

**ACES 2016 Wednesday Evening Town Hall  
December 7, 2016 | 5:30pm-6:45pm | Grand Ballroom 3**

***Title: How Climate Change is Impacting Native American Sacred Sites and Cultural Practices***

**Description:**

As former Secretary Ken Salazar stated in his Secretarial Order 3289, *Addressing the Impacts of Climate Change on America's Water, Land, and Other Natural and Cultural Resources*, “[c]limate change may disproportionately affect tribes and their lands because they are heavily dependent on their natural resources for economic and cultural identity.” As these severe climate events occur with greater force and frequency, Native American Nations are facing unprecedented challenges to their sacred sites and cultural practices that have sustained them for millennia. This Town Hall will provide case studies and the tribal perspective on the effect these impacts are having on tribal cultural survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This Town Hall will provide a forum to discuss these challenges.

Three Native American speakers will give 20 minute presentations on these impacts specific to their Tribes and regions, as well as perspectives on the significance they have on tribal spiritual practices and how this affects the first Peoples of our country. The Panel will be moderated by USGS National Tribal Liaison Monique Fordham, Esq. (Nulheagan Abenaki).

**Speaker #1: Mike Durglo**

Mr. Durglo is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). He received his BS in Environmental Science from Salish Kootenai College in 2002. He is currently the Environmental Protection Division Manager for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and is the Climate Change Planning Coordinator. He has worked for the Tribes for over 30 years in different capacities including Wildlife Conservation Officer, Tribal Councilman, Wetland Conservation Coordinator, and Regulatory Specialist. He currently serves as the Chairman on the EPA Region 8 Tribal Operations Committee and is the EPA Region 8 representative on the National Tribal Science Council. In July of 2016 Mr. Durglo received the “Whitehouse Champion for Change in Climate Equity” award. He also serves on the Climate and Traditional Knowledge’s Workgroup (CTKW) that was formed from the Department of Interior’s Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science.

The CSKT developed their Climate Change Strategic Plan in 2013. In the process of developing the plan numerous tribal elders were interviewed. These tribal elders identified concerns about the impacts of climate change on traditional foods and also shifting animal populations on and around the reservation. Elder observations indicate that the climate has noticeably changed within their lifetime and that the knowledge they gained from parents, grandparents, and great grandparents goes back multiple generations. These first-hand accounts of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) on the impacts of climate change further demonstrate its effect on tribal cultural practices.

**Speaker #2: George “Chuckie” Green**

Mr. Green is the Assistant Director of Natural Resources for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MWT). He is currently a District Supervisor for the Cape Cod Conservation District (CCCD), Region 1 representative to the Massachusetts Commission on Soils and Water Resources, Massachusetts Representative to the East Regional Tribal Conservation Advisory Council (RTCAC) to NRCS and the MWT Representative to the NE-Regional Planning Body (RPB). Mr. Green has also served his Tribe as a member of Tribal Council, and Vice Chairman for three years each consecutively. He served Tribal Historic Preservation Authority for the Tribe for fifteen years from 1992 through 2011. He has also served on the Advisory Board for

Waquoit Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and as a member of the refuge planning team for the Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge and other Cape and Island Refuges.

The Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MWT) exists on their aboriginal homeland of Cape Cod, a peninsular that is exposed to the ocean on all sides. The Tribe has been experiencing increasing erosion from storm surge and sea level rise. Hurricane Sandy and the subsequent winter storm Juno have exacerbated coastal erosion and shoreline damage. In particular, the Tribe has been experiencing the loss of sacred plants due to these factors. They have lost almost all of their Sweet-Grass and Atlantic White Cedar plant communities used in ceremony and for construction of traditional structures. In addition, warming ocean temperatures and acidification are affecting the health and populations of traditional foods such as shellfish, major components of their traditional first foods.

**Speaker #3: Dr. Bull Bennett**

Dr. T. M. Bull Bennett (Mi'kmaq), is a Co-Convening Lead Author on the Third National Climate Assessment (2014), the Co-convenor for the Indigenous Peoples Climate Change Working Group, and the President and CEO of Kiksapa Consulting, LLC. He earned a BS in Biology from Black Hills State University (1996), a MS in Zoology and Physiology from the University of Wyoming (1999), and his PhD in Atmosphere, Environment and Water Resources from the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (2004). Dr. Bennett grew up in the mountains and prairies of Wyoming and calls the Northern Great Plains home. As a trained ecologist and educator, he has pursued his passion in bringing awareness to conservation issues and over the last 20 years has worked to expand the science and technology capacity of Tribal Colleges and Universities to address climate impacts and conservation issues faced by Indian Country. He has experience working with endangered species addressing captive propagation of black-footed ferrets (*Mustela nigripes*) as part of the National Black-Footed Ferret Conservation Center recovery program. He was also funded by NASA Earth System Science Fellowship and the National Science Foundation to work with local land owners to investigate bison impacts on short grass/shrub steppe prairie in Wyoming using biophysical parameters and geospatial applications while fulfilling his PhD requirements. Dr. Bennett was appointed by the Secretary of Interior in 2008 to serve as a charter member of the National Geospatial Advisory Committee; a Federal Advisory Committee established to help develop the national geospatial policy for the Country. In 2011 he was appointed by the Secretary of Commerce to the National Climate Assessment Development and Advisory Committee, where he coordinated, and ultimately served as Co-Convening Lead Author of *Indigenous Peoples, Lands and Resources*; Chapter 12 of Third National Climate Assessment (2014).

According to both the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Climate Assessment (NCA3) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), those marginalize and chronically stressed communities are most vulnerable to the impacts of a changing climate. Dr. Bennett has come to understand through his work with Native Peoples across the country, and his experiences with the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Climate Assessment, that Indian Country is across the board in terms of their awareness and preparedness for climate impacts. Although a global phenomenon, climate change is impacting indigenous communities in very unique ways. From changing storm patterns, loss of summer sea ice, and melting permafrost threatening the subsistence livelihoods of Alaska Natives, to the chronic extreme drought conditions plaguing the tribes in the Southwest, all indigenous communities are facing change, and the very real prospects of adapting to these changes in order to sustain their cultures and ways of life. The focus of this discussion will be the diverse ways in which climate change is manifesting itself locally in Native communities, the current efforts underway to adapt to change, and the opportunities for adaptation and mitigation that have yet to be embraced and deployed.

**Target Audience:**

The target audience is all who are interested in understanding the impacts that climate change is having on the cultural survival of Native American Tribes. The session is intended to provide the audience with the opportunity to hear directly to hear from tribal communities and to broaden their understanding of how ecosystem services include the spiritual and cultural practice elements that sustain Native cultural survival.

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