



September 2020 Story Archives

Internship and Engagement Program for Native College Students at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center



April Taylor is a Tribal Liaison at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (SC CASC) and is a citizen of the Chickasaw Nation. She received her B.S. from Texas A&M University in Marine Science and a M.E.E.R.M from the University of South Carolina in Earth and Environmental Resource Management. One aspect of the SC CASC's Tribal engagement program is their workforce development. Workforce development is a priority due to building relationships with Tribal Nations and communities and developing the next generation of Tribal climate staff. It includes doing outreach to Native youth at Tribal camps, festivals, and after school programs. The second aspect includes mentoring Native college students. The third aspect is working with American Indian educators including hosting workshops. We are currently planning a NASA Earth to Sky workshop for native educators and we hope to reschedule next year in 2021. The SC CASC

has hosted **37 students** that have worked on a Tribal projects. Here is a summary of the SC CASC's current four Native student employees and their respective research topics this summer:

"Hello! My name is Jacob Nichols, I am studying Biomedical Engineering at the University of Oklahoma and I am a Chickasaw Nation School-To-Work Student at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center. I am currently developing a presentation and flyer on fire adaptation, which includes a history of fire, applications of prescribed burning for the purpose of climate adaptation, and Tribal programs and practices as they relate to those topics."

"Hello! I am Matthew Armor. I am an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation and pursuing a geography degree at the University of Oklahoma. I am able to work and go to school through the unique opportunity of the Chickasaw School to Work Program working at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center. The project I am working on involves the mapping and analysis of oil and gas production in the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations.

Another related project, is the research of early oil and gas history within the two nations to see the impact of the industry on both Tribal Nations and Tribal activity within the industry."



SC CASC student interns pose for a photo with April Taylor, right, at the University of Oklahoma. Jacob Nichols, left, and Matthew Armor center.

"Hello! I'm Peyton Cavnar. I'm an undergraduate at the University of Oklahoma and a student employee at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center! I'm majoring in environmental sustainability. Because of my Apache and Comanche heritage, I hold an interest in the relationship between our changing climate and indigenous cultures and communities. My current project revolves around this relationship. I am researching both historical and contemporary Native American seed banking and analyzing how they not only keep cultural traditions alive, but also help communities prepare for a changing climate. Climate adaptation is not a word commonly associated with Indigenous land management practices. However, as my project evolves, Native American seed banking and other environmental management traditions are shown to be a relevant resource for adapting to climate change."



"Hello! I am Heath Steward, a senior at Oklahoma State University where I am working on a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture. I am Bureau of Indian Affairs Pathways Program Intern of three years. This summer I am working with April Taylor of the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center on a project which seeks to assess how National Wildlife Refuge managers in Oklahoma manage for culturally significant plant species and for the effects of climate change."

"Hello! My name is Jovon Jojola, I am an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Isleta, located in the State of New Mexico. I am also a Bureau of Indian Affairs Pathways intern located in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This summer I worked on downloading precipitation data from USGS, and a few other sites. The data that was downloaded with some help from New Mexico State University, and my boss Maurice Cruz at the SC CASC. We were able to compile the data to a GIS map that shows the snow pack and precipitation data for tribal lands within the state. This map is currently being worked on."



SC CASC's Native Youth resources web page: <https://southcentralclimate.org/nations/youth-resources/>

Traditional Cherokee Lands Placed in Conservation Easement

A brief intro to a story posted on the USFS Tribal Relations blog on July 28th, 2020: "The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) has successfully competed for a second Forest Service Community Forest Program grant to continue enhancing the Hall Mountain Community Forest in Macon County, North Carolina. Hall Mountain is a culturally and historically significant EBCI landscape that was once threatened by developers. In 2012, EBCI, in collaboration with the Little Tennessee Land Trust, earned their first Community Forest Program grant to incorporate a public hiking trail highlighting the natural resources used and managed by the Tribal Nation. Now, the Tribal Nation is ready to enter phase 2 of enhancing the forest by expanding the acreage and building an eagle aviary on the property." Read more about this project by [Clicking Here](#).

