



TMSN Sustainable Future Strategy Meeting 2024

Session Purpose

Gather together to co-create a shared vision of a self-sustaining Tribal Marine Stewards Network (TMSN) and understand what we can each commit to do in support of this vision.

Outcomes

- Build and deepen our relationships based on our shared intent and values.
- Authentically share what each of us needs at the individual, organizational, and collective level to contribute to the strategies we co-design.
- Understand the enabling conditions and success factors of other self-sustaining Indigenous networks and how these relate to the vision of TMSN and partners.
- Co-design a set of near and longer-term strategies to support TMSN to become financially self-sustaining.
- Establish agreement on the next steps and commitments we will make to advance the strategies we develop.

Meeting Preparation

We kindly ask that all meeting participants come prepared for an engaging and collaborative session. Below are specific points of preparation tailored to each participant:

Philanthropy Partners	State Partners	Tribal Council
<p>Please come prepared with a thorough understanding of your organization's giving policies and guidelines.</p> <p>Be ready to share ideas on strategies for accessing additional philanthropic funds and maximizing support from donors.</p> <p>Reflect on conditions that you consider crucial for enhancing philanthropic support and fostering stronger partnerships with funders.</p> <p>Be ready to share your thoughts on exploring potential approaches for shifting power dynamics in favor of Indigenous stewardship.</p>	<p>Please come prepared to discuss potential strategies for accessing sustainable government funding and explore avenues for unlocking additional governmental resources.</p> <p>Reflect on conditions that you believe are crucial for increasing government support and fostering stronger partnerships.</p> <p>Be ready to share your ideas on empowering Tribal communities to take a more active role in managing lands and waters, and discuss potential approaches for shifting power dynamics in favor of Indigenous stewardship.</p>	<p>Be prepared to articulate the impact you aim to achieve through our collective efforts with more sustainable and long-term support.</p> <p>Be ready to discuss your vision for redistributing relational power to empower Tribal communities in managing lands and waters.</p> <p>Be ready to share your insights and aspirations for co-management, outlining your vision for collaborative governance.</p> <p>Please come prepared with innovative proposals for potential sources of earned revenue.</p>

Key Research Findings

Caliopy Glaros and Evelyn Erickson of Philanthropy Without Borders, compiled a comprehensive 78-page report, synthesizing insights gleaned from interviews with over 41 stakeholders, including TMSN leadership, donors, state agencies, allies, and likeminded Indigenous organizations with sustainable funding. The following is a succinct overview of their extensive findings:

TMSN's Structure

- 100% of leadership council members cited TMSN's collaborative approach as a strength
- 90% of funders praised TMSN's innovative model and approach
- 80% of funders were notably impressed by TMSN's thoughtful, deliberate, and forward-thinking approach
- The assessment proposed that TMSN consider becoming a 501(c)(3) to amplify its fundraising capabilities. The Council has previously deliberated on this matter and chose not to pursue a non-profit status. The Council will resume this discussion after the April 30th meeting to determine if there is reason to move forward with this effort.

Philanthropic Funding

- Investment in TMSN by the state garnered significant interest among funders, with 60% expressing their support due to the grant funding received from Ocean Protection Council (OPC).
- While endowment funding remains uncommon among foundations, there is a growing openness to bolstering general operating support and exploring pooled funds. Hence, our recommendation for TMSN is to fortify its reserves and establish an invested fund for long-term sustainability, without fully endowing the entire amount.
- 60% of funders expressed a strong desire for more communications and engagement opportunities with the network. Many donors were willing to co-host webinars or sessions to bring other foundations to the network.

Peer Organizations

- Most tribal endowments are very small (less than \$1mil), but around the world, the Project Finance for Permanence Model has been used to unlock hundreds of millions for conservation, such as [Coast Funds](#) and [Amazon Rainforest Protected Areas \(ARPA\)](#).
- [Seacoast Trust](#) and [Parks California](#) both present viable models for TMSN.
- The most sustainable entities are ones with diverse sources of revenue, including grants, government funding, and earned income, so it was recommended that TMSN also explore multiple streams of income.
- Numerous smaller organizations successfully leveraged partnerships with larger NGOs to facilitate fundraising efforts, however it will be important to have contractual agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) established in advance.

Government Funding

- In Canada, government funding has been the key to unlock significant philanthropic capital and ensure sustained Indigenous-led conservation.
- In Australia, the Indigenous Land and Sea Rangers program proved so successful that successive administrations have increased the budget for it over time, growing from 20 to 200 rangers.
- Ocean Protection Council adopted a first-of-its-kind Tribal Engagement Strategy, which serves as a framework for enhanced communication and partnership between OPC and California Native American tribes on ocean and coastal issues.
- 60% of respondents noted that California's keen interest in Indigenous marine stewardship, coupled with a similar sentiment among donors, signaled a conducive environment for **TMSN to expand its presence and impact.**