



INDIAN COUNTRY SNAPSHOT:

Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership

Managed by the non-profit Lomakatsi Restoration Project, ITERP systematically builds the technical, managerial, and administrative capacity of participating Tribal Nations in rural Oregon, Idaho, and northern California to sustainably advance their ecosystem restoration priorities on their ancestral lands through tribal workforce training and the creation of related jobs “and tribal community business infrastructure.”¹ Working with Lomakatsi’s Native staff, each participating Nation customizes the workforce training curricula that its eligible citizens receive in its tribal priority areas, which include wildland firefighting, forest restoration, watershed and wetland restoration, invasive species management, and cultural resource monitoring.² Through intensive, hands-on training, participants earn nationally recognized professional certifications and learn how to use Traditional Indigenous Ecological Knowledge principles to responsibly steward the land as their ancestors once did.³ A federal Indian Youth Indian Service Corps partner, Lomakatsi’s most rigorous training option is its Tribal Ecological Forestry Training Program, in which ITERP-connected trainees become full-time, paid Lomakatsi employees for one year, during which they obtain a comprehensive suite of professional certifications and receive wrap-around support services to set them firmly on the path to career success.⁴ Successful trainees are then channeled into ecological restoration jobs with their Tribal Nations, relevant federal agencies, and Lomakatsi itself. Through ITERP, Lomakatsi also partners with Tribal Nations to support some trainees in starting profitable businesses in the ecological restoration industry.⁵ In addition to workforce training, participation in ITERP expands the ecological restoration funding available to Tribal Nations who often lack the capacity to successfully pursue funding themselves, as Lomakatsi applies on their behalf and then “awards back” funding to support each Nation’s priority ecological restoration projects, including the creation of critical staff positions that are typically filled with tribal citizens trained through the ITERP initiative.⁶ For its participating Tribal Nations, ITERP provides tribal citizens with “education, experience, and a foot in the door” to the ecological restoration field *on their own lands*, things they otherwise would need to move away to gain.⁷

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- ¹ Lomakatsi Restoration Partnership (LRP), *Tribal Youth Ecological Forestry Training Program Curriculum 2022-2023*, 2023, p. 6; LRP, “Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership” webpage (accessed September 23, 2024); LRP, *Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership Learning Summit Summary Report (Draft)*, November 14-16, 2023, p. 6. According to Lomakatsi, ITERP “is committed to the creation of ecological restoration jobs and the incubation of tribal businesses, supporting tribal members to work on their time immemorial, ancestral land bases as the first, best stewards” (LRP, “Inter-Tribal Ecosystem Restoration Partnership” webpage). Established nearly 30 years ago, the Lomakatsi Restoration Project is “a tribally affiliated, multicultural ecosystem restoration and workforce development nonprofit organization” (LRP, *Lomakatsi Inter-Tribal Indian Youth Service Corps*, August 2024, p. 1).
- ² Belinda Brown, Tribal Partnerships Director, Lomakatsi Restoration Project Conversation with NCAI, September 23, 2024; United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service, Supplemental Project Agreement to Master Participating Agreement # 24-PA-11062771-167 Between Lomakatsi Restoration Project and the USDA Forest Service, Mt. Hood National Forest, June 2024, p. 1; LRP, *Tribal Youth Ecological Forestry Training Program Summer 2021 Curriculum*, 2021, p. 2. Focused on cultivating the next generation of ecosystem stewards, the ITERP-related training partnerships target tribal citizens between the ages of 18 and 30, with an exception for Native veterans up to the age of 35 for some of its programs.
- ³ According to Lomakatsi, training participants “develop professional skills, a sense of responsibility and self-sufficiency, a long-term community service and stewardship ethic, knowledge and increased interest in natural resource academic study, and the ability to obtain future employment in natural resource management” (LRP, “Tribal Youth Ecological Forestry Training Program” webpage (<https://lomakatsi.org/project/tribal-youth/>), accessed September 23, 2024).
- ⁴ As an Indian Youth Service Corps partner, Lomakatsi is able to leverage federal investments through long-term agreements with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of the Interior. The professional certifications include ecological restoration, wildland fire, chainsaw operation, cultural resource monitoring, and First Aid/CPR. According to Lomakatsi, this longer program format, which includes staff providing mentorship and life skill coaching, “ensures more successful outcomes for indigenous participants facing the ongoing impacts of colonization” (LRP, *Lomakatsi Inter-Tribal Indian Youth Service Corps*, August 2024, p. 1). Lomakatsi recently expanded its workforce training programming for its partner Tribal Nations with the launch of its Inter-Tribal Indian Youth Service Corps, which is “open to tribal and multicultural young adults ages 18-30 (and up to age 35 for veterans). As an IYSC partner, Lomakatsi is authorized to certify the 640 hours of work on federal and tribal lands required for participants to earn Public Land Corps Act non-competitive hiring eligibility, supporting pathways to careers with federal agencies” (Ibid.).
- ⁵ Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Conversation with NCAI, September 23, 2024. To deepen the institutional capacity of the tribal ecological restoration workforces it supports through ITERP, in 2023 Lomakatsi held its ITERP Peer-to-Peer Learning Summit, which “brought together nearly 300 people, including tribal leaders, elders, and cultural practitioners – representing 22 tribes from within and around Oregon – and regional and national state and federal agency, nonprofit, higher education, and industry leadership to discuss how to elevate tribal partnerships in collaborative forest and watershed restoration initiatives” (LRP, *2023 Highlights*, p. 4 (<https://lomakatsi.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2023-Lomakatsi-Highlights-Digital.pdf>), accessed September 23, 2024)).
- ⁶ Marko Bey, Founder & Executive Director, Lomakatsi Restoration Project, Conversation with NCAI, September 23, 2024.
- ⁷ Maria Liz Zendejas, Council Member, Fort Bidwell Indian Community, Correspondence with NCAI, October 4, 2024.