



Welcome to the Full Circle Newsletter



The TWAR SC Goes to Washington – Lots of Meetings, Lots of Writing, and a Little VR Testing

Every year the TWAR SC travels to Washington DC, where they meet with their colleagues throughout the Office of Land and Emergency Management (OLEM) and begin work on their next Priority Document.

It was a packed three days of intense meetings, brainstorming, writing, sharing differing opinions, and hashing out some complicated issues. They met with their Superfund, solid waste, UST, emergency management, and brownfields colleagues in OLEM, as well as staff from the Office of Environmental Justice and External Civil Rights for a lot of discussion, and then started work on their next Priority Document. (You can read the current Priority Document, as well as all past ones, on the [TWAR SC website](#).)

In addition, members held elections for new officers. [Rebecca Stevens](#) (Coeur d’Alene Tribe) was elected the new Chair and [Summer King](#) (Quapaw Nation) was elected the new Vice Chair. Members also decided to create a new officer position – “Past Chair”. This would allow the previous chair of the TWAR SC to assist the new officers with the transition, and also provide an extra pair of hands to help with recruitment and welcoming new members into the TWAR SC family. [Mark Junker](#), our amazing Chair for many years now, will of course be filling this role.

After meeting with multiple OLEM office staff, starting the writing process, and also dealing with many vital administrative issues, the ITEP team thought the members could use some fun. We’ve been working with our friends in EPA’s Office of Research and Development, specifically Sang Don Lee and

Meet Our Team



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Shawn Ryan who are helping us develop some terrific virtual courses on the tools they are creating. They have also designed virtual reality training courses for first responders dealing with emergency situations. These VR trainings are allowing environmental professionals to gain experience dealing with difficult situations, but without the expense of having to travel to specialist locations. TWAR SC members discussed designing specific scenarios to help Tribal UST inspectors and emergency responders. As part of meeting with the TWAR SC Shawn and Sang Don brought along a VR headset and radiological disaster scenario. Rebecca Stevens and Rob Roy (La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians) got to don the goggles and try the scenario out. Everyone had a lot of fun, as well as getting some ideas of how this technology might help out many of their colleagues at other Nations. We sincerely appreciate our colleagues at EPA thinking outside the box while meeting with us, and giving us an educational, but also fun, way to end an intense several days of meetings and work!

The whole Waste and Response Team here at ITEP is so grateful to work with such an amazing group of people, who work incredibly hard not only for their Nations and Villages, but for all Indigenous communities. Thank you for all you do! Be sure to visit [the TWAR SC webpage](#) to learn more about them.

Going Down the Rabbit Hole on PFAS? We've Developed a PFAS Specific Section of TLAC

It can be terribly confusing finding the best sources of information on PFAS, and keeping up with new developments involving them and other emerging contaminants of concern. I know I've found myself going in circles and pursuing leads that were dead ends plenty of times. So, we've created a new section of our Tribal Lands Assistance Center site (TLAC) where we are gathering sites, articles, recordings, and other sources of information that we hope keep you from going in circles too!

Our new [Understanding PFAS](#) page will be a constantly evolving resource. If you have a site, news source, research paper, training, or anything else you've found helpful and think could be included, let us know!

Save the Date for the 2024 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum!

Mark your calendars – the 2024 TLEF will be taking place **August 12 through 15**. We are still working through the final contract negotiations with the host facility, so we can't announce the location just yet. But we wanted to make sure you got the dates on your calendar, given there are so many other events going on next year. We look forward to seeing you then!

Save the Dates for Our Latest Tribal Solid Waste Codes Cohort!

Do you work for a federally recognized Tribe or Alaskan Native Village that has an Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan but lacks enforceable solid waste codes? Consider applying for our *Development and Implementation of*

Tribal Solid Waste Codes and Ordinances, a tuition-free training offered by ITEP, IHS, and EPA. This **three-part training** includes an online course, online assignments, and an in-person workshop to focus on writing and implementing effective tribal solid waste codes, and will be taking place February 12-15 (virtually), March 6 (virtually), and April 23-25 (in-person in Denver) next year. We'll be sending out an application soon.

Events, Webinars and, Opportunities

Those of you who attended the 2022 TLEF in Milwaukee will remember our closing keynote was done by Jonathan Gilbert from the **Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC)**. They are a terrific organization, doing such good work. They recently did a webinar with ITEP's Tribes and Climate Change Program, and I think many of you will find it as inspiring and fascinating as we did! Check out the recording of GLIFWC's Climate change Vulnerability Assessment presentation, "[Aanji-bimaadiziimagak](#)"

Have you heard about the **Climate Pollution Reduction Grants**? We know, there are so many different funding options suddenly available, and it can be hard to stay on top of them, and even keep them straight. These grants caught our eye though and we wanted to make sure you all were aware of them:

- EPA made available \$4.6 billion across two implementation grant competitions, one general competition and one specifically for tribes and territories. Under these funding opportunities, eligible applicants will compete for climate pollution reduction implementation grants to fund measures in their state, municipality, tribe, or territory-specific climate action plans. As part of its application evaluation, EPA will prioritize measures that achieve the greatest reduction in GHG emissions. Measures that address waste and materials management are within the scope. The deadline to apply to the general competition is April 1, 2024. **The deadline to apply to the Tribes and territories competition is May 1, 2024.** EPA estimates that the implementation grants will be awarded in Fall 2024 for the general competition and in Winter 2024-2025 for the Tribes and territories competition. **For more information, please read the [General Competition Notice of Funding Opportunity](#), the [Tribes and Territories Competition NOFO](#), and the [Climate Pollution Reduction Grant website](#).**

You also might be interested in **FEMA's Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC)** funding opportunities, which are providing \$1 billion to help state, local, tribal and territorial governments address high-level future risks to natural disasters, foster greater community resilience and reduce disaster suffering. **Application deadline is February 29, 2024.** In addition, **apply now through February 29, 2024, for BRIC Direct Technical Assistance.** Go to #3 on their [website](#) for more information.



The 2023 TLEF had an excellent lineup of Underground Storage Tank sessions and trainings. Topics ranged from climate change and USTs, ASTs 101, transportation of the future, environmental self-determination, and facility specific compliance plans. The [Underground Storage Tanks recordings](#) are free and available for your team's training needs.



Are you interested in designing emergency preparedness plans for tribal communities? What about EPA resources for oil spills, chemical emergencies, and disaster response? The 2023 TLEF [Emergency Management session recordings](#) are free and available for your team.