

Project Title: Cross cultural capacity building: Landscape conservation and climate change adaptation with the Blackfeet Nation

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Partners: Chief Earl Old Person, Blackfeet Tribal Business Council (406) 338-5421. Chief Old Person is a political leader and staunch supporter of his people and their territories. He was chosen based on his Chieftainship and his 44 years as Chairman of the Blackfeet Tribal Council. No-one understands the desires of the Blackfeet as they pertain to landscape conservation and climate change, more than Chief Old Person.

Mark Magee, Blackfeet Lands Department, Director (406) 338-2667. Mr. Magee was chosen based on his knowledge of large landscape conservation and management. Mark will be invaluable in helping to identify relevant stakeholders for interviewing and understanding current needs on Blackfeet lands. Mark also controls and uses the geographic data for mapping of Blackfeet lands.

William Little Plume, Blackfeet Fish & Wildlife Department, Director (406) 338-7207. Mr. Little Plume was chosen because of his knowledge of fish and wildlife biology, as it pertains to climate change and adaptation. He will be an excellent source of understanding as well as an authoritative source of relevant stakeholders.

Gerald Wagner, Blackfeet Environmental Department, Director (406) 338-7421. Mr. Wagner was chosen based on his knowledge of environmental stewardship and his department's mission to "protect, preserve and enhance the environment within the Blackfeet Nation through development and implementation of environmental policies and regulations". He is an expert on local conservation issues.

Ervin Carlson, InterTribal Buffalo Council (ITBC), President (406) 338-2667. Mr. Carlson was chosen based on his experience as a facilitator between the ITBC and the National Park Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Forest Service. He will be an invaluable asset because of his experience working with federal agencies, as well as climate change issues as they relate to rangeland, water, and bison.

Project Summary: The purpose of the proposed project is to increase the "cross cultural capacity" (Craig et al. 2012:241) of indigenous and non-indigenous groups to collaborate on climate adaptation in the Crown of the Continent (CoC) a sub-region of the GNLCC area. In order to achieve this purpose, the objectives of this project are to conduct a pilot study 1) to identify the necessary protocols for collaboration between the Blackfeet Nation and government and non-government agencies active, and 2) to identify the priorities of the Blackfeet Nation in climate change adaptation. The outcomes of this project will include both written and presented material on the priorities of, and protocols for working with the Blackfeet Nation, including a widely distributed public brochure, local community presentations, and national academic paper and presentations.

Category for Proposal: This project falls under the tribal category. The co-PI on the project, as well as the community served, are the people of the Blackfeet Nation and non-indigenous actors working with the Blackfeet Nation on landscape conservation. This project has received no previous GNLCC funds.

Need: *What is the need within the Great Northern landscape?*

The CoC, a sub-region of the GNLCC area, is composed of over 18 million acres spanning two nations. Almost all of the 1.5 million acres of the Blackfeet Nation, all of the 1.3 million acres of the Flathead Reservation, as well as about 228,000 acres of Northern Pikuni, Kainai, Siksika and Ktunaxa lands in Canada, are considered part of the GNLCC. A rough estimate demonstrates that around 17% of the lands within the CoC boundaries are either Native American or First Nation Reservation lands. **Because large landscape level conservation; the sharing of data, science and capacity; and working across boundaries and jurisdictions are a priority of the GNLCC, it is vital to have strong collaboration with Native American and First Nation peoples.**

What landscape level issue is this work related to and how?

The report “Remarkable Beyond Borders, People and Landscapes in the CoC” (2010) stresses the importance of collaboration and includes key elements for successful collaboration including the importance of: understanding catalysts for change, the representation for all affected interests, both scientific and public learning, and adaptation. Furthermore, the report states the need to “bridge these jurisdictional and cultural barriers to address the challenges they collectively face” (2010:19). This work addresses conservation, a large landscape level issues and a priority of the GNLCC. The work also addresses climate change also, a stated key area of concern for the GNLCC.

Why is it important?

Building cross cultural capacity is important in all large landscape conservation efforts but is especially important when working with Native Americans/First Nations people, given the atrocities committed on these populations by the US and Canadian governments. One of the most import aspects in collaborative efforts is trust and communication, and it is hard to imagine a relationship that could be more damaged than the one between these governments and Native Americans/First Nations. The reservation lands that the Native American/First Nations people have been left with is land which these people have sovereignty over. Large landscape conservation, if it is to be effective, will need to include Native American/First Nations priorities both on and off reservation. If there is not complete understanding of protocol and communication style, there can never be full understanding of what Native American/First Nations priorities truly are and without full understanding; collaboration and therefore large landscape conservation efforts cannot be successful.

What science products, problem addressed, or information needs will your project provide?

This project aims to address the needs of both the GNLCC and the Native American/First Nations by providing information on the priorities and protocols for working across cultures on large landscape conservation and climate change with the CoC of the GNLCC area. The project will provide a list of priorities for the Blackfeet Nation for climate change adaptation. The project will also address the need to better enable collaboration between Native America/First Nations and non-indigenous peoples. The products that will result from this research will be a public brochure for educating both indigenous and non-indigenous actors working on large landscape conservation and climate change adaptation, academic articles disseminating the same materials to the scientific and academic community, conference presentations at national conferences and local community presentations.

What is the science product or direct management application?

The science product and direct management application is written and presented material to better enable collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous actors on large landscape conservation

within the GNLCC. The published brochure will help stakeholders within the GNLCC to envision a picture of collaboration between indigenous (Blackfeet) and non-indigenous actors based on enhanced learning and respect for different cultural protocols. This project can serve as a catalyst for ways administrative and management can engage with Native American/First Nation peoples.

Geographic scope of the project

The geographic scope of this work directly includes the 1.5 million acres of the Blackfeet Reservation and indirectly will impact additional acreage around the Reservation. It is anticipated that some of the priorities and protocols identified by this study will be applicable to other Native American/First Nations, however it is also expected that given the different cultures of the various Native American/First Nations that some priorities and protocols will not travel. It is the intent of the researchers to engage other important Native American/First Nations in similar discussions after the completion of this project. It is anticipated that this project will be a pilot project for other similar studies in the Crown, wherein the Salish, Kootenai, Pend d'Orielle, Ktunaxa, Kainai, Siksika and Northern Pikuni Nations will also be invited to participate, in order to completely build a framework for productive communication between all tribes and GNLCC stakeholders.

The need as identified by other conservation, management or other plans

The priority of the GNLCC for large landscape conservation via collaboration has been addressed by the Crown of the Continent, a group which has shown concerted effort to work with First Nations and Native Americans, starting with the CoC Joint Meeting of Tribes and First Nations in April 6-7, 2009 in Pincher Creek, Alberta. The short memorandum summarizing this meeting states the objectives of the meeting to “(1) explore the interests and concerns of tribes and First Nations”; and (2) explore how, if at all, the tribes and First Nations would like to participate” in landscape conservation (2009:1). This document recognized the need to understand the different priorities of the Native American/First Nations populations, and to continue to learn with and build trust with the Native American/First Nations people. The document also highlighted the interest of the Native American/First Nations in being a part of these collaborative efforts, though cautiously.

At the 2013 CoC Roundtable the indigenous perspectives breakout session concluded that there was a need for education for non-tribal peoples, as tribal groups are not homogeneous. Each tribe has unique and diverse cultural perspectives, separate languages; they operate under different treaties, have different worldviews and are people of protocol (CoC indigenous perspectives summary slide, 2013). Furthermore, the breakout session highlighted the difficulties of indigenous and non-indigenous people and groups working on issues of large landscape conservation and suggested that conversations need to be more collaborative from the beginning (CoC, 2013). The proposed research aims to address the needs of both indigenous peoples within the CoC, the CoC Roundtable, and the GNLCC by aiding large landscape conservation by promoting collaborative avenues through the development of protocols and developing a set of climate change priorities for the Blackfeet.

It is apparent from the meetings, roundtables, reports, and memorandums that on the ground efforts are needed to better connect the priorities and involvement of the Native American/First Nations in the Crown to the larger goals and actions of the GNLCC. This is further supported in the academic literature; in a recent study by Craig et al. it was found that the “Blackfeet argued for greater integration of their needs and perspectives into park management and policy” (2012:232); a need that is relevant for more than just the ‘park’. It is also clear however, that there has only been limited progress in 1)

understanding the priorities of the Native American/First Nations, 2) understanding how to work with the Native American/First Nations, and 3) building trust for better collaborative efforts with the Native American/First Nations in the crown. Given the interests of the Native American/First Nations and the GNLCC to work towards conservation goals, combined with the history of the Native American/First Nations, it is imperative to work on increasing the learning and capacity for working together on issues of large landscape conservation in general and climate change in particular. As Downing et al. (2002:29) notes, “the central theme of the indigenous struggle is for a cultural group to have the right to determine their priorities: a) on their own land, b) on their own terms, and c) within their own time frame.”

Objective: The proposed project will support the objectives of the GNLCC by helping support the decision tools available to indigenous and non-indigenous actors to work together for large landscape conservation, and with a specific focus on climate change. The project will also help understand the current state of resource conditions and evaluation of these conditions, through the identifications of priorities for adaptation to climate change. Though correlation is not causation; the identification for priorities for climate change will offer insight into perceptions of resource conditions and management.

Deliverables: The outcomes of this project will include both written and presented material on the priorities of, and protocols for working with the Amskapi Pikuni for large landscape conservation and adaptation to climate change.

- 1) Public brochure. A brochure designed for a public/agency audience will be produced for distribution at educational presentations/workshops as well as be available online. This brochure will serve as a standalone resource for those interested in collaborating with the Amskapi Pikuni. The brochure will be available on the Nature-Link Institute website and other websites to be determined. This public brochure will act as a final report, discussing the important findings of the study as well as the lessons learned.
- 2) Educational presentations/workshops. At least 4 educational presentations/workshops will be given. These educational workshops will target current CoC partners to build upon the current activities and interests of those actors already working within the CoC. The presentations/workshops will be designed for local stakeholders potentially including the Forest Service, National Park Service, MT Fish Wildlife and Parks, MT Department of Natural Resources, active NGO’s as well the Amskapi Pikuni community and other Native American/First Nations groups. Presentation/workshops will be given in geographically diverse locations within the CoC to ensure geographic coverage of the landscape. Target audiences will be identified with the help of the collaborators based on perceptions of need.

Methods: Semi-structured key informant interviews will be conducted with approximately 30 Amskapi Pikuni of the Blackfoot Nation. Interviews will be conducted with key informants to best ascertain the diversity of opinions. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted to better understand the priorities of the Blackfoot Confederacy for climate change and the appropriate protocols for working between the Blackfoot Nation and government and non-government agencies active in the CoC. Because this research is exploratory and open-ended, we chose to use a qualitative method of conducting semi-structured interviews. This method allows for emerging themes across actors and unlike surveys, does not limit the range of responses. The interview script has been created and can be provided upon request.

The community that will be targeted for data collection will be the people of the Blackfoot Nation. Future studies aspire to include the remaining tribes of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Siksika, Kainai,

Northern Pikuni), as well as the Confederated Salish and Kootenai, Pend d' Orielle, and Ktunaxa Nations. Data collection outreach will include key informants of the Blackfeet Nation. Further outreach upon conclusion of study, will include public and agency outreach with all interested CoC stakeholders.

Expertise of the Project PI's: Kim Paul is a member of the Amskapi Pikuni tribe, which is the southernmost band of the Blackfoot Confederacy, and has lived within the CoC her entire life. She is "born into" the Green Wood Burner Society, a lineal society, and was "captured" into the Brave Dog Warrior Society over a decade ago for her continued work in protecting traditional lands, plant and animal species and water, and for being a warrior engaged in the battle to decrease health disparities within America's indigenous populations. Kim received a BS in Chemistry and a MS in Interdisciplinary Studies, with an emphasis in Environmental Chemistry, from the University of Montana and is currently working on her Doctoral degree at the University of Montana.

Laura Caplins has experience working with rural communities, indigenous populations, large landscape conservation efforts, and community-agency collaboration both nationally and internationally. Laura has been involved in indigenous community development in the Himalaya of India since 2005 and in Montana with collaborative projects between community members and land agencies to promote community and economic development since 2009. She received a BS in Geography from Appalachian State University in 2006, a MA from Georgia Southern University in 2007 and is working on her Doctoral degree from the College of Forestry and Conservation at the University of Montana.

Statement of Compliance: The Project coordinator and Principal Investigator have read Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative Information Management, Delivery, and Sharing Standards and agree to comply with those standards if the proposal is selected.

Schedule:

Phase 1: Identify key informants/develop and pretest interview guide	Jan 2014
Phase 2: Interview key informants (30 interviews)	Feb – April 2014
Phase 3: Transcription, coding and results	May - June 2014
Phase 4: Pass-back to key informants for confirmation	July 2014
Phase 5: Revisions based on key informant comments	Aug 2014
Phase 6: Public and academic outreach	
Presentation at CoC roundtable & website/newsletter	Sept 2014
Presentation for local FS, NPS and tribal groups	Oct– Dec 2015
Preparation and submission of academic articles	Jan – June 2015
Presentation at Society for Applied Anthropology Conference	April 2015

References:

- Craig, D., Borrie, W., & Yung, L. (2012). "Blackfeet Belong to the Mountains: Hope, Loss, and Blackfeet Claims to Glacier National Park, Montana". *Conservation and Society*, 10(3), 232.
- Crown of the Continent Roundtable, Indigenous Perspectives. (2013). *Summary Slide*.
- Downing, T. E., Moles, J., McIntosh, I., & Garcia-downing, C. (2002). *Indigenous Peoples and Mining Encounters: Strategies and Tactics*, (57).
- Joint Meeting of Tribes and First Nations, Pincher Creek, Alberta. (2009). *Memorandum*.
- Remarkable Beyond Borders, People and Landscapes in the Crown of the Continent. (2010). *Report*.