



Native Peoples Law Caucus Newsletter

Welcome from the NPLC Chair

Summer 2026

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Dear NPLC friends,

I always feel lucky to work with this group. NPLC has been a special little community for a long time now, and that is entirely because of our incredible members.

Thinking of this community and its continued impact, I am reminded of something very special I received a few years ago from my great aunt Elvina. She is a phenomenal quilt maker, and in addition to beautiful star baby quilts, she made me a double wedding ring quilt that arrived on my doorstep one day from Anadarko, OK, out of the blue. It has hundreds of fabrics, some I remember her mother working with from many decades' past.

It must have been incredibly complicated to assemble, with a scalloped edge and tiny curved pieces, beyond anything I could ever do. At any rate, it's a favorite, somehow always the right temperature of being warm but also not too much so, perfect for early morning coffee on the back porch. Living in loud and often chaotic Los Angeles, I draw calm from the effort, care, precision, and forethought put into this quilt, and from the many generations that came before me, who faced challenge with calm and steadiness. It helps keep the new issues in perspective.

Our group is much the same. I am always impressed with how so many talented people in NPLC take the wisdom of those who came before and work to welcome, nurture, and protect information from tribal communities, the rights of Indigenous People, and also help mentor, counsel, and make community for people coming after us, the ones who will carry this important work forward. Every action that is done forms a piece of safeguarding these projects and this work. Here's to NPLC!

This newsletter includes a snapshot of some of the amazing projects, publications, presentations and resources our members contributed to in the past year. Looking ahead, I hope to see many of you at AALL in Cleveland. *(continued on page 4)*





Get to know the Native Peoples Law Caucus

2026 Officers

Chair: Amber Madole

Secretary: Diane Ellis

Webmaster: R. Martin Witt

Newsletter Editor: Hannah Evans

Mission & Vision

The aim of the Native Peoples Law Caucus (NPLC) is to provide a forum in which Native law and other issues that impact Indigenous Peoples worldwide can be discussed, ideas shared, information exchanged, and education offered. The Caucus encourages and facilitates the analysis, cataloging, collection, dissemination, management, organization, and preservation of Native law in accordance with cultural tradition.

Join the NPLC



Are you interested in federal Indian and tribal law? Please join the American Association of Law Libraries' Native Peoples Law Caucus! Already a member? Please invite your colleagues! AALL Members can join our community by going to bit.ly/aallnplc, signing in, and clicking on the "Join Community" button.

All AALL members are welcome!



Recent member publications & work

Publications

More Than Morrill: The Intertwined History of Indian Land Dispossession, Arizona Statehood, and University Enrichment by NPLC member Teresa Miguel-Stearns (University of Arizona College of Law), Samantha Ginsburg, and Kristen Cook

Arizona Journal of Environmental Law & Policy, Volume 16, Issue 1:

<https://repository.arizona.edu/handle/10150/679097>

Teresa also gave a keynote address tying in this paper at the AJELP 2026 Spring Symposium which had the theme “Law, Scarcity, and the Construction of the ‘Other.’”

New York Legal Research, Fifth Edition (Carolina Academic Press, 2026) was co-authored by NPLC member Rebecca Chapman (University at Buffalo School of Law) and features her chapter titled “Finding Indian Law Sources.”

Presentations

The Southern California Association of Law Libraries 2026 Spring Institute on February 20-21 in Palm Springs, California, had the theme “Tribal and Federal Indian Law: Practice and Policy.” NPLC member Sherry Leysen (UCLA School of Law) gave the introductory remarks, and Anne Lucke (National Indian Law Library) presented on **Researching Federal Indian Law and Tribal Law**. On day two, Amber Kennedy Madole (USC Gould School of Law) presented **A Practical Guide to Researching and Citing Tribal Law Under the New Bluebook Rules**. Other presenters included Heather Whiteman Runs Him from University of Arizona, Lauren van Schilfgaarde of UCLA, Cornell Winston from the U.S. Attorney’s Office, Robin Willscheidt of O’Melveny Law Firm, and Tim Evans of the Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation. The full schedule and presentation slides are available at <https://scallnet.org/scall-institute>.

“What, Why and How” - **Session on Native American Law** was presented by NPLC members Rebecca Chapman and Rebecca Plevel (University of Denver Law School) on May 28 at the Teaching the Teachers Conference for Law Librarians in Denver, Colorado.

Recognition

NPLC member Bonnie Shucha (University of Wisconsin Law School) is a 2026 recipient of the **Association of American Law Schools Section on Law Libraries & Legal Information Award**. The purpose of the award is to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to teaching and scholarship in the areas of legal information and academic law librarianship. Congratulations to Bonnie for this well deserved award! 🎉



New and interesting resources

NPLC course materials page

Are you teaching a course relevant to the NPLC? Please consider sharing any materials you may have on the private group course materials page: community.aallnet.org/nativepeopleslawcaucus/home → Resources → Course Materials

From Amber Madole: If you have a syllabus, class activity, or exam you'd be willing to share, we'd love to include it so other NPLC members can benefit from that knowledge. (This will be private and just for the NPLC community). As we all know, it can be difficult to start something new. Having a support/boost like this can help fellow instructors share this info with other teachers/librarians, who in turn can reach many future lawyers across many jurisdictions to understand know more about tribal law and Indigenous law.

Here's how:

1. Just email any course materials (syllabi, exams, activities, etc...) to me at amadole@law.usc.edu.
2. If you'd like, feel free to include your name, course name, institution, and year-or share anonymously if you prefer.

Navajo Nation project wins AALL award

From the LLMC June 2026 member newsletter: Congratulations to the Daniel F. Cracchiolo Law Library at the James E. Rogers College of Law, University of Arizona on receiving the AALL Public Access to Government Information Award for their work on the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources Library Preservation Project.

The award recognizes individuals or organizations that have made significant contributions to protecting and promoting public access to government information.

LMC is proud to be a member of the project team, working in partnership with the Daniel F.

Cracchiolo Law Library, the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources, and the Agnese Nelms Haury Program.

You can find the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources Collection on the LLMC database's Special Focus Collections or at <https://discover.llmc.com/nn>.

Supreme Court Indian Law Database

Created by the University of Arizona's Indigenous Peoples Law & Policy Program, this database compiles all federal Indian law cases adjudicated by the U.S. Supreme Court. Over 670 cases are currently organized by category as well as by justice, with individual justice's votes, opinions, and participation in each case captured. Visit this resource at scilddb.com. 🌐

Welcome (*continued from page 1*)

I also want to thank our amazing newsletter editor, Hannah Evans, our secretary, Diane Ellis, and our webmaster, Marty Witt, for keeping NPLC running and informed.

Finally, please keep sharing any research challenges, project updates, research tips, or cool new tools you've found. I'm grateful for the information I learn from this community, so please do share with our listserv.

And if you develop any new teaching materials, I would love to share those on our protected caucus page for other members who are also teaching, for inspiration and guidance. I'm always glad to hear of law students getting a more complete understanding of our nation's legal system, including the laws of Tribal Nations. Thank you, as always, for your support and community. Looking forward to a good new year ahead of continuing this important and vital work together!

Warmly,
Amber 🌐



Invitation to share resources on Indigenous language recovery

by Elaine Tornos Blanco

I have been thinking about ways I might make a useful contribution to the AALL Native Peoples Law Caucus, especially in a way that draws on my Spanish fluency and interest in Indigenous legal and cultural materials across the Americas.

One idea I am leaning toward as a first step is a small project focused on Indigenous language recovery. I am still at the early stage of thinking this through, but I can imagine beginning with a short resource-gathering effort: identifying useful collections, organizations, library projects, research guides, archives, and publications connected to Indigenous language preservation, revitalization, and recovery.

This topic feels like a meaningful starting point because language is closely tied to law, culture, identity, governance, history, and community memory. For librarians and legal researchers, language recovery also raises practical questions: Where are language materials being collected? Which institutions are preserving them? Which projects are community-led? How can libraries support this work respectfully? What resources are available to researchers who may not know where to begin?

Rather than starting with something too broad, I would like to begin by asking NPLC members for suggestions. Are there libraries, tribal archives, university collections, Indigenous-led organizations, digital repositories, language programs, or research projects that members would recommend? Are there existing bibliographies or guides that should be highlighted? Are there people already working in this area who might be open to sharing their knowledge?

Longer term, I remain interested in developing a bilingual directory or research guide focused on Indigenous legal and cultural resources, especially Spanish-language and Indigenous-language materials from Latin America. My hope is that such a guide could include more than a list of links. Ideally, it would have short annotations, subject tags, language information, access notes, and practical comments for legal research and collection development. It could help English-speaking law librarians discover Spanish-language sources that are otherwise difficult to find, while also being careful to distinguish between materials about Indigenous peoples and materials created by Indigenous communities and organizations themselves.

If you know of tribal archives, library projects, Indigenous-led organizations, language recovery programs, digital collections, bibliographies, or other resources that should be included in an initial resource-gathering effort, I would be grateful to hear from you. I am especially interested in projects that are community-led or that model respectful library support for Indigenous language preservation and revitalization.

Please send suggestions to Elaine.TornosBlanco@colorado.edu by 8/31/2026, or feel free to reach out if you would like to discuss possible collaboration. 🌍



Sovereignty Symposium XXXVIII

by Darla Jackson

Hosted by Oklahoma City University School of Law, the 2026 Sovereignty Symposium was held June 15-16, 2026, at the OKANA Resort in Oklahoma City. The annual symposium brought together tribal leaders, attorneys, judges, policymakers, and scholars to explore contemporary issues affecting Tribal Nations. While there was a plethora of interesting sessions, I attended sessions examining the intersection of sovereignty, governance, justice, health, and economic development.

Opening Ceremony

The symposium opened with a moving ceremony that celebrated the enduring strength of Tribal Nations and recognized the remarkable public service of Chickasaw Nation Governor Bill Anoatubby, who announced his retirement after nearly four decades of leadership. The tribute honored his lasting contributions to tribal self-governance, economic development, healthcare, education, and intergovernmental relations, setting a fitting tone for a conference devoted to the continued advancement of tribal sovereignty.

Guardians of Land and Water: Tribal Leadership in Environment and Energy Law explored how Tribal Nations are exercising sovereign authority to protect natural resources while pursuing economic opportunities. Panelists discussed environmental stewardship, water rights, renewable energy development, and the growing role of tribes in addressing climate related challenges.

Beyond the Casino Floor: New Legal Challenges in Tribal Gaming examined emerging issues in tribal gaming, including sports betting. The primary focus of the session was on facing the challenges posed by prediction markets.

Invisible No More: Vulnerable Populations and Tribal Justice Systems focused on the needs of

children, elders, victims of violence, and individuals facing mental health or substance use challenges. Panelists shared approaches that incorporate culturally informed practices to promote healing, accountability, and community wellbeing.

Bridging Gaps in Indian Country: Laws, Policy, and Health Equity examined how legal and policy decisions affect health outcomes in tribal communities. Topics included healthcare access, public health initiatives, Medicaid policy, and efforts to address longstanding health disparities through collaboration among tribal, federal, and state governments.

Keynote Panel - Ethical Leadership: Honoring Sovereignty from the Bench featured a discussion among Indigenous federal judges on leadership, judicial ethics, and the role of tribal values in the administration of justice. Moderated by Emily Eleftherakis, Executive Director of the OCU Tribal Sovereignty Institute, the panel included Judges Sara E. Hill (Cherokee), Ada Brown (Choctaw), Lauren King (Muscogee (Creek)), Diane J. Humetewa (Hopi), and Sunshine S. Sykes (Navajo). Their conversation offered attendees valuable perspectives on the responsibilities of the federal judiciary, the importance of representation, and the continued advancement of tribal sovereignty within the American legal system.

Materials from the 2026 Sovereignty Symposium are available through the Oklahoma City University School of Law's repository at <https://scholarship.law.okcu.edu/works/publication-book/0mv66-kzy15>. 🌐



Indigenous Perspectives on AI: Appropriation, Regulation, & Innovation

by Darla Jackson

On June 5, 2026, the Seattle University School of Law hosted its virtual 9th Annual Innovation Law and Technology Conference, **Indigenous Perspectives on AI: Appropriation, Regulation, and Innovation**. The conference brought together scholars, practitioners, technologists, and Indigenous leaders to examine the opportunities and challenges artificial intelligence presents for Indigenous communities. Speakers emphasized the importance of Indigenous self-determination, cultural preservation, and sovereignty in shaping the future of AI governance and innovation.

The conference opened with **Cultural Appropriation: Past and Present**, which explored the historical and contemporary extraction of Indigenous knowledge, cultural expressions, and resources. Panelists examined how AI systems can perpetuate longstanding patterns of appropriation when trained on Indigenous languages, stories, artwork, and traditional knowledge without consent or compensation. The discussion highlighted the need for legal and ethical frameworks that recognize collective rights and cultural stewardship.

A central theme of the conference emerged during the **Conference Spotlight: Data Sovereignty and the Ethics of AI** session. Speakers, including Abigal Echo-Hawk, Aila Hoss, Stephanie Russo-Carroll, Desi Small-Rodriguez, and Rebecca Tsosie underscored that Indigenous data sovereignty is essential to ensuring that communities maintain authority over the collection, storage, use, and sharing of data relating to Indigenous Peoples and territories. The panel examined ethical concerns and advocated for community centered approaches to AI development that prioritize transparency, accountability, and consent. This session was made particularly poignant by examples regarding the use of Indigenous health data.

Ethical Natural Resource Use and AI focused on the growing role of AI in environmental management, energy development, and resource extraction. Presenters discussed the potential benefits and risks of AI driven technologies, emphasizing that Indigenous communities must have meaningful participation in decisions affecting lands, waters, and natural resources.

Questions of governance took center stage during **AI Regulation and Indigenous Sovereignty**, where panelists Adam Crepelle and Margaret Hu considered the relationship between tribal sovereignty and emerging AI regulatory frameworks. Speakers explored how Indigenous nations can assert jurisdiction, develop tribal AI policies, and ensure that future regulatory regimes respect tribal authority and self-governance as foundational principles.

The conference concluded with **Indigenous AI Innovation: Frameworks and Models**, showcasing examples of Indigenous led technology initiatives and emerging models for responsible AI development. Presenters highlighted efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages, preserve cultural knowledge, and create technologies that reflect community values. The session reinforced a key message carried throughout the conference: Indigenous peoples must not only be protected from the harms of AI but also empowered to shape its future. The conference offered a timely and important examination of the intersection of technology, law, and Indigenous rights and sovereignty, demonstrating that Indigenous perspectives are essential to the development of ethical and inclusive artificial intelligence.

Session recordings are available at:
<https://law.seattleu.edu/academics/degree-programs/jd/curriculum/tile/site/annual-innovation-law-and-technology-conference-archive/>. 



AALL Annual Meeting member events

Attending the American Association of Law Libraries' annual conference in Cleveland? Meet other NPLC members at the following events:

NPLC table at CONELL (Conference of Newer Librarians)

Date: Saturday, July 18

Time: 11:15 am - 12 pm

Location: Hilton Superior C

Stop by the NPLC table to meet members and to welcome new law librarians!

NPLC meetup

Date: Sunday, July 19

Time: 12:45-1:45 pm

Location: HCC Room 8

Join NPLC members for a casual get together.

From NPLC Chair Amber Madole: This meetup is happening thanks to someone special. Our NPLC family member and alum Gretchen Van Dam generously sponsored it this year. Gretchen shared that NPLC was an important part of her own journey and wanted to give back so others could have that same experience. I am genuinely moved by her kindness and her advocacy for keeping this caucus strong. Thank you, Gretchen, from all of us.

Diversify Your Case Law: Using Foreign, International, and Indigenous Law to Teach Lateral Thinking

Date: Sunday, July 19

Time: 3:15 - 4:15 pm

Location: HCC Room 8

Speakers: Rebecca Chapman (NPLC member), Sherri N. Thomas (NPLC member), Loren Turner

This Presentation will look at using global and Indigenous legal frameworks to expand student knowledge and solidify research skills. Leveraging a variety of legal systems, this presentation demonstrates how integrating diverse areas of law can transform conventional legal research into a practice that inspires creative problem-solving and prepares students for a globalized legal landscape.



July 18-21 • Cleveland, OH