



July 2020 Story Archives

Solving the Climate Crisis: The Congressional Action Plan for a Clean Energy Economy and a Healthy and Just America.

The House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis released this report, which lays out the Climate Crisis Action Plan, full of detailed, ambitious and actionable climate solutions that Congress should enact to benefit American families in communities across the nation. The report includes a section on “*Partnering with Tribes and Indigenous Communities for Climate Adaptation and Resilience.*” The full report is available [here](#). Participants on the call discussed how these recommendations might move forward and what opportunities there may be to comment on the report. Several participants mentioned their interest in reviewing the plan and Eliza Ghiitis shared that the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission will be discussing the recommendations in the report. We will continue to explore opportunities to submit comments about the Plan to the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis and share any opportunities with the Network.

Prestigious Banting Postdoctoral Fellow to Study How Climate Change Affects Indigenous Water Justice



Water and climate scientist Kelsey Leonard is a Banting Postdoctoral Research Fellow at McMaster University in Ontario, Canada.

After graduating from Harvard College, Dr. Leonard became the first Native American woman to earn a science degree from the University of Oxford, receiving

her master's in water science, policy, and management.

As a citizen of the Shinnecock Indian Nation and an environmental leader, Dr. Leonard strives to be a strong advocate for the protection of Indigenous waters through enhanced interjurisdictional coordination and meaningful consultation. She is a Tribal representative on the [Mid-Atlantic Committee on the Ocean](#) and a member of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board of the International Joint Commission.

Dr. Leonard has been instrumental in safeguarding the interests of Tribal Nations for environmental planning, and builds Indigenous science and knowledge into new solutions for water governance and sustainable oceans. Her recent scholarship explores “Indigenous Water Justice” and the defining international legal principle of self-determination under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples which was published in the *Lewis and Clark Law Review* and available for download here:



https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3013470. Her research on climate change focuses on water security challenges facing Tribal and First Nations in the Great Lakes and Coastal Atlantic regions due to rising sea and lake levels and extreme climate events. Dr. Leonard is a member of an international research team using Indigenous science, to deepen our understandings of perceived climate change impacts, and works to ensure Indigenous knowledge systems influence international climate change negotiations and policy-making processes.

At the TEDWomen 2019 Conference, she presented a talk titled “Why lakes and rivers should have the same rights as humans,” which has garnered almost 1.5 million views. In this talk, Dr. Leonard outlines why granting legal personhood to water is a powerful step in transforming our relationship with water and asks us to reflect on the question “What have I done for the water today?”

You can watch Dr. Leonard’s TED Talk [HERE](#): If you are interested in learning more about Dr. Leonard’s research or exploring opportunities for climate change research partnerships please contact her at leonardk@mcmaster.ca.

How is the Coronavirus Pandemic Affecting Climate Change?

COVID-19 and the climate crisis are intertwined threats to Native American and the Earth; A story by Chase Iron Eyes

Within the past few weeks, Indigenous communities in the U.S. achieved a pair of substantial victories regarding pipelines. First, legal action by the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe compelled a federal judge in Washington, D.C., to revoke permits for the Dakota Access pipeline. Then another federal judge in Montana ruled that the environmental impact review process for the Keystone XL pipeline was flawed, and he halted its construction through domestic waterways... Yet, any sense of victory is tempered — by the COVID-19 pandemic we face together, and by a long history of disappointment... The COVID-19 pandemic should remind us of our need to be prepared. Though Mother Earth may be getting a short breather while billions stay home, the climate crisis hasn't gone away. Even in the midst of this awful time and with two key rulings in our favor, the Dakota Access pipeline is about to double the oil it carries through our homelands, and Keystone XL construction is slated to continue. For the full article, click [here](#).

Tribal Community in Louisiana Fights to remain in their Homelands Amid the Impacts of Sea Level Rise

Sea level rise is threatening the homes, lands, and waterways of the Atakapa-Ishak/Chawasha Tribal Community of Grand Bayou in Louisiana. However, the community is not looking to relocate, but to protect in place. Since the 1930s, about 2,000 square miles—more than 10 times the land area of sprawling New Orleans—have disappeared from Louisiana's coastline. Grand Bayou lies outside the protection of the state's levee system. With the understanding of the risk of sea level rise the people of Grand Bayou are leaning to their self-determination of their future amid the Climate Crisis. For more on the story see [here](#).

A New Fish and Climate Change Database – Check out FiCli!

Inland fishes provide important ecosystem services to communities worldwide and are especially vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The National Climate Adaptation Science Center (NCASC) supported researchers created the standardized Fish and Climate Change database, FiCli (pronounced “fick-lee”) where researchers and managers can query fish families, species, response types, or geographic locations to obtain summary information on inland fish responses to climate change and recommended management actions. To learn more, see [here](#).

Analysis Identifies Most Worrisome Invasive Plants in the Northeast

More than 100 new invasive plant species could expand into the Northeast under changing climate conditions in the region. To help resource managers plan for this challenge, Northeast CASC supported ecologists at the University of Massachusetts Amherst are offering a new analysis that narrows the large list down to five priority invasive plant species with the greatest potential impacts. To learn more, see [here](#).