The NIDIS-CU Boulder
Tribal Drought Engagement Project
The Progress So Far
10 October 2019
The Team

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NIDIS and Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS)

- The National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) program is part of NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration).

- In 2006, NIDIS was authorized by Congress to create Drought Early Warning Systems (DEWS); a network of people working together to provide the information needed to respond to drought.

- The Missouri River Basin DEWS is already in action, but engagement with tribal communities still needs to be improved.
The Tribal Drought Engagement Project: Goals

- To increase NIDIS collaboration with Tribal Resource Managers, by building lasting relationships.
- To identify areas in which NIDIS can be of most use to Tribal Nations and prioritize support accordingly.
- To identify how existing information (e.g. drought.gov) can be improved.
- To develop a Tribal Engagement Strategy; to ensure the further strengthening of collaboration around drought-related issues.
The NIDIS Tribal Drought Engagement Project

Phase 1: Initial Engagement

- **Reservation visits:** Visits to 14 Reservations across MT, WY, ND, SD, NE, KS, MN and WI.
- **Workshops and Conferences:** Team attended 10+ tribal conferences and meetings.
- **Other engagement:** Virtual discussions with other key contacts.
Phase 2: Collection and analysis of key drought-data

- Data Source: Historical USDM data (severity and duration).
- Analysis of relative drought severity between tribes in the region.
- “Historical Drought Exposure Score.”
- Creation of Historical Drought Exposure Map.
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Results of the Analysis

- MRB reservations have a higher Drought Exposure Score than the Midwest.
- 6 Reservations in particular have experienced significant problems with drought over the past 10 years.
- Major economic and cultural impacts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Reservation Name</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Historical Drought Exposure Score</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cheyenne River Reservation</td>
<td>MRB</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Prairie Band of Potawatomi Reservation</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Wind River Reservation</td>
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<td>0.56</td>
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Key Engagement Findings

1. **Real engagement requires long-term relationship building;** Trust is something that must be earned over time, face-to-face contact and fulfilling promises is vital.

2. **Engagement must also be culturally relevant and respectful;** need for Cultural Intelligence Training within federal agencies.

3. “**Extractive**” nature of many tribal engagement projects; Benefits are often one-sided.

4. **Tribes Resource Managers want simpler, more culturally relevant data;** Drought.gov can be confusing and difficult to navigate. Many reservations don’t have their own weather station.

5. **Major variations in drought exposure, capacity and resilience exist between tribes;** with limited resources available, it is vital that federal agencies, such as NIDIS, provide additional support to tribes with the least resources.
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