

FOUNDATIONAL MODULE

# Indigenous Climate Action



CLIMATE JUSTICE  
INSTRUCTIONAL  
— TOOLKIT —



# What's in this module?

## Contents

This module discusses climate justice, climate change, Indigenous practices, and the fight for climate equity. The module focuses on a case study of the Metlakatla Indian Community of Alaska's climate action and adaptations.

## Activities

1 video  
1 reading  
4 activities  
2 project options

## Key Resources

- [Indigenous Peoples and Climate Justice](#) (Video)
- [Indigenous Leadership for Transformative Climate Action](#) (Article)





# Learning Objectives

01

**Examine** the relationship between colonialism and climate change

02

**Learn** about indigenous participation in international climate mitigation efforts

03

**Research** indigenous-led efforts to mitigate and prevent climate change

# Warm up

How is climate change an issue of colonialism for indigenous people?

Turn to a partner or small group and discuss any thoughts and feelings invoked by this question. Write them down to revisit it later.





## ACTIVITY #1

# INTRODUCTION TO INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

Watch this video lecture

Indigenous Peoples and Climate  
Justice

Revisit the warm-up question:  
How is climate change an issue  
of colonialism for indigenous  
people?

- What have you learned after watching the video?
- Has your response changed?

Learn more about Kyle Whyte



Retrieved from Feministing



# Indigenous Participation in Climate Change Conferences (CCCs)

## The history of Indigenous participation at world CCCs

- Indigenous leaders have been present at world climate change conferences since they began in 1979
- The International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC) was formed in 2008, but indigenous voices did not begin to be heard until the adoption of the Facilitative Working Group of Local Communities and Indigenous Peoples' Platform (LCIPP) workplan by COP21 in 2015
- The workplan recognized the importance of indigenous knowledge and practices in climate change policies and actions.





# Indigenous Participation in Climate Change Conferences

## The future of Indigenous participation at world CCCs

Although progress has been made, there is still a significant lack of including indigenous input towards developing solutions and recognition of indigenous people as most impacted by climate change at these conferences.

## Exploratory questions

- Why isn't Indigenous presence at climate conferences enough?
- How can these challenges be addressed beyond one conference?

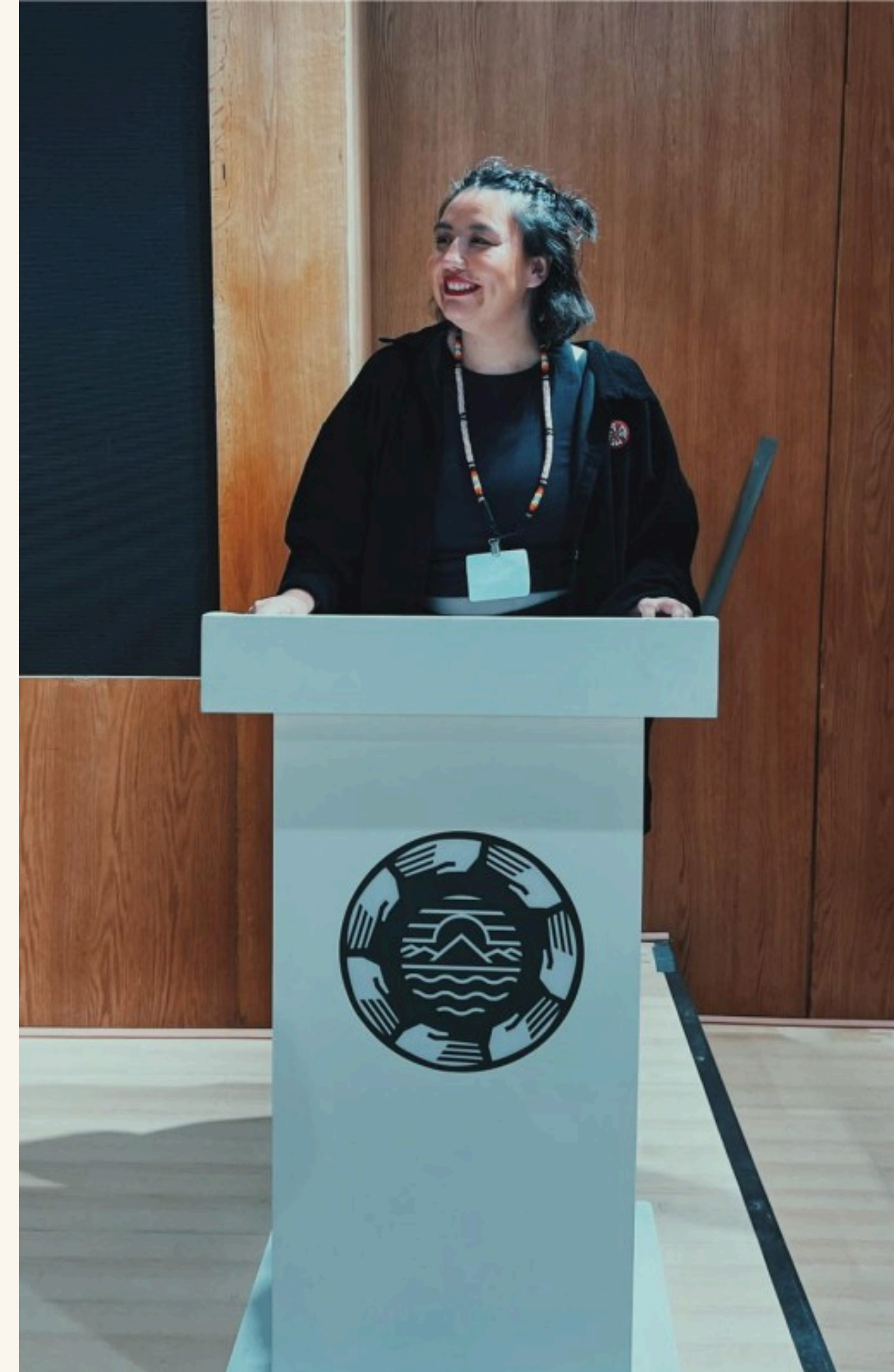




# Reflecting on COP27

## **Skw'akw'as Dunstan-Moore, a Nlakapamux and Yakama Youth Leader, at the Closing Plenary of COP27**

"We were clear with our expectations: the rights of Indigenous Peoples must be mainstreamed across all agenda items, and we must see those who have caused the climate crisis be accountable for fixing it.... Yet instead of delivering on the bold promises, COP27 has otherwise come to an end with the feeling of apathy and disappointment...by false solutions... that delay real reductions, replicate new forms of climate colonialism, and fall short of 1.5. Weak or absent language on human rights, the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the rights of Persons with Disabilities in many agenda items, means that this COP has compromised on the uncompromisable...."





## ACTIVITY #2

# CONNECTING SELF- DETERMINATION AND CLIMATE ACTION

Read an excerpt from *Required Reading*

Indigenous Leadership for  
Transformative Climate Action

### Consider this question

How does self-determination and climate action go hand-in-hand?

# REQUIRED READING

CLIMATE JUSTICE, ADAPTATION AND  
INVESTING IN INDIGENOUS POWER



# Required Reading: CJ Adaptation and Investing in Indigenous Power

**Kaniela Ing, Hawaiian Climate Justice Activist**

"Climate justice requires us to radically restore our relationship with the natural world around us and transform our political and economic systems to support this deep cultural change. No one is better equipped to lead this vision than the Indigenous people who have maintained reciprocal relationships with their homelands for millennia."





# Indigenous Climate Action

## Indigenous climate adaptation plans and strategies

Since 2008 over 50 indigenous tribes and inter-tribal organizations in North America have created climate adaptation plans & strategies to mitigate and monitor the impacts of climate change.

[See this list of all Indigenous plans and strategies.](#)





## ACTIVITY #3

# CASE STUDY: METLAKATLA INDIAN COMMUNITY CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION PLAN

## Review case study

Background

Coastal erosion

Invasive species

Salmon

Shifting precipitation patterns

Subsistence practices

Human health

## Reference

Metlakatla Climate Change  
Adaptation Plan

# Metlakatla Indian Community

## Climate Change Adaptation Plan

Prepared for the Metlakatla Indian Community  
2017 – 2027

Metlakatla Indian Community  
P.O. Box 8  
Metlakatla, Alaska 99926  
907-886-4441



## CASE STUDY

# Background

The Metlakatla Indian Community is located on the Annette Islands Reserve (AIR) in Alaska.

The adaptation plan addresses the following:

- Coastal erosion
- Invasive species
- Salmon
- Shifting precipitation patterns
- Overall subsistence practices including yellow cedar, berries, and shellfish
- Human health



Retrieved from Alaska Native Lands



## CASE STUDY

# Coastal Erosion

The tribe has acknowledged the visible signs of coastal erosion.

**Some adaptation strategies include:**

- Collaboration with the Annette Island School District—methods for monitoring coastal erosion is likely to be incorporated within the science curriculum.
- Nourishment of the coast through new stabilization using natural materials, vegetation planting, bio-engineering techniques, forming hard barriers such as seawalls or breakwaters.



Figure 3-2: Shoreline erosion exposing tree roots and stumps found on the AIR. (Photographer: Julia Scott & Genelle Winter).



## CASE STUDY

# Invasive Species

The tribe has identified many invasive species within the AIR and has outlined solutions in their pre-existing Invasive Species Management Plan.

### These solutions include:

- Usage of a vehicle/vessel decontamination system to prevent the spreading of potential contamination.
- Treatment or removal of invasive species immediately when detected for the reduction and likelihood of establishment.
- A consistent community education program to ensure new infestations are noted and managed.



"three invasive plant species on the bank of the kelvin" by tom clearwood is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0.

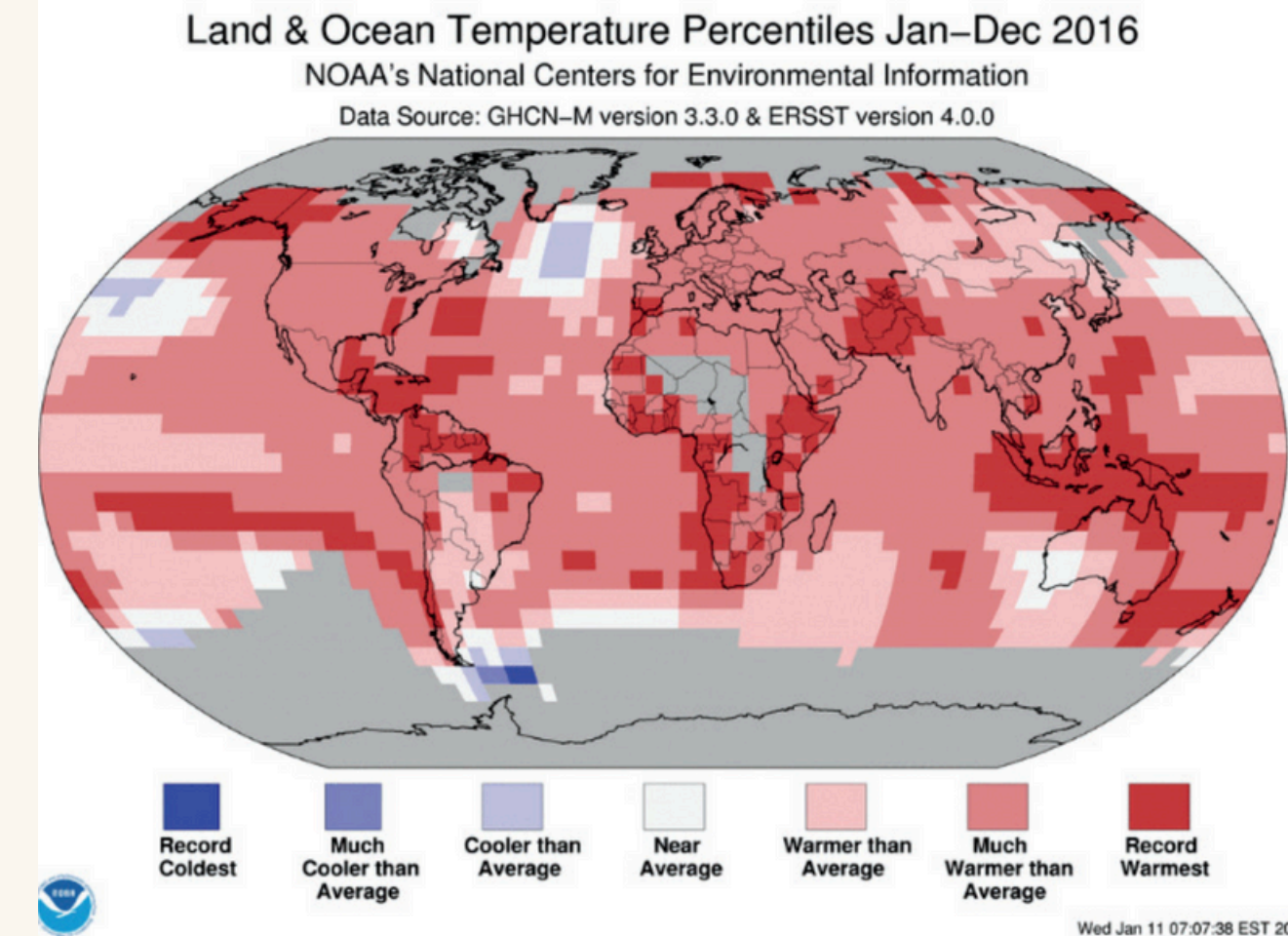


## CASE STUDY

# Salmon

**To address declines in salmon populations in the AIR, the tribe has proposed the following measures:**

- The Tribe's Fisheries Department will continue to set limitations on the amount of species harvested and timing of the harvesting.
- Improvement and expansion of fisheries management through stream monitoring water quality and aquatic populations.
- Attempt to minimize stressors to fish species by voluntarily setting limitations on local disturbances by restoring water systems, removing unnecessary and potentially harmful barriers is necessary.
- Track trends and forming assessments on local impacts to annual recreation, tourism, commercial, and subsistence fishing.



Land and Ocean Temperature Percentiles: Jan – Dec 2016. State of the Climate: Global Climate Report, Feb 2016.



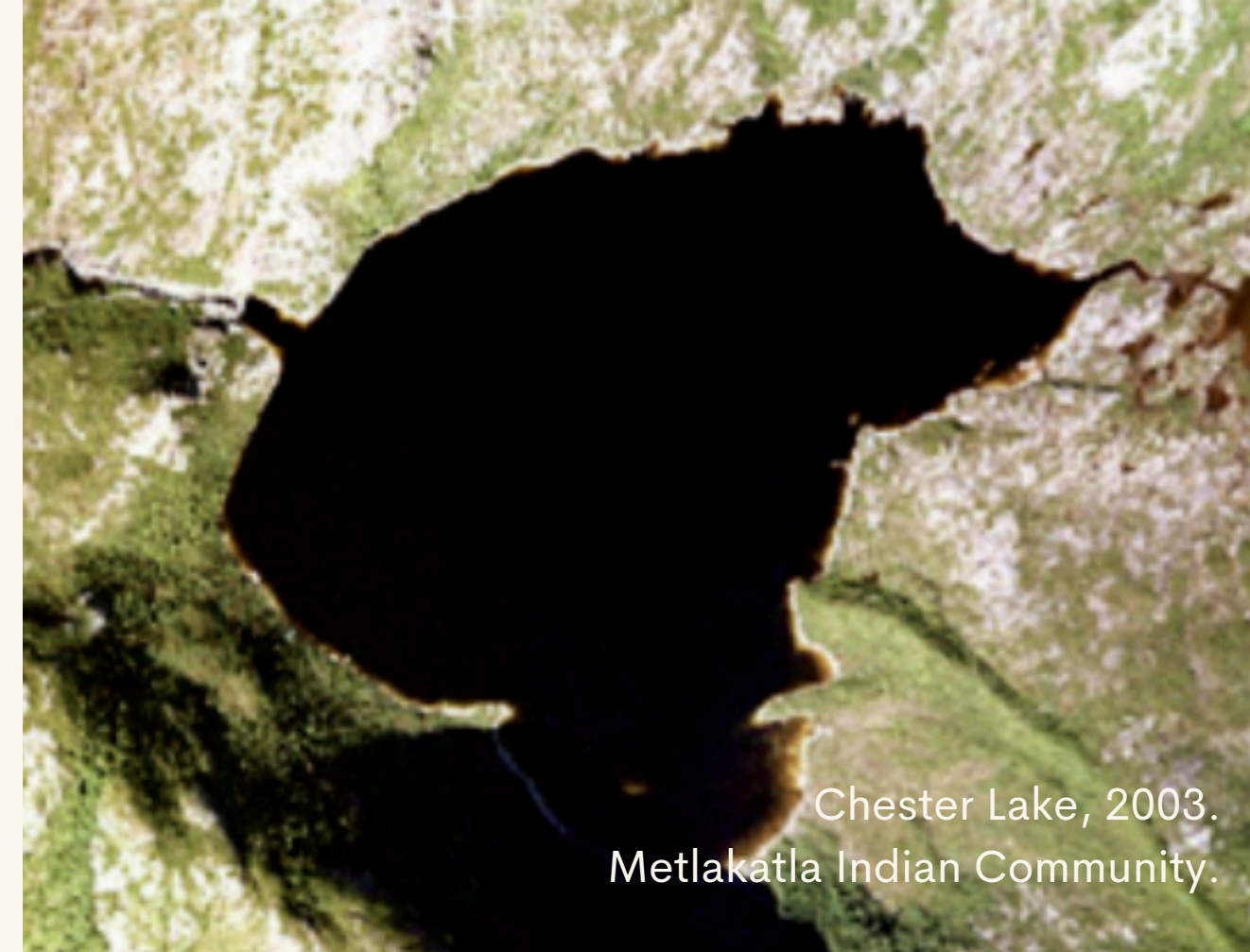
## CASE STUDY

# Shifting Precipitation Patterns

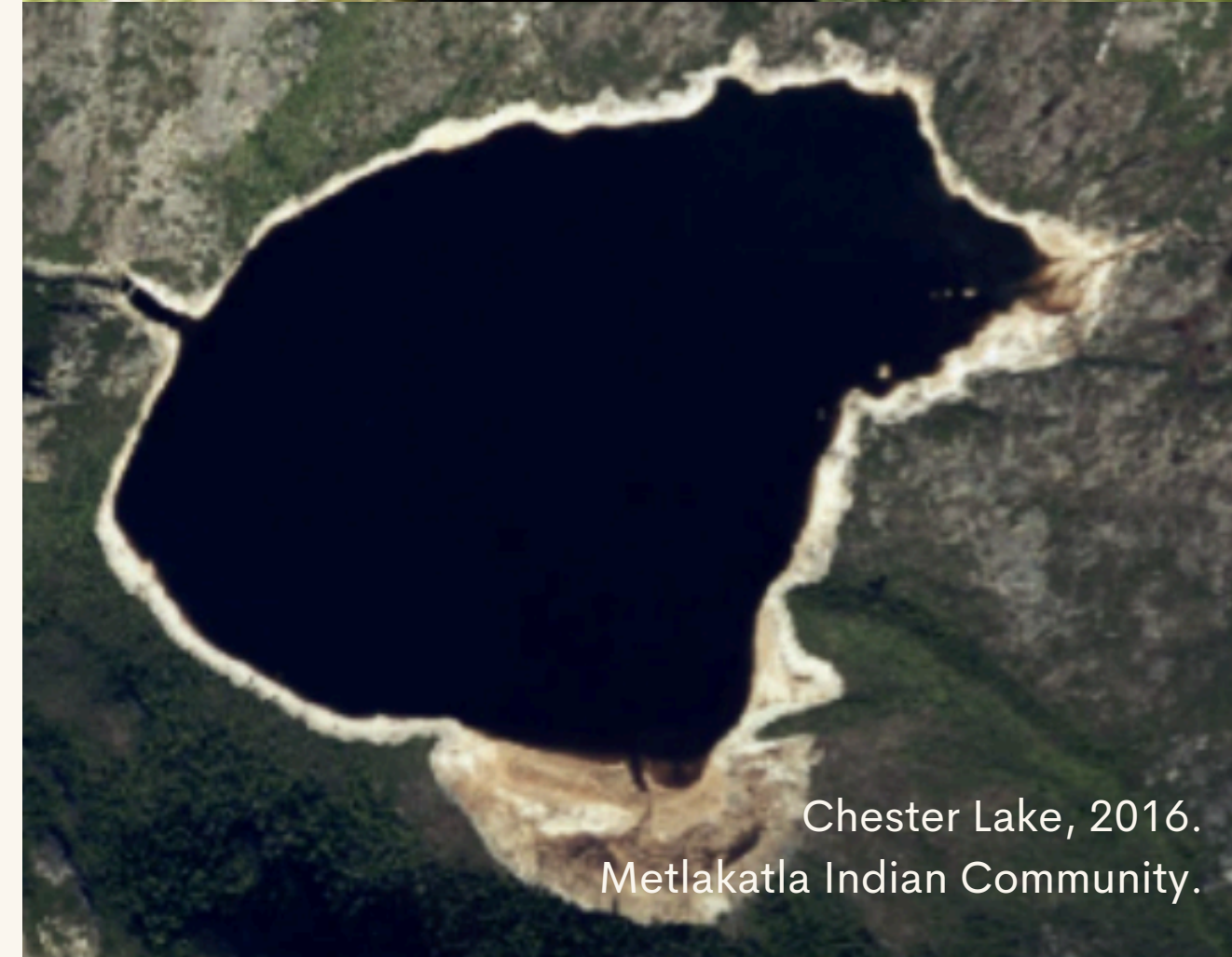
**The tribe is reliant on hydropower from two lakes as sources of municipal water and hydropower, but as precipitation patterns vary water levels drop.**

### **Proposed measures to adapt to changing precipitation patterns:**

- When water levels in the municipal supply drop below threshold levels, community conservation practices will be enforced.
- Promote and make accessible water saving nozzles, showerheads and other tools to reduce water consumption.
- Larger efforts like increasing the capacity of available water reservoir, increasing the size of the existing dam, or increasing the number of storage tanks used to treat and circulate municipal water supply.



Chester Lake, 2003.  
Metlakatla Indian Community.



Chester Lake, 2016.  
Metlakatla Indian Community.



## CASE STUDY

# Subsistence Practices

Traditional harvest times of essential materials or food items have been undergoing changes as the climate changes.

**Some strategies that will be used to adapt to these changes:**

- Enforcing the cataloguing of Alaskan Yellow Cedar harvest.
- Increase forestry staff on the AIR.
- Update and maintain existing GIS data to be as accurate as possible.
- The Tribe's Landscaping or Forestry Department can collect seeds of each berry species and gift them to reliable community members.
- Test shellfish samples on both individual and community level to prevent PSP and PST poisoning.





## CASE STUDY

# Human Health

**Climate change is estimated to impact the health of tribe members through an increase in diseases, allergies, and changes in food production & distribution.**

### **Proposed adaption measures:**

- Develop more recreation trails to create a community-wide effort to change lifestyles and gain healthy habits.
- Create a better sidewalk system to protect pedestrians in a safe walking zone, which will encourage residents to walk more.
- Collaborate with the Emergency Preparedness Task Force for implementing emergency plans and warning systems community wide.





## ACTIVITY #4

# RESEARCHING INDIGENOUS-LED CAMPAIGNS

### Select a campaign

Visit the [Indigenous Environmental Network's website](#), click on "programs" and then "campaigns" to see the list of campaigns.

### Investigate

Individually, or in small groups, investigate the campaign of your choosing.

### Share your findings with the class

- Sentence 1: Goal of the campaign
- Sentence 2: Summary of the efforts to achieve this goal
- Sentence 3: What you found most interesting. Did you learn anything new?



**INDIGENOUS  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
NETWORK**



# Beyond the Module

PART X

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## PROJECT OPTION #1

# Present a Profile of an Indigenous Climate Action Leader

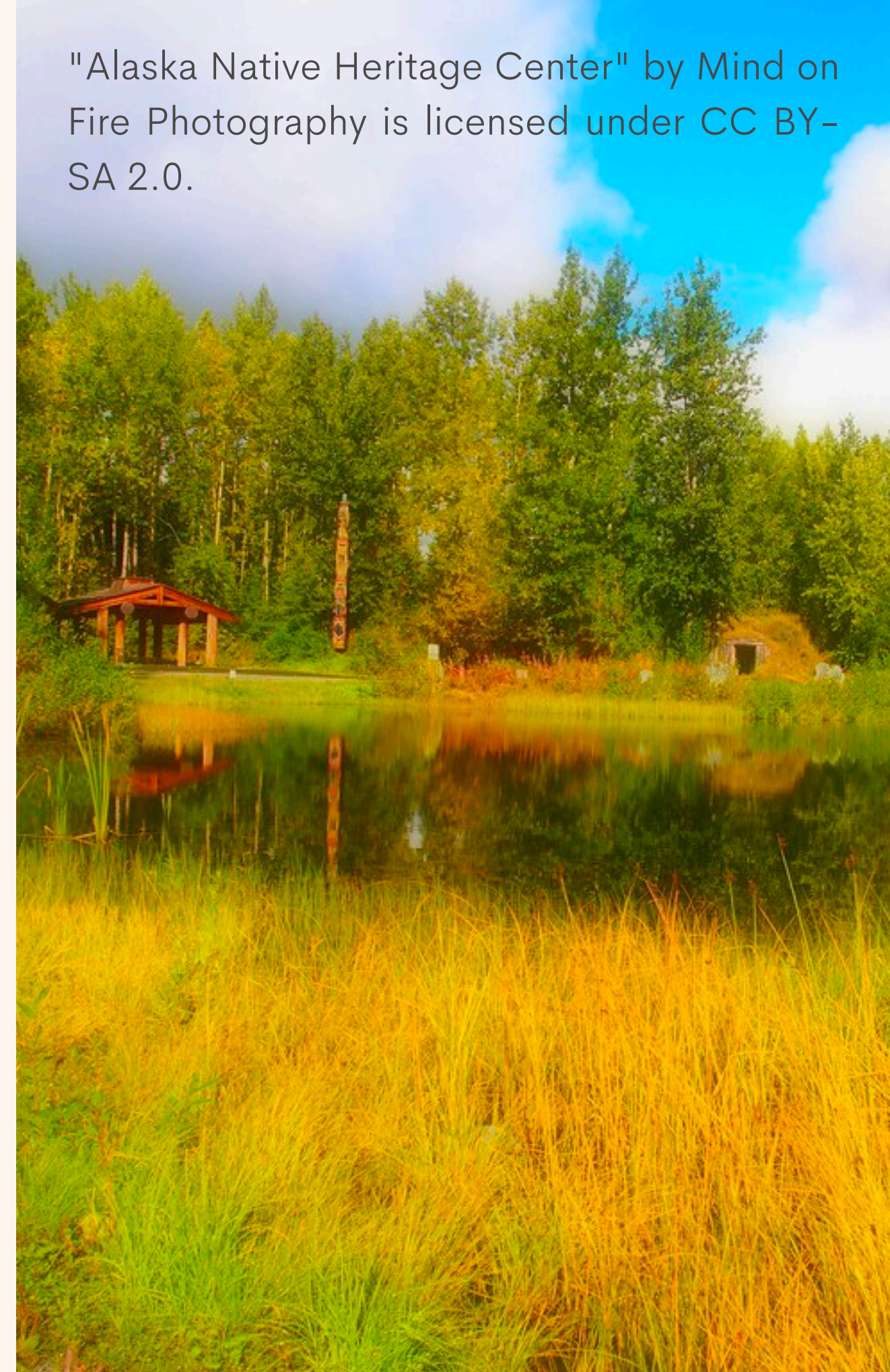
### Prompt suggestion

Discuss the background and work of your climate action leader and consider how their work connects to your classes and future.

### Presentation options

Students could present to the entire class, or in small groups.

"Alaska Native Heritage Center" by Mind on Fire Photography is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0.





PROJECT OPTION #2

# Essay on Metlakatla Indian Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan

## Prompt suggestion

How can you support indigenous led climate change solutions? How can your work can connect to the Metlakatla Indian Community Climate Change Adaptation Plan?



Fishers in the Metlakatla Indian Community



# Additional Resources

## Academic Resources

- [We Are Water Protectors](#) (book)
- [Does renewable electricity promote Indigenous sovereignty? Reviewing support, barriers, and recommendations for solar and wind energy development on Native lands in the United States](#) (article).

## Other Resources

- [Autumn Peltier](#): Known as 'the water protector', Anishinaabe Indigenous Rights advocate raised in the Wiikwemkoong First Nation.
- [The RED Nation](#)
- [The North American Indian Center of Boston](#)



For more resources on climate and environmental justice: **Please explore other modules in the Climate Justice Instructional Toolkit.**





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