



Department of Defense Tribal Engagement Guidebook

Project # CR-21-001

Background:

The Department of Defense (DoD) Legacy Resource Management Program funded this project to develop a Tribal Engagement Guidebook as a resource to aid DoD personnel who engage with or work on matters of concern to Tribes. Such personnel may include commanders, cultural resource professionals, natural resource professionals, Tribal liaisons, legal counsel, public affairs and protocol staff, and more, as duties require.

Objective:

The project's objective was to create a user-friendly guidebook for DoD tribal engagement. The guidebook's authors intended to provide DoD personnel with tools to successfully engage with federally recognized Tribes by promoting:

- Consistent language in communications with federally recognized Tribes,
- Effective management strategies of Tribal resources on DoD-managed lands, and
- Compassionate and respectful approaches to establishing and maintaining Government-to-Government relationships.

The guidebook's authors sought to aid installation managers as they navigate Tribal engagements and create relationships with Tribes specific to their region and/or installation. The authors also worked to collect best practices and protocols for engaging with federally recognized Tribes.

Summary of Approach:

The authors coordinated with a large and diverse group of Cultural Resources Management experts across all branches of DoD and organizations to develop the guidebook. The authors also compiled relevant laws, regulations, DoD and military policies, and Tribal protocols in their research. The authors developed comprehensive tools for DoD agencies' use in meeting their Federal Trust Responsibilities to federally recognized Tribes. For the guidebook, the authors obtained information on:

- Tribal sovereignty and Federal Trust Responsibility,
- Tribal liaison training and professional development,
- the difference between collaboration,

consultation, and coordination in Government-to-Government communication,

- effective methods of conducting Tribal engagement, and
- how Government-to-Government relationships can be put into practice.

Benefit:

The guidebook offers DoD personnel a detailed reference guide to assist them in the meeting Federal Trust Responsibilities and developing Government-to-Government relationships with Tribes in their respective Area of Responsibility. The guidebook also provides a standardized and replicable process for engagement, collaboration, and consultation with federally recognized Tribes in the United States. This may result in a consistent, successful, and technical approach across the DoD.

Accomplishments:

The final guidebook contains useful historical background and legal references; a step-by-step guide on how to successfully engage, outreach, and conduct consultation with federally recognized Tribes; as well as a few "success" stories highlighting DoD and Tribal positive relationship building.

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