

# Press Release

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**For immediate release**

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## **Coastal Tribes Convene to Tackle Climate Change**

*Symposium at Smithsonian will bring together indigenous and Western knowledge*

On Washington's rugged Pacific coast, the Quinault Indian Nation has depended on salmon for thousands of years. But the glaciers that feed the Quinault and Queets Rivers and sustain these salmon populations are in retreat because of climate change, threatening the very survival of the salmon.

In Alaska, native villages are pulling up stakes and moving to new ground as the permafrost beneath them melts and erodes due to warming global temperatures.

In the U.S. Pacific Islands rainfall and stream levels are decreasing while storm intensity, sea level, and atmospheric and oceanic temperatures are on the rise. Communities are threatened by the resulting decline in underwater aquifers and increases in land-based pollution, coral bleaching, fire risk, hillside and shoreline erosion, and altered fish abundance and distribution.

All around the United States, coastal indigenous people are confronted with loss of food, loss of land, loss of a way of life due to global climate change. But they are working to adapt, as they've adapted to changing conditions for millennia.

Coastal indigenous people, led by the Hoh, Makah, and Quileute Tribes and the Quinault Indian Nation tribes located in Washington state, will host the inaugural First Stewards symposium, to be held July 17-20 in Washington, D.C. This national event will examine the impact of climate change on indigenous coastal cultures and explore solutions based on millennia of traditional ecological knowledge.

For more information about the First Stewards symposium please visit [firststewards.org](http://firststewards.org).

Hundreds of native leaders, witnesses and climate scientists will join policy-makers and non-government organizations for groundbreaking dialogue in what is planned to be an annual meeting at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian.

Regional panels will share climate adaptation strategies from coastal and island ecosystems nationwide where Indian Country, Alaskan Natives and indigenous U.S. Pacific Islanders are at the forefront, creating an incubator for climate change solutions. Tribal regulatory environments allow for demonstrations of solutions to pressing needs, such as renewable energy and adaptation strategies for villages.

The symposium is a partnership between the tribal and Pacific Island indigenous communities with scientists and governmental and non-governmental organizations including the National Congress of American Indians, NOAA Office of National Marine Sanctuaries and National Marine Fisheries Service, Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian, The Nature Conservancy, and Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council. Other partners include American Native Renewables; EA Engineering, Science, and Technology; Salmon Defense, Uncas Consulting Services; and United South and Eastern Tribes.

For more information, visit [www.firststewards.org](http://www.firststewards.org)<<http://www.firststewards.org>>.