

Dominique Nault, Missoula MT

Project Overview and Role:



The fellowship consisted of working with Missoula County to address extreme heat and how it is impacting vulnerable communities. As a fellow, I was also able to explore my personal interest in traditional ecological knowledge and research how to incorporate it into climate action plans. The majority of the fellowship was reaching out to stakeholders in the community and getting a better understanding of what is currently being done in the community to address climate change, specifically extreme heat. One of the biggest issues

I found was that neighborhoods with typically higher populations of vulnerable communities (BIPOC, lower income, people with pre-existing health conditions) had a significantly lower amount of green spaces. Climate change is only increasing the number of extreme heat events and having shaded bus stops, neighborhood tree canopies, and affordable housing in areas that have amenities such as parks, schools, and areas to keep cool are important.

What did you learn from the project?

As a Native American, this experience taught me the importance of having BIPOC voices in local government. I learned how the local governments can play a significant role in how they address climate change and ultimately made me believe that some of the biggest changes will happen at a local level.

What was the impact of your work?

When I finished this fellowship I felt like I had little to no impact on my work but after following up with some stakeholders I met earlier in the summer they told me how I impacted their views of their own work and learned just how important it was to talk with someone from these communities they are

trying to help. Although there is still a long way to go, I was a voice for a population that often goes unheard.

Any links to project deliverables?

Extreme Heat Survey for Missoula County:

<https://www.climatereadymissoula.org/>