



# USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

**Nashville, TN Office**  
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100  
Nashville, TN 37214  
P: 615-872-7900 | F: 615-872-7417

**Washington, DC Office**  
1730 Rhode Island Ave., NW, Suite 210  
Washington, DC 20036

## USET SPF Resolution No. 2024 SPF:005

### **SUPPORT FOR THE CREATION OF A TRIBAL LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET SPF Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribal Nation, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribal Nations' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribal Nations are uniquely connected to the land. Many Tribal cultures, food sources, ceremonies, and economies are heavily reliant on the ecosystems for resources such as the use of fish, wildlife, and native plants; and
- WHEREAS,** the Tribal Nations located in the USET SPF region have a lengthier history when it comes to the systematic dispossession of our lands as a result of hundreds of years of federal (and before that, colonial) policies, which have left a majority of USET SPF Tribal Nations with only a fraction of their homelands and some landless; and
- WHEREAS,** all Tribal Nations, whatever their historical circumstances, need and deserve a stable land base, sufficient to support robust Tribal self-government, cultural preservation and economic development, and the federal government should ensure every Tribal Nation has the opportunity to restore its homelands; and
- WHEREAS,** the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) was established by Congress in 1964 to safeguard our natural areas, water resources and cultural heritage, and to provide recreation opportunities to all Americans. Using zero taxpayer dollars, the LWCF invests earnings from offshore oil and gas leasing to help strengthen communities, preserve history and protect national endowment of lands and waters; and
- WHEREAS,** the LWCF has the potential to be one source of federal funding through which Tribal Nations can restore and protect our ancestral homelands and the cultural lifeways that they sustain; and
- WHEREAS,** a recent report, *Tribal Access to the Land and Water Conservation Fund*, was commissioned by The Wilderness Society and the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers; and
- WHEREAS,** the report documented the deep disparities in access to LWCF funds from Tribal Nations and, further, that only a shameful 0.2 percent of grant awards have ever been distributed to federally-recognized Tribal Nations in the history of this program; and
- WHEREAS,** the report also found considerable barriers to accessing LWCF funds by Tribal Nations that are adverse to Tribal Sovereignty that included the requirement of matching funding, the

considerable capacity required to apply and manage LWCF grant funds, and the lack of Tribal perspectives, values, and priorities regarding conservation, recreation, and public access criteria which govern how these funds are used in our ancestral homelands; and

**WHEREAS,** in the President's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Request, the Biden Administration proposed \$8 million for the establishment of a Tribal LWCF at the Department of the Interior; and

**WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it

**RESOLVED** the USET SPF Board of Directors endorses the report recommendations calling for a stand-alone Tribal Land and Water Conservation Fund with an allocation program for Tribal Nations that addresses barriers to access; and be it further

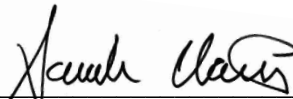
**RESOLVED** the USET SPF Board of Directors urges Congress to allocate \$8 million for a Tribal Land and Water Conservation Fund in any final Fiscal Year 2025 appropriations legislation.

#### CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting held in Arlington, VA at which a quorum was present on March 29, 2024.



Chief Kirk E. Francis, Sr., President  
United South and Eastern Tribes  
Sovereignty Protection Fund



Vice Chairwoman Sarah Harris, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes  
Sovereignty Protection Fund