



*Students from INL Tribal Future Corp at the Shoshone-Bannock Festival Parade.*

## Strategic Tribal Engagement

### OVERVIEW

INL Strategic Tribal Engagement, or ISTE, is the Idaho National Laboratory's framework for coordinating engagement with tribal nations.

As a U.S. Department of Energy national laboratory, INL supports DOE's government-to-government responsibilities by promoting respectful, transparent and sustained engagement.

### PRINCIPLES FOR MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

The INL desert Site and its mission activities are located on lands of historical, cultural and spiritual significance to local tribal nations. ISTE is guided by the following principles:

- **Respect for sovereignty:** Recognize tribal nations as sovereign governments and uphold federal trust and treaty responsibilities.
- **Early and sustained engagement:** Involve tribal nations early and maintain communication throughout a project's life cycle.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Provide timely information and follow through on commitments.
- **Cultural and environmental stewardship:** Respect cultural practices, Indigenous knowledge, and natural and cultural resources.
- **Compliance and ethics:** Follow applicable laws, policies and ethical standards.

### STRENGTHENING TRIBAL PARTNERSHIPS

ISTE turns these principles into coordinated strategies that expand tribal participation in INL programs and initiatives.

Priorities include:

- An INL Tribal Advisory Committee
- Increasing participation in STEM education and workforce programs
- Developing joint research and education initiatives
- Expanding economic development opportunities
- Establishing consistent reporting measures

### From engagement to action

Current partnerships demonstrate how INL expertise and Indigenous knowledge can address



*Left: The Fort Hall STEM Carnival brought hands-on activities to children and families.*



*Middle: INL professionals connected with community members and shared STEM career pathways.*



*Right: The STEM tipi offered hands-on learning during the Shoshone-Bannock Festival.*

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### General contacts

#### Tribal Engagement Lead

**Else Teton**

[else.teton@inl.gov](mailto:else.teton@inl.gov)

[www.inl.gov](http://www.inl.gov)

A U.S. Department of Energy  
National Laboratory



shared challenges, strengthen communities and support DOE's mission.

### Modernizing water infrastructure

INL partnered with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Pacific Northwest National Laboratory to evaluate Fort Hall Irrigation Project data and adapt INL's IrrigationViz software. The project identified ways to improve efficiency, infrastructure and resource management.

### Advancing waste-to-energy research

With support from DOE's Alternative Fuels and Feedstocks Office, INL and the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes examined approaches to solid waste management. Researchers explored methods for sorting waste and refining biogenic materials into higher-value fuels and chemicals.

### Creating pathways to the workforce

Tribal Future Corps introduces Shoshone-Bannock youth to skilled trades and technology careers through career and technical education, work-based learning and paid summer internships.

### Expanding education and research opportunities

INL works with tribal colleges, universities and communities to expand access to STEM education, research and workforce development. Partnerships with institutions such as Navajo Technical University connect students and faculty members with national laboratory expertise, facilities and careers.

### Strengthening community and cultural engagement

ISTE also creates opportunities for INL employees and tribal communities to connect outside individual projects.

Examples include:

- Participating in Shoshone-Bannock Earth Day activities
- Offering interactive booths at the STEM Carnival
- Hosting a STEM tipi at the annual Shoshone-Bannock Festival

These activities build familiarity and create a stronger foundation for future collaboration.

### Coordination and accountability

Effective engagement requires coordination across INL programs and organizations. INL's Tribal Engagement Lead helps:

- Develop and implement engagement strategies
- Coordinate work across programs and departments
- Support DOE-led consultation processes
- Maintain relationships with tribal nations
- Advise leadership on engagement matters
- Track commitments and outcomes

Battelle Energy Alliance manages INL for the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Nuclear Energy.