





One Tribe, One Earth

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Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

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Welcome to the Native Voices newsletter!

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From the Executive Director...



Hello to all of you. I pray this editorial finds you healthy and safe. We are living in difficult and uncertain times and writing this editorial is quite different from any other that I've written. I am grateful to have an opportunity to reach out to each of you and tell you, you are on my mind and in my prayers during these difficult times. I am also so thankful to work with our team at ITEP and all of you throughout Indian country.

Like all of you, we have had to make many adjustments this last month. The entire staff is now working from home, navigating the challenges of staying connected remotely, and taking care of their families. ITEP has also put in

place an indefinite hold on all travel and canceled all up-coming in-person events. These events include all in-person trainings, mentorships, professional assistance, and events like the National Tribal Forum on Air Quality (NTFAQ). These were not easy decisions to make, but they needed to be done to protect our tribal communities and reduce the spread of this pandemic. Until these restrictions are lifted we will do our best to offer remote training opportunities and technical assistance. So please contact us if we can be of any assistance.

I am currently at home with my mother, Marie (80) and son, Shonto (13), pictured right. There has been a lot of sadness within my hometown communities of Chilchinbeto and Kayenta. The Navajo Nation is fighting hard to keep everyone safe. I brought my Mom home with me to keep her safe. I am touched when I watch my mom and son interact, fills my heart with hope. They read native books, do chores, speak Navajo, cook, argue about bed time, and play together. They have never been closer. To find joy in a time of sorrow, is bittersweet.



I am exceedingly grateful to all the men, women and their families on the frontlines of this pandemic. I have family members and friends who are working tirelessly to serve all of us. I support them via text messages every day and lots of prayer. They ask me over and over to convey this message: Please stay home and practice all the hygiene recommendations.

Lastly, I am thankful for our ancestors. I have heard many times over the years that we were born with resilience in our DNA. They endured the worst for us and now we must stand strong and united for our future generations. I, along with the entire ITEP team, stand with you and your communities during these difficult times.

For a list of resources and more information related to COVID-19, please see the section below.

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For more information:

ITEP Training

Indoor Air Quality in Tribal Communities

ITEP Climate Change Program

National Tribal Air Association

ITEP Videos & Media

Resources

- American Indian Health Commission COVID-19 webpage
- National Indian Health Board COVID-19 Tribal Resource Center
- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Coronavirus (COVID-19) webpage
- EPA's List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2
- NDN Collective: <u>Decolonizing Community Care In Response To Covid-19</u>
- The University of Arizona recently released their <u>School & Home Integrated Pest</u> <u>Management (IPM) April 2020 Newsletter.</u>
- The <u>CDC Asthma website</u> provides information to help Americans with asthma achieve better health and improved quality of life.
- The <u>EPA Asthma webpage</u> provides information on managing asthma triggers, publications on asthma, and other resources.
- The <u>California Department of Public Health guide</u> helps school districts transition to safer products and practices. The guide outlines products and methods that help prevent asthma or asthma symptoms.
- The <u>Environmental Working Group's (EWG) website</u> provides information about the safety of consumer products, including cleaning products.
- The EWG screened hundreds of disinfectants and sanitizers approved and recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and checked them against their Guide to Healthy Cleaning. Here, they've identified 16 safer products.
- Texas A&M Extension Service emphasizes disinfectants are pesticides, so use them safely.
- COVID-19 Webinar: "Safe and Proper use of Disinfectants & Household Cleaners" April 9, 2020 at 10:00 am PDT. Hosted by the Partnership for Air Matters, the Tribal Healthy Homes Network, the Washington State Department of Health, EPA, CDC, and IHS. Register here.

Online Training Opportunities through ITEP

Our team will continue to support the existing online courses listed below, and we are actively looking for new ways to provide the training and support needed to help tribal programs and the communities they serve. We have started by compiling some useful resources and information in the links and articles that follow. In this time of upheaval from our traditional work spaces and routines, we remain committed to providing the training and assistance tribes need.

Our current selection of online courses, video tutorials, and recorded webinars span topics related to

understanding the basics of air quality, to managing data, and developing emissions inventories. Most of the information is free and available at the click of a button; while they are generally self-paced, some involve direct engagement with instructors and other students in the cohort. Many of our materials and webpages are being

We encourage you to reach out to us and let us know how we can help – we are only a phone call or email away!

revamped and reorganized, so if there is anything you are looking for, please do not hesitate to reach out to our staff at any time.

The following online courses are currently available; visit www.nau.edu/itep/elearning for details or email professional@nau.edu with questions or suggestions.

- > Residential Building Science Review
- > Building Performance: Improving Indoor Air Quality in Cold Climates
- > Quality Assurance Fundamentals / Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) Series
- > Radon Fundamentals
- > Emissions Inventory Fundamentals / Advanced (requires ITEP approval)
- > Tribal Data Toolbox Version 3.1 (requires ITEP approval)
- > Partnerships and Community Outreach ** Fall 2020 schedule coming soon!
- > Tribal Strategic Planning ** Fall 2020 schedule coming soon!
- **Fee-based courses.

These online courses contain assignments, quizzes, videos, examples, downloadable spreadsheets, and other resources. While they are self-paced, each course provides the opportunity for individual interaction with subject matter experts.

EPA's Air Pollution Training Institute

As part of its obligations under the Clean Air Act, the US EPA supports the Air Pollution Training Institute (APTI) to provide training to state and local agencies who are working in air quality. Their full catalog can be accessed via www.apti-learn.net and users can create a free account to access online training materials and print certificates of completion. Topics range from "Introduction to Air Pollution Control" through "Risk Assessment" and many others.

American Indian Air Quality Training Program (AIAQTP) In-Person Trainings

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, our courses for the coming months have been postponed for the health and safety of our communities. As a team we are looking for new ways to continue to provide trainings. The staff is working on development of a Building Science review online-course. Be on the lookout for live webinars, video tutorials, and updated resources for tribal air quality professionals.

In the meantime, we are also working on developing our schedule of courses for next year, which should be available soon on our website. Visit www.nau.edu/airquality for updates.

The AIAQTP instructional team are patiently waiting to see all of you again soon! We are wishing you and your families' good health and safety.



Introduction to Tribal Air Quality, January 14-17, 2020 in Flagstaff, AZ (Photo credit: Christal Black)

The following courses were offered during this past quarter:

- 1. "Introduction to Tribal Air Quality" in Flagstaff, AZ.
- 2. "Indoor Air Quality Diagnostic Tools" at the TAMS Center in Las Vegas, NV.
- 3. "Air Quality Computations" in Phoenix, AZ.
- 4. "Fundamentals of Air Quality" at the TAMS Center in Las Vegas, NV.
- 5. "Air Quality in Alaska Native Villages (mini-course)" in Dillingham, AK.
- 6. "Indoor Air Quality Level 2 in Alaska" in Dillingham, AK.



Air Quality Computations participants, February 11-14, 2020 in Phoenix, AZ



Indoor Air Quality participants, March 2-6, 2020 in Dillingham, AK

At the AIAQTP courses, participants engaged in small group activities, lectures and discussions. Participants in courses went home with new knowledge in tribal air programs, indoor air concerns, gained hands on knowledge with diagnostic tools and stimulated their brains with forgotten computations. As participants continue to progress through ITEP training courses, new friendships and bonds are created. Many individuals completed multiple courses. This quarter AIAQTP had the honor of training and engaging with 92 participants.







Indoor Air Quality Diagnostic Tools, January 28-31, 2020 in Las Vegas, NV (Photo Credit: Mercedes Kaiser)

Travel Restrictions and Health Concerns Cause 2020 NTFAQ Cancellation

The Planning Committee for the National Tribal Forum on Air Quality (NTFAQ) has determined that in order to protect the health and well-being of our communities across the country, the 2020 NTFAQ, originally planned for May in Tulsa, Oklahoma, will be cancelled. While it was a difficult decision to make with so much uncertainty around the current situation and the impacts of restrictions on travel, gatherings, and other activities for the foreseeable future, we feel that this is the best course of action.

At this time, we are exploring and evaluating options for the near term so that we can continue providing support for knowledge-sharing among tribes, as well as and creating space for tribes, EPA, and others to connect with each other. As ITEP has cancelled all in-person events and gatherings through the end of May, we will be sharing more information about remote access to resources and other types of learning and engagement opportunities as they become available.

We would also love to hear any ideas and suggestions you have for meeting your air program goals during this time. Are there topics you were hoping to learn more about during the event? Are there conversations you were interested in having? Do you have a project or experiences to share with others? We are looking for all input and will do what we can to meet your needs, and we are always looking for ways to improve and expand what we offer.

Please share your thoughts with the ITEP staff listed below, or if you wish you can use our online suggestion form here: https://tinyurl.com/NTFAQsuggest.

We are committed to delivering the high-quality experience you have come to expect from the NTFAQ, and will be continuing to work closely with the Muscogee (Creek) Nation as our host on the development and planning of the in-person event, which will be scheduled for May 17-20, 2021. For the time being, we are closing the event registration forms and will be re-grouping in the coming months to establish a timeline and revised information for the 2021 event. Updates will be announced via the ITEP listservs and websites when finalized, however questions can also be directed to Lydia.Scheer@nau.edu or Andy.Bessler@nau.edu

Tribal Air Monitoring Support (TAMS) Center

>> Remote services available from the TAMS Center

As many activities and services are disrupted due to the National Emergency of the coronavirus pandemic, the TAMS Center is announcing that many of its support services are still available. The TAMS staff cannot provide in-person professional assistance due to Northern Arizona University travel restrictions in effect through the end of May 2020. However, the TAMS staff are working on ways to assist tribes utilizing online tools. TAMS staff can use GoToMeeting, Skype, or Zoom to facilitate assistance projects. Additionally, there are a significant amount of online resources available on the TAMS online resources webpage including information on online training, online videos, and example quality assurance/control documentation. Several TAMS staff are also available to offer technical support and assistance.

Here are the TAMS staff and their areas of support:

Angelique Luedeker (<u>Angelique.Luedeker@nau.edu</u>) – Emissions Inventory assistance.

- Melinda Ronca-Battista (<u>Melinda.Ronca-Battista@nau.edu</u>) Data management, validation, analysis and quality assurance project plan/standard operating procedure assistance.
- Michael King (<u>Michael.King@nau.edu</u>) Air monitoring, meteorological equipment, datalogger, and AQS assistance.
- Farshid Farsi (<u>Farsi.Farshid@epa.gov</u>) Air monitoring project and air quality program assistance.
- Christopher Lee (<u>Christopher.Lee@nau.edu</u>) Air monitoring project and air quality program assistance.

You may contact the appropriate person for your project.

>> Cove Air Monitoring Project in Cove, AZ, Navajo Nation: Support for U.S. EPA Emergency Response Team and the Navajo Nation EPA

On February 28 and March 6, 2020, Michael King (TAMS Center Technology Specialist III) assisted the U.S. EPA Emergency Response Team-Las Vegas and the Navajo Nation EPA Air Quality Control Program with the installation of a tri-pod meteorological tower and data



Mike King (TAMS), Kaelyn Morgan (NNEPA), and Alberta Scott (TetraTech) connecting meteorological equipment to a datalogger.

logger to support ambient radiological air monitoring in Cove, Arizona on the Navajo Nation.

Michael provided Navajo EPA staff with instruction and technical assistance on the wiring



Mike King (TAMS), Henry Gerard (USEPA), and Kaelyn Morgan (NNEPA) connecting meteorological equipment to a datalogger.

of the meteorological sensors to a Campbell Scientific CR1000 data logger and oversight in the programming of the data logger to collect data.

Meteorological monitoring provides critical data to characterize meteorological conditions and prevailing wind directions throughout the air monitoring project.

Michael King is available to provide technical assistance with installation, operation, and troubleshooting of air monitoring and meteorological equipment. Please contact Christopher Lee, TAMS-ITEP Co-Director, at Christopher.Lee@nau.edu or 702-784-8278 for further information on the TAMS Center professional assistance (PA) services.

>> Attention Tribal AQS Users! Deprecated Features of AQS are no longer supported as of December 31, 2019.

For tribal users of the Air Quality System (AQS), please know that as of December 31, 2019, AQS no longer supports the following features:

- 1) Loading of Raw Composite (RC) data. This is replaced by new duration codes for each of the composite types.
- 2) UTM coordinates: AQS no longer supports creation of new sites with UTM coordinates, or the output of UTM coordinates on any AQS outputs. Note: There are many tools available on the internet for converting from UTM to Latitude and Longitude, such as the one available from the National Geodetic Survey at https://www.ngs.noaa.gov/cgi-bin/utm_getgp.prl.

>> Get Your AQS Questions Answered!

The Air Quality System (AQS) is the EPA central repository of ambient air monitoring data. If you submit your air monitoring data to AQS, you might have some questions on AQS or just want to talk with others about AQS. Every two months, Pamela McIntyre of the AQS Helpline hosts an online question and answer session for AQS Tribal users. The question and answer format allows users to pose questions and Pamela then demonstrates the answer in AQS. Even if you know the answer to your question, you are encouraged to bring it to the session because someone else attending might not know the answer. You can either email Pamela your question before the session or ask your question during the session. If there are not any questions posed, Pamela uses the session to review various AQS aspects. Recent topics have included the data certification process, how to resolve common error messages received when submitting data, and establishing a monitor in AQS. Even if you do not currently have any questions on AQS, it is a good idea to attend these sessions to refresh your memory on different aspects of AQS and to share feedback with others about AQS.

If you are an AQS Tribal user, you should already be receiving emails from Pamela every two months that announce these sessions and include the link to log into these sessions. These sessions are usually held the second Wednesday of every other month at 2 PM Eastern. Here is a schedule of upcoming sessions.

 Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 2 PM Eastern, 1 PM Central, 12 PM Mountain, 11 AM Pacific, 10 AM Alaska

- Wednesday, July 8, 2020 at 2 PM Eastern, 1 PM Central, 12 PM Mountain, 11 AM Pacific, 10 AM Alaska
- Wednesday, September 9, 2020 at 2 PM Eastern, 1 PM Central, 12 PM Mountain, 11 AM Pacific, 10 AM Alaska

The <u>AQS Calendar of Events</u> lists upcoming sessions. You may also contact Pamela McIntyre at <u>McIntyre.Pamela@epa.gov</u> if you would like to be added to the email announcements.

>> 2020 Spring TAMS Steering Committee (SC) Meeting

The TAMS SC Spring Meeting occurred at the TAMS Center in Las Vegas, Nevada from March 3-5, 2020. The TAMS SC selected Bill Thompson from Penobscot Indian Nation to receive the 2020 Virgil Masayesva Award in the category of policy development. Mr. Thompson has been employed with the Penobscot Tribal Air Quality Program since 2005. He has served in leadership positions on many national organizations including the NTAA Executive Committee, the TAMS Steering Committee, and the Tribal Science Council. Congratulations to Bill Thompson!



2020 Virgil Masayesva Awardee, Bill Thompson (Penobscot Indian Nation)

Other highlights from the 2020 Spring TAMS Steering Committee:

- 2020 TAMS Technical Needs Assessment: The technical needs assessment is conducted by the
 TAMS SC to determine the relevancy and usefulness of the current TAMS Center technical support
 services. The 2020 TAMS Technical Needs Assessment is now available online. The TAMS Center
 staff and the steering committee will be sharing the Needs Assessment with tribes through
 different avenues such as the TAMS Listserv and by the TAMS SC members with tribes in their
 regions.
- **Upcoming Status of Tribal Air Report (STAR):** The TAMS center will provide information from the regional equipment survey, the *Sensor Technology* course, the *Air Quality Planning for Wildland Smoke* course, and the 2020 Virgil Masayesva Award recipient. TAMS SC members will also develop tribal stories to include in the report.
- **Regional Equipment Inventory:** A subcommittee has redeveloped the inventory questionnaire and will finalize in mid-2020.
- Quality Review and Exchange System for Tribes (QREST): Melinda Ronca-Battista provided a demonstration of the current state of development of the QREST application.
- TAMS Center 20-Year Anniversary: In celebration of the TAMS Center providing strong assistance to tribal programs since 2000, the TAMS SC suggested a 20-Year Anniversary Celebration to occur in either November or October of this year in conjunction with the Fall SC Meeting at the TAMS Center. The planning is ongoing through a subcommittee.
- TAMS Vision Statement: The TAMS SC discussed developing a vision statement for the TAMS Center. Suggestions for the vision statement will be submitted to Vallen Cook (Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa), who will develop the final draft for the TAMS SC to consider.

Environmental Education Outreach Program (EEOP)

>> Indoor Air Quality Training: Lessons Learned on Particulate Air Pollutants By Diane Abraham, IGAP Coordinator Assistant, Twin Hills Village Council

It was an amazing week learning about indoor air quality in Dillingham, Alaska from March 2-6, 2020. The training was conducted by ITEP-EEOP Project Director, Mansel Nelson, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Tribal Air Program Manager, Mary Mullan, and coordinated by Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC) Environmental Specialist, Melany Eakin.

I learned about why pollutants in our homes can make us sick and why we should protect



homes from these invasions. ITEP shared information on types of particulate matter and why we should eliminate dust in our home because it can harm our lungs and our overall health. I learned that mold and moisture from leaks in roofs, plumbing leaks, and relative humidity can cause allergies. We learned about fine particles from secondhand smoke, carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, mold and moisture. Radon and chemical compounds we were introduced to optical particulate matter sensors (sampling measurements). After we learned about strategies for maintaining good air quality and measurements, on our second day we went to a school to do an assessment. It was very amusing. On the remaining days we did home investigations on air matters and it was remarkable determining various sources (composed of solids and liquid particles) in a home. One day, if IGAP and Twin Hills

Village Council decide to create a Quality Assurance Project Plan for this program, I would be honored to study and work with our community.

>> COVID-19 Update: EEOP Online and Home Schooling

With the arrival of COVID-19, many states and communities are practicing social distancing (physical distancing) and closing schools. Educators and parents are trying to figure out how to continue educational activities without formal classroom meetings.

The EEOP Staff are collecting various Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) resources, with a focus on Environmental Education (EE) to support teachers and parents for home schooling. A webpage will be developed to share those resources; in the meantime, resources will be communicated via the ITEP listservs. Those interested in educational resources identified by the EEOP staff can join the Education and Outreach for Educators listserv.

For more information about STEM Educational resources, contact mansel.nelson@nau.edu.

>> COVID-19 Update: Cleaning Practices May Trigger Asthma

With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been increasing interest in cleaning, especially with disinfectants (regulated by the EPA as pesticides). However, increased use of disinfectants may pose a problem for many tribal members with asthma. Many disinfectants can trigger asthma episodes.

Envelope protein

Membrase protein

Spike protein

Nucleocardid protein

Coning Red

Upid membrase

Upid membrase

A recent report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that tribal

communities are disproportionately impacted by asthma (see URL 1 below.) Asthma affects almost 12% of tribal members, nearly double the national average of 7%. One of the key approaches to reducing the impact of asthma is to reduce exposure to asthma triggers (see URL 2 below). Many chemicals used as disinfectants are known *asthmagens* (substances that cause or exacerbate asthma symptoms). Increased use of disinfectant products may result in higher rates of asthma episodes, which result in increased use of asthma medications and even visits to medical providers.

According to the CDC, SARS-CoV-2, the novel coronavirus that causes the disease COVID-19, is believed to spread primarily person to person through airborne respiratory droplets. However, they suspect that the virus may spread via surfaces as well. Once the virus is transferred from surfaces via your hands to your face, you may become infected. The primary defense against surface contamination recommended by CDC is washing your hands regularly with soap and water. Another way to address the risk of SARS-CoV-2 on surfaces is cleaning. The EPA recently released a list of antimicrobial products for use against SARS-CoV-2. This list has been created under an emerging viral pathogens EPA program. The list is not based on actual specific scientific investigations but on the ability of the cleaning product to kill similar viruses. A key limitation of the list is that it does not consider which products are asthmagens.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) has identified 16 products from the EPA antimicrobial list that are safer for use in your home and safer for use around people with asthma (see URL 3 below). Several of the safer cleaning products recommended by EWG include hydrogen peroxide as the active ingredient. The advantage of using hydrogen peroxide are the fewer residual chemicals: hydrogen peroxide (H_2O_2) breaks down into water (H_2O_2) and oxygen (O_2). In addition to using safer products, you need to ventilate the area that you are cleaning. Even with products that are identified as safer, you should always read and follow label instructions.

As mentioned previously, soap and water are also effective against the SARS-CoV-2. Enveloped viruses like SARS-CoV-2 are the easiest type to deactivate because of their flimsy shell. In contrast with many gastrointestinal viruses, like norovirus which have a tough protein shell called a capsid, viruses like SARS-CoV-2, are relatively vulnerable with their fatty wrapping. There are a few ways to burst this flimsy shell. Soap and water are one of the effective ways to not only wash away the virus, but to kill it. Combining soap and water with microfiber cloths to target surfaces and high-touch points (door knobs, light switches, appliance handles), has been shown to be an effective approach to healthy cleaning. The California work-related asthma prevention program has fact sheets on using microfiber for cleaning (see URL 4 below).

If you decide that you still must use something "stronger" to clean surfaces that may be contaminated with SARS-CoV-2, then it is important to read and follow label instructions. Additionally, if anyone in your home has asthma, vigorous ventilation is particularly important while using the cleaning products. Vigorous ventilation should continue until there are no residual odors from the cleaning

product. The Texas A&M Extension Service and the University of Arizona Extension Service have provided extensive guidance on the proper and safe use of disinfectants (see URL 5 and 6 below). Improper use of disinfectants can be harmful to everyone, but people with asthma will be impacted even more.

It is recommended to watch for updates on all aspects of COVID-19, since the science regarding COVID-19 is still evolving. Scientists will need a lot more data to provide more guidance on the risks and to make specific recommendations on all aspects of protection against COVID-19.

If you have questions about the information in this article, contact <u>mansel.nelson@nau.edu</u>.

Reference links:

- 1) https://www.cdc.gov/asthma/ This website provides information to help Americans with asthma achieve better health and improved quality of life.
- 2) https://www.epa.gov/asthma Information on managing asthma triggers. Publications on asthma and other resources are also available.
- 3) https://bit.ly/EWG-COVID-19 The EWG screened hundreds of disinfectants and sanitizers approved and recommended by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and checked them against their Guide to Healthy Cleaning and identified 16 safer products.
- 4) https://bit.ly/CA-microfiber The fact sheet explains how microfiber is a highly effective cleaning tool that is also safer for asthma as well as how to use and take care of the microfiber cloths.
- 5) https://bit.ly/TAMU-disinfectants-are-pesticides-so-use-safely Texas A&M Extension Service emphasizes that disinfectants are pesticides, so use them safely.
- 6) https://bit.ly/UofA-Extension-COVID-19 The University of Arizona Extension staff provide a useful summary of SARS-CoV-2 and COVID-19 as well as appropriate cleaning guidance.

Upcoming Events:

>> 2.5 GHz Rural Tribal Window. This window is a unique opportunity for Tribes in rural areas to directly access unassigned spectrum over their Tribal lands, subject to buildout requirements. The 2.5 GHz band is suitable for both mobile coverage and fixed point-to-point uses and is currently used to provide broadband service by legacy educational licensees and commercial providers that lease the spectrum. The Rural Tribal Priority Window will close on Monday, August 3, 2020. For more information, visit the FCC Rural Tribal Window website.

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