



## Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act: Revitalizing America's Lands Via Traditional Ecological Knowledge



**The Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act proposes a transformative approach to land management in the United States, drawing upon the traditional ecological knowledge of Native American tribes.** This policy aims to restore lands that have been all but denuded of the most high maintenance fruit producing wild plants and wildlife, to vibrant living ecosystems; to increase biomass and biodiversity, mitigate wildfire risks, and empower indigenous communities.

By offering federal investments to landowners and granting usage rights to a selection of federal lands via Wild Harvest Income Sharing Agreements (WHISA), this initiative not only revitalizes natural ecosystems but also provides sustainable economic opportunities. The program will be self-sustaining, with revenues from the sale of some of the regenerated lands wild produce used to repay federal investments, reduce the national debt, and reinvest in further rewilding efforts.

The policy is designed to tackle urgent environmental challenges while promoting economic and social equity by restoring humanity's role as Earth's ultimate keystone species, reestablishing our vital stewardship of nature in alignment with our ancestral roots. Many Native American techniques—Wild Tending, Forest Gardening, Growing Plant Families, Three Sisters Planting, Raised Beds, and more—share a focus on creating symbiotic relationships that sustain both nature and human needs in harmony.

- **Revitalize Ecosystems:** The Act restores degraded lands, enhancing biodiversity, soil health, and water retention while reducing wildfire risks.
- **Empower Indigenous Communities:** Native American tribes lead rewilding efforts, integrating traditional ecological knowledge into land management.
- **Sustainable Economic Growth:** The program creates self-sustaining revenue streams through sale of land products, repaying federal investments and reducing the national debt.
- **Climate Resilience:** By improving land management, the Act strengthens our resilience to climate change and environmental

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

## Urgent Need for Ecological Restoration

The degradation of America's natural landscapes has led to a significant loss of biodiversity, increased wildfire risks, and the depletion of natural resources. Traditional land management practices, particularly those of Native American tribes, by working with nature and in nature's own ways, have historically maintained the balance between human activity and natural ecosystems, maintaining a wild abundance of fruit and vegetable bearing plants in polycultural plant families. However, the abandonment of these practices has contributed to the ecological decline we see today.

The Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act seeks to reverse this trend by reintroducing sustainable land management practices deeply rooted in traditional ecological knowledge and observation of the ways of nature – ways that are being rediscovered by the growing practice of permaculture around the world. By restoring the land to its former vitality, we create resilient ecosystems to support diverse plant and animal life, reduce the risk of wildfires, and provide sustainable nutritional and economic benefits to local communities.

*“An ancient Abenaki custom uses squirrels to plant nut trees. In springtime the Abenaki put piles of acorns and butternuts out for the squirrels who live around their home and village. The squirrels become tree planters: they gather and bury the nuts in the ground for their food stores, but do not remember where all the seeds are buried...”*

*...We are all connected in the great Circle of Life – people, plants and animals from every culture and environment. It is not too late to relearn how we are related and to begin living in ways that support the Circle and keep it strong.”*

~ Native American Gardening

## The Crisis of Degraded Lands & Exclusion of Indigenous Knowledge



The consequences of degradation are severe: increased vulnerability to wildfires, soil erosion, loss of biodiversity and the loss of essential ecosystem functions. Wildfires alone have cost the U.S. economy over \$24 billion annually in recent years, exacerbating the strain on federal and state budgets.

Furthermore, indigenous communities, whose traditional ecological practices once maintained these lands as abundant sources of wild produce and game, have been largely excluded from modern land management strategies. This exclusion not only undermines the ecological health and natural abundance of the land but also perpetuates economic and social inequities for Native American tribes who, even through the near destruction of their cultures, never gave up the duty of humankind to steward the land in harmony with nature's ways.

## Pathways to Revitalization: Exploring Solutions for Land Restoration

**Status Quo: Continue current unsustainable land management practices.**

- **Drawbacks:** Fails to address the root causes of land degradation or empower indigenous communities; wildfire risks remain high.

**Funding Rewilding Initiatives with Debt-Based Loans:**

- **Benefits:** Federal investment is provided through debt-based loans to private companies, which are repaid with interest from increased land productivity. This model ensures that the government recoups its investment while encouraging private sector involvement in rewilding efforts.

- **Drawbacks:** The use of debt-based loans means that participants accrue interest, creating the risk of a financial burden for participants that may result in slower adoption, a focus on financial returns and less focus on indigenous empowerment compared to income-sharing models.

### Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act (Recommended):

- **Benefits:** Comprehensive ecosystem restoration, reduced wildfire risks, economic empowerment of indigenous communities, and sustainable land management funded via WHISA.
- **Drawbacks:** Requires initial federal investment and coordination across multiple agencies and stakeholders prior to initial investments being repaid by increased land productivity.

## Embracing Tradition for a Sustainable Future

The Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act is the most effective and sustainable option to address the environmental and social challenges facing the United States. This policy not only restores degraded lands but also re-integrates Native American tribes into stewardship of their traditional territories.

The act leverages traditional ecological knowledge to enhance biodiversity, increase water retention, and reduce wildfire risks—outcomes that are crucial in the face of escalating climate change impacts. The program’s self-sustaining financial model ensures that federal investments are repaid through the sale of land products, making it a fiscally responsible choice.

By adopting this policy, America can lead the world in sustainable land management while restoring rightful dignity and honor to Native Americans and returning natural biodiversity and abundance to the environment.

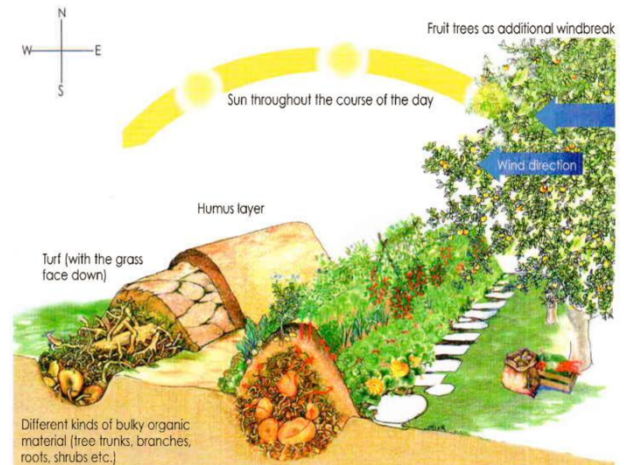
## Vision to Reality: Implementation

### Phase 1: Initial Setup (0-6 months)

- Establish a federal task force to oversee the program, including representatives from the Department of the Interior, Department of Agriculture, and Native American tribal authorities. Consult with Native American agriculturalists and permaculture experts.
- Identify eligible landowners and federal lands for participation in the program.

### Phase 2: Program Launch (6-12 months)

- Begin disbursing WHISA to participating landowners and native American tribes.
- Initiate rewilding activities, including the planting of native fruit and vegetable bearing species, creating raised beds (as depicted in the drawings to the right) that can more than double the productive surface area of the land, and implement other traditional natural ecological succors as well as water management systems.





### Phase 3: Monitoring and Expansion (12-24 months)

- Monitor progress of rewilding efforts, focusing on biodiversity, soil health, and water retention.
- Expand the program to additional lands as initial projects demonstrate success.

### Phase 4: Revenue Generation and Repayment (24+ months)

- Sustainably harvest and sell a portion of the land products, with a portion of revenues used to repay federal investments. Reinvest additional revenues into further rewilding and conservation efforts.



## WHISA: A Wise Solution for Environmental & Social Challenges

The Three Sisters Rewilding and Indigenous Empowerment Act represents a bold, innovative approach to addressing the environmental challenges facing the United States. By restoring degraded lands, fostering natural polycultural plant families, empowering indigenous communities, and reducing wildfire risks, this policy offers a comprehensive solution that benefits both people and the planet. The program's self-sustaining financial model, using Wild Harvest Income Sharing Agreements (WHISA) paid back at 2x the loan amount as a percentage of income ensures its long-term viability, making it a sound investment in the nation's future.

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