

Climate Change, Water Impacts and Indigenous People: Cross-Regional Dialogues with Alaska, the Pacific Islands and the US Southwest

Overview

Impacts to water resources are among the primary concerns of natural resource managers in Native American communities throughout North America and local and indigenous communities in the Pacific Islands. In particular, drought can initiate a cascade of impacts that affect water supplies, water quality, food production, and forest health.

With global temperatures on the rise, the impact of drought on water supplies and ecosystems can only be expected to increase in the coming years. Being prepared by better understanding drought planning innovations and the array of monitoring and forecasting resources may help reduce vulnerabilities and avert disasters.

This project, supported by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), aims to use modern communication technologies to open a dialogue among tribal and indigenous decision-makers and resource managers from Alaska, the US Southwest, and the Pacific Islands as well as climate scientists from these regions.

Project Goals

- Provide indigenous resource managers and decision-makers an opportunity to hear about water stress and climate change in other regions and how others are responding and strategizing in response to these issues.
- Raise national awareness of water and drought issues in indigenous communities in Alaska, the Pacific Islands and the Southwest.
- Improve the ability of NOAA and the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) to address the information needs of underserved populations by strengthening communication, and prioritizing research and decision support needs.

Project Activities

- Engage in three cross-regional drought and climate dialogues via videoconferencing and telecommunications technologies in Fall 2008 and Spring 2009.
- Identify approaches, tools, and techniques to improve drought awareness, planning, preparedness, and response in each region.
- Provide expert trainings with question and answer sessions on topics and decision support tools identified by native and indigenous resource managers.
- Work with resource managers to assess the drought and climate information and research needs of tribal and indigenous communities in the Pacific Islands, Alaska, and Arizona.



"Bathtub ring" from dropping water levels in Lake Mead, near Las Vegas, NV. Photo taken in October 2002.



Wildfire in 1999 on Kenai Peninsula, Alaska in an area hit hard by bark beetle infestation.



Taro lo'i in Honopou Maui on cracked ground from the ongoing drought.

Courtesy: Dr. Ken Dewey, High Plains Regional Climate Center

<http://www.habitat.org/state/ak/arc/geninfo/4097-cooldeynfo/kbacc-dcf.html/coosys/forest/hankbeeet.htm>

<http://www.hawaiiimg.com/info/C980587838/E20080730172524>



Pacific RISA
managing climate risk in the Pacific



Project Details:

These cross-region meetings will be held using internet and telecommunications technologies. Video conferencing centers in each region will be available for those near one of the centers. For those interested in participating but unable to get to a video conferencing center, a toll-free conference phone line will also be available. Each session will be approximately 2 hours long and will include brief presentations, group discussion from across the regions, and short training sessions on available drought and climate tools.

The project team is seeking input from indigenous resource managers and decision-makers about potential water-, climate-, and drought-related topics for these meetings. You can offer your feedback in an online survey available at:

http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=CbPacvYQPQ_2bWMWJOdcP7wA_3d_3d

Contact Information:

For more information about available video conferencing centers, dates for the meetings, or to provide suggestions about topics for the meetings, please contact:

In Alaska:

Sarah Trainor
Alaska Center for Climate Assessment and Policy (ACCAP)
University of Alaska Fairbanks
P.O. Box 755910
Fairbanks, AK 99775-5910
Phone: (907) 474-7878
Fax: (907) 474-6686
E-mail: fnsft@uaf.edu



In Arizona:

Dan Ferguson
Climate Assessment for the Southwest (CLIMAS)
Institute for Environment and Society
University of Arizona
715 N. Park Ave., 2nd Floor
Tucson, AZ 85721-0156
Phone: (520) 622-8918
Fax: (520) 792-8795
Email: dferg@email.arizona.edu



In the Pacific Islands:

Cheryl Anderson
Pacific RISA
University of Hawaii Social Science
Research Institute
2424 Maile Way, Saunders 719
Honolulu, HI 96822
Phone: (808) 956-3908
Email: canderso@hawaii.edu

