



FULL CIRCLE



Newsletter for Tribes

Waste Management & Tribal Response

Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

Welcome to the Full Circle Newsletter: March/April 2025 Vol. 17, Issue 1

2025 TLEF – Registration and Proposal Submission Now Open!

Your [2025 TLEF website](#) is now up and running! You can now register, submit your proposal for a session or training, sign up as an exhibitor, become a sponsor, and request a table for the Multi-Media Meetup. We will soon be announce our host hotel and provide you with a special lodging reservation link so you can get the federal lodging rate. So keep your eye on your inbox!

This year's TLEF takes place August 18-21, and we are keeping it a hybrid event. This means you can attend, and participate, either in person or virtually.

And if you haven't been to a TLEF before, be sure and visit [ITEP's TLEF site](#) and click on the "Past TLEFs" tab. There you can watch recordings of all our sessions going back to 2020, and find out more about what to expect at our annual "homecoming".

A Message From the Waste & Response Team Manager

A few weeks ago, we worked with our Tribal TAB partners on hosting the second Tribal Brownfields Knowledge Circle. The intention of this one was to create a space for staff at Tribes, Nations, and Villages to come together to talk about how they are weathering the current chaos, and share their ideas on how to stay strong and do good work – while also caring for themselves and others.

I didn't know what to expect. Would just a few people show up? Would people actually turn on their cameras and connect with others on a human level? Would everyone just be too worn down? As I sat there, staring at the clock on my laptop get closer to the top of the hour, I don't mind admitting I was sweating. But then, one, three, eight, fourteen, people joined. And it kept going up. And people were turning on their cameras! They were smiling, waving, greeting friends in the chat. We ended up having over 80 people join, share, and connect.

There were tears. There was also laughter. There were extremely insightful and moving perspectives shared. After we said goodbye, my inbox was filled with messages from people

who said this was something they really needed, and that they felt reinvigorated and inspired by their colleagues.

I've been lucky enough to work at ITEP for 23 years now. During that time, I've been fortunate to be invited to break bread in the home of a course attendee in a small village above the Arctic Circle. I've been privileged enough to watch the young daughter of a regular TLEF attendee grow into an amazing young woman getting her graduate degree in environmental sciences. I've been able to sit and learn from elders, from youth, from both human and non-human relatives, from California to Maine. I am grateful for those experiences, and for all the experiences yet to come. As is our whole team, who have their own stories and experiences.

I am also grateful to those 80 plus people who joined that virtual Knowledge Circle. I know many of you may have had people you dearly love be hurt during these times. You may be watching things you've spent a lifetime building being destroyed. You may be feeling a great deal of pain. I certainly have. I needed this moment of space and reflection as much as anyone. And yet the pain I was feeling made it hard to believe that this virtual time together would really be of benefit to anyone.

But then I saw those smiling faces. I saw they were also navigating a lot of pain and fear. And yet they were coming together, in community. My thoughts went back to moments spent with so many of you, and others who have passed beyond. Moments of community and connection. Moments that, in the words of Robin Wall Kimmerer, remind us that "all flourishing is mutual". We move through this life together. And we will. And we will thrive.

I want to sincerely thank all of you for the incredible things you do every day. And that most certainly includes my amazing team! Especially during these trying times. Thank you for allowing me to share your journey. And do not ever hesitate to reach out to me or anyone else on the team.

Good Samaritan Remediation of Hardrock Mines Act Pilot Project Discussion

Our next Tribal Superfund Working Group presentation and discussion will focus on the [Good Samaritan Remediation of Hardrock Mines Act of 2024](#), which was passed on December 17, 2024. Under this legislation, EPA is tasked with establishing a 7-year pilot program, where EPA may issue up to 15 permits to allow outside parties (Good Samaritans) to remediate mine residue at abandoned hardrock mine sites to protect human health and the environment without being subject to enforcement or liability.

Please join us on **Thursday, March 20, 11 AM Pacific/2 PM Eastern**, when we will be joined by staff from the Office of Mountains, Deserts, and Plains. Be sure to put this Zoom link in your calendar: <https://nau.zoom.us/j/88088342255?pwd=EbE8eur8dsj4GYzHBhy0a8wbbKgvQa.1>

They will talk about the Good Sam Act and their new pilot project. And they have some questions and comments you can consider prior to our discussions:

- What are your experiences with Good Samaritan efforts: lessons learned, current efforts, and/or ideas moving forward?
- What is an eligible Good Sam site? Are there sites with Tribal interest that might make a good pilot site?
- Who pays for the cleanup and what would it take for a Tribe to be involved?
- What special Tribal considerations should we consider as we develop guidelines and application instructions?
- How can we help Tribes or Tribal sites be successful applicants to the program?
- Are you interested in helping us develop guidelines to ensure Tribal concerns are addressed, Tribes are involved, and sites of interest to Tribes are included?
- Who else should EPA talk to? What meetings or conferences should we attend?

All are welcome! We look forward to seeing you on March 20.

Tribal Brownfields Knowledge Circle: Coffee Chat

Many Tribal attendees of our Tribal Brownfields Knowledge Circle in February mentioned they would enjoy having a virtual “social time” where they could come together and just hang out and chat with their peers. Our KSU and ANTHC colleagues on the Tribal TAB program are doing just that!

Join us at our first coffee chat on March 21!

Time: March 21, 10AM Alaska; 11AM Pacific; 12PM Mountain; 1PM Central; 2PM Eastern

Zoom: <https://ksu.zoom.us/j/99494448983?pwd=avVlaVkb93OBB5KCzWHVlkGS9BaDkZ.1>

And be sure to add our April coffee chat to your calendar while you are at:

Time: April 17, 10AM Alaska; 11AM Pacific; 12PM Mountain; 1PM Central; 2PM Eastern

Zoom: <https://ksu.zoom.us/j/99271208404?pwd=Fz5uswEriLYXSNAHtHZyOnuGUyrNhq.1>

ITEP's Tribes & Climate Change Team Is Here To Help

We want to share a message from our friends and colleagues here at ITEP, about a new project they have initiated. We think in these chaotic times, you will find this really helpful.

The [Tribes & Climate Change Program](#) is excited to announce our new Caring for Our Relatives Technical Assistance Program. Our program offers free, ongoing technical assistance for Tribes who may be facing barriers to starting or completing climate change-related species and/or ecological resilience projects that help our non-human relatives to survive and thrive in a changing climate. Types of projects supported include: grant writing, project proposal support, project scoping, support in implementing species/ecological resilience projects, engaging with Tribal Leadership, and more! Please share widely with your colleagues and relatives, and reach out to me with any questions or for more information at ashley.gries@nau.edu. Apply here: <https://lnkd.in/gWFUHUGq>

Accessing Funding for Tribal Solid Waste Projects

Our friends at Capacity Collaborative (formerly EFCWest) are holding a four-part training to help Tribal environmental and solid waste professionals access funding for solid waste projects. This free virtual training series will take place throughout April and into May. Please see the flyer attached to this issue of *Full Circle* to sign up for each of the workshops in this series. And if you have any questions, please email elainem@capcollab.org.

Your Waste & Response Team

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