



Press Release

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Native Peoples Native Homelands II Climate Change Workshop

ALEXANDRIA, VA, OCTOBER 1, 2009: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), through its Tribal Colleges and Universities program, along with its partners will convene an important collaborative and comprehensive national workshop to discuss and propose strategies for addressing the impacts of climate change on Native Peoples and Native Homelands on **November 18-21, 2009 at the Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, MN.**

The workshop, coming a decade after the first U.S. Workshop on Climate Change Impacts on Native People and Native Homelands, will update the findings conducted in conjunction with the U.S. National Assessment of the Potential Consequences of Climate Variability and Change. This workshop follows shortly after the release of the 2009 U.S. National Assessment of Global Climate Change Impacts in the United States, which failed to include an in-depth consideration of American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and their respective lands.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Dr. Dan Wildcat (Haskell Indian Nations University) and Winona LaDuke (Honor the Earth), the Native Peoples Native Homelands II Climate Change Workshop will examine the impacts of climate change and extreme weather variability on Native Peoples and their homelands from Indigenous cultural, spiritual,

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and scientific perspectives. The goal of this workshop is to develop immediate response and adaptation actions and proactive recommendations to ensure the survival of Indigenous communities.

Ten years after the first U.S. Workshop on Climate Change Impacts on Native People Native Homelands, it is now known unequivocally (IPCC, 2005) that significant warming of the Earth is occurring along with the increasing levels of atmospheric CO₂. Global warming scenarios point to significant increased and disproportionate impacts on Native Peoples because of their unique relationship to the land, the prevalence of subsistence land-based economies and the deep cultural and spiritual significance of the land. Compounding these issues, many reservations and tribal lands are located in remote areas where substandard housing and poverty prevail, making our communities especially vulnerable to weather extremes and global oil concerns.

“Climate change impacts Indigenous peoples first and foremost,” said Ms. LaDuke. “We will be in a very difficult position as Indigenous peoples if we do not act now to build resilience in our communities. This means shifting the energy paradigm so that we develop efficiency and produce our own clean energy, and it means growing our own traditional varieties of food. It means returning to self-sufficiency by creating energy and food sovereignty that can provide a bright future for the generation yet to come.”

“Indian reservations represent significant land holdings containing indigenous species that provide key indicator species to monitor and document climate change,” said Dr. Wildcat. “Our knowledge and work must be included in a meaningful and central way in any assessment of climate change. We need a legitimate seat at the table in policy discussions.”

The 2009 Native Peoples Native Homelands Climate Change Workshop is an opportunity for Native people to play active roles in the development of future national and international policy and agendas at this very critical time in history. Taking place just a few weeks before world leaders meet in Copenhagen for international climate change

talks, this workshop will seek to develop policy and position papers that contribute to a unified Indigenous voice that can be heard in Denmark.

“This workshop will bring Native Indigenous knowledge together with science, education, and technologies to address the challenges of climate and environmental change in Indian Country and to build adaptation strategies and solutions for a sustainable future”, said the workshop director, Dr. Nancy Maynard (NASA). Areas of impact and adaptation to be considered in the workshop will include water, traditional plants and medicine, sacred lands and sites, subsistence economies, agriculture, energy and more.

Current and future American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian tribal leaders and practitioners, Tribal elders, Tribal College presidents, faculty, staff and students, national and international climate scientists and scholars, Indigenous leaders in climate related issues, government agencies, and other university scholars are invited to participate in the workshop.

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