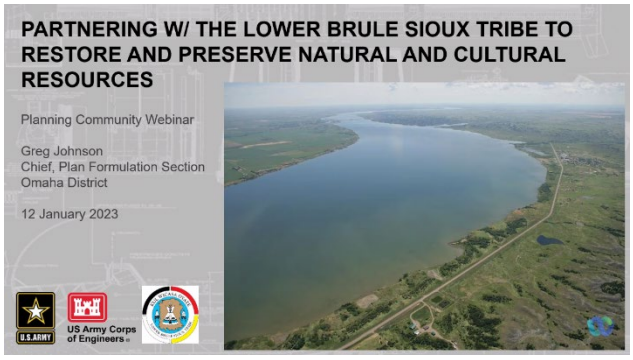
Partnering with the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe to Restore and Preserve Natural and Cultural Resources
12 January 2023
Q&A Session



This webinar provided an overview of the Omaha District's partnership with the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. The presentation highlighted the formulation approaches of two Tribal Partnership Program (TPP) projects, as well as successes and lessons learned. The webinar was presented by Greg Johnson, Chief of the Plan Formulation and Project Management Section in the Omaha District's Planning Branch.

This summary of the Question / Answer session of the webinar is not a transcription; questions and responses have been edited and reordered for clarity.

Lower Brule Sioux Tribe-USACE Relationship

What are the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe's perspectives on the TPP process and the projects they've collaborated on with the Omaha District?
The feedback from the Lower Sioux Brule Tribe has generally been positive. The Since WRDA 2016 and the initiation of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Natural Resources Preservation and Ecosystem Restoration Project under the TPP in 2017, there is a lot more momentum and the goal is to sustain the momentum.

These two projects only cover a few of the many miles of problems in the area that can be traced to the construction of Big Bend Dam. This has been an ongoing challenge in the relationship between USACE and the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe. However, Joel Bich, a partner in the ongoing TPP study, noted that the Tribe's relationship with USACE has made "tremendous strides in the last ten years."

Real Estate

Are there any real estate-related best practices or lessons learned the Omaha District can share from either project?
Following construction, USACE will issue an easement to the Tribe for their management of the project features.

Did these projects utilize Tribal allotment lands?
Both projects are on USACE lands – there are no Tribal land allotments in the project area. Because the projects are on a federal reservoir, USACE is working to arrange a right of entry agreement with the Lower Sioux Brule Tribe to allow for access onto USACE land for long term operation and maintenance of the project features. Most of the surrounding land is Tribal land, which is owned by the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe as a whole and contains no individual allotments.

Project Products and Models

What was the level of design for ecosystem restoration features (e.g., landscape plans) during the feasibility phase?
The level of design during the feasibility phase of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe Natural Resources Preservation and Ecosystem Restoration Project was approximately 15-20%. The designs included cross sections, quantity estimates of rock, and quantity estimates of fill material. The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe

also requested an assessment of the ice forces and sizing of rocks, which required the study team to leverage USACE expertise.

The team worked with ERDC's landscape architects to develop polished renderings. Teams requiring this type of expertise can reach out to ERDC or the Landscape Architecture CoP to work with a landscape architect on landscape plans and renderings.

Which habitat model(s) did the PDT use?
The study team used the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Habitat Suitability Index Model for the Red-Headed Woodpecker to assess the cottonwood habitat and Mink to assess the wetland habitat. These models were used to assess future without project conditions and the restored habitat qualities. The study team did not weigh the models, and described them as equal and additive.