

AUTUMN M. POWELL

AFRO-DINÉ

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EDUCATION

- Ph.D.** University of Kansas, Geography and Atmospheric Sciences
2024-present
- M.S.** University of Maryland-Baltimore County, Geography and Environmental Systems
August 2022-May 2024
- B.S.** Haskell Indian Nations University, Environmental Science
May 2018- May 2021
- A.S.** Haskell Indian Nations University, Fitness and Recreation
January 2016- May 2018

*RESEARCH & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP)

Northern Arizona University

ITEP Supervisor: Kim Shaw

Host Site: White Mountain Apache Tribe- Water Resources Program (WMAT-WRP)

Fort Apache, Arizona

WMAT-WRP Supervisor: Cheryl Pailzote, Jarvis Davis, and Sean Parker

Water conservation, water monitoring, and management

June 1, 2026- August 7, 2026

The White Mountain Apache Tribe established the Water Resource Program to update ongoing land and water management initiatives that benefit the Tribe. I gathered background geomorphological and related case study information on the land and water. For instance, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) has collected 123 years of climatic data for the White Mountain area, showing a shift from high precipitation before 1980 to increased drought after 1980. Water is a high concern and priority for the Tribe, which seeks to conserve as much as possible, as noticeable ceremonial plants and medicinal herbs are vanishing. Other related issues include overgrazing, tree spacing, wildfires, maintaining riparian zones, long-term technology use, federal and state politics, and, lastly, data accessibility for the community. My role as a summer intern is to create qualitative data on how climate change is affecting the White Mountain Apache citizens and share that data with the public.

Bears Ears Conservation Corps

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

Bears Ears National Monument

Harrenson Gorman, Jenny Rosas, Liam Pino, and Michael Garlid

Role: Participant

June 8-June 13, 2026

I attend the Bears Ears Conservation Corps (BECC), a group of Tribal individuals carefully selected by the five Tribal leaders to advocate for Bears Ears. The five Southwest Tribes consist of the Hopi, Diné, Ute, Zuni, and Ute Mountain Ute, forming the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Program. I attended to represent the Navajo Nation and WMAT-WRP, for the WMAT to connect with Indigenous-led organizations to support Native issues such as the Oak Flats, a sacred site being targeted by foreign entities for mineral extraction. In the safe space of the Conservation Corps, Native participants felt safe enough to share their cultural stories, histories, and values is connected to the cultural and historical landscape of Bears Ears, as well as how policies interact with or impact the preservation of the endangered landscape. It was a rewarding experience to connect with each of the Tribal individuals representing their Nations, absorb oral histories and culturally sensitive information, the sciences behind the geologic formations of the landscapes, the influence of altitude on plant availability, distinguished plant species, observed animals, and participate in cultural activities. The cohort's presence emphasized that Indigenous land use at the National Monument is a space used for cultural education, collecting medicine, and performing ceremonial prayers.

Water Leadership Institute

Environmental Defense Fund

Northern Arizona: Flagstaff, Sedona, and Page

Coordinators: Kait Bieber, Lucero M. Radonic, Noa Bruhis, Claudia Mendoza Chávez, Anélyse Regelbrugge, Mariessa Fowler, Grace Horner, and Solana Herold

May 30th- June 21st 2026

The Water Leadership Institute (WLI) brings together water leaders from diverse backgrounds to contribute to change in water policy and infrastructure from a multi-scalar perspective that aligns with their current water journey in Northern Arizona. WLI is funded by the Environmental Defense Fund and community water leaders to create innovative and equitable water solutions for all levels of governance. The program expanded to Southern Arizona, and now I am proudly part of the 1st Northern Arizona cohort. WLI had three sessions on various topics in three different locations. On May 30th in Flagstaff, we discussed community communication, Arizona Groundwater 101, and roles of collaboration. On June 6th in Sedona, AZ, we discussed water infrastructure and challenges, uncertainties of management planning, and citizen science. Lastly, on June 20th and June 21st in Page, AZ, we delved into Tribal water law and policy, the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Plan, cross-cultural collaboration, and water access and sanitation. Overall, this program was geared toward building connections and supporting our leadership projects by giving a presentation. This program granted me ideas for my dissertation research on counter-

mapping water relationships from Indigenous perspectives and how land use is applied differently by Indigenous Peoples.

Institute for Tribal Environment Professionals (ITEP)

Northern Arizona University

ITEP Supervisor: Kim Shaw

Host Site: Hopi Water Resources Program (HWRP)

Kykotsmovi, Arizona

HWRP Supervisor: Dr. Sarah Abney

Water sampling and wastewater

June 2, 2025- August 8, 2025

The Hopi Tribe has established HWRP to conserve and sustain existing water sources within the Hopi reservation. Drought and invasive plant species are causing severe losses of many water sources, which are vital to their culture, including ceremonies, oral traditions, livestock, agriculture, and livelihoods. The Hopi Tribe collaborates with programs such as the Hopi Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Land Information Systems (LIS), Hopi Department of Transportation (HDOT), and the Hopi Tribal Council. They also work with other Tribes like the Navajo Nation, White Mountain Apache, San Carlos Apache, Walapi, and O'odham Tribe(s). I assist in monitoring the health of their water sources, developing plans for composting toilets for wastewater, and performing manual labor to remove invasive plants and fence off springs from overuse by nearby livestock. The frameworks I create are reviewed to ensure that cultural values with the Hopi Tribe are aligned with existing analytical work.

Bears Ears Conservation Corps

Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition

Bears Ears National Monument

Harrenson Gorman, Jenny Rosas, and Liam Pino

Role: Participant

June 8-June 14, 2025

I attend the Bears Ears Conservation Corps (BECC), a group of Tribal individuals carefully selected by the five Tribal leaders to advocate for Bears Ears. The five coalition Southwest Tribes are Hopi, Diné, Ute, Zuni, and Ute Mountain Ute. This forms the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition Program. I attended to represent HWRP and learn about the cultural and historical significance of Bears Ears, as well as how policies interact with or impact the preservation of the endangered landscape. It was a rewarding experience where I connected with each of the Tribal individuals representing their Nations, absorbed the oral histories and culturally sensitive information, studied the sciences behind the geologic formations of the landscapes, noted the differences in elevations, distinguished plant species, observed animals, and participated in cultural activities. The cohort's presence emphasized using the land in our Indigenous way while recognizing that seasonal cultural events are currently taking place at Bears Ears.

Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Fund

Chesapeake Bay Trust

Technical Review Committee

Samara Pyfrom and Jose Castellanos

Role: Proposal Reviewer

April 2025

The Mid-Atlantic Environmental Justice Fund is a grant program that leverages forestry to address environmental justice (EJ) issues in the Mid-Atlantic. Our goal is to disperse and democratize the range of co-benefits that healthy community forests have for decades into the future. A just community forestry and tree stewardship effort that integrates environmental, climate, and energy justice is a powerful tool to improve the health of the Mid-Atlantic region. Increasing tree canopy improves local air and water quality, cools neighborhoods, fosters public health, stimulates local green jobs, encourages community cohesion, mitigates flooding and its adverse effects, and strengthens the region and its inhabitants.

***Sloan Foundation Scholar**

University of Kansas

Advisor: Dr. Melinda Adams

Committee: Dr. Joseph Brewer, Dr. Jay T. Johnson, and Professor Sarah Deer

Geography and Atmospheric Sciences

Dissertation: ***Counter-Mapping Land Use of the Wakarusa River Valley: Inter-Tribal Cartography Reclaiming Narrative of Tribal Rights, Urban Decisions, and Ecological Survivance***

2024-ongoing

Institute for Tribal Environment Professionals (ITEP)

Northern Arizona University

ITEP Supervisor: Kim Shaw

Host Site: Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources (NNDWR)

Fort Defiance, Arizona

NNDWR Supervisor: Ryan Barton

San Juan River Crop Inventory

June 17, 2024-August 16, 2024

My role as a summer intern was to review last year's maps of the San Juan region of New Mexico and to update the map of the current cropland inventory on Navajo Farmers. We drove to the pinpoint sites of last year's map and had the chance to meet with farmers who shared their concerns about the canal and how the Navajo Nation government can leverage their concerns. My colleague and I also attended chapter house meetings at Fruitland, New Mexico, and the Farm Board Meeting in Flagstaff, Arizona. We had to educate ourselves on

the Diné policies that are put in place for farmers, land leases, land disputes, grazing and agriculture permits, and the mechanisms of canal functions.

National Parks Conservation Association

Washington D.C.

Mid-Atlantic Indigenous Fellow

Indigenous Partnerships Field Representative at the National Parks Conservation

Association; Supervisor: Michaela Pavlat

March 2024-July 2024

In this role, the individual will reach out to Tribal Nations in Maryland and Virginia, as well as Parks, to learn about their initiatives related to sovereignty, consultation, and co-management. Michaela and I started creating a formal framework for engaging with Tribal Nations or their communities, although best practice guidelines currently exist primarily for individuals who have never worked with Tribes before. My connection with the Maryland Tribes helped expand these guidelines to other Mid-Atlantic Tribes because it is important to maintain and strengthen these relationships with other NGOs.

***NFS Interdisciplinary Consortium of Applied Research in the Environment (ICARE) 2022-2024**

University of Maryland-Baltimore County (UMBC)

Academic Advisor: Dr. Margaret (Maggie) Holland, Associate Professor, Geography and Environmental Systems (GES)

Partner Mentor: Dr. Ashley Minner-Jones, Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

Community Mentor: Maria Day and Megan Craynon, Maryland State Archives: Special Collections, Indigenous Peoples' Program

Thesis Topic: A STATE THAT LEAVES NO ONE BEHIND? ERASURE OF NATIVE PEOPLES IN MARYLAND & HOW THIS LIMITS INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL & CLIMATE ACTION

My thesis project amplifies the voices of Maryland's Eastern Shore and Woodlands Tribal Peoples about their issues and priorities in the social and environmental sector. Neocolonialism has created Indigenous erasure in Maryland's Tribal Nations, where everyone assumes no tribes exist, leading to inequitable access to their waterways and access to their lands. My thesis is to confront the European legacy of erasure affecting Tribal Nations and for institutions to be held accountable for their unconscious bias and erasure of Maryland's Tribal Nations.

Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) 2023-2024

Northern Arizona University (NAU)

ITEP NAU Supervisor: Kim Shaw

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) Supervisors: Celene Hawkins and Lanier Nabahe

FY Intern

TNC is creating scenario planning for the San Juan River Basin, taking into account residents, Tribal, agricultural, and institute communities relying on the water source. This is carefully planned through my supervisors, including other organizations, to ensure water usage is equitable from other perspectives. As an intern, I'm observing the Tribal engagement in scenario planning to make sure it aligns with their priorities.

Colorado River Water Users Association (CRUWA) Conference

December 13-15, 2023

Las Vegas, NV

Indigenous Women's Leadership Network (IWLN) Scholarship Recipient

Supervisor: Lorelei Cloud, Mira Barney, & Tahila Bear

IWLN presented an opportunity for Native students to attend the CRUWA 2023 Conference in Las Vegas to witness the functions and processes of how each organization, state, and Tribal rights to the Colorado River Basin. The current water policies will soon expire, and this conference was held to update new policies for 2026. This was a unique conference I attended because it was an actual planning scenario discussion I witnessed.

Maryland State Archives Special Collections: Indigenous Peoples Program

June 2023-August 2023

Annapolis, MD

Supervisor: Maria Day

Co-Supervisor: Megan Craynon

Intern

Worked with historical records dating from 1600-1800 regarding Maryland's Indigenous People: Eastern Shore & Woodland Tribal Peoples. Contributed my work and input on updating the Mayis Indigenous Records website for the public to use it better. Attended teachers' conferences and workshops on incorporating Indigenous Peoples in the curricula.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) Canada National

Gathering Conference

2023

Vancouver, CA

Conference attendee

***NIH Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP)**

2021-2022

University of Kansas

Research advisor: Dr. Kelly Kindscher, Kansas Biological Survey
Omaha (Umó'hoⁿ) Ethnobotany Project: working with the Umó'hoⁿ tribe to reconnect culturally important plant knowledge that is researched and documented for educators and tribal members to utilize, with the Tribal citizen's permission for the knowledge to be publicized.

***Haskell Indian Nations University**

Lawrence, KS

January 2016-May 2021

Bachelor of Science: Environmental Science

Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Summer Internship 2021
Haskell Indian Nations University, University of Kansas

Undergraduate Research I (ENVS 480), 2021
Haskell Indian Nations University
Students are given a topic of choice; my research focused on Ecotourism and how large populations in nature reserve parks impact the frail environment.

American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) National Conference 2018
Conference Attendee

Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Summer Internship 2018
Haskell Indian Nations University, University of Kansas

PRESENTATIONS

Powell, A. 2025. *The Haskell Wetlands at a Crossroads: Tribal Rights, Urban Decisions, and Ecological Survival.* University of Kansas Red Hot Research. Presenter

Powell, A. 2025. *Indigenous Allyship Presentation.* University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Presenter

Powell, A. 2025. *The Hopi Water Resources Program.* The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals Final Presentation. Presenter

Powell, A. 2024. *Silenced Voices & Slow Violence: Eco-Colonialism's Ongoing Erasure of Native Peoples in Maryland.* University of Maryland, Baltimore County ICARE Presentation. Presenter

Powell, A. 2023. *MSA: Special Collections- Indigenous Peoples Project.* Maryland State Archives. Presenter

Powell, A. 2023. *Indigenous Education in Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore.* Maryland State Archives. Organizer and Presenter

Powell, A. 2022. Plant collection of the Umó^{nh}oⁿ (Omaha) people: Indigenous & Scientific knowledge. University of Kansas Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (KU PREP). Presenter.

Powell, A. 2021. *Tó éí 'Íiná dóó éí Diné Bikéyah Bikáa 'gí (Water is Life on the Navajo Nation).* Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Poster Symposium. Poster presentation.

Powell, A. 2018. *Climate Change, Cottonwoods, and The Navajo Nation.* Haskell Environmental Research Studies (HERS) Poster Symposium. Poster presentation.

SCHOLARSHIPS/FELLOWSHIPS

Haskell Scholarship Scholar

Haskell TRIO Grantee

University of Kansas Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (KU PREP scholar)

UMBC Interdisciplinary Consortium for Applied Research in the Environment (ICARE) cohort

Alfred E. Sloan Scholar

Navajo Nation Scholarship Recipient 2023-2024, 2024-2025, 2025-2026

LANGUAGES

Navajo: Intermediate Speaker and Listener

English: Second Language and expert

OTHER

KU PhD scholar

Treasurer of Diné Club at Haskell

Co-coach of Barbellas (all-women powerlifting group at Haskell)

Haskell TRIO participant

Native Medicinal Plant Program

Baltimore American Indian Center Group

UMBC Graduate Geography and

Environmental Systems Club

KU Indigenous Student Coalition

Indigenous Stewardship Club

Haskell Greenhouse Volunteer

KU Red Hot Research Presenter

Maryland Proposal Reviewer

REFERENCES

Dr. Melinda Adams [Ph.D Academic Advisor]
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