



Message from the Director

I am delighted to share with you the inaugural American Indian Environmental Office newsletter. With all of the great work that EPA is doing in partnership with tribal environmental programs, we wanted



JoAnn Chase

to reach out to you, our partners, to spread the word about new programs and opportunities impacting tribal communities. More importantly, we want to engage you in this work, to hear your ideas on how we can continue to strengthen our existing partnerships, and to create new and meaningful endeavors.

U.S. EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson has charged our Agency to expand the conversation of environmentalism, and I have taken this charge to heart. Communications is a passion of mine, and in my tenure as director of the American Indian Environmental Office I have made it a priority to thoughtfully assess how we gather and distribute information – both internally and with those whom we serve.

At an Agency level, we just celebrated the first anniversary of the implementation of the Tribal Consultation Policy. This Policy establishes clear EPA standards for the consultation process, including defining the what, when, and how of consultation. By ensuring timely and consistent dialogue with tribal governments, the Tribal Consultation Policy exhibits good communication practices at the highest level: our government-to-government relationship.

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Questions? Comments? Submit them on the Tribal Portal:
<http://www.epa.gov/indian/contactus.htm>

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EPA Announces 2012-2013 Tribal ecoAmbassador Program

OITA is celebrating the success of its inaugural class of Tribal ecoAmbassadors in addition to announcing a call for applications to participate in next year's program.

The Tribal ecoAmbassadors program helps professors, students and community leaders develop locally-relevant solutions to protect public health and the environment. This past year, Tribal ecoAmbassadors created sustainable and local construction jobs by developing recycled and carbon negative building materials, and monitored community air quality with innovative mobile technology, among other topics.

Read more on page 3



Ambassador David Stone sits with two students on a bench made entirely of carbon-negative materials.

Meet a National Tribal Caucus Member

Interview with Clay Bravo, NTC Co-Chair, Hualapai Tribe

Q: What is your role with the National Tribal Caucus?

A: I am a Co-Chair. My job includes ensuring that information moves between NTC members and the Agency, coordinating meetings and activities and sharing information with Regions. The NTC also has relationships with several national groups at the Agency, like the Tribal Science Council and Tribal Water Council, and the program offices like Office of Water and Office of Air and Radiation. A main task is also to ensure that we have a presence with the Administrator, and that our issues are brought to the attention of the Agency.

Q: In your opinion, what are the most pressing issues in Indian country today?

A: There are several key areas. One is air and stationary sources. It's crucial that we balance our environmental concern with air and our tribal employment needs. Climate change is also an issue for all tribes. Whether you're in Alaska and pieces of your land are falling into the ocean, or you're on the coast of Louisiana where they have other large catastrophes, it's something that we all need to focus on. Providing clean water and safe sanitation on our lands is also very important, as many tribal lands are lacking this. Solid waste is another issue. Mainly, we need to work with the Agency to make sure that these issues are addressed more efficiently – we need to ensure that resources are available to manage these four priorities and that there are sufficient resources on the ground.

Q: What can a tribal member do to take action and affect change?

A: An individual tribal member can start with recycling at home. If they want to do more than that they can also step up and let it be known what their issues are by talking with BIA, IHS, EPA and the Regional Tribal Operations Committees. They should step up and become members of the NTC if they believe they have the capability, and talk to our state leaders, who have a voice at the national level. Really, the answer is to engage at all levels.



Clay Bravo

“[A PERSON] SHOULD STEP UP AND BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NTC IF THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE THE CAPABILITY, AND TALK TO OUR STATE LEADERS.”

-CLAY BRAVO

Upcoming Events

- **July 16-20, 2012** – Region 7 RTOC Meeting
- **July 16-17, 2012** – National Tribal Caucus Meeting
- **July 18, 2012** – National Tribal Operations Committee
- **July 26, 2012** – Indigenous Peoples Work Group
- **August 5-6, 2012** – Region 5 RTOC Meeting
- **August 14-16, 2012** – Region 10 RTOC Meeting
- **August 20-23, 2012** – Tribal Lands & Environment Forum
- **August 26-29, 2012** – National Tribal Environmental Council Conference
- **August 28-30, 2012** – Region 9 RTOC Meeting

For more upcoming events visit the [AIEO Tribal Portal](#)

Available Grants

- **July 22, 2012** – Tribal ecoAmbassador Program
- **July 27, 2012** - Climate and Integrated Assessment Modeling Studies (PDF)
- **July 31, 2012** - Application due Community Transformation Grant Funding Opportunity Announcement
- **August 6, 2012** - USDA Seeks Applications for Grants to Help Rural Businesses Create Jobs

For more grant information visit the [AIEO Tribal Portal](#)



At Diné College near Shiprock, New Mexico, Professor Mark C. Bauer designed a program where students have been wearing personal air monitors over the course of several weeks to record levels of air pollutants in their immediate environment. Data is then uploaded to a research database, with students presenting the findings to nearby communities. The goal of the program is to increase awareness of indoor and outdoor air pollution due to coal-burning stoves.

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Over the past months we have also worked hard to roll out the new charter of our top advisory committee, the National Tribal Operations Committee. Under the leadership of Assistant Administrator Michelle DePass, tribal leaders, EPA Tribal Program Managers and senior leaders worked together to assess the effectiveness of the Committee and how its operations could be improved in order to better communicate and meet the needs of federally-recognized tribes across the United States.

In the American Indian Environmental Office, we have taken a cue from these two larger initiatives and are looking inward. We are in the midst of reorganizing our office into teams that are designed to meet our goals in the most efficient way possible, and are flexible enough to adapt to the evolving role of our office. Within this organization, a new communications team cross-cuts the office, with the goal of effectively communicating all of our goals and progress.

This newsletter is the first of several new tools that you will notice over the coming months. In addition to the newsletter, we are working to streamline our web information to better share your tribal environmental accomplishments, and to expand our presence using social media, helping to ensure that there is always an open line of communication between us and those whom we serve.

Feel free to contact me or my staff if you have any questions or suggestions. I look forward to working with you on this most important endeavor.

Sincerely,

JoAnn Chase, AIEO Director

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“Building stronger tribal partnerships and increasing our support for Tribal communities are some of our top priorities,” said EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson.

“This group of ecoAmbassadors represents an effective partnership where the tribal community can direct EPA resources to the most pressing environmental problems they face, and start developing solutions.”

Selected Tribal ecoAmbassadors will receive a grant of up to \$40,000 to support a year-long initiative focused on air quality, water quality, climate adaptation, waste management, pollution and toxics. New this year, EPA is also seeking research proposals that explore the relevance, utility, and understanding of data and information from EPA’s Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) Program as it relates to tribal communities and facilities located on tribal lands.

Applications from Tribal College and University faculty are being accepted through July 22, 2012.

See page 5 to learn about one of the 2011 Tribal ecoAmbassador projects in Tohono O’odham Nation.

2011–2012 Tribal EcoAmbassadors

- **Dr. Deborah Hunter**, Turtle Mountain Community College – Sampling private well drinking water
- **Dr. David Stone**, Tohono O’odham Community College – Using recycled glass and adobe to create carbon-negative building materials
- **Dr. Kerry Hartman**, Fort Berthold Community College – Sampling groundwater for contaminants
- **Renee Dufault**, Fort Peck Community College – Creating awareness of toxics exposure and disease
- **Rachel Brazil**, Candeska Cikana Community College – Improving campus sustainability through recycling
- **Sara Plaggmeyer**, Little Big Horn College – Assessing non-point sources on Little Big Horn River
- **Dr. Mark C. Bauer**, Diné College – Participatory air quality monitoring
- **Dr. Jen Janecek-Hartman**, United Tribes Tech – Campus-wide contest on energy efficiency using technology upgrades

EPA and AmeriCorps Announce Partnership

On January 4, 2012, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps) announced that Indian General Assistance Program (GAP) grants may be used as match funding for tribally-sponsored AmeriCorps programs.

More than \$3 million worth of AmeriCorps funding is dedicated to support tribal communities every year, but often, tribal governments face financial challenges that prevent them from providing the required matched funding. AmeriCorps members help address key challenges facing Native American communities, including education, disaster response and environmental preservation. EPA manages GAP to assist eligible tribal governments in building environmental programs needed to regulate and manage their environments. The combination of AmeriCorps grants and EPA program funding such as GAP enable tribal governments to bring in energetic, committed people to help build an environmental program.

"In this time of limited resources, it is critical that our tribal partners are aware of and able to use all available EPA financial support to ensure tribal environmental needs are being addressed," said Michelle DePass, Assistant Administrator of EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs. "This initiative is another example of how EPA is working to ensure that all communities have equal opportunity to develop solutions to their most pressing environmental problems."

Two types of AmeriCorps grants are available specifically for Indian Tribes: a planning grant (up to \$50,000) to help support a tribe's development of a future AmeriCorps program, or an operational grant to recruit AmeriCorps members to serve the community.

AmeriCorps members can help tribes expand services, build capacity, develop partnerships, create sustainable programs, and recruit and manage other volunteers, and AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance, education award, and other benefits. "AmeriCorps members are a valuable resource to help tribal leaders meet immediate community needs and make a lasting difference," said John Gomperts, Director of AmeriCorps. "We are pleased to team up with EPA to find ways to make it easier for tribes to participate in AmeriCorps."

To use EPA grant funds for an AmeriCorps grant, the proposed activities must be within EPA's scope of work.

More information is available online at <http://www.epa.gov/tribal/pdf/ameri-corps-gap-fact-sheet-122111.pdf>

National Tribal Operations Committee

In order to improve communication and build stronger partnerships with the tribes, EPA established a National Tribal Operations Committee (NTOC) in February 1994. The NTOC is comprised of 19 elected tribal leaders (National Tribal Caucus) and EPA's senior leadership team, including the Administrator, the Deputy Administrator and the Agency's Assistant Administrators and Regional Administrators.

This year's NTOC meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. on July 18, 2012. As in years past, the meeting will be in conjunction with the Annual EPA Budget Meeting, where NTOC members will participate in setting priorities and budget formulation for the upcoming fiscal year.

In addition, the NTOC will hold planning meetings on July 16 and 17, and executive members of the Caucus will present their budget priorities to staff from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). More information will be posted to the AIEO Tribal Portal as the meetings get closer.

The NTOC meets on a regular basis to discuss implementation of the environmental protection programs for which EPA and the tribes share responsibility as co-regulators. All tribes are encouraged to communicate with the members of the NTOC.

Executive members of the NTOC met with Administrator Jackson at the 2011 NTOC meeting. Pictured left to right: Erica Helms-Schenk, Clay Bravo, Administrator Jackson, Gerald Wagner.



Tribal Delegations Visiting AIEO

- Cheyenne River Sioux, March 27; Discussed the Mni Waste Water Company and the possibility of additional funding to match a USDA grant
- Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, March 28; Discussed Treaty Rights at Risk, GAP and a Climate Change Symposium scheduled for July
- Black Mesa Water Coalition, April 17; Discussed pollution and tribal youth programs
- James Anaya, United Nations Special Rapporteur, May 3; Discussed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in the U.S. Government.
- Hopi delegation, May 22, discussed arsenic mitigation and drinking water issues.

**If you would like to organize a visit to AIEO contact Marissa McInnis at mcinnis.marissa@epa.gov

Carbon Negative Building: Tohono O'odham

Serving as 2011-2012 selected Ambassadors, David Stone and Jane Latane applied for the Tribal ecoAmbassador Program with the hopes of resolving two tribal challenges -- having too much waste and too little building material. The idea of taking a positive and holistic approach to seemingly separate environmental issues is based on a central principle that unites each of the project participants: materials management.

The Tohono O'odham Nation's solid waste facility collects roughly 500 tons of waste each month, which must be trucked 65 miles from the reservation, where it is dumped for a fee of \$32/ton. While a recycling program is an obvious way to alter the situation, the College wants to initiate a program that not only collects waste, but utilizes it in a new and permanent form as building materials.



Students used carbon-neutral materials to construct projects on their campus.

The Nation also faces a chronic housing shortage. Yet, at the same time, the Nation's vast land holdings include thousands of tons of sand, gravel yards and earthen materials that could be utilized. The Tohono O'odham Community College is taking action to find a sustainable response to both issues – using local materials and waste to build in a way that would save time, energy and money, while also promoting local environmental education and economic opportunities.

Most recently, Stone and his students finished a campus bench made entirely of the carbon-negative materials, and are starting to build campus sidewalks in the same way. The team has laid a solid foundation on which to develop this project, including leveraging equipment, creating awareness of green building on campus, and developing critical partnerships with HUD and the Tohono O'odham Tribal Environmental Program.

Hot Topic: Climate Change

Even though EPA is limited in what we can do to address greenhouse gases, the Agency is working hard to identify what we can do to help tribes and others adapt to climate change.

Here is a sample of the work taking place related to tribes:

- EPA's Office of Policy is leading the development of an EPA Climate Change Adaptation Plan and has been engaged in a thorough consultation process on it. This plan will be an Agency-wide blueprint for how our programs need to be adjusted to account for the changing climate and will guide the development of subsequent regional and program office plans. A final document is anticipated soon.
- AIEO has initiated a national priority project in Alaska in coordination with the regional tribal office to develop climate change adaptation tools, including educational materials. This effort responds to the action items developed at the Tribal Leaders Summit in Juneau in September 2010. While this project is being implemented in Alaska, we anticipate that the tools and resources developed will be transferable to tribes elsewhere.
- AIEO is working with the Canadian government and the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources, an indigenous not-for-profit organization, to host a workshop that will leverage tribal expertise to develop climate change adaptation strategies that ensure food security and protect traditional plant use. The forum will be an interactive workshop where participants are key contributors and everyone involved has valuable knowledge to share. Participants will develop draft action plans that address their own situations and needs and outline key next steps. This workshop will take place September 18-20, in the Village of Kanatakon (St. Regis) in Akwesasne (near Ontario, Quebec and New York borders). A limited number of seats remain. If you are interested in attending, please contact Paige Ingram by June 29 at (202) 564-9957.
- AIEO is coordinating a Tribal-EPA climate adaptation workgroup, which has the goal of improving tribal capacity, coordination, and engagement in climate change adaptation activities. They will also develop proposals for additional work or more specific recommendations that would be most effective in Indian country.

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