Tribal Pesticide Program Council Fall 2022

Meet Jeremy Phillips: A Founding Member of the TPPC!
Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community
Host of the October 18-20 TPPC Meeting

As one of the original organizers of the Tribal Pesticide Program Council, Jeremy Phillips has been an active voice in the organization as well as an enduring proponent of pesticide education in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. Beginning as a Water Technician with Environmental Protection & Natural Resources (EPNR), Jeremy earned multiple promotions that led him to his current position as Senior Environmental Engineer with the Community Development Department and EPNR.

Two strong mentors, Berkeley Cough and Delroy Manuel provided guidance and beneficial knowledge for Jeremy with conducting inspections, collection of samples, and educational outreach on the proper use, storage, and disposal of hazardous substances.

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"A positive and respectful attitude is a must while performing both pesticide compliance and educational outreach."

Community outreach is crucial and often a full-time job that is necessary for the continuous protection of community members. In addition to education, Jeremy is responsible for conducting pesticide compliance & enforcement through monitoring, sampling, marketplace inspections and ensuring Worker Protection Standards are followed within four leased agricultural farms. He also oversees collection and proper disposal of hazardous waste, responds to environmental emergencies and community member complaints, manages grants, and has developed multiple enforcement documents.

Along with attending Scottsdale Community College and ITT Technical Institute, Jeremy has completed numerous certifications including FIFRA, Resource Conservation & Recovery Act (RCRA), Department of Transportation Hazardous Waste Shipping, OSHA HAZWOPER, Mine Safety & Health Administration (MSHA) and holds an ADA Pesticide Applicator License.

Some of Jeremy's recent professional accomplishments include successfully developing and being awarded a 2023 Pollinator Protection grant for outreach and education for both community elders and school children, implementing IPM programs in several schools, and receiving funding to plan and conduct two Household Hazardous Waste events in the next year.

In his spare time, Jeremy enjoys traveling and spending time with family.

Thank you to everyone who completed the ITEP Performance Survey!

Your responses provide valuable feedback that helps us understand the needs of the council and the vision for the TPPC.

The Tale of the Contaminated Arrow

Long ago, a man living in the southwest created an arrow from wood and a common wetland reed. He sharpened and smoothed a small piece of wood into a cylindrical shape so that it would fit into one end of the reed. Sinew was wrapped around the reed and pigment was applied. This arrow was not strong or sharp enough for actual hunting but was created for a ceremony.

Nearby this man's home was a large, 100 feet deep cavern somewhat like a sinkhole. This cave was so deep that after falling in, animals were unable to escape, and people could not access the inside.

One spring morning the man participated in a ceremony in which the arrow was released from a bow into the bottom of the cave. Because the space was protected from snow, wind, rain, as well as humans, organic material could remain undisturbed and well preserved for a long time.

More than a thousand years later, a museum researcher 'discovered' the cave and using modern climbing gear, rappelled to the bottom to collect specimens for the study of the past environment and people of the area. One of the items the researcher collected was the arrow which was brought back to the museum collection for further research. The staff treated the arrow with arsenic, a common pesticide used at the time to preserve organic materials from damage by destructive insects.

Decades later in 1991, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was passed, an effort to correct historic injustices that required institutions to return human remains, funerary objects, sacred objects, and objects of cultural patrimony to associated Tribes. The arrow was returned to a modern-day community and prepared to be re-introduced into ceremony. The Tribe was not made aware that the arrow had been treated with arsenic, and Tribal members handling the arrow were potentially exposed to this dangerous poison.

Because of situations like this, an addition to NAGPRA was passed in 1996 requiring museums to inform recipients of repatriations about any known treatment using pesticides, preservatives or other substances that represent a hazard to persons handling the objects. Unfortunately, museums and institutions often do not have documentation of when and what chemicals were applied. It is the responsibility of the museum to provide full disclosure to Tribes that potentially hazardous chemicals were most likely used to preserve organic collections up until the 1960's, as well as recommendations for personal protection equipment needed to reduce the risk of exposure. And if desired, Tribes can request non-destructive pesticide testing be conducted by the institution.

As these complex repatriation situations continue to arise, it is important for Tribes to collect as much background information as possible to make informed decisions about an object's ultimate disposition whether it be storage, reburial or used in ceremony. The protection of Tribal communities as well as the environment is essential, and museums need to be transparent about the potential risks of handling pesticide contaminated objects.

Updates and Announcements

Conferences & Meetings

PPDC Semi-Annual Meeting

The Pesticide Program Dialogue Committee (PPDC) will hold a semi-annual meeting on November 2-3 in Washington, DC. For more information visit https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-advisory-committees-and-regulatory-partners/pesticide-program-dialogue-committee-ppdc

Full SFIREG Meeting

SFIREG will hold it's semi-annual full meeting on December 5-6, location TBD. For more information see https://aapco.org/2015/07/30/sfireg-3/

Trainings & Courses

Federal Certification Training for Private Applicators of RUPs within Indian Country

The EPA will be holding its quarterly training for private applicators of restricted use pesticides (RUPs) virtually on November 9-10. For more information visit https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-applicator-certification-indian-country/training-private-applicators-under-epa-plan

Enforcement PIRT

The State of Massachusetts will host an Enforcement Pesticide Inspector Residential Training (PIRT) on May 8-12, 2023 at a location to be determined. For more information visit https://www.epa.gov/compliance/pesticide-inspector-residential-training-pirt

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The TPPC is a member-based organization with more than 74 members and 46 Tribes and tribal organizations as of January 2022, whose activities are funded by a cooperative agreement with the EPA. The Council serves as a tribal technical resource, and provides a forum for dialogue between Tribes and the EPA on program and policy development relating to pesticides issues and concerns. Assistance provided to Tribes includes support in building tribal pesticide programs and conducting pesticide education and training, and the preparation of resources for Tribes interested in specialized issues such as Integrated Pest Management and pollinators. Through its interaction with the EPA, the TPPC keeps Tribes informed of developments in the regulation of pesticides and pesticide use, and provides feedback to the EPA on such matters from a tribal perspective (though it is important to note that communication between the EPA and the TPPC does not substitute for direct government-to-government consultation).

For information about how to join the TPPC, contact Mark Daniels at mark.daniels@nau.edu or (928) 523-8897.