Tribal Cultural Awareness:
The Floodplain in Indian Country
FEMA Region IX Tribal Partners

- FEMA professionals serve 150+ tribes in this region that have legal status as sovereign nations.
FEMA Tribal Policy

• FEMA will consult, to the extent practicable and to the extent permitted by law, with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments before taking actions that affect Federally recognized Tribal governments to ensure that Tribal rights and concerns are addressed.
Tribal Liaison

• Some Regions include the Tribal Liaison in the External Affairs office, others part of National Preparedness. Whatever the titles used, the critical functionality remains.

• The Regional Tribal Liaison is there to support Tribal Governments. The Regional Tribal Liaison is the entry point for answering questions, establishing new relationships and discovering new resources that are available to Tribes.
National Preparedness

- National Preparedness Division is responsible for the coordination and development of the capabilities and tools necessary to prepare for all hazards among all government entities, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and communities.

What remains of Native America

Demographics:

- 4.3 million Americans identify themselves as American Indian/Alaskan Native (1.5% of the population)
- 573 Federally recognized tribal entities
- 1/3 of the native population live on Indian lands/villages
Welcome to Indian Country

Demographics:

- 32% of native population under 18 compared to 24% in general population

- 5% of native population over 65 years of age compared to 12.4% in the general population

- Median age is 29 years old compared to 35 years old in general populations

Source: US Census Demographics
Floodplain Management Challenges

Often Tribal Governments:

• Are developing
• Have many priorities
• Have rapid turn-over
• Understaffed
• Have little or no resources:
  • No single POC.
  • No warning/notification system.
  • No shelters or sheltering plan.
  • No mutual aid agreements.
When Working with Tribes...

- Open Mindedness
- Positive attitude and approachable (warm)
- Communication (verbally and non-verbally)
- Listen
Tips for Working with Indian Country

• Learn about each tribe individually
• Understand that if you have been to ONE Reservation, you have been to ONE Reservation
• Think Constitution: Tribes are not minorities, subcultures, counties, regions, or interested parties. They are federally recognized separate nations.
• Demonstrate a level of genuineness on your part
• Avoid perpetuating stereotypes by discussing “what you know” about Indians or by what you have seen on TV or “heard”
Questions: ?