

# Making a Visible Difference in Communities



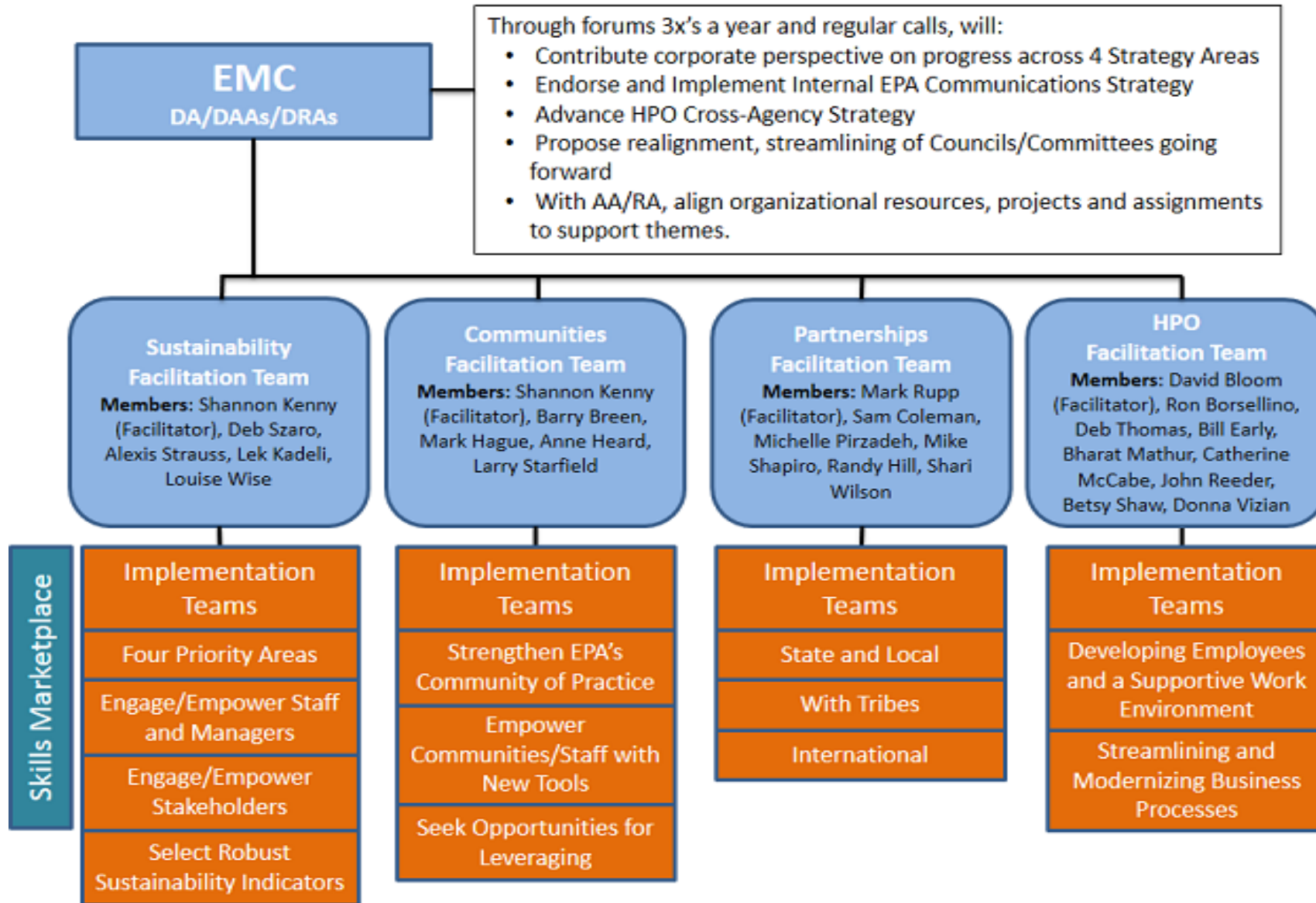
Natioanl Air Toxics Monitoring and  
Data Analysis Workshop

*Holly Wilson (OAQPS)*

*October 28, 2015*



# Taking Action on the Administrator's Cross-Agency Strategies: An Integrated Model



# How the Administrator is Talking About this Work

- Administrator Gina McCarthy's videos on Making a Visible Difference in Communities.
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSkl-n-hddw&feature=youtu.be>
  - <http://workplace.epa.gov/realizingoneepa/communities.html>
  - <http://www.c-span.org/video/?324732-2/national-league-cities-2015-congressional-city-conference>
- “One of the things that I think EPA does very well is to provide technical assistance to communities. We have strong relationships with our communities. We don't go in there telling them what our vision is. We go in there asking the question of how do we work with you to make your visions succeed.”
- “It's amazing what a \$15,000 or \$20,000 technical assistance grant can do to get a community that's struggling to define some good steps for moving forward ...”
- “We have identified 50 communities where our Regions are actively working with communities and with our Regional partners from HUD, from DOT, from DOE, from other agencies, that can work with us and go to communities and do exactly what they want us to do.”



# Making a Visible Difference in Communities – Action Plan

In support of the Cross-Agency Strategy, Working to Make a Visible Difference in Communities, this Annual Action Plan includes four transformative cross-agency actions the Agency will perform during FY 2015. Through these actions, we will better support the efforts of environmentally overburdened, underserved, and economically distressed communities (including tribes), with a particular focus on those that are vulnerable, such as children. These actions aim to focus the wide array of Agency and other federal resources to help these communities proactively address endemic and emerging environmental challenges in ways that build long-term sustainability.

For more information, visit

<http://workplace.epa.gov/realizingoneepa/communities.html>



# Making a Visible Difference in Communities – Action Plan (Cont.)

1. Work through the Regions and across Programs to provide coordinated and targeted technical expertise and resources to 50 environmentally overburdened, underserved, and economically distressed communities.
2. Build a new Community Resource Network.
3. **Empower more communities to improve environmental outcomes by providing them with monitoring data on environmental conditions in their communities.**
4. Leverage existing websites at EPA and HUD (National Resource Network) to better connect communities to EPA and other available Federal resources; design and deliver an interactive, web-based tool to help communities apply green infrastructure approaches to solve local problems.





# Community Focus Projects

- The Administrator has made *Making a Visible Difference in Communities* a cross-agency priority.
- Our strategy focuses work in communities where EPA can best leverage our resources and other federal investments.
- While we will continue to work in thousands of communities across the country, we will showcase communities in each region where there is a need for coordinated action and an opportunity to make a visible difference in environmental health and economic development in the next two years.
- Our goal in these focus communities is to better coordinate across our EPA programs and other federal agencies to improve how we work together to support community needs.
- As we learn lessons, we will use these lessons to help even more communities in the future.



# Community Focus Projects

## Region 1

- Brattleboro, VT & Hinsdale, NH
- Bridgeport, CT
- Lawrence, MA

## Region 2

- Camden, NJ
- Martin Pena Channel, San Juan, PR
- St. Regis Mohawk Tribe, Akwesasne, NY
- Vieques, PR
- Newark, NJ
- Newburgh, NY

## Region 3

- Reading, PA
- Norfolk & New Port News, VA
- Huntington, W VA
- Dover, DE

## Region 4

- Turkey Creek Watershed, Gulfport, MS
- North Birmingham, AL
- Selma & Montgomery, AL
- Eastern Band of Cherokee, NC
- Proctor Creek Watershed, Atlanta, GA

## Region 5

- Detroit, MI
- Gary, IN
- St. Louis River, Duluth, MN
- Mill Creek, Cincinnati, OH
- 30<sup>th</sup> St. Industrial Corridor, Milwaukee, WI
- Pilsen/SE Chicago, IL



# Community Focus Projects (Cont.)

## Region 6

- City of Anthony & Cochiti Puelo, NM
- Alexandria & Pineville, LA
- Choctaw Nation, OK
- City of Brownsville & Corpus Christi, TX
- Crossett, AR
- Grants Minin District, NM
- Cyndie Park, Nueces County, TX

## Region 7

- Kansas City, KS & Kansas City, MO
- Omaha, NE & Council Bluff, IA
- Wichita, KS
- Muscatine, IA
- St. Louis, MO

## Region 8

- Fort Peck Assiniboine & Sioux Tribes, Poplar, MT
- Sun Valley Neighborhood, Denver, CO
- The Queen City Crossing & 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Area, Helena, MT

## Region 9

- American Samoa
- Southern Nevada, Las Vegas
- Gila River Indian Community, Phoenix, AZ
- Gilroy, CA
- Imperial Valley, CA [US-Mexico Border]

## Region 10

- Bremerton, WA
- N/NE Portland, OR
- Alaska Native Villages Climate Resiliency (3 communities)
- Nampa, ID
- Tribal Asthma Healthy Homes Medicaid Reimbursement, WA





# National Program Leads

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# Community Resource Network

- Build a community of practice among all EPA programs and regions, enabling staff working on community issues to share information and learn from one another.
- Improve cross-agency efforts in support of community needs by developing policy change recommendations, informed both by past EPA community work and 50 MVD projects, in the following areas:
  - Grants (Leads: OGD & OEJ)
  - Technical Assistance (Leads: OSWER)
  - Leveraging Federal Resources (Lead: OEJ)
  - Training (Leads: OAR & R4)
  - Measures (Leads: OP & R7)
  - GeoPlatform (Leads: OEI & OP)



# Community Resource Network

- [CRN SharePoint](#) site is a powerful tool for enabling engagement on community work.
- EPA staff strongly encouraged to visit the SharePoint site and CRN team pages to provide valuable input. For example:
  - Fill out an end-user survey on the Geoplatform Team page to better define community mapping needs.
  - Participate in the Training Team needs assessment to meet the needs of internal and external entities working in communities.
  - Take the Technical Assistance Team poll to identify ways of improving the availability and delivery of technical assistance for communities.






# Making the Difference Visible

- Leaders are out talking about our work with Communities with our partners
- Press coverage so far on a few projects (Portland, Lawrence MA, Imperial and Gilroy in California)
- Administrator is looking for opportunities as she travels to these 50 communities

The screenshot shows a web browser interface with the Los Angeles Times logo and navigation menu on the left. The main content area features the article title "EPA 'environmental justice' map highlights California's pollution ills" and a map of California with various regions highlighted in red and yellow, indicating pollution levels. The text "Los Angeles Times LOCAL / L.A. Now" and "This article is related to: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency" is visible in the top right corner.

The screenshot shows a news article with the headline "Feds excited about fixing 26 dirty diesel engines, leaving 146,000 to go" and a sub-headline "29 comments". The main image shows EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy speaking at a podium in front of a large truck and shipping containers. The text below the image reads: "U.S. EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy speaks Wednesday in Portland while awarding the state a \$1.5 million clean diesel grant. While neighboring states have invested their own money, Oregon has relied almost solely on federal grants to address diesel pollution. (Rob Davis/The Oregonian)". At the bottom, there is a byline "By Rob Davis | The Oregonian/OregonLive" and social media links for "Email the author" and "Follow on Twitter".



**IN JUST MOMENTS,  
A FIRE CAN CHANGE  
EVERYTHING.**

Last year, wildfires destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres in communities throughout the Western United States.

We are preparing for this wildfire season.  
And the **Red Cross** will be there.  
Your gift makes this possible.

[Donate Now](#)





# Program Support in FY 15 -16

- OW: \$250,000 in technical assistance and contracts
- OP/OSC: \$750,000 in technical assistance and travel funds
- OGC: up to \$90,000 in convening and workshops for EPA staff on cross-cutting issues
- OEJ: Technical assistance for each Region - ~110k
- OITA: General Assistance Program funding priority
- ORD: Staff time and tools delivery; RESES/ORISE
- OSWER: Brownfield grants (Cleanup, Assessment, EWDJT); TASC
- OCFO: \$268,000 EOY
- OAR: DERA grants- ~\$2.2M; \$278K in TASC (CAAA Training/Ports/Healthy Homes), CSATAM grants



NPM	Sub-Office	Program Name	Number of Communities	Community Name(s)	Region	Grant	Contract	Travel Funds	Staff Time	Other	Dollar Amount
OAR	IO	Travel funding to Regions	3	Caño Martín Peña, PR N. Birmingham, AL Wichita, KS	2, 4, 7			X			\$8,100
OAR	IO, OAQPS, OTAQ	Funding for Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) contract	6	Camden, NJ Norfolk & Newport News, VA Chicago, IL Imperial Valley, CA Detroit, MI Alexandria & Pineville, LA	2, 3, 5, 9, 6		X				\$288,000
OAR	OAQPS	Technical Assistance (CAAA & Permit training)	1	N. Birmingham, AL	4		X		X		\$10,000
OAR	OAQPS	Technical Assistance (Ozone & PM Advance Program)	7	Norfolk & New Port News, VA Turkey Creek Watershed, Gulfport, MS Duluth, MN Alexandria & Pineville, LA Corpus Christi, TX Omaha, NE & Council Bluff, IA Wichita, KS The Queen City Crossing & 6th Ward Area, Helena, MT Southern Nevada, Las Vegas, NV	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9					TA	
OAR	OAQPS	Technical Assistance (School Flag Program)	1	Imperial Valley, CA	9		X		X	Office of Environmental Education provided \$16 K to support the translation. Funds were placed on an Interagency Agreement with the State Dept managed by OSWER.	
OAR	OAQPS	Awards Pending - Community Scale Air Toxics Air Monitoring Grants (CSATAM)	2	MVD communities included	TBA	X					TBA

# Summary MVD Numbers

- 49 community focus projects (more than 55 communities) - 25 are rural; 10 are tribal; and all involve underserved populations or environmental justice issues.
- Each project averages 6 different focus areas addressing human health and environmental challenges (23% OSWER, 22% OW, 21% No NPM designation, 18% OAR, 11% ORD, 3% OITA, 2% OECA).
- Over 500 activities completed or planned, which lays the foundation for improvements to human health and the environment for years to come.
- Over 200 community level partners involved, including neighborhood and EJ organizations, school districts, hospitals, chambers of commerce, utilities, city agencies, and more.



# Trainings and Technical Assistance

- Lead based paint
- Pollution Prevention
- Brownfields assessments
- Brownfield job training
- Hazardous Waste
- Emergency response
- Climate resilience
- Home energy audits
- Recycling
- Safe drinking water
- Water quality monitoring
- Green infrastructure
- Green streets/transportation planning
- Grants writing and management
- Environmental justice
- Air pollution data collection
- Air quality monitoring
- Citizen Science Tools: EnviroAtlas,
- CFERST, EJSCREEN, community driven monitoring
- Asthma/Indoor Air Quality: Healthy homes and healthy schools (17 projects), Near roadway exposure
- Air permit training



# Lessons Learned

- First identify needs, then work to find resources to address them.
- Funding buys a lot of credibility and a seat at the table.
- Communities are understaffed and some don't have capacity to manage too much assistance/attention at once.
- Modest technical assistance contracts can have an outsized impact by providing critical analysis, training, or facilitation.
- Being present in the community builds critical relationships, understanding, and trust.
- EPA (Federal partners) can foster or strengthen relationships among local organizations who may not normally collaborate.



# Next Steps

- Next quarterly update to Administrator is mid September
- FY16 Operating Plan decisions are in October/November

Note:MVD meeting at the Community Involvement Training Conference (CITC) August 3-6, 2015 in Atlanta, GA which which included a face to face of the CRN on August 3, 2015. <http://www.epa.gov/ciconference/>





# The Air Quality Flag Program Making a Visible Difference for Seniors in the Imperial Valley



Donna Rogers  
August 25, 2015



# What is the Air Quality Flag Program?

- Schools, businesses and government entities raise a flag each day
- Flags are the colors of the Air Quality Index
- Flag color indicates the local air quality
- Activity guidance = ways to modify outdoor activities when air quality is unhealthy









# Six Fire Stations



# Provo, Utah



# Easy to Implement - Just 4 Easy Steps

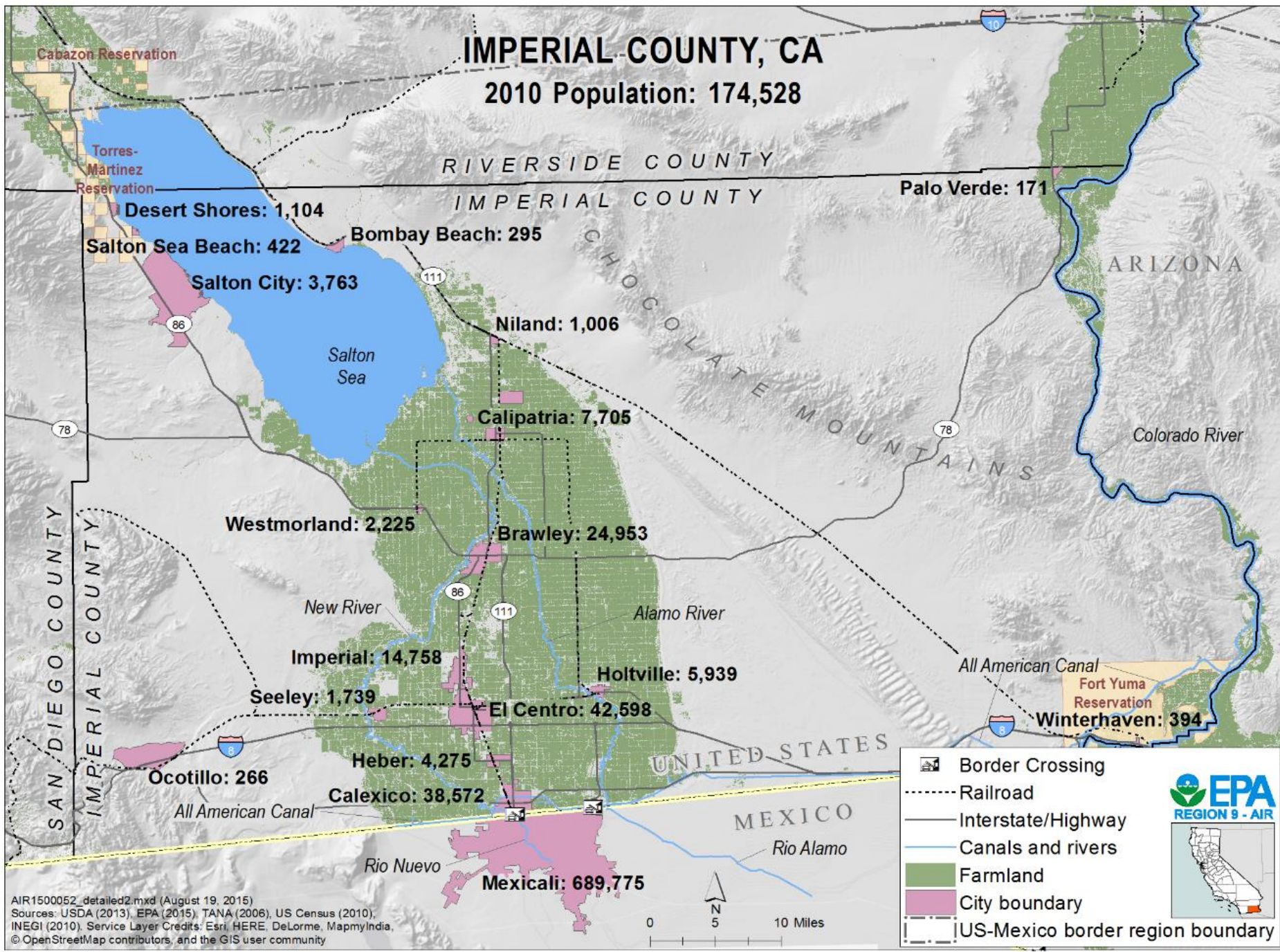
1. Purchase flags
2. Educate school and community
3. Check the daily air quality forecast for flag color
4. Follow the outdoor activity guidance



# Making A Visible Difference in Communities Imperial Valley

- EPA Region 9 has selected the Imperial Valley as a “focus community” for the Administrators Making a Visible Difference in Communities initiative.
- Imperial Valley lies in Imperial County, CA, included in the US-Mexico Border Region
- Predominantly Hispanic county (80%)
  - One of the highest unemployment rates in the nation (27.2%)
  - Its poverty rate (22.8%) is among the highest in the state
- Imperial County is among the top five counties for non-attainment for PM2.5
- To build knowledge and understanding of environmental health issues, the Air Quality Flag Program will be implemented in three Senior Centers





## Reaching “Seniors” with the Flag Program Message

- Older adults (age 55 and older)
  - Greater prevalence of heart and lung disease
- People with asthma (serious, chronic respiratory disease that affects millions)
  - Better prepared to know when to take protective measures
- Seriously high levels of PM 2.5 – a year round pollutant





# Seniors Outdoor Activities



## Spanish Translation

- 80% Hispanic – Senior Centers have a predominately Spanish speaking population
- CRITICAL NEED – flag materials translated into Spanish
- EPA’s Office of Environmental Education provided funds
- Funds transmitted to OSWER for Interagency Agreement with State Department
- State Department is translating all flag materials, including:
  - Flag website: [www.airnow.gov/flag](http://www.airnow.gov/flag)
  - *Why is Coco Orange?* children’s book



## Benefits

- The Imperial Valley MVD Project benefits the Seniors there with the health message and guidance.
- The translated flag materials and website will benefit all Spanish speaking communities and have a far reaching impact now and in the future.



## Air Quality Flag Program

- Help get a flag program started at a local school, business or organization near you
- Flag materials are available online at [www.airnow.gov/flag](http://www.airnow.gov/flag)
  - Fact sheet
  - Activity guidance
  - Handbook, etc.

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# Questions and Conversation

