

Clearing the Haze from Tribal Air Issues

by Joanna Stancil

Looking up into a bright blue sky and taking a deep breath of clean air was once taken for granted in Indian Country. But what a difference a couple hundred years can make. The outside world with its urbanization, industry, ozone depletion, smog, and the ever-present plume of “whatever” has cast a haze over much of Indian Country. With so much on their already full agendas, what are tribal governments and their environmental staffs to do about air quality? What if tribes are considering economic development that might also impact air quality? Where do they turn to bring a higher level of focus on the very air they breathe?

After years of tackling the complicated issue of air quality, the National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC) and a group of dedicated tribal air staff recommended that a national tribal air organization be created. And now with the assistance of an EPA grant, a national air organization for Indian Country is one step closer to becoming a reality. On March 11, 2002, the National Tribal Air Committee Working Group met in Tulsa, Oklahoma to begin the exciting yet challenging process of building this high visibility organization.

“Indian Country has long needed a national air organization to raise the level of awareness to our air quality issues,” said Jerry Pardilla Director of the National Tribal Environmental Council. “These issues don’t just affect our environment and health, but also impact our economic development and sovereignty. A national air organization will enhance our efforts to reach the key decision makers. It will also strengthen communication between the tribes, federal agencies and other interested organizations.”

The Working Group is comprised of air quality/environmental staff from throughout Indian Country. “This Working Group brings together a diverse mix of tribal and mainstream environmental experiences,” shared Joanna Mounce Stancil, Working Group Facilitator. “Their task will be to form the organizational infrastructure, direction and the scope-of-work that will set the vision for Tribal air issues.”

The Tulsa meeting is one of three in-person meetings scheduled over the next six months. “My role,” stated Stancil, “is to assist the Working Group through the strategic planning for this organization.” “One of the key decisions they will have to make during the first meeting is how to disseminate their recommendations back to the tribes for review and input.”

Many see the participation and support of Tribal leadership as key to the success of the national tribal air organization. Among the many tasks awaiting the Working Group is how to involve tribal leaders and to encourage them to make air issues a priority. “The Working Group has a lot of hard work ahead of them.

Their commitment and that of the tribal leaders will be rewarded by the formation of an organization that helps ensure that Indian Country is heard loud and clear on air issues. It’s an honor to be part of helping clear the haze from tribal air issues,” said Stancil.

For more information please contact, Joanna Mounce Stancil (Shawnee) National Tribal Air Committee Working Group Facilitator at jstancil@aol.com or 505-242-2175.



An Inside Look...

Indoor Air Quality

Tribal Science Council

Navajo Uranium & Radiation Protection Program

Mark Your Calendar



EPA Response to Circuit Court Decision on Operating Permits

Michigan, New Mexico and several industry groups challenged EPA's rulemaking that established the Agency's air operating permit program in Indian country. In this rulemaking, EPA also asserted its authority to issue permits to air pollution sources that were located in areas for which EPA believed the Indian Country status was in question. In other words, where EPA believed a source was probably in Indian Country, EPA could issue a permit until the issue was decided. The reasons for this were (1) some questions/disputes cannot be resolved quickly and sources nonetheless need permits and (2) the Agency acted to protect Tribal sovereignty.

The D.C. Circuit Court decision said that EPA does not have authority to

issue permits to sources unless they are in Indian Country and the sources are not covered by a state program. It also said that before EPA issues operating permits under part 71 of the Clean Air Act, it must determine whether the source is located in Indian country using a notice and comment process.

EPA has stopped issuing "part 71" operating permits and is developing a rulemaking that responds to the court decision. It will delete the language about "in question" areas. EPA is considering how to respond to the portion of the court decision that talks about delineating Indian country, recognizing the need to minimize the risks to Tribal sovereignty as the Agency does so.

For more information please contact Candace Carraway carraway.candace@epa.gov or 919-541-3189.

Tribal Air Emission Inventory Data in EPA's National Emission Inventory

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP), with the support of EPA's Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards and the Tribal Data Development Working Group of the Western Regional Air Partnership (WRAP), is assisting tribes in submitting their emission inventory (EI) data to version 3 of the 1999 National Emissions Inventory (NEI). ITEP estimates that 30 to 40 US Indian tribes have completed EI's for use in their own air programs. By submitting their data to the NEI, tribes gain representation in the database most often used for national and regional air quality planning and modeling. ITEP sent letters to all tribes believed to have an EI inviting their participation. A process was created for gaining approval for release of data from the appropriate administrative levels, quality checking, encoding, and obtaining a final approval from tribal air staff for submission of data.

By the end of January 2002, four tribes have released their data to ITEP and the NEI; the Pueblo of Laguna, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community, and the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. Approximately 30 additional tribes have completed EI's, but need additional time to obtain approval from their tribal governments or legal counsel to release the data. In order to participate in this project, the tribe's EI must have been completed in 1996 or later. The deadline for submission of tribal EI's for inclusion in the 1999 NEI is March 31, 2002. If your tribe wishes to participate in this project or you have additional questions, please contact one of the following ITEP staff as soon as possible:

Fonda Swimmer at (928) 523-8785 or email at Fonda.Swimmer@nau.edu
Sarah Kelly at (928) 523-6377 or email at Sarah.Kelly@nau.edu



Healthy Air Inside the Home

EPA's Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) Office is currently hosting two projects that will educate tribal leaders and health professionals about reducing the risk of indoor asthma episodes for children residing on tribal lands.

The Inter-Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA), a coalition of 21 tribes within Arizona and the Southwest, promotes self reliance through public policy. IAQ and ITCA are conducting indoor asthma episode and air quality risk reduction training on designated tribal reservations. This on-site training will be conducted by an EPA trainer who will visit high risk areas based on their rates of asthma, respiratory illness, smoking, etc. The trainer will be promoting the acquisition and maintenance of healthy indoor air quality. In addition, the ITCA will be developing print materials and training

courses specifically for a Native American audience.

The IAQ has also created a pilot project with the Indian Health Service (IHS) to reduce indoor environmental asthma episodes in children. For the pilot IHS has selected two sites; Jemez Pueblo, NM and Ft. Peck, MT. These sites were selected due to their high rates of asthma and respiratory illness. The project will focus on conducting in-home Indoor Environmental Asthma Assessments with families whose children have asthma. The project also includes educational seminars for families and health practitioners, which recommend use of the Indoor Air Asthma Management Plan and other low cost improvement techniques.

For more information please contact Chris Griffith at griffin.chris@epa.gov.



Uranium and Radiation Education Outreach to Navajo Nation Native American Community



The Radiation Protection Program has undertaken partnership projects to assist communities concerned about their exposure to radiation. The work is done in cooperation with community organizations, such as local colleges or universities, grassroots organizations or government agencies.

Community-based groups are often best suited for several reasons: they have the greatest understanding of community concerns, they often have an obligation to assist the community, and they have cultural knowledge and credibility. Another benefit to involving community organizations is that it builds their knowledge and capacity at the local level to meet future challenges.

One community-based effort, begun on the Navajo Nation, is the Uranium and Radiation Education Outreach (UREO) Project. Its goal is to educate Navajo Nation students so that they will be equipped to guide decisions that affect their environment and health, whether it's clean-up of mine sites or decisions regarding future mining activities. To date, more than 200 teachers have been trained and 300 students exposed to elements of the uranium and radiation education program. In the workshops, teachers are instructed on principles of chemistry and geology.

This project evolved out of Navajo community concerns about contamination from uranium mines and

health impacts from mining operations. Uranium miners, millers, truckers, their families, and residents near the sites realize that they may have been exposed to radioactive contaminants as well as heavy metals including lead and arsenic. Health effects from exposure

to these radioactive elements, through airborne contact or ingestion, are cancers and kidney damage.

These issues were discussed between stakeholders at a national meeting in 1999, and from there, the UREO project concept began.

Project collaborators include EPA's Radiation Protection Program and Region 9; Northern Arizona University; Dine College at Shiprock, NM; the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency;

and the Navajo Nation Abandoned Mine Lands Program.

In many cases, the lessons learned and results found from a project initiated at the local level can be transferred to other communities around the nation or even internationally. With respect to the UREO project, similar concerns about radiation exposure are shared by the Spokane Tribe in Washington State and the Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. The education outreach initiative will be extended to these communities over the next two years. Uranium mining has also impacted Indigenous peoples in Canada and Australia.

For more information please contact Susan Dolgin at 202-564-9895 or Dolgin.Susan@epa.gov You can also access the website at www.nau.edu/eeop/ureo



Tools: Updates and Current EPA/Tribal Announcements

EPA Tribal Science Council

In response to concerns by tribes that their unique interests needed to be addressed in EPA scientific activities, EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) proposed the formation of a Tribal Science Council (TSC). The TSC, composed of tribal and EPA representatives, was designed to provide a unique forum for Agency and Tribal representatives to discuss and work cooperatively to address scientific issues that are of priority to Tribes. Membership includes a Tribal representative from each Region as well as members from EPA Program Offices and EPA Regions. At the first meeting in December 2000 the TSC drafted a Mission Statement and identified goals.

Over the past year, a group of EPA staff and representatives of EPA's Tribal Operations Committee Tribal Caucus met in person and via conference calls to refine the mission, goals, and basic operating parameters of TSC. The Tribal Science Council held a second meeting in December 2001. Discussion topics focused on key issues, including: Tribal perspectives on traditional knowledge, EPA and Regional perspectives and capabilities regarding Tribal science issues, and examples of current EPA programs that integrate Tribal science issues. Tribes identified subsistence issues as their top priority, and the TSC members formed subcommittees to address Quality Assurance, Subsistence, and Handling of Sensitive/Propriety Information.

For more information, contact Dennis O'Connor at oonnor.dennis@epa.gov



Region 10 Proposal

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is proposing a set of rules to regulate air pollution sources on 39 Indian reservations in Idaho, Oregon, and Washington. EPA developed this basic set of air rules to fill the regulatory gap under the Clean Air Act with federal air rules where there are no EPA-approved Tribal or State Implementation Plans. These rules would "level the playing field" between air pollution sources on and off Indian reservations. EPA developed this proposal in close partnership with Region 10 tribes through an extensive consultation process designed specifically to meet tribal needs.

EPA will take public comment on this proposal until June 13th, 2002. Please submit your written comments to: David Bray, Office of Air Quality (OAQ-107), U.S. EPA Region 10, 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101-1128.

To download the proposed rulemaking from EPA Region 10's home page go to <http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/tribalairrules.htm>.

Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves. All things are bound together. All things connect. - Chief Seattle

Tribal Designations and Implementation Work Group

Since the Tribal Designations and Implementation Work Group was formed in summer of 2001, they have been wrestling with issues of tribal concern about federal air quality designation processes and how to implement the new 8 hour ozone standard. In a few months, the work group will take on issues surrounding designations for the PM 2.5 standard. The goal of the work group is to provide a forum for discussing tribal issues of concern about designations and implementation with EPA. Discussing the issues in depth will ultimately provide the tribes with the opportunity to make policy recommendations to EPA.

There are 4 subcommittees within the work group. The *Designations Group* is looking at case examples to form a work group opinion about the need for changes to the document "EPA's Guidance on 8-Hour Ozone Designations for Indian Tribes". The group is also discussing policy options that EPA must resolve to make the program work for tribes. The *Implementation Group* is discussing flexibility options for implementing the standards to address specific needs of tribes without jeopardizing air quality. The *Resources Group* studies how tribal environmental programs are funded, and a fourth work group is looking at how to apply federal air programs to native villages and trust lands in Alaska.

All tribes with an interest in these standards and how they are implemented in Indian country are invited to join the conference calls held on a regular basis. For more information contact Julie McClintock at 919-541-5339 or mclintock.julie@epa.gov.



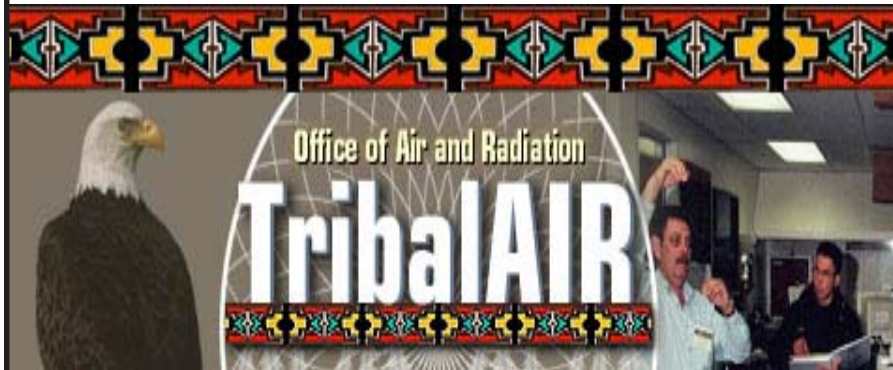
On The Thunderbird Trail



Recently one of 10 Clean Air Transportation Community (CATC) program grants from the Office of Transportation and Air Quality was awarded to the Little River Band of Ottawa Indians (LRBOI) Their proposal entitled, "On the Thunderbird Trail: Using Tribal Traditions to Reduce Vehicle Emissions." received \$59,275 for a two year plan that includes purchasing electric bicycles, a multi-passenger electric vehicle and a wind turbine to recharge the vehicles. The electric vehicles will be placed at a new housing development LRBOI is currently building for tribal elders.

Lee Sprague, Director of Economic Development at LRBOI, said they "have a commitment to the environment." It is their hope that the use of alternative transportation by the elders will set an example for the youth of the tribe and for other communities as well. "For a five-year-old kid, his whole world will be seeing this." Sprague and the rest of LRBOI hope that setting an example for others to follow will be beneficial for the environment and therefore everyone.

The CATC grant funds voluntary, innovative projects by tribal, state, local and multi-state agencies that improve air quality by reducing vehicle emissions. The main goal of the CATC program is to cut down on air pollution caused by transportation and to create more energy conserving and efficient ways to improve air quality. The grant also requires that the program involves partnership, has measurable results and can be a model for reducing air pollution in other communities.



EPA's TribalAir Website: Don't miss out on breaking news!!!

Do you want information about upcoming training, conferences, grant programs, recently published (draft and final) air policies and regulations and other breaking news sent directly to you? For example, during the month of January the Tribal Website announced the following:

- The funding of the National Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program, with \$2,500,000 set-a-side for Tribes.
- EPA has developed a listserv to facilitate communications between the Regional Planning Organizations
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe was hiring an Air Quality Program Manager

If you want to receive e-mails informing you of new information posted on the Tribal Announcements page it's as easy as:

- 1.) Going to the TribalAir Website at <http://www.epa.gov/air/tribal/>
- 2.) Clicking on the Tribal Air Mail notification mailbox icon at the top of the page, and
- 3.) Entering your name and e-mail address.

Once you're registered you will be sent an automated e-mail announcing news and new additions to the TribalAir Web site.

Also, if you haven't surfaced the TribalAir Website recently, we encourage you to explore it. We think you will be surprised with the recent updates. We're constantly looking for ways to improve the Website. Your questions and suggestions are always appreciated. If you would like more information, or if you have an announcement you would like posted on the Website, contact Kristen Bremer, bremer.kristen@epa.gov

Visit APTI's New Virtual Classroom!

Brand new from EPA's Air Pollution Training Institute (APTI) — self-instructional (SI) courses are now available on-line to anyone with web access! This free service allows you to take a selection of APTI's technical training courses at your leisure without ever having to contact APTI by phone or mail. Just download the pdf file for the course or lesson you wish to review, take the course as well as the on-line test, and print your own certificate of mastery! These courses have been developed for employees of state, tribal, and local air pollution control agencies. To access this service, go to <http://www.epa.gov/oar/oaqps/eog> and click on Self-Instructional Classes in the APTI section. For questions, contact Michele Dubow, in EPA's Education and Outreach Group, at (919) 541-3803 or dubow.michele@epa.gov. Look for more on-line courses to become available in the future as this service expands to meet your needs.



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Mark your Calendar...



INSTITUTE FOR TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROFESSIONALS

***3rd Annual National Tribal Forum Series on Air Quality Management Issues**
Portland, OR May 14-15

***Air Quality Data Management**
Las Vegas, Nevada April 30-May 3

***Emissions Inventory**
Flagstaff, Arizona May 13-17

***National Tribal Forum**
Portland, Oregon May 14-15

***Developing a Tribal Air Program**
Phoenix, Arizona May 26-31

***Fundamentals of Modeling**
Flagstaff, Arizona June 3-7

***Meteorological Stations**
Las Vegas, Nevada June 11-13

Please contact Lydia Scheer for workshops or Loretta Yazzie for Tribal Forum.
Lydia.Scheer@nau.edu 928-523-6887
Loretta.Yazzie@nau.edu 928-523-8783

TRIBAL AIR MONITORING SUPPORT CENTER

***Air Quality Data Management**
April 29-May 3

***Introduction to Meteorological Stations**

June 11-13

***Continuous PM Monitoring**
Sept. 24-27

All workshops are in Las Vegas, NV.
Please contact Christy Nations for more information. 928- 523-7792 or
Christy.Nations@nau.edu

NEW!

Also, please note ITEP's
NEW toll free technical assistance
line for Tribal Air staff:
866-248-4576