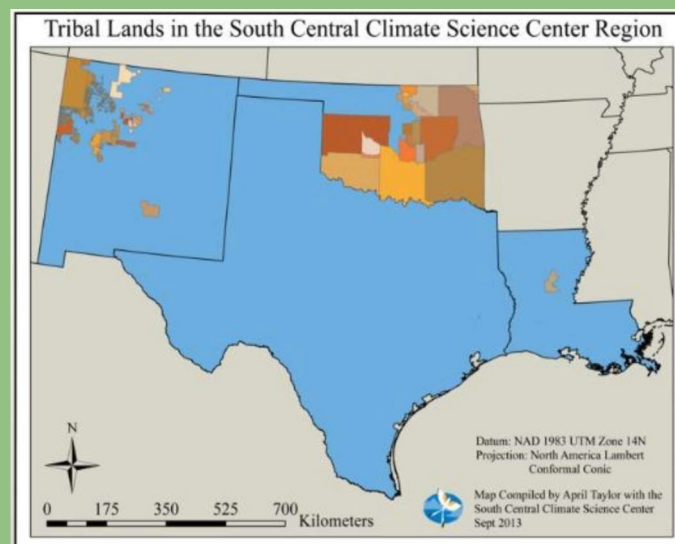


# Tribal Engagement

## at the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center

### Tribes as Land and Water Managers and Research Partners

From day one, the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (CASC) has made it a priority to focus on working with tribes. The south central region has 68 tribes with diverse histories, cultures and governmental structures. Many of these tribes have experienced historical climate change and adapted over time since their origins; other tribes were relocated from their homelands to the region and adapted to new landscapes over time. This region also has significant acreage owned by private landowners; tribal citizens and tribal governments are major landowners in the region. Lastly, tribes have a significant role in water management in the region due to tribal treaty water rights.



Because the South Central CASC made it a priority to include tribes as partners from its inception, the Chickasaw Nation and the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma became consortium members. Under this arrangement, the South Central CASC employs a full-time Chickasaw Nation Sustainability Scientist and a full-time University of Oklahoma Assistant Sustainability Scientist, both officed at the main CS office in Norman, OK. These scientists liaise between tribes and researchers, develop partnerships for climate science projects, build tribal manager capacity, and conduct tribal youth programs.

### Building Relationships

In 2014, the South Central CASC published its Tribal Engagement Strategy to outline the following framework for developing tribal relationships:

- Host meetings and outreach activities;
- Invest in the next generation of tribal staff;
- Build tribal capacity in climate-related areas;
- Train climate researchers to invest in relationships;
- Encourage tribes to develop their own independent climate research projects and integrate climate science into their own adaptation plans.





# Developing Capacity for Climate Resilience and Response

Building partnerships between tribes and climate science researchers is an essential part of the South Central CASC's *Tribal Engagement Strategy*. One way to build these relationships is by enhancing tribal capacity in climate-related areas. From 2013-2015, the South Central CASC team partnered on 28 trainings for tribal staff totaling over 5000 contact hours. Training topics included introductions to climate science, grant writing, vulnerability assessments, and engaging with tribal councils.

- **28** total trainings
- **554** tribal attendees
- **91** tribes engaged
- **5,100** contact hours with tribes



## Engaging Tribal Youth in Science and Technology



An essential part of the South Central CASC's *Tribal Engagement Strategy* is conducting tribal youth outreach programs that promote native scientists in climate-related fields and build capacity in the next generation of tribal staff. From 2013-2016, the South Central CASC team conducted 24 tribal youth activities and mentored about 16 Native undergraduate and graduate students. In July 2016, the South Central CASC's Sustainability Scientist and two Native undergrads assisted in planning and conducting the "Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress" - a week-long national tribal high school youth camp at the USFWS National Conservation Training

## Facilitating Collaboration Between Tribal Staff and Researchers

The South Central CASC facilitates collaboration between tribal staff and researchers. From 2012-2015, the South Central CASC team funded four projects with tribal partners. In 2015, the South Central CASC also funded a project titled, "Climate Training for Native Tribes of Louisiana and New Mexico," providing train-





# Stories of Success: Tribes Leading Regional Climate Response

Many tribal staff members that attended the South Central CASC trainings became more successful in seeking funding and conducting climate-related projects. Here are just a few of those success stories:

**The Citizen Potawatomi Nation (CPN)** attended four South Central CASC trainings. They were the first tribe in our region to hire climate staff! In 2014, the South Central CASC team partnered with BIA Southern Plains regions to assist five tribes beginning vulnerability assessments. We worked with CPN on vulnerabilities associated with flooding. In 2015, the South Central Research Experiences for undergraduates program to host a student, Kristina Mazur, who worked with three tribes (included Citizen Potawatomi Nation) to analyze the projected frequencies of two-inch rainfall events for their jurisdictions. The South Central CASC team continues to partner with the CPN to work toward a climate adaptation plan.



In 2015, the South Central CASC team partnered with New Mexico National Science Foundation Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) to offer a climate science grant writing training. Then in 2016, the South Central CASC Louisiana State University team conducted a climate training for New Mexico tribes. As a result, seven of the northern New Mexico pueblos joined together to create a **Water and Climate Change Working Group** facilitated by Roger Fragua of Pueblo of Jemez. This inter-tribal group continues to meet regularly and discuss efforts to work together.



In 2015, the South Central CASC – Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma team partnered with the National Conservation Training Center to offer vulnerability assessment trainings. Several of the **Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIWFC)** staff attended the training in Durant, OK, and had already received funding to conduct a vulnerability assessment. As a result, the GLIFWC staff have completed a vulnerability assessment as well as many other climate-related studies. The GLIFWC staff also has teamed with USFS Northern Institute of Applied Climate Science to develop a tool for tribal forestry adaptation options.





## Activities During Year 6

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- Tribal College Conference on Climate Change, hosted by Pawnee Nation College (March 2017).
- Communicating Climate Change training in Norman, OK (April, 2017)
- Climate Training for Louisiana Tribes in Baton Rouge, LA (May 2017)
- Hiring of new BIA CASC liaisons and orientation training at National Adaptation Forum (May 2017)
- Hosting two Chickasaw nation summer inters (Summer 2017)
- Climate Adaptation Planning in Albuquerque, NM (June 2017)
- 2017 Native Youth Community Adaptation and Leadership Congress (July 2017)
- Hiring new tribal liaison focusing on New Mexico (August 2017)
- Hosting new BIA CSC tribal liaisons orientation and vulnerability assessment training in Norman, OK (September 2017)

## CONTACTS

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**Visit our website at <https://southcentralclimate.org/>**