



## ATALM National Planning Council (NPC) February 4, 2026 Meeting Notes

### I. Opening & Meeting Structure, Susan Feller, ATALM President & CEO

Susan welcomed participants and outlined the meeting format. NPC work will be conducted through **nine standing committees**, with chairs to be appointed. Committees may meet between full NPC meetings, and future NPC agendas will include time allocated for committee breakouts.

The meeting followed a structured format:

- Staff presentation on major conference components
- Pause for questions and discussion
- Interactive voting segments using whiteboard tools
- Local introductions and planning updates

### II. Conference Facilities & Spokane Overview, Melissa Brodt, ATALM Chief Operations Officer

#### Host City Framing

- A city with strong Indigenous presence and living Native communities
- Culturally active, with a growing Native arts scene
- Compact and walkable, ideal for relationship-building
- Logistically manageable for attendees

Staff emphasized the goal of creating a **seamless experience** between hotels, convention center, and off-site venues.

#### Conference Dates & Structure

##### Monday, September 21 – Summit Day

Location: Davenport Grand Hotel

Four major summits:

1. AI, Data Sovereignty & Indigenous Knowledge
2. Shared Stewardship, Voluntary Returns & Reclaiming Oral History
3. Indigenous Knowledge Centers / Master Plan for Tribal Libraries
4. Strengthening Institutional Support for Native Artists

These are designed as high-level working gatherings for practitioners, tribal leaders, artists, and partners.

##### Tuesday, September 22 – Pre-Conference

- 4+ local tours and field trips
- Up to 16 workshops

- Potential off-site evening programming

## **Wednesday–Thursday, September 23–24 – Main Conference**

Location: Spokane Convention Center

Includes:

- 120+ sessions
- Poster presentations
- Roundtables
- Opening ceremony (September 23)
- Guardian Awards luncheon
- Honoring luncheon
- Evening networking events
- Closing ceremony (Sept. 24)

### **Hotels & Rates**

Two primary host hotels (both 4-star properties connected to the Convention Center):

- Davenport Grand – \$169/night
- DoubleTree – \$150/night

Discounted rates available up to **three nights prior to conference start** to encourage early arrival.

### **Issue Identified**

A participant reported that the DoubleTree booking link appeared to restrict the discounted rate to Monday–Friday only, excluding Sunday. Staff committed to addressing the issue and updating attendees.

### **III. Off-Site Events & Local Partnerships**

Discussion included:

- Planning for at least **two off-site evening events**
- Northwest Museum of Arts & Culture expressed interest in hosting an event
- Possible Wednesday-night street fair near conference hotels
- Suggestion to coordinate with Convention & Visitors Bureau to identify city events during conference week

These opportunities reinforce community integration and Indigenous visibility in the host city.

## **IV. Conference Visual Identity & Theme, Jess Cordes, ATALM Director of Programs**

### **Submissions & Process**

- 65 artworks submitted
- Narrowed to top 6 finalists
- NPC members voted via digital whiteboard tools

### **Selection Criteria**

- Culturally grounded
- Representative of host region
- Visually striking at multiple scales
- Reflective of ATALM's collective spirit

Jess also framed possible thematic language emphasizing sovereignty, cultural authority, and Indigenous-defined stewardship.

## V. Distinguished Artist & Recognition Discussion

Significant discussion focused on the importance of honoring a **living artist**.

Key themes:

- Recognizing a living artist elevates both the artist and the conference.
- A prior conference demonstrated the power of a Distinguished Artist leading a conference-wide art project.
- Strong interest in honoring a **local Spokane or regional artist**, especially one connected to host tribal community.
- Emphasis on ledger art traditions and regional relevance.

Recognition roles were discussed as strategic tools for:

- Visibility
- Relationship-building
- Cultural grounding
- Community pride

## VI. Conference Chair & Honorary Chair (2026)

Susan introduced discussion on selecting:

- Conference Chair
- Potential Honorary Conference Chair (not always appointed, but may be this year due to strong recommendations)

Shana Bushyhead Condill, 2025 Chair, shared her experiences and the role of the chair:

- Visibility within tribal governments
- Regional leadership engagement
- Public representation of the conference
- Enhancing host tribe presence

Further consultation required before final recommendations.

## VII. Local & Regional Participation

Strong engagement from host region leaders and cultural professionals.

Notable participation included:

- Spokane tribal leadership and preservation staff
- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- The meeting reflected meaningful host-region buy-in and readiness to collaborate.

## VIII. Field Trip & Cultural Programming Ideas

Ideas raised included:

- Historical tour related to 1858 Battle (led by Warren Saylor)
- Museum-hosted events
- Cultural and contemporary exhibitions
- Community storytelling programming

These discussions reflect integration of:

- Cultural history
- Contemporary Native life
- Place-based learning

## **IX. Sustainability & Facilities Session Concept**

A proposal was raised to include a session on:

- Energy audits
- Sustainability practices
- Facilities management case studies
- Discussion acknowledged rising energy costs and the need for practical tools for tribal institutions.

## **X. Programming & Submission Deadline**

- Session proposals due: February 10, 2026
- NPC meets first Wednesday monthly at 2:00 PM Eastern
- Spokane site visit scheduled: April 28, 2026
- Planning documents available on NPC webpage.

## **XI. Strategic Themes Emerging**

The meeting surfaced clear strategic patterns:

1. Elevating living Native artists
2. Centering host tribe visibility
3. Deepening shared stewardship and voluntary return frameworks
4. Maintaining ATALM's relational culture as conference grows

## **XII. Operational Status & Risk Notes**

### **On Track:**

- Venue secured
- Hotels secured
- Summit topics defined
- Visual identity selection process underway
- Strong regional participation

### **Needs Follow-Up:**

- Hotel booking date issue
- Finalize Distinguished Artist
- Confirm Chair/Honorary Chair
- Confirm off-site event partners
- Ensure strong session submissions by Feb 10

## **Overall Assessment**




Planning for ATALM 2026 in Spokane is progressing on schedule with:

- Strong local tribal leadership engagement
- Clear programming structure
- Defined facilities and logistics
- High strategic alignment with ATALM’s mission

The conference continues to mature in scale and complexity while maintaining cultural grounding and relational integrity.

# ATALM2026 NPC Whiteboard Voting

## WHITEBOARD 1: CONFERENCE IMAGE

 <p><b><i>Unknown Title</i></b> <b>Alfred Charles</b> Lower Elwha Klallam, Coast Salish</p>	 <p><b><i>Ancestral Landscapes</i></b> <b>Joe Feddersen</b> Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation</p>	 <p><b><i>Gathering Under the Stars</i></b> <b>Joe Feddersen</b> Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation</p>
<p><b>8 votes</b></p>	<p><b>5 votes</b></p>	<p><b>5 votes</b></p>



**Celebrate 40,000 Years**  
**Juane Quick-to-See-Smith**  
 Confederated Salish and  
 Kootenai Tribe / Métis and  
 Shoshone descent



**Warriors**  
**George Flett**  
 Spokane Tribe



**Women Warrior Black Star and  
 Her Medicine Helpers**  
**George Flett**  
 Spokane Tribe

<b>26 votes</b>	<b>20 votes</b>	<b>12 votes</b>
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## WHITEBOARD 2: CONFERENCE THEME

SUGGESTED THEMES:	RESULTS
<b>Guided by Responsibility, Protected by Collective Strength</b>	<b>16 votes</b>
40,000 years / 250 years: <b>Long Before, Long After</b>	<b>16 votes</b>
On the Record: <b>Long Before, Long After</b>	<b>11 votes</b>
<b>Long Before, Long After</b>	<b>11 votes</b>
We Know What We Hold. We Know Who We Are.	5 votes
Grounded in Place, Sustained by Community; Caring for Place, People, and Memory Presence of Indigenous Knowledge	5 votes
Sovereignty Sustained: Protecting Our Stories for Future Generations	3 votes
The Enduring Presence of Indigenous Knowledge	2 votes
Connecting to/Centering Indigenous Futures	2 votes
Through Our Songs and Stories, We Preserve the Past	2 votes
Generations Working Together	1 vote
Honoring Our Roots, Rising into Tomorrow	1 vote
Refusal, Repair, and Reclamation	1 vote
Honoring our Ancestors Through Cultural Spaces of Knowledge	
Togetherness in the reclamation of land and culture	
Resilience: Cultural, Emotional, Institutional	
Carrying Tradition and Knowledge	

## WHITEBOARD 3: CONFERENCE CHAIR NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS	RESULTS
<b>Sven Haakanson</b> , a long-time ATALM participant and respected Native scholar, anthropologist, and museum curator.	23 votes
<b>Miranda Belarde Lewis</b> , Associate Professor, Univ. of Wash.; specialized in Indig. Systems, knowledge, and Indig. art, tribal museums and Indig. curation	15 votes

## WHITEBOARD 4: HONORARY CHAIR NOMINATIONS

NOMINATIONS	RESULTS
<b>Warren Seylor</b> (Spokane tribe, historian)	12 votes
<b>Elaine Miles</b> -actress-comedian-Smoke Signals, Northern Exposure	12 votes
<b>Charlene Teters</b> . Spokane artist, activist, and educator.	10 votes
<b>Margo Hill</b> for her nationally respected leadership in Indigenous art and placemaking and her deep, living connection to Spokane as a member of the Spokane Tribe, grounding ATALM 2026 firmly in place and community.	10 votes
<b>Joy Harjo</b> for her extraordinary contributions to Indigenous voice, language, and memory, and her widely trusted presence as a cultural leader whose work bridges history, art, and future generations.	9 votes
<b>Deb Haaland</b> in recognition of her historic national leadership, unwavering commitment to Indigenous sovereignty, and profound influence on land, cultural stewardship, and federal responsibility.	6 votes
<b>Miranda Belarde Lewis</b> Associate Professor, Univ. of Wash.; specialized in Indig. Systems, knowledge, and Indig. art, tribal museums and Indig. curation	4 votes
<b>Tatanka Means</b> for his visible and uncompromising advocacy for Native people through contemporary storytelling, activism, and public engagement that speaks powerfully to the present moment.	3 votes
<b>Ryan Fedderson</b> - Colville Tribe – Artist	2 votes
<b>John Herrington</b> for his historic achievement as the first Native American astronaut and his enduring role as an inspirational leader connecting Indigenous knowledge and science	2 votes
<b>Sherman Alexie?</b> May be too controversial, but he is one heck of a speaker	1 vote