

Accomplishments: Region 2 area

National Information Exchange Network (The Exchange Network)

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, with EPA Environmental Information Exchange Network Grants since 2002, has been instrumental in improving the information and communication technology infrastructure, and to modernizing and increasing the Tribe's and affiliated agencies' environmental analyses, data sharing, and educational capabilities. Funding for the Exchange Network program allowed the Tribe to build on a govt-to-govt relationship with EPA and implement a computer-based node client that will ensure better quality data is exchanged with federal, state and Tribal agencies. Chief Ransom of St Regis Mohawk Tribe said "for more than two decades, the Tribe has been busy developing its own Tribal regulations to improve air, water and other environmental standards. Through the Exchange Network, the St Regis Mohawk Tribe can now share our findings and help other Indian Nations to protect and improve their environments".

In 2005, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe received an Award from the EPA-HQs Office of Environmental Information for being the first tribe in the US to establish direct environmental dataflows for ambient Air Quality System data in the Exchange Network. The SRMT has also begun submitting air quality data into the Air Quality Systems (AQS) database under their own Tribal code. The National Award recognized the Tribe's leading role in the Exchange Network administered by the EPA, using the E-Gov protocols of the EPA Central Data Exchange (CDX). This is a groundbreaking achievement, and reflects partnering to expand the Network and to increase access to environmental data and make the exchange of data more efficient. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division achievement and cooperative effort in this area has helped move forward the network exchange activities for environmental data in the spirit of developing outcome measures for showing the success of environmental programs in Indian country.

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Programmatic Agreement

The Oneida Indian Nation expressed an interest in coordinating with EPA Region 2 to develop an overall consultation agreement, as well as a National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Programmatic Agreement. On June 22, 2005, a "Covenant/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between EPA Region 2 (EPA) and the Oneida Indian Nation on Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and Related Laws" was signed. The MOU identifies the procedures that will be used to help ensure effective government-to-government consultation and communication with respect to EPA actions having the potential to impact cultural resources of interest to the Oneida Indian Nation. This in turn will assist EPA in carrying out its NHPA and NAGPRA responsibilities.

Solid Waste

St Regis Mohawk Tribe opened a new waste transfer station July 2005 for community members and haulers to dispose a variety of materials and recyclables. The transfer station is just one

component of the Solid Waste Program that will provide for the safe disposal of wastes. The Tribe has trained personnel to operate the transfer station.

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe has been developing an independent solid waste management program for the past decade, beginning with establishing a formal plan. Implementation of the solid waste management plan began in 2001 through the execution of five components: development of codes, program delivery (e.g. transfer station, collection of recyclables as well as garbage), education program, planning for economic self-sufficiency, and monitoring. The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe is currently implementing projects advancing all these components.

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe successfully competed for funding for the Interagency Open grant program, activities include focus on three major areas: removal of accumulated tires from the community (auto mechanic shops and residences), collection of a goal of 80 tons of recyclables including mixed paper, and completion of the construction of the waste transfer station for use by the community.

The Seneca Nation of Indians has also taken steps to systematically deal with open dumps. It inventoried the existing dumps and has provided the Indian Health Service with a list of the most troublesome sites. EPA was able to provide visual characterization of these sites through contractor assistance. Meanwhile, through a solid waste demonstration grant, the Seneca Nation was able to hire a coordinator to apply consistent attention to building a program to both prevent open dumps and to enforce existing laws associated with them. Seneca Nation of Indians also plans to open a Transfer Station during Spring 2006. Also, the Seneca Nation of Indians successfully applied for funds through the Interagency Open Dump program described above to build a roll-off box transfer station for collection of white goods and demolition debris. The funding for the roll-off box transfer station will be administered through a grant from the US Department of Agriculture which participated in the Interagency Open Dump program. This program activity will complement the previous work that the Seneca Nation of Indians has done to create a solid waste program to replace open dumping.

Indian Nation Drinking Water Infrastructure Grant Program Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants Tribal Set-Aside Program

The St. Regis Mohawk Tribe received \$1,247,400 in funding to upgrade the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe Filtration Plant. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Indian Health Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development co-funded the project. The total project cost was \$2.6 Million.

A grant of \$578,852 was awarded in 2004 to the Seneca Nation of Indians to improve its drinking water infrastructure. A variety of improvements will be made to the Jimersontown and Steamburg Water Systems on Allegheny Territory. Both systems have a ground water supply and both systems are owned and operated by the Seneca Nation of Indians. The Seneca Nation also received \$198,400 to replace a ground level water storage tank at the Steamburg Water System. Funding was provided through an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Indian Health Service. Construction is expected to begin in 2006.

<http://www.epa.gov/region02/water/drinkingwater/region2.htm>

<http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwsrf/allotments/tribes/index.html>

SEE Circuit Riders

Several Regions have Circuit Riders, hired through a EPA HQs cooperative agreement grant under the Senior Environmental Enrollee (SEE) program. Following coordination with the Indian Nations, two part-time Circuit Riders, Bob Williams and Rick Narang (both retired Region 2 employees) have been enrolled, as of March 2001, as Region 2 Circuit Riders. Although their responsibilities fall primarily within the drinking water program, they are equipped to provide technical assistance concerning waste water treatment facilities as well. They join Garrett Smith who has been serving as a SEE Circuit Rider for the solid waste program for EPA Region 2 since 1997; in addition, Garrett since 2004 also provides assistance to the nine Tribes located in EPA Region 1. Over time all three have established a working relationship with several Indian Nation contacts. Specifically the SEEs have provided assistance for integrated solid waste management and recycling planning, transfer station development, identifying resources to clean open dumps, and assistance for drinking water and wastewater facilities, assisting with providing regulatory oversight of these facilities and oversight of capital improvement projects.

The Circuit Riders have provided the Indian nations with a wealth of expertise and technical assistance. The Circuit Riders will continue to assist in Indian Nation program coordination and assist with face-to-face interaction with the Indian Nations, seeking resources to help support the development of Indian Nation environmental programs, providing training and technical assistance and enhancing EPA's communications with the Indian Nations.

Quality Assurance

EPA Region 2 actively supports the quality assurance (QA) processes of tribal environmental programs. Technical support to the Tribes' water quality monitoring and air monitoring programs included reviewing and assisting in the development of QA project plans and other related documents, providing formal and informal QA training and advice, and conducting technical audits of ambient air monitoring projects. Some of the QA project plans reviewed during 2005 are: a SRMT Fish Derby / Fish Analysis Project in which smallmouth bass fillets, from a fishing tournament, are analyzed for PCBs, mercury, and chlorinated pesticides contamination; a SRMT Spottail Shiner Fish Analysis Project, funded by EPA's Great Lakes National Program Office, in which fish tissues are analyzed for PCBs, dioxins, and other contaminants; and several SRMT air quality monitoring programs for ozone and NO/NO₂/NO_x sampling. A performance audit of the SRMT O₃ and SO₂ ambient air monitoring instruments, and site evaluation of its monitoring station was conducted in September 2005 by Region 2 staff. The results showed that the SRMT instruments were consistent with EPA criteria for ambient air instrumentation. In addition, the monitoring station was found to be consistent with siting criteria.

In April 2005, the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe hosted a 3-day training course on Data Quality Objectives (DQO) - Managing Uncertainty with Systematic Planning for Environmental

Decision Making. This training, funded by EPA OSWER, was provided by the Department of Energy's Richland Operations Office. The training, held in Syracuse, NY, was attended by environmental staff from the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force, and New York State.

Communications

Meetings between the Indian Nations and EPA Region 2 staff and managers are a useful mechanism to enhance communications. Since 1995, Region 2 has held Annual Indian Nation leaders meeting between the Regional senior managers and the Indian Nation leaders and representatives; the tenth such meeting was held November 16-17, 2005.

In addition, in December 2005, the EPA Region 2's managers and staff held the 14th annual two-day multiprogram meeting with St Regis Mohawk Tribe environmental representatives to discuss program issues and environmental program building. In addition, similar meetings with the Seneca Nation of Indians were held January 2000, late summer 2000, October 2003, May 2004, and most recently January 2006. EPA met with Oneida Indian Nation representatives in the Spring 2002, Sept 2004, December 2004, and a number of times during 2005. The Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force visited our offices on November 7, 2002; and again in April 2004 for multi-program discussions. The Spring Semi-Annual meeting was held in 2004 and 2005, again affording all the Indian Nations located in the Region 2 area with training and discussion opportunities.

Brownfields

In 1999, the Seneca Nation of Indians successfully applied for competitive brownfields pilot funding. The Seneca Nation used the funds EPA awarded for environmental investigations to inform redevelopment planning of a former rail yard which is at the centerpiece of their community revitalization effort. Seneca Nation leaders responsible for environmental issues, public health, planning and economic development have met with the Brownfields Inter-Agency Work Group (includes more than 20 federal and state agencies) to strategize approaches and resources to meet local needs.

As part of the Seneca Nation's overall desire to protect and preserve the land, the Seneca Nation is working to reclaim a long and narrow 100-acre rail yard in the City of Salamanca. The Seneca Nation Brownfields Pilot objectives included an environmental assessment of the rail yard and to develop site specific remediation alternatives based on the findings. With community and partner input, the Seneca Nation developed a comprehensive redevelopment plan to promote the reuse of the rail yard as part of an overall local and regional revitalization effort that is consistent with the cultural and economic goals of the Seneca Nation.

Consultation

Region 2 has initiated consultation with the Indian Nations on a wide variety of topics. In addition, an EPA meeting with New York State officials during the summer of 2005 and sessions with New York State at the Annual Indian Nation leaders meetings has further enhanced the consultation process.

Green buildings

The Pollution Prevention Act activities include promotion of the use of source reduction techniques. St Regis Mohawk Tribe proposes to construct a new building for the Tribe's Environmental Division to incorporate green building designs into the construction of their new building. The objective of this project is to develop a Community Involvement Plan to share information with the community regarding sustainable building practices and collect information from the community to use in the pre-design phase of the project; to conduct pre-design study to establish building design goals, objectives, and priorities; to develop a conceptual design; and to demonstrate the environmental benefits associated with the new building.

Inter-Agency Indian Nation Coordination

On Sept 12, 1991, EPA entered into a MOU with Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and the Indian Health Service (IHS). With a focus towards building Tribal capacity and protection of Tribal environments, the MOU identifies areas of mutual interest and responsibility of the four agencies and encourages the coordination of respective activities to promote more efficient resource utilization. Over the past years, EPA Region 2 has successfully coordinated with other federal agencies in our efforts to coordinate with the Indian Nations with regard to environmental protection. For example, EPA funds for Indian Nation water treatment plant facilities have been awarded in coordination with IHS. Emergency response training has been coordinated with Federal Emergency Management Act agency (FEMA).

Over the past three years, the EPA Region 2 has continued to actively explore coordination with other federal agencies. The Region held meetings with IHS and BIA with regard to solid waste concerns, and has had mtg./conf. call with IHS, US Department of Agriculture (USDA), HUD, with regard to St Regis Mohawk Tribe's Drinking Water system upgrade and co-funding the St Regis Mohawk Tribe's drinking water system upgrade. In addition, the Region coordinated with several federal agencies, such as: IHS, BIA, FEMA, NRCS, USDA, FWS, and ACE. This federal agency coordination has already had benefits regarding funding resources and technical assistance.

Another example is through the Solid Waste Interagency Working Group, the Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) was selected for funding under the Interagency Open Dump Cleanup Grant program. The Working Group agreed that funding is to come from USDA for this grant. USDA will channel the funds through its Rural Development program. EPA continues to providing technical assistance