



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

December 2, 2024

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA:

Pursuant to §2.2-401.01 of the Code of Virginia, I submit the attached report on the status of Indian tribes in Virginia for 2024. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance as you review this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Gee".

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

2024 Report on the Status of Virginia's Indian Tribes

The Commonwealth recognizes 11 Virginia Indian tribes: the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe Eastern Division, Mattaponi Indian Tribe, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Tribe, Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Patowomeck Indian Tribe of Virginia, Rappahannock Tribe, and the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe.

Seven of these are federally recognized tribal nations: the Chickahominy Indian Tribe, Chickahominy Indian Tribe Eastern Division, Monacan Indian Nation, Nansemond Indian Nation, Pamunkey Indian Tribe, Rappahannock Tribe, and Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe.

State Affairs

Chief Walk "Red Hawk" Brown and members of the Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe from Southampton County, Virginia presented Governor Glenn Youngkin with the 311th Spotswood Treaty Tribute on **April 23, 2024**. This tribute, consisting of three peace arrows wrapped in a beaver pelt and accompanied by a wampum belt, commemorates the historic Spotswood Treaty signed on February 27, 1713.

On **October 14**, Secretary Kelly Gee attended the Richmond Indigenous People's Day celebration hosted by The Pocahontas Project on behalf of the Youngkin administration.

On **October 25, 2024**, Governor Youngkin appointed Kara Canaday as the Commonwealth's first ever Ombudsman for Tribal Consultation, a newly established full-time employee in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth. This position will oversee the coordination of consultation policies between various state agencies and federally recognized tribes. Additionally, she will engage in outreach efforts with Indian Tribes.

Governor Glenn Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin hosted the 347th Tribute Ceremony with Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Gee on **November 26, 2024**. Members of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey tribes were present along with members of the public. Before the tribute ceremony, Governor Youngkin, the First Lady, and Secretary Gee met with the leadership of the Mattaponi and Pamunkey tribes. This annual ceremony dates back to the 1677 Treaty of the Middle Plantation.

The Virginia Indian Advisory Board met 4 times during 2024 (May 22, July 31, September 25, and December 9).

Legislative Affairs

HJ 14 introduced by Delegate Delores L. McQuinn; Wolf Creek Cherokee Tribe of Virginia; Extends state recognition. This bill has been continued to 2025 in House Rules by voice vote.

HB 1157 introduced by Delegate Paul Krizek; Federally recognized Tribal Nations in the Commonwealth; agencies to consult on permits and reviews. The bill was signed into law by Governor Youngkin on April 17, 2024.

The Commission on Updating Virginia Law to Reflect Federal Recognition met three times during 2024 (July 1, September 18, November 20).

Federal Affairs

The seven federally recognized tribes continue to work with federal government agencies to build direct government-to-government relationships and pursue federal programs and grants to improve the lives of the Tribal members.

There are currently three state recognized tribes actively seeking federal recognition either through petition to the Bureau of Indian Affairs or with legislation sponsored by a member of Virginia's congressional delegation: Mattaponi, Patowomeck, Cheroenhaka (Nottoway).

Secretary Gee and Ombudsman Kara Canaday attended the ribbon cutting ceremony for the All Points Broadband and Pamunkey Indian Tribe broadband activation ceremony. With a \$500,000 grant from the Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program administered at the federal level, the Pamunkey Indian Tribe worked with All Points Broadband in a partnership with Dominion Energy to run fiber lines on Dominion's power poles. All homes on the Pamunkey reservation will now have access to high-speed internet.

Cultural Affairs

This year, Virginia's Indian tribes organized nine powwows that were open to the public and provided an opportunity for non-tribal members to gain insights into Virginia's Indigenous culture. The list of powwows held in the past year is as follows:

- 35th Annual Upper Mattaponi Tribe Powwow – **May 25-26, 2024**
- 31st Annual Monacan Indian Nation Powwow – **June 1-2, 2024**
- 26th Annual Mattaponi Indian Reservation Powwow – **June 15, 2024**
- 33rd Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian "Green Corn" Powwow – **July 6, 2024**
- 36th Annual Nansemond Indian Powwow – **August 17-18, 2024**
- Annual Nottoway Indian Powwow – **September 21-22, 2024**
- 72nd Annual Chickahominy Fall Festival & Powwow – **September 28-29, 2024**
- Rappahannock Powwow – **October 12-13, 2024**
- 34th Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian "Corn Harvest" Powwow & School Day – **November 1-3, 2024 – Attended by Secretary Gee**

Apart from the aforementioned powwows, the tribes organized numerous additional cultural educational events throughout the year engaging students and the broader community.

The 8th Annual Pocahontas Reframed Film Festival was held from **November 22-24, 2024**, at the Virginia Museum of History and Culture in Richmond, VA. Notably, Chief Lynette Allston of the Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia holds a position on the Board of Directors

Tribal Leadership

Two Tribes elected new leadership this year. The following is now serving as Chief:

- Chief Joanne Howard, Chickahominy Indian Tribe Eastern Division
- Chief Kevin Brown, Pamunkey Indian Tribe