



Tribal Advisory Council

July 2024



Arthur "Butch" Blazer

Arthur "Butch" Blazer, a member of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, was raised on the beautiful 463,000 acre Mescalero reservation, which is located in South-central New Mexico. Upon his graduation from New Mexico State University ('75) with a BS Degree in Range Science, he returned home to embark on what has turned out to be a very successful career.

In January of 2003, Butch temporarily left federal service to accept an appointment by former Governor Bill Richardson to the position of New Mexico State Forester. As the first ever Native American in this position, Blazer successfully initiated many positive changes within the State during his eight-year tenure, including the development of a unique state-wide forest and watershed health plan.

In 2011, Blazer accepted an appointment from President Obama to serve as Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and the Environment within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) where he provided oversight and direction to the U.S. Forest Service. He retired in May 2016 having served 32 years with the federal government including a distinguished 27-year career with the U.S. Department of Interior (BIA), serving in various executive management positions, while also participating in important natural resources related Non-profits (i.e. National Wildlife Federation, Native American Fish & Wildlife Society, etc.)

In November of 2017, Butch was elected by his tribal members as the President of the Mescalero Apache Tribe. He served in this position for his two-year term, providing executive leadership to the Mescalero Tribal Council and the Tribal constituency.

Over the course of his diverse career, Blazer has and continues to serve on numerous Boards, Councils and working groups that have assisted Tribal Leadership in addressing key issues and concerns within Indian Country.



John S. Banks

John Banks retired on 9/30/2021 from the position of Director of the Department of Natural Resources for the Penobscot Indian Nation, a federally recognized Indian Tribe in Maine. Mr. Banks had served the Penobscot Nation in this capacity since 1980, following the enactment of the Maine Indian Land Claims settlement Act of 1980. As Natural Resources Director, Mr. Banks developed and administered a comprehensive Natural Resources management program for his tribe, which advances an integrated management approach, in recognition of the inter-connectedness of all things in the natural world. Mr. Banks has served on many local, regional, and national organization boards including the National Tribal Environmental Council, Native American Fish and Wildlife Society, National Indian Policy Center, and the Tribal Operations Committee with USEPA.

Mr. Banks has a BS degree in Forest Protection from the University of Maine, where he was awarded an Indian Fellowship from the Office of Indian Education in Washington DC.

Mr. Banks has been awarded the 2019 Distinguished Alumnus from the University of Maine's School of Forest Resources.



Karen Diver

Karen Diver is currently serving as the inaugural Senior Advisor to the President for Native American Affairs at the University of Minnesota. Her previous roles in higher education included serving as a Faculty Fellow for Inclusive Excellence at the College of St. Scholastica, and as faculty with the Masters in Tribal Administration and Governance at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Karen was also an appointee of President Obama as the Special Assistant to the President for Native American Affairs. As part of the Domestic Policy Council from November 2015 until the end of the Administration. Karen served as Chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa from 2007 -2015, and Executive Director of the YWCA of Duluth from 1992-2003. Her current service includes the Great Lakes Fishery Commission as a US Commissioner, and member of the Climate Related Financial Risk Advisory Committee of the Financial Stability Oversight Council at the Department of Treasury. She is a member of the Board of Governors for the Honoring Nations Program with the Harvard Kennedy School Project for Indigenous Governance and Development. She has a Bachelors in Economics from the University of Minnesota, Duluth, and a Masters in Public Administration from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



Shaun M. Grassel

Dr. Shaun Grassel is the CEO of the Buffalo Nations Grasslands Alliance – a Native-led nonprofit dedicated to supporting Native nations in the Northern Great Plains with building capacity within tribal fish and wildlife programs, building nature-based economies, and conserving grasslands. Shaun is an enrolled member of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe and was a Wildlife Biologist for his Tribe for 25 years. Shaun’s experience includes creating fish, wildlife, and habitat restoration programs, conducting research, administering programs, advocacy, and fundraising.



Koa Kaulukukui

Koalani Kaulukukui-Barbee (Koa) has dedicated her career and personal life to protecting the environment and using the law to effectuate positive change. She obtained a J.D. and Certificate in Environmental Law from the William S. Richardson School of Law in 2006, and is licensed to practice law in Hawaii and Washington State. As Counsel for Environmental Law and Native Rights at the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, Koa assisted with cases at the intersection of Native Hawaiian rights and natural resource law, such as helping to restore freshwater to streams for kalo (a staple Hawaiian food) and native species habitat. Koa also helped tackle many of Hawaii's environmental issues as Vice-President of Conservation Council for Hawaii, former President of KAHEA: The Hawaiian-Environmental Alliance, and former member of the state Environmental Council.

As an associate attorney with Earthjustice's Mid-Pacific office, she helped secure an injunction requiring the U.S. Navy to use protections to reduce harm to marine mammals from high intensity sonar around the Hawaiian Islands. In another case, she files a motion that resulted in the State beginning to install a fence that scientists say was necessary to stop the steep decline in the critically endangered Palila bird population on Mauna Kea.

Koa currently works for the Washington State Attorney General's Office, Division of Ecology, dealing with hazardous and nuclear waste cleanup issues.



Stevie Kapanui Parsons

Stevie Kapanui Parsons' is rooted in her Native Hawaiian (*Kanaka Ma'ole*) who was born and raised in Hawaii. She is also of Maori and Taino descent. As a native Hawaiian, conservation values have been ingrained since birth. She has lived her life trying to incorporate the native values of *malama 'aina* and *lokahi*, or, balance and love for nature and humans; an understanding that whatever one does to the land or the ocean's ecosystem, in turn affects us.

'Aina, or love of the land, includes the Hawaiian belief that land and fresh water are not mere commodities but are a vital core to our existence as human beings. This includes a commitment to care, protect, and consider future generations in all land and water decisions. It is a holistic perspective in which one never takes too much, only what is needed and eventually one gives back what is taken and one recognizes the coexistence between organisms and ecosystems.

Stevie relocated to Oregon thirteen years ago and has for the last five years been active in speaking out and testifying for among other things, the importance of wild spaces to our well-being, salmon and wildlife habitat, fresh water, and against oil trains in the gorge. Stevie is committed to and actively recruits women, young people and minorities into the hunting and fishing fold as well as discussions in the board room. She brings her love of food and previous chef experiences to the table as she invites, teaches, and uses food as a way of bringing people of different interests, cultures, and political beliefs to the table, while calling attention to and raising money to fund current issues. She is also an avid fisherman, elk hunter and gardener who also hunts mushrooms and not only catches the seafood and wild meat, but grows all the family's fruits and vegetables – all sustainably with a love and appreciation for the land.

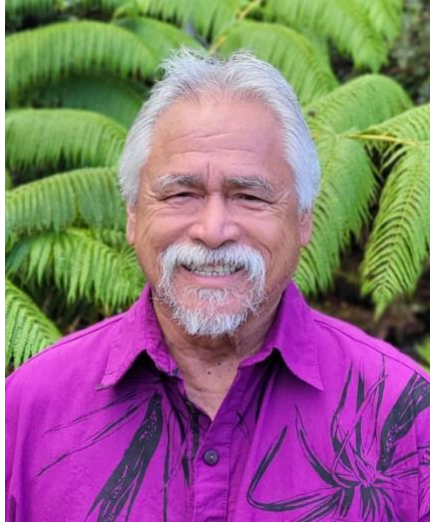


Gloria Tom

Gloria Tom is the Director of the Navajo Nation Department of Fish and Wildlife (NNDFW) in Window Rock, Arizona. (The Navajo Nation's territory covers 27,425 square miles in northeastern Arizona, southeastern Utah, and northwestern New Mexico. This is the largest land area retained by a U.S. tribe.) Gloria has worked with NNDFW for over 20 years and has also previously worked for the United States Department of Agriculture and the San Carlos Apache Tribe. Gloria has brought to the Department a deep emphasis on both outreach and education. As an example, under Gloria's leadership NNDFW organized a summit in 2014 to educate and inform local chapter leadership about wildlife management. NNDFW has also established for the Navajo Nation the only tribal zoo in the United States. It provides environmental and ecological education, and its animals are all rescue animals of species important to the Navajo people (www.navajozoo.org).

National Wildlife Federation staff has worked with Gloria on endangered species issues and climate adaptation. She is well respected throughout the conservation community and is very active in both tribal and non-tribal coalitions and forums.

Gloria has a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Management from the University of Arizona. She is originally from Fort Defiance and makes her home in St. Michaels, Arizona, while working at the Navajo Nation's capital in Window Rock.



Charles K. H. Young

Charles Young was born and raised in Honolulu on the island of O‘ahu. Born before Statehood in the Territory of Hawaii, Young grew up at a time of great change for Hawai‘i and in particular for Native Hawaiians. He graduated from Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo Ca. in 1970 where he earned a BS degree in Mechanical Engineering. Young returned to Honolulu and soon after moved to Hawai‘i Island the birthplace of his mother where he now lives in the Ahupua‘a of Kealia in South Kona. During his corporate career Young incorporated many of his cultural learnings into his decision making and retired from The Hershey Company in 2013 as a plant manager.

His parents encouraged him to “count your blessings” and “give back” to the communities that you serve which inspired his devotion toward community service. He was appointed by the late Sen. Dan Inouye to represent native Hawaiian interests on the building of new telescopes on Mauna Kea and on the Saddle Road Task force which helped guide the construction of a major military thoroughfare built on public lands. Young helped co-found 2 non-profits and 1 for profit corporations whose mission statements are primarily focused on including Native Hawaiian customary and traditional practices as placed based resource management tools.

Young serves on various State and County advisory councils related to resource management and devotes much of his efforts toward the policies and decision making processes that influence or determine natural resource management in Hawaii. He serves as the Hawaii Island Po‘o for the Aha Moku Council housed within the Hawaii State Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). The DLNR is responsible for managing all the public lands in Hawaii.

Recognizing that protecting our natural resources respects his heritage and his obligations to his ancestors, Young also recognizes that he must visualize the future of Hawaii through the eyes of his Mo‘opuna (grandchildren).