



Phone (360) 466-7280
Fax (360) 466-1615

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

A Federally Recognized Indian Tribe Organized Pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 476

11430 Moorage Way
La Conner, WA 98257

PRESS RELEASE

Swinomish Tribe Releases Report on Local Climate Change Impacts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LaConner, WA, 12/01/09 – The Swinomish Indian Tribal Community has released a major new report on projected climate change impacts for the Swinomish Indian Reservation and local communities surrounding southeast Fidalgo Island. The 140-page Impact Assessment Technical Report provides a detailed assessment of the potential impacts of climate change on the Reservation community through the end of the century, based on a comprehensive review and analysis of current climate models and scientific data. Developed over the past year, this report represents the first phase of a 2-year project to assess climate change impacts and make recommendations for adaptation strategies. The Tribe enlisted the consultation of the University of Washington Climate Impacts Group in examining climate models and data, and the Tribe also invited participation by the Town of LaConner, Skagit County, the Shelter Bay Community, and the Skagit River System Cooperative, a fisheries cooperative comprised of the Swinomish and Sauk-Suiattle Tribes.

The \$400,000 project is supported largely by a grant from the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Native Americans, with the Tribe providing 20% of funding. Among other potential impacts, the report identifies over 1,100 acres that are potentially at risk from sea level rise and storm surge, as well as 180 structures worth over \$100 million. Important Tribal shellfish beds, beach seining sites, fishing dock facilities, and coastal cultural sites are also threatened by eventual sea level rise inundation. In addition, the report finds that over 1,500 properties valued at more than \$518 million are in a high risk area for wildfire, based on projections for increased average temperature and decreased precipitation over the long term.

The project began in late 2008, following a proclamation issued in 2007 by the Tribal Senate stating the Tribe's intent to study and respond to the potential challenges arising from climate change. During the final year of the project, staff teams will work with Tribal officials and community members to develop recommendations for addressing the impacts identified in the technical report. Swinomish Tribal Chairman Brian Cladoosby said about the project that "The Swinomish Tribe is addressing climate change as one of our greatest challenges, and we are committed to having an action plan to protect our community."

The report and more information on the project are available on the Swinomish Climate Change web site at:

http://www.swinomish.org/departments/planning/climate_change/project/reports.html.

For more information contact:

Ed Knight, Senior Planner
Swinomish Indian Tribal Community
Office of Planning & Community Development
11430 Moorage Way
LaConner, WA 98257
360-466-7304
eknight@swinomish.nsn.us

###