

Nez Perce Tribe Climate Change and Community Well-being Survey: Executive Summary

In 2017, the Nez Perce Tribe received funding to develop a climate change program focused on developing a Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan. As part of this process, the Nez Perce Tribe Climate Resilience Team conducted a staff and community survey with the goals to:

- Better understand perspectives and knowledge of climate change among tribal members and staff.
- Measure levels of concern about climate change among tribal members and staff.
- Develop a stronger understanding of respondent environmental observations as they relate to climate change.
- Learn how climate change is currently affecting tribal community members.
- Identify community members who are interested in future engagement and gather information about what kinds of activities these community members are most interested in.

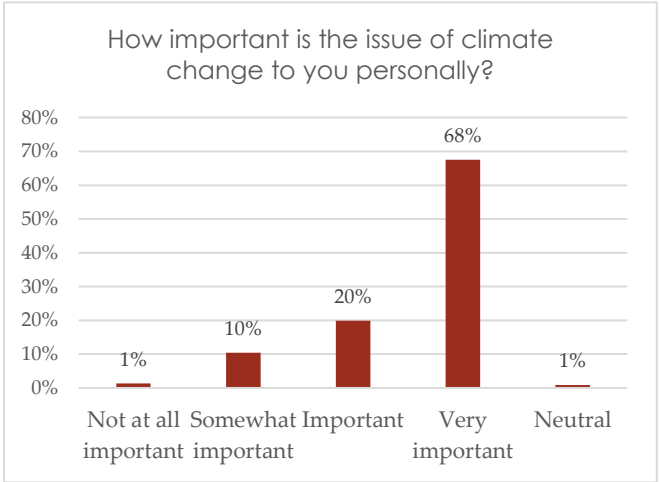
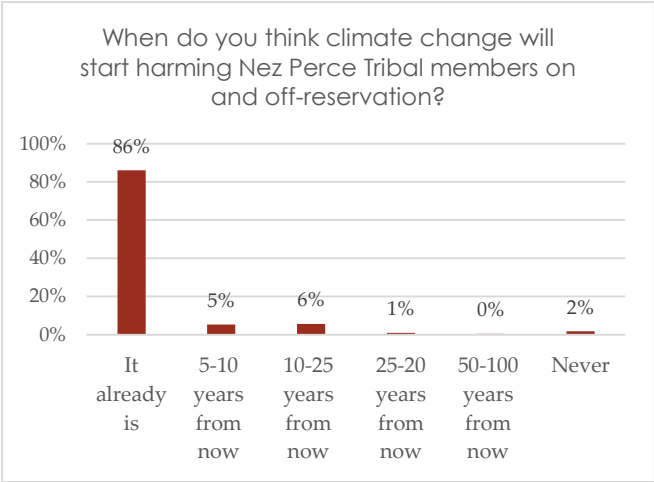
Two-hundred thirty-two complete responses were collected. Most people who took the survey are enrolled members of the Nez Perce Tribe (71%), and most work for the Tribe (79%). Survey respondents were mostly women (65%), and highly educated (64% with a college degree). Unfortunately, the survey results cannot be considered representative of the larger tribal community.

Survey results indicate that:

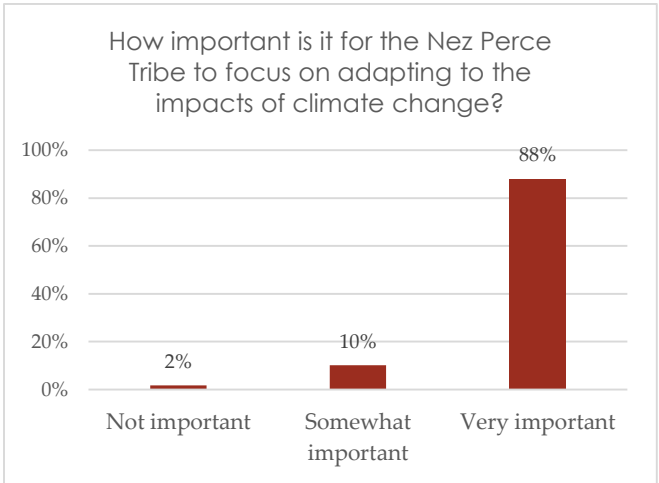
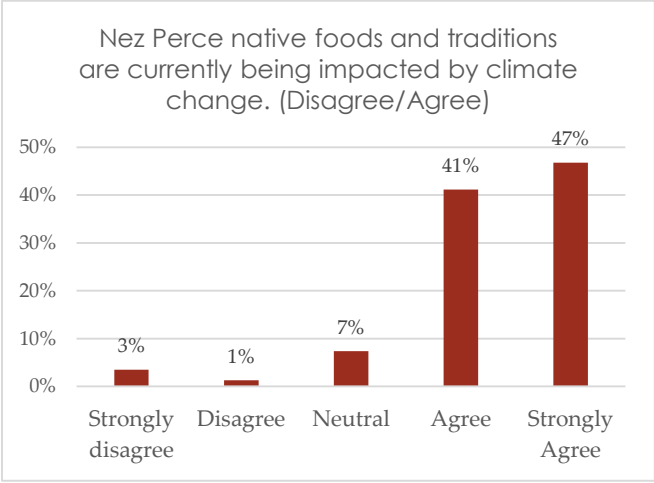
- Most respondents appear to have a basic understanding of climate change and see it as a threat to their own lives and tribal resources. Some respondents see it as an immediate threat to their lives; others believe it will impact them at some point in the future. Most agree that climate is currently impacting traditional foods and practices.
- Respondents are generally concerned about climate change and its impacts, especially on water, weather, fish, and other natural resources.
- Many respondents have observed local environmental change over time and connect much of it to climate change.
- A large majority of respondents support tribal governmental action in adapting to climate change impacts, especially providing educational opportunities to community members and developing renewable energy resources.
- Many respondents are also interested in personal action and engagement, especially educational opportunities and workshops.

This survey has provided us with valuable information, as well as opportunities for future engagement and participation with community members, guidance for how to focus the vulnerability assessment and adaptation plan, and inspiration for how to incorporate local and traditional knowledge as a fundamental piece of tribal climate change adaptation strategies.

For a full copy of the survey report, or to ask about the Tribe's Climate Change Program, please email stefaniek@nezperce.org or amberz@nezperce.org.



“These changes have impacted my family personally for years now. We have experienced lower numbers in herd animals that we hunt. We have experienced less and dry roots and berries because of extreme temperatures and lack of snow pack. The snow run off is going faster than ever so the river gets low fast which prevents us from certain fishing. Invasive species are starting to cover sections of land that used to be covered by native plants and species.”



“Well the Nez Perce entire way of life and being, which is already in jeopardy due to years of assimilation and other political and religious means, however, whatever we have saved and are practicing today is in direct threat to continuing. Climate change could literally change our entire way of being and doing. This is alarming.”

