Consultations with Multiple Tribes

Consultations with tribes takes many forms, but must be initiated at a government-to-government level with tribes individually. Once this relationship has been established, federal agencies may consider utilizing various tribal consortia as a means to facilitate the exchange of information.

However, it must be clearly understood by federal agencies that:
- Only the tribes may authorize the use of tribal consortia as official government-to-government consultation; and
- Tribal consortia cannot be used to initiate consultation.

Tribal consortia take many forms. Here are some examples:
- National Congress of American Indians
- National Tribal Environmental Council
- National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
- Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council
- Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.
- Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
- United South & Eastern Tribes
- Inter-Tribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes
- Inter-tribal Bison Council
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission
- Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission
- Tanana Chiefs Conference
- Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Alaska Federation of Natives
- Alaska Inter-Tribal Council
- Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement

The key is to understand who is represented in these tribal consortia and the extent to which tribal governments allow themselves to be represented. Also, while a particular consortium may be concerned with regional issues, it may not represent all tribes in that region. Some tribes may choose to exclude themselves from all consortia. Some consortia may have clearly defined protocol and structure; others may not. We strongly recommend that before any steps are taken to utilize consortia that you first seek the advice from the affected tribes early in the consultation planning process. If used effectively, consultation can be streamlined and made more effective with tribal consortia. However, it should never be viewed as a shortcut.