

CULTURAL RESOURCES CLIMATE CHANGE TASK FORCE, CALIFORNIA



AGENDA 2030 - SDGs



CULTURE 21 ACTIONS - COMMITMENTS

1. CULTURAL RIGHTS
2. HERITAGE, DIVERSITY AND CREATIVITY
4. CULTURE AND ENVIRONMENT
6. CULTURE, EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

CLIMATE, NATURE, HERITAGE, GOVERNANCE,
INDIGENOUS PEOPLES, COVID, SUSTAINABLE,
COMMUNITY, VULNERABILITY, RESILIENCE



1. California and culture

The project scope encompasses the entire State of California. With a large coastline, mountains, deserts, and land in between, the topography and climate of California represents most every situation the world might encounter. Facing severe drought, more frequent and intense wildfires, increased intense storm activity, are just a few of the weather events challenging our communities. From agriculture to mountains, urban areas to rural mountain regions, California is a laboratory for solution-based learning in ways that can also serve to benefit areas facing similar situations around the world.

Cultural heritage is impacted by climate change. At the same time, it has enormous potential to drive mitigation and adaptation solutions. But cultural policies are typically separate from environmental policies. Under the auspices of the California Natural Resources Agency, California State Parks, and the Office of Historic Preservation, goals have been developed to understand ways in which efforts could be joined for greater efficiencies and larger landscape outcomes. Opportunities to engage cultural partners, Indigenous communities, and the public in these processes is a major focus of the ambition.

In this intersection, it set to understand how cultural heritage goals could co-exist with other environmental actions, how culture could play a role in helping people make the changes necessary for climate action to succeed, etc. The idea is to increase adaptation and mitigations solutions, show what is possible, and provide frameworks that are scalable at the local level for overall heightened outcomes.

THE TASK FORCE IS MISSION TASKED TO IDENTIFY THE SYNERGIES BETWEEN CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE GOVERNMENT'S CLIMATE ACTION.

2. Project goals and implementation

2.1. Main goal and specific objectives

The Task Force seeks ways to further promote a post-pandemic framework that is low carbon, sustainable, a place for people to learn, share, understand, thrive, to create a resilient future. The urgency of climate change, a shortage of sufficient human and financial capital, and the needs of our communities require us to look at frameworks in different ways. Because public policy changes can take years to negotiate, the Task Force identified the intersection of cultural heritage and existing climate action projects.

2.2. Project development

The specific goals of the Task Force were modified to meet the realities of a governing during a pandemic. It required us to also think about what post-pandemic recovery looked like. How could programs and processes incorporate cultural values, just transition, low carbon solutions, to address the climate threats while providing communities tools to thrive into the future.

In conducting the Gap Analysis, members collated the state's climate ambition. They then used the ICOMOS' Future of our Pasts report as a primer, identifying how culture could add to greater, more holistic outcomes and/or how culture could be a vector for human actions shifts- those needed to increase success. Once the climate actions were catalogued, members discussed possible partnerships, met with external partners, non-governmental organizations, tribal communities, to learn their ideas, goals, linkages.

While the first phase was internal to state government, individual agencies reached out to non-governmental, local government, and other partners throughout the process. The Task Force is connected to the Climate Heritage Network and its global reach of colleagues, through inception and post COP 26, inputting to webinars, learning from partners, sharing information and successes.

Next steps to integrate cultural heritage contributions and values in to mainstreaming of climate actions across all of state government is part of the future Task Force duties. Additionally, working with external to California, our national government, trade organizations, global partners through efforts such as those of UCLG, greater learning, implementation, and contribution to global low carbon goals can be achieved. We must continue to create action while laying the tracks for policy changes to accelerate ambition.



THE STATE OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION INITIATED A CLIMATE VULNERABILITY INDEX ASSESSMENT PROCESS TO THEN ASSESS CLIMATE RISKS AND DEVELOP ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION PROGRAMS.

3. Impacts

3.1. Direct impacts

Utilizing existing scholarship such as the ICOMOS report, and the gap analysis, an increased awareness of the important values of cultural heritage throughout the state was gained. Agencies began to look for opportunities to talk to California Tribes about cultural matters important to their existence, to communities about values of celebration, place, traditions that are critical to their well-being. They were also able to identify ways to incorporate



these values and goals into existing projects with little or no additional funding. Future projects are beginning with cultural heritage goals alongside the environmental goals for which each agency is mission tasked.

Collaboration with international partners via the Climate Heritage Network further increase knowledge for cultural heritage to play a key role in climate action solutions. Coordinated efforts to test frameworks in different global regions to create useful toolkits are underway. Every effort includes people, their voices, to breakdown existing frameworks and build back those that are equitable, just, inclusive and sustainable.

POLICY CHANGES ARE BEING FORMULATED. PUBLIC AWARENESS, INFORMATION SHARING PATHWAYS, KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGES ARE OCCURRING WITH ALL LEVELS OF CIVIL SOCIETY, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND POLICY PARTNERS TO FURTHER ADVANCE OPPORTUNITIES AND ACTION.

3.2. Assessment

The Gap Analysis is one mechanism for evaluating the existing policy and programming of climate action within the state.

Public input opportunities are currently underway. Information, ideas, goals from California Tribes, communities, non-governmental partners, local governments will be a key part of future recommendations.

A progress report detailing the achievements of the Task Force to date, webinars, pilot projects, frameworks created, along with policy recommendations, is slated for completion in September of 2022. This will also include a path for the Task Force's future efforts.

3.3. Key factors

The pivot during COVID led to the Gap Analysis conducted by the Task Force as a way to understand current climate ambitions in the state and investigate the intersection of cultural heritage and climate ambition

A second key aspect is to identify frameworks as new state ambition were being created, such as the Natural and Working Lands 30X30 and the California Adaptation Strategy.

Simultaneous to internal action, a goal of the Task Force is to share, learn, and provide frameworks for partners nationally and globally..

3.4. Continuity

Because of its place within state government, the Task Force is positioned to continue its work as long as climate ambition continues. California has committed to increased climate action funding over the past three years, including in the current budget. This, coupled with the progress report, continuing engagement, and future plans for increasing the integration of cultural heritage and climate action, progress is slated to continue.

4. Further information

California was a candidate for the fifth "UCLG – Mexico City – Culture 21" International Award (February – June 2022). The jury for the award drew up its final report in September 2022, and requested that the Committee on Culture promote this project as one of the good practices to be implemented through Agenda 21 for culture.

This article was written by Julianne Polanco, California State Historic Preservation Officer, Sacramento, California, United States.

Contact: [julianne.polanco \(at\) parks.ca.gov](mailto:julianne.polanco@parks.ca.gov)

Website: <https://ohp.parks.ca.gov>