NATIVE AMERICAN INDIAN DOG

Official NAIDPP Breed Standard

Native American Indian Dog Preservation Project, Inc.

Established 2020

Authenticity without mythology. Diversity without loss of type. Health without genetic destruction. Development without loss of provenance.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Standard is to define the preservation ideal of the Native American Indian Dog (NAID) and provide a consistent framework for breeding, evaluation, education, and continued breed development.

The Standard describes the dog toward which the Native American Indian Dog Preservation Project (NAIDPP) intends the population to progress. It is therefore both a conformation standard and a preservation roadmap.

The Native American Indian Dog remains a breed in active preservation and development. Not every living NAID will conform equally to every provision of this Standard, nor should the present population be mistaken for the final expression of the preservation objective.

Breeders should use the Standard to guide selection across generations. Judges and evaluators should use it to assess how closely an individual approaches the preservation ideal.

Health, welfare, functional soundness, stable temperament, and preservation of essential breed character take precedence over purely cosmetic preference.

> **No single minor departure should outweigh the quality of the whole dog.**

PRESERVATION STATUS

The Native American Indian Dog is a modern preservation and development breed with an established population and documented modern breeding history.

NAIDPP recognizes the historical importance of the established NAID population while acknowledging the need to manage genetic diversity, health, structure, temperament, and breed type across future generations.

Preservation means identifying what is essential, protecting what remains valuable, correcting what has become detrimental, and developing the population responsibly toward a coherent and sustainable breed.

The established population remains the living foundation of the modern NAID.

Where population needs justify outside contribution, NAIDPP may employ controlled development pathways in which ancestry remains permanently documented and descendants are evaluated across generations.

> **The Standard defines the destination. The development program determines responsible routes toward it. The pedigree is merely an ancestral lineage record.**

HOW TO READ THIS STANDARD

Standard

The Standard describes the desired characteristic.

Form and Function

Form and Function explains why a characteristic contributes to soundness, movement, endurance, working ability, health, or characteristic breed identity.

Interpretation

Interpretation provides guidance concerning acceptable variation and how a characteristic should be evaluated.

A departure from the ideal is not automatically of equal significance to every other departure.

1. health and welfare;
2. temperament and behavioral stability;
3. structural soundness and function;
4. essential breed type;
5. secondary phenotype; and
6. cosmetic detail.

A dog should always be evaluated as a complete animal.

CULTURAL AND LANGUAGE STEWARDSHIP

Earlier versions of the NAID Standard incorporated terminology from several Indigenous languages.

NAIDPP is conducting a broader review of this terminology so that language associated with Indigenous peoples is not adopted, translated, standardized, or repurposed without appropriate linguistic and cultural consideration.

For this edition, English terminology governs all normative provisions of the Standard.

Indigenous-language terminology may be incorporated in future editions or educational materials following appropriate review by knowledgeable speakers, language authorities, cultural representatives, elders, or other appropriate community resources.

Where terminology is eventually included, it will supplement rather than replace the technical English definition of a characteristic.

NAIDPP does not claim authority to speak collectively for Indigenous Nations or to define their individual historical dog traditions.

HISTORY

Indigenous Dogs of the Americas

Dogs have lived in relationship with the Indigenous peoples of the Americas for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence securely documents domestic dogs in North America by approximately 10,000 years ago, while genetic research indicates that pre-contact American dogs descended primarily from dogs a genetically distinct lineage rather than from the domestication of North American wolves.

These dogs were not a single uniform breed. Across the vast and environmentally diverse regions of the Americas, Indigenous peoples maintained dogs suited to different communities, climates, cultural practices, and forms of work.

Historical, archaeological, ethnographic, and oral-history records describe dogs serving in hunting, transport, protection, companionship, fiber production, ceremony, and other roles. Their size, coat, structure, and working characteristics varied accordingly.

Some historically documented populations became particularly specialized. Others were locally maintained landrace or working populations rather than breeds in the modern sense.

The Native American Indian Dog should therefore not be understood as a reconstruction of one universal ancestral “Indian dog.” No single historical type adequately represents the diversity of Indigenous dogs across the Americas.

Instead, the modern preservation objective draws from recurring functional characteristics documented among multiple Indigenous dog traditions while developing those characteristics into a coherent modern breed.

Disruption, Persistence, and Loss

European colonization profoundly altered canine populations throughout the Americas.

Indigenous communities experienced displacement, warfare, disease, forced assimilation, disruption of traditional lifeways, and the introduction of large numbers of European dogs. Indigenous dog populations declined, disappeared, interbred with introduced populations, or were replaced.

Genomic research indicates that the distinctive ancestry represented by sampled pre-contact American dogs survives minimally in most modern dog populations.

Accordingly, a modern breed should not be assumed to represent an unchanged genetic continuation of ancient American dogs merely because of appearance, tradition, or breed name.

Genetic loss, however, does not erase cultural history.

Historical records, Indigenous oral traditions, archaeological evidence, surviving regional populations, and accounts preserved by researchers and breeders provide different forms of evidence concerning relationships between Indigenous peoples and their dogs.

NAIDPP recognizes these sources according to what each can establish. And while not all of the following sources are interchangeable, archaeological evidence, genomic evidence, oral history, breeder accounts, and modern registry records are all valuable in how we understand Native American Indian Dogs today.

Twentieth-Century Preservation and the Modern NAID

During the twentieth century, several individuals became interested in researching, preserving, or recreating dogs associated with Indigenous American history.

Among the important figures in this broader modern preservation movement was Kim LaFlamme, founder of the American Indian Dog program, whose work included research and preservation of historical and oral accounts concerning Indigenous dogs.

The American Indian Dog and Native American Indian Dog are separate modern breed populations with distinct breeding histories. Historical relationships among people involved in these programs should not be interpreted as evidence that the breeds are interchangeable or that American Indian Dog ancestry constitutes documented Native American Indian Dog ancestry.

The modern breed specifically known as the Native American Indian Dog was founded and developed by Karen Markel through Majestic View Kennels.

Accounts preserved from the founding period describe Markel assembling dogs from several sources and selecting toward her conception of a versatile Indigenous-inspired working and companion dog.

Markel reported obtaining dogs from breeders associated with Blackfeet, Shoshone, Ojibwe, and Inuit communities, including an Inuit source identified with the Thule region of Greenland. These associations are retained as part of the recorded provenance of the founding program; we do not present them as proof that these dogs represented genetically unbroken pre-contact tribal lineages.

Additional early developmental sources are preserved in breeder and registry history. These include dogs associated with the White Bear program obtained through Shirley

Allen and attributed to a Cherokee breeder in Oklahoma, as well as Kenai and Kalispell, dogs associated with the Mackenzie River Husky program that subsequently passed through Allen to Markel.

Siberian Husky and Alaskan Malamute ancestry formed part of the developing population and these breeds were regularly introduced during subsequent development. Registry history records additional limited early contributions from other breeds including Chinook, Samoyed, Collie, and Belgian-type dogs.

Historical wolfdog contribution is also documented in portions of the early development population. Available registry history indicates that these contributors were already generationally removed from immediate wolf × dog matings rather than first-generation hybrids. Historical wolfdog contribution should therefore be distinguished from recent wolf hybridization and should not be converted into unsupported estimates of modern wolf ancestry.

> **The resulting NAID was a modern composite development population, not an ancient breed preserved unchanged from antiquity.**

Continued Development

Development did not end once a recognizable NAID population had been established.

Intentional outside breeding continued at different points in breed history. Some crosses were identified by developmental or marketing names, and descendants of some outside crosses subsequently contributed to NAID pedigrees.

Historical and registry records document recurring or later contributions involving German Shepherd Dog, Alaskan Malamute, Siberian Husky, Newfoundland, and other breeds. Additional developmental crosses within the broader NAID community involved Golden Retriever, Australian Shepherd, Swiss Shepherd, Belgian-type dogs, and other populations.

Later Carolina Dog-derived ancestry also entered portions of the population through specific documented contributors. These represent later developmental contributions rather than original NAID founders.

The presence of a source breed within NAID development does not make the defining phenotype of that source breed part of the NAID Standard.

> **An ancestor may contribute useful characteristics without defining the phenotype toward which subsequent generations are selected.**

Expansion and Contraction

Following the establishment of Majestic View, additional breeding programs developed and dogs moved among breeders and kennels.

Programs important to subsequent NAID history included Terra Pines, Night Eyes, JAACE's Animal Companions, Happy Bend, Native Sky, and others, with later organizational changes producing additional programs such as Native Mountain.

These kennel histories should not be mistaken for independent breed origins. The modern NAID developed as an interconnected network of dogs descending from, exchanged among, and sometimes developed beyond the population established through Majestic View.

Over time, recognized NAID identity became increasingly associated with descent from an established group of accepted lines. Portions of the breeding population also became increasingly concentrated around particular ancestors.

The diversity of populations contributing historically to NAID development should therefore not be confused with the genetic diversity remaining within the contemporary breeding population.

The NAIDPP Preservation Era

The Native American Indian Dog Preservation Project was established in 2020 to support the long-term preservation, health, documentation, consistency, and responsible development of the Native American Indian Dog.

As pedigree records, health information, genetic testing, breeder experience, and historical research accumulated, the Project's preservation strategy continued to develop.

NAIDPP recognizes the established NAID population as the living foundation of the modern breed and considers preservation of historically significant and underrepresented lines an essential responsibility.

Preservation, however, cannot mean maintaining pedigrees without regard to population health.

For this reason, NAIDPP approaches breeding as population management across generations rather than the pursuit of individually perfect dogs.

Where population needs justify it, carefully evaluated outside dogs may enter a controlled development pathway. Outside ancestry remains documented, and descendants are evaluated across generations for health, temperament, structure, function, and convergence toward this Standard.

> **The purpose of outside contribution is to strengthen and extend the established NAID population, not to replace or alter its essence.**

Continuing Preservation Objective

The Native American Indian Dog is a modern breed whose development was inspired by the diverse dogs that lived and worked alongside Indigenous peoples of the Americas.

It is not presented as an unchanged remnant of a single ancient dog population.

The preservation objective is to develop a healthy, genetically sustainable, functionally capable, temperamentally sound, and phenotypically coherent breed informed by historical research, Indigenous knowledge where appropriately shared, established NAID history, and contemporary canine science.

> **The purpose is to preserve and develop a coherent breed made possible by the historic native dogs.**

BREED ESSENCE

The Native American Indian Dog is an intelligent, perceptive, athletic, environmentally aware, highly communicative dog combining endurance, adaptability, functional strength, and close partnership with humans.

> **The breed should convey dignity without heaviness, strength without coarseness, and refinement without fragility.**

Its appearance should be distinctly canine and primitive in character without exaggeration toward either a generic wolfdog or a conventional northern sled-dog or shepherd phenotype.

The NAID is fundamentally a versatile dog. No single historic task defines it.

Its structure should permit sustained movement, agility, environmental adaptability, carrying or pulling moderate working loads appropriate to the individual, scent work, hunting-related activity, companionship, service work, therapy, and other forms of useful work.

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Native American Indian Dog is a medium-to-large, athletic, moderately elongated dog of balanced proportions.

The impression is one of functional elegance.

The body is lean and capable rather than bulky. The topline is strong. The chest is deep but not barrel-shaped. The abdomen exhibits a clearly defined tuck-up. The legs provide useful ground clearance without appearing stilted.

Bone is sufficient for durability but should never become excessively heavy.

The feet are characteristically large and functional.

The head is angular, expressive, and proportionate, with erect ears and an intelligent, highly communicative expression.

The coat is double and occurs in three expressions—Short, Intermediate, and Long—without obscuring the dog's underlying structure.

When viewed as a whole, the NAID should appear capable of traveling efficiently across varied terrain for extended periods.

The breed should never appear cumbersome, massive, exaggerated, coarse, or ornamental.

SEXUAL DIMORPHISM

Sexual dimorphism is expected and desirable.

Males generally possess greater substance, musculature, breadth of head, and overall physical presence.

Females should remain distinctly feminine, often appearing lighter and more refined while retaining adequate bone, strength, and working capability.

Neither sex should become exaggerated.

A male should not require excessive mass to appear masculine, and a female should not appear weak or insubstantial in order to appear feminine.

SIZE, PROPORTION, AND SUBSTANCE

The NAID exists across a meaningful range of size because of its developmental history and the preservation of two functional body expressions.

Size alone does not determine quality.

Correct proportion, structural balance, movement, health, temperament, and preservation type take precedence over height or weight considered independently.

Current numerical ranges should be regarded as reference ranges under continuing population review rather than rigid boundaries while NAIDPP completes population-level analysis by sex and body expression.

Historically used reference ranges have generally placed the smaller expression approximately within the low-to-upper 20-inch range at the withers and the larger expression within the upper 20-inch range, with substantial overlap.

Weight must remain proportionate to frame, sex, conditioning, and body expression.

Excessive weight or substance should never be rewarded merely because it produces a larger dog.

Likewise, smaller size should not be penalized where the dog remains structurally sound, functional, and recognizably NAID.

BODY EXPRESSIONS

The Native American Indian Dog is one breed with two historically recognized body expressions, not two breeds or varieties requiring rigid separation.

Intermediate dogs may occur and are acceptable when they remain balanced and characteristic.

Smaller Body Expression

The smaller expression is generally more compact and may approach a more nearly square outline.

Legs are proportionately shorter than in the larger expression, although sufficient ground clearance must remain.

The body should retain the NAID's athletic character, defined tuck-up, useful chest depth, strong topline, and functional movement.

The smaller expression should not resemble a shortened, heavy, or dwarf version of the larger dog.

Its strength lies in compact athleticism, maneuverability, endurance, and efficiency.

Larger Body Expression

The larger expression is taller and generally more elongated, with notably longer legs and greater ground clearance.

It should remain lean, athletic, balanced, and capable of efficient endurance movement.

Additional height must not be created through excessive straightness, narrowness, weak substance, or exaggerated length of limb.

The larger expression should not drift toward an oversized German Shepherd, northern sled dog, or generic wolfdog phenotype.

Shared Breed Identity

Both expressions must retain the same essential NAID identity in head, expression, erect ears, feet, coat character, movement, temperament, athleticism, and overall primitive working-dog character.

The principal distinction should arise from proportion and relative leg length, not from development into two unrelated phenotypes.

HEAD

General

The head is one of the defining characteristics of the NAID.

It is angular, balanced, expressive, and proportionate to the body.

Viewed from above or from the front, the head tends toward a modified wedge or triangular outline, narrowing gradually toward the muzzle.

It should possess adequate breadth and strength without becoming blocky, massive, cheeky, or coarse.

The expression is alert, perceptive, intelligent, and unusually communicative.

Exaggeration toward the heavy head of a Malamute, the strongly defined stop and muzzle of many modern shepherds, or a caricatured wolf-like head is undesirable.

Skull

The skull is moderately broad between the ears and gradually narrows toward the eyes and muzzle.

Cheeks are relatively clean and should not create excessive lateral bulk.

The skull should appear substantial enough to support functional jaws while retaining refinement.

Stop

The stop is present but moderate.

It should flow naturally from skull to muzzle rather than creating an abrupt break.

A hard, sharply defined stop that produces a strongly domestic shepherd- or northern-breed expression is undesirable.

An almost absent stop that compromises recognizable breed expression is likewise undesirable.

Muzzle, Lips, and Jaws

The muzzle is moderately long, strong, and gradually tapered.

It should neither appear blunt and heavy nor excessively narrow and delicate.

The jaws are functional and adequately developed.

Lips are clean and reasonably tight without excessive flews.

The combination of skull and muzzle should maintain the characteristic angular wedge of the head.

Teeth and Bite

A complete complement of healthy, functional teeth is desirable.

A scissors bite is preferred.

Minor variation in dentition should be evaluated according to functional consequence rather than cosmetic perfection alone.

Missing premolars are not automatically disqualifying and should not outweigh the quality of the whole dog.

Overshot or undershot bites are faults, with severity determined by degree and functional consequence.

EYES AND EXPRESSION

The eyes are almond-shaped, set slightly obliquely, and of moderate size.

They should contribute strongly to the characteristic perceptive and communicative expression of the breed.

Eyes should not be excessively round, protruding, deeply sunken, or so small as to create a hard expression.

A broad range of naturally occurring eye colors is acceptable.

Brown, amber, yellow, green, gray, blue, and combinations thereof may occur.

Complete heterochromia, central heterochromia, and sectoral heterochromia may occur and are not faults solely because of pigmentation.

Eye color should never outweigh sound ocular structure or health.

The desired expression is difficult to reduce to color or shape alone. It should convey attentiveness, environmental awareness, intelligence, and the capacity for close communication with the handler.

EARS

The ears are erect and triangular and may vary considerably in size.

They may range from relatively small ears with somewhat rounded tips to large, longer ears with more pointed tips.

Variation in ear size is characteristic and should not be penalized when the ear remains functional, erect, proportionate enough to the individual, and consistent with breed expression.

The ears are generally set sufficiently apart to preserve the breadth of the upper skull.

They are highly mobile and expressive.

When alert, they commonly orient forward or toward a stimulus. During relaxation, play, submission, affection, or movement, one or both ears may rotate laterally or fold temporarily backward.

Permanent failure of the mature ear to stand erect represents a significant departure from characteristic breed type.

A naturally occurring darker rim or pigmentation around the ear may be characteristic but is not required.

NOSE

The nose is well developed and proportionate to the muzzle.

Nostrils should permit unrestricted respiration.

Pigmentation may be black, brown, liver-toned, pink, mottled, spotted, seasonally altered, or otherwise consistent with the dog's underlying pigmentation.

A snow nose or partially depigmented nose is not a fault by itself.

Pigmentation should be evaluated primarily in relation to health and the dog's overall color genetics rather than cosmetic preference.

NECK

The neck is moderately long, strong, clean, and sufficiently flexible.

It should flow smoothly into the shoulders and permit balanced carriage of the head during movement and work.

The neck should possess useful musculature without appearing thick, short, or cumbersome.

Excessive throatiness is undesirable.

> **Form and Function: The neck contributes to balance, head carriage, directional control, stabilization during movement, and the transfer of force through the forequarters.**

FOREQUARTERS

The forequarters should provide efficient reach, shock absorption, stability, and endurance.

Shoulder

The scapula is well laid back and lies close to the body.

The shoulder assembly should permit useful forward reach without looseness or excessive motion.

Upper Arm

The upper arm is of sufficient length and appropriate return to place the forelimb functionally beneath the body.

An excessively short or upright upper arm restricts reach and contributes to inefficient movement.

Forelegs

Viewed from the front, the forelegs are generally straight and parallel with sufficient bone for durability.

Viewed from the side, the limb should support the body cleanly without excessive forward or backward displacement.

Pasterns provide moderate flexibility for shock absorption while remaining strong.

Slight individual variation in foot orientation may occur, but pronounced east-west fronts, weakness, instability, or deformity should be penalized according to severity.

BODY

Overall Body

The body is athletic, moderately elongated, and strongly supported.

Length should come from balanced body construction rather than an excessively long or weak loin.

The dog should possess sufficient capacity for endurance without unnecessary mass.

Topline

The topline is strong and generally level from the withers through the back, allowing for natural variation associated with movement and body expression.

A weak, markedly roached, or excessively sloping topline is undesirable.

Chest

The chest is deep, reaching approximately toward the elbow in the mature dog, but should not become excessively broad.

Forechest is present without exaggeration.

The desired impression is capacity rather than mass.

The NAID should not possess the barrel-like chest or excessive width associated with heavy pulling breeds.

Ribs

The ribs provide adequate thoracic capacity and are moderately sprung.

They should not be slab-sided, nor should they become so rounded that they create a barrel-shaped body.

Underline

A pronounced but functional abdominal tuck-up is characteristic.

The underline contributes to the breed's athletic appearance and should distinguish the NAID from heavier-bodied northern working breeds.

Extreme tuck-up associated with poor condition is not desirable.

Loin

The loin is strong, muscular, and sufficiently short to transmit force effectively while accommodating the breed's moderate body length.

It should never appear weak or sagging.

Croup

The croup is strong and moderately shaped to support balanced rear drive and natural tail carriage.

Extreme steepness or flatness that compromises movement is undesirable.

HINDQUARTERS

The hindquarters are muscular, balanced with the forequarters, and moderately angulated.

The pelvis, stifle, and hock should work together to generate efficient propulsion without exaggerated angulation.

Viewed from behind, the rear limbs should track soundly and remain stable.

The hocks are well defined and should neither turn markedly inward nor outward.

Overangulation, excessive straightness, cow hocks, sickle hocks, instability, or other structural departures should be penalized according to their effect upon movement and durability.

Rear dewclaws may occur.

The presence of dewclaws alone is not a fault.

FEET

The feet may appear characteristically large relative to the dog and contribute meaningfully to breed identity.

They are strong, well padded, and functional, with arched toes and useful surface area.

Some degree of interdigital webbing is expected.

Hair between the toes may be prominent, particularly in dogs with greater coat furnishings.

The foot should remain compact enough for stability and durability despite its size.

Thin, weak, excessively flat, severely splayed, or structurally unsound feet are undesirable.

> **Form and Function: Large, well-padded feet distribute force across varied terrain and contribute to traction, stability, shock absorption, and environmental adaptability.**

TAIL

The tail is an expressive continuation of the dog's overall balance.

It is of sufficient length to complement the body and is generally well furnished, particularly in Intermediate- and Long-coated dogs.

At rest, the tail commonly hangs naturally behind the dog.

In movement, excitement, communication, or alertness, it may rise substantially and may be carried above the topline.

A gentle curve is acceptable.

A persistently tight, inflexible tail compressed against the back is undesirable where it represents structural or characteristic departure.

The tail should not be evaluated from one moment of emotional carriage alone.

Precaudal Region — Interpretation

A localized variation in hair color, texture, or density may occur in the precaudal region of the tail.

Such variation is naturally occurring and shall not, by itself, constitute a fault.

Evaluation should distinguish normal localized variation from dermatologic disease, injury, or abnormal coat loss.

No fixed percentage of white or other tail coloration is required.

COAT

The NAID possesses a functional double coat consisting of protective outer hair and insulating undercoat, with density and expression influenced by genetics, season, climate, age, and reproductive status.

The coat should protect the dog without concealing its fundamental structure.

Three coat expressions are recognized: Short, Intermediate, and Long.

These exist along a continuum rather than as entirely disconnected varieties.

> **Correct coat should be evaluated according to: structure → texture → distribution → furnishings → function → length.**

Length alone does not define quality.

Short Coat

The Short coat lies relatively close to the body and clearly reveals the dog's outline.

The outer coat remains protective and the undercoat may vary seasonally.

Furnishings are limited compared with the other expressions but may still occur at the neck, tail, backs of the thighs, and feet.

The Short coat should not be so sparse or fine that weather protection is compromised.

Intermediate Coat

The Intermediate coat is the characteristic middle expression and may present the classic NAID silhouette.

Body coat remains sufficiently close to reveal structure while greater furnishings occur around the neck, tail, breeches, and other characteristic areas.

A distinct ruff may be present.

The tail commonly forms a prominent plume or waterfall effect.

The coat should remain functional rather than excessive.

Long Coat

The Long coat possesses increased length and furnishings but should still permit recognition of the dog's underlying structure.

Long-coated dogs may possess a finer or softer-feeling outer coat than Intermediate-coated dogs and may require more grooming.

Length is often most evident around the ruff, tail, breeches, topline, and other furnishing areas rather than through uniformly excessive body coat.

The Long coat should not become woolly, shapeless, profusely shaggy, or so abundant that it obscures the dog's athletic outline.

The coat should clothe the dog, not conceal it.

COLOR AND PATTERN

The Native American Indian Dog occurs in a broad range of naturally occurring canine colors and patterns.

No otherwise healthy dog should be considered inferior merely because its color is less common.

Characteristic patterns historically observed in the population include agouti- and sable-based coloration, extensive white or piebald patterning, solid colors, masking, and combinations thereof.

Additional patterns and modifiers may include ticking, roaning, brindle, merle, tan-point patterning, and other genetically possible expressions.

Broken white patterning has been particularly recognizable within portions of NAID history.

Facial markings may include widow's peak patterns, full or partial masks, blazes, snips, stars, spectacles, and other symmetrical or asymmetrical markings.

A characteristic pattern may contribute strongly to breed expression, but pigmentation must remain subordinate to health, structure, temperament, and preservation value.

White coloration should not be confused with albinism.

A white dog with normal pigmentation is acceptable.

Color should never be used as a shortcut for determining ancestry, authenticity, or quality.

GAIT

Movement is a major indicator of structural quality.

The NAID should move with efficiency, balance, agility, and endurance.

At a trot, the gait is smooth and ground-covering without unnecessary vertical motion or wasted effort.

The forequarters provide useful reach while the hindquarters generate balanced propulsion.

The back remains stable enough to transfer force efficiently.

As speed increases, the limbs may naturally converge toward the centerline while maintaining sound tracking.

Movement should appear light and capable rather than ponderous.

Despite variation in body expression and size, the NAID should retain the impression that it could continue traveling comfortably over substantial distance and changing terrain.

Characteristic movement combines grace, economy, coordination, and environmental agility.

Faults include persistent paddling, hackney action, crossing, crabbing, restricted reach, weak rear drive, instability, excessive pounding, or other inefficient movement.

Any gait abnormality caused by pain or structural unsoundness is of greater concern than stylistic variation.

TEMPERAMENT

Temperament is fundamental to breed identity.

The NAID is intelligent, perceptive, environmentally aware, adaptable, communicative, and strongly oriented toward human partnership.

The breed commonly forms deep attachments to its household and may develop particularly strong relationships with individual caregivers while remaining capable of bonding with multiple people.

Affection should coexist with discernment.

The NAID need not greet every stranger enthusiastically.

Thoughtful reserve, observation, or temporary caution may be entirely appropriate.

The desired dog assesses its environment and recovers readily when no genuine threat exists.

The breed should possess emotional sensitivity without fragility.

Sensitivity to people, surroundings, body language, and changes in routine is characteristic; chronic inability to recover from ordinary environmental stress is not.

Confidence should not be confused with indiscriminate boldness.

Likewise, reserve should not be confused with fearfulness.

Intelligence and Trainability

The NAID is highly capable of learning patterns, routines, behaviors, and environmental associations.

Training should reflect the breed's intelligence and perceptiveness.

The dog should demonstrate the capacity for cooperative work while retaining independent thought and environmental awareness.

Social Character

Stable interaction with humans is essential.

Persistent uncontrolled aggression toward people is contrary to breed temperament.

Extreme fear that prevents normal evaluation, recovery, or safe interaction is likewise contrary to breed temperament.

Appropriate defensive or alert behavior should be distinguished from indiscriminate aggression.

Prey and Working Drive

Prey drive varies considerably within the population.

Neither extreme prey drive nor complete absence of it is required for breed identity.

Working aptitude may be expressed through hiking, pulling sports, scent work, tracking, service or assistance work, therapy-related activity, hunting-related work, farm activity, guardianship, performance sports, or other forms of partnership.

Versatility is more characteristic than specialization in one task.

Environmental Awareness

The NAID commonly notices subtle changes in its surroundings.

Strong hearing, scent awareness, visual observation, and attention to human behavior may contribute to this characteristic.

These traits should not be exaggerated into unsupported claims of sensory superiority over specialized working breeds.

> **The NAID should notice more without necessarily reacting more.**

HEALTH AND PRESERVATION

Health is an essential component of breed type.

A dog cannot fully embody a functional preservation standard if its structure, genetics, or health prevent a normal and useful life.

NAIDPP recognizes that the breed's health must be managed at both the individual and population level.

Longevity

NAIDs have historically been reported to live approximately 14–17 years, although longevity varies by individual, lineage, environment, body size, and health.

This range represents an observed and aspirational breed expectation rather than a guarantee.

Orthopedic Health

Hip and elbow health are important preservation priorities.

Breeding programs should employ appropriate orthopedic evaluation and consider results in relation to pedigree, genomic diversity, phenotype, age, related individuals, and population need.

Ocular Health

Heritable and potentially heritable ocular conditions require appropriate examination, documentation, and longitudinal monitoring.

An ocular finding should be evaluated according to diagnosis, severity, heritability, effect upon welfare, available relatives, and population context.

Other Health Considerations

Thyroid function, reproductive health, dermatologic health, gastrointestinal health, immune function, and other recurring concerns should be documented as population information develops.

Breeders should distinguish documented disease patterns from anecdotal observations and emerging hypotheses.

Genetic Testing

DNA testing may identify known variants, ancestry information, relatedness, diversity measures, and other useful data.

No single commercial test provides a complete assessment of breeding value.

Test results should be interpreted within the limits of the technology and reference population used.

Genetic Diversity

Preservation requires sufficient diversity to permit continued selection.

Pedigree, coefficient of inbreeding, genomic homozygosity, genetic relatedness, founder representation, and effective contribution of breeding animals may all inform population management.

A low coefficient alone does not guarantee health.

A high coefficient does not identify which specific liabilities are present.

Both pedigree and genomic information should be interpreted in context.

Breeding Decisions

Health testing provides evidence.

It does not make breeding decisions.

The goal is neither to ignore disease nor to remove every imperfect dog automatically from a limited population.

Responsible preservation considers the severity and heritability of a condition, welfare consequences, available alternatives, genetic contribution of the individual, mate selection, and projected effect upon future generations.

The unit of preservation is ultimately the population across generations.

FAULT INTERPRETATION

A fault is a departure from the preservation ideal.

Faults should be penalized according to degree and consequence, not merely counted.

When evaluating competing departures, priority should generally be:

1. health and welfare;
2. stable temperament;
3. structural soundness and functional movement;
4. essential NAID type;
5. secondary phenotype;
6. cosmetic detail.

An otherwise excellent dog should not be reduced to a single imperfection.

Conversely, visually impressive color, coat, head markings, or size should never compensate for serious structural, health, or temperament deficiencies.

FAULTS

The following should be considered faults when present to a meaningful degree:

- excessive heaviness or coarseness;
- insufficient substance or structural weakness;
- disproportionately short or excessively long body;
- poor balance between body and leg length;
- excessively broad or barrel-shaped chest;
- weak topline;
- excessive or inadequate angulation affecting function;
- weak pasterns;
- markedly poor feet;
- excessively abrupt or insufficient stop that alters characteristic head type;
- coarse, blocky, or excessively narrow head;
- excessively short, blunt, or weak muzzle;
- overshot or undershot bite;
- persistently inefficient movement;
- coat lacking adequate functional protection;
- excessive coat obscuring structure;
- temperament lacking appropriate recovery;
- or any departure materially reducing characteristic breed type or function.

SERIOUS FAULTS

Serious faults include departures substantially affecting health, function, temperament, or essential breed identity, including:

- structural unsoundness materially compromising normal movement;
- persistent significant gait abnormality not attributable to temporary circumstance;
- extreme structural exaggeration;
- severe bite abnormality affecting function;
- mature ears that remain permanently non-erect;
- coat structure fundamentally incompatible with functional double-coat character;
- extreme fearfulness with poor recovery;
- inappropriate aggression not rising to the level of disqualification;
- or pronounced loss of characteristic NAID type.

A serious fault does not automatically determine breeding eligibility. Breeding decisions require broader health, pedigree, genetic, and population analysis.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Disqualification is reserved for circumstances fundamentally incompatible with safe evaluation, basic breed identity, or the requirements of the conformation class.

Temperament

Persistent uncontrolled aggression toward a judge, handler, or other person that prevents safe evaluation.

Extreme fear or panic of such severity that the dog cannot be safely and reasonably evaluated or demonstrates profound inability to recover.

Normal reserve, caution, avoidance of unwanted social contact, or temporary environmental uncertainty is not disqualifying.

Reproductive Status

For intact conformation classes in which reproductive status is required:

Bilateral cryptorchidism.

Unilateral cryptorchidism should be addressed according to the rules of the governing event or registry and considered separately in breeding eligibility.

Identity or Eligibility

A dog demonstrated not to meet the registration or class eligibility requirements established for the event.

Lameness and Welfare

A dog experiencing obvious pain, acute injury, or lameness sufficient to prevent fair evaluation should be excused from evaluation, rather than treated as possessing a permanent breed disqualification.

CONDITIONS THAT ARE NOT AUTOMATIC DISQUALIFICATIONS

The following are not, by themselves, automatic conformation disqualifications:

- blue eyes;
- complete, central, or sectoral heterochromia;
- white coat;
- merle;
- brindle;
- ticking or roaning;

- tan points;
- unusual but naturally occurring pigmentation;
- snow nose;
- localized precaudal coat variation;
- rear dewclaws;
- missing premolars;
- variation between the two body expressions;
- intermediate body expression;
- Short, Intermediate, or Long coat;
- or documented development ancestry.

These characteristics may still require health or breeding consideration where an associated condition exists.

CONFORMATION ELIGIBILITY AND BREEDING ELIGIBILITY

Conformation evaluation and breeding selection are related but different processes.

> **A conformation evaluation asks: How closely does this individual dog approach the preservation phenotype and temperament described by the Standard?**
>
> **A breeding evaluation asks: What contribution should this individual make—or not make—to the future population?**

The second question requires substantially more information.

Breeding decisions may consider:

- health testing;
- diagnosis and family history;
- pedigree;
- genomic relatedness;
- coefficient of inbreeding;
- founder representation;
- reproductive fitness;
- temperament;
- structure;
- phenotype;
- mate availability;
- population need;
- development status;
- and the likely characteristics of resulting descendants.

A dog may therefore be an excellent representative of breed type yet be a poor breeding choice in a particular population context.

Likewise, a dog carrying a correctable phenotype departure may possess important preservation value when used thoughtfully.

> **The breed standard describes the destination. Preservation breeding determines the responsible route.**

DEVELOPMENT REGISTRY PRINCIPLE

The Native American Indian Dog has a documented history of developmental outcrossing.

NAIDPP therefore recognizes that responsible preservation may require carefully managed introduction of genetic resources outside the established population.

Phenotypic resemblance alone is insufficient for admission.

Potential development dogs should be evaluated for the particular contribution they are intended to make, including:

- health;
- temperament;
- structure;
- functional characteristics;
- genetic information;
- pedigree and provenance where available;
- relationship to the existing population;
- potential liabilities;
- and preservation need.

Outside founders and their descendants must remain identifiable within registry records.

Development ancestry is not something to hide or erase.

The objective is not rapid absorption of unrelated dogs under the NAID name.

> **The objective is measured genetic contribution followed by deliberate multigenerational selection toward the Standard.**

Established NAID lines—particularly rare and underrepresented lines—remain preservation priorities.

Outside contribution should strengthen those lines and the population surrounding them rather than displace them.

FINAL PRESERVATION STATEMENT

The Native American Indian Dog Standard is a living preservation document.

It establishes the breed toward which NAIDPP intends to breed, select, evaluate, and steward the population.

The Standard does not require that every dog presently registered as a Native American Indian Dog already embody the finished preservation ideal.

Nor does it require future breeders to reproduce every feature that appeared somewhere in the breed's developmental history.

Preservation demands discrimination in the best meaning of that word: the ability to recognize what should be protected, what requires improvement, what should be recovered, and what should be left behind.

The Native American Indian Dog should remain recognizable across its legitimate diversity.

Its two body expressions should remain members of the same breed.

Its three coat expressions should preserve the same underlying dog.

Color should enrich rather than define it.

Outside ancestry should be documented rather than concealed.

Historical ancestry should be valued without becoming an obstacle to population health.

Health should be pursued without destroying genetic diversity.

Temperament should preserve sensitivity without fragility, awareness without indiscriminate reactivity, independence without loss of partnership, and confidence without unnecessary dominance.

Structure should preserve endurance, agility, balance, and functional strength without exaggeration.

And history should be approached with the same integrity expected of the breeding program itself: distinguishing evidence from interpretation, oral tradition from archaeological conclusion, provenance from genetic continuity, and respect from appropriation.

NAIDPP's responsibility is not merely to inherit the Native American Indian Dog.

It is to leave the breed healthier, better documented, more genetically sustainable, more structurally coherent, and more honestly understood than it was received.

Authenticity without mythology. Diversity without loss of type. Health without genetic destruction. Development without loss of provenance. Tradition with accountability. Preservation with a future.

Native American Indian Dog Preservation Project, Inc.

Official NAIDPP Breed Standard — 2026 Finalization Revision

This Standard supersedes earlier NAIDPP conformation-standard editions upon formal adoption by the Native American Indian Dog Preservation Project.