden: (field next to Hoop Houses
 - Planted Three Sister
 - site requires additional soil amendments for the 2025 planting season.
- Pollinator Garden Well at NIT Farm – install well to access water

Founder Plots: The Tribe and the Wild Plant Society partnered to install founder plots at the farm and planted plants historically and culturally significance to the Tribe: Indian Grass, groundnut, blue vervain, mountain mint, and sweet grass.

Green House Growing (Charlestown, RI)

- The following seeds were sown inside the Green House
 - Tomatoes, Peppers, Lettuce, cucumbers, squash, cabbage, scallions

Grant Funds

- Tribe was awarded RIDEM Local Agricultural grant (LASA) to purchase an outdoor cold storage unit. Award Amount: \$15,000.
- Tribe was not awarded the RIDEM Infrastructure grant for the purchase of seeder, post hole digger, and raised bed mulcher.
- Pending awards:
 - Climate Next Grant – implement measures to reduce climate impacts
 - RIDEM LASA – purchase of raised bed mulch/dripline equipment
 - Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Implementation

Note: If the Tribe plans on growing Hemp or Marijuana at the farm, all the funds we received from USDA/NRCS will have to be paid back. Federal law states these items are still illegal.