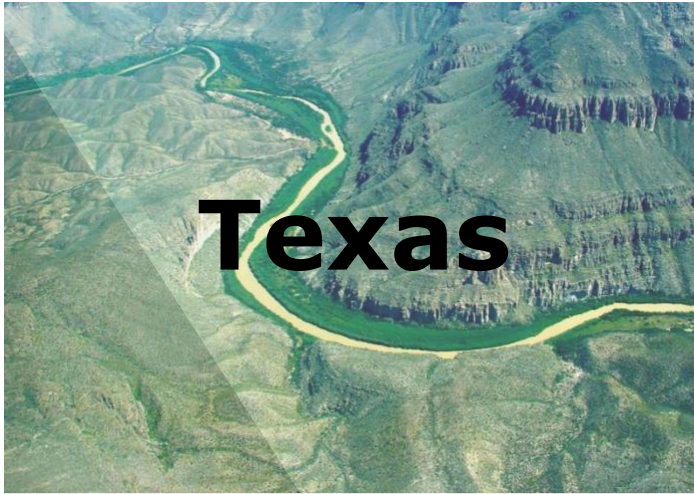




# SOUTH CENTRAL

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION SCIENCE CENTER



# Communications Plan

## 2020

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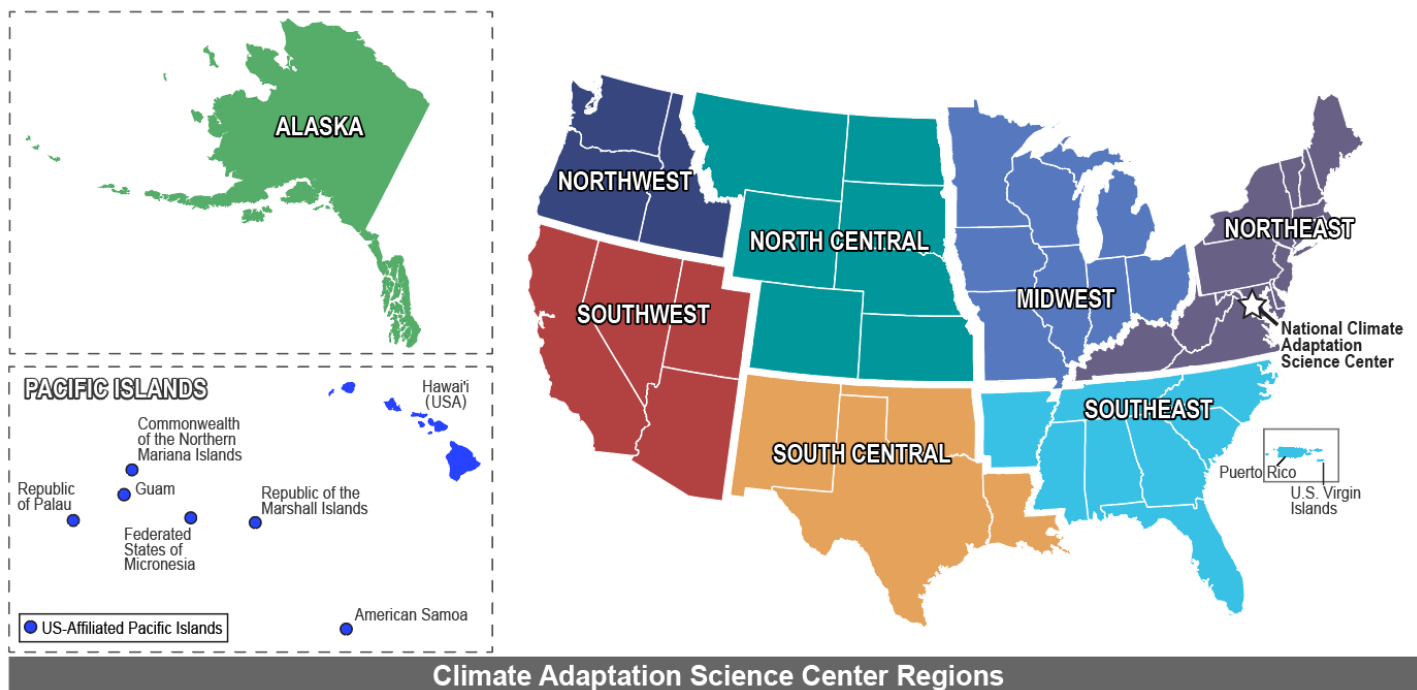
# Our Mission

*Established in 2012, the South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center provides decision makers with the science, tools, and information they need to address the impacts of climate variability and change on their areas of responsibility. The Center will transform how climate science is conducted and applied in the South Central United States. We support big thinking, including multi-institutional and stakeholder-driven approaches to assessing the impact of climate extremes on natural and cultural resources.*

## About Us

The South Central Climate Adaptation Science Center (South Central CASC) is one of eight regional CASCs in the United States focused on adaptation planning for a changing climate. Likewise, the South Central CASC strives to support decision makers and stakeholders with the necessary climate information. However, this immense effort takes more than just the Center, it requires a partnership with multiple groups, agencies and communities. For this joint effort, the South Central CASC is hosted by the **University of Oklahoma** in Norman, OK and is a mix of partnerships with:

**Researchers   Native Nations   Resource Managers   Stakeholders   Affiliate Members**



*The location and partners of the nine Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs) by region in the United States.*

# Region We Serve

The development of usable science in natural and cultural decision making and planning for a future climate is made possible by collaborating with our consortium members (see image below).

Our region includes a natural and culturally diverse landscape of semi-arid deserts, grasslands, bayous and is home to approximately 70 sovereign Tribes and pueblos. States we serve include:

**Oklahoma**  
**Texas**  
**New Mexico**  
**Louisiana**



## Guiding Principles

**Actionable Science is essential to the South Central CASC's mission.**

What this means for communications: Through the use of communication strategies, strive to make every effort to better understand the needs and perspectives of end-users.

**The South Central CASC's primary role is to liaise between scientists and stakeholders.**

What this means for communications: Focus on representatives of the DOI State, Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Native Nations and engage with additional target audiences.

# South Central CASC Communication Plan Details

## Purpose of Plan

Since 2012, the South Central CASC has worked toward the overall mission of the center, by engaging with our affiliates, consortium members, stakeholders and Native Nations. Yet, there remains a strong need for a more strategic approach to how the center communicates climate science for decision making and adaptation planning. Implementing this plan allows us to further engage with our diverse audiences, keep track of outreach progress and enhance the overall CASC brand.

## Implementation

Communications staff should revisit the plan at the beginning of every new fiscal year to ensure listed goals and objectives are being met. This will allow the communication staff to make necessary adjustments in order to realign goals and objectives, chose new strategies and develop any metrics needed for the upcoming fiscal year.

## Key Plan Elements

### Target Audiences

Who do we want to reach with our climate science and why?

### Goals & Objectives

How will communicating climate science contribute to our mission?

### Communication Tools

What specific outlets will we use to relay the science?

### Overall Implementation

Detail specific tasks we want to pursue during our host agreement.

### Evaluation

How we will determine the effectiveness of our Communications effort.

### Our Branding

How to keep our brand consistent and recognizable.

# Target Audiences

**CASC Administration & Researchers** includes a wide range of internal staff, from the South Central CASC leadership to our researchers. USGS staff members housed in our office and the broader network are included. This also includes our students, consortium members, and affiliates in our internal audience.

**Native Nations** are part of the internal CASC audience as well as a target audience due to the extensive role Native Nations play as natural and cultural resource managers.

**Stakeholders & Partners** (such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, U.S. Geological Science Centers, State fish and wildlife agencies, etc.) are one of our target audiences due to their extensive role in natural and cultural resource management.

**Policy makers** are an additional external audience that we occasionally interact with as is appropriate. Sometimes we may partner with other boundary organizations (e.g., Southern Plains Climate Impacts Planning Program) while interacting with this audience.

**General Public** includes those outside of the audiences already stated. Though the South Central CASCs' main objective is focused on the above audiences, outlets such as the media, should be included through public outreach efforts.

## Goals & Objectives

### GOAL 1

**Strengthen all internal South Central CASC communications and partnerships.**

#### **Objective 1.1:**

Better the understanding of each other's' position/role within the South Central CASC to improve collaboration efforts.

#### **Examples to Meet Objective:**

- Attend presentations or workshops led by personnel.
- Give constructive feedback on projects when solicited.
- Share tasks to complete on weekly staff meetings.

#### **Objective 1.2:**

Strengthen and diversify all partnerships, as well as collaborate with new PI's to increase the number of affiliates.

#### **Examples to Meet Objective:**

- Promote the South Central CASC's Affiliate program more broadly through our region.
- Connect PIs with affiliates or other partners in similar disciplines to expand collaboration opportunities.

***Target Audience: Internal South Central CASC, Consortium & Affiliates***



## GOAL 2

### Use effective communication strategies to enhance & promote climate science.

#### **Objective 2.1:**

Improve and create more end-user friendly products and extensions of climate science for our stakeholders.

#### **Examples to Meet Objective:**

- Seek opportunities to present South Central CASC research at regional meetings, webinars, workshops and conferences.
- Develop a 1-page factsheet for each South Central CASC project highlighting the purpose & outcomes.

#### **Objective 2.2:**

Encourage PI's to develop project-based communication plans that fit stakeholder needs and enhance engagement.

#### **Examples to Meet Objective:**

- Once RFP or CASC funded projects are selected, identify the following:
  - PIs new to the region or to actionable science approaches.
  - Potential stakeholder base.
- Setup meeting with new PI and discuss how our communications staff can support them; share resources for actionable science.
- Determine schedule for project process reporting with the CASC and develop communications products toward the end of a project.

#### **Objective 2.3:**

Increase public outreach to promote more climate adaptation planning and address barriers across the South Central U.S.

#### **Examples to Meet Objective:**

- Use photography, video, webinars, workshops and various storytelling methods to demonstrate how stakeholders in our region are addressing a changing climate.
- Continue to promote educational materials such as climate short courses, Climate 101 Workshops, webinars through social media, newsletters and website.

***Target Audience: All External Audiences, Public***

# GOAL 3

## Empower researchers and end-users with tools or resources to increase more effective engagement.

### Objective 3.1:

Strengthen actionable science and increase knowledge for building successful partnerships with stakeholders.

### Examples to Meet Objective:

- Work closely with PIs to refine and improve webinars, trainings, and workshops.
- Build capacity of South Central CASC staff through trainings to ensure they have skills to develop, identify and manage effective communication with a variety of regional audiences.
  - Focus on identifying, translating and overall science delivery to key audiences.
  - Include diversity and cultural sensitivity sessions for staff/consortium/affiliate members.

### Objective 3.2:

Educate and build a network of consortium, affiliates and researchers that maximizes the understanding of end products and effectively communicate actionable science.

### Examples to Meet Objective:

- Provide holistic knowledge and information that may already be available (Indigenous Knowledge with permission).
- Keep webpages dedicated to resources updated with essential information for network use.
- Encourage members to become familiar with research etiquette with the Native Nations (communications, presentation styles, collaboration etc.,). See Shifting Landscapes Appendix A.

### Objective 3.3:

Foster an environment for actionable science, engagement and end-user product understanding.

### Examples to Meet Objective:

- Open a two-way dialogue between scientist and stakeholder by using communication tools.
- When giving presentations or having discussions with stakeholders, avoid:
  - Scientific jargon that confuses the message.
  - Use tools such as narrative storytelling to relate to the stakeholder and their needs.
  - Being mindful of impairments (color blindness, auditory) when relaying information (graphics, videos etc.,)

**Target Audience:** All External Audiences, PI's, early career researchers



# Communication Tools

Various platforms are used by the South Central CASC for communication purposes. The following section highlights the main tools we use to communicate climate science throughout the CASC network, with our stakeholders, researchers, and the target audiences previously identified.

## Online Platforms

**\*Refer to “Social Media Overview” document for all social media guidance**

### Website

The South Central CASC website is maintained by the Science Translator. Content for the site includes publications, training resources, climate projections for our region, climate information and resources for the Native Nations, USGS funded projects and event calendar.

Site: [www.southcentralclimate.org](http://www.southcentralclimate.org)

### Facebook

848 followers (8/4/2020). Facebook is used primarily for sharing webinars, workshops/conference announcements, publications, new projects and human-interest pieces. Target Audience: CASCs, universities, agencies, and general public.

### Twitter

467 followers (8/4/2020). Twitter is used for building relationships with agencies & researchers, nonprofits, other climate groups etc., Target Audience: Everyone.

### LinkedIn

150 followers (8/4/2020). LinkedIn is used for sharing job postings, funding or internship opportunities. Target Audience: Internal staff, consortium, affiliates.

### YouTube

369 subscribers (7/1/2020). YouTube is a platform best used for housing video content and linking to our newsletter, websites and social media accounts. No target audience.

## Instagram

Started in March of 2021, Instagram was added as an additional social platform. 52 followers (5/13/2021) and is used to showcase our region. Target Audiences: some agencies and general public.

## Project Outlets

### Project Booklet & Explorer

A single document created as a reference guide to all USGS funded projects for the website. The project explorer is a resource created by the Alaska CASC for easier navigation of all USGS funded projects CASC wide. Access [here](#).

## Newsletters & Surveys

### Monthly Newsletter

The South Central CASC website is maintained by the Science Translator. Content for the site includes publications, training resources, climate projections for our region, climate information and resources for the Native Nations, USGS funded projects and event calendar.

### Listserv

MailChimp allows us to deliver interactive surveys, information and announcements to all subscribers. This platform is used by the CASC and Native Nations.

## **Meetings: Internal & External**

### **Weekly Staff Meetings**

Each week, internal South Central CASC staff members & students give informal updates on the latest research, outreach efforts, and project status.

### **Consortium Calls**

Bi-Monthly meetings are focused on updates from the South Central CASCs consortium members, their institutions and projects.

### **Joint Stakeholder Committee**

Each quarter, the JSC gathers for updates on how research projects are being conducted, what end results can be expected and general updates from the South Central CASC.

### **Quarterly Tribal Engagement Call**

Quarterly calls promote open communication between all federal agency members in the South Central Region who work with tribes and climate change, as well as a method to update all federal agency workers in the region on current projects.

### **CASC Network Communication Calls**

Held Bi-Monthly across CASC network to share communication ideas, outreach efforts, improve current strategies and collaborate on projects.

### **CASC Network Calls**

Held Bi-Monthly across the CASC network to give updates from each CASC region.

### **CASC Project Management Calls**

Held Bi-Monthly across the CASC network to collaborate on ideas for improving CASC outcomes.

## **National Communication**

### **DOI Highlights**

Prior to South Central CASC publications become public, workshops occur or other significant events, a summary is submitted for announcements made in the Climate Adaptation Insights Newsletter. At least six are required annually.

# Evaluation

A yearly assessment on how products, projects, etc. have been communicated through the different tools and methods outlined in this plan. The assessment will take place in conjunction with the host agreement annual reporting timeline to USGS. Based on assessment results, we will make adjustments as needed to ensure effective and efficient communication efforts.

| <b>Evaluation Question</b>   | <b>Criteria</b>  | <b>Sources</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| <i>Is the science we conduct being effectively communicated to our stakeholders?</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Consistency with all communication products.</li> <li>-Collaboration with stakeholders and partners on meetings or webinars.</li> <li>-Promotion of new products or research through communication tools.</li> </ul> | Number of webinars (us & collaborations with partners), newsletters, workshops hosted, handouts per year. Number of attendees. Stakeholder feedback about the accessibility/readability of specific science communication products and events. |
| <i>What communication tools/methods are better for reaching certain audiences?</i>   | -Delivery of our science through appropriate avenues based on engagement with different delivery platforms.  | Gather analytics for the following methods: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Social media</li> <li>-Newsletter</li> <li>-Workshops, meetings and webinars</li> <li>-Website</li> </ul>  |
| <i>Is our science reaching the general public?</i>                                   | -Engagement in public outreach as appropriate.   | Number of outreach events held each year & attendees.  |
| <i>How are staff members communicating and engaging with stakeholders?</i>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Engagement with CASC stakeholders.</li> <li>-Participation in regular communication training events.</li> </ul>  | Tracking specific meetings with stakeholders (groups or individual) and the outcomes of those meetings. Number of communication trainings held and number of attendees.  |

# South Central CASC Branding

Having a consistent and concise brand is detrimental for audience recognition as well as helping people know who the South Central CASC is. A more detailed description of our brand and guidelines for formatting materials can be found in our South Central CASC Style Guide. For the purpose of this communications plan, items such as fonts, colors and logo will be discussed as they are the more critical component of the South Central CASC brand.

## Font Style

For all South Central CASC products, the following fonts should be used to keep the brand recognizable and style consistent.

Oswald -----Titles, Headers  
Montserrat-----Subtitles  
\*Cooper Hewitt-----Body Text

**Oswald** should only be used for titles. Any variation of the Oswald font family can be used in titles.

**Montserrat** should be used for subtitles and section headers. This is the preferred font for any visual design elements, with the exception of main body text. Alternative Text: Verdana.

**\*Cooper Hewitt** is for the body text only, however, is not required. This can be swapped with another serif font such as Cambria, Times New Roman.

**Downloading Fonts:** Follow these tutorials to get started.

[How to Install Fonts on Mac](#)

[Installing Fonts on PC](#)

## Color Scheme

**Base Colors** are used for backgrounds, text, icons, imagery and design elements.

**Accent Colors** are only used for emphasis on text, icons and design elements.

**Other Colors** are used mainly for text. Limit use for design elements.

## Base Color

HEX: 3D466A  
RGB: 61 70 106

## Base Color

HEX: B7D7E8  
RGB: 72 84 91

## Base Color

HEX: D8DCE2  
RGB: 85 86 89

## Base Color

HEX: 87848C  
RGB: 53 52 55

## Accent Color

HEX: FF5925  
RGB: 100 35 15

## Accent Color

HEX: 0174C1  
RGB: 0 45 76

## South Central CASC Logo



The full logos, both versions, should be used wherever design reasonably allows. There are no concrete rules about logo placement as long as the dimensions are not distorted when added to a product. Logos with black text must be used on a light-colored background. Logos with white text must be used on dark backgrounds. Additionally, when mentioning the South Central CASC, DO NOT abbreviate with SC CASC. Completely spell out "South Central CASC".

Access to all current South Central CASC logos can be accessed through [Google Drive](#). If you have trouble accessing the link, email [info@southcentralclimate.org](mailto:info@southcentralclimate.org).

# USGS Logo

The USGS Logo has specific rules outlined in the CASC Communication Guidelines (add link to appendix). When adding the USGS logo to South Central CASC products, the following must be adhered:

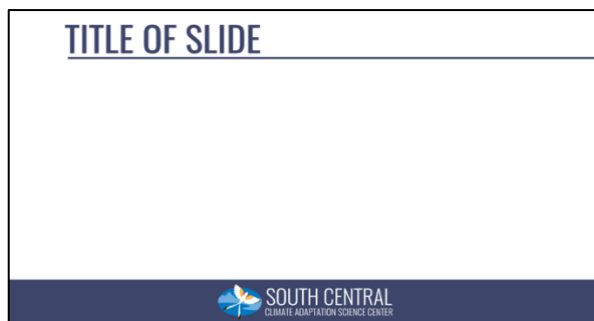
**Color:** The USGS Logo may only appear in black, white or USGS Green (RGB 0, 11,65; HEX: 006F41).

**Placement:** The USGS logo may appear anywhere on the product **EXCEPT** the top left corner.

**Download:** Follow this [link](#) to download the USGS logos.

## South Central CASC Presentations

When giving an official South Central CASC presentation, use the following template to assure consistency and brand recognition (PPT, Google Slides, etc.):



Access to the current South Central CASC presentation template can be accessed through [Google Drive](#). If you have trouble accessing the link, email [info@southcentralclimate.org](mailto:info@southcentralclimate.org).

## OU Land Acknowledgment

(May move to Appendix, follow up with April (regional and nationwide)) When the South Central CASC hosts presentations, workshops, webinars etc., it's important to acknowledge the land we are on. From the university of Oklahoma, the following statement may be used at the beginning of such events mentioned:

"Long before the University of Oklahoma was established, the land on which the University now resides was the traditional home of the "Hasinai" Caddo Nation and "Kirikir?i:s" Wichita & Affiliated Tribes.

We acknowledge this territory once also served as a hunting ground, trade exchange point, and migration route for the Apache, Comanche, Kiowa and Osage nations.

Today, 39 tribal nations dwell in the state of Oklahoma as a result of settler and colonial policies that were designed to assimilate Native people.

The University of Oklahoma recognizes the historical connection our university has with its indigenous community. We acknowledge, honor and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this land.



We fully recognize, support and advocate for the sovereign rights of all of Oklahoma's 39 tribal nations. This acknowledgement is aligned with our university's core value of creating a diverse and inclusive community. It is an institutional responsibility to recognize and acknowledge the people, culture and history that make up our entire OU Community."

Maps of our region indicating where the almost 70 Native Nations reside can be found in Appendix B.

## Funding Acknowledgment

There are specific guidelines for acknowledging funding for scientific projects and research. When acknowledging funding, use the full, official name of the CASC (no abbreviations). From the National CASC Communications Guideline:

"Funding acknowledgement must be spelled out in all scientific publications and press releases **where research funding was provided by the USGS.**" For further information, see Appendix D.

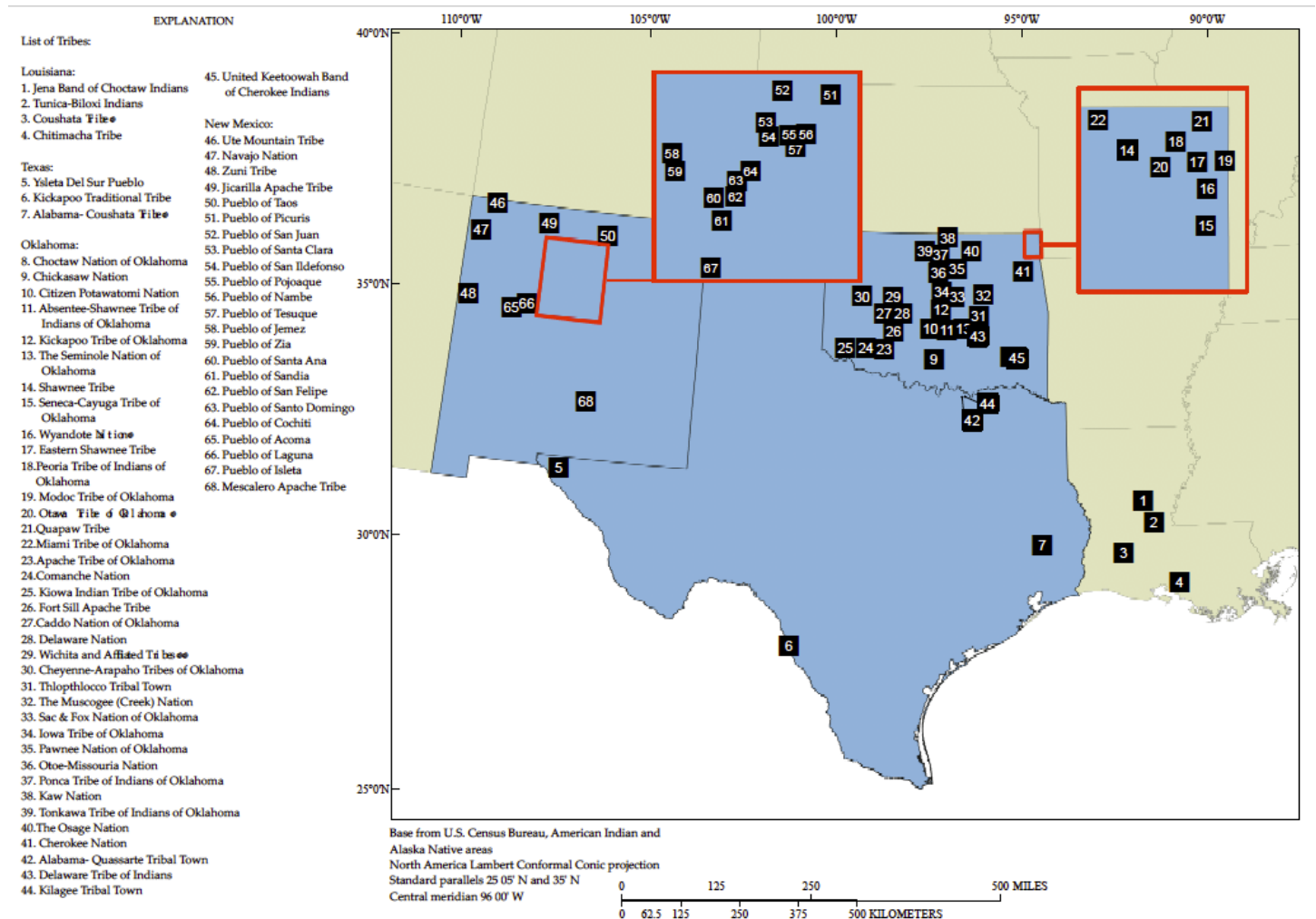
# Appendices

## Appendix A

Shifting Landscapes document provides resources for non-Native researchers, scholars, government officials and faculty members, to better understand and build collaborative relationships with the Native Nations. This document can be accessed on our website:

[Ethics Guidance for Researchers Working with Native Nations](#)

## Appendix B



## Appendix C

From the National CASC Communications Guidelines (V1.8):

The USGS logo must be included on all websites and communications products related to CASC projects or initiatives funded by the USGS.

## Color

The USGS logo may only appear in black, white, or USGS green. *USGS green is RGB 0, 111, 65; Pantone 348; CMYK: 100, 0, 79, 27; HEX: 006F41.*

The identifier can appear in green or black when placed against white or light-colored backgrounds.

The identifier can appear in white when placed against black or dark-colored backgrounds.

## Placement

The USGS logo can be placed anywhere on the product **except** the top left corner.

## Spacing

To ensure that the USGS logo is sufficiently prominent at any size, there should always be a clear area surrounding it. The clear area should be equal to one-fourth (1/4) the height of the USGS logo and extend on all sides. Note that “clear” does not mean “empty”; there can be a colored background or photo sitting behind the logo.

## Do not:

Distort the proportions of the logo. (Note that it’s okay to resize the logo as long as the proportions remain the same).

Change the color of the logo, beyond what is described above.

Add to, remove content from, or otherwise modify the logo.

Place the logo in the top left corner of the product.

# Appendix D

From the National CASC Communications Guideline on funding acknowledgements: In scientific publications (or manuscripts intended for publication), use the specific wording below to acknowledge funding:

**Non-USGS PIs** should include the following statements (usually in the acknowledgements section): “The project described in this publication was supported by Grant or Cooperative Agreement No. [add number, and include appropriate designation of award] from the United States Geological Survey. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center or the USGS. This manuscript is submitted for publication with the understanding that the United States Government is authorized to reproduce and distribute reprints for Governmental purposes.”

**USGS PIs** should use the following statement of acknowledgement: “This research was funded by the U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center”.

**Other Federal PIs** other non-USGS, federal PIs should follow their agency’s guidance or can model their funding acknowledgement statement on the statement used by USGS PIs.

**When there are both USGS and non-USGS supported authors on a publication**, the following statement of acknowledgement should be used: “This research was funded by Grant or Cooperative Agreement No. [add number, and include appropriate designation of award] from the U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center.”

**Fellows, students, and post-docs** should use the following statement of acknowledgement: “This research was funded by a U.S. Geological Survey [insert CASC region] Climate Adaptation Science Center award [add number, and include appropriate designation of award] to [Name of fellow/student/post-doc].”

**For other communication products** – such as videos, handouts, and bookmarks – including the USGS logo is sufficient acknowledgement of funding support.