



Climate Change Strategic Plan

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Reservation

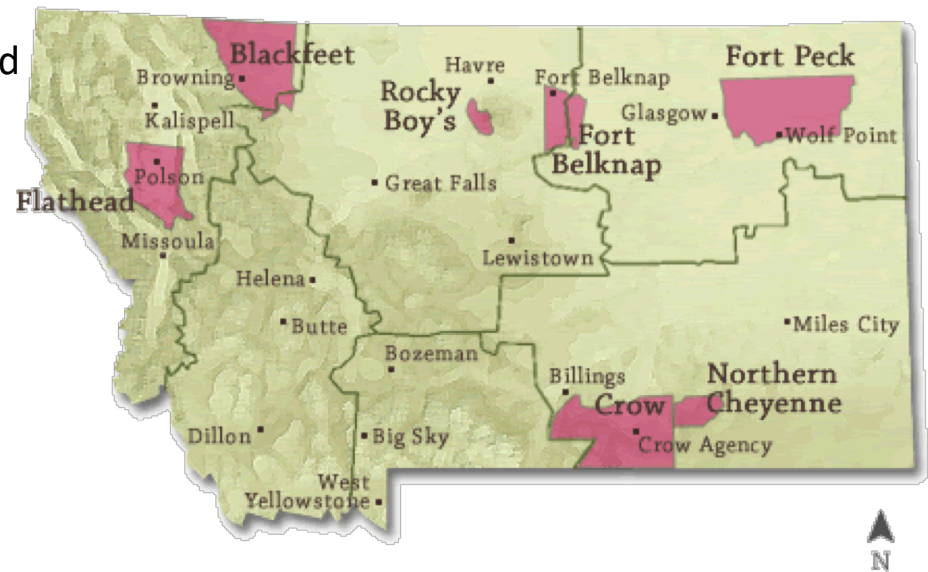
September 2013

***What we have planned for is happening NOW!
Extreme weather events, Megafires, Flooding,
Drought, Glacial melt, Rising Sea-levels***



Flathead Indian Reservation

- Created in 1855 by the Hellgate Treaty
- Home to the Confederated Selilsh, Qlispe, and Ksanka Band of Kootenai Tribes (8,000 tribal members)
- 460K acres of forest land
- Irrigation Project (Reservoirs and 1,300 miles of canal and lateral systems with over 10K diversion structures)
- 963 miles of perennial rivers and streams
- 3,118 miles of intermittent streams
- 71,849 lake surface acres
- 103,133 national wetland inventory wetland acres
- Diverse ecology and hydrology



Introduction

In late 2012, CSKT received funding from the The Roundtable of the Crown of the Continent Adaptive Management Initiative through the Kresge foundation and the Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

The Planning process was led by the CSKT Office of Environmental Protection and was assisted by Next Seven Group, LLC.

The Plan was completed in collaboration with the Tribes' administration, Elders, scientific leaders, and other stakeholders and experts.

Local impact assessments on forestry, land, fish, wildlife, water, air, infrastructure, people, and culture were developed by our CSKT Tribal Resource Management Departments.



Intro. Cont.

The Planning committee included a representative group of staff from various tribal departments and local organizations.

The Planning resulted in the establishment of priorities and related preparedness goals and actions. The goals and actions are diverse-addressing each resource's needs.

We felt that the CCSP should be regularly revisited and modified as priorities and needs of the Tribes change and new information regarding the climate science and impacts becomes available (a living document).

Through stories passed down through generations, Tribal Elders have already been able to identify some of affects. Cultural teachings provide lessons for dealing with situations that relate to a changing climate.



Climate Impacts Locally

- The Flathead Reservation and Missoula County share geographic, topographic, and climatic characteristics.
- Climate change trends and scenarios have been adapted from the Missoula County Climate Action: Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Community report, Section 1. Considerations for temperature and precipitation, storm events, snowpack, hydrology, forest and vegetation, wildfire, snow events, air quality, and fish and wildlife are provided.



Hydrology

- This area has already experienced many changes in hydrology patterns.
- Snow water equivalent of winter snowpack has declined.
- Summer stream flow has declined.
- Water temperatures have increased.
- The timing of many events, such as average freeze and thaw dates, has also changed substantially over the last 50-100 years.
- More precipitation falls as rain instead of snow.



Strategic Plan Purpose

1

Serve as an **early step** towards addressing the **impacts** of climate change on the Flathead Reservation Resources.

LEARN

2

Improve the Tribal **community and its lands resiliency** by effectively informing the Tribal resource managers.

INFORM

3

Initiate the development of beneficial impact **mitigation** and **adaptation solutions.**

ACT



Cultural Considerations

The Planning Team was compelled to incorporate our Tribal Perspective into our CCSP because- Cultural traditions rely on abundant populations of native fish and wildlife, healthy plant communities, clean air and water. ***“All Things Are Connected”***.

“Indigenous people of the world have a special moral stature on this issue [of climate change] and may have a special role to play in coming together to advocate for action.”- Salish-Pend d'Oreille Culture Committee



Why the Tribes are Planning

- Climate change **is currently impacting** resources on the Flathead Reservation.
- These impacts may substantially affect ways of life that have been at the core of Tribal culture for generations.
- It merits special focus, especially related to the connection between traditions and issues of community resilience and sovereignty.



Impacts on the Tribes

- Many cultural resources are non-renewable resources. They can be one day or thousands of years old. Their destruction is a gross violation of everything we value - Flathead Culture Committee



Input from our Elders

- Tribal elders and the languages are perhaps the most vital of these resources because they teach and communicate the histories and traditional lifestyles of the Tribes.
- The traditions depend on land 'place-based' cultural resources and knowledge.
- These resources include native fish and wildlife and their habitats, food and medicinal plants and the areas where they grow, prehistoric and historical use sites, and areas where Tribal members currently practice cultural traditions.



Our Elders

- The Elders that we interviewed were approximately 80 years of age. Their stories tell of a time when they were young, told by their parents, grandparents, and beyond...a time that may reach as much as 200 years ago.
- Unfortunately, Many of the Elders we interviewed have since passed.



Tribal Elder Observations

“I do not know when the last time the lake completely froze. It has been awhile since it did that. I do not know if we will ever see that again.”

- Ignace Couture



Ignace Couture, photo by Frank Tyro



Tribal Elder Observations

“As an Indian people we get concerned especially for the higher elevation plants that we use for medicine - not only for the plants but for the animals”.

- Mike Durglo Sr.



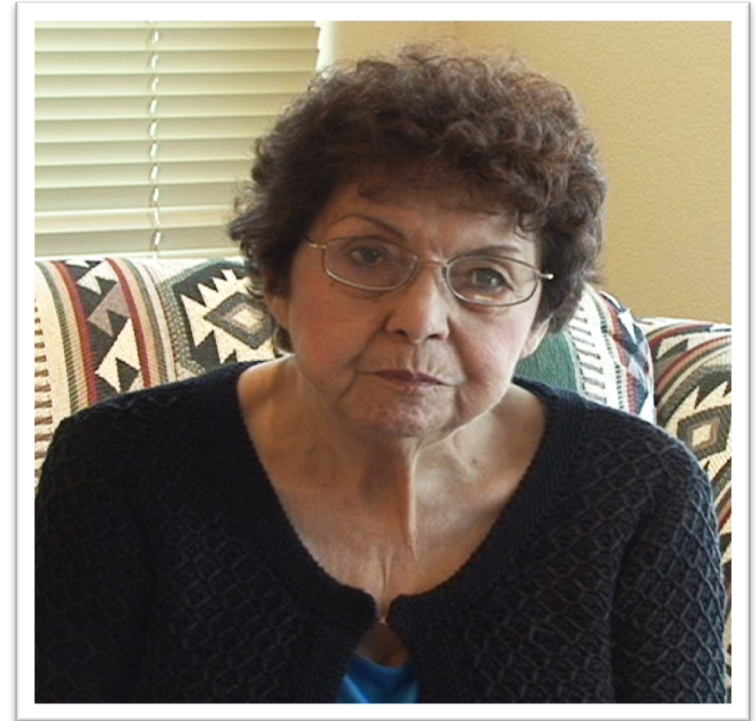
Mike Durglo Sr., photo by Frank Tyro



Tribal Elder Observations

“One of the things my dad always did was when we took a drink out of the creek we always put some [water] back. You took a drink then you threw some [water] on the plants or somewhere.”

- Sadie Saloway



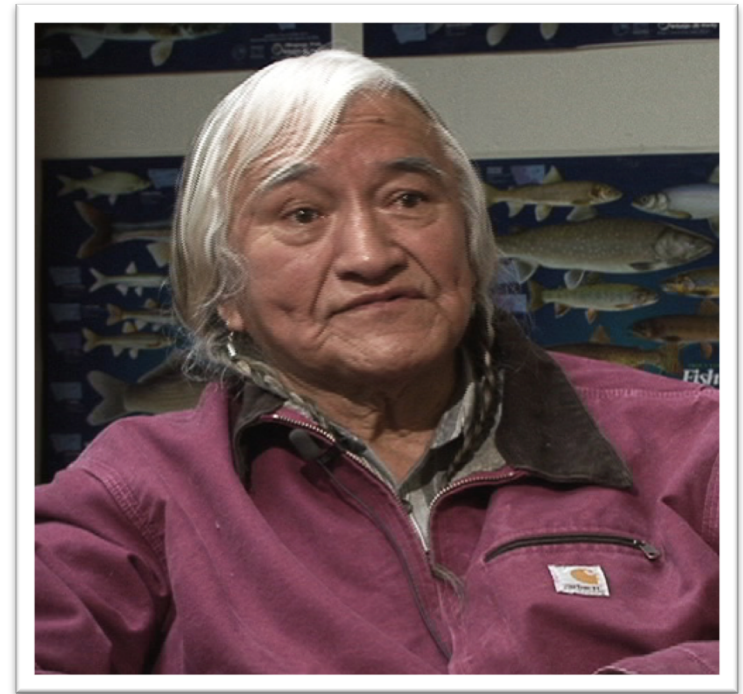
Sadie Saloway., photo by Frank Tyro



Tribal Elder Observations

“The weather [may bring a] big change and then maybe the world will go back the other way.”

- Stephen SmallSalmon



Stephen SmallSalmon., photo by Frank Tyro



Tribal Elder Observations

“The elders would sit down and they would tell stories. They would talk about certain things that were coming...One day this earth is going to become warm....The snow and ice is going to melt in the north and the oceans are going to fill up...I am witnessing this today.”

- Patrick Pierre



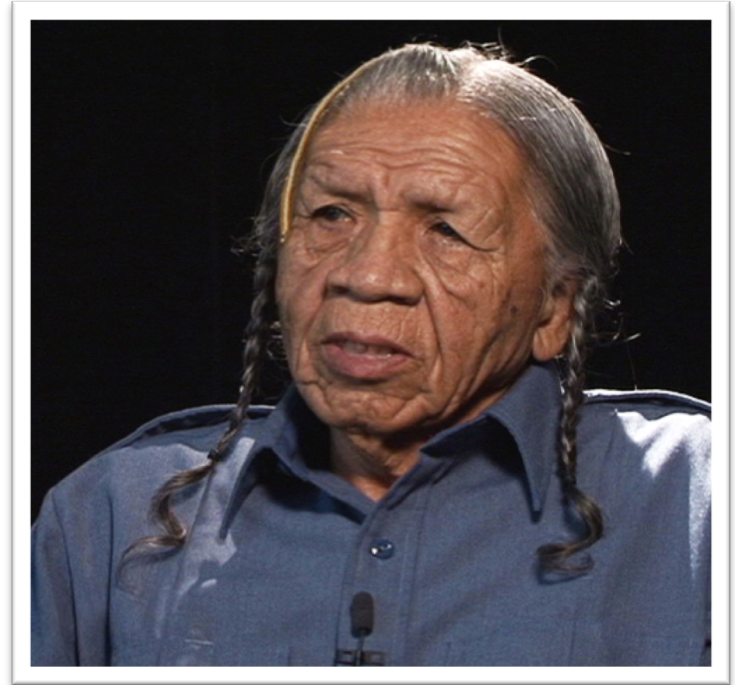
Patrick Pierre, photo by Frank Tyro



Tribal Elder Observations

“The old people used to say that in the winter when it got cold you could hear the trees pop, it sounded like a rifle shot, then the coyote stories could come out, then in the spring when you hear the first thunder then that when you put them away.”

- Louie Adams



Louie Adams, photo by Frank Tyro



The Plan-Planning Sectors

The Climate Change Strategic Plan- Management areas are divided into 9 sectors; each assigned the responsibility of a particular division or program within the working Tribal government.

- 1 Forestry/Fire (Forestry Dept)
- 2 Land (Lands Dept)
- 3 Fish (NRD)
- 4 Wildlife (NRD)
- 5 Water (NRD)
- 6 Air Quality (NRD)
- 7 Infrastructure (Housing)
- 8 People (Tribal Health, DHRD)
- 9 Culture (SPCC, KCC)



Flathead Reservation, photo by Roian Matt





Next Steps *ACT*

- We will continue to research Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Engage with our Elders
- Each Resource Department will focus planning and mitigation efforts based on risk and vulnerabilities (priorities). (active forest management, WBP restoration, Bulltrout recovery, Lake trout population control, wetland and river restoration, energy efficiency, recycling, landscape connectivity planning, youth engagement)
- Maintain a Climate Change Oversight Committee monthly meeting.
 - Monitor and measure progress
 - Review basic assumptions
 - Incorporate findings into guiding documents
 - Update the CCSP regularly
 - Conduct education and outreach activities



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