

**TRIBAL PESTICIDE PROGRAM COUNCIL
MONTHLY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CONFERENCE CALL**

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

FINAL notes



Roll call:

Tribes (15)

- Camilo Perez, Quechan Indian Tribe
- Dorla Tartsah, Kiowa Tribe
- James Jackson, Cherokee Nation
- Jeremy Phillips, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
- Jessica Raspitha, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Luis Sanchez, Cocopah Indian Tribe
- Melanie Kirby, Institute of American Indian Art
- Phil Jackson, Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe
- Phillip White, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Renee Keezer, White Earth Nation
- Ron Workman, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Steve Anderson, Choctaw Nation
- Tacy Jensen, Gila River Indian Community
- Ted Puetz, Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Verna Potts, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

Tribal Organizations (3)

- Diania Caudell, California Indian Basketweavers Association
- Mark Daniels, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals
- Robert Shimek, White Earth Tribal College

EPA (3)

- Charles Kovatch, EPA/OCSP
- Lauren Achstatter, EPA/OECA
- Helene Ambrosino, EPA/OECA

Other (1)

- Betsy Rakola, USDA Office of Tribal Relations

Reported in advance as absent (6)

- Eric Gjevre, Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe
- Jasmine Courville, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Jessica Raspitha, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Linsey Walsh, EPA/OCSP

- McKenna King, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals
- Nina Hapner, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians

1. Tribal Caucus

2. Welcome/Introductions

Mark Daniels, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals, facilitated roll call.

3. EPA Updates

Lauren Achstatter, EPA/OECA shared that EPA is reviewing the applications for TPPC grant administration.

Helene Ambrosino, EPA/OECA, shared that work is continuing on the draft 2026-29 cooperative agreement guidance. The goal is to formalize this by February 2025. Tribal consultation is on the draft. There were two tribal webinars held in 2024 that facilitated dialogue and there was an open comment period but they did not receive any written comments.

4. TPPC Administrator Updates

Fall Meeting updates

Mark shared that the TPPC Fall meeting 2024 notes, agenda with presentation links, contact information, meeting evaluation, and photos have been uploaded to the TPPC website. Mark noted that some reimbursements from the meeting are still being processed. If you have any questions or concerns, reach out to Mark. He thanked members for their responses to the ITEP evaluation survey.

5. Tribal Caucus Report-out

Mark shared about the discussion regarding the Cumulative Impacts project feedback. This feedback will be sent to Amanda Hauff. He also commented that the group discussed concerns that the new presidential administration may change priorities at EPA. Mark noted that the TPPC Spring meeting could serve as a space to clarify these changes.

6. Workgroup Report-out

Mark provided updates on TPPC Workgroups.

Risk Assessment Workgroup

This group has not been meeting regularly due to delay on the pilot project.

Policy Workgroup

This workgroup has been meeting once a month and is working on a comment letter on the SAFETEA Act and its impact to Oklahoma tribal sovereignty and environmental issues. They are also working to submit a comment on the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) risk assessment guidance document that now incorporates tribal lifeways, exposure pathways, tribal data, and traditional ecological knowledge to risk assessments.

Pollinator Protection Workgroup

Mark is not involved in this workgroup and there was not a workgroup member present to provide updates.

7. NTC Updates

No updates noted.

8. Other Issues/Concerns/Hot Topics

Renee shared that the Basic Structural PIRT nominations close Wednesday 11/27/2024 and reminded members to submit nominations. Mark will look into additional upcoming trainings to be added to the website.

9. Meet & Greet with the USDA Office of Tribal Relations

Betsy Rakola, USDA/OTR, presented about the mission of the USDA including working to improve the economy and quality of life in rural America, to develop sound agricultural production practices, enhance food safety, improve health, and nutrition and to manage and protect natural resources.

The Office of Tribal Relations advises the Secretary of Agriculture on policies related to tribes. They are the primary point of contact for tribes to report issues related to USDA programs. New projects emphasize tribal food sovereignty and nutrition education. The Farm Bill has lapsed which provides funding and policy guidance for all USDA activity. The Farm Bill continues to expand on tribal specific provisions.

Betsy shared about a new local food purchase agreement program where tribal governments can purchase foods from tribal producers supporting the local economy and reinvigorating tribal food ways. USDA partners with the Intertribal Agriculture Council which is creating a national intertribal food business center to provide technical and financial assistance to tribal food businesses. The funding opportunities for this will open in a month or so. There are a variety of USDA food programs that have been updated to include more

traditional tribal foods.

The USDA also includes the Forest Service and Betsy shared about Forest Service co-stewardship efforts, grants, and research to partner with tribes. In the past four years they have signed over 200 co-stewardship agreements between the Forest Service and tribal nations. There is a Tribal Action Plan on the Forest Service app. Projects emphasize the protection and conservation of sacred sites.

If you would like to learn more visit the website [USDA.gov/tribalrelations](https://www.usda.gov/tribalrelations) or email tribalrelations@usda.gov

Renee Keezer, White Earth Nation, inquired about the herbicide strategy and new mitigations that will be required. Betsy can arrange for a subject matter expert to present on this topic. Verna Potts, Prairie Band Potawatomi, voiced concerns about forests in her area and their potential to become wildfire fuel sources. She asked if there is funding for planting new trees and managing dying trees. Betsy responded that there is funding for managing hazardous fuel related issues and reforestation. She shared a link to the current open grants (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/working-with-us/grants>). Betsy noted that a lot of funding that had been available through the Inflation Reduction Act was temporary and in addition there will be a large budget cut soon. Ted Puetz, Ak-Chin Indian Community, supports the TPPC meeting with USDA Office of Tribal Relations representatives while in Washington for the Spring meeting and finding an expert to address Renee's question regarding herbicide mitigations. Mark will reach out to Betsy to coordinate on topics of interest and collaboration during the Spring Meeting.

10. Next TPPC Conference Call: Wednesday, December 18, 2024, 2:00-4:00 p.m. EST

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- December 9-10: Full SFIREG Meeting (<https://aapco.org/2015/07/30/sfireg-3/>)
- March 2-5, 2025: AAPCO Spring Meeting (<https://aapco.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/2025-SAVE-THE-DATE.pdf>)
- March 5-7, 2025: TPPC Spring Meeting (<https://tppcwebsite.org/meetings/>)
- April 22, 2025: ASPCRO Mid-Year Board of Directors Meeting (<https://aspcro.org/meetings/>)