



STEWARDS OF OUR EARTH All of God's Creation

Social Justice Committee, Holy Cross Parish, Mt. Airy, January 22, 2023

Indigenous Lands in Indigenous Hands – Part 2

“Native tribes have held sacred stewardship over this land for countless generations. U.S. history is rife with atrocities against tribal communities through relentless colonization and expansion. And it continues: Across the United States, hundreds of Indigenous sacred sites on federal lands — places of harvest, medicines, ceremony, burial, and creation — are threatened and desecrated by harmful, irreparable development projects like pipelines, mining activities, and resource extraction.

U.S. law fails to adequately protect Indigenous people's interests — on and off reservations. But we have a chance to fix that. **Two key bills in Congress would correct these injustices** and ensure that Native people have a seat at the decision-making table when it comes to managing and protecting sacred and cultural sites....

The **Advancing Tribal Parity on Public Lands Act** (H.R. 8108/S.4421) will restore tribal sovereignty by prohibiting the sale of public land containing tribal cultural sites and increase consultation with tribal nations on federal public land use.

The **Tribal Cultural Areas Protection Act** (H.R. 8109/S.4423) will establish a national system of culturally significant sites on public lands and further safeguard tribal nations' efforts to protect and manage their sacred sites....

Together, these bills will enshrine much needed protections into federal law and safeguard the sovereignty of Tribal communities across the land. (Sara Haghdoosti, *Win Without War*, 11/26/22)

While we cannot change the past, we have the power to shape the future. [Please add your name to tell Congress to pass the Advancing Tribal Parity on Public Lands Act and the Tribal Cultural Areas Protection Act now.](#)

In Philadelphia this past September, Indigenous people from two dozen tribes gathered for a traditional powwow to commemorate the **1682 Treaty of Shackamaxon**. “The Lenape tribe signed a treaty and were given a bunch of land and properties in this area that have now been all taken away from them, as the treaty was broken,” said Frank Adams, chief of the Upper Mattaponi Tribe.

“Our people are never found, because they're never looked for,” said Cornelia Dimalanta, executive director of the Native American House Alliance, the nonprofit that hosted the powwow. “That's why we do this — to symbolize that we are here.”

“The Alliance, founded in 2019, provides social services to the more than 6,000 Indigenous people living in the Philadelphia area today. In addition to direct services, the organization is pushing Philadelphia to create a commission for Native Americans to fund job development, education, and housing.” (Excerpted from Zoe Greenberg, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, September 20, 2022)

“I have felt the greatest strength in recognizing that it is my own anger against injustice where God is showing Himself. Our desire to see wrongs righted, our yearning for good to come amidst tragedy—these are the ways in which God reminds us that He is near. God is in our desire for reconciliation and in our calls for justice. God is present in the doubt felt by the perpetrators of harm, and He is behind us when we push for our humanity. It is easy to forget that in its own way, these are the signs and wonders we've been waiting for all along.” (Maka Black Elk, Ignatian Solidarity Network Series, 3/28/22)