

Tribal Pesticide Program Council Executive Committee
Monthly Conference Call
04/16/25
Call Notes – Final

1. Tribal Caucus

2. Welcome/Introductions

Jasmine Courville, Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes facilitated the roll call:

Tribes (14)

- Brenda Pusher-Begay, White Mountain Apache Tribe
- Brian Parker, Gila River Indian Community
- Bob Shimek, White Earth Tribal Community College
- Camilo Perez, Quechan Indian Tribe
- Daniel Hoyt, Gila River Indian Community
- Eric Gjevre, Coeur d'Alene Indian Tribe
- Jasmine Courville, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes
- Jessica Raspitha, St. Regis Mohawk Tribe
- Joe Herrera, Yakama Nation
- Nina Hapner, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians
- Steve Anderson, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
- Tacy Jensen, Gila River Indian Community
- Theodore Puetz, Ak-Chin Indian Community
- Verna Potts, Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation

Tribal Organizations (1)

- Diania Caudell, California Indian Basketweavers Association

EPA (2)

- Linsey Walsh, EPA/OCSP
- Lauren Achstatter, EPA/OCSP

Other (1)

- Mark Daniels, Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals

3. EPA Updates (Linsey, Lauren, Helene, Michael)

(A technical glitch with the Zoom system that started around the top of the second hour prevented any additional attendees from joining the call. Due to this, Lauren Achstatter, EPA/OCSP was the only EPA staff member able to join the call. She communicated outside of the Zoom call with Linsey Walsh and other EPA staff to relay their comments and answers to TPPC members' questions. Lauren eventually got Linsey on a separate phone call allowing her to join the Zoom call for the remainder of the hour by Lauren holding her phone up to the microphone on her computer.)

Lauren announced that Linsey Walsh is back from maternity leave, and happy to be stepping back into her role as the EPA project officer for the TPPC cooperative agreement.

Jasmine asked Linsey about EPA's response to the recent SAFETEA Act decision. Linsey noted that she sent out a letter from Region 6 recently with the rationale for the decision, and that her interpretation is that EPA is agreeing to the state's request to administer environmental resources on tribal lands. She noted where questions can be sent, and offered to share a letter with the EPA point of contact if TPPC wants to prepare one. Jasmine brought up the issue of underground injection wells that was noted as part of EPA's decision on the SAFETEA Act, and noted her concerns about the practice. There was a discussion about whether TPPC should prepare a letter about this, or leave it up to individual Tribes if they want to do so, or possibly route it through the Regional Tribal Operations Committees (RTOCs). Jasmine also asked if we can get a presenter from the state (Oklahoma) to talk about what they're permitting and where. **Linsey said she would look into finding a speaker from the state.**

Nina asked Lauren about when EPA might disburse some or all of the FY25 funding. Lauren noted that they still don't have any information on the issue, despite numerous requests to their management. Jasmine followed up with a question about the status of the next TPPC cooperative agreement (FY26-30). Lauren said that's still in the selection process, and she's not able to give any information about when we will hear more information. Apparently a selection has been made, but the award hasn't been completely processed through the system yet.

Nina also asked about the removal of the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ's) implementing regulations for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Linsey said that she understands CEQ has directed federal agencies rescind their own implementing rules about NEPA and replace them with (non-binding) guidance.

4. TPPC Administrator Updates (Mark, Mehrdad, McKenna, Liz)

Spring meeting: Mark said that all materials from the meeting are now up on the website (agenda w/links, attendee list, full notes, evaluation results, group photo (on Zoom) in case anyone wants to go back and review them.

Fall meeting status: Mark pointed out that whether or not we have a Fall meeting depends on what happens with the new cooperative agreement for FY26-30, as well as funding for ITEP to finish out the remaining year of the current cooperative agreement. If ITEP is provided with funding to get through the end of the fiscal year and awarded the agreement for the next grant cycle we would move forward with planning a Fall meeting. White Earth Nation and Ak-Chin Indian Community have both been suggested as possible hosts for a Fall meeting.

5. Tribal Caucus Report-out

Nina noted that the group discussed the issue around the removal of the NEPA implementing regulations in the Tribal Caucus session, as well as checking in to see if Tribes have noticed an increase in immigration enforcement activity on their reservations, as this may impact farmworker labor availability.

6. Workgroup Report-out

- a) Pollinator Workgroup: Nina reported that the group has started meeting again after taking some time off around the turn of the year. At their April call they talked about the "education toolboxes" that were suggested at the TPPC's Fall 2024 meeting, building templates for pollinator protection plans, and possibly holding another tribal pollinator symposium in the future.

Jasmine noted that she recently gave a pollinator presentation to the Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS), and Hannah Golden of NAFWS might be interested in collaborating with TPPC to create a “Western Tribal Resource Alliance.”

Jasmine also noted that Ed Spevak from the St. Louis Zoo (and Pollinator Workgroup member) is creating a 501c3 called Native Foods, Native Peoples, Native Pollinators to share knowledge about these issues beyond his current employment with the zoo.

- b) Policy Workgroup: Mark noted that the group recently submitted a comment letter on the rescinding of the Council on Environmental Quality’s implementing regulations for the national Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Mark also discussed upcoming opportunities for the TPPC to provide feedback, including the US Fish & Wildlife Service reopening the comment period for listing the Monarch butterfly as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, and the Army Corps of Engineers revising (yet again) the definition of “Waters of the US” in the Clean Water Act.
- c) Risk Assessment Workgroup: Mark described how the Risk Assessment group has been in a holding pattern for a while due to lack of movement on the pilot project between White Earth Nation and EPA, and that we currently have a survey out to members of the group to figure out how to move forward.

7. NTC Updates (Gerald Wagner)

No one from the NTC was available to give an update on the group’s activities.

8. Other Issues/Concerns/Hot Topics (All)

Nina Hapner, Kashia Band of Pomo Indians, informed the group that she had spoken with former TPPC Chair Fred Corey in March and relayed some information about his health and the work he’s doing for his Tribe currently, and sent his warm greetings to all of the TPPC members.

9. Next TPPC Conference Call: Wednesday, May 21, 2025, 2:00-4:00 p.m. EST

*(Yellow highlighting in the notes above indicates action items)