2015-2016 Executive Seminar Program

This Year’s Program Theme: Legacies: How government agencies, tribes, local communities and stakeholders are working collaboratively to implement treaties and laws from past eras.

Treaty Rights at Risk in Western Washington

Date: November 16 – 20, 2015
Location: Anacortes, Washington

In 2011, twenty tribes in Western Washington prepared a white paper titled Treaty Rights at Risk contending that the federal and state governments were violating their treaty rights and the Bolt Decision (that allocated to them half of the salmon harvest), by allowing salmon habitat to be damaged and destroyed faster that it can be restored. The tribes further stated that the federal government was failing to meet their trust responsibilities by not assuring that state non-point source coastal protection plans are consistent with the Clean Water Act, ESA and federally secured treaty rights. Recent court decisions requiring salmon passage through culverts in the state have bolstered the tribes’ claims. The tribes asked the federal government to align its agencies and programs and lead a more coordinated salmon recovery effort. In response, the White House Council on Environmental Quality designated the regional administrators of the Environmental Protection Agency, NOAA Fisheries and the National Resource Conservation Service as co-leads of a renewed effort to work with the tribes on these issues through the Puget Sound Federal Caucus. This case will highlight the history Indian treaty rights in Western Washington, the struggles of securing these rights, the Bolt Decisions, and the challenges of meeting treaty obligations and law on non-federal lands.

Implementing the Sealaska Lands Bill in Southeastern Alaska

Date: May 9 - 13, 2016
Location: Juneau & Ketchikan, Alaska

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 compelled the federal government to transfer land titles to Alaska’s 13 Native regional corporations, including Sealaska in Southeast Alaska, and more than 150 village corporations across the state. In 2008, legislation was introduced to complete selection and transfer of Sealaska’s ANCSA entitlement. The bill was met with opposition from members of Congress, communities proximate to the lands, and conservation groups committed to preserving old growth timber in the public domain. After extensive negotiation and revision, the Southeast Alaska Land Entitlement and Jobs Protection Act became law in December 2014. Known as the Sealaska lands bill, the Act transferred more than 68,000 acres to the Sealaska Corporation for economic and renewable energy development and tourism projects, as well as returned many sacred sites to Native ownership.
Sealaska is working with local communities and stakeholders to examine new land stewardship opportunities including carbon sequestration, wetland mitigation and local commercial harvest of Native foods. The lands bill also included a provision setting aside approximately 150,000 acres of the Tongass National Forest as conservation lands. This case study will focus on the unique social, cultural, and economic challenges and opportunities associated with Native claims settlement in Southeast Alaska and how Sealaska, government agencies, tribes, local communities and stakeholders are working collaboratively to implement the Sealaska lands bill.

Adaptive Management of USFWS Refuges in SE Oregon and Northern Nevada

Date: June 20 - 24, 2016
Location: Burns & Frenchglen, Oregon

Malheur National Wildlife Refuge was established on August 18, 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt “as a preserve and breeding ground for native birds.” Their neighbor, Sheldon-Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge Complex was established in 1931 primarily to provide habitat for pronghorn antelope. Managing for these primary purposes has become increasingly complex due to emerging wildlife management issues within and outside refuge boundaries. Working in collaboration with the High Desert Partnership, a grassroots organization comprised of federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, private land owners, NGOs and other stakeholders, the Malheur Refuge developed and is implementing a carp control strategy to improve the health of wetlands within the refuge, and to maintain traditional flood irrigation practices on federal and private lands important seasonal wetland habitats across the Harney Basin. After extensive study and public involvement, the Sheldon-Hart Mountain Refuge Complex's recently removed feral horses and burros with particular care because of the wild horse’s iconic status. In addition, both refuges are working with the federal, state and local governments, tribes and other entities to implement a Great Basin-wide strategy that protects and restores sagebrush lands threatened by rangeland fire in order to conserve habitat for the greater threatened sage-grouse, and maintain ranching and recreation economies. The case study will illustrate how the USFWS is increasingly working collaboratively with diverse stakeholders at the landscape level to address emerging wildlife management issues within and outside their refuge boundaries.

Final Capstone Session

Dates: July 28 - 29, 2016
Location: Portland State University Campus

In stonework, a capstone is the central block that holds an arch together and supports the other stones in the arch. The arch of the ESP program year is held together by the final two-day wrap-up session, which integrates the leadership lessons learned over the course of the year with the practical challenges participants face in their agencies. Participants come prepared to discuss issues from their own work experience and apply principles learned during the year to these issues. They present their conclusions to a panel of ESP Advisory Board members and Portland State University faculty, who provide feedback. Beyond providing a summative learning experience, this session provides an opportunity to deepen professional relationships and friendships formed over the program year.