

Tribal Leader Statement on 30x30 Proposed Policy

Page 1 of 4

May 6, 2021

5/06/2021

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We, the undersigned Tribal Leaders & Tribal organization leaders, express our support for the Biden Administration's *Thirty by Thirty* (30x30) *initiative* to set a goal for the United States to protect and conserve at least 30% of oceans and lands by 2030. Tribal Nations are the first sovereigns and guardians of this continent's lands and oceans and possess inherent stewardship responsibilities and rights to protect and care for our ecosystems and communities, which are interconnected.

Scientists say that 30% protection is the minimum step needed to pull us back from the tipping point that our ecosystems and our climate has reached. As Tribal Leaders and Tribal organization leaders, we are alarmed at these increasing threats to nature, which constitute direct threats to Tribal Nations. Progress to safeguard wildlife and wild places in the U.S. has slowed to a near standstill in recent years. The previous administration took many unprecedented actions to eliminate protections for critical conservation areas and species, and Tribal Nations' cultural connections to these places. We now face these challenges against the backdrop of a global nature crisis. Protected areas serve a critical role in conserving biodiversity, culturally important ecosystems, and mitigating climate change impacts.

Tribal Nations are essential to the success of the 30x30 policy initiative in the U.S. as they are intrinsically linked, presently and historically, to existing and prospective protected areas. Tribal Nations are the original stewards of these lands and waters and have been the most effective managers and protectors of biodiversity since time immemorial. Tribes continue to participate in national taskforce channels to provide needed commentary regarding steps to improve climate change mitigation and resilience on Tribal homelands and their surrounding communities.

The 30x30 proposed policy serves as a vitally important opportunity to safeguard the environment and Tribal cultural values, strengthen the Nation-to-Nation relationship, and uphold Tribal sovereignty and self-determination. We have identified key priorities related to (1) Sovereignty, (2) Consultation, (3) Representation, (4) Resources, and (5) Evaluation to strengthen the government-to-government collaboration we must undertake to safeguard the environment. We call on federal implementers of this important policy to commit to the following priorities early in their implementation process and to consult with Tribes continually and meaningfully on a government-to-government basis.

Tribal Leader Priorities for 30x30 Policy (continued)

(1) Sovereignty Commitment:

- a) Support increased protection of U.S. lands and oceans, to at least 30% each by 2030, to ensure Tribal sovereignty and Tribal ancestral/traditional uses within

Tribal Leader Statement on 30x30 Proposed Policy

Page 2 of 4

May 6, 2021

these places and to help address climate; conservation; and fish, wildlife, and First Foods crises.

- b) Fully acknowledge that Tribal uses include fishing, hunting, gathering, and ceremonial uses within traditional Tribal and ancestral/traditional areas.
- c) Fully uphold federal trust and treaty obligations.
- d) Fully uphold the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- e) Fully recognize and protect Tribes' pre-existing water rights necessary for protection and continuation of Tribal life and life of the planet.
- f) Acknowledge and protect Tribal Nations' sovereign right to their First Foods, which necessitates accessing and utilizing traditional food sources and expanding Tribal access, management, and restoration to enable continuation and revitalization of Tribes' cultural lifeways, foods and ecosystems.
- g) Establish opportunities for meaningful and mutually beneficial Tribal management and Tribal co-management of new federal protected areas.
- h) Support similar opportunities for Tribal management and Tribal co-management within state protected lands and marine waters and private protected lands, through formal agreements and other means.
- i) Develop new opportunities for meaningful and mutually beneficial Tribal management and co-management of existing protected areas.
- j) Strengthen existing Tribal co-management agreements in federal protected areas to achieve enhanced recognition of Tribal sovereignty and to reach true partnership between Tribes and the Federal Government.
- k) Enable and support paths for the establishment of Alaska Native Tribal Historic Preservation Offices.
- l) Support legislative action to strengthen the status of protected areas as a complement to Executive Orders and other executive actions, in consultation with Tribes.
- m) Ensure that Tribes can take land into trust even when lands are in the process of being mitigated.
- n) Reverse the Trump Administration's revisions to the implementing regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the regulation of toxic substances and safety as well as others.

(2) Consultation Commitment:

- a) Engage in free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC) of Tribes with regard to establishment of any and all new federally protected areas and support for recognition of FPIC in statute.
- b) Conduct meaningful Tribal consultation throughout 30x30 policy, planning, and implementation, including commitment to:
 - Support collaborative processes and the incorporation of Tribal values systems.

Tribal Leader Statement on 30x30 Proposed Policy

Page 3 of 4

May 6, 2021

- Engage in a consultation process, directed by and in partnership with Tribes, on identification and funding of federal research topics relating to protection and conservation of lands and waters.
 - c) Respect cultural landscapes, celestial-scapes, and seascapes, as well as other sacred sites, and meaningfully consult with Tribal Nations for their protection, care, access, and stewardship.
 - d) Respect, acknowledge, and support culturally appropriate use of traditional knowledge, with consent of and in consultation with Tribes.
- (3) Representation Commitment:
- a) Acknowledge the role of Tribes in safeguarding biodiversity since time immemorial with equitable treatment given to Tribes in developing protection measures and full Tribal involvement, fairly and equitably, in the process of 30x30 planning and implementation.
 - b) Fully include Tribal histories, in consultation with Tribes, as essential to all educational programming related to new and existing protected areas.
 - c) Establish Tribal seats on all federal resource advisory bodies with full voting power.
 - d) Establish a federal 30x30 Tribal Advisory body to help advise the government on policy implementation and consultation strategies.
- (4) Resources Commitment:
- a) Provide funding for innovative inclusion of economic development that supports 30x30 conservation goals and economic transitions to 30x30 industries.
 - b) Provide full multi-year funding and support for Tribal establishment and administration of Tribally protected areas and other Tribally managed or co-managed areas, terrestrial and marine, including support for a Tribal set-aside for Tribal conservation and related research.
- (5) Evaluation Commitment:
- a) Support legislation that codifies a routine mandate for federal agencies to continually monitor potential threats to protected lands and resources, and to consult with Tribal Nations to develop free, prior, and informed consent through culture-based and science-based approaches to improve resilience and better prepare for potential threats.
 - b) Establish a task force to conduct formal evaluations of ways in which federal protected areas are currently addressing needs, interests, and cultural relevance of Tribes within whose territories they are situated.
 - c) Report to Tribes on the progress and results of the 30x30 initiative on an annual basis and demonstrate consistency with these principles.

We, the undersigned Tribal Leaders & Tribal organization leaders, believe that protecting at least 30% of U.S. lands and oceans is necessary to safeguard our

Tribal Leader Statement on 30x30 Proposed Policy

Page 4 of 4

May 6, 2021

communities and our world by protecting biodiversity and mitigating climate change impacts. This must be done with the partnership of Tribal Leadership and the free, prior, and informed consent of Tribal Nations. This list of our priorities is not exhaustive and will undoubtedly grow and change as policy implementation proceeds. We stand ready to work with the federal government on a government-to-government basis to safeguard our traditional territories and to ensure the success of 30x30 and the wellbeing of our Tribal Nations and the world.

Sincerely,

W. Ron Allen,
Tribal Chair/CEO
Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe

Beniakem Cromwell,
Chairman
Robinson Rancheria of Pomo
Indians

Leonard Forsman,
Chairman
The Suquamish Tribe

Debra Ramirez,
Chairwoman
Redwood Valley Little River
Band of Pomo Indians

Cheryl Andres-Maltais
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