



Executive Council Report

Rob Sanderson Jr.
1st Vice President



Representatives from the United Tribal Transboundary Mining Work Group (UTTMWG) brought transboundary mining to an international audience at the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in Honolulu, Hawaii earlier this month. UTTMWG representatives in attendance include Central Council 1st Vice President and UTTMWG Treasurer Rob Sanderson Jr, UTTMWG Chairperson and Vice President of the Organized Village of Kasaan Fred Olsen, Vice-Chair and Ketchikan Indian Community Carrie James, Secretary and council from Douglas Indian Association John Morris Sr, Daniel Klanott from Chilkat Indian Village, Mike Baines from Sitka Tribe of Alaska; Clinton Cook Sr. from Craig Tribal Association, and Central Council's Natural Resource Specialist Jennifer Hanlon to provide staff support.

The IUCN World Conservation Congress is the world's largest conservation event that brings together leaders from governments, non-governmental organizations, business, United Nations agencies, and indigenous and grassroots organizations to discuss and decide solutions for pressing environmental issues. This event takes place every four years in different part of the world and this is the first time the United States hosted it. In addition to workshops and formal presentations, the Congress hosts informal discussions called Knowledge Cafe's. Knowledge Cafe's are a hosted roundtable discussion that aim to foster mutual understanding, areas of common interest, opportunities to share experiences, and explore possible partnerships. The IUCN had received approximately 1,500 proposals from groups around the world to host a Knowledge Café, UTTMWG's "Saving Southeast Alaska's Rainforest Way of Life" was selected as one of 188 sessions. This session was designed as a discussion among 12 leaders, but over 25 people attended.

Among the attendees we met with were Indigenous leaders from California, New Zealand, British Columbia, Australia, Brazil, and many other countries. Many of these communities are facing some of the same issues such as mine development in their transboundary watersheds. We also met with many heads of our U.S. federal agencies including Tom Tidwell Chief of the U.S. Forest Service.



“You cannot talk about conservation without speaking of the indigenous peoples and their role as guardians of our most delicate lands and waters,” we were told by one IUCN official. “They depend on those natural resources to survive, and the rest of society depends on their role in safeguarding those resources for the well-being of us all.”

The IUCN was an opportunity for the UTTMWG to generate more support and awareness on their efforts to protect tribal communities and our way of life in the Southeast Alaska/British Columbia region from the downstream impacts of large-scale mining. In addition, it was an opportunity to learn about different land management models that are under indigenous leadership all over the world. UTTMWG made contacts with other Tribes throughout the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and other places where it became apparent that transboundary issues is a common occurrence. During the conference, UTTMWG had also been invited to share a presentation with high school students at Kamehameha School, a school funded by income generated from trust lands and serves over 1800 indigenous Hawaiian students.

