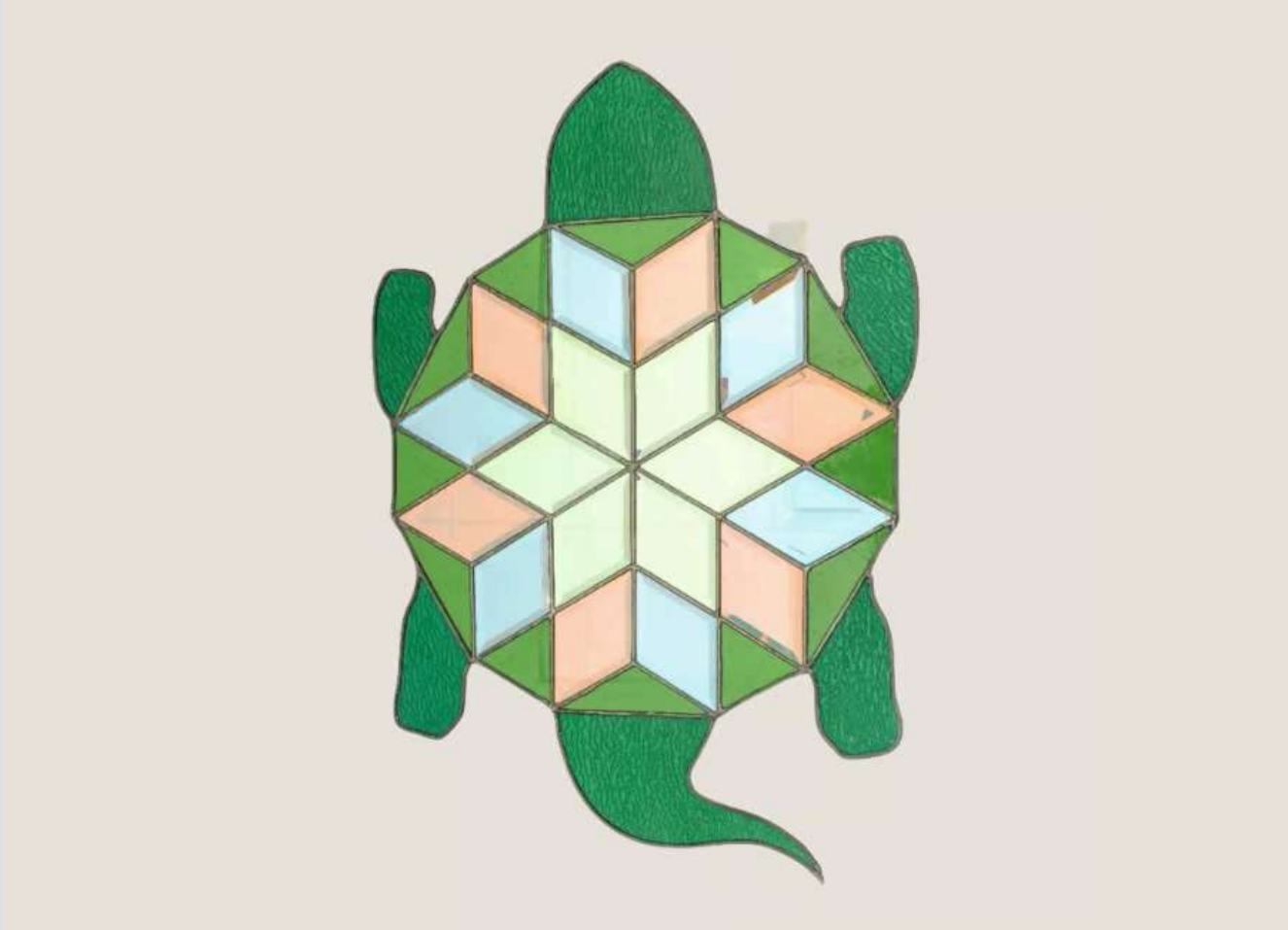
TRIBAL RELATIONS ROUNDUP

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

We are pleased to introduce the first edition of the *Tribal Relations Roundup*—your source for the latest news and updates from WisHistory. We appreciate the ongoing collaboration on various projects, initiatives and programs, and we value our relationships with First Nations in Wisconsin and throughout Turtle Island.



Large stained-glass turtle by Cody Cotrell, Oneida Nation of Wisconsin.

Native Art Makes a Bold Mark on Wisconsin Universe Wall

The new Wisconsin History Center, opening in early 2028, will feature a 40-foot glass structure to showcase iconic and cultural items from across Wisconsin and First Nations. In the fall of 2024, WisHistory hosted a call for First Nation artists. Seventeen applications were approved for commission. Artists represent Ho-Chunk, Oneida, Menominee, Bad River, Lac du Flambeau, Lac Courte Oreilles, Sokaogon, Stockbridge-Munsee and Forest County Potawatomi nations.

One of the comissioned artists is Cody Cotrell. Inspired by his Oneida heritage, Cotrell created a large stained-glass turtle to honor Turtle Island. A star quilt pattern makes up the turtle's shell. The turtle is approximately 32 inches long by 23 inches wide.

Cotrell explains, "The turtle's form represents the Earth itself—steadfast, enduring, and carrying creation on its back—while the geometric star at its center reflects the interconnectedness of all beings, directions, and cycles of life. As light passes through the glass, shifting colors echo the changing seasons, waters, and skies of Turtle Island, reminding us that the land is not static but alive and responsive. Together, the organic turtle silhouette and the structured geometric pattern speak to harmony between natural forms and sacred knowledge, emphasizing care for ancestral teachings, and our shared role as caretakers of the land."

Michelle Reed's red jingle dress created in honor of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. Photo by Michelle Reed.

Native American Powwow, Dance and Veteran Regalia Headed to History Center

The Culture gallery in the new Wisconsin History Center will feature a powwow display. To prepare for this, WisHistory hosted a call for Native American Powwow, Dance and Veteran Regalia. All 11 applications were accepted. The artists represent Oneida, Menominee, Bad River, Lac du Flambeau, Lac Courte Oreilles, Stockbridge-Munsee, White Earth, Santee Sioux and Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska nations.

Michelle Reed, a citizen of Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, contributed a beautiful red jingle dress. Reed grew up in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and started making regalia and beadwork when she was young. She learned how to sew by hand before learning on a sewing machine.

“Learning to hand sew is a great foundation for any artist,” said Reed.

Reed created the dress to honor Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), a movement to help gain awareness and action for the crisis in Indian Country against Native women. A notable feature is the attached cones that make a beautiful sound when they bounce off each other.

The history of the jingle dress and the dance were created during a time of great illness. A grandfather dreamt about this dress, the songs and the dance while his granddaughter was sick. The jingle dress is a healing dress. Now this dance style is danced all over Turtle Island.

As a clothing and accessories designer, Reed’s work can be seen on many champion powwow dancers. To keep this tradition going, she teaches future leaders how to make regalia and dance. Reed is the manager and co-founder of the Woodland Sky Native American Dance Company as well as lead female dancer for the #1 selling Native American recording artist, Brulé.

Out and About and Other Happenings

Explore selected highlights from recent First Nations community engagements:

Jan. 9: The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council held its annual meeting in Madison. Wisconsin Historical Society Director Christian Overland and Tribal Liaison Rachel Byington were in attendance.

Jan. 10: Christian Overland, Rachel Byington and Assistant Deputy Director and Chief Program Officer Angela Titus attended the State of the Tribes at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, delivered by Red Cliff Ojibwe Chairwoman Nicole Boyd.

Feb. 3-5: The WisDOT Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) Listening Session was held at the Menominee Casino and Resort in Keshena, WI. Rachel Byington, State Archaeologist Amy Rosebrough and Compliance Reviewer Kimberly Cook were in attendance.

Feb. 18: Wisconsin Historical Society Director of Outreach Janet Seymour and Rachel Byington visited the Stockbridge-Munsee community to present to the Tribal Council for a filming request for maple sap collection and syrup making. The request was approved.

Feb. 20: The Wisconsin Indian Education Association (WIEA) Board held its monthly meeting. Wisconsin Historical Society liaison Rachel Byington attended the meeting.

March 4-5: Rachel Byington attended and renewed her annual membership at the Great Lakes Native American Elders Association, held at the Mole Lake Casino and Lodge in Crandon, WI.

March 7: Filming for Wisconsin History Center exhibits included a day with the Miller family at their sugar bush camp. Jeremy Mohawk, a language teacher for the Stockbridge-Munsee Community, shared the beautiful story of maple syrup with the film crew as well. Janet Seymour and Rachel Byington attended this lovely tradition.

March 19: The Wisconsin Inter-Tribal Repatriation Committee (WITRC) met at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Curator of American Indian Collections and NAGPRA Coordinator Jackie Pozza Reisner provided an update on repatriation work. Burial Sites Coordinator Taylor Lambrigger discussed dispositions available to the WITRC, discussed ongoing compliance projects, and shared that the Burial Sites Preservation Board is seeking nominations for a Tribal representative to serve on

the board. State Historic Preservation Officer Tricia Canaday shared information about the status of SHPO/THPO funding and information from her meetings in Washington, D.C. Rachel provided updates on the continued development of the Wisconsin History Center.

Left to right: Luke Heider, Michael LaRonge, Larry Plucinkski, Bill Quackenbush, Sarah Thompson, Kanani Nunies, Jackie Pozza Reisner, Taylor Lambrigger, Tricia Canaday and Rachel Byington at the March 19, 2026, WITRC meeting at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

April 9-10: The Ho-Chunk Nation hosted WIEA's annual conference at Ho-Chunk Gaming in Wisconsin Dells. WisHistory Press set up a vendor table, and Press Sales & Marketing Manager Susan Jevens sold a variety of books by Native authors. Ho-Chunk citizen Sherman Funmaker gave a presentation at the conference and signed copies of his newly released book, "Bear Tracks: Memories of a Ho-Chunk Elder." Also in attendance at the conference were H.H. Bennett Learning Facilitator Abby Siepel and Outreach and Partnership Coordinator Daniel Soulier. WisHistory was pleased to donate a gift basket for the silent auction including a WisHistory Family + membership, a facility tour of the State Archives Preservation Facility for up to 10 people, recent editions of the Wisconsin Magazine of History, and WisHistory Press books "Bear Tracks: Memories of a Ho-Chunk Elder" by Sherman Funmaker and "Little Hawk and the Lone Wolf" by Raymond C. Kaquatosh.

April 12: Rachel Byington and Taylor Lambrigger worked on mounds restoration on a set of mounds in the UW-Madison Arboretum led by Earth Partnership, Indigenous Arts and Sciences. The goal for the day was to seed two linear mounds. The seeds for the native plants were chosen for their shady growing abilities and soil type in the area. With their deep roots, the plants will help stabilize the mounds and prevent further erosion.

Rachel Byington and Taylor Lambrigger working on mounds restoration at the UW-Madison Arboretum. Photo credit: Earth Partnership.

April 13, Rachel Byington welcomed Leon Valliere, respected Elder and ceremonial leader of the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians to the Wisconsin Historical Society. Valliere served as the spring semester Elder-in-Residence for UW-Madison. Valliere visited the archives reading room, spoke with Archivist Lee Grady and discussed research interests. Valliere also

viewed Lac du Flambeau and Ojibwe cultural items with Jackie Pozza-Reisner, visited and toured the stacks with Jill Fuller, met Chief Financial Officer Wes Mosman-Block, Chief Learning Officer Abby Pfisterer, Press Director Josh Leventhal, State Historic Preservation Officer Tricia Canaday, State Archaeologist Amy Rosebrough and Librarian Cynthia Bachhuber at the reference desk.

April 18, Rachel Byington, Janet Seymour and Jackie Pozza Reisner attended Menominee Nation's 34th Annual Sturgeon Feast and Celebration Powwow held at the Menominee Nation High School in Keshena, WI. Tribal Historic Preservation Officer Dave Grignon was honored for his decades of service.

Dan Grignon honors his uncle, THPO Dave Grignon, at Menominee Nation's 34th Annual Sturgeon Feast and Celebration Powwow.

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