

NEWS RELEASE

September 9, 2015

Media Contact:

Don Sampson, Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians, (541) 215-2753 DP@Seventhgenerationllc.com

Jerry Pardilla, United South & Eastern Tribes, (615) 467-1533 jpardilla@usetinc.org

Gustavo Bisbal, Dept. of the Interior, NW Climate Science Center, (541) 750-1020
gbisbal@usgs.gov

Steven Daley-Laursen, University of Idaho, (208) 885-5804 stevendl@uidaho.edu

Tribes, Department of the Interior and Universities Announce Collaborative Bi-Coastal Tribal Climate Change Initiative

*Tribes, Federal agencies and Universities collaborate to address climate
change impacts*

(Portland, OR) — The Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI), Institute for Tribal Government (ITG), United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), the Department of the Interior's (DOI) Northwest Climate Science Center (NW CSC) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) today announced a collaborative effort to host a Bi-Coastal Tribal Leaders Summit, Tribal natural and cultural resource manager trainings, and policy workshops to support Tribal leaders, climate change coordinators, planners, and Tribal program managers to build skills, gather information, and develop Tribal policy needed to address climate change impacts. The Department of Interior's BIA is providing nearly \$250,000 of federal funds each to ATNI and USET and their federal agency and university partners for this collaborative project as part of BIA's FY 2015 Tribal Cooperative Landscape Conservation Program.

Climate change is expected to significantly alter the ecology and economy of the Northwest and Southern and Eastern United States. Tribes and Native communities are among the most climate-sensitive groups within these geographic areas. Models predict warmer temperatures, more precipitation as rainfall, and decreased snowfall over the next 50 years, which will directly affect the abundance of culturally significant foods, such as salmon, deer, root plants, and berries. These foods are important for ceremonies and subsistence, and access to traditional hunting, fishing, and gathering sites is guaranteed by treaty, executive order, or other agreements with the Federal Government. Increasing the climate resilience of Tribal governments and Native communities is critical to ensuring access to resources protected by right and vitally important to the cultural existence and economic vitality of these communities.

The unique component of this proposal is the bi-coastal collaborative efforts of two of the nation's leading intertribal consortia –ATNI and USET. There are 57 member Tribes of ATNI and 26 member Tribes of USET. The ATNI and USET initiatives include three collaborative projects to be implemented over the next year:

1. Two Collaborative Bi-Coastal Tribal Climate Change Workshops

2. One Tribal Climate Change Boot Camp; and
3. 2nd Annual Tribal Leaders Summit on Climate Change

"Since 2008, the ATNI has proposed to develop a regional and national climate change strategy for Tribes." said ATNI President Fawn Sharp. "This effort demonstrates the Tribes' leadership to build Tribal capacity, develop policy, and regional strategies and solutions related to climate change including a proactive approach to developing renewable Tribal energy and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. This is the largest Tribal cooperative effort to address climate change in the nation."

"USET is dedicated to promoting Indian leadership, improving the quality of life for American Indians, and protecting Indian rights, and natural resources," Said USET President Brian Patterson. "An essential part of our work as Tribal leaders is to address climate change and associated economic, social, cultural, regulatory, and technological trends and impacts. Through these efforts we have the ability to build the capacity of our Tribes to meet the challenges and possibility opportunities our Mother Earth may bring to us for the next seven generations. What is increasingly important is that we utilize the scarce resources we have in a collaborative and effective effort with our strategic alliance partners across Indian Country and globally."

"Regional intertribal consortiums and organizations such as ATNI, ITG, and USET are in a unique position to provide technical and policy support to Tribal governments by organizing trainings and workshops to build Tribal capacity and educate and engage elected Tribal leaders to effectively address climate impacts" said Brian Patterson, USET's President. "Our organizations are familiar with the regional climate change issues, have built trusted relationships with our member Tribes, and have extensive networks with our respective Tribes' elected leaders and management staff to provide this very critical support."

"The DOI NW Climate Science Center (jointly represented through the U.S. Geological Survey, Oregon State University, University of Idaho, and University of Washington), is proud to be a partner in this Tribal-federal-university project" said Gustavo Bisbal, NW CSC Director. "Through projects like this, we are actively implementing DOI's Secretarial Order 3289 and the President's Executive Order 13175 related to climate change impacts on Tribes and Tribal communities by providing scientific, educational, and policy support."

In 2014, the U.S. President's State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience declared, "*The Federal Government must fully incorporate its government-to-government relationship with Tribes and Alaska Native communities into existing programs and activities that relate to climate change by enhancing self-governance capacity, promoting engagement of Tribal, State and local knowledge in understanding the changing climate.*"

The three collaborative projects are expected to occur in the spring and summer of 2016.

Tribal and Federal Partners:

ATNI is a regional Tribal organization comprised of 57 federally-recognized Tribes from Oregon, Washington, Idaho, California, Alaska, Nevada, and Montana. ATNI is a union of sovereign governments, addressing among other things, issues such as energy and economic development, fishing, and treaty rights, and environmental issues.

ITG is working with ATNI to develop and lead its Climate Change Project. ITG is part of the Center for Public Service - Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. ITG serves elected Tribal governments from across the nation and also provides training and support to local, state, and federal government agencies and others who work with Tribal governments.

USET is a nationally-recognized intertribal consortium comprised of 26 federally-recognized Tribes in 12 southern and eastern states, ranging from Maine to Florida to Texas. USET is dedicated to promoting Indian leadership, improving the quality of life for American Indians, and protecting Indian rights and resources on Tribal lands.

DOI NW CSC is one of eight regional Climate Science Centers initiated by the Department of the Interior to understand and address changes in climate and adaptation, addressing the full range of natural and cultural resources. The NW CSC was established in 2010 as a partnership between the Department of the Interior and an academic consortium led by Oregon State University, University of Idaho, and University of Washington.