

Secretary Zinke Announces \$32.6 Million in Historic Preservation Grants to States and Tribes

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke with the National Park Service recently announced the awarding of \$26.9 million in historic preservation grants to every U.S. state, the District of Columbia, the U.S. territories, and partnering nations, in addition to \$5.7 million in grants to more than 160 tribes for cultural and heritage preservation projects on their tribal lands.

"Fees collected from drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf help fund important conservation tools like these grants," Secretary Zinke said. "The Department of the Interior and the National Park Service are committed to preserving U.S. and tribal history and heritage. Through valuable partnerships we are able to assist communities and tribes in ensuring the diverse historic places, culture and traditions that make our country unique are protected for future generations."

Administered by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary, these funds are a part of annual appropriations from the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF). Since its inception in 1977, the HPF has provided more than \$1.2 billion in historic preservation grants to states, tribes, local governments and nonprofit organizations. Funding is supported by Outer Continental Shelf oil lease revenues, not tax dollars, with intent to mitigate the loss of a non-renewable resource to benefit the preservation of other irreplaceable resources.

This year's HPF grant funds were appropriated under the Continuing Resolution Act, 2017, enacted as Public Law 114-254. All funding to the states and District of Columbia requires a 40 percent non-federal match, which leverages state, local and private dollars to do even more with the federal HPF investment. The HPF grants fund preservation programs at state historic preservation offices and ensure support of local preservation with a required 10 percent pass through to Certified Local Governments via competitive subgrants.

The HPF is also an essential funding stream for tribes to

preserve their unique cultural and heritage resources through a broad range of activities, including identifying places of cultural significance for planning and protection purposes, public education and training, and leading tribal preservation initiatives.

Examples of the diversity of work accomplished with this annual funding include:

- Students from Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College in Michigan will assist conducting oral interviews with elders on tribal traditions and everyday life in a project that also includes an outreach and education exhibit.
- A statewide study on Japanese-American settlement coordinated by the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- Wisconsin conducted underwater survey evaluations of shipwrecks in Lake Michigan, preparing site plans, and National Register of Historic Places nominations for the S.C. Baldwin and three newly discovered vessels.
- Washington's State Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation's consultation with the U.S. Department of Energy and Native American Tribes on culturally-sensitive Columbia River shoreline with known tribal archaeological resources, historic properties illustrative of post-contact settlement, and Manhattan Project era resources.
- In Texas, a youth summit held in conjunction with the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park and a series of workshops on historic metal truss bridges in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission and the Texas Department of Transportation.

For more information about the National Park Service historic preservation programs and grants, please visit www.nps.gov/stlpg.

Secretary Zinke Announces Funding of \$60 Million for Cobell Education Scholarship Fund

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke recently announced the Department has made its final transfer to the Cobell Education Scholarship Fund, bringing the total amount to \$60 million to be made available to help unlock the doors to advanced technical training and higher education for Native youth.

The Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to American Indian and Alaska Native students wishing to pursue post-secondary and graduate education and training. It is funded in part by the Land Buy-Back Program for Tribal Nations (Buy-Back Program) and authorized by the Cobell Trust Management Settlement.

"This scholarship program advances the Trump Administration's commitment to tribal sovereignty and self-determination, as well as the President's belief that 'education is the civil rights issue of our time,'" Secretary Zinke said. "Investment in

the next generation of American leaders will allow many of these young people to gain the valuable skills required for today's competitive workforce and the knowledge and expertise needed to help their communities meet tomorrow's challenges. Educational development and skills training are vital for sustaining the economic and political advancement of tribal nations and our nation as a whole."

To date, over 2,000 scholarships totaling more than \$5.25 million have been awarded to almost 1,000 Native American students for vocational, undergraduate, and graduate study. The scholarship awards are up to \$5,000 per semester for vocational and undergraduate students and up to \$10,000 per semester for graduate and doctoral students. Information regarding summer 2017 scholarship opportunities can be found via www.cobellscholar.org.

Under the terms of the Cobell Settlement, Interior made

quarterly transfers to the Scholarship Fund up to \$60 million. The latest transfer of \$12.5 million allowed the Department to reach this milestone in its fourth year of implementation. The Scholarship Fund is overseen by the Cobell Board of Trustees and administered by Indigenous Education, Inc., a non-profit corporation expressly created to administer the scholarship program.

Alex Pearl, chairman of the Cobell Board of Trustees, said: "We look forward to continuing our commitment to the legacy of Elouise Cobell and the vision she had for an independent, sustainable, and dynamic Indian Country. Our Board understands that the barriers to education for Indigenous students are significant and multi-faceted. The funds made possible by Ms. Cobell's determined pursuit of justice for individual Indians provide an essential vehicle for improving the lives of young Native people and their communities. Our goal of creating a uniquely tuned and permanent scholarship program attentive to the needs and issues of Native students will remain our steadfast focus."

The Buy-Back Program was created to implement the land consolidation component of the \$3.4 billion Cobell Settlement, which provided \$1.9 billion to purchase fractionated interests in trust or restricted land from willing landowners. Consolidated interests are transferred to tribal government ownership for

uses benefiting the reservation community and tribal members.

Since the Buy-Back Program began making offers in December 2013, more than \$1.1 billion has been paid to landowners, nearly 680,000 fractional interests have been consolidated, and the equivalent of nearly 2.1 million acres of land has been transferred to tribal governments. Tribal ownership is now greater than 50 percent in more than 13,500 tracts of land. The amount Interior contributed to the Scholarship Fund each quarter was based on a Cobell settlement formula that set aside a certain amount of funding depending on the value of the fractionated interests sold. These contributions did not reduce the amount that an owner received.

The Buy-Back Program recently released its annual Status Report, which highlights the steps taken to date to consolidate fractional interests. Individual participation in the Buy-Back Program is voluntary. Landowners can contact the Trust Beneficiary Call Center at 888-678-6836 or visit their local Office of the Special Trustee for American Indians (OST) to ask questions about their land or purchase offers, and learn about financial planning resources. More information and detailed frequently asked questions are available at www.doi.gov/buybackprogram/FAQ. ♣

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