



INDIGENOUS PEYOTE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

Frequently Asked Questions

The facts about the mission and purpose of IPCI, its history, and its stance on issues relating to Peyote are important for people to have access to and understand. We hope you take the time to review this information and we welcome any questions or feedback, at info@ipci.life

IPCI'S MISSION AND PURPOSE AND SERVICES FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND CHAPTER

- **What is IPCI's Vision?**
 - We promote the health, wellbeing, and cultural revitalization of Native communities through reconnection to, sovereign use, and sustainability of the sacred Peyote and the lands on which it grows.

- **Why is it important for Native Americans (NAC/ABNDN) to do conservation of the Peyote Medicine and its Native habitat in South Texas/USA.**
 - It is a sacred responsibility to harvest the medicine properly – in a spiritual and ecological way – and to teach our youth how to harvest medicine properly so that it is available for generations to come. This maintains a healthy energy exchange with the medicine and is tied to medicine sovereignty.

- **What is medicine/Peyote sovereignty?**
 - Medicine/Peyote sovereignty is taking responsibility for the health of our sacred Peyote medicine and teaching our youth how to care for the medicine so that it is available and plentiful for generations to come.

- **Why are youth so important to fulfilling IPCI's mission?**
 - For our way of life to continue for our children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren we need to nurture generational responsibility for the

reconnection and preservation of our Medicine, its natural habitat, and the “old ways” of harvesting medicine.

- **What resources do we have available for your family or chapter to access spiritually and ecologically clean medicine?**
 - If you/your chapter is interested in making a pilgrimage to the Peyote Gardens and participating in a spiritual and ecological harvest please email info@ipci.life. Currently we are offering harvesting in the spring and fall due to safety precautions regarding the weather in Texas. We can make arrangements now for Fall 2024 and Spring 2025.
- **How do we run our organization and how can you participate in this biocultural conservation prayer?**
 - IPCI is an Indigenous-led initiative. Our BOD members represent different regions and operate as an equal council and direct our staff to carry out the prayer through the daily work of the organization.
 - Please reach out to info@ipci.life if you are interested in volunteering with us. We have many volunteer opportunities, including preparing for our Thanksgiving Celebration this November 2024.

IPCI'S HISTORY AND CURRENT OPERATIONS

- **How and why was the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative (IPCI) formed?**
 - In 2017, the Presidents of four of the largest or oldest Native American Church organizations came together under the name of the National Council of Native American Churches for a strategy session in Laredo, Texas. The group discussed ideas on how to strategically ensure Peyote medicine sovereignty for Indigenous people, Peyote medicine sustainability, and spiritual reconnection of Indigenous peoples to the Peyote medicine. The group agreed on the formation of the Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative to manage land-based programs. In 2018 The Indigenous Peyote Conservation Initiative officially became a 501c(3) organization in Texas.
- **What research projects has IPCI been connected to in the past?**
 - IPCI draws on results of Peyote Research Project (PRP) Phases 1 and 2, which identified consistent complaints among NAC chapters and members about small Peyote buttons, undercounted purchases, bad harvesting techniques, sales to non-Native people, shrinking ranch lease access, drought, and price increases.. The PRP was initiated by NAC of North America and conducted by the Walker Research Group and the Native American Rights Fund. In Phase 2, it was expanded to include the National Council of Native American Churches when the

involved NAC organization Presidents recognized the need to expand conservation strategies across NAC/ABNDN and Native Peyote practitioners.

- **Who are the members that make up the Board of Directors of IPCI?**

- The IPCI Board of Directors is made up of members of Indigenous Peyote leaders from four general geographic regions of the United States, including Southwest, Southern Plains, Midwest, and Northern Plains regions. These representatives are Road Men who have families and a demonstrated commitment to their communities, to the future of Peyote and to the health and future of the Peyote ceremonial way of life.
- Current IPCI BOD members include:
 - Northern Plains Region - Sandor Iron Rope, NAC SD
 - Southwest Region - Andrew Tso, former NACNA president
 - Southern Plains Region - Arlen Lightfoot, NAC OK
 - Southwest Region - Steven Benally, Dine Nation
 - Northwest Region - Cedric Blackeagle, Crow Nation
 - Northeast Region - Joe Daniels, Potawatomi tribe

** Read more about our Board of Directors here at www.IPCI.life/board-and-staff*

- **Is IPCI a religious organization?**

- IPCI is a 501(c)3 conservation non-profit organization located in south Texas. However IPCI supports Native American Church and ABNDN chapters and Indigenous leaders to connect with, regenerate, and conserve their sacred Peyote medicine for generations to come. It is a conservation organization, not a Church organization and does not intend to be one.

- **What are our strategies for ensuring an abundant future for Peyote and its Indigenous peoples?**

- IPCI's organizational mission is, Empowering Indigenous communities to reconnect with, regenerate, and conserve their sacred Peyote medicine for generations to come. IPCI's primary focus is on conserving the Peyote in its natural habitat. The Board of Directors have developed conservation strategies alongside experts in the field to address the issues of declining Peyote populations in south Texas.
- One effort IPCI addressed is creating land sovereignty for Indigenous Peyote leaders to guide conservation efforts. Other strategies include transplanting Peyote back into its natural habitat, providing education around ecological harvesting, and creating partnerships with Ranchers to work together on the conservation of Peyote.

- In turn, IPCI will transplant Peyote back into the natural habitat by utilizing the nursery for growing babies on site that can replenish over-harvested or harmed areas.

- **What are the strategies for Peyote conservation?**
 - Create meaningful relationships with Ranchers in South Texas.
 - Conservation leases with Ranchers to create land access and support reconnection for Indigenous Peyote practitioners and Native American Church/ABNDN chapters to conduct ecological and spiritual harvests.
 - Replant Peyotes for every Peyote harvested during an ecological harvest.
 - Collect Peyote seeds from Native American Church/ABNDN members to grow and transplant into the Peyote gardens.

- **What is IPCI spending money on?**
 - In 2017, IPCI purchased 605 acres of land in the Peyote gardens that at one point had no structures or facilities available. Over the years, IPCI has invested time and money into transforming the landbase into a spiritual homesite including a living structure and meeting area, bathhouses, composting toilets, and a nursery/germination chamber. Each of these structures were intentionally designed to be environmentally conscious and sustainable.
 - IPCI has expanded its capacity in bringing on staff and stipend volunteers to upkeep the land base and maintain the organization's functional pieces.
 - IPCI has invested in ranch leases to create access to Peyote lands for Native American Church chapters and members to conduct ecological and spiritual assessments and harvests. In our early years, harvests have been free of charge to NAC/ABNDN organizations and members.

- **How did IPCI acquire the 605 acre Spiritual Homesite in South Texas?**
 - IPCI purchased 605 acres of land in south Texas with a grant from the Riverstyx Foundation, the deed was initially held by the Native American Rights Fund (NARF) and was passed on to IPCI.

- **What activities take place on the Spiritual Homesite in south Texas?**
 - Our Spiritual Homesite includes a campground, kitchen area and ceremonial sites where NAC/ABNDN chapters can set up their teepees for ceremony. We have a Peyote offering garden where Indigenous families can make prayers with privacy. Several adobe structures have been built – a home for the staff and host family as well as a bathhouse with compostable toilets. IPCI plans to have more buildings constructed over the next several years, as funding allows. These buildings will

include a welcome center and housing for youth, elders, and families. The intention of all development is to make a comfortable spiritual homesite in the Peyote Gardens for Native Peyote Families. The Master Plan was developed using the vision of the IPCI's Board of Directors.

- **How does IPCI create land access for Indigenous people and NAC members?** (What is the role of land access in conserving medicine?)
 - IPCI negotiates leases with local ranchers to open up opportunities for NAC/ABNDN chapters to conduct their own pilgrimage and spiritual and ecological harvests. This model of harvesting was done decades ago prior to the Texas instituted peyotero licensing system. IPCI has organized several children's and Chapter harvests, where a NAC/ABNDN chapter can bring their community and youth to conduct a harvest. These NAC chapters then can take the Peyote they harvested back to their community. If you are interested in organizing a harvest for your chapter please contact info@ipci.life.
 - IPCI, with the support of botanists who are experts in their fields of study, have developed a model for restoring the damaged Peyote in the Peyote Gardens. Spiritual and ecological harvesting in the Peyote Gardens is essential to this restoration.

INFORMATION ABOUT IPCI FUNDING AND THE COMMITMENT BY ITS FUNDING ALLIES

- **Where does IPCI get funding from?**
 - From Foundation grants and Individual major donor grants. IPCI's first 'seed money' came from Riverstyx Foundation. In 2015, Native American Church leaders were introduced to Cody Swift, an American Philanthropist, from the RiverStyx Foundation. Riverstyx Foundation was formed from a trust created by Cody's grandmother from funds inherited by her father, one of the founders of the United Postal Service (UPS). Additional funders include Dr. Bronners, Groupon, NARF, Cohen Foundation, crowdfunding campaigns and other individual donors.
- **How does IPCI work with funders and allies?**
 - The Board of Director members clearly defined that funding allies interested in supporting IPCI should have no interest in opening up legal access to and use of Peyote by non-Natives. Peyote – as set out in federal law – is for Native tribal members only.

- Some of these Philanthropic Foundations also support the FDA approved testing of substances such as MDMA and psilocybin for medical use to treat PTSD (especially for military veterans), depression, alcoholism, opiate addiction and trauma in mainstream society. They understand the clear differences between those activities and protecting the sacred way of life for Indigenous people who worship with Peyote.
 - Funders to IPCI must be approved to give money by the Board of Directors, and must agree to support direct Indigenous sovereignty and primary decision making over their medicine. They agree to this because they know the community healing potential of this medicine is intertwined with the Indigenous way of life and therefore those NAC community elders and leaders responsible for this way of life must be the protectors and decision-makers.
 - Financial and other support to IPCI can only be given with this understanding.
- **Why is the RiverStyx Foundation supporting Peyote people?**
 - The RiverStyx Foundation not only supports Peyote people but Indigenous peoples all over the world through the grants they provide. The RiverStyx Foundation supports Indigenous-led initiatives and Indigenous leaders who are making decisions on behalf of their own medicines, traditions, and ways of life. Riverstyx foundation also supports other ecological and social justice issues. The RiverStyx Foundation has done work to educate themselves on how to become a funder ally for Indigenous communities.
- **Why does the Riverstyx Foundation also support psychedelic research at Johns Hopkins and other universities and what does that have to do with IPCI?**
 - The RiverStyx Foundation provides funding for Universities to conduct scientific research around psychedelic treatments for mental health illnesses such as depression and PTSD. This is part of the Foundation's social commitment to healthy communities. These projects are not connected to IPCI's mission or conservation efforts. IPCI is its own independent Indigenous-led non-profit organization focused on conservation efforts around Peyote.

CORRECTING SOCIAL MEDIA MISINFORMATION ABOUT IPCI AND ITS ACTIVITIES

- **Is IPCI conducting research for pharmaceutical companies?**
 - IPCI has not been involved in any forms of research that extracts mescaline from Peyote for any pharmaceutical companies. IPCI is a 501(c)3 conservation non-profit organization based in south Texas. IPCI is focused on learning about understanding the ever changing Tamaulipan Thornscrub region by understanding the soil that Peyote prospers in, what are the growing cycles of Peyote, and what are natural ways to germinate Peyote seed to transplant into its natural habitat. The research IPCI is focused on is to understand the best ways to steward the land from Indigenous leaders and Peyote to sustain its decreasing populations in the wild.
- **Why did IPCI have a DEA importation permit?**
 - The importation permit was a one-time event approved by the U.S. DEA and Customs and Border Protection, as well as relevant Canadian agencies. It covered the one importation of medicine from Canada back to the Peyote Gardens in south Texas. It has now expired.
- **Why does the IPCI have a DEA research permit?**
 - IPCI is utilizing this research permit to specifically compare the longevity and possible causes of peyote decline in its natural habitat in the Tamulipan thornscrub. Having this legal permit allows the IPCI to continue improving the conservation efforts it has set out to accomplish.
 - Under no circumstances will IPCI be involved in, or in any way support, research into the organic makeup of Peyote, or any possible alteration to Peyote in its natural state. IPCI also does not and will never support using Peyote to derive synthetic mescaline in the laboratory.
- **What is IPCI's stance on synthetic mescaline?**
 - As IPCI understands it, synthetic mescaline is just that, a compound derived completely from synthetic substances with no tissue or other molecular connection to Peyote.
 - The Board of Directors of IPCI have no political stance on synthetic mescaline because this area of study is not related to IPCI's conservation efforts in south Texas. IPCI's mission is, Empowering Indigenous communities to reconnect with, regenerate, and conserve their sacred Peyote medicine for generations to come.
 - IPCI has never had any involvement with synthetic mescaline or any companies working on creating synthetic mescaline, and never will. IPCI is a conservation

organization focused on the natural sustainability and conservation of the Peyote medicine.

- To the extent that the use of synthetic mescaline by drug companies or individual people creates any increased interest by non-Indians in buying or using Peyote, IPCI has the same concerns as other NAC or ABNDN organizations and tribal nations.

- **What is IPCI's relationship with the Decriminalize Nature movement?**

- IPCI has no involvement with the Decriminalize Nature movement, however IPCI has in the past advocated for the Decriminalize Nature movement to leave Peyote out of their decriminalization laws. The IPCI Board of Directors, have published a [written statement of their stance on DN](#) and continues to focus on the conservation of Peyote in south Texas.
- IPCI stands in solidarity with other NAC/ABNDN organizations who oppose any effort to decriminalize or legalize the possession and use of Peyote by non-Indians who have no rights under the 1994 AIRFA.