



Climate Impacts to Indian Tribe and Native Hawaiian Sacred Sites and Historic Properties: Plan for ACHP Actions

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) recognizes that climate change impacts sacred sites, cultural practices, landscapes, and cultural properties that are significant to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations (NHOs). These impacts may result from sea level rise, extended drought, increased severity of invasive species, severe storm events, and extreme wildfire, among other examples, of which any or all have the potential to impact or destroy historic properties of religious and cultural significance and sacred sites. The ACHP also recognizes that addressing these issues requires both proactive and reactive strategies that attempt to mitigate and combat climate change's impacts to historic properties of religious and cultural significance and sacred sites through prevention, improved coordination during emergency response between federal agencies and their Tribal and Native Hawaiian partners, and through capacity building of Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations.

The ACHP further acknowledges that an Indian Tribe's treaty and reserved rights related to historic properties of religious and cultural significance, sacred sites and landscapes, and other important cultural places may also be impacted by climate change and commits to integrating, as appropriate, the consideration of such rights in its efforts to implement this plan. The Indigenous Knowledge (IK) of Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiians, knowledge that is unique to their history and people, should also be integrated, elevated, and protected by federal agencies as part of their planning and decision-making processes. Indigenous Knowledge has been acquired through the unique relationship between a people and their ancestral lands that includes intergenerational knowledge and detailed observation.

The ACHP developed the following set of actions (Action Plan) in conjunction with Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations to address climate impacts to historic properties of religious and cultural significance and sacred sites. Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations provided input at national conferences and during two nationwide listening sessions hosted by the ACHP focusing on climate change and historic preservation. While not exhaustive, this list identifies actions the ACHP can take to advance consideration and protection of historic properties and sacred sites in response to climate change.

Coordination with Indian Tribes, Native Hawaiians Organizations, Federal Agencies and Other Partners

To further implement this Action Plan, the ACHP identified various partners including [Salish Kootenai College](#) (SKC), the [White House Council on Native American Affairs](#) (WHCNA), and numerous federal agencies and Indian Tribes that may be able to assist in addressing climate change impacts to historic properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations. The ACHP commits to advancing this plan through collaboration and will work to include partners in the implementation of this Action Plan.

Section 106. Consideration of sacred sites and the historic properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations necessarily requires that federal agencies conduct effective consultation and coordination throughout the section 106 process. However, many federal agencies lack appropriate experience and awareness to fully account for these places in relation to climate change. In response to this need the ACHP will seek to:

- Update existing guidance, information, and training to ensure that green energy projects are fully considered during Section 106 as undertakings that have the potential to adversely affect historic properties and sacred sites.
- Develop sample stipulations regarding climate change preparedness and response that may be included in Section 106 agreement documents.
- Encourage inclusion of climate change preparedness and response provisions in programmatic agreements that incorporate the knowledge and expertise of Indian Tribes and NHOs.
- As a member of the Unified Federal Review (UFR), work with partners to suggest, consistent with the UFR's Strategic Plan, additional efforts that could be made to integrate Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations into UFR deployment during active disasters.
- As a member of the Heritage Emergency National Task Force, recommend the establishment of a centralized point of contact that would be responsible for assisting Indian Tribes and NHOs with preparedness and response as well as assisting FEMA with consultation for emergency planning, response, and recovery.

Case Studies, Training, and Education. Access to information relative to the impacts, consideration, and protection of historic properties and sacred sites in response to climate change, and the incorporation of Indigenous Knowledge, were identified as key resources during outreach with Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations. With appropriate partners the ACHP will seek to achieve the following:

- ONAA interns will research climate change in relation to historic properties, sacred sites, and Indigenous Knowledge and will develop case studies to serve as a resource for future training, guidance, or information papers.
- Facilitate a series of webinars or podcasts that advance the knowledge and expertise of Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations as it pertains to the intersections between sacred sites, Indigenous Knowledge, and historic properties, among other topics, with climate change.
- Draft an information paper that identifies ways that sacred sites, cultural landscapes, and other historic properties have been and continue to be impacted by climate change.
- Participate in the development of training materials that can advance the consideration of sacred sites, historic properties, and Indigenous Knowledge in climate preparedness and response.

Federal Agency Planning and Preparation. Advanced planning and preparedness help to ensure proper consideration of Indigenous Knowledge, historic properties, and sacred sites by federal agencies. Having knowledge pertaining to the location or importance of significant places, preferred treatment, and/or transparent consultation and coordination protocols can advance the preservation of these places.

Accordingly, with appropriate partners the ACHP will seek to:

- Incorporate consideration of climate change into WHCNAA deliverables including but not limited to education and outreach materials, information, and guidance documents, and through the inventory and review of existing resources and proposed project plans.
- Review and document inclusion or consideration of Indigenous Knowledge, historic properties, and sacred sites in federal agency climate adaptation plans submitted to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) in compliance with [Executive Order 14008](#).
- Work with partners to advise federal agencies on better mechanisms to account for Indigenous Knowledge, historic properties, and sacred sites in their climate adaptation plans.
- Incorporate consideration of climate change into ACHP Policy Statements
- Through the appropriate platform(s), advance the fact that natural resources are cultural resources and that climate change and emergency response need to be responsive to both.
- Through the appropriate platform(s), recognize the inseparable connection that cultural practice has with place and the impacts climate change and emergency response can have on both.

Resources for Emergency Response and Climate Change. Resources, including funding, are necessary to effectively plan for and respond to climate impacts and emergency response actions that may impact sacred sites and historic properties. With appropriate partners the ACHP will seek to:

- Acquire support from the ACHP membership for recommending to the appropriate House and Senate committees that funding be provided for Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations to develop and implement plans for addressing climate impacts to their sacred sites and other sites of religious and cultural importance.
- Acquire support from the ACHP membership to advocate that Congress provide funding to Indian Tribes in order to address the impacts of a disaster to sacred sites and historic properties.
- Develop a resource document that identifies ways and opportunities to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge, historic properties, and sacred sites into climate change preparedness and response.

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP). The [UN DRIP](#) is an inspirational international instrument that includes a broad range of provisions regarding the relationship between nations, organizations and Indigenous peoples and individuals. The ACHP encourages the historic preservation community and the general public to become familiar with the UN DRIP. It is important because it expresses both the aspirations of Indigenous peoples around the world and those of States in seeking to improve their relations with Indigenous peoples. On March 1, 2013, the ACHP took a bold step to adopt a [plan](#) to support the UN DRIP with a commitment to further incorporate the principles into policy and guidance documents.

- The ACHP will continue to raise awareness in the historic preservation community regarding the UN DRIP focusing on the articles that address Indigenous rights to protection of the environment in accordance with the ACHP's plan to support the Declaration.
- The ACHP, with guidance from appropriate partners, will incorporate applicable articles of the UN DRIP into the deliverables resulting from this Action Plan.

Outreach and Coordination. Conducting effective outreach and assisting Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations with elevating their voice is foundational to the work of the ACHP. The ACHP commits to conducting ongoing outreach and coordination efforts with both Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations and federal and non-federal partners. Initial efforts to advance ACHPs recognition of climate change impacts and establishment of this Action Plan are listed below:

- Feedback and recommendations from Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations (ongoing)
- Coordination with Salish Kootenai College, the WHCNAA, federal agencies, Indian Tribes, and the Native Hawaiian community (ongoing)
- [ONAA Climate Change webpage](#) development (ongoing)
- Panel discussion during NATHPO's 22nd annual conference (February 2022)
- *Climate Impacts to Tribal and Native Hawaiian Historic Properties: Plan for ACHP Actions* draft provided to Indian Tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations for comment (February 2022)
- Coordination with ACHP's Climate Change Task Force (February & May 2022)
- Coordination with ACHP's Native American Affairs committee (February & May 2022)
- 2-hr nationwide listening session for Indian Tribes and NHOs (March 17, 2022)
- 2-hr nationwide listening session for Indian Tribes and NHOs (March 21, 2022)
- Briefing to WHCNAA's Climate Adaptation Subcommittee (April 2022)
- Panel discussion at the CalTHPO-SHPO Summit (May 2022)
- Summary of nationwide listening sessions shared with Indian Tribes and NHOs (June 2022)
- *Climate Impacts to Indian Tribe and Native Hawaiian Sacred Sites and Historic Properties: Plan for ACHP Actions* updated draft shared with Indian Tribes and NHOs (June 2022)