Welcome to the Full Circle Newsletter!

- **Registration Now Open for 2012 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum**

The 2012 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum will be taking place at the Coquille Tribe’s Mill Casino in Coos Bay, Oregon, August 20-23, 2012. Registration is now open. Please visit our website at [www4.nau.edu/itep/waste/twrap_tlf12.asp](http://www4.nau.edu/itep/waste/twrap_tlf12.asp) to register and to learn more about making your hotel reservation.

The Tribal Lands and Environment Forum is a national conference organized by ITEP in partnership with the TWRAP Steering Committee and the EPA Office of Solid Waste & Emergency Response. We would greatly appreciate hearing from you - If you have suggestions for presentations, training and informational sessions. Please visit the Forum website or contact John Mead or Todd Barnell at ITEP for more information.

**ITEP to Begin Project Assisting EPA’s Toxic Release Inventory Program**

EPA's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) is a database containing data on disposal or other releases of over 600 toxic chemicals from thousands of facilities in the US and information about how facilities manage those chemicals through recycling, energy recovery, and treatment. One of TRI's primary purposes is to inform communities about toxic chemical releases to the environment. TRI contains data on toxic releases from facilities in multiple industry sectors operating in and adjacent to Indian communities and other areas of interest to tribes. Beginning in 2012, ITEP will be working with the EPA in several ways; to provide an assessment of the number of tribes currently making use of TRI data, conduct an assessment of TRI training materials, and create training materials that are tribally relevant.

We are interested in hearing your opinions and stories relative to your experience with TRI and pollution prevention data that you have experience with. As the project progresses look for TRI updates and training opportunities in upcoming editions of this newsletter! See contact information for ITEP staff working with this project below. For more information about EPA’s TRI program please visit: [www.epa.gov/tri/](http://www.epa.gov/tri/).

John Mead: Primary contact and project manager, may be reached by email at [John.Mead@nau.edu](mailto:John.Mead@nau.edu) or telephone 928-523-2005. Roberta Tohannie will also be assisting the project. She may be contacted by email at [Roberta.tohannie@nau.edu](mailto:Roberta.tohannie@nau.edu) or telephone 928-523-2082.

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**Meet Our Staff:**

- **Todd Barnell, Program Coordinator Senior, TSWEAP and TWRAP**
  
  Todd joined ITEP in 2002. In 2006 he developed TSWEAP and TWRAP two years later. Prior to joining ITEP Mr. Barnell worked for The Nature Conservancy and has been a field researcher on ecology and climate projects. 928-523-3840  
  [Todd.Barnell@nau.edu](mailto:Todd.Barnell@nau.edu)

- **Jennifer Williams, Program Coordinator Senior, TWRAP Alaska**
  
  Jen joined ITEP in 2001 and has worked on a variety of issues affecting Alaskan Natives, including air quality, solid waste, environmental education, and hazardous substances. She oversees TWRAP's Alaskan projects. 928-523-0673  
  [Jennifer.Williams@nau.edu](mailto:Jennifer.Williams@nau.edu)

- **John Mead, Program Coordinator Senior, TWRAP and TRI Assistance Program**
  
  John has been with ITEP since 2002 and he has worked in the fields of wastewater, compliance, and waste management. He currently assists with coordinating the Tribal Lands and Environment Forum as well as trainings. 928-523-2005
Tribal Steering Committee Profile: Katie Kruse

Katie Kruse, an Environmental Response Program Specialist for Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC), applied to become a member of the national Tribal Waste and Response Assistance Program Steering Committee (TWRAP SC) member in June 2009. This committee is part of a cooperative agreement between EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER) and ITEP. Katie has brought both extensive academic and field work experience to the committee. Her work with KBIC has spanned solid waste management, hazardous substance management, hazardous site management, emergency response programs, and public education. She also has an M.S. in Environmental Policy, with a specific focus on Native American mining issues and environmental justice. Katie's fellow committee members elected her as their first vice-chair in 2009 and then as the chair of the committee - a position she held through 2011.

Katie has been employed with KBIC since September of 2006, providing coordination and development of the Tribal Response Program (TRP) for the tribe. KBIC is a rural community of 3,450 enrolled members. The tribe's land includes over 56,000 acres of largely forested land, with 80 miles of river, 3,000 acres of wetlands, 160 lakes and ponds, and 17 miles of Lake Superior shoreline. The TRP Katie oversees incorporates elements of solid waste, hazardous waste, brownfields, and emergency response. By securing a diverse portfolio of grants, KBIC has recently added new environmental staff and have implemented a household hazardous waste and electronics collection program. They also have plans to build a transfer station in the spring to help combat open dumping and burning of waste.

Katie has always been interested in tribal policy and being proactive toward environmental justice issues. The TWRAP SC interested Katie because it allowed her to expand beyond her day-to-day technical work and address issues of importance to KBIC, as well as other tribes. She felt this was an opportunity to address tribal policy issues at a national level. In her work with KBIC, Katie has seen how long it takes to build capacity and technical knowledge internally.

While many resources and policies have been developed over the years to assist state programs, tribes often face numerous challenges in their work to build efficient and sustainable waste and response programs. Through her work on the TWRAP SC, Katie hopes to assist in the process of sharing tribal priorities with her EPA colleagues and to create meaningful resources for all tribal programs. One of the aspects of the TWRAP SC Katie has been most excited about is the opportunity to travel to Washington DC and talk one-on-one with the OSWER Assistant Administrator, and other senior EPA personnel, about tribal issues and priorities. The committee held their second such meeting last month and they are seeing progress as a result of these conversations.

Katie and other committee members have made the case for the importance of technical training and the need for efficient, tribally-relevant, technical assistance. Katie has seen headway made with EPA senior managers during her time with the TWRAP SC, stating that "the training and resources that are currently available provide a good foundation, but we need more meat in the training and assistance provided to get things moving forward. After talking with Janice Sims (Office of Brownfields & Land Revitalization) about technical needs of the tribes, we saw EPA create an RFP for a cooperative agreement specific to assisting tribes with technical assistance to enhance their TRPs." Katie expresses her excitement with the DC meetings when she talks about how beneficial they are: "The meetings get you energized and involved by really letting the issues be known. The EPA staff is really listening and becoming engaged in tribal issues. We are working together to move forward and address concerns and issues."

Katie's work on the TWRAP SC has also turned her attention to other tribes, and she takes to heart what is
going on in her region, and beyond. She believes this opportunity to communicate and collaborate with other tribes is an important part of her role on the TWRAP SC. Katie notes that not all tribes are facing the same issue. They have different governments, different organizational structures, and different priorities even within one region, and she does her best to represent those differences, as well as the common themes, when going to DC to express tribal needs and concerns. Although her role on the TWRAP SC - applying her knowledge and talking to senior managers at EPA - was intimidating at first, Katie sees how the members of the TWRAP SC bring support to each other when presenting tribal concerns at the table. It is this unified voice that diminishes intimidation and strengthens the efforts of the TWRAP SC and EPA's cooperative agreement to work towards solutions.

Katie lives on a small farm in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where she is raising two children: 13 year old Jacob and 10 year old Kara. When she is not at an ice rink - Jacob plays competitive hockey and Kara is a figure skater - she enjoys gardening and being outdoors. Katie says "I appreciate the opportunity to be on the steering committee and being involved in very important issues. It has been extremely rewarding."

**TSWEAP Mentor Program**

For environmental programs, mentoring is a great strategy that can help potential mentees of all circumstances and backgrounds attain important information and necessary tools. Mentors make for valuable and tremendous resources for anyone in need of assistance, guidance, and support. The TSWEAP Mentor Program consists of environmental professionals from throughout Indian Country who have expertise and knowledge in the areas of tribal solid waste programs. These areas include solid waste management plan development, source reduction activities, transfer station management, landfill operations, illegal and open dump cleanup and closure, brownfields, code development, and community outreach.

Currently, there are several mentors in the program and they represent various tribal waste programs throughout Indian Country. Via email and telephone, these mentors can provide assistance with, or answer questions about, solid waste projects and tasks. Being a TSWEAP mentor also includes the satisfaction of performing an important job and sharing experiences to help others.

For more information about being a TSWEAP mentor, please contact Roberta Tohannie at Roberta.Tohannie@nau.edu.

**40-Hr HAZWOPER Training - A Recap**

The city of Tempe, Arizona served as the site for the first 40-Hr HAZWOPER training course offered by ITEP's TWRAP. The free five-day course began on Monday, October 24 and ended Friday, October 28. Over fifty individuals applied for the course. Twenty-nine participants from 17 tribes were accepted, and completed, the course. Everyone received certificates verifying completion of each training component. This course also met the OSHA 29 CFR 1910.120 standards for forty hours of training for workers involved in cleanup operations, voluntary cleanup operations, emergency response operations, and storage, disposal, or treatment of hazardous substances or uncontrolled hazardous waste sites.

The course was conducted by employees of HazTrain, a company based in Maryland and working under an EPA grant to provide hazardous substance training. During each day of training, the participants learned how to properly wear protective suits (Levels A, B, and C) and use breathing devices, and they became familiar with some of the most common chemicals found in the environment. Important guidelines for appropriate cleanup and disposal measures were also provided to assist participants understand corrective action procedures. In addition to informative lectures and outdoor exercises, the participants viewed hands-on demonstrations for lab sampling techniques and monitoring equipment usage. Sessions on safety protocols and environmental regulations were thoroughly explained and/or clarified by excellent trainers. Participants engaged in mock Incident Command Systems activities to ascertain the various levels of response operations and public safety measures. The course ended with participant exams and individual assessment of all training sections and elements.

To maintain HAZWOPER certifications, participants must attend annual 8-Hr Refresher courses within one year.
of attending the 40-Hr training. These courses are available in-person or online nationwide and at fees typically less than the 40-Hr course. At the August 2012 Tribal Lands Forum, an 8-Hr Refresher course will be available at no cost to participants. The next ITEP 40-Hr HAZWOPER course is scheduled for late spring of 2012.

For more information of 2012 course date and prerequisites, please contact Roberta Tohannie at Roberta.Tohannie@nau.edu.

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Learn more...

- **Tribal Waste and Response Assistance Program (TWRAP)**
  TWRAP is a program focused on assisting tribes with all waste management, brownfields, USTs, contaminated sites, and response programs. This program is funded by the USEPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response.

- **Tribal Solid Waste Education and Assistance Program (TSWEAP)**
  TSWEAP's focus is providing training and assistance to tribes working on solid and hazardous waste management. It is funded through a grant with the Rural Utilities Service, USDA.

"Any opinions, findings, and conclusions expressed in this material are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Rural Utility Service."

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