

TNTCX NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020 Issue No. 9

Editors: Michael P. Fedoroff and Annie Harrison



TNTCX Director's Message

Welcome back everyone to a new issue of the TNTCX newsletter. Wow, what an incredible spring we've faced together. I pray that you and your families have been able to stay safe during the Covid-19 health crisis. As all of you are aware, many of the Native American communities with whom we work have not been so lucky. Most tribes have had to take unprecedented measures to protect themselves from this invisible outside threat. As I write this, USACE offices and tribes are just now re-opening their office doors for business. We hope you'll understand as much of our content this month is playing catch-up from the weeks leading up to our lockdown.

In this issue's *Tribal Perspectives* section, we have a contribution from Ms. Annie Harrison on the importance of traditional foodways. Our USACE focus this issue is provided by Jeremy Decker on SPD emergency assistance to the Navajo Nation in the face of the Covid-19 outbreak. The *TNTCX Update* catches up on outreach events from January and February, including events partnered with the Institute for Water Resources. As usual, the *News and Notes* section is full of information on coming events, newly released publications, and exciting training opportunities (Most of have been cancelled due to the Pandemic). We think there's something there for everyone. As we head into summer, we invite you all to contribute to the community by letting us all know about your initiatives, your successes, your comments and suggestions. Please all of you stay safe.



Ron Kneebone, Ph.D.
Director
Tribal Nations Technical Center

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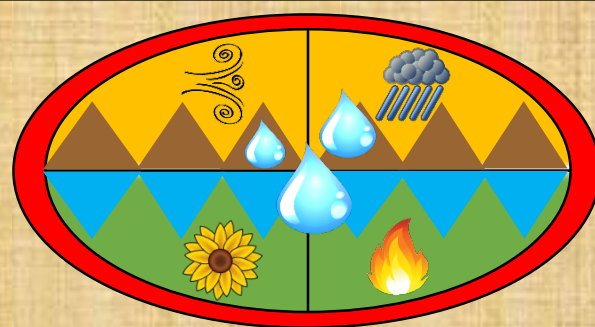
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Tribal Perspectives

Tribal Perspectives: Restoring Traditional Foodways

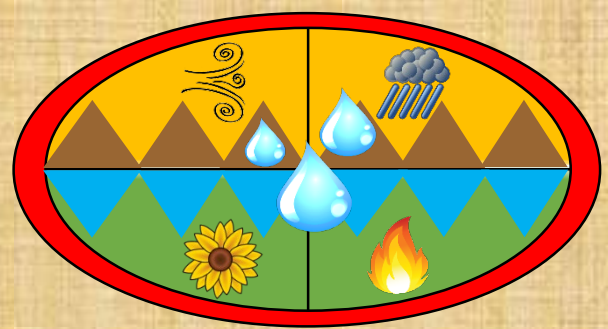
Written by Annie Harrison

Cross culturally, food is used as a tool to bring people together. Foodways are also reflective of cultural practices and values and can be used as a tool of enculturation. Native American tribes all have a rich history of traditional food practices, and tribal members are increasingly reconnecting with these methods to teach younger members about tribal cultural identity and history. Tribes also seek to reconnect with traditional foods and have control over their foodways to solve health problems like obesity and diabetes.

Every tribe has a unique culture and relationship with food. Tribes historically hunted and gathered foods within their tribal lands across present day North America using methods specific to the landscape in which they lived. Colonialism disrupted these foodways as tribes were forced from their ancestral lands and displaced to new ecosystems. Tribes also faced the attempts of the US government to erase tribal cultures in favor of western values which led to further changes in diet. These factors resulted in change for Native American foodways which further resulted in negative impacts to tribal health and food security.

This disconnect from traditional foodways factors into challenges faced by most tribes today including obesity, diabetes, poverty, food insecurity, and food deserts. All tribes, with their unique cultures, seek to address these problems in different ways, but they all strive for the same goals – control over their foodways (food sovereignty) and reconnecting with traditional foods. A few notable initiatives to address food sovereignty and connect with tribal history through food are documented below.

Three tribes in the Klamath River Basin in Oregon and California have also developed relationships with university researchers and governmental organizations to enhance food security in the region. Many tribal members in this area can be reported as food insecure, and there are high rates of poverty and occurrences of food related conditions like diabetes. The Karuk, Yurok, and Klamath tribes have been building relationships for years with UC Berkeley, the US Forest Service, and a local nonprofit, and these relationships culminated in a four-million-dollar collaborative project funded by the US Department of Agriculture to build a sustainable regional food system. This project saw extreme success with huge turnouts to education programs, rehabilitation of 17 abandoned orchards, construction of greenhouses for tribes free of charge, creation of a field research institute, and 65% of participants surveyed reporting that their community was more food secure. The relationships built and maintained through this project are expected to continue to produce successful initiatives in the future, and participants are hopeful that this success can be reproduced in other tribal communities.



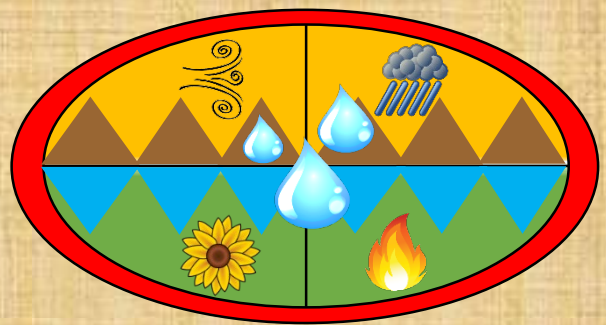
Tribal Perspectives

Finally, in understanding traditional foodways it is important to understand that the very definition of “traditional” can be contextual and contestable. This debate over the meaning of traditional foods is evident in many Native American cultures that make frybread. Frybread is thought of by many as a tribal food, and it is often served at tribal festivals, tribal restaurants, and even in the Native Foods Café at the National Museum of the American Indian. Members of tribes which make frybread may consider it to be a traditional food because it is something that they have grown up eating, however, it is not a traditional food in the sense that tribes made it pre-colonialization. Some Navajo consider frybread to be a symbol of their survival through Western expansion. Conversely, some Anishinaabe Ojibway do not consider it a tribal food at all. In a study of Tohono O’odham foodways, members all reported differing feelings about the inclusion of frybread as a “traditional” native food. It is significant to understand this example to better understand that each and every tribe has a unique relationship with food and their own traditions which may include complex ways of defining what is traditional. It is incumbent upon the person learning about the tribe to learn the differences and not make assumptions about the role of certain foods in tribal diets and cultures.

Many Native American tribes are seeking to reconnect with their traditional foodways which have been damaged by colonialism and displacement from ancestral lands. As tribes create initiatives to reconnect with these foodways or restore their food sovereignty, they may reach out to other organizations to create these initiatives. It is important to respect tribal knowledge as these partnerships are formed and understand that all tribes have a unique food culture. Connecting with traditional foodways allows for increased understanding of tribal culture and identity and is also a way to celebrate cultural heritage. Ask yourself how your USACE Corps District may help, but more importantly ask the Tribe!



An education program for the Karuk Herbarium



Tribal Perspectives

Mihesuah, Devon

2016 Indigenous Health Initiatives, Frybread, and the Marketing of Nontraditional “Traditional” American Indian Foods in *Journal of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association* 3(2): 45-69.

Olson, Sara

2019 The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, Remaking Popelutchum in *News From Native California* 33(1):18-27.

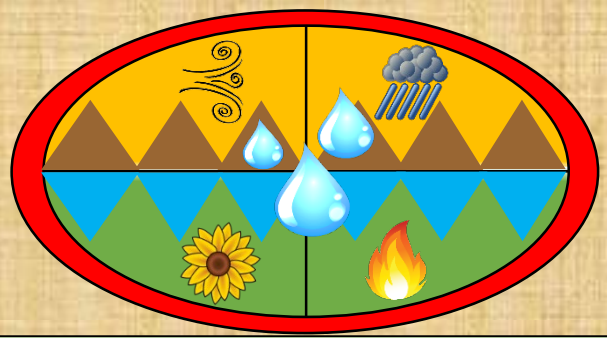
Sowerwine, Jennifer, Lisa Hillman, Daniel Sarna-Wojcicki, Frank K. Lake, Megan Mucioki, and Edith Friedman

2019 Enhancing Indigenous Food Sovereignty: A Five-Year Collaborative Tribal-University Research and Extension Project in California and Oregon in *Journal of Agriculture, Foods Systems, and Community Development* 9(Supplement 2): 167-189.



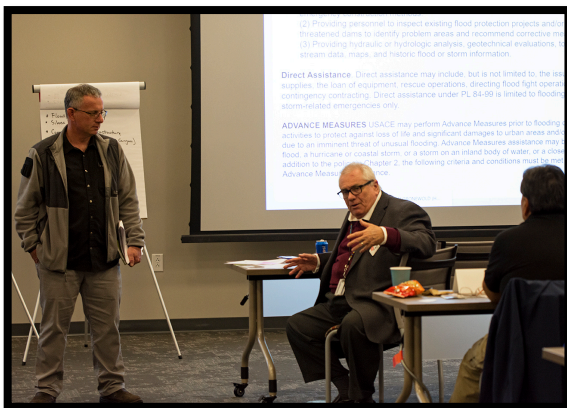
An education program about preparing and cooking Pacific Lamprey

TNTCX Update



IWR Workshop with SPD Federally Recognized Tribes

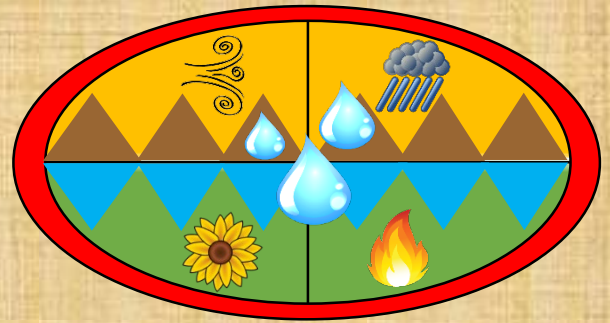
On 11 February, TNTCX Director, Dr. Ron Kneebone, in collaboration with the Institute for Water Resources (IWR) conducted a workshop with South Pacific Division (SPD) federally recognized tribes. The meeting was held at Albuquerque District's recently renovated headquarters building. The meeting was a definite success, attended by tribes from across New Mexico and Arizona despite a driving snowstorm that created a 2-hour delay for government institutions around the city. The purpose of the meeting was twofold, first to inform tribal government members about USACE programs and authorities that they might find useful, and second to elicit input from those Tribes present who have a history of working successfully with the USACE in the past about their experiences and suggestions for USACE process improvement. Workshop participants included Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and Sacramento District personnel representing programs and project management, planning and plan formulation, readiness and contingency Operations, as well as regulatory. As a positive note, inquiries about potential new projects are already being received by USACE personnel.



LEFT: RCO Chief Jeff Daniels (left) and TNTCX Director Dr. Ron Kneebone (seated right) explaining USACE emergency response authorities and procedures during the workshop.

RIGHT: Mr. Loren Panteah from the Pueblo of Zuni addressing the workshop on water resource challenges his community faces.

TNTCX Update



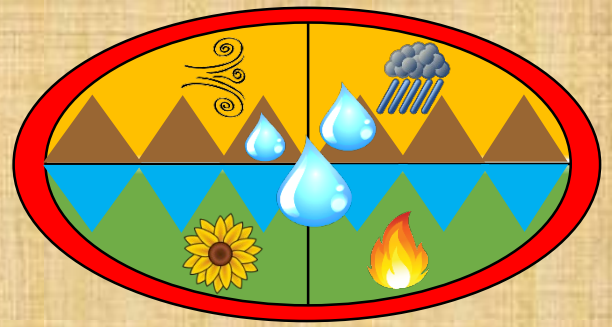
IWR and Tulsa District Native American Outreach Meeting

Dr. Ron Kneebone, Tribal Nations Technical Center of Expertise (TNTCX) Director, in collaboration with IWR and Tulsa District for an outreach meeting with Native American communities and Tulsa's area of responsibility on 18 February 2020. The purpose of the meeting was to inform Tribes about the opportunities available by working with the USACE. Additionally, because Tulsa District has a proven track record of working with tribal governments, to elicit from participants their experiences working with USACE as well as any perceived impediments inherent in USACE business processes.



Dr. Ron Kneebone (TNTCX) presenting at the meeting.

TNTCX Update

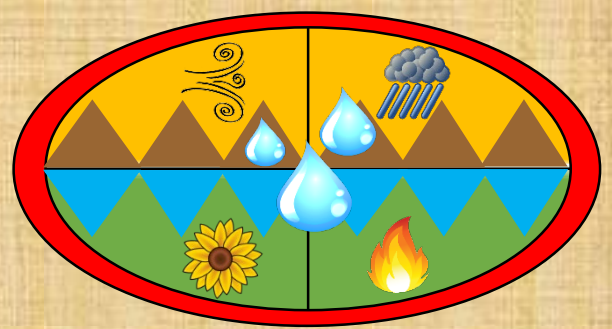


Federal Highway Southeastern Region Consultation Meeting

TNTCX Deputy Director Michael Fedoroff was an invited speaker at the annual Federal Highway Southeastern Region consultation meeting that took place from 18 February to 21 February, 2020. The meeting was held at the Chickasaw Nation Cultural Center in Sulphur, Oklahoma. The three day meeting was well attended by Southeastern Tribes including the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Chickasaw Nation, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma, Muscogee Creek Nation, Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town and the Thlopthlocco Tribal Town. The meeting was co-organized by the Chickasaw Nation and The University of Alabama. Topics discussed included primarily ancestral homeland issues and water resource infrastructure in Indian Country.

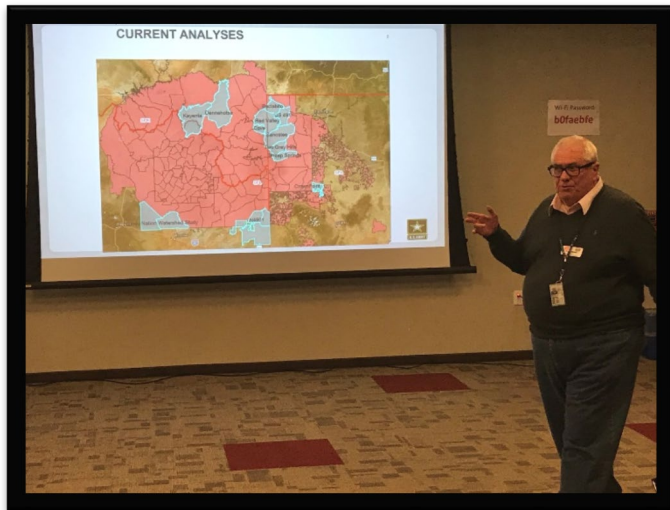


TNTCX Update



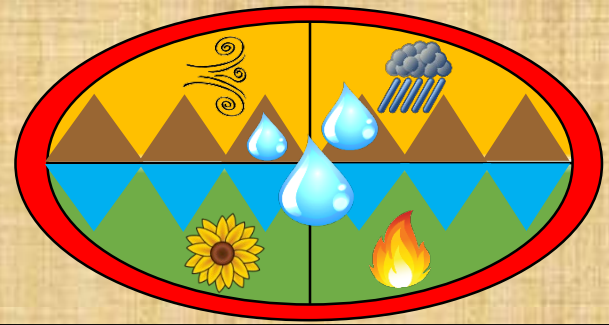
Collaboration Workshop with IWR and Navajo Nation

TNTCX Director, Dr. Ron Kneebone in collaboration with IWR participates in a workshop with representatives from the Navajo Nation in Window Rock, Navajo Nation (AZ), on 3 March 2020. Navajo Nation attendees included Tribal Council Delegates, representatives from Navajo Water Resources Division, Departments of Transportation and Justice, Navajo Chapter officials and members. The purpose of the meeting was twofold, first to inform participants about the opportunities available by working with the USACE. Second, to elicit from participants their experiences working with USACE as well as any perceived impediments inherent in USACE business processes.



Dr. Ron Kneebone, TNTCX director, presents information and assists facilitating the meeting.

Partnering Tips

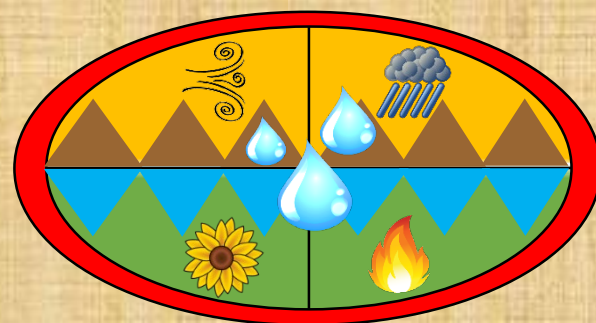


Partnering Tips

- Regularly conducting outreach to tribes in your district is an important part of developing successful relationships.
- Understand that a lack of resources may cause unresponsiveness from tribes rather than lack of interest or concern.
- Support shared skills and strengths in a collective effort to accomplish objectives. Tribes have a lot to offer USACE in both skill and expertise.
- Recognize that during a pandemic, tribal elders may not be available for quick decisions. Patience and understanding is key during this challenge. Elders are a treasure to Tribal Nations and must be protected.



Chickasaw Nation Warriors (photo courtesy of Michael Fedoroff)



News and Notes

Tribal Engagement Focus

With contributions from our Tribal Partners, USACE Tribal Liaisons, and TNTCX Staff

Upcoming Events, Cancellations and Announcements:

To Bridge A Gap Meeting Cancelled

March 30 - April 2, 2020

Tulsa, OK

This annual meeting co-hosted by the USDA Forest Service and Tribal Partners has been cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19.

Society of American Archaeology (SAA) Annual Meeting Cancelled

April 22 - 26, 2020

Austin, TX

The 85th Annual Meeting for the SAA has been cancelled due to concerns about COVID-19.

<https://www.saa.org/annual-meeting>

21st National Tribal Preservation Conference

POSTPONED

Elton, LA

This year's conference is hosted by the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana. Workshops, field trips, and presentations will be offered. This event has been postponed and will be rescheduled for a later date this year due to concerns about COVID-19.

<https://www.nathpo.org/2020/01/24/21st-national-tribal-preservation-conference-2020/>

American Anthropological Association (AAA) Annual Meeting

November 18 - 22, 2020

St. Louis, MO

The theme for this year's annual meeting is Truth and Responsibility, encouraging attendees to examine equity, diversity, inclusion, and analysis of power.

https://www.americananthro.org/annual_meeting?&navItemNumber=566

Publications:

Tribes of the Oregon Country: Cultural Plant Harvests and Indigenous Relationships with Ancestral Lands in the Twenty-first Century

Rebecca Dobkins, Susan Stevens Hummel, Ceara Lewis, Grace Pochis, and Emily Dickey

Documented human presence in Oregon dates to at least 12,000 to 14,500 years ago, and Oregon Tribes "have ongoing legal, ecological, and cultural relationships with their ancestral lands even when they have been forcibly removed from them."

In this article, the authors discuss research they conducted to document the importance of understanding Native cultural plant harvesting and access rights on U.S. government land. The authors argue that "to sustain the Pacific Northwest's ecosystems and all the people who now call the region home, then there is a role for management that includes traditional knowledge...because Indigenous systems for tending plants and animals have been influencing forests and sustaining humans for millennia."

PDF Available at:

https://www.fs.fed.us/pnw/pubs/journals/pnw_2017_dobkins001.pdf

Training Opportunities:

E0581: Emergency Operations for Tribal Governments

July 6 - 9, 2020

Emmitsburg, MD

Registration contact:

<https://training.fema.gov/apply/>

E0580: Emergency Management Framework for Tribal Governments

August 17 - 20, 2020

Emmitsburg, MD

Registration contact:

<https://training.fema.gov/apply/>

E0582: Mitigation for Tribal Governments

September 14 - 17, 2020

Emmitsburg, MD

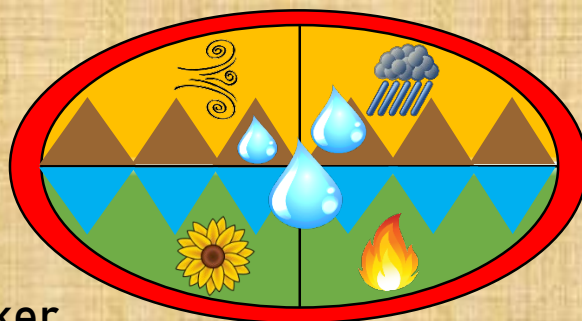
Registration contact:

<https://training.fema.gov/apply/>

Editor's Note: With today's busy schedule it can be tough to find time for professional development. One way to increase knowledge and awareness of tribal matters is through reading!

What are you reading?

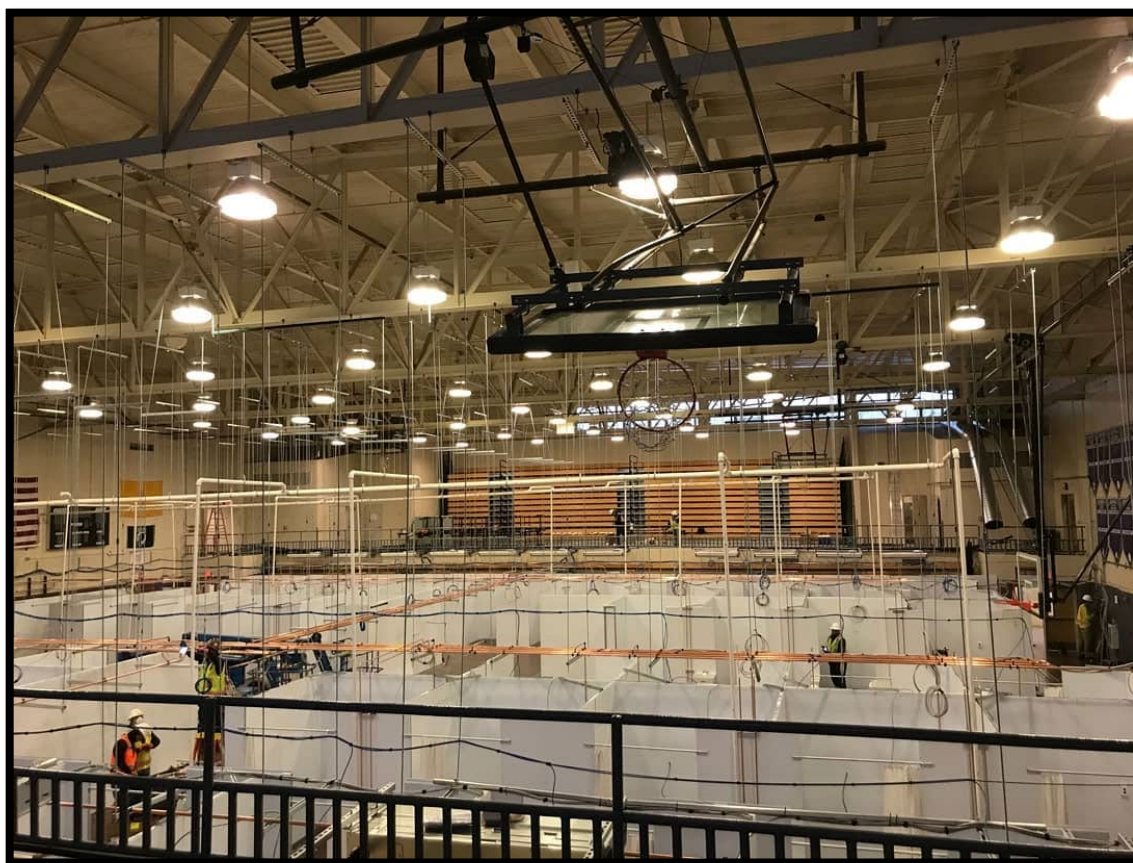
We would love for you to reach out with suggestions for publications that have impacted you.



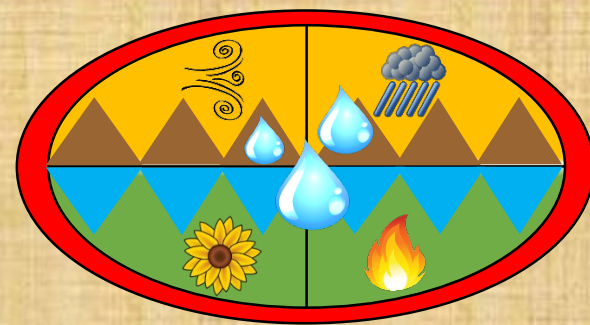
Tribal Engagement Spotlight

Albuquerque District Tribal Liaison Jeremy Decker

The novel coronavirus, known as COVID-19 has touched all parts of the nation over the first 6 months of 2020, and Indian Country has seen a significant number of cases. The Navajo Nation has been hit particularly hard, as it has the highest per capita infection rate anywhere in the United States. A number of factors have contributed to this high infection rate including limited access to water for sanitary purposes, homes that contain multi-generational families, and a lack of hospital infrastructure and staffing to support treatment and isolation of COVID-positive patients. This March, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requested the assistance of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to assist in building alternative care site (ACS) facilities across the United States to provide additional hospital bed space to support the fight against COVID-19. ACS facilities consist of pre-existing buildings that can be retrofitted to house patients, and can provide basic medical support, in particular, piped oxygen to COVID-positive patients. Buildings used across the country include arenas, convention centers, hotels, decommissioned hospitals, and gymnasiums.



View of the completed ACS facility a Miyamura High School in Gallup, New Mexico. The facility, completed in 12 days, contains 60 individual patient rooms, plumbing, piped oxygen, and has negative pressure to keep air inside the gym from circulating to other parts of the high school.

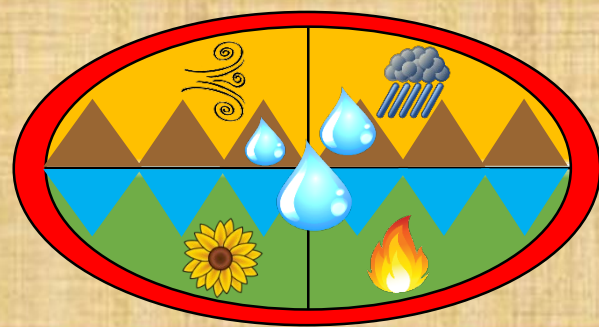


Tribal Engagement Spotlight

On April 3, Jeremy Decker, Tribal Liaison for the Albuquerque District, deployed to the Navajo Nation capital in Window Rock, Arizona to assist FEMA in the effort to identify locations for ACS to be built. Mr. Decker served as Local Government Liaison for the mission, and worked in the Navajo Nation Health Command Operation Center to coordinate efforts between USACE, Navajo Nation leadership, and numerous federal agencies working on the emergency response including FEMA, Indian Health Service, U.S. Department of Human and Health Service, AZ and NM National Guard, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Indian Education, and Disaster Medical Assistance Teams from the National Disaster Medical Service. USACE assessment teams from the Albuquerque District and Los Angeles District assessed 10 potential sites for feasibility as ACS. The Navajo Nation selected two sites, one in Chinle, Arizona and another in Shiprock, New Mexico, and also worked with the State of New Mexico to identify a third site in Gallup, New Mexico. Working under difficult conditions on the front line of some of the hardest hit hot spots in the country, USACE teams converted three high school gymnasiums into ACS facilities; each in under 14 days. These facilities provide an additional 150 hospital beds for treatment of non-acute (patients with less severe cases) COVID-positive patients, allowing hospitals on the Nation to maintain bed space to treat non-COVID patients, and those COVID-positive patients that require acute, or ICU-level care. Following construction, the Navajo Nation engaged numerous federal and state partners to provide medical equipment and supplies, and staffing to the facilities. Each facility was brought online by mid-May.



Albuquerque District Tribal liaison, Jeremy Decker (left), speaks with the ACS assessment team from Los Angeles District while assessing the Tuba City Juvenile Detention Center.

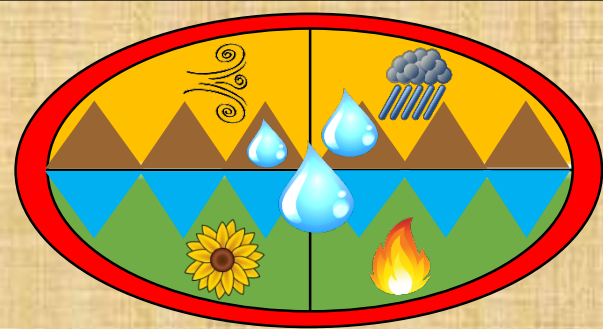


Tribal Engagement Spotlight

Navajo Nation leadership praised USACE teams for their efforts. Vice President Myron Lizer said, “We are very thankful to the Army Corps of Engineers, Navajo Area IHS, Navajo Department of Health, and others for collaborating to establish these facilities to isolate individuals. It is making a great difference and saving lives. These facilities are places of healing and we want to see our people leaving the isolation sites well and free of the virus.” Each facility is still in use, and the Navajo Nation expects to continue to support patients in the facilities throughout the summer and into the fall if necessary.



Albuquerque District Project Manager, Amanda Velasquez, speaks with Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez (center) and Vice President Myron Lizer (left) at the Shiprock ACS turnover ceremony on April 27, 2020.



How to Reach Us

HOW TO REACH US

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