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Transferring adaptive capacity between North American indigenous communities Assembly of First Nations (AFN)

Project Summary - Part I. Description

Participating organizations and geographic location(s) of the project

National Congress of American Indians (US)
Assembly of First Nations (CA)
Gespe'gewag Mi'gmaq Resource Council (CA)
Assembly of First Nations Chiefs of New Brunswick (CA)
Mi'kmaq Confederacy of Prince Edward Island (CA)
Chiefs of Ontario (CA)
Aroostook Band of MicMacs (US)
Passamaquoddy Tribe (Indian Township) (US)
Passamaquoddy Tribe (Pleasant Point) (US)
Woodstock First Nation (CA)
Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (US)
St. Mary's First Nation (CA)
Lennox Island First Nation (CA)
Indian Island First Nation (CA)
University of PEI (CA)
University of Maine (US)

Background or problem statement (why was the project carried out?)

There is a strong physical, cultural and spiritual relationship that exists between Indigenous communities and the environment from which many communities continue to depend upon to maintain their wellbeing. This is a relationship that has existed since time immemorial and is built on a deep respect and understanding of the environment. Such a relationship with the land has enabled Indigenous communities to grow, sustain, and adapt to the changing environment over time. As the environment continues to change both naturally and under human influence, the deeply rooted environmental understanding and knowledge of Indigenous communities to develop innovative methods of adaptation will become increasingly important. Indigenous peoples are currently in a position to identify the climate related changes that are taking place at the community and regional levels and understand that adaptive changes must be made to meet the climatic challenges ahead. At the same time, Indigenous territories remain some of the most biodiverse and resource rich lands on earth. It is therefore of utmost importance to protect the environment, conserve sensitive ecosystems, and support and share knowledge and experiences, for the benefit of present and future generations.

General description of the project (what was done?)

This project resulted in the formation of a network of Indigenous communities, built upon longstanding nation-to-nation collaboration between Tribes and First Nations, by providing a forum for sharing adaptation experiences. The project facilitated communications and networking among Indigenous decision makers and technicians representing communities that are interested or have been successful in climate change adaptation.

Description of outcomes and follow-up (what did the project achieve?)

List project products and how they can be obtained, follow-up activities, and contact person for more information about the project.

The information presented at the meetings (June 13, 2013, in Bangor, Maine and July 9, 2013 in Fredericton, New Brunswick) were of interest and may be used by other First Nations and tribes seeking adaptive measures for their communities and for sites of particular cultural interest. As a result of this project, First Nations have decided to collaborate on the development of a regional network, housed at a University and to continue the joint work started on this project between tribes and First Nations on adaptation to climate change.

Project Summary - Part II. Analysis

Successes

Describe the most significant successes achieved during the implementation of the project.

The project generated considerable interest among tribes and First Nations. This project provided one of a very few number of opportunities for networking between tribes and First Nations. Indeed, the project was one of a very few number of opportunities for either tribes or First Nations to network amongst themselves on climate change, and particularly adaptation to climate change.

Challenges

Describe the most significant challenges encountered during the implementation of the project.

The primary challenge for this project revolved around turnover and regional capacity. While indigenous communities have conducted a considerable amount of work on adaptation to climate change, capacity and turnover within those communities hindered identification of indigenous communities with current interests and activities on climate change.

Lessons Learned

Increased and aggressive presence within the region is necessary for successful implementation of a project, particularly on topics where sustained capacity for First Nations and tribes does not exist. This should involve preliminary site visits to

communities in order to identify interested communities, but more important, interested players within communities.

What next?

Describe what will your organization do and what should others do.

First Nations and tribes are each in the process of building specific regional capacities on adaptation to climate change and are committed to future collaboration. In addition, First Nations in other regions are considering the feasibility of developing their own regional networks.

For more information about this project please contact:

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