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Instagram by way of Ian Campbell

Nonprofit metamorphoses into indigenous-led organization for Sierra Nevada

Metamorphosed organization advances a movement for indigenous-led sustainable conservation and community resilience

(Sierra Nevada, CA) The Sierra Fund, a respected regional organization, proudly announces their board of directors has elected six new Indigenous Board Members from around the region (making the board 75% Indigenous members) and hired a visionary Indigenous leader as their new Chief Executive Officer – transforming the nonprofit into an Indigenous-led new force for the Sierra Nevada. By centering the voices of the Sierra’s first nations, The Sierra Fund seeks to blend traditional ecological wisdom with western science to restore and protect Sierra lands, waters, and communities through practices that have sustained it for generations. [For the full board member list and bios visit here.](#)

The transformation, fully supported by the prior Executive Director and board, includes the adoption of a new mission to invest in and elevate Indigenous place-based wisdom, leadership, and guardianship to achieve reparative justice and resilient Sierra Nevada cultural ecologies and communities for future generations.

“The Sierra Fund’s new mission is about more than conservation,” said A. Brian Wallace (Washoe/Nisenan), Chief Executive Officer, The Sierra Fund. “It is a call to action for funders, allies, and partners to join a collaborative journey to a sustainable future. This is an organization reflective of a new movement to center and honor indigenous sovereignty to promote ecological balance and enhance community resiliency more effectively.”

A. Brian Wallace, the new Sierra Fund Chief Executive Officer, is a visionary Indigenous leader with a wealth of experience and success in advancing tribal led initiatives. Wallace served as an elected official of the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California from 1979-2006, including four terms as Tribal Chairman. Wallace secured federal court protection of sacred sites in Lake Tahoe and throughout Washoe homelands, was a key leader ensuring clean-up of the Leviathan Mine superfund site, facilitated a bio-cultural international agreement on restoration with the Republic of Buryatia and the Washoe Tribe, and was a founding member of the Lake Tahoe Federal Advisory Committee. Under his leadership the Washoe Tribe created their first Environmental Protection Department, Development Corporation, Cultural Foundation, Language School, and Land Trust.

“I’ve worked for over forty years in the conservation movement, and I’ve never been this excited about coming to work,” said Joan Clayburgh, prior Executive Director and now retained as Executive Officer of Strategy and Operations. “This bold transformation is reflective of a profound commitment to Indigenous leadership and decision making, knowing that centering Indigenous wisdom is needed more than ever to craft solutions for the challenges ahead. I am not indigenous and I’m very honored to be invited to serve under this talented and committed new CEO and board.”

The Sierra Nevada Indigenous-led organization will be launching five new innovative Indigenous centered programs in the coming years: 1) Climate Adaptation, Emergency Services and

Community Safety. 2) Cultural Ecologies – promoting tribal ecological knowledge, language, food, and data sovereignty and revitalization. 3) Land and Water Guardianship, 4) Workforce and Social Investment Strategies, and 5) Reconciliation and Equity. The organization’s approach will establish and support collaborative tribal efforts, offer technical assistance and mentorship, create knowledge sharing platforms and events, support Indigenous land return and land and water management, and advocate for the centering of tribal voices and the rights of nature.

“By centering Indigenous knowledges and tribal ancestral wisdom in the promotion of a culture that is founded on the principles of collective stewardship, we work together to preserve and restore the rich biodiversity of the Sierra. We ensure that our future generations can enjoy the natural beauty that defined this region since time immemorial” said Dr. Lisa Grayshield, (Washoe), Chair of The Sierra Fund’s Board of Directors. “This collaboration is writing a new future, one defined by reconciliation, stewardship, and shared responsibility for the land and our more than human relatives with whom we share this land we call home.”

This revitalized organization can create a long-lasting legacy of empowered communities and protected landscapes. Collaborating with tribes across the region, The Sierra Fund will support Indigenous visions for the future and help create a sustainable and resilient future for all peoples and life.

The Sierra Fund invites the public to be a part of this transformative journey. The Sierra Fund launched a [GoFundMe Campaign](#) to show support for helping the Sierra Bioregion thrive by elevating the stewardship and leadership of Indigenous peoples.

“The sky shouts now or never,” continued Wallace. “Together, we can create a future where Indigenous wisdom and western science unite to protect our natural worlds, cultures, and ecologies for generations to come.”

For more information or to support The Sierra Fund, visit <https://sierrafund.org>

The Sierra Fund’s mission is to elevate Indigenous place-based wisdom, leadership, and guardianship to achieve reparative justice and resilient Sierra Nevada cultural ecologies and communities for future generations.

We envision a future where: ♦ All people respect Indigenous cultural ecologies of the Sierra Nevada. ♦ Indigenous voices, leadership, and knowledge are centered in the movement to restore resiliency to our environment and communities. ♦ Rights of Nature are honored, and everyone understands their inherent caretaking responsibility to be a guardian. ♦ Indigenous peoples restore and protect the land through practices that have sustained the region for generations. ♦ Indigenous peoples’ cultures, lands, and languages thrive. ♦ All of our relations (humans and more than humans) are given equal voice. ♦ Women’s voices as cultural keepers are centered. ♦ All peoples’ learn from the land, intergenerational transmission of knowledge, and cultural wisdom.

The Fund has a must read, excellent resource directory for your perusal : <https://sierrafund.org/tsrd/>



Photo: Many Fall Stars, 1968-1988, Almira Buffalo Bone Jackson (Almira Cox Jackson), Assiniboine (Stoney), National Museum of the American Indian, Donated by Ann Pulford Wilson and Sarah Pulford Zweng.

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**Organism new to science found in Mono Lake's water**

“Researchers at the University of California, Berkeley discovered a new organism living in Mono Lake’s water—a species of choanoflagellate they named *Barroeca monosierra*.

Choanoflagellates are single-celled, microscopic organisms that primarily feed on bacteria. Scientists have found that *B. monosierra* is unique because instead of only consuming bacteria, the organism forms large colonies that contain live bacteria and form a stable relationship with them. “To our knowledge, this is the first report of such an interaction between choanoflagellates and bacteria,” reads the researchers’ paper, which was published in the *American Society for Microbiology*. ...” ...” [Read more from the Mono Lake Committee](#).



**Mary Gibson**

*Our ancestors ate bugs, insects, and small critters to survive. They did that so you could be here today. Thank the ancestors for their varied palates and know that the colonial's livestock almost destroyed our people for the lack of our traditional foods. Think Newe, not dybo, domichi.*

## **Dive into Nevada's prehistoric past at the Nevada Museum of Art**

RENO, Nev. (KOLO) - Nevada is an important paleontological site and currently on display at the [Nevada Museum of Art](#) is the biggest collection of ichthyosaur fossils ever shown under one roof. [Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada](#) was co-curated by Ann M. Wolfe, the Museum's Chief Curator, along with lead paleontologist Dr. Martin Sander. It is designed by award-winning designer Nik Hafermaas of Berlin, Germany.

Wolfe and Colin Robertson, Charles N. Mathewson senior vice president of education and research, stopped by Morning Break to invite the community to come out and see this exotic and historical exhibition.

There's a life-sized, virtually animated ichthyosaur soaring in one gallery. It responds to movement, giving visitors a chance to swim alongside the ancient reptile. Guests will get to walk through displays representing Nevada mountain ranges, discovering over 20 fossil specimens excavated between 1868 and 2022, many of which have never been seen publicly before.

Accompanying the exhibition is a new children's book celebrating women in science by honoring the achievements of Annie Alexander. [Annie Alexander's Amazing Adventure: An American Fossil Expedition in Nevada](#) is written by Ann M. Wolfe with illustrations by Nevada-based artist Kate O'Hara. Through brilliant and colorful illustrations, readers learn about the plants and animals of the desert environment, ichthyosaur fossil discoveries and excavation, and extinction and climate science.

Deep Time: Sea Dragons of Nevada will be on display at the museum through January 11, 2026.



## **California State Indian Museum**

In addition to our [Native American Style Flute Workshop](#), we have some informative guided tours for you too! Join Park Interpretive Specialist, Mike Ramirez (Maidu Konkow) at 1:00 pm and 3:00 pm to learn more about California's first peoples and their continuing culture!

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[Report: Some Federal Telecom Programs Failing Tribal Nations](#) By **[Kristi Eaton, The Daily Yonder](#)**

The report from the Institute for Local Self-Reliance says tribal nations are not always consulted about proposed projects on their lands

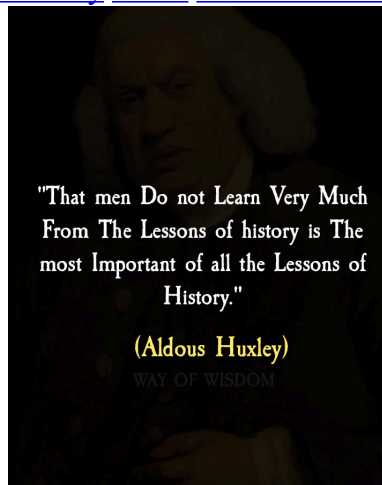
Debbie Smith Academy Mavericks

Ready to build your future? The Debbie Smith CTE Academy Construction Program is now enrolling! Learn essential skills like blueprint reading, carpentry, safety protocols, and more. With Industry Recognized Certifications and the chance to earn college credits, you'll be prepared for a wide range of careers in the construction industry.

Want to learn more? Join us at the Debbie Smith CTE Academy Open House on Saturday, Sept 28th at the DSCTE Football/Soccer Field (corner of Sutro & McCarran) from 10 AM - 12 PM. Explore your future and get hands-on with our state-of-the-art program! Register today at

washoeschools.net/debbiesmith

[#ConstructionCareers](#) [#DSCTEAcademy](#) [#CTE](#) [#WashoeSchools](#) [#WCSDProud](#)



Western water bills teed up in U.S. Senate

“The Senate Energy and Natural Resources (ENR) Subcommittee on Water and Power earlier this month heard testimony on 16 bills, with several focused on addressing challenges in the Colorado River Basin. The Colorado River, vital to 40 million people across seven Western states, has been severely impacted by prolonged drought. However, a handful of bills have implications for water users throughout the rest of the West, including in the Klamath Basin. The Family Farm Alliance, which advocates for irrigated agriculture across the West, has been monitoring several of these bills, and prepared written testimony for the Sept. 11 hearing record. ...” [Read more from Herald & News.](#)

Scientists develop AI models able to predict future drought conditions with high accuracy

“Scientists say they have developed new AI models with the ability to predict future drought conditions with almost unerring accuracy. Their research, published in the journal Scientific Reports, highlights the substantial advantages of using AI models over conventional drought indices in predicting the causes and onslaught of conditions leading to scarcity of rain and water. (The study can be found at: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-024-70406-6>) “The results were promising. The AI models were able to predict future drought conditions with high accuracy. The AI models demonstrated strong correlations with multiple drought indicators and consistently outperformed existing indices, said Dr. Mohamed Abdallah, University of Sharjah’s Associate Professor of Civil Engineering, and the study’s lead author. ...” [Read more from KTLA.](#)



Max Padilla representing Nevada at Honolulu powwow.

Why Being Near Water Really Does Make Us Happier

There are scientific reasons why we're so drawn to lakes, rivers, and oceans.

https://getpocket.com/explore/item/why-being-near-water-really-does-make-us-happier?utm_source=pocket-newtab-en-us

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*For those with the archive disease*

## **Not just the Constitution: How the National Archives protects billions of historical documents**

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/national-archives-preserves-us-history-60-minutes/?intcid=CNR-02-0623>

- Join Friends of the Rio Grande del Norte and the Taos BLM Office for a day of cleaning up the Rio Grande and a fly-fishing clinic on September 28th at 10 am. Read more about this event [here](#).
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- The Humboldt River Field Office of the Nevada BLM invites the public to a National Public Lands Day celebration at Water C for details.
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- Are you interested in wildlife corridors and connectivity, forest management, and responsible land development? Don't miss a happy hour and panel discussion hosted by the Arizona Wildlife Federation at Historic Brewing Company on September 27th. See more [here](#).
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- After its Journey of Prayer across the country, the Apache Stronghold formally presented its appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. to stop a massive copper mine from Resolution Copper that would destroy Oak Flat, or Chi'chil Bildagoteel, a sacred site for the Apache Tribe and other Indigenous communities in Arizona. Read more [here](#).

➔ **U.N. leaders yesterday adopted the "Pact of the Future,"** which included explicit calls to end fossil fuels.

*By request: a repeat*

### **How Ridwell reinvented recycling for a new era**

<https://www.pccmarkets.com/sound-consumer/2024-01/how-ridwell-reinvented-recycling-for-a-new-era/>

### **Corporations plunder West's water amid worst drought in 1,200 years**

“Rural La Paz County, Arizona, positioned on the Colorado River across from California, is at the center of a growing fight over water in the American Southwest. At the heart of the battle is a question: Should water be treated as a human right, to be allocated by governments with the priority of sustaining life? Or is it a commodity to be bought, sold and invested in for the greatest profits? As the West suffers its worst megadrought in 1,200 years, investors have increasingly eyed water as a valuable asset and a resource to be exploited. For years, investment firms have bought up farmland throughout the Southwest, drilling to new depths for their water-hungry crops and causing nearby wells to run dry. Now, new players have entered the scene: “Water management companies” are purchasing up thousands of acres of farmland, with the intention of selling the water rights at a profit to cities and suburbs elsewhere in the state. Some argue that treating water as a commodity can efficiently get it where it is needed most. But others fear that water markets open the door to profiteering and hoarding, leaving poorer communities in the dust. ...” [Read more from Truthout.](#)

### **Arizona Water Research Center Upcoming Events**

**Oct 16: Water Webinar: First Nations Water Rights (Australia) – Save the Date! – 3:30pm**

**Oct 31: Special Book Signing Event: Living River: The Promise of the Mighty Colorado – 3:00pm**

**May 20–21, 2025: WRRRC 2025 Annual Conference – Save the Date!**

### **TAPPED: This aquifer is our Colorado River: Rural residents struggle when corporate farms drill deep for water**

From Governor Katie Hobbs to Attorney General Kris Mayes, Arizona officials grapple with saving rural water supplies

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/this-aquifer-is-our-colorado-river-rural-residents/id1634702420?i=1000670205767>

### **The Buzz: Arizona's rural water fight continues**

“On September 12, Arizona Attorney General Kris Mayes sent a letter to the Arizona Department of Water Resources calling into question its approval of paperwork filed by Saudi-backed alfalfa



farm Fondomonte to drill a new well on land it owns in La Paz County. “This is an area that we are already investigating for over-pumping by the Saudis, and it’s also an area that has a formerly utilized munitions site. State law already requires the Director of the [Arizona] Department of Water Resources to not approve this well, at least not without additional study and making it clear and known that the site will not migrate to other areas and cause additional contamination to the water supply,” Mayes told AZPM. ... ” [Read more from Arizona Public Media](#)

## **New tool to help decision makers navigate possible futures of the Colorado River**



“The Colorado River is a vital source of water in the Western United States, providing drinking water for homes and irrigation for farms in seven states, but the basin is under increasing pressure from climate change and drought. A new computational tool developed by a research team, led by Penn State scientists, may help the region adapt to a complex and uncertain future. Their tool, the Framework for Narrative Storylines and Impact Classification (FRNSIC), can help decision-makers explore many plausible futures and identify consequential scenario storylines — or descriptions of what critical futures might look like — to help planners better address the uncertainties and impacts presented by climate change. They reported their findings Sept. 19 in the journal *Earth’s Future*. ... ” [Read more from Penn State University](#).

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## **[Reuters: Sinking Tuvalu fights to keep its maritime boundaries as sea levels rise.](#)**

Life is already changing for Tuvaluans, who rely on rainwater tanks and a central raised garden for growing vegetables, because saltwater inundation has ruined groundwater, affecting crops.

A landmark climate and security treaty with Australia announced in 2023 provides a pathway for 280 Tuvaluans annually to migrate to Australia, starting next year.

On a recent visit to Tuvalu and in interviews with more than a dozen residents and officials, Reuters found anxiety about rising seas and the prospect of permanent relocation.

Kirsty Needham



## **Support the NCAI Youth Commission at NCAI's 81st Annual Convention!**

We are thrilled to invite you to an event that will shape the future of Indian Country: The 2024 Native Youth Convention: Leadership Now, held in conjunction with NCAI's [81st Annual Convention & Marketplace](#) from **October 26 – November 1, 2024**, at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Nevada.

This year's convention will place Native youth at the forefront of leadership, advocacy, and action. We are proud to host over 100 Native youth attendees from across the nation, who will come together to learn, grow, and champion the causes that impact their communities. We encourage all NCAI members to participate in this transformative event that will spotlight the next generation of tribal leaders.

### **Why This Event Matters**

Our youth are the future defenders of tribal sovereignty, and this year's theme, Leadership Now, focuses on empowering them with the tools and resources necessary to lead their communities. With a full week of interactive sessions, panels, and hands-on learning opportunities, the Native Youth Convention will cultivate leadership skills, strengthen advocacy efforts, and connect youth with mentors and tribal leaders like you.

The youth attending the convention will engage with NCAI's broader mission, participating in General Assemblies, Regional Caucuses, Committee/Subcommittee Meetings, and other important sessions. This event is a platform where youth not only learn but actively contribute to discussions shaping Indian Country's future.

### **Daily Themes**

- *Saturday, October 26* – Lead by Doing: Community service activities to build leadership skills and make a positive impact.
- *Sunday, October 27* – Level UP!: Explore grassroots movements, civic engagement, and policy in action.
- *Monday, October 28* – Defending Tribal Sovereignty: Youth leaders discuss their role in self-determination and tribal governance.
- *Tuesday, October 29* – All My Relations: A unique day devoted to healing our relationships with the environment and one another.
- *Wednesday, October 30* – Native Youth Health & Wellness: Holistic development discussions on health, wellness, and the Path of Life Continuum.
- *Thursday, October 31* – Indigenous Futures Day: The grand finale – a powerful day focusing on education, careers, and leadership for the future.

## **Key Activities on Indigenous Futures Day:**

- *University of Nevada, Las Vegas:* Participants will tour the Native programs available to students and each lunch on campus.
- *Micro Career Fair:* Tribal leaders, recruiters, and representatives from top organizations will offer valuable resources and networking opportunities to help youth prepare for their educational and professional journeys.
- *Halloween Fun:* End the day with a Halloween movie screening of *Prey*, starring Amber Midthunder, and the much-anticipated Youth Commission Officer Elections.

## **Keynote Speaker**

We're honored to welcome Sarah Adams, founder of Matriarch, as a keynote speaker. Sarah will share her inspiring journey of leadership and advocacy and offer insights into how Native youth can lead with purpose and vision.

## **Exclusive to NCAI Members**

As an NCAI member, you are invited to participate in all of these sessions. Your involvement will have a profound impact on the youth attendees, whether through mentorship, knowledge sharing, or simply showing your support. Our collective presence and guidance can help nurture the next generation of Native leaders.

## **Youth Commission Elections**

A highlight of the week will be the NCAI Youth Commission Officer Elections. This is your opportunity to witness the energy, passion, and commitment of Native youth as they step into leadership roles, shaping the direction of youth advocacy and involvement in NCAI for years to come.

## **Why You Should Attend**

The 2024 Native Youth Convention is not just for youth—it is an event that brings together all generations to collaborate, learn, and forge a brighter future for Indian Country. By attending, you'll help bridge the gap between the wisdom of tribal leaders and the aspirations of young people eager to make a difference.

Tribal leaders play an essential role in the success of this event. Your participation in workshops, panel discussions, and mentorship programs will provide the guidance and support our youth need to excel as the next generation of tribal advocates and community leaders.

## **Join Us!**

Be part of this incredible journey by attending the 2024 Native Youth Convention and lending your voice to the development of future leaders. Let's show our support for the youth of Indian Country as they step into their roles as champions of tribal sovereignty, cultural preservation, and community wellness