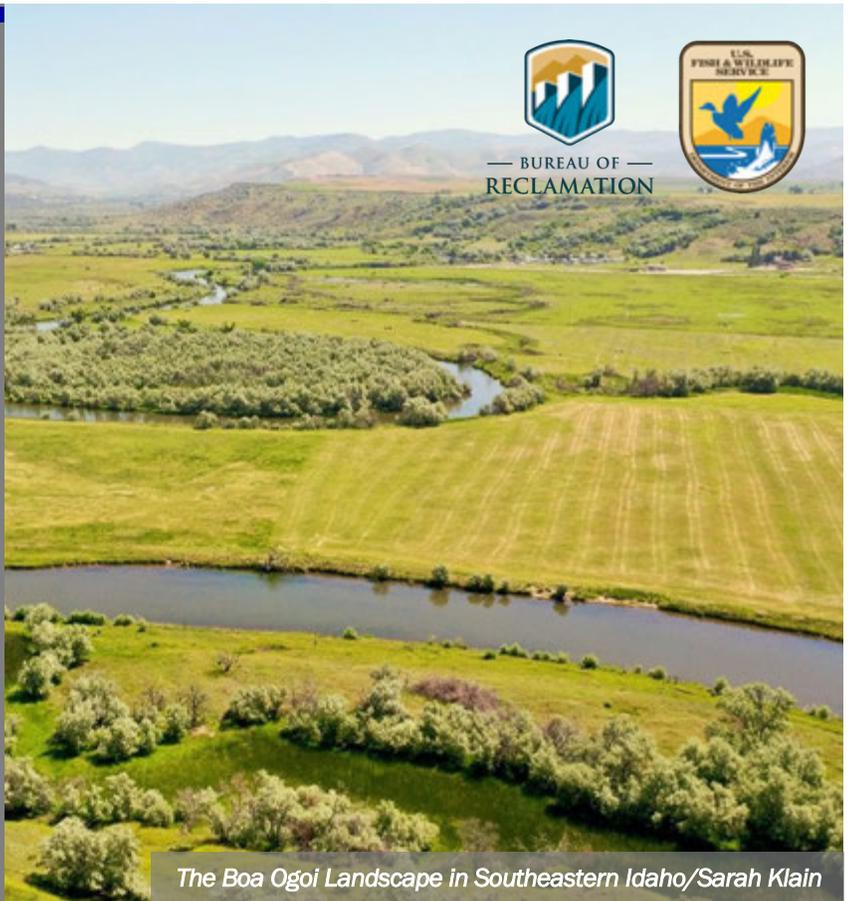


## RESTORATION

# Using Traditional Shoshone Knowledge to Develop a Restoration Plan for Boa Ogoi



In 1863, more than 400 members of the Northwest Band of the Shoshone Nation (NWBSN) were massacred by the U.S. Cavalry at Boa Ogoi, a traditional Shoshone wintering site in Idaho. Settlers transformed the land to support intensive agriculture, degrading the native ecosystem. In 2018, the NWBSN purchased approximately 500 acres of the Boa Ogoi landscape to restore its ecological integrity as much as possible and honor past generations. NWBSN partnered with Utah State University (USU) to develop a Boa Ogoi restoration plan integrating Shoshone traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) with western scientific ecological knowledge (SEK) to increase the area's climate resilience and re-establish NWBSN cultural practices inherently tied to the landscape.



*The Boa Ogoi Landscape in Southeastern Idaho/Sarah Klain*



BUREAU OF  
RECLAMATION



## KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

There is limited knowledge about the Boa Ogoi landscape and the native species it supported before post-settlement agricultural activity. Therefore, developing a reference site for a pre-settlement Boa Ogoi was needed before any restoration could take place. SEK gathered through USU researchers provided some insight, but it failed to address the tribe's perspectives on culturally significant species and how to best reestablish ecological integrity in a respectful way. Integrating TEK from the NWBSN helped identify which species were present pre-1863 and their cultural uses, recognized the knowledge of elders, and encouraged NWBSN community engagement within the restoration process.

## PROJECT GOALS

- Develop a restoration plan that integrates TEK and SEK to address ecological degradation and climate resilience at Boa Ogoi
- Restore NWBSN's stewardship of Boa Ogoi and reestablish traditional native cultural practices
- Build long-term partnerships between USU and the NWBSN at Boa Ogoi for future learning

## THE NEXT GENERATION

In 2021, indigenous students in the Native American Summer Mentorship Program gathered at Boa Ogoi to learn ecological monitoring techniques such as water quality testing.



Assessing Conditions of Beaver Creek on the Boa Ogoi Site/Levi Sim

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

**Developing a Reference:** Project partners used plant diaries collected by a Shoshone record keeper, Mae Timbimboo, and elder interviews to identify culturally important species found at Boa Ogoi pre-settlement. SEK sources like the Intermountain Planting Guide provided information to fill in the gaps of other plant species not accounted for in Shoshone TEK sources.

**Setting Restoration Goals:** USU researchers used tools like Species Distribution Models (SDMs) to determine how resistant culturally important species would be to a projected 2070 climate. This helped partners choose which species to prioritize and which ecosystem processes to support.

**Connecting Generations:** NWBSN leaders will organize youth-led interviews with tribal elders when COVID-19 conditions improve. Youth will receive guidance on how to sensitively conduct site restoration and learn more about traditional practices that were conducted at Boa Ogoi.

**Long-Term Partnerships:** USU and the NWBSN partners share a common goal for Boa Ogoi to exist as a “living classroom.” For the next 20-30 years, partners hope USU students and researchers can continue to monitor site conditions in a changing climate and NWBSN youth and community members can continue to learn and sustain traditional practices.

## Collaborators

- See online for full list of collaborators

CCAST Authors: Malik Scott, Nadira Mitchell, and Anna Weinberg (University of Arizona), November 2021.

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## LESSONS LEARNED

The NWBSN’s central message around restoring Boa Ogoi has been to use the project as a way to heal and move forward from a painful past. This clearly identified goal has resonated with and motivated partners to engage and support project planning. Additionally, the shared goal of education—whether for university students or tribal youth—has provided a solid foundation for the continued study and maintenance of Boa Ogoi.

All partners agreed that providing space for the NWBSN to tell their own story and lead project design and implementation was key for project success. Tribal members directed and had final say on all restoration decisions. Iterations of the restoration plan will continue to be reviewed by tribal leaders throughout the restoration process.

Collaboration was essential to the development of the Boa Ogoi restoration plan. Tribal leaders believed that USU’s knowledge sources complemented their own traditional knowledge and helped them achieve their goals. Multiple knowledge sources strengthened planning by requiring that outcomes and results were vetted through multiple restoration frameworks and knowledge holders (researchers, elders, tribal leads, students, etc.).

## NEXT STEPS

- Design, fund, and implement an ecological restoration plan for Boa Ogoi
- Construct a Shoshone Cultural Interpretive Center at Boa Ogoi to honor those who once lived there, and provide a place of learning for tribal members and guests

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USU and NWBSN Project Partners/Levi Sim