Building a more inclusive and equitable economy

FOR THE GRAND CANYON REGION



Grand Canyon National Park is an economic powerhouse in northern Arizona. But very few of the park's tourism dollars reach the 11 associated tribes of the Grand Canyon.

In 2018, the Intertribal Centennial Conversations Group, a grassroots advisory body that works to place Native voices at the forefront of education, stewardship, and economic opportunities in Grand Canyon National Park, posed a question:

How can the region's tribal communities establish direct, reciprocal partnerships with Grand Canyon National Park?

To answer that question, 75 Native entrepreneurs, artists, community leaders, governmental support staff, and National Park Service employees gathered on the south rim of Grand Canyon National Park in August 2022 for the first-of-its-kind Emergence Intertribal Economic Summit.

The four-day mix of panels, field tours, and discussions laid the foundation for a more equitable economy that centers, advances, and respects Native cultural values.

Take a look at the conversations blossoming out of the inaugural Emergence Intertribal Economic Summit.

million visitors at Grand Canyon National Park

> 2021 statistics

jobs supported by

Grand Canyon tourism

\$945 million funneled into gateway economies



What is our share of that as tribes? And how can we help ensure that some of that money is spread around so we all rise up together?

—Charles "Chuck" Sams III. Director of the National Park Service



Expanding cultural demonstration and vending in the park



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Desert View, the gateway from Grand Canyon National Park to neighboring tribal lands, is transforming into an intertribal cultural heritage site, with an emphasis on first-voice cultural interpretation. How can its cultural demonstration and vending programs be replicated and adapted elsewhere in the park?

EMERGENCE ATTENDEES SAY

Expand representation beyond arts, crafts, and dance

Give full multi-dimensional view of Native people

> Include Indigenous food and drink

Build indoor and outdoor shaded vending spaces throughout the park

Feature art installations that share stories and histories Kelli Jones, a Diné park ranger at Grand Canyon National Park, worked at Desert View earlier in her career.



We don't talk about cultural appropriation and how that whole tower was built from cultural appropriation.



Architect Mary Colter designed the Desert View Watchtower in 1932 to resemble Ancestral Puebloan buildings. AMANDA PODMORE



Carlos Deal, of AlterNativEats, catered all the meals at Emergence. He served modern Native American cuisine featuring cultural staples like blue-corn mush, piñon nuts, tamales, and watermelon.

Creating space for Native foods in Grand Canyon National Park would create opportunities for Deal and other Native chefs to share tastes of their cultures with millions of park visitors.

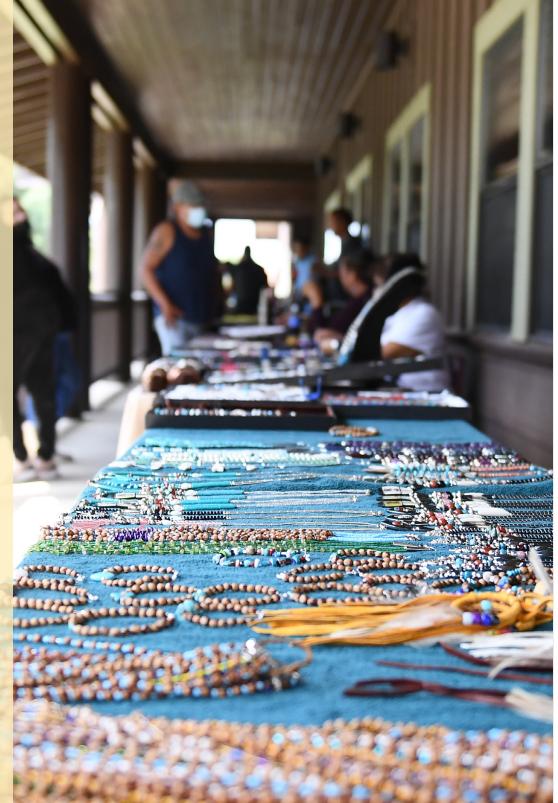
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Increasing concessionaire support for arts and crafts

For Native artists, companies like Xanterra and Delaware North are middlemen that sell their crafts to park goers in Grand Canyon National Park gift shops.

How can these companies, called concessionaires, create more equitable relationships with Native artisans and authentically share stories of their products?







EMERGENCE ATTENDEES SAY

Increase transparency around price points and product sourcing

Provide a centralized location for artists to meet buyers

Educate concessionaires about cultural appropriateness

Include Native artists in concessionaire decisions



For so long, we've just been able to sit along the side of the road and sell our wares. But being able to connect with people coming into the park would open up a lot of opportunities for tribes.

—Mae Franklin, Diné

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The designs in our jewelry, like our different styles of dancing, all have different meanings. I want to pass down the cultural teachings I've been taught when I have kids of my own.

That's how we can keep our culture and traditions alive.

—Colton McClellan, Diné

JAMIE ARVISO

Repurposing historic buildings in Grand Canyon National Park

K. THOMAS, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

An old power plant that generated electricity for the south rim of Grand Canyon National Park sits empty, awaiting its next chapter of development. **How might** the power house complex be repurposed to increase Indigenous representation within the park?

\$20
million
estimated cost
for renovation

The park service is looking into funding for the renovations with the possibility of tribal buy-in.

Built in 1926, the power house is a national historical landmark. Preserving historical elements of the building may draw tourists and lead to creative use of the space.

EMERGENCE ATTENDEES SAY

Native education center/tribal visitor center

Retail space: food, art, clothing, textiles, cultural demonstrations

Evening programming

Housing for artists and vendors

Hub for Native businesses and tours

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Supporting gateway communities

Having been pushed off ancestral lands to make way for Grand Canyon National Park, affiliated tribes are now neighbors to the park. But nearly all the tourism dollars flow to off-reservation border towns like Flagstaff, Tusayan, and Page.

How do Native gateway communities tap into the economic benefit of Grand Canyon National Park and build equitable relationships over the next 100 years?



I think it becomes a game changer when we ask for what we want, and most importantly, what we need. Because we've always given over to somebody else's power. And that's never worked toward giving equal partnership to tribes and tribal business owners.

—Monica Nuvamsa, Hopi



EMERGENCE ATTENDEES SAY

Develop tourism infrastructure

Increase Nativeowned and operated businesses and tourist attractions

Increase educational opportunities and programs within the park

Develop cooperative community objectives



The idea of being given an opportunity to have selling spaces is music to our ears.

We don't want to be pushed to the back. We want to be pushed to the front. My vision is to have retail stores, where our people can set up and rotate out on a consistent basis, and to include our elders and our youth.

—Dorothy Denetosie Gishie, Diné

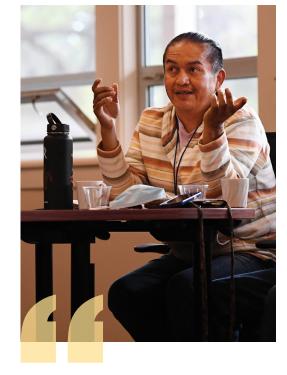


Emergence 2022 was the first step down a long road toward building a more sustainable, equitable, and inclusive Grand Canyon economy.

How can Grand Canyon tribes keep the economic conversations sparked at Emergence going?

A regional economic alliance of Native community leaders, nonprofits, local governments, park service employees, and others could help turn ideas into action.





I believe economic stability is having all the tribes included. Not just in the conversation, but with the building of venues or vendor spaces. We need to include all the tribes that call Grand Canyon home so we can collectively move forward.

—Richard Graymountain Jr., San Juan Southern Paiute

GOALS FOR A REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Help Native economies thrive

Provide education for entrepreneurs

Share correct histories of Native peoples with Grand Canyon visitors

Build equitable
economies that care
for communities
and align with
cultural values

Engage Native youth
and create opportunities
to become the
next generation of
park leaders

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