



SAIGE SPRING NEWSLETTER - May 2023

## MESSAGE FROM THE SAIGE CHAIR

Hello! We are a little more than one month away from SAIGE's 20th Annual National Training Program (NTP), June 20-23, 2023, at the River Spirit Resort, owned by the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Tulsa, OK. We are busy finalizing our agenda and excited that it will be our first face-to-face gathering after conducting our training virtually for the past several years.

This year's theme is, *Tribal Nations, Soaring to New Heights*. We celebrate and acknowledge the number of Indigenous people who are serving in the Federal government in political assignments and senior leadership. This year we had a female Indigenous astronaut, Nicole Mann, who soared to new heights!

The NTP offers subject matter experts from across the country to provide information happening in Indian Country. SAIGE offers training tracks in Federal Indian Law and Policy; Professional Development; Natural Resources/Culture; and Equal Employment, Diversity, and Human Resources. These topics are important to employees who serve as Special Emphasis Program Managers, Tribal Liaisons, EEO and HR Specialists, and federal and tribal employees.

A career fair on Wednesday will provides agencies the opportunity to recruit for positions. Perhaps you're

looking to make a change, this is a great opportunity to see what is available for your career! We will be hosting Indigenous vendors as we support the Buy-Indian Act so plan to check out the beautiful jewelry and goods and meet our vendors at the same time! Take this opportunity to network while you're attending our event. Bring your business cards and make those important professional connections and friendships.

The Warrior Society will host their day-long training session on Thursday. The agenda is full of speakers including a representative from the Department of the Army, Ms. Veterans American, and the designer of the National Native American Veterans Memorial located at the National Museum of the American Indian. You can read more from Ed Blauvelt, Warrior Society Director, on pages 2-4 of this newsletter.

Finally, come and meet our SAIGE Native Youth who represent our SAIGE Youth Program. SAIGE offers scholarships to Indigenous students ages 18-25 years of age. These students will be learning leadership skills at the NTP. They will also be forming new lifelong friendships that come from networking while they attend this training opportunity. For recruiters this is the time to meet the students where you can offer internships and/or employment opportunities.



FREDERICKA JOSEPH

In addition to the Veteran's and Youth Track, on page five of the newsletter is an overview of confirmed speakers.

SAIGE looks forward to meeting new employees attending the NTP for the first time, and reconnecting with returning SAIGE members. You will not be disappointed by the NTP or the friendships you will make while you attend our training. If you aren't a member, you will have the opportunity to join SAIGE at the registration desk.

Please visit our [website](#) for agenda updates and to learn more about registering.

I look forward to seeing you there!

# SAIGE WARRIOR SOCIETY

## 2023 Veterans' Track during the SAIGE National Training Program

By Edward Blauvelt, Warrior Society Director



### Hensci!

2023 marks the 20th SAIGE NTP. SAIGE proudly supports its Warrior Society Program developed for and by veterans that offers training specific to the needs of veterans by highlighting available federal benefits and providing attending veterans exposure to varied employment options. The Veterans' Program facilitates collaboration and partnership opportunities among veterans, agencies that serve them, and veterans' organizations.

This year's NTP will be one of the best as we look forward to hearing from our Keynote Speaker, Mr. Clarence Johnson, Special Assistant to the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Diversity and Leadership. Mr. Johnson is responsible for the development and coordination of diversity management and equal opportunity policies and programs affecting all DoD civilian employees and military personnel within DoD worldwide. He also supervises the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute, a 100-member institution located at Patrick Air Force Base, Florida, the premier

DoD school in equal opportunity and equal employment opportunity training, education, and research. Mr. Johnson serves as principal advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense (Personnel & Readiness) on diversity management, equal opportunity, and equal employment opportunity matters. Mr. Johnson entered active duty as a C-141 Starlifter navigator, serving in global airlift, contingency operations, Military Airlift Command Plans staff, and Air Staff Training (ASTRA). He was a squadron commander three times and a group commander twice. Additionally, he held increasingly responsible positions at the headquarters and installation levels. His decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal (with one Oak Leaf Cluster), the Legion of Merit, and the Meritorious Service Medal (with three oak leaf clusters).

Other speaker highlights will include Ms. Kaylan "Katie" Harrington, Ms. Veterans American. Ms. Harrington is a 21-year member of the South Dakota Army National Guard, where she serves as a training officer at the Guard's Warrant Officer Candidate School. She deployed four times to Iraq and twice to Afghanistan. Ms. Harrington is a member of American Legion Post 33 in Sturgis, Auxiliary Unit, and American Legion Riders Chapter 164 in Spearfish. In the role of Ms. Veteran America, she serves as an ambassador for Final Salute Inc., a nonprofit that provides homeless women veterans and their children safe housing, food, clothing, and supportive services, especially for women veterans who find themselves without housing.

Mr. Solomon Trimble, will present a course on Suicide Prevention and

will certify all in attendance on Suicide Prevention and Mr. Brandon T. Whiterock, the son of PFC Lori Piestewa, will present "My Journey," discussing how he grew up after losing his mother in Operation Iraqi Freedom and how it led him to help Native Veterans in Arizona.

Finally, we are honored to have Mr. Harvey Pratt. Mr. Pratt is a member of the Cheyenne & Arapaho tribes, where he is recognized as one of the traditional Cheyenne Peace Chiefs. He is the great-grandson of scout, guide, interpreter, and Sand Creek massacre survivor, Edmund Guerrier. He is also the great-great-grandson of American frontiersman William Bent. Pratt began his career with Oklahoma's Midwest City Police Department in 1965, where, as a police officer, he completed his first composite drawing that resulted in an arrest and conviction. Mr. Pratt will discuss his National Native American Veterans Memorial Warriors' Circle of Honor installed at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington. D.C.

During the lunch service, the SAIGE Warrior Society will present the SAIGE 2023 Military Meritorious Service Awards to ten outstanding military and veteran members for their dedicated service to our nation and people.

I hope to see you all there on June 22-23, at the River Spirit Resort in Tulsa, OK!

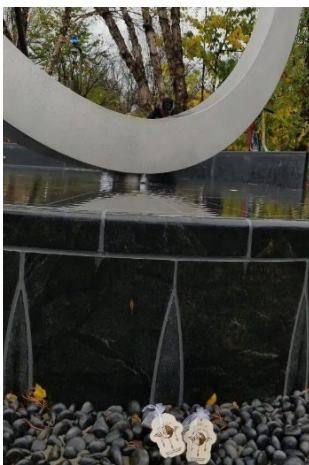
The Veterans' Program is open to all SAIGE registrants and any veterans and active-duty military.

# National Native American Veterans Memorial

By Edward Blauvelt, SMSgt, USAF (ret), Warrior Society Director

The remnants of Hurricane Nicole covered the U.S. Capitol, spreading wind and rain as I awoke on 11 November in Washington, D.C. The day's events were scheduled for later, so hopefully, the rain would abate some. A glorious day awaited us! My son, Staff Sergeant Evan Blauvelt, U.S. Army, 11th Cavalry, accompanied me to represent SAIGE and the SAIGE Warrior Society for this momentous day. Today was the unveiling and dedication of the National Native American Veterans Memorial at the National Museum of the American Indian. Organizers informed us that some 1,500 American Indians and senior government officials would attend this day, but many more showed up in the end.

Since my son and I were staying only a mile from the museum, we decided to walk to the staging area. We were in our finest military regalia, wearing Pendleton Grateful Nations vests affixed with our military achievements and accouterments. As we passed The Capitol building toward the National Mall, several people shouted, "Happy Veterans Day!" to us. With our chests out even further now, we marched to the museum.



Upon arrival, we found representatives for nearly every tribe there. The Kiowa and the Kiowa Women Warriors Honor Guard, National Native American Women Warriors Honor Guard, the Muscogee, Comanche, Apache, Karuk, Seneca, Choctaw, Navajo, Zuni, Cochiti, Dakota, Cherokee, Chickasaw, Mohawk, Nez Perce, Ho-Chunk, Hawaiians, and the Anishinaabe to name just a few were in attendance. The military comradery was amazing as we all greeted each other, knowing we were taking part in a historical event and recognition from the United States for our service and sacrifice to our nation and our people.

After saying our hellos, Evan and I headed toward the memorial. It is a beautiful, large, upraised silver ring in a water fountain surrounded by native plants. In the center of the silver ring is a burning lodge fire. The fountain is a stylized stone carved drum, symbolizing our people's heartbeat. Around the raised fountain dais are large stone benches and four lances. The lances have metal rings attached which will allow veterans and their families to tie prayer cloths in remembrance of our military service. The entire piece enables visitors to sit and reflect in prayer, gathering healing from the creator as they remember. It is a small quiet oasis of babbling water, flapping cloths, and flickering flames celebrating our existence, situated within the center of our nation's Capitol. I placed some small satchels containing sage, sweetgrass, tobacco, and cedar attached to SAIGE's emblem at the memorial's base. I offered prayers for our active-duty service members, and veterans, for SAIGE, the nation, and our people's future.



Later, I talked to the memorial designer Mr. Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho), about his design and its significance. He stated that the memorial encapsulates the past, the present, and the future. He said past warriors would recognize it, today's warriors know it, and our grandchildren will understand it. He said he had watched me earlier place my prayer satchels at the base of the memorial and felt joy that prayers were being offered as he had intended. He hoped the lances would soon be covered in prayer cloths from all our veterans or their families.

Standing next to the memorial, I found Thomas H. Begay, the last World War II Navajo Code Talker. He told me about his time in Iwo Jima and how honored he was to be here today. Thomas enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps when he was 16 and was selected as a Code Talker. Thomas also served in Korea, surviving the



Continued on page 4

## National Native American Veterans Memorial (con't)



Battle of the Chosin Reservoir. During his service, he earned eight Bronze Stars! He told me about all the battles he had been in and the names of his lost comrades; he remembered them all. We posed together for pictures and said our goodbyes, but I pray it is not the last time I see him, for I have many more questions.

The time had finally come to form up for the parade, and it was a typical military endeavor. Hurry up, hurry up! FORM UP! And wait, and of course, the rain returned. Standing there, in formation, in the rain, with all these veterans and service members, I truly felt at home.

We assembled on 3rd Street West and Independence Avenue just behind the Capitol building. With Eagle Staffs raised and drizzle continuing, we walked through the American Indian Museum courtyard, past the new Veteran's Memorial. Honor Guard personnel carried tribal flags while other participants hoisted pictures of their veteran family members, while Cochiti hand drummers sang memorial songs as memories swirled around us. We were doing this for all of us.

We continued up Jefferson Drive and down Madison Avenue before ending up on the mall across the street from Union Square to a large meeting area. We all sat and waited for the guest speakers to arrive as the rain continued slowly. After some time, Mr. Ralph Zotigh (Kiowa) and Mr. Dennis Zotigh (Kiowa, San Juan Pueblo, and Santee) sang prayer songs. After the songs, the cheering crowd welcomed the emcees, American Indian Astronaut and veteran Mr. John Herrington (Chickasaw) and famed actor and veteran Mr. Wes Studi (Cherokee), as they took the stage.

Other guest speakers included the Lieutenant Governor Emeritus of the Chickasaw Nation, the Honorable Jefferson Keel (Chickasaw), Senator Daniel Sullivan, R-Alaska, Representative Sharice Davids (Ho-Chunk), D-Kansas, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Mr. Denis McDonough, the National Museum of the American Indian Director, Ms. Cynthia Chavez Lamar (San Felipe Pueblo, Hopi, Tewa, and Diné), Secretary of the Smithsonian and co-chair, Memorial Advisory Committee, Mr. Lonnie Bunch, and the memorial designer Mr. Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne and Arapaho). After all the speakers had finished, the time for the unveiling had finally come, and Mr. Pratt ignited the fire within the Memorial Ring. Prayer songs and drumbeats danced across the Capitol Mall.

The whole event was intense and awe-inspiring. I was in the presence of our greatest past and present American heroes. We veterans were being remembered and thanked by our nation. We, as a people, who hadn't been recognized by the very same nation, but who still stood to fight with that nation against tyranny, striving for ideals and principles this country is fiercely determined to achieve; freedom and equality for all. America is not a perfect nation, and I don't know if it ever will be, but as long as we are ready to defend its principles with a craving desire and prayers for victory, our children and future generations will be secured.



The Capitol and The National Native American Veterans Memorial

## SAIGE YOUTH TRACK

### SAIGE Student Alumni Featured at NTP

By JoAnn Brant, SAIGE Youth Track Coordinator

We are excited that this will be our first in-person meeting since the 2019 NTP held at the Niagara Falls Seneca Nation Resort. Our SAIGE student Alumni will be featured at the 2023 SAIGE NTP. They include **Julian Guerrero Jr.**, Director, Office of Indian Education, United States Department of Education. His talk will be titled, *From SAIGE Student to Agency Director*, **Kelly Berry**, Indigenous Associate at Kansas State University and **Taylor Morris**, Pharmacy



Julian Guerrero, Jr.

Clinical Coordinator at Claremore Indian Hospital, Indian Health Services. They all have stories to share about their time at SAIGE, their college experiences, career goals and how they persevered through the challenges in their life. Each of them gives back to their communities and families. I believe they are all positive role models for our future generation of students.

SAIGE believes that supporting indigenous scholars is planting seeds for the future of tribes. SAIGE offers the Student Program free for Native students from Tribal and mainstream colleges, universities, and high schools.

I look forward to meeting our 2023 SAIGE students from Haskell Indian Nation University, Northwest Indian College, University of New Mexico, Idaho State University, New Mexico State University, and Kansas State. I hope that you will all take time to interact with the students and share your job opportunities.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [brant.joann@epa.gov](mailto:brant.joann@epa.gov)

## SAIGE 20TH NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM OVERVIEW

by Lori Windle

SAIGE is very happy and anxious to be meeting in person again after three years of online training due to the pandemic. The River Spirit Casino Resort in Tulsa, Oklahoma has been extremely patient in holding this time and space for us to reunite. "Tribal Nations Soaring to New Heights" was the theme chosen since we are witnessing an unprecedented number of native people who are in high government positions and political appointments, in positions to advocate for tribal nations that have been woefully underserved in the past. Many other sectors in addition to government are also experiencing the benefits of native leaders and entrepreneurs who are enhancing progress and productivity in their areas.

We are fortunate to have speakers at our 2023 NTP who personify this theme. We are honored that the Director of the National Park Service, Charles Sams, (Umatilla), will be providing opening remarks in a virtual message to our attendees on Wednesday, June 21, the first full day. Arlando Teller (Dine') was recently appointed as the U.S. Department of



Charles Sams, Director of the National Park Service



Arlando Teller, US Department of Transportation Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, at the Great Lakes Tribal Economic Summit in October 2022 (Photo: Katy Batdorff for Tribal Business News)



Michael S. Regan, US EPA Administrator

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## SAIGE 20TH NATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAM OVERVIEW (con't)

Transportation's first-ever Assistant Secretary for Tribal Affairs, a newly created office, and will be opening the plenary session the following day.

We are quite pleased to have the U.S. EPA's Administrator, Michael S. Regan, delivering recorded remarks followed by a panel on the implications of the McGirt Supreme Court decision on tribes. This will have Federal Indian Law expert Mike McBride, of Crow and Dunlevy, and the Attorney General of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation, Geri Wisner. Michael Anderson, formerly of the Department of the Interior, now principal at Anderson Law, will be moderating this session.

As you may know, SAIGE has always supported and been extremely proud of its youth. We will have former SAIGE students attending who have gone on to do great things. Ryan Aguilar, a SAIGE student in 2015 is currently the Zuni Area Director for the Ancestral Lands Program through the Conservation Corps. In this position, he helps students get hands-on experience with agencies that is transferable to government careers. This year he's enriching the SAIGE Youth program by bringing students from his program to Tulsa.

We are also excited to have another SAIGE youth alumnus, Julian Guerrero, who attended in 2013 and 2014, who is now Director of the Office of Indian Education for the Department of Education. He will be speaking to the attendees about how his SAIGE experience interested him in a career in public service. The students this year will also have the added benefit of hearing from other former SAIGE students who have gone on to meaningful careers in and outside of government.

Our professional development and EEO/Diversity tracks will have practical information that will help attendees looking at improving their positions understand how to navigate the system successfully. We welcome back Cynthia Dunn of the IRS and Elaine Robles of the EPA who will help you level up your professionalism in all you do in the workplace.

Our Cultural and Natural Resources track and Indian Law/Indian Country track offer extremely interesting topics that will remain with you far beyond the days of the Training Program.

We are experiencing a surge in interest this year for the Career Fair so if you happen to be thinking about your options at this point in your career, there will be plenty of interesting agency exhibits to visit and engage them in discussion about what is available.

The shortened program due to the Juneteenth holiday created an opportunity to hold the Warrior's Society luncheon for everyone in attendance at the NTP, and we look forward to seeing you there. For more information on the program and to register, go to our site at [saigettraining.org](http://saigettraining.org). Skoden!



# NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURE

## Why Beads?

By Nieva Brock



All the colors of the rainbow and then some. Who does not love the beauty and splendor of native beaded regalia, jewelry, and other items. As an avid beader, my chin is just a bit higher and smile just a bit wider when I wear my beaded earrings. For me, beading brings me closer to those who came before me – my ancestors – and because it requires me to be still, it is a time of healing.

When I bead, I am one with my thoughts, feelings, and spirit. As I concentrate on each bead and its particular placement, I become lost in my own world, enjoy some prayer, and am at peace. The worries and concerns of the day fade as I create a new expression of my heritage and wonder who I will bless with these earrings.

According to the article on the Indians.org website, Beads help tell stories of the past of Native Americans, “ancestors of Native Americans in prehistoric times used beads as adornment in jewelry as well as a way to trade.” The article further shares that some tribes have “story bead” necklaces where symbols and figures were carved into flat pieces of stone and strung

**For me, beading brings me closer to those who came before me – my ancestors – and because it requires me to be still, it is a time of healing.**

with other beads. The necklaces illustrated stories handed down from generation to generation.

“Wood and bone have been used quite a bit in making beads. The materials were sturdy, lasted a long time and easily fashioned and carved. Semi-precious stones like turquoise were and still are often used in making Native America jewelry. Shells are also another popular material in crafting beads for adornment purposes.”



Have you ever wondered how Native American tribes came to include glass beads into their beautiful traditions? It turns out the introduction of glass beads (which we still use today) occurred in the 16th century. They came to us via European traders. They were known as “trade beads.” The Oregon History Project’s article “Trade Beads” states:

*Trade beads are representative of the glass beads traded between Euro-American fur traders and Native Americans throughout much of northern North America. Glass beads, produced primarily in Italy, Bohemia (modern-day Czech Republic), and*

*China, were a highly-valued commodity for trade in Native North America. For many Indian peoples, the ownership and display of beads was a mark of status, making them a popular trade good across the continent.*

*However, in northern North America, blue beads were particularly sought after, largely as a consequence of the difficulty in producing blue beads from naturally-available resources...*

*Compared to many other trading commodities, beads were fairly difficult to break, weren’t ruined by water or prolonged exposure to moisture, were compact and lightweight, and were eagerly traded throughout the region. At times, beads could even be used to broker passage through hostile territories or to settle conflicts by providing compensation to injured or insulted parties.*

According to PowWows.com, beading itself is “a cultural artifact” that not only teaches history, but still hold a spiritual significance. I believe that.

I challenge you to visit a Pow Wow this year (whether virtually or in person) and note the amazing beadwork on the dancers’ regalia. Someone put their heart and soul into that work. I know that you too will come to the conclusion that I did: that beadwork is not only beautiful, but supernatural.



Hahom (“thank you” in the Taino language.)

## IN MEMORIAL

Our SAIGE family is deeply saddened by the recent loss of three of our friends and long-time contributing members. We will continue to share many stories of our friends for the years to come, they will not be forgotten.



**Kathleen Bergeron** “walked on” late in March of 2023. Our hearts are heavy, and we are still in shock. Her friendship, positive attitude, quick laugh, and willingness to always help will be missed. She was a loving and proud woman. Family, friends, and community were always in her thoughts, conversations and her actions were always filled with them in mind. She was so proud of her family, her tribe, the United Houma Nation, and our SAIGE organization. She made many impacts in our world including SAIGE, as both a lifetime member and as a Director on the SAIGE Board. When Kathleen retired from FEMA she went to work for her tribe helping preserve their history and culture. She was a tireless advocate in her tribe's efforts to gain Federal Recognition. We will always hear her voice, her laugh, and carry her in our hearts!



**Don Coqayohomuwok Chapman** was welcomed to the Great Spirit Band in late November of 2022. Don was an incredibly talented musician, who played with the stars while here and now plays with the stars above. He was a member of SAIGE and attended many of our National Training Programs, where he presented and entertained us. He was highly intelligent, full of energy, and took pride in helping American Indian and Alaska Native America find financial success while working with our federal government. Don became a lifetime member of SAIGE while serving as the Senior Policy Advisor to the Secretary of Commerce, where he built the framework to keep serving both our country and communities the best he could. It will be the memories of his positive spirit, genuine smile, and open friendship that we will carry with us till the end of time.



**Sadé Heart of the Hawk**, began her spirit journey in early November of 2022. Sadé was a lifetime member of SAIGE and served as a Director on the SAIGE Board. She was a proud Mi'gmaq First Nation from Sturgeon Clan. Sadé was the founding member and medicine keeper of the New England States Two Spirit Society and very active with the Education Development Center. When Sadé retired as the Deputy Commissioner of Philadelphia's Department of Behavioral Health and Intellectual Disability Services, she continued to work and serve for several organizations. She tirelessly traveled all around the world working for the Zero Suicide Institute and being an advocate for all people and the many needed causes. Sadé was both larger than life and yet immediately became your Auntie upon meeting her. Her big heart and shared wisdom are gifts to us all. We will all be better humans for knowing her.



## SAIGE NEWS

**Duane Matt and Lori Windle** attended the Denver American Indian Commission Summit on November 11, 2022. They staffed the SAIGE booth and Duane gave a short presentation on SAIGE. The purpose of the summit was to allow Native serving organizations in the Denver Metro to present their work. Janeen Comenote from the National Urban Indian Family Coalition was the keynote speaker. Participants included the Denver Indian Center, Native American Bank, JSI, Denver Zoo and Native American Rights Fund.







Duane Matt and Lori Windle staffing the booth at the Denver American Indian Commission Summit.

**Rory Wheeler**, former SAIGE Student, received the Prestigious Udall Native American Congressional Internship. [https://www.law.msu.edu/news/2023/wheeler\\_rory\\_native\\_american\\_congressional\\_internship.html](https://www.law.msu.edu/news/2023/wheeler_rory_native_american_congressional_internship.html)

**Robin Hairston**, former SAIGE BOD member and band, Blue Mountain Tribe perform at largest Pow Wow in the World: <https://nativenewsonline.net/arts-entertainment/blue-mountain-tribe-s-path-to-the-playing-the-world-s-largest-powwow>



**Georgia Madrid**, SAIGE Lifetime Member, is participating in the FEEA Feds in Motion Challenge 37 miles in 37 days. She has already surpassed the goal. Learn more about the challenge at: <https://feea.org/support/feds-in-motion-challenge/>



### Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement

At OSMRE, we ensure that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment and assure that the land is restored to beneficial use. We mitigate the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

Interns and recent graduates are needed nationwide. Come join our team:  
<https://www.osmre.gov/get-involved>



## SAIGE PARTNERSHIPS - OSMRE

*By Allison Travers, Tribal Liaison, OSMRE*

The Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE) is a bureau within the Department of the Interior whose mission is to carry out the requirements of the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) in cooperation with State and Tribal partners. OSMRE established a nationwide program to protect the public and the environment from the adverse effects of surface coal mining operations, ensuring that coal mines are operated in a manner that protects citizens and the environment during mining, that the land is restored to beneficial use following mining, and mitigating the effects of past mining by aggressively pursuing the reclamation of abandoned coal mines.

OSMRE is the regulatory authority on all coal mining and reclamation operations located on “Indian Lands,” defined by SMCRA as all lands, including mineral interests, within the exterior boundaries of any Federal Indian reservation. Currently, this includes all mining and reclamation operations located on the Cherokee, Choctaw, Crow, Hopi, Muscogee, Navajo, and Ute Mountain Ute reservations and all lands supervised by those Tribes.

OSMRE offers various service and learning opportunities for students, recent graduates, and the public at large to get involved and make a difference. Check out the [Stewards Individual Placement Program](#) for more information!

The [OSMRE Semester Internship Program](#) provides a career exploration opportunity for undergraduate and graduate students, as well as recent graduates who have received their degree in the past two years. Interns work in OSMRE headquarters, regional offices and field offices, gaining professional experience with a federal regulatory agency. Interns conduct research assignments

and participate in projects with OSMRE staff focusing on a variety of subjects, from GIS and mine mapping to budget analysis and communications outreach development.

The [OSMRE Volunteers in Service to America \(VISTA\)](#) Program, established in 2002 through a partnership with AmeriCorps VISTA and the Stewards Individual Placement Program, has supported over 1,000 VISTAs across the country. The OSMRE/VISTA program places individuals who have recently graduated in communities impacted by legacy mining practices and the decline in coal mining employment. OSMRE/VISTA projects promote economic redevelopment, community engagement, and environmental stewardship. Whether it’s driving volunteer engagement efforts to restore a watershed or helping to improve access to healthy food, OSMRE/VISTAs are committed to reinvigorating rural communities in America.

The [OSMRE AmeriCorps Program](#) has connected participants to direct-service projects in support of OSMRE’s mission since 2012. OSMRE/AmeriCorps members work directly with OSMRE staff and gain professional experience in a federal regulatory agency, while developing skills and abilities in fields of their interest, including water monitoring, invasive species removal, mine mapping, and more. The OSMRE/AmeriCorps Program has helped OSMRE develop talent and service projects that have made a lasting impact on the agency, with some going on to full-time employment with OSMRE.

For more information about OSMRE see our website at <https://www.osmre.gov>.



# NOTEWORTHY NIFA PRIORITY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## HIRING AND RECRUITMENT

The agency now has a full staff of highly qualified employees thriving in a remote work environment. NIFA offers a suite of remote work equipment, training and support to ensure employees have the tools they need to succeed.

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

NIFA Equal Opportunity staff is piloting a new program, DEIA Forward, in conjunction with the Southern Rural Development Center at Mississippi State University. It is a pilot training program and instrument of institutional cultural transformation.

## HIRING AND RECRUITMENT

NIFA implemented several new efforts to address employee needs for Work Life Balance including Meeting-Free Fridays, Midweek Mindfulness, Thoughtful Thursday, and Healthy Happenings.

## HIRING AND RECRUITMENT

To promote professional development and training opportunities, NIFA established a Learning & Development team to create and deliver training in a remote environment to enhance job satisfaction for employees.

**LEARN MORE AT [NIFA.USDA.GOV](https://nifa.usda.gov)**



USDA IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER,  
EMPLOYER AND LENDER

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Native Youth Climate Adaptation Leadership Congress (NYCALC), June 25-30, 2023, Sheperdstown, West Virginia – <https://www.nycalc.org/>

Unity Inc National Conference, June 30-July 4, 2023, Washington, DC – [www.unityinc.org](http://www.unityinc.org)

Federally Employed Women (FEW), July 9-13, 2023, Columbus, OH - <https://www.few.org/national-training-program/>

Blacks In Government 2023 National Training Institute, August 28-31, 2023, National Harbor, MD – <https://bignti.org/>


National Tribal & Indigenous Climate Conference, August 29-September 1, 2023, St. Paul, MN and online – <https://sites.google.com/view/nticc-itep/home>

AISES National Conference, October 19-21, 2023 in Spokane, WA – [www.aises.org](http://www.aises.org)

SACNAS NDISTM Conference, October 26-28, 2023 in Portland, OR – [www.sacnas.org](http://www.sacnas.org)

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Nation Depends on YOU.**

Your perspective is mission critical,  
see where you can join us at [CIA.gov/careers](https://cia.gov/careers)

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[cia.gov/careers](https://cia.gov/careers)

## Talking Leaf Newsletter

TALKING LEAF NEWSLETTER is issued twice a year - Spring and Fall. Do you want to contribute to the newsletter? SAIGE welcomes your stories, suggestions, and ideas. Please contact Georgia Madrid at [newsletter@saige.org](mailto:newsletter@saige.org) for information and newsletter guidelines.

## About SAIGE

The Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAIGE) is the first national non-profit organization representing American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) Federal, Tribal, State and local government employees. Formed in 2002, SAIGE provides a forum on the issues, challenges and opportunities of American Indian Tribal Nations and the government workforce, and to foster a professional network among AI/AN government employees.

JOIN THE SAIGE NETWORK

[info@saige.org](mailto:info@saige.org)

[www.saige.org](http://www.saige.org)



## SAIGE Board of Directors

### OFFICER POSITIONS

**Chair:** Fredericka Joseph (Kaw Nation)

**Vice Chair:** Jay Spaan (Cherokee Nation)

**Secretary:** Luke Jones (Chickahomeny and Pamunkey Indians of Virginia)

**Treasurer:** Sue Morris (Comanche Nation of Oklahoma)

### MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Ed Blauvelt (Muskogee/Mohawk Descent)

Nieva Brock (Higuayagua Taino)

Tilford Brown (Diné)

Carl Etsitty (Diné (Navajo Nation))

Phil Hamel

Duane Matt (Confederated Salish Kootenai and Pend D 'Oreille)

Georgie Reynolds

Lori Windle (White Earth Chippewa)



*Society of American Indian  
Government Employees*

<https://saige.org/home/board-members/>