



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

December 30, 2025

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 2025.

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

2025 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 **312th Spotswood Treaty Tribute** on April 23, 2025. This tribute, consisting of three peace arrows wrapped in an otter pelt and accompanied by a wampum belt, commemorates the historic Spotswood Treaty signed on February 27, 1713.

Governor Glenn Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne S. Youngkin hosted the **348th Tribute Ceremony** with Secretary of the Commonwealth Kelly Gee, on November 26, 2025. 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 Kelly 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 3 times during 2025 (February 20, April 24, July 31). During the February meeting, the Board finalized and voted to update the State Recognition Criteria and Procedure which is reflected on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website.

Ombudsman for Tribal Consultation, Kara Canaday, published the inaugural List of Localities for Consultation as required by § 2.2-401.01. The list and procedure for updating the list are located on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website.

Legislative Affairs

HJ453 introduced by Delegate Delores L. McQuinn; Recognition of the Wolf Creek Cherokee Tribe of Virginia. Extends state recognition to the Wolf Creek Cherokee Tribe of Virginia within the Commonwealth. This bill was left in House Rules.

HB2134/SB949 introduced by Delegate Paul E. Krizek and Senator Ryan McDougale, respective; American Indians, Va. Recognized tribes, and federally recognized tribes; definitions, sovereignty. Establishes definitions for “American Indian”, “federally recognized tribes,” and “Virginia recognized tribe” and amends various sections throughout the Code for the purpose of uniformity in terminology. The bills were vetoed.

The Commission on Updating Virginia Law to Reflect Federal Recognition met four times during 2025 (April 23, July 7, August 19, December 3).

Federal Affairs

There are currently four pending requests for federal recognition from Commonwealth recognized tribes. The Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian Tribe is seeking federal recognition via legislation carried by Congresswoman Jen Kiggans. The Patawomeck Indian Tribe is seeking federal recognition via legislation carried by Congressman Eugene Vindman. The Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia is seeking federal recognition via legislation carried by Congresswoman Jennifer McClellan. The Mattaponi Indian Tribe is seeking federal recognition via approval by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Cultural Affairs

This year, Virginia's Indian tribes organized ten 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:

- Rising Sun Powwow (Virginia Beach Parks & Recreation in partnership with the Nansemond Indian Nation) - May 17, 2025*
- 36th Annual Upper Mattaponi Tribe Powwow – May 24-25, 2025*
- 32nd Annual Monacan Indian Nation Powwow – May 31 - June 1, 2025*
- 27th Annual Mattaponi Indian Reservation Powwow – June 21, 2025*
- 34th Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian “Green Corn” Powwow – July 5, 2025*
- 37th Annual Nansemond Indian Powwow – August 16-17, 2025
- Annual Nottoway Indian Powwow – September 20-21, 2025*
- 73rd Annual Chickahominy Fall Festival & Powwow – September 27-28, 2024*
- Rappahannock Powwow – October 11-12, 2024*
- 35th Annual Cheroenhaka (Nottoway) Indian “Corn Harvest” Powwow & School Day – November 1-2, 2025*

Ombudsman Canaday attended nine powwows (indicated with *).

Ombudsman Canaday attended the **9th Annual Pocahontas Reframed Film Festival** held from November 20-23, 2025, at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and 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 Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Board of Directors.

Tribal Leadership

Three tribe(s) held elections this year. The following reflects those updates:

The **Mattaponi Indian Tribe** held their Tribal election on February 1, 2025.

Chief: Mark T. Custalow

Assistant Chief: Brandon G. Custalow

Tribal Council: Todd Custalow, Michael Waldropp II, Jack Custalow, Malcolm Custalow Sr., Richard Custalow, Ernest Langston, B. Leon Custalow Jr.

The **Monacan Indian Nation** held two separate Tribal elections on June 21, 2025, and October 18, 2025.

In accordance with the Monacan Indian Nation Bylaws and Ordinances, the Nation held an election for four (4) Council seats. In accordance with the governing documents, those newly elected assumed office on July 23, 2025, for a term of four (4) years ending June 16, 2029.

Election Results:

Continuing Council persons: Daniel Branham, Mark Bryant, Rufus Elliott

Re-elected Council person: Dennis Dean Branham

Newly elected Council persons: Amber Fink, Rhonda Matthews, Isiah Branham Moss

On October 18, 2025, in accordance with the Monacan Indian Nation Bylaws and Ordinances, the Secretary and Treasurer were elected by default. In accordance with the governing documents, their terms are October 18, 2025, for the term of four (4) years ending on September 15, 2029.

Secretary: Teresa R. Pollak

Treasurer: Pamela Johns Thompson

The **Chickahominy Indian Tribe** held their Tribal election on November 14, 2025. Official results have not yet been reported.