

YOUTH CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL TASK FORCE SURVEY



GWX0 DBP
CHEROKEE NATION®

To: Chuck Hoskin Jr., Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation
From: Youth Climate Change and Environmental Protection Task Force
CC: Christina Justice, Secretary of Natural Resources; Camerin Fite-James, Assistant to the Chief
Date: August 15, 2024

Re: Youth Climate Change and Environmental Protection Task Force Report

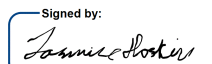
Chief Hoskin,

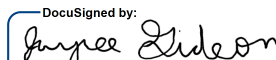
The Cherokee Nation Youth Climate Change and Environmental Protection Task Force (“Youth Task Force”) submits the following recommendations with full consensus to Principal Chief Chuck Hoskin Jr. and his administration. The Youth Task Force was established in the Executive Order on [Further Environmental and Climate Change Goals](#) and set forth to gather and collect the perspective of Cherokee Nation youth citizens to craft a report that would include recommendations pertaining to the topic of climate change and environmental protection concerns.


Data was collected from Cherokee Nation youth citizens, ages 14-24, through a survey that included questions designed to gauge not only the interest of the participants but the level of participants’ knowledge towards topic specific issues. The data was then utilized to identify the primary concerns felt by the Cherokee Nation youth citizens, which shaped the recommendation portion of this report.

The Youth Task Force would like to thank Chief Hoskin and his administration for the opportunity to survey Cherokee Nation youth citizens and bring forth recommendations based solely on the data collected from the survey conducted by the Youth Task Force. With the below recommendations, we hope to contribute to the present and future efforts of the Cherokee Nation in its endeavor to protect our natural resources for many years to come.

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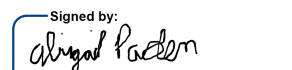
Signed by:

ACEC153A01BE4ED...
Jasmine Hoskin
First Daughter
Cherokee Nation

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F0D2D5775BE9453...
Jaycee Gideon
Tribal Youth Council

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Emily Pack
Tribal Youth Council

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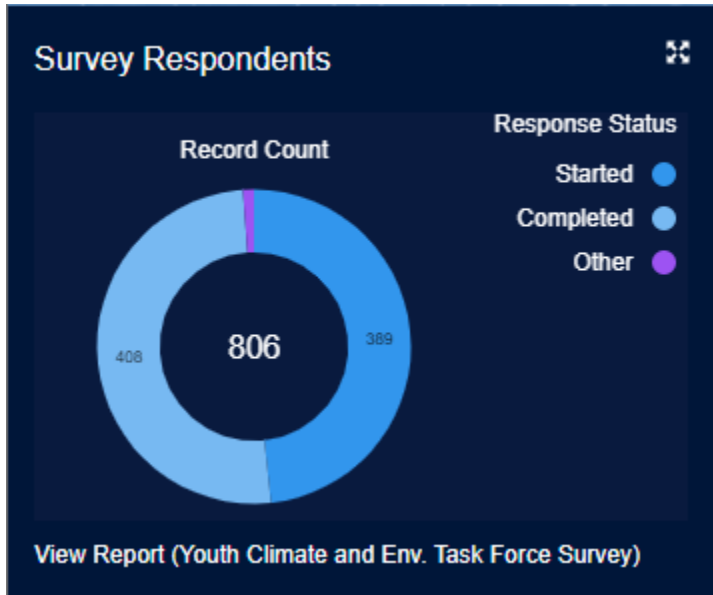
EF441D4A605A449...
Shace Anagali Duncan
Cherokee Nation citizen

Signed by:

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Abigail Ugasdi Paden
Cherokee Nation citizen

Prescribed Tasks:

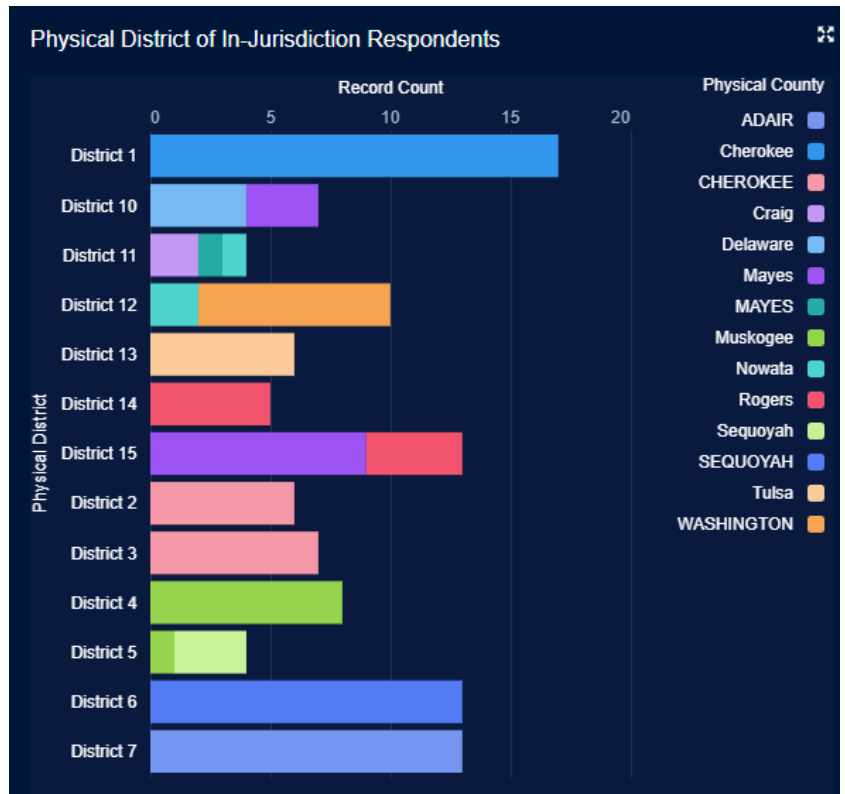
- i. Conduct a “Cherokee Youth Climate Change and Environmental Protection Survey,” utilizing reasonably available forms of outreach, including the Gadugi Portal.

Data Summary

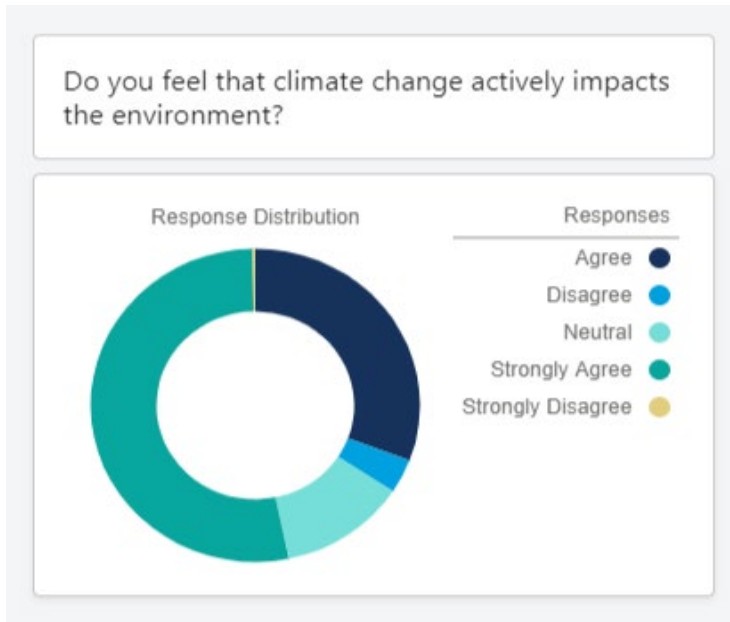


A total of 408 surveys were completed throughout the United States, with 27 states represented in the survey results. States represented include: Alabama (1), Arizona (6), Arkansas (11), California (13), Colorado (2), Florida (6), Indiana (1), Iowa (1), Kansas (13), Kentucky (1), Maryland (1), Massachusetts (1), Minnesota (1), Missouri (3), Nebraska (1), New Hampshire (1), North Carolina (1), Oklahoma (279), Oregon (2), Pennsylvania (1), South Carolina (1), South Dakota (1), Tennessee (3), Texas (20), Utah (1), Vermont (1), and Washington (4).

Oklahoma had the highest number of completed surveys, with 279 responses. 160 of these responses indicated their location within the Cherokee Nation Reservation, with 13 Cherokee Nation Districts represented. The other 119 responses completed within the state of Oklahoma are considered to be At-Large responses.

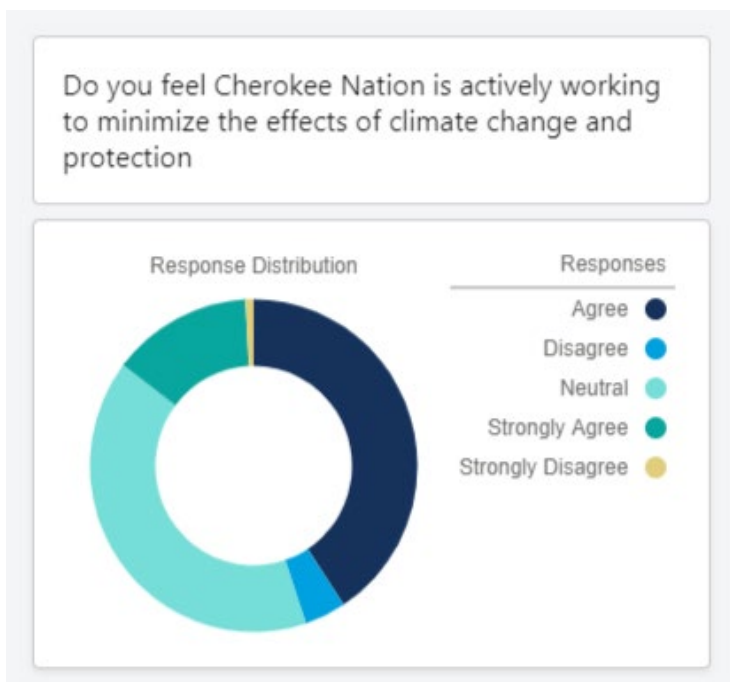


When questioned on whether climate change actively impacts the environment, 83.7% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed.



More specifically, of the environmental concerns listed, the three leading concerns were: pollution (19.67%), climate change (16.52%), and water issues (16.24%). The remaining four topics were also selected in lesser degrees: biodiversity and ecosystem loss (13.45%), resource depletion and waste management (12.8%), land degradation (11.8%), and conversation and preservation (8.94%).

54.62% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that they feel Cherokee Nation is actively working to minimize the effects of climate change.



ii. Recommend at least three goals, activities or strategies that Cherokee Nation might utilize to address climate change and environmental degradation.

1. Education on Climate Change and Environmental Concerns

With a high number of responses indicating an interest in participating in Cherokee Nation hosted events surrounding the topics of climate change and environmental protection, the Youth Task Force recommends pursuing the organization of such events geared towards engaging Cherokee Nation youth citizens. Expanding organized volunteer efforts in various communities to target youth participation would increase youth exposure to conversation surrounding climate change and environmental protection concerns.

Furthermore, the recommendation includes providing materials on the topic at such events planned for youth participation. Pairing our existing resources with our current programming would greatly increase the knowledge and awareness of Cherokee Nation youth citizens. Increasing the awareness of youth citizens is imperative as the issues surrounding climate change and environmental protection continue to grow.

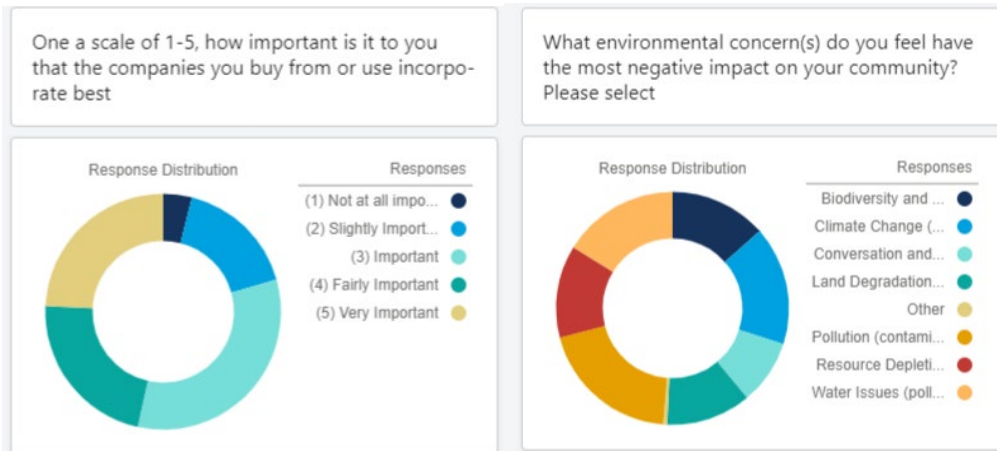


2. Recycling and Waste Management Efforts

As the impact of pollution on climate change and the environment was the respondents' largest concern indicated by survey response, the Youth Task Force recommends supporting already existing recycling efforts to significantly enhance opportunities for not only Cherokee Nation youth citizens, but all Cherokee Nation citizens to begin their own recycling efforts or increase their current recycling efforts. Such support could take the form of working with TERO vendors to help promote their recycling businesses or a social media campaign educating on the importance of recycling and the impact improper waste management has on the environment.

Waste management is another concern found highlighted in the survey responses. To promote better practices, engaging in conversation with Cherokee Nation Businesses and its entities to promote workplace policies that would increase the amount of waste recycled and eliminate food

waste would be a beginning step towards making an impact in the area of recycling and waste management.



3. Water Pollution and Land Preservation

Where water pollution is further defined as pollution of drinking water, limited availability of freshwater, and quality of water sources, Cherokee Nation should continue to prioritize its efforts in voicing the need for conversations surrounding water sovereignty rights. With many waterways, dams, lakes, etc., being located within the Cherokee Nation reservation, the issue of water pollution directly impacts the areas in which citizens are located. Ensuring the waterways remain free of pollutants is one small need in the greater issue of water pollution.

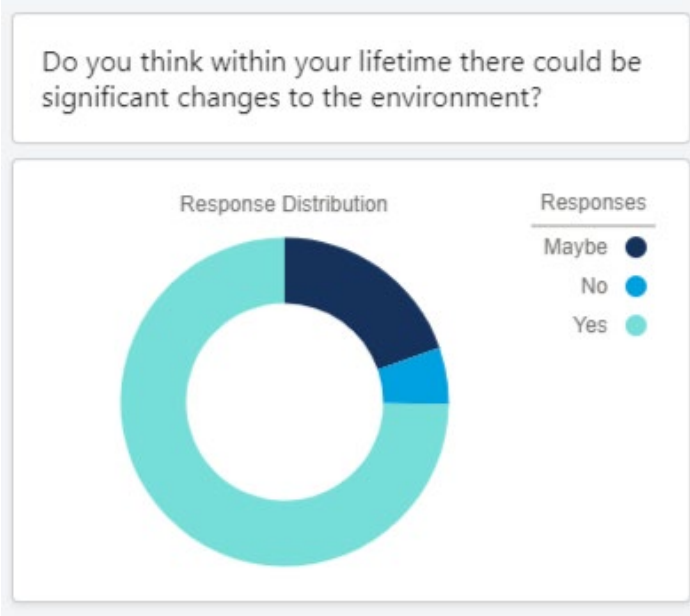
In concurrence with [America the Beautiful](#), a nationwide campaign issued by the Biden-Harris administration in 2021 and led by the U.S. Department of the Interior, to “conserve, connect, and restore the lands, waters, and wildlife,” Cherokee Nation should continue its efforts in land preservation by identifying opportunities to increase the protection and designation of its local parks and nature reserves. Current efforts have included the establishment of areas such as Cherokee Nation Sequoyah Hunting Preserve and the Principal Chief Wilma P. Mankiller Capitol Park. Where both the Cherokee Nation and the federal government have identified the importance and need for the prioritization of land preservation, the continuation of the aforementioned efforts will benefit the citizens of Cherokee Nation for years to come.

iii. Recommend how Cherokee Nation can engage youth on matters of climate change and environmental protection policy on a more permanent basis.

- 1. Promote Interconnectedness of Climate Change and Environmental Protection in Other Youth Initiatives and Events:**
 - a. For example, include a workshop focused on environmental protection as part of Camp Cherokee and the Cherokee Nation Youth Summit- both are existing and well-attended youth events.
 - b. Draw connections between already existing youth initiatives such as the Tribal Youth Council by creating a position or committee devoted to environmental matters to serve as liaison to the Office of the Secretary of Natural Resources.
- 2. Explore Providing Additional Access to Support Youth Volunteer Participation and Career Development Opportunities:**
 - a. Encourage environmentally focused volunteer efforts to contribute to youth program requirements such as those set forth by the college scholarships and community youth leadership funds.
 - b. Offer internship opportunities to Cherokee Nation youth citizens in the area of conservation through the Equity in Conservation project within the Department of Natural Resources.

Conclusion:

Addressing these issues is nothing short of urgent. The Youth Task Force is grateful to be a part of a Nation that cares greatly not only for the people of today but also for those of us who will inherit our



natural resources and the issues that are currently plaguing our environment. We end by noting that over 75% of youth surveyed think that within their lifetime they will see significant changes within the environment. We must act now to further the vision of the Cherokee Nation in its goal to protect our environment.

The Youth Task Force feels strongly about the above recommendations and puts them forward for further consideration.