



*"The Official Newsletter of the Inter-Tribal Environmental Council"*

# ITEC NEWS

Volume 27 Issue 5

March 2025

## Introduction to PFAS — ITEC Training

### ITEC Member Tribes

Absentee-Shawnee Tribe  
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe  
Alabama-Quassarte Tribe  
Apache Tribe  
Caddo Nation  
Cherokee Nation  
Cheyenne/Arapaho Tribes  
Citizen Potawatomi Nation  
Comanche Nation  
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana  
Delaware Nation  
Delaware Tribe  
Eastern Shawnee Tribe  
Fort Sill Apache Tribe  
Iowa Tribe  
Jicarilla Apache Nation  
Kaw Nation  
Kialegee Tribal Town  
Kickapoo Tribe  
Kiowa Tribe  
Miami Tribe  
Modoc Tribe  
Muscogee Nation  
Osage Nation  
Otoe-Missouria Tribe  
Ottawa Tribe  
Pawnee Nation  
Peoria Tribe  
Ponca Tribe  
Pueblo of Laguna  
Pueblo of Pojoaque  
Pueblo of Santa Clara  
Pueblo of Taos  
Pueblo of Tesuque  
Quapaw Nation  
Sac & Fox Nation  
Seneca-Cayuga Nation  
Shawnee Tribe  
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town  
Tonkawa Tribe  
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees  
Wichita & Affiliated Tribes  
Wyandotte Nation  
Ysleta del Sur Pueblo  
Zuni Tribe

On March 12, 2025, at the Cherokee Nation Environmental Programs in Tahlequah, OK, Gregory Lyssy, EPA Environmental Engineer, gave an introductory class on the topic of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Lyssy instructed on the background of PFAS, the toxicology/toxicity, the presence within our daily lives, research and studies, and technical challenges.

PFAs are man-made chemicals that are found in the majority of products around us. They are extremely persistent in the environment, and resistant to typical environmental degradation processes. Many of the long-chain PFAS bio-accumulate in animals and humans, with 98% of human blood samples containing these molecules. This may pose adverse effects for human health given their toxicity, mobility, and bioaccumulation qualities.

This class allowed for the 28 attendees, representing 11 ITEC Tribes, to learn about the basis of PFAS and how to navigate sampling in various situations, and how to decrease the impact on us and our environment in highly contaminated areas. As certain Tribes plan to implement PFAS mitigation into their planning, this class and others like it will provide helpful information.





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## U.S. EPA Waste and Materials Management Training Series for Tribes

On March 4–5, 2025, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation (MCN) Office of Environmental Services, in collaboration with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6, hosted a Tribal Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Workshop in Okmulgee, Oklahoma. This two-day, in-person workshop featured a combination of classroom instruction and a hands-on HHW collection event held at the MCN Recycle Center. The event brought together 30 participants from 14 tribal nations to share knowledge, build capacity, and promote safe HHW management practices.

This workshop is one of two annual HHW events sponsored by the MCN Office of Environmental Services (MCNOES). The collection event successfully removed a significant amount of waste from the community, including: 375 lbs of flammable liquid waste (e.g., acetone, xylene, alcohol), 195 gallons of non-hazardous/non-regulated used oil, and 1,500 lbs of non-hazardous/non-regulated water-based materials.

MCNOES is grateful to the EPA, the College of the Muscogee Nation, and all participants who contributed to the success of this event. Through continued collaboration and education, tribal nations are building resilient, sustainable environmental stewardship for future generations. Next up for MCNOES is its slate of annual Earth Day events, beginning on Friday, April 4th with its community cleanup where it leads 30 to 40 volunteers in picking up trash along the roadside near tribal facilities in Okmulgee along Loop 56. Earth Day events will then culminate on Earth Day, Tuesday, April 22nd, with the department providing free document shredding and accepting everything from tires, white goods, electronics, and car batteries to more commonly recycled items such as cardboard, paper, plastic, and metal cans. According to Director James Williams, "this is always one of our favorite events with the most community support and participation. We feel it's incumbent on tribes to be good stewards of our land, air, and water, and this event demonstrates our commitment."







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## Director's Corner

**Cindy Riley**  
**Environmental Manager of**  
**The Shawnee Tribe**



**Where is your Tribal Community located?** Our headquarters are located in Miami, Oklahoma.

**How many community members are served by the Environmental department?** Currently, we offer recycling services at all of our Miami, OK office locations. Additionally, we have procured our first recycling trailer that will be accessible to our local community of around 13,000 people. That will be able to receive aluminum, paper, tin cans, glass bottles, and cardboard.

**How long have you been the Environmental Director?** Since September of 2024.

**What are the primary environmental concerns that affect your tribal community?** Our tribal community is affected by many of the same concerns that challenge all tribal communities, but one thing that is unique to the tribes in our area is the Tar Creek Super Fund site and the proximity of it and it's run off into Grand Lake. We work with the LEAD Agency and their partners to co-host the annual Tar Creek Conference.

**As an Environmental Tribal Director, tell us what you enjoy most about your work?** I enjoy networking and learning from the other tribes in our area. I love being able to reach out to other tribes and have found their willingness to help me and mentor me very inspiring. I look forward to the day when I can share knowledge with someone new in this field.

**What are some of your current projects or future plans for your tribe's environmental programs to address tribal environmental needs or concerns?** We are purchasing a second recycling trailer that will be available to more community members in the rural areas east of Miami. We are developing a recycling education program that will be geared for all ages and will educate the community on recycling and will have an aim on repurposing items as well. We are looking into the Adopt-A-Highway program to pick up trash and items that are an eyesore for our earth.

**What have been your biggest challenges?** I took this position with very limited knowledge of Environmental concerns so I would have to say the biggest challenge is also one of the things that I enjoy the most.... Learning! There is so much to learn, and it is so important to think ahead as to how the actions (or inactions) of today can have a significant impact on future generations. That has been an eye-opening experience





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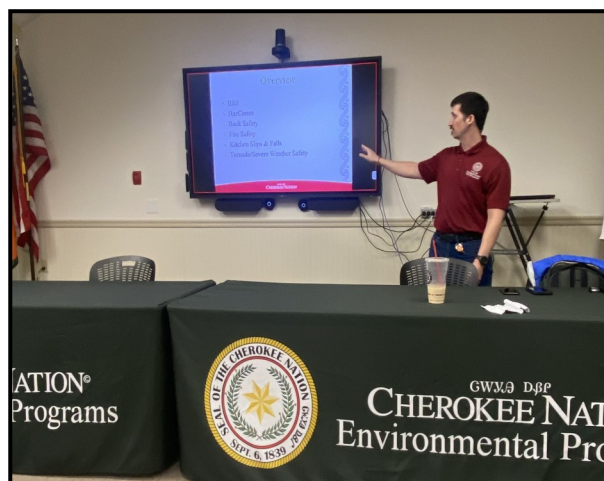
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## 8-Hr HAZWOPER Refresher Training

An annual 8-hr Hazwoper Refresher training was held at the CNEP offices in Tahlequah on March 28, 2025. There were 30 in attendance in-person and on the Microsoft Teams platform, from Cherokee Nation, BIA, IHS and 9 ITEC member tribes. Instructors for the class included Shaun West, RES, CNEP, Seth Arney, Loss Prevention Supervisor, CN Risk Management and Leslie Fain, Occupational Therapist with Cherokee Nation Health Department. Topics of discussion were:

Indoor Smoke/ Wood Burning Stoves

- Workplace Safety
- Defensive Driving
- Exercises and Ergonomics for employee workstations







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## Upcoming Events:

*The 28th Annual*

## TRIBAL ENVIRONMENTAL SUMMIT

July 9-11, 2025 • Albuquerque, NM

**Have an idea for a presentation topic or want to present?**

Contact:

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**SAVE THE DATE!**



## SAVE THE DATE

### AUGUST 18-21, 2025

#### TRIBAL LANDS & ENVIRONMENT FORUM



## MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

In-Person attendance: \$175.00  
Virtual attendance: \$25.00

For more information please contact:  
Todd Barnell  
Project Director  
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Check out ITEC's YouTube Channel:

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC42GM\\_3wppOEPkgFEUj\\_CgQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC42GM_3wppOEPkgFEUj_CgQ)

## ITEC on the web

Check out the ITEC webpage for information on upcoming events, training and newsletters.

Please visit us at: [www.itecmembers.org](http://www.itecmembers.org)

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*The Cherokee Nation Environmental Programs (CNEP) publishes ITEC News each quarter. The mission statement is to protect the health of Native Americans, their natural resources, and their environment as it relates to air, land and water. To accomplish this mission, ITEC provides technical support, environmental services, and assistance in developing Tribal environmental programs to the member Tribes.*

*The viewpoints contained in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the USEPA or the CNEP/ITEC. Free and open discussion of all environmentally related issues is strongly encouraged. We also encourage submission of letters, comments, and articles from readers so as to promote a greater awareness among our people about environmental issues and to foster the free exchange of information, technology, and culturally relevant values of Tribal people.*

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Inter-Tribal Environmental Council**

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