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## **I'm Guessing You Have Questions About the 2026 TLEF**

*Todd Barnell, Waste & Response Program Manager*

Judging by my inbox, the inboxes of my team, the text messages I get from TWAR SC members and others, and the carrier pigeon that just landed on my window ledge with a note tied to its leg, I am going to go out on a limb here and say you have some questions about where the 2026 TLEF is going to be. Am I right?

Well, the simple fact is we are still in the fun contract negotiation stage. So, I can't actually tell you yet where the TLEF will take place. However, I know you need to start running your own budget projections, just like I have to do. You need to have at least a ballpark location.

The 2026 TLEF is going to be held in **Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**, August 17-20. In-person registration is \$250 and virtual registration is \$50. I promise you all, as soon as I can I'll let you know the actual facility, as well as additional details. We are so excited to be working with our friends and colleagues in that area, and rest assured we already have a lot of plans in the works. Our goal is to open registration by early March, and proposal submissions shortly after. So stay tuned – we have more information coming soon!

For me, holding the TLEF in a particular place means establishing a connection. Of course I want the TLEF to be of benefit to all of you, as attendees. But I *also* want it to be of benefit to the hosts. I want the TLEF to be a bridge, a way to help people connect.

And it means a great deal to me when those connections last, even blossoming into friendship. Many of you will know that Minneapolis is the only city that has hosted two TLEFs. And I deeply appreciate the friendships I have made with people at the Ojibwe and Dakota Nations, the Minneapolis American Indian Center, Minnesota Pollution Control

Agency, and so many other groups. Their commitment to community and connection inspires me every day.

The people in Minneapolis are going through a lot right now. But they also remind all of us about the power of community. And events are of course affecting many other Indigenous people around the country. (You may find a recent presentation by the [National Congress of American Indians and the Native American Rights Fund](#) of interest if you or any of your friends and colleagues have been affected by recent occurrences.)

Let's all remember the importance of holding out a hand to help others in need, to honor our relationships, and find strength in community and connection. All of us here on the Waste & Response team hold you in our hearts and thoughts, and wish you courage and peace.

## **The TWAR SC's new Priorities Document Released, and We Welcome Our New Members**



The Tribal Waste & Response Steering Committee (TWAR SC) met in Washington DC this past December, and recently completed their 2026-2027 Priorities Document. They spend a great deal of time talking with their colleagues at other Tribes, Nations, and Native Villages on potential priorities. These priorities are shared with senior staff at OLEM, as well as the chairs of other Partnership Groups, RTOCs, and the National Tribal Caucus. It's not over once the document is disseminated, though. EPA staff meet with the TWAR SC throughout the year, providing updates on progress meeting priorities. You can view the new Priorities Document (as well as past versions) by visiting the [TWAR SC Priorities Document site](#).

We're also thrilled to announce the results of the past year's applications to serve on the TWAR SC. We received some fantastic applications, and it was a real challenge for the selection team to decide among all the great candidates. Four current members were

selected to serve another two year term: Joy Britt (Chignik Bay Traditional Council), Victoria Flowers (Oneida Nation), Tracy Horst (Choctaw Nation), and Rebecca Stevens (Coeur d'Alene Tribe). And we are thrilled to welcome MaryRose Morigeau (Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribe) to the TWAR SC. Their new terms will begin on March 1 of this year.

For us here at ITEP, the TWAR SC members are a shining example of the power of community. Serving on the TWAR SC is a lot of work, and it requires not only knowledge and dedication, but also a willingness to work on tough subjects, in challenging conditions, with people from different backgrounds and with different perspectives. That is a lot to ask in the best of circumstances! And yet the members have worked hard to not only address serious issues and ensure that EPA understands the perspectives of Tribal professionals working in the front lines; they have created a community that supports and learns from one another. And that sort of dedication, and kindness, is something we can all use a bit more of right now. Thank you to all the current members, and thank you to everyone who applied!

### **Virtual Presentation & Discussion About the Reuse of Contaminated Sites for AI Data Centers**

Four times a year the Tribal Superfund Working Group holds a virtual presentation and discussion, and everyone is welcome! We have an exciting one coming up on **February 26** that may be of interest to many of you. Sharon Hartzell, EPA's Superfund Redevelopment Program (SRP) Manager, will be discussing SRP's collaborative effort with the Brownfields program to develop resources for the **potential reuse of Superfund and Brownfields sites as artificial intelligence (AI) data centers**. Sharon will discuss siting criteria, site reuse resources, and other considerations pertaining to data center reuse. We'll have 90 minutes, so there will be plenty of time for discussion, questions, and your observations.

We'll be meeting on ITEP's Zoom platform. Please check below for your time zone and be sure and copy this to your calendar. We look forward to seeing you then!

**Date: Thursday, February 26, 2026**

**Time: 9 AM (Alaska); 10 AM (Pacific); 11 AM (Mountain); 12 PM (Central); 1 PM (Eastern)**

**Zoom:** <https://nau.zoom.us/j/89272923312?pwd=AOet9EFW9KdjUgAZE2ja33e5TSy4Lv.1>

Meeting ID: 892 7292 3312

Password: 756501

Dial by your location

833 548 0276 US Toll-free

833 548 0282 US Toll-free  
877 853 5247 US Toll-free  
888 788 0099 US Toll-free

## **Oneida Nation's UST Bootcamp Applications Open!**

The Oneida Nation's annual UST Boot Camp in Arlington is coming up, and the deadline to apply for a spot is **March 12**. This year's training will take place in Arlington, TX, March 31-April 2, at Source University. NEIWPC is currently evaluating the ability to offer scholarships to registered attendees, and we have block of rooms available for \$114 per night. Scholarship and Hotel information will be provided to selected attendees. Register soon as this event fills quickly. Please use this link to register [Oneida UST Boot Camp Registration Form - Source University March 31- April 2 2026 – Fill out form](#)

## **Tribal TAB – Upcoming Gatherings and New Resources for Tribal Brownfields Programs**

Our team is grateful to be part of the Tribal TAB team, and there are some cool new developments we want to make sure you are aware of. First, the next quarterly **Tribal Brownfields Knowledge Circle Gathering** is coming up on **Thursday, February 12. , 1:00 - 2:30 CT (2:00 ET/12:00 MT/11:00 PT)**. Members of our TWAR SC will be talking about their new Priorities Document, and staff from US EPA will be coming to talk about funding, policy, and agency priorities.

Be sure to add this to your calendar!

**Date/Time:** February 12, 10AM (Alaska); 11AM (Pacific); 12PM (Mountain); 1PM (Central); 2PM (Eastern)

**Zoom Link:**

<https://ksu.zoom.us/j/95533866796?pwd=kUuTaByiTNoEMk5oSN2FLhv7WwWS9M.1>

**Meeting ID:** 955 3386 6796

**Passcode:** 431849

The Tribal TAB team is also working in cooperation with the Cherokee Nation on an upcoming **Tribal Brownfield Workshop and Site Visit**. The deadline for applications is February 11! Please [visit our Applications page](#) for more information and to submit an application.

Also, if you haven't already heard, **Tribal TAB has a new website**, with tons of great resources, news, and services. Be sure to check it out at: <http://www.tribaltab.org>

And while you are on this site, be sure to click on the tab at the top that says “**Forum**”. This is a terrific resource for you to chat directly with colleagues from around the country about brownfield issues. Pop in and learn how you can join the conversation. And don’t be shy! You might have been working on this for 30 years, or for three months. The fact is, we can all learn something new, and we can always share a fresh perspective. These kinds of forums are all about building community. So drop on by, and do just that!

### **Center for Disaster Preparedness Tribal Nations Training Week**

FEMA’s Center for Disaster Preparedness is putting on their 11<sup>th</sup> annual training for Tribal Nations April 11-18. This comprehensive training opportunity covers a wide variety of topics. Please see the attached flyer for more information on what will be covered and how to register.