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| F:\NEIEN_LocalCopy\EN_TGG_logo_small.jpg | Tribal Exchange Network News |  |
| **Issue #2** |  | Spring 2015 |
| **In this issue:**  <> Tribal-EN Conference  <> Administrator McCarthy  <> Tribal Needs & Capacity  <> EN2015 National Meeting  <> EN & E-Enterprise Updates  <> Tribal Consultation on E-Enterprise Portal  **Important Dates:**  **April 8, 2015**  *E-Enterprise Portal Consultation Webinar (\*see article for details)*  **June 28-July 1, 2015**  *NCAI Semi-annual Meeting; Minneapolis, MN*  **Sept. 29-Oct 1, 2015**  *EN2015 National Meeting; Philadelphia, PA (\*See article for details)*  **October 1-2, 2015**  *TGG Semi-annual Meeting; Philadelphia, PA*  On the Horizon  Be on the lookout for the draft version of the FY16 EN/EE Grant Program Solicitation Notice in early July. It will be followed by two stakeholder conference calls. The draft notice will be open for review and comment at that time; the final notice is planned for released in September. Sign up for [EN Alerts](http://www.exchangenetwork.net/exchange-network-alerts/) or the [Tribal EN](mailto:lydia.scheer@nau.edu?subject=Please%20add%20me%20to%20the%20Tribal%20EN%20email%20list) email list to receive updates. | Annual Tribal-EN Conference Marks a New Path Forward ITEP & the TGG worked with the Gila River Indian Community (GRIC) to host the 2015 Tribal Exchange Network Conference (Tribal-EN) last month on the GRIC reservation near Phoenix, Arizona. Attended by nearly 100 professionals representing over 40 tribal organizations and a dozen public and private entities, this year’s Conference was the most well attended event in its history. Nearly half of the attendees came to the Tribal-EN with little to no experience in the EN, and as a result, were newly inspired to further explore opportunities available within the EN.  Feedback received from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with many citing the opportunities to learn from other tribes, bolstered by the excellent turnout, as the most positive element. The most common improvement identified by attendees was to increase the level of involvement by EPA, both from regional and headquarter offices, so as to help reinforce EPA’s commitment to the success of tribal EN projects.  The agenda offered up numerous topics addressing a wide range of interests, and was full of informative presentations on tribal projects and activities, along with information and updates from EPA and other EN partners. A portion of the agenda was dedicated to breakout sessions, which provided for a presentation track and a workshops track. The US EPA’s Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds (OWOW) offered one-on-one help sessions on WQX-web data submissions. Other topics included: EN basics, EN grants, EPA’s Virtual Node/Virtual Environment Service, E-Enterprise, and updates from the National Tribal Caucus and National Congress of American Indians.  The official conference sessions were enhanced by the addition of tours to the GRIC’s wetlands restoration and air monitoring project sites graciously provided by GRIC staff. An evening reception and poster session was hosted to help foster networking amongst conference attendees and exhibitors, and highlight additional work by tribes. This reception was sponsored by the generous contributions of the Tribal-EN Sponsors: AWQMS/Gold Systems (Platinum), Agilaire LLC (Gold), open-environment.org (Gold), Windsor Solutions (Silver), MeteoStar-A Division of Sutron (Silver).  A detailed agenda and presentations from the Tribal-EN are available for download from <http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/tribal-en-events.html>.  ITEP and the TGG are looking ahead to future conferences to truly help elevate tribal issues and standing in the greater EN community. If your tribe is interested in hosting a future conference, or you have ideas for presenters, sessions, etc., please contact [ITEP](mailto:lydia.scheer@nau.edu?subject=Tribal-EN%20meeting) and let us know! TGG Chair Meets with Administrator McCarthy During a recent trip to Washington DC, Frank Harjo, TGG Chair, had the opportunity to briefly meet with US EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy at the NCAI Executive Council Winter Session, to discuss Exchange Network-related priorities and issues that affect tribal participation, as identified by the TGG.    Talking points were developed from assessments conducted during the recent Tribal-EN Conference and the current direction of the Exchange Network from the perspective of the TGG. During the meeting, Frank communicated the following needs and priorities to the Administrator:  ***<>*** *EPA-OEI and the EN needs to acknowledge the Indian Policy in all of its activities and work towards developing stronger relationships with tribal partners;*    *Left to Right: NCAI Deputy Director Robert Holden, EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy, NCAI President Brian Cladoosby, and TGG Chair Frank Harjo*  ***<>*** *a widely disparate technical infrastructure and capacity exists among all tribes impacting existing and potential EN projects;*  ***<>*** *the lack of resources for operation & maintenance activities is problematic and does not support the long-term sustainability of many EN projects;*  ***<>*** *the uniqueness of tribal scenarios demands flexibility with regard to project requirements and/or funding constraints.*  The TGG will be following-up with JoAnn Chase (EPA Office of International and Tribal Affairs, American Indian Environmental Office) regarding the issues raised to Administrator McCarthy, and will continue to communicate openly with the EPA-OEI staff as well as EN governance bodies. Understanding Needs to Build Tribal Capacity in the Network During the Tribal-EN Conference, the TGG began scoping efforts to seek information from tribal representatives regarding the current status and future goals of their environmental data collection efforts. Of particular interest to the TGG are the on-going needs and concerns of tribes regarding EN projects, policies and funding. Over the next several months, the TGG will be asking tribes to share their input and experiences on these issues through a variety of mechanisms so that the TGG can continue to help promoting tribal priorities to EPA and elevating tribal issues to the national agenda. Needs Assessment One of the ways the TGG is gathering information is through the use of a needs assessment tool. This easy-to-use [online form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CDyBh5PjXY6RpbjXboUFcErrb240NUE-chjYrambfCE/viewform) is available through the Tribes and the Exchange Network website; all tribes, whether working on EN projects or not, are encouraged to submit the assessment. This data will be analyzed and evaluated by the TGG to better understand the current trends in tribal data management, and, as appropriate, used to inform TGG feedback to EPA and EN governance. Mentorship Network ITEP is also working with EN stakeholders to identify appropriate mentor tribes as well as tribes in need of assistance on implementing and improving their EN project activities. The goal of this effort is to build tribal capacity through the direct exchange of information and expertise between mentor and mentee. Requests to participate in the mentorship program, either as mentor or mentee, can be made through the [online request form](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1FkYfScOMVoPLp4GVuunPtXBckFbiblz1AM2LZeKzHrg/viewform) on the Tribes and the Exchange Network website. ITEP and the TGG will review all requests for appropriateness and feasibility. If possible, a match will be made between mentee and mentor, and ITEP will facilitate logistics and outcomes for the project. ITEP has funding available to assist with tribal travel expenses, as well as a contractual fee-for-service for the mentoring tribe, if requested. For more information or assistance, contact [ITEP](mailto:lydia.scheer@nau.edu?subject=EN%20Mentorship%20Project). EN2015: Supporting the Business of Environmental Protection The Exchange Network National Meeting (EN2015) will be held September 29–October 1, 2015, in Philadelphia, PA. E-Enterprise will feature prominently at this year’s event, and there will be numerous sessions on how the EN and E-Enterprise can support each other. This event is free to attend; more information can be found online [here](http://www.exchangenetwork.net/meetings-and-events/en2015/).  Presentation abstracts are still being accepted; anyone interested in submitting a request is encouraged to do so as soon as possible before space fills up! ***This is an opportunity to showcase successful project activities and interact with key EN stakeholders—travel support may be available for tribal professionals interested in presenting.*** The project planning team is also looking for more volunteers to moderate sessions during the conference. Contact [ITEP](mailto:lydia.scheer@nau.edu?subject=EN2015) for details. ECOS Announces Changes to E-Enterprise & Exchange Network Staffing After a competitive process started in 2014, the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) announced their selection of the E-Enterprise for the Environment Coordinator. **Peter Soyka**, an environmental policy, strategy, and management expert and the founder and President of Soyka & Company, LLC, a business strategy and sustainability consultancy. He has performed scores of projects for U.S. EPA over the years, ranging from regulatory development support and program evaluation to stakeholder engagement and meeting and conference planning. He may be contacted at peter [at] soykaandcompany.com.  Early in 2015, **Kurt Rakouskas**, long-time Coordinator of the Exchange Network, both in an independent role and as part of ECOS staff during its development, announced his planned departure from the EN. Kurt will be working with ECOS and the Exchange Network Leadership Council (ENLC) to help identify a replacement over the coming months. ECOS has released a request for proposals for the EN Coordinator position, whose sole objective is to advance the success of the Exchange Network, its joint Governance structure, and its Partners (i.e., EPA, States, Territories, Tribes, local governments, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, regulated communities, and others). The Exchange Network Coordinator is an independent contractor to ECOS. ECOS’ Request for Proposal (RFP) EN-ENC-15 is available at: <http://www.exchangenetwork.net/en-coordinator-rfp/>. Responses are due by 5:00 PM ET on Tuesday, March 31, 2015.    **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*Tribal\*\*\*Consultation\*\*\*Opportunity\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***  **<<>>*E-Enterprise Portal*—**this activity is related to the E-Enterprise for the Environment initiative from EPA. The goal of the Portal is to allow users to customize how they access environmental information, and to decrease the time and effort needed to retrieve information and interact with other stakeholders. The Portal will provide a more uniform way for environmental agencies to communicate with regulated entities and the general public.  A webinar on the E-Enterprise Portal will be held April 8, 2015, from 3-5 pm EASTERN. The webinar will be an opportunity for tribes to obtain information about the development of the portal as well as to ask questions and provide feedback to EPA. More information, including invitation to tribal leaders, timeline for consultation, and an E-Enterprise Fact Sheet can be found on the Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website: <http://tcots.epa.gov/oita/TConsultation.nsf/>  Interested parties must register in advance for the webinar by April 7, 2015 at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/8313252751244262401>.  **\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*** | | |
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