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UPPER MATTAPONI PLACES LAND INTO TRUST

Sharon Indian School and Tribe's Government Center are Now Tribal Land

The Bureau of Indian Affairs accepted two parcels of land into trust for the benefit of the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe on April 14, 2022. The parcels, which are located in King William County, total 27.69 acres and include the historic Sharon Indian School, the tribe's government center, and its pow-wow grounds.

"The Upper Mattaponi Tribe now has tribal lands on which we can exercise our sovereignty, rebuild and further develop our community, and protect our way of life," said Chief Frank Adams. "Today is a momentous day for all of the citizens of our tribe and for those generations to come."

Putting land into trust brings many benefits for tribes. Trust land is governed by tribal laws, rather than state laws. Having trust land helps the Tribe access a variety of federal programs and services, including economic development preferences, housing support, and enhanced abilities to manage cultural and environmental resources.

The United States government currently holds approximately 55 million surface acres and 59 million subsurface mineral estates in trust for tribes across the country. The acquisition announced today is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth of Virginia, where the Upper Mattaponi and five other tribes were federally recognized by Congress in 2018.

Congressman Rob Wittman, who co-sponsored the legislation that extended federal recognition to the tribe, remarked, "On this historic day, I would like to extend my sincere congratulations to the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe on this achievement. The acceptance of this land into trust will help facilitate economic growth for the tribe and allow the tribe to further protect their way of life and sovereignty."

"I congratulate the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe on placing land into trust with the federal government, which is critical to the tribe's ability to self-govern," said Senator Tim Kaine. Senator Kaine and Senator Mark Warner also co-sponsored the legislation that extended federal recognition to the tribe.

Senator Mark Warner added, "I want to congratulate the Upper Mattaponi Tribe on this fantastic announcement. The placement of this land into trust will allow the tribe to exercise its rightful sovereignty while expanding economic opportunities for the tribal community."

Secretary of the Commonwealth Kay Coles James remarked, "Congratulations to Chief Frank Adams and the members of the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe. This is indeed a historic time. Tribal lands provide an important home base and connection to tribal traditions and history. This monumental agreement will allow members to better connect with their past in order to preserve and share their culture with future generations."

"I want to congratulate Chief Frank Adams and the Upper Mattaponi Tribe on the announcement of the Bureau of Indian Affairs accepting two parcels of land into trust for the benefit of the Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe. This announcement is the first of its kind in the Commonwealth. The Tribe will greatly benefit from having trust land, and this will open up a host of opportunities for the Tribe," said Delegate Scott Wyatt (R-King William).

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