

## When Communities in a Region Tackle Adaptation Together

**Adaptation planning** is a high priority topic for many USDN members. In four North American regions, more than 30 cities and urban counties—USDN members and other communities—are working together to build their capacity and effectiveness for adaptation planning. The 2014 initiative, designed by the USDN Regional Networks Coordinating Committee and the Innovation Network for Communities and funded by grants from the USDN Innovation Fund and the Summit Foundation, supports these regional networks of sustainability directors: Cascadia Regional Network, Heartland Regional Network, Southeast Sustainability Directors Network, and the Western Adaptation Alliance —each pursuing an angle on adaptation planning tailored to their members' needs and capacities.

Cascadia members are bringing together urban foresters in the region to develop shared priorities and next steps to address regional-level climate changes. With **Eugene, Portland OR, Seattle,** and **Vancouver BC** taking the lead, they are designing a convening that will be held in late October 2014. In addition to helping sustainability directors understand more about their cities' forestry needs, the project is helping them to build connections with city departments responsible for forestland, explained Eugene's Babe O'Sullivan.

Heartland members are working with climatologists in the region to pull together a comprehensive forecast of climate effects and, with the participating cities, a clear picture of the vulnerabilities cities will have to address. Members in the lead: **Columbia, Iowa City, Kansas City MO, Lawrence, Lincoln,** and **Oklahoma City.**

Southeast members are developing educational workshops and an online Community Resilience Planning Handbook with easy-to-use modules to help cities develop resilience plans. They are working with the National Environmental Modeling and Analysis Center and the University of Arkansas. Participating members: **Asheville, Atlanta, Charleston, Fayetteville AR, Huntsville, Knoxville, Miami, Nashville, Orlando,** and **Raleigh.**

Western Adaptation Alliance members, who have worked together before on adaptation planning, are developing a shared strategy and toolkit to help them better communicate with key constituencies to broaden support for more robust action on climate adaptation. The work will focus on the region's highest priority concern: extreme heat events. Participating members: **Aspen, Boulder, Boulder County, Denver, El Paso, Flagstaff, Fort Collins, Las Vegas, Park City, Phoenix, Salt Lake City, Santa Fe,** and **Tucson.**

Each region's network customized its approach to meeting the needs of its city-members, which resulted in four very different collaborations to advance adaptation-planning processes. In each of these four regions, the understanding and practice of urban adaptation to climate changes is advancing—driven by networks of local government sustainability directors. And for each of the four regional networks, moving the ball on adaptation has been an opportunity to strengthen the network itself: its capabilities and impact.