

Integrating Climate Policy

Traditional Knowledge and Climate Science

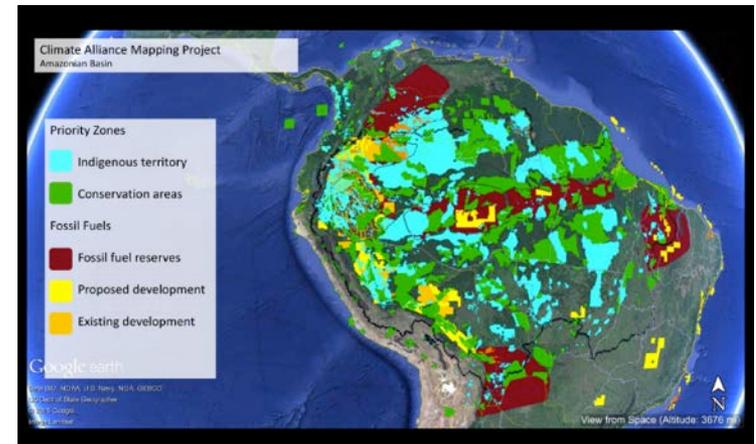
Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples Around the World



Indigenouising.org

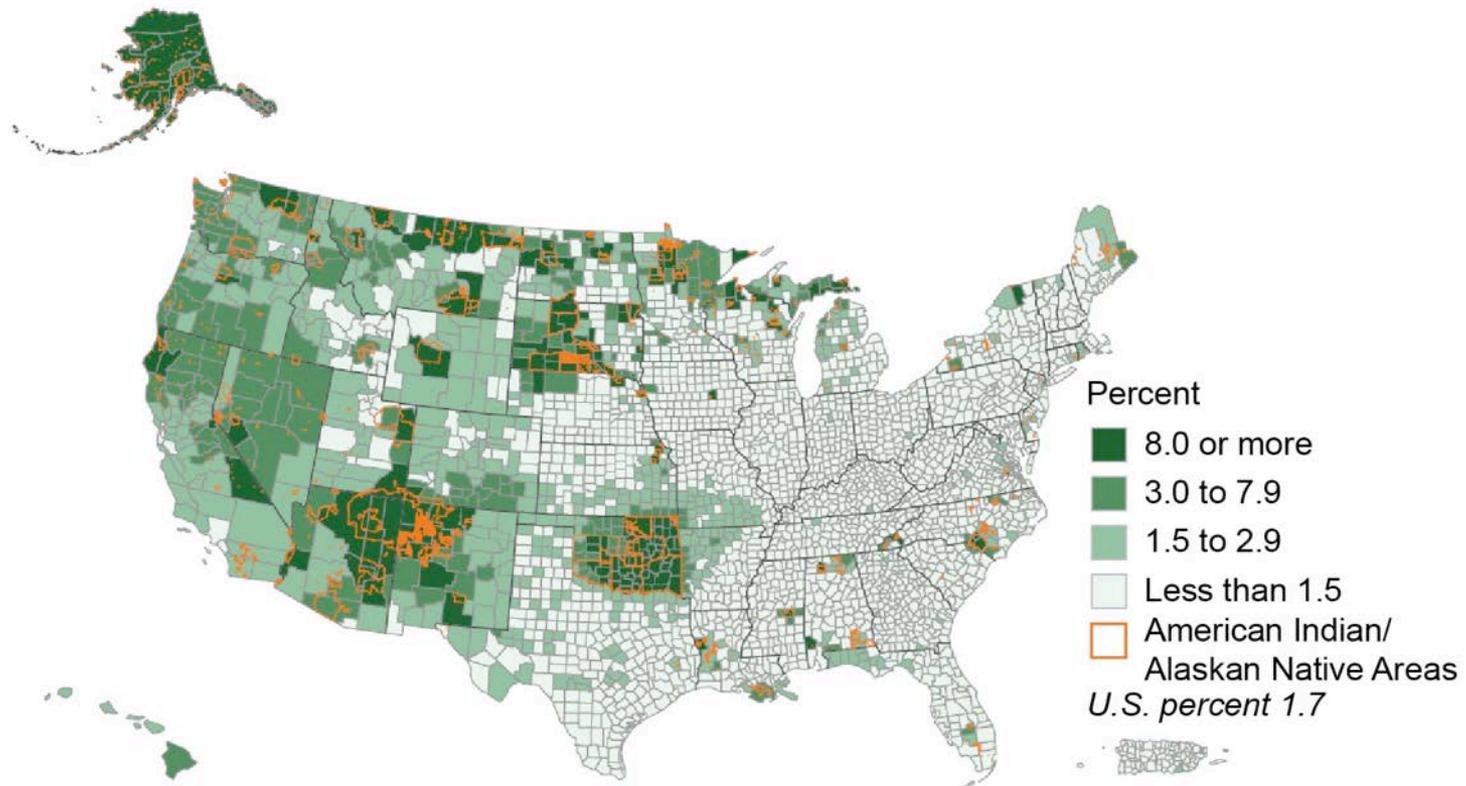
- COP21 Paris Climate Talks
- mobilizing against CO2lonialism

- Climate Alliance Mapping Project (CAMP)
- Climate Justice
- Linking research, activism, and policy-making



Public Political Ecology Lab, Arizona State University

Climate Change and Indigenous Issues in the US – National Climate Assessment



NCA3 2014, p. 299, Figure 12.1 – Indigenous Populations Extend Beyond Reservation Lands

NCA Chapter 12

12 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, LAND, AND RESOURCES

KEY MESSAGES

1. **Observed and future impacts from climate change threaten Native Peoples' access to traditional foods such as fish, game, and wild and cultivated crops, which have provided sustenance as well as cultural, economic, medicinal, and community health for generations.**
2. **A significant decrease in water quality and quantity due to a variety of factors, including climate change, is affecting drinking water, food, and cultures. Native communities' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to adapt to water-related challenges are exacerbated by historical and contemporary government policies and poor socioeconomic conditions.**
3. **Declining sea ice in Alaska is causing significant impacts to Native communities, including increasingly risky travel and hunting conditions, damage and loss to settlements, food insecurity, and socioeconomic and health impacts from loss of cultures, traditional knowledge, and homelands.**
4. **Alaska Native communities are increasingly exposed to health and livelihood hazards from increasing temperatures and thawing permafrost, which are damaging critical infrastructure, adding to other stressors on traditional lifestyles.**
5. **Climate change related impacts are forcing relocation of tribal and indigenous communities, especially in coastal locations. These relocations, and the lack of governance mechanisms or funding to support them, are causing loss of community and culture, health impacts, and economic decline, further exacerbating tribal impoverishment.**

Strengths and Weaknesses of the NCA



- Most comprehensive information to date
- Broad, collaborative, often Indigenous-led process
- Limitations of “peer-reviewed” research standards
- Collapsing diverse experiences into short document limits
- Need for more resources, support, and ongoing engagement
- **Challenges of addressing scientific and traditional knowledge**

(Maldonado et al. 2015)

Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge – What is “Knowledge”?



- Common definition: made up of “facts” or “information” that exist in our heads, straightforward to categorize, communicate, or move between contexts
 - this is actually “Western” or “scientific” conception of knowledge, what science aspires to provide to the world
 - Becomes a problem when assumed that Indigenous knowledge fits this model

Example: Traditional Foods



“Western”:

- knowledge is limited to where and when foods can be gathered
- plants/animals as food are separable from meaning, stories, and ceremonies
- it doesn't matter who gathers food, or who knows how



“Indigenous”:

- knowledge is the process of gathering and relations with the food and landscape
- you **can't** separate meaning or relationships from food
- It matters who gathers food, and who knows where it is

Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge – *Inequalities and Exclusion*



- Colonial relationship between knowledge systems
- History of science as tool of domination and exclusion
- Peer-reviewed data vs oral and traditional knowledge (exclusion from NCA)
- Whose knowledge is considered “valid”?
Is it always possible (or desirable) to “translate” between knowledge systems?



NCA3 2014, p. 302

Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge – *Risks and Rewards of Bridging Knowledge Systems*



NCA3 2014, p. 300

- “Indigenuity” - histories of adaptation and close relationship with changing environments
- value of exchange between different ways of knowing
- Potential access to new lands and resources (e.g. in State Parks)
- right to self-define knowledge, and choose what to share
- risk of loss of control over traditional knowledge (e.g. location of sacred sites or cultural resources, federal agencies and the Freedom of Information Act)

Risks and Rewards of Bridging Knowledge Systems

EXAMPLE: A site with important cultural resources might be endangered due to coastal land loss and rising sea level. Should the site's location be shared with non-Tribal agencies? With traditionally excluded members of the tribe? With other tribal groups?

Possible risks: too many visitors, desecration of site, loss of cultural resources, loss of control over sacred knowledge

Possible rewards: new resources available, more possibilities for adaptation (e.g. relocation of cultural resources), equitable sharing of knowledge/resources with other groups, new social and political alliances

Dealing with Difference

Working with non-Tribal agencies or other Tribes



http://www.nola.com/news/index.ssf/2008/09/tribe_chief_on_isle_de_jean_c.html

- Different senses of community and connection
 - *E.g. relocate as individuals or as a group*
- Different priorities for adaptation and response
 - *E.g. protecting economic assets or protecting sacred places*
- Different possibilities for adaptation
 - *E.g. If an important ceremonial site is under threat of seasonal flooding, do you engineer flood protection? Change sites? Change the timing of the ceremony?*

Indigenous Knowledge and Lifeways *Contending with Loss*

- Loss of knowledge, resources, traditions, and community (“culture”)
- Involving elders
- Potential relocation – of communities, cultural resources, ceremonies, etc.

EXAMPLE: Hurricane Katrina – many communities suffered *loss*, especially intersecting with different forms of diversity and social vulnerability

- How were the effects felt differently among Tribal communities? How were the responses and recovery efforts different?



<https://charybde2.wordpress.com/2015/09/17/note-de-lecture-katrina-isle-de-jean-charles-louisiane-frank-smith/>

Discussion

- What possible risks and rewards do you foresee in your own engagement with scientific and other non-Tribal institutions dealing with climate change?
- What kinds of “indigenuity” exist in your communities? What resources, experiences, knowledges, and values can you use to adapt?
- What processes will be used to make decisions about sharing traditional knowledges with federal or other outside agencies? Who in your communities needs to be involved in these decisions, and how will you involve them?
- How can you use the scientific perspectives provided in this training to help protect and advance Indigenous sovereignty, knowledges, and values?
- What kinds of support, resources, and engagement do you need to make these decisions, to manage the risks, and to maximize potential benefit to your communities?