

NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL

Conference Call Summary Monday, February 14, 2011 2:00 – 2:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time

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Roll Call/Introductions

Monica Rodia, Executive Secretary of the National EPA-Tribal Science Council (TSC), welcomed the members to the teleconference and took roll.

January Meeting Minutes

Monica stated that the TSC conference call minutes from January 2011 had been reviewed, finalized, and distributed to the members. It is important to review the minutes following each conference call, particularly for those members who were unable to attend the conference call.

Update on Tribal Science Priorities (TSP) Process

Ted Coopwood explained that the TSP process was launched on January 31, 2011. JoAnn Chase, Director of the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO), signed the cover letter, and an inquiry concerning the process has already been received from Alaska. Almost 600 packages were sent out that included the letter, framework, and instructions to the tribes for developing TSPs. Ted thanked the TSC members, particularly Beth Jackson, and stated that they should be proud of this effort, which was launched on schedule. As the stakeholders begin to examine and address their issues, complete the template, and provide specific information about why their issues should be considered as national TSPs, the TSC has placed itself in a good position to receive the feedback. A process is in place to receive feedback, and Jeff Mears will be the lead during the process to select priorities. Stakeholders will submit their responses to Monica by April 1, 2011. Monica in turn will provide all of the responses to Jeff and the workgroup made up of Tribal Caucus members to evaluate the responses and determine which issues will be moved forward. At the same time, Monica and Ted will be visiting as many tribes as possible via the Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC) meetings (e.g., Regions 5, 6, and 8). These presentations will move the effort forward by offering the tribes an opportunity to interact with TSC members during the 60-day window to discuss and identify potential priorities. The process is being approached from the bottom-up and top-down so that it can be as successful as possible. A newsletter scheduled to be published in late February 2011 will discuss the process; Jeff will write the introduction. Webinars are being developed for March so that stakeholders' questions can be addressed. Ted appreciated everyone's efforts in making the TSP process successful. Patti Tyler asked Monica and Ted to contact her when they were in Region 8.

Next Steps

Monica explained that Tia Chullakorn presented the TSP process to a workgroup in Region 9 that is devoted to tribal priorities and received feedback from the tribes regarding what they need from EPA. In today's meeting materials is a template that Tia created based on the tribes' feedback for simplifying the TSP process. The TSC members will refine the template based on this feedback, and it will be published on the TSC Web Site. Monica asked the TSC members to provide comments on the template as soon as possible.

James Leathers asked how much time Monica and Ted required for their presentations at RTOC meetings. Monica responded that the presentation is tailored to fit the time that each RTOC can provide. For example, during the Region 10 meeting, 15 minutes were allotted.

Sustainable and Healthy Communities

Rick Linthurst provided background on the Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Program. This is a new program that resulted from the reorganization of the Office of Research and Development's (ORD) research programs. One challenge that the program is examining is that communities face a

fragmented decision process with conflicting and competing stakeholder interests. The goal is to examine challenges from a holistic view and identify opportunities in which there may be co-benefits to making certain decisions in a certain manner. The research questions that were developed to address this problem are: How can the program meet the needs of this generation without compromising the needs of future generations? More specifically, how can the program protect the environment during the long-term in a way that fosters human health and well-being, is socially just, and promotes economic prosperity?

The program's problem statement is as follows: "Communities face social, economic, and environmental trade-offs in a resource-constrained world. Communities need relevant, holistic, integrated science and decision analysis tools that provide communities with a sound basis to equitably, efficiently, and effectively advance sustainability." The problem statement still is being reviewed by internal and external reviewers. The goal is to provide useful and effective information via an integrated approach. Another goal is to learn from communities about their problems and how to best assist them in finding solutions. Tools to increase sustainability and improve human health and environmental quality will be developed via the program. Rick thinks that the direction and broad scope of the focus is appropriate. Two themes, also under review, have been developed. The first relates to developing data, methods, and models to support sustainable and healthy communities using an approach that examines multiple issues. Under this theme, two pilot projects are being developed in Durham, North Carolina, and three communities in the Gulf shore region (Florida, Mississippi, and Texas). The program will examine regional-scale solutions for community problems. The second theme integrates human health, landscapes, and ecosystems using a transdisciplinary approach. Multiple disciplines will be brought together to develop new solutions.

The program will develop products such as decision-support platforms and models; databases to aid assessment, modeling, and performance metrics; a national atlas of ecosystem services, urban environments, and human health; ecosystem and human health linkages and interactions; restoration of contaminated sites to maximize human, environmental, economic, and social values; life cycle analysis and alternative approaches and technologies to improve materials and waste management; and solutions to common community sustainability problems from a systems perspective. One goal is to foster the ability to examine alternative futures and how these alternative decisions made in the present will affect future generations. The research program will begin in earnest in October 2011. The program is interested in feedback on its proposals, particularly from the tribes.

Ted stated that a holistic approach is necessary to deal with issues in a way that is helpful to tribal and other communities. It is difficult to address environmental issues when people have more basic needs (e.g., lack of food). He is very interested in determining how the TSC can help the research program, particularly in terms of addressing issues in a holistic manner. Dan Kusnierz also approved of the holistic approach that emphasizes human health and well-being.

David Guest said that it would be helpful to view the timeline of the program. An Agency climate change adaptation plan is being examined within AIEO, which is helping to develop the tribal component of the plan. Development of institutional capacity for addressing climate change has been identified as a critical component. Many of the themes and issues that Rick presented are being discussed within this project as well. Climate change adaptation and sustainability coordinate well conceptually; therefore, internal collaboration across the Agency and increased communication is important. Rick responded that he would work on a timeline to send to David and agreed that communication and collaboration would be beneficial to advance the two efforts.

Bob Hall stated that there will be a workshop devoted to system services during the week of May 23, 2011, at the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Rancheria in Solvang, California; many of these topics and case studies will be discussed at the workshop. Monica added that ORD, the Office of Science Policy (OSP), and AIEO are supporting the workshop.

Tom Baugh asked about the impact of the new program on the previous Ecosystem Services Research Program and which communities in Florida and Mississippi would participate in the pilot project. Rick replied that Anne Keller has the information regarding the communities; Tom is in frequent contact with Anne, so he will ask her. Rick explained that there would be no significant changes to the prior program until the new program has been developed further. One new emphasis, however, will be the tradeoff between the built and natural environments and emphasis that that ecosystem services are extremely significant in terms of economic benefits. One goal is to expand the success seen in the Chesapeake Bay. Claudia Walters added that the communities that the program will work with are partnership communities with regional planning grants (Gulf Regional Planning Commission, Houston-Galveston Area Council, and South Florida Regional Planning Council). Rick is coordinating with various programs across the Agency, Bob Perciasepe's cross-Agency community-based initiatives effort, and *Plan EJ 2014* efforts. Capacity building is one issue that is being examined. Rick promised to keep the TSC members engaged in the process to develop the research program.

Announcements

Monica announced that Rich Janssen has been promoted to Natural Resources Department Head of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and will be leaving the TSC. The Region 8 RTOC will inform Monica about his replacement shortly. Monica has appreciated his service to the TSC during the past several years. Also, Dan Mosley is stepping down as the alternate for Region 9; his son, John Mosley, will be replacing him on the Council.

Katie Renwick and Ken Bailey provided a report out of the United South and Eastern Tribe's (USET) Impact Week and the Tribal-Focused Exposure and Risk Screening Tool (T-FERST) presentation in Arlington, Virginia, during the week of February 7, 2011. Katie said that that T-FERST was well received by the USET tribes. The USET tribes also thought that T-FERST has the potential to become the central location for data from various media to be stored. Ken said that a resolution was passed by USET to move forward with T-FERST. He also was approached by Joel Frank of the Seminole Tribe of Florida about becoming active with T-FERST and the Healthy and Sustainable Communities Research Program. Brenda Commander of the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians in Maine also approached him. Other federal agencies, such as the Indiana Health Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) also are involved with the project. HUD is holding a meeting in Hollywood, Florida, on February 23–24, 2011, that will focus on sustainable communities; HUD's efforts parallel EPA's efforts. Monica added that Paul Anastas provided the opening remarks at the workshop focused on healthy and sustainable communities held during the meeting. She was pleased to hear that the tribes have a strong interest in the tool and thanked Ken, Valerie Zartarian, and OSP management for supporting the effort.

Tia Chullakorn provided a report out on the Region 9 RTOC meeting in Coarsegold, California, during the week of February 7, 2011. The TSP process was well received by the RTOC, although the members have some concerns regarding how the process will be executed. The important aspects of the process were highlighted for the RTOC, and the template was discussed. The TSC should be able to receive feedback from the tribes after the template is released.

Caren Robinson asked Ken whether the federal agencies were seeking to gather data within T-FERST (i.e., a data initiative). Ken said that this was the case. Other agencies' data are not located in one place, and the agencies would like them consolidated within T-FERST to help make sound decisions about human health and the environment to assist in future planning that will use green infrastructure to create jobs. The desired end result of the Passamaquoddy Tribe's effort is sustainable jobs and communities. The U.S. Geological Survey also has been approached about its geospatial database and other accumulated scientific data.

Monica stated that she would set up an EPA Caucus meeting during the week of February 21, 2011, to discuss the TSP process, EPA's role in the process, and upcoming RTOC meetings. The group will identify ways that the EPA Caucus can continue the dialogue during the two-month interactive window.

Monica thanked the members for participating and adjourned the conference call at 2:59 p.m.

Action Items

- ✧ TSC members will review the template that they received with the teleconference materials and provide their comments to Monica via e-mail as soon as possible.
- ✧ Monica will set up an EPA Caucus teleconference during the week of February 21, 2011.

**NATIONAL EPA-TRIBAL SCIENCE COUNCIL
CONFERENCE CALL
FEBRUARY 14, 2011
2:00 P.M. – 2:30 P.M. EASTERN STANDARD TIME**

Call-in Number: **866-299-3188**
Access Code: **2025648322#**

DRAFT AGENDA

- 2:00 – 2:05 Roll Call/Introductions
- 2:05 – 2:10 January meeting minutes distributed for review and finalized
- 2:10 – 2:30 Update on Tribal Science Priorities Process
- Launched on January 31, 2011
 - Announcement letter, framework, and instruction guide distributed to stakeholders
 - Priority template deadline: April 1, 2011
 - Process for submitting templates and example fillable template
- 2:30 – 2:45 Next Steps
- Selection Process (workgroup will be led by Jeff Mears and TSC Tribal Caucus)
 - Identifying “Champions” within regions and program offices
 - February newsletter and setting up Webinars to assist tribes with understanding process and completing template
 - Regional Tribal Operation Committee (RTOC) meetings
- 2:45– 3:15 Sustainable and Healthy Communities
- Rick Linthurst from EPA’s Office of Research and Development will discuss the Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Program
- 3:15– 3:30 Announcement(s)
- United South and Eastern Tribe’s Impact Week and T-FERST presentation in Arlington, VA, week of February 7, 2011 (Katie Renwick and Ken Bailey)
 - Report out on Region 9 RTOC meeting in Coarsegold, CA, week of February 7, 2011 (Tia Chullakorn)

Next conference call—**March 21, 2011**, from 2:00 – 3:30 pm EDT