



# Research Issues/Needs

National Tribal Caucus Discussions with  
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USEPA Office of Research and Development



# Goal

Ensure federally recognized tribes have equal opportunity to build and implement our capacity for sound science to understand how to protect and enhance the relationship between humans and the ecosystems of Earth.

*The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) relies on sound science to safeguard both human health and the environment. The Office of Research and Development (ORD) is the scientific research arm of EPA*  
(<http://www.epa.gov/ORD/htm/aboutord.htm>)



# Environmental Priorities and Recommendations

- ❖ Build Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and Science Relationship for blending knowledge
  - ❖ Tribes hold valuable TEK and Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) of area
  - ❖ Tribal policy is based on science, TEK and cultural sustainability
  - ❖ Tribal science has place based science practices
- ❖ Enhance International and national transboundary ecosystem research and science
  - ❖ Tribal science is vital to the collective research and science on ecosystem programs
    - ❖ Tribal Journey Water Quality Project-40,000 data points in one ecosystem
  - ❖ Transboundary Science
    - ❖ Tribes are participating or initiating international transboundary ecosystem science and information sharing
    - ❖ Fund programs to include US and Canadian Border



# Environmental Priorities and Recommendations

- ❖ Include federally recognized tribes in the integration of work with ORD science partners
  - ❖ Build stronger partnerships with Tribes and tribal organizations
  - ❖ Tribal science is a blend of science and TEK
- ❖ Provide programs and funding for federally recognized tribes to enhance science capacity
  - ❖ Building research and science capacity outside of the IGAP is must, if we are all seeking to provide sound science and policy for the environment.



# Environmental Priorities and Recommendations

- ❖ Provide science and research for realistic consumption rates for indigenous people
  - ❖ Toxic studies in traditional foods and consumption rates
    - ❖ Example: Swinomish Indian Tribal Community received 1 million for a bio-toxics in shellfish study in 2000.
  - ❖ Realistic consumption rates are perimeters in water quality standards, if the standards are too low, indigenous people's health are threatened
    - ❖ Example: Oregon Tribes and CRITFC coordinated with Oregon State for stricter water quality standards, based on realistic consumption rates of Oregon Tribes.
- ❖ More science and research on traditional foods webs of indigenous people and relationship to existing standards.
  - ❖ Assessment of standards in relation to consumption rates in the regions



# Environmental Priorities and Recommendations

- ❖ Provide a tribal program for research and science
  - ❖ Many programs are underfunded and over competitive
  - ❖ Tribes can provide cutting edge research and science (no bureaucratic ties-straight to the science)
  - ❖ Tribes face place based environmental issues
- ❖ Build a stronger relationship with ORD for information sharing and networking
  - ❖ Enhance information sharing and access to data storage
  - ❖ Tribes need to know science and research data on federally recognized tribal lands and waters, as well as surrounding area



# Environmental Priorities and Recommendations

- ❖ Climate Change Impacts and Planning for Adaptation and Mitigation
  - ❖ Provide program and support to assist tribes in assessing climate change impacts upon communities and usual and accustomed areas and place based planning for adaptation
  - ❖ Provide funding for science collaboration
    - ❖ Skagit Climate Science Consortium-federal, tribal, state, academics, and industry
      - ❖ Science based and focused to fill data gaps and collaborate on projects
  - ❖ Provide funding and program for climate change impacts and new management policy for natural resources
    - ❖ Impact of natural resources – if we have sound science we can discuss management policy for natural resources in our Regions
      - ❖ Example: Pacific Northwest
        - ❖ if there is no salmon, where will our treaties be?



# Recommendations

*Build and enhance ORD for federally recognized tribal program and funding to build capacity and enhance existing sound research and science in native communities.*

- ❖ Provide outreach to federally recognized tribes to enhance sound science
- ❖ Provide communication and information sharing capacity with federally recognized tribes
- ❖ Strengthen the integrated partnership by including federally recognized tribes to participate
- ❖ Provide specific programs and funding specifically for federally recognized tribes





# Recommendations

- ❖ Provide research and science capacity through relationship with federally recognized tribes to
  - ❖ Support common environmental missions
  - ❖ Enhance our science and research performance
  - ❖ To anticipate future environmental issues
- ❖ Build ORD programs specifically targeted for Tribal place based research and science
  - ❖ Integrated science work groups addressing present and future environmental issues
  - ❖ Only Tribes can provide a blend of science and TEK



# Program would help Tribes:

- ❖ Build research and science capacity and enhance existing programs
- ❖ Develop tribal specific programs that focus on place based environmental issues and resolutions
- ❖ Build relationships and information sharing on a national level by inviting tribal science into the ORD integration goal
- ❖ (with respect to each tribal's information sharing capacity)



# Program would help Tribes:

- ❖ Address environmental issues on a transboundary level, thus providing ecosystem accessibility to research and science
- ❖ Help fill data gaps for tribes and government