



# Building Collaboration Between State and Tribal Land-grant Institutions in the North Central Region

## Background

There are 20 Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs) in the North Central Region. While there are great examples of collaboration between state land-grants and TCUs on water-related issues, there is room for growth. Strengthening collaboration and learning from local successes can achieve greater benefits for land-grant faculty, staff, and students, communities and tribal nations in the North Central Region; and the water resources upon which we depend.

A recent First Americans Land-Grant Consortium (FALCON) member survey showed there is a strong interest among TCUs nationwide to work on water quality-related projects. While there are examples of collaborative water quality programs supported by other agencies, this program aims to expand Extension collaborative programming and partnership among state land-grants and TCUs.

## Addressing the Challenge

To fill the gap in collaborative programs between state land-grant universities and TCUs, the tribal collaboration team works to understand past collaboration successes and challenges, research ideas for collaboration, determine future funding opportunities, and build a stronger connection between these entities. Building on prior efforts to enhance collaboration and connection, the team works to determine solutions benefiting all parties through ample communication and open conversations combining perspectives.

## Progress Made

In May 2017 the tribal collaboration team convened a Tribal Water Summit at Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, Kansas. The summit brought together seven TCUs, six state land-grants, and state and federal agency personnel to identify priority issues surrounding water, share past collaboration successes and challenges, and determine future funding and collaboration opportunities.

A post-event survey demonstrated that 91% of respondents felt 'somewhat' or 'very' well positioned to apply for additional funding for research and outreach around water-related issues following the summit. Similarly, 78% of respondents increased their understanding of past successful collaboration between TCUs and state land-grants, and 92% developed connections with out of state experts who they could consult on water-related issues.

Additionally, a wrap up survey sent to project team members, and summit attendees demonstrated that a number of funding proposals were submitted as a result of the event.

## Moving Forward

A follow-up meeting to the Tribal Water Summit is planned for August 15-17, 2018 at the College of Menominee Nation in Keshena, Wisconsin. The summit will further the conservations initiated at the 2017 Summit and continue to determine future funding

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opportunities.

In addition, earlier this year the team released a survey to understand specific water-related interests, garner interest for topic-specific collaboration work groups, and examine the types of collaborations that have been successful in the past.

The online survey was distributed to faculty, administrators, and Extension personnel from state and tribal land-grants, and individuals who work for state, federal or tribal agencies who are interested in collaboration. Over 130 survey responses were received.

Results showed an overwhelming interest in participating in collaborative workgroups focusing on a range of priority issues from watershed assessments and agricultural best management practices to local foods and water and emergency preparedness for tribal communities. On average over 35 individuals have signed up for each of the six proposed workgroups via the survey.

The workgroups will come together and form actionable plans and goals at the August Summit.

### RESOURCES

If you are interested in joining the collaborative project team, attending the summit, or learning more about the program, visit <http://northcentralwater.org/tribal/>.

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The North Central Region Water Network comprises 12 Land-grant colleges and universities:

