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Tribes and Climate Change

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Tribes—Background Information

- 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes in US (229 are in Alaska)
- 5.2 million AI/AN=1.7% of total US population
- Greatest concentrations of AI/AN populations are in West, Southwest, and Midwest
- Tribes vary in population and reservation size

Impacts of Climate Change

- Tribes – disproportionately impacted by climate change
  - Contribute little to causes of climate change
  - Close ties to land, water and natural resources
    - subsistence and livelihood
    - cultural and spiritual connections
    - traditional knowledge systems
- Great diversity in how climate change will impact each tribe

Credit: USFWS

Credit: NPS

Challenges to Addressing Climate Change

- Other immediate issues and competing priorities
  - Economic, housing, health, education
  - Climate change is long-term issue, sometimes difficult to make it a priority
- Funding: impact, vulnerability and renewable energy assessments; development and implementation of plans and strategies for adaptation, energy conservation or other natural resources
- Limited staff time
- Jurisdictional boundaries—treaty-defined reservations

Credit: Shishmaref Erosion and Relocation Coalition

Credit: M. Hiza, USGS

Approaches to Addressing Climate Change

Mitigation—focuses on causes—reduce amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs) in atmosphere while achieving many additional benefits

Adaptation—focuses on effects— minimize impacts, decrease vulnerabilities

Planning to Address Climate Change—planning and preparing to reduce emissions and impacts

- Integrated approach – "mainstream" into all planning efforts
- Climate-specific – develop a climate change plan

Credit: M. Lockhart/USFWS

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For more information about the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, please visit our website at:
http://www4.nau.edu/itep/

ITEP's Training and Resources for Tribes

Climate Change Program

http://www4.nau.edu/itep/climatechange/

- Training courses: *Climate Change Adaptation Planning*
- Templates: Adaptation Plan, Tribal Resolution
- Tribal Climate Change Newsletter
- Tribes & Climate Change website
- Outreach material: Climate Change Fact Sheets

Tribal Clean Energy Resource Center

http://www4.nau.edu/itep/tcerc/

- Technical assistance, policy analysis, business planning, training, internships