



**COCONINO**  
COUNTY ARIZONA  
**COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**

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**EFFECTIVE DATE:** August 30, 2022

**POLICY NAME:** Substantive Policy Outlining Communication Strategies with Native American Tribal Governments for Public Hearing Projects in Coconino County.

**POLICY NO:** PZ-2022-01

**PURPOSE:** To provide applicants preparing public hearing project applications with strategies for communicating with and requesting comments from Native American Tribal governments.

**BACKGROUND:**

The 2022 update to the Coconino County Zoning Ordinance added Section 3.19, Utility Scale Renewable Energy Systems. During preparation of the ordinance, staff outlined a process to assist project applicants preparing public hearing applications in communicating with and requesting comments from Native American Tribal governments. The outline below is intended to provide guidance for how to appropriately reach Native American Tribes to request both formal consultation and informal comments. This process is in addition and supplemental to the required citizen participation plan.

This process is intended to provide applicants an opportunity to gain early feedback from Native American Tribal governments that may be utilized to inform project design. Information and comments from this process will also inform County decision makers about concerns, issues and possible mitigation options raised by Tribes regarding specific project sites. The goal is to build relations with Native American tribes by engaging early in the development process to collaborate and learn about perspectives, to invite discussion, and encourage dialogue that provides meaningful response.

**POLICY:**

The following steps provide guidance to project applicants for how to contact, engage with, and request comments about proposed projects from Native American Tribal governments:

**Initial contact.** Initiate contact with Native American Tribal governments early in the process, usually prior to application submittal. Utilize the “Government to Government” tool hosted on the State Historic Preservation Office website. This site provides formal contact protocol for tribal governments that may have an interest in a project site. The tool website is found here: <https://sites.google.com/view/az-consultation-toolkit>. Once in the site, click on the “consultation map” tab and find your project’s location and a list of tribal government contacts with detailed information as to how to reach individual tribes.

**Host a “pre-project cultural on-site survey”.** Invite tribal representatives that were notified during the initial contact step to an on-site meeting to review and discuss the project. For Utility Scale Renewable Energy projects this meeting should occur prior to conducting either preliminary desktop or formal archaeological surveys. The meeting should be conducted as a listening session where applicants ask tribal representative if the site holds special meaning that may point to further research needs or project concerns. Early, informal communication can provide valuable information that may inform a developer as to what they might encounter during formal surveys and provide strategies and design options to avoid impacts and later challenges. Questions such as the following might be helpful but are only suggestions:

Is this place significant to you or your tribe?

In your view, how might the proposed development impact the site?

How can we work together to mitigate potential impacts?

**Make personal contact.** It may be necessary to follow up initial contact and request for consultation that was made through formal letters with phone calls, hand-delivered letters, and in person contact.

**Summarize the meeting results.** A written summary of the meeting details and results should supplement the required public participation plan, particularly for Utility Scale Renewable Energy projects. Depending on the extent of the pre-project cultural on-site survey comments, preliminary site investigations that are required for Utility Scale Renewable Energy projects may be narrowed to focus on specific concerns or areas identified during the pre-project cultural on-site survey.

#### **ACCESS TO THE POLICY:**

This substantive policy statement is available for inspection at the Community Development office or on the Coconino County website: <https://www.coconino.az.gov/2208/Zoning-Ordinance>.

#### **APPROVED BY:**



Jay Christelman, Director

September 6, 2022

Date