



The Governor's Office of
INDIAN AFFAIRS

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMISSION MEETING

December 3, 2025

1:00-2:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Chief Thomas Rivers

Chairman

Devon Parfait

Vice Chairman

Debbie Garrett

Secretary

1. Call to Order

Chief Rivers

A. This meeting was called to order at 1:06 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Debbie Garrett

A. The following members of the Commission are present: Elizabeth Rogers (here by proxy, Anders Melton), Billy Burkette, Debbie Garrett, Deme Naquin Jr, Devon Parfait, Fred Simon, Geneva LeBeouf, Kelsi Lancon, Randy Verdun, Thomas Rivers (here by proxy, Alexis Hagelyn).

B. The following members of the Commission are absent: Audrey Clifton, Chip McGimpsey, David Sickey, Holly Talley, Len Wiggins, Lora Chaisson, Marshall Pierite, Melissa Darden.

C. The commission members each made a formal introduction.

3. Public Comments

A. Public comment from Christopher Walters explains a letter from the Governor's office explaining the process for adding federal and state recognized tribes, stating the Turtle Choctaw tribe has not been recognized by the federal or state government.

- B. Geneva LeBeouf asks a question about how an unrecognized tribe becomes a state tribe and what are the components a tribe must have to be officially recognized in the state.
- C. Billy Burkette says he thought it was official, Christopher Walters says it would have to be passed through an official legislative act.
- D. Devin Parfait says Geneva LeBeouf had some criteria that the Native American commission had submitted previously and he was wondering if there was any movement on that.

4. New Business

- A. Presentation from GOHSEP, has officially merged with the Louisiana military department LANG (Louisiana National Guard) effective in March 2025. GOHSEP serves as a bridge between education, response, and recovery. Prepare before, during, and after any disasters.
- B. Tribal Liaison Support will work to coordinate to prepare ahead of disasters. They also work with QIA to make sure that the appropriate state agency is involved.
- C. A State Applicant Liaison (SAL) is an agent. Federally recognized tribes have the option to obtain their own federal declaration. If they are only state recognized, they would have to follow the state recognized declaration. Preliminary Damage Assessment will help you after the event of a disaster.
- D. Motion to approve September minutes, with correction to Commission member names. Motion made by Debbie Garrett, Seconded by Randy Verdun.

5. Meeting/Speaker ideas for next meeting

- A. Topics for next meeting, someone who is interested in speaking and working with the Native American Commission.
- B. Comment made to request longer meetings occasionally.

6. Announcement of future commission meeting dates **Kelsi Lancon**

- A. The next meeting will be on March 4, 2026.
 - I. Followed by the meeting date June 10th from 1:00-2:00 p.m.

7. Adjournment **Debbie Garrett**

- A. This meeting was adjourned at 2:01, motioned by Devin Parfait, seconded by Debbie Garrett.