

# TRIBAL AGRICULTURE FELLOWSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23 ACADEMIC YEAR



2022 TAFellow Santana Nez  
during her clinical rotation  
as a Doctor of Veterinary  
Medicine student



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## A WORD FROM TAF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NICOLE DE VON

The creation of the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship was a merging of true hearts, minds, and spirits. I want to thank our TAF Board of Directors and NAAF (Native American Agriculture Fund) staff for all their work to stand the TAFellows Program up before being hired as the inaugural Executive Director; the work you did truly set us up for success. When I started in May of 2022, I had the ability to start working immediately with our first-ever TAFellows cohort.

We refer to our ancestors as “the original stewards of this land” because, as Native people, we have always had a connection to “place.” Today, our young people are finding innovative ways to revitalize and carry on traditional agricultural practices. They see the world through an indigenous lens, and that lens is powerful.

Our mission at the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship is to preserve and promote the legacy of agriculture in Tribal communities. Our Fellowship was created to support the next generation of agricultural leaders – we have students enveloped in many different areas of agriculture, but they see the connection to all. Some are studying land management and conservation, some are studying Native food sovereignty, and others are becoming veterinarians. No matter what our students are studying, they all believe that preserving our communities through agriculture is important, not just for our communities but for everyone.

Over the past year, it has been amazing getting to know our TAFellows. We've connected with them during monthly meetings, where they hear from industry leaders about work experiences and job opportunities they may want to pursue after graduation. We also provide students with academic enrichment funds that they can utilize for professional development opportunities relevant to their career goals. Some students have used the funds to attend conferences, and others have used the funds for tools or activities that enhance their education outside of the classroom.

Our staff had the opportunity to attend several conferences last year, each being important to our program’s development. We created relationships with individuals and organizations that will benefit our students and our organization for years to come.

After another successful application cycle in 2023, we will add eight additional students to the Tribal Agriculture Fellowship. Late this summer, we plan to have our first official Fellowship retreat, bringing together our current Fellows, new Fellows, and staff for the first time since TAF was established. As our students graduate, we will establish a TAF Alumni program, pairing future students with our alumni as mentors. We learned so much in our first year, and I am excited to see what the future holds!

All my best,

*Nicole De Von*



# ABOUT TAF



2022 TAFellow Brendan Walker as a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine student

## OUR VISION

WE NEED TO START BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATIVE AGRICULTURE

Our vision is to empower Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students pursuing technical, undergraduate, and graduate degrees in agriculture as next gen leaders.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the TAF is to create opportunities for students to advance their education with the purpose of preserving and promoting the legacy of agriculture in Tribal communities.

## WHO WE SERVE

We serve college students who are Native American, Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian pursuing degrees in agriculture. The students must be enrolled in graduate, undergraduate, or career and technical education (CTE) programs at accredited institutions.

Students must be a member or descendant of a Tribe or Indigenous community. Regardless of enrollment status, students must have strong cultural ties to a tribal community.

TAF has helped me by simply lifting a financial burden so that I can focus more on my education and dissertation. I enjoy meeting with the TAF staff and my cohort for updates on their educational/professional journeys. It is sometimes isolating in academia, where you have little to no Indigenous mentors or peers who strive to serve our tribal communities.

**TAFellow  
Nicole Benally (Navajo)**

Pursuing Ph.D. in Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana

# TAF BY THE NUMBERS

Ten students were awarded fellowships to advance their education and careers in agriculture-related fields. This cohort is comprised of future educators, scientists, lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, and cultural knowledge keepers, aiming to foster sustainability within Tribal and Indigenous communities.



## 10 FELLOWS

TAF currently supports ten fellows pursuing degrees in agriculture business, agriculture education, agriculture mechanics, animal science, forestry, geography, and veterinary medicine.



## AFFILIATIONS

Chickasaw, Lumbee, Navajo, Osage, 'Ōiwi [Native Hawaiian], and Potawatomi Nation



## EDUCATION

Our current cohort attends **8** different universities and education systems.



## STATES

Our fellows represent **6** different states: Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, New Mexico, North Carolina, and Oklahoma



# TAF IN YEAR ONE



Tribal Agriculture Fellowship was officially established by its Board of Directors in December 2021.

In March 2022, the Board of Directors and a committee of external evaluators selected the inaugural cohort of TAFellows.

In May 2022, TAF hired its first Executive Director, Nicole DeVon.

By August 2022, TAF was able to fund its first cohort of students and hired Program Coordinator April Parrott.

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## CONFERENCES ATTENDED IN 2022

- American Farm Bureau Convention
- AISES\*
- FALCON\*\*
- Intertribal Ag Council Conference
- National FFA
- National Western Livestock Show
- Native Women in Ag & Natural Resources

\*American Indian Science and Engineering Society

\*\* First Americans Land-Grant Consortium

\$325,000

AWARDED TO  
TAFellows IN 2022

\$530,000

TO BE AWARDED  
IN 2023

# OUR 2022 FELLOWS



## MARQUEL BEGAY (DINE' [NAVAJO])

Graduate | University of Arizona

Major: Ecology, Management, and Restoration of Rangelands.

Focus within major: Ecological restoration and community-based land management planning on the Navajo Nation.



## NICOLE BENALLY (NAVAJO)

Graduate | University of Montana

Major: Forestry & Conservation Sciences

Focus within major: Indigenous Food Sovereignty



## MADDYLON BURRIS (CHICKASAW)

CTE | Redlands Community College

Major: Agriculture Education

Focus within major: Teaching Agriculture Education



## CARSON CAPPS (CITIZEN POTAWATOMI NATION)

Undergrad | Oklahoma State University

Major: Agribusiness

Focus within major: Pre-Law



## JAELYN DOVE (LUMBEE)

Undergrad | North Carolina State University

Major: Animal Science

Focus within major: Veterinary Bio-Sciences



## HENRY HAINZINGER (OSAGE)

CTE | Oklahoma State University-Institute of Technology

Major: Truck Technician

Focus within major: Diesel Mechanic



## GINA MCGUIRE (ŌIWI [NATIVE HAWAIIAN])

Graduate | University of Hawai'i

Major: Geography & Environment

Focus within major: Indigenous Geographies of Wellness



## SANTANA NEZ (NAVAJO)

Graduate | University of Arizona

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

Focus within major: Mixed Animal / Food; Animal Medicine



## JUSTINA SLIM (NAVAJO)

Undergrad | Colorado State University

Major: Animal Science & Agriculture Business

Focus within major: Bovine Reproduction and Genetics



## BRENDAN WALKER (NAVAJO)

Graduate | University of Arizona College of Veterinary Medicine

Major: Doctor of Veterinary Medicine

Focus within major: Large Animal Medicine

## TAF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Karli Moore (Lumbee)** President

**Matt Denetclaw (Navajo)** Secretary

**Dr. Jim Hafer** Treasurer

**Dr. Joe Graham (Pueblo of Laguna)**

**Dr. LaKisha Odom**

# YOUR GIFT MATTERS.



Since time immemorial Indigenous peoples have been stewards of this land. By making a gift, you ensure that stewardship continues to be prevalent for future generations to come. Your generosity provides financial support and shows the next generation of Native agriculturists that their work is valued and can positively impact regionally, nationally, and globally.



TAF Staff and several TAFellows were able to attend the 35th Annual IAC Conference.

# THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDING FUNDERS



**FFAR**



**JOHN DEERE**

**FARMER**  **AC**



**FARM CREDIT**

**Our Founding Funders are truly committed to the mission of TAF. Without their partnership, none of this could be possible.**

## OUR TEAM



TAF Staff attending the 35th Annual IAC Conference.



**NICOLE DE VON** (Mescalero Apache)  
*Executive Director*

20+ years of experience working with Native American Students in Higher Education.



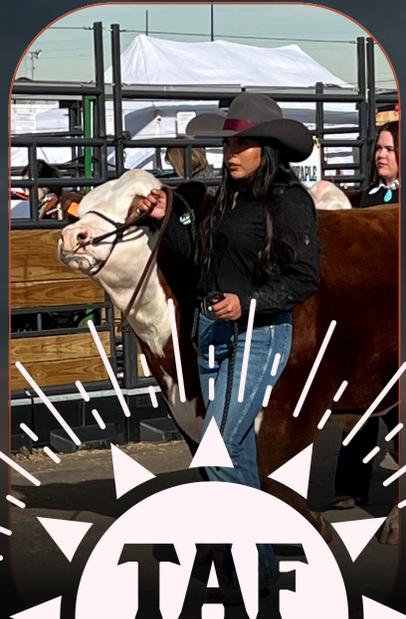
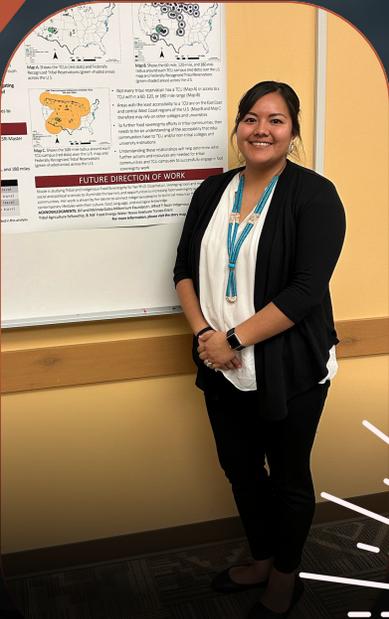
**APRIL PARROTT** (Cherokee)  
*Program Coordinator*

Experience in youth and adult personal development. Has more than 10 years working with youth in agriculture.



**SAMANTHA BELOTE** (Spokane)  
*Communication Operations*

Experience in marketing, brand awareness, development, fundraising, design, and photography/videography.



Pictured 2022 TAFellows (L to R): Nicole Benally, Justina Slim, Gina McGuire.

# GROWING LEADERS. CULTIVATING MINDS.

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