



Welcome to the Full Circle Newsletter

Goodbyes and Welcomes to the TWAR SC

The Tribal Waste & Response Steering Committee is saying goodbye to two long-time members – and amazing people!

Virginia LeClere joined TWAR SC when it was first established in 2009. She is the Environmental Manager for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, and is an amazing mentor and advocate for Tribes across the country. As part of the committee, she has helped it grow, develop the annual Priority Document, represented the group at numerous high-profile meetings, and has played a key role in advancing Tribal issues on numerous environmental media.

John Wheaton joined just a few years after Virginia, and has also played a huge role in making the TWAR SC what it is today. John is the Emergency Management Planner for the Nez Perce Tribe, and he has used his expertise to make sure Tribes are well represented in this media, as well as assisting his colleagues around the country.

Both John and Virginia have been amazing advocates for Tribes, and are wonderful friends as well as colleagues. While they are stepping down as members, we are not *really* saying goodbye. They can't get away that easily! At the beginning of the pandemic, the TWAR SC established a twice a month virtual social time, which was quickly dubbed "TeaWAR Time". It is a time to just share, connect, talk about things other than work, and just support one another. It wasn't a hard decision to say John and Virginia were both invited to keep coming to TeaWAR Time so we can all stay in touch.

But while Virginia and John are leaving the TWAR SC, we are very excited to welcome two new members to TWAR SC. Kori Ellien is the Enforcement, Response, and Education Manager for the Yurok Tribe. Kori has worked with us at ITEP as an instructor, mentor, and all-around fantastic resource. She also helped us make the connections that led to the terrific closing plenary at this year's TLEF on the Yurok Tribe's work with California Condors. We are also welcoming a wonderful advocate and dedicated professional from Alaska – Joy Britt. Joy is Senior Project Manager for the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, with expertise in environmental health and contaminated lands. She too has worked with us on a variety of other projects over the years, and brings a host of new perspectives and skills to the TWAR SC. We couldn't be happier welcoming both of these terrific people to our merry band.

Both Kori and Joy will begin their new terms on November 1. You can always keep up with the TWAR SC by visiting their website at <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/twarsc/Home/Index>.

Quapaw Nation Staff Visit Forest County Potawatomi Tribe As Part of Our Mentoring Project

As many of you know, we have been organizing both virtual and in-person mentor matches for Tribal staff since 2014. This project has gone through a lot of changes over the years, when it started as a special opportunity for just Tribal solid waste staff through a USDA grant. Now we are offering this opportunity to Tribal professionals working in Superfund, emergency response, USTs, solid waste, and brownfields.

These matches are competitive, and are highly reliant on our being able to find just the right mentor for a specific issue someone may be facing. So we were thrilled to find just the right match for two staff from the Quapaw Nation. As part of their outstanding work on the Tar Creek

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■ **Full Circle Network**
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www7.nau.edu/itep/waste

Superfund site, they wanted to figure out a way to create their own compost to assist with remediation work. After considering what tools they already had at hand (fantastic staff, bison herds, agricultural expertise, and more) we realized we needed to connect them with colleagues of ours at the Forest County Potawatomi Community (FCPC).

Dave Cronauer is the Farm Manager at FCPC, and a valued friend who has presented at our courses in the past. Sure, he might not be a Superfund expert - but he sure knows what he is talking about when it comes to bison, farming, and making terrific compost! He, and several others at FCPC, hosted Summer King (a TWAR SC member and Environmental Scientist for the Quapaw Nation) and her colleague Michelle Bowden (the Farmers Market Manager for Quapaw Nation) over a few days. They were able to tour the farm, learn more about larger scale composting, and also meet other staff from FCPC who provided additional ideas.

Summer said after her visit “This was an exceptionally helpful mentor match! Before we visited, both of us were overwhelmed, confused, and concerned that we were going to take on more than we could handle. After spending two days at the Forest County farm, we are now confident that we can make this project work for our Superfund site. Dave was knowledgeable, willing to spend all day answering questions, and take us anywhere we wanted to visit within the tribe and area. We talked to the Forestry Department about timber management, tree clearing and thinning, and their equipment recommendations and maintenance experience. We talked to their Energy person about solar panels and DOE grants. Thank you for the perfect mentor match and the chance to visit with the Forest County Potawatomi!”

We can’t thank Dave and our other friends at FCPC enough for their willingness to assist their colleagues at another Tribal Nation, and we are glad Summer and Michelle have some new tools to assist them in their ongoing, and inspirational, work at the Tar Creek Superfund site.

If you are interested in submitting an application for our mentor match project, please visit <http://bit.ly/ITEPMentorProgram>

Learning New Tricks – On Your Own Schedule

We received a lot of helpful feedback after this year’s TLEF, and one comment we heard over and over from our Tribal colleagues was how helpful they find it to take virtual trainings at their own pace, check out short videos on specific topics when they have the time, and learn about other Tribe’s approaches, but not waste hours scrolling through a dozen websites. It’s not easy learning new tricks when you are juggling several different media, cranking out reports, and trying to stay on top of too many emails and meetings!

So, when you do have a few minutes to breathe and feel up for learning something new, we hope you’ll check out some of the resources we’ve created for you!

- We have several self-paced, in-depth, courses – and we’re making some new ones for you as well. Nearly 800 people across the country have enrolled in these so far. You can see our current offerings here: <https://bit.ly/WasteResponseCourses>
- No time for a full training? No problem. We have 23 Channels of videos covering all kinds of Waste & Response videos, from TLEF presentations to recycling seminars to UST discussions to our ongoing Superfund series...you name it. And if you missed our presentation on Climate Resiliency and Superfund sites, you’ll find the recording here! Check them all out here: <https://bit.ly/WasteResponseVideos>
- And don’t forget to visit our Tribal Lands Assistance Center at <http://triballands.org>. This site is packed with plain language guidance on Superfund, response, and other contaminated lands issues. You can also access our ORCA online library of documents, where you can search for materials on a wide variety of waste and response topics.

We hope you are finding our existing resources helpful, and we are constantly working on new ways to lend you a hand as you do the vital work you do in the front lines. We have some exciting new things going on regarding emergency response and management, as well as dealing with hazardous materials, that we’ll be announcing soon! In the meantime, if you have any resources you’d like to share with other Tribal staff, ideas for ways we can help, or anything don’t hesitate to let us know.

And Now For Something Completely Different

Flagstaff has the longest running Science Festival in the world. And this year, with most events virtual, there was a very special presentation. **Aaron Yazzie** is Dine (Navajo) and grew up in northern Arizona. He now works at the Jet Propulsion Lab, where he managed the team designing the drill bits used by the Mars Rover Perseverance! You can see Aaron talk about his journey from “Northern Arizona to Mars” at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xci4LdKqdFM>.

Terrific Trainings, Webinars, and Opportunities Coming Up!

The USEPA released their [Draft FY 2022-2026 EPA Strategic Plan](#) on October 7, 2021. It is now available for public comment through November 12. Administrator Michael Regan said “The Strategic Plan communicates and provides a roadmap to achieve EPA’s and the Administration’s priorities over the next four years. Building on work already begun under President Biden’s Executive Orders 13985: *Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government* and 14008: *Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad*, we are charting a course in this Strategic Plan where tackling climate change and advancing environmental justice and civil rights will be integral to all we do in carrying out EPA’s mission.” Be sure and check this out!

The EPA is initiating recently announced their 2021 **Environmental Education Local Grant Program**. They are awarding grants in each of EPA’s 10 Regions, for no less than \$50,000 and no more than \$100,000 each, for a total of 30-40 grants nationwide. Applications are due **December 6, 2021**, and you can find out more here:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/environmental-education-ee-grant-solicitation-notice>.

Could Superfund actually see more funding? As we all know, funding for Superfund work has been, shall we say “less than optimal” for many years. This has caused numerous issues for those trying to address these sites and the communities affected by them. But there just might be some hope for additional funding. Bloomberg Law has a really interesting article on this issue here: <https://bit.ly/SuperfundFunding>

The Superfund Research Program is hosting a really interesting series on **communicating potential environmental health risks**. This is a four part series - the first has already happened but you can check out the recording and join the rest. Be sure to check out this [Risk e-Learning webinar series](#).

EPA’s Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery has extended the deadline for their **Peer-To-Peer matching Program** for Tribal solid waste professionals to October 13. To learn more, and sign up as either a mentor or a mentee, be sure to visit their [online inquiry](#) page before the deadline.

On September 30, EPA’s **Administrator Michael Regan met with Gerald Wagner and other members of the National Tribal Caucus**. As part of their meeting Administrator Regan reaffirmed EPA’s 1984 Indian Policy. To learn more about this meeting, you can check out [the associated press release](#) from EPA.

There has been a lot of talk about **Environmental Justice** lately! We realize this is a complicated subject, and there are various perspectives on how this can (or cannot) be an effective tool for sovereign Native Nations. However, EPA is running national EJ calls you may be interested in attending. If you want to learn more you can visit their [National Environmental Justice Community Engagement Calls](#).

The White House Council on Environmental Quality is hosting two meetings to consult with Tribes on how to **support Tribal restoration and conservation priorities as part of the America the Beautiful initiative**. You can learn more about these meetings (which take place October 26 and October 28), check out the <https://bit.ly/AmericaBeautifulTribes> memo here.