Regional Tribal Operations Committee Meeting
Full Caucus
December 2, 2020
9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CDT
8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. MDT

WebEx Link for the Meeting
https://cherokeenation.webex.com/cherokeenation/j.php?MTID=md843118a594fe68cb80bb2fcb8998989

AGENDA

I. Opening – Tribal Co-Chair Cherokee Nation
II. Invocation – James Williams – Muscogee Creek Nation
III. Roll Call and Declaration of Quorum – Pueblo of Santo Domingo, RTOC Secretary
    a. Quorum established – 16 in attendance.
    b. Randy Gee conducted a roll call of Tribal partners.
    c. Randy Gee conducted a roll call of EPA – Headquarters and Region 6
        - Federal partners also invited – BIA (Harold Peterson), IHS, FEMA, HUD.
IV. Welcome and Introductions– Co-Chairs Ken McQueen, EPA Region 6 Administrator & Wayne Isaacs, Cherokee Nation
    a. Ken McQueen – Sends well wishes for staying health and safe in this global pandemic. Mentioned being in OK meeting face-to-face and thanked Wayne Isaacs for being the co-chair and thanked Cynthia Naha for the work as Secretary. Welcomed EPA office of Internal Affairs and mentioned that AIEO Director, Scott Mason, will be speaking later in the meeting. Recognized the new RTOC and NTC members that were elected yesterday and briefly discussed the certification for the NTC member and will be working with AIEO. Today is a special day for EPA, it marks the 50th birthday of EPA and they've published a list of Tribal accomplishments. Quapaw – Superfund mitigation efforts and Isleta Pueblo for achievements in their Water Quality Program. The creation of a newly established office, Mountains, Deserts and Plains (OMBP) and Felicia Wright has been delegated to get it set up. This new office will address the cleanup efforts at hardrock mines in Regions 7, 6, 8, 9, 10. Will be developing innovative approaches to cleanups and look forward to fostering relationships with Tribes to identify goals and addressing any bottlenecks that may halt these cleanups. Uranium cleanups across western NM and eastern AZ. This will be Mr. McQueen's last RTOC with us. https://www.epa.gov/tribal/tribes-and-epa-50-years-environmental-partnership
    b. Wayne Isaacs, Co-chair – Thanked everyone for their participation. If you are having any issues with WebEx, contact Jason White, 918-316-4081 or Karen Dye, 918-316-2395. Chelsea Jones is also here; her number is 918-316-5994. Recognized the unprecedented times we are experience. It's important to continue with the noble work that we do for environmental preservation and protection. Maintain relationships with federal partners. Everyone here in attendance has a voice and everyone is invited to share that voice. These proceedings do not limit them to assert their sovereignty.
V. Approval of Agenda - approved
    a. 1st motion – Muscogee Creek Nation
    b. 2nd motion – Wyandotte Nation

VI. Approval of Minutes – July 22, 2020 RTOC Virtual Meeting - approved

a. 1st motion – Muscogee Creek Nation

b. 2nd motion – Ottawa Tribe

VII. Announcement on Incoming RTOC Members/RTOC Leadership and NTC Elections – 2021

a. Isleta Pueblo made the announcement.

- Tribal Co-chair: Pueblo of Isleta
  - Ramona Montoya provided some words of encouragement to the Full Caucus and is extending the invitation to use RTOC to listen and learn. Learning more about OK Tribes needing to get EPA's assistance of state and tribal matters. RTOC members are appointed for 1-year. Gave credit to Cherokee Nation and Wayne Isaacs. Hopes that we won't hear that we can't spend out GAP funds on pandemic response because its project implementation.
- Vice-Chair: Ottawa Tribe
- Secretary: Santo Domingo Pueblo
- NTC Reps: San Felipe Pueblo & Caddo Nation with Pueblo of Laguna as alternate

VIII. EPA American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) Update-AIEO Director W. Scott Mason IV

a. It was 1-year ago that we met in person at the Hard Rock in OK and then a few weeks later, he visited the Pueblo of Isleta. Been an honor and pleasure to work with the Pueblos and Tribes, in his role. R6 is his home region, and he is a Cherokee citizen. Appreciated the working relationship and finding common ground and gave thanks to the RTOC for inviting him to visit with us today and also thanked EPA for facilitating this engagement as part of their Government to Government relationship. Send well wishes out to all Tribal and Pueblo communities. Acknowledge the commitment and time that Shawn Howard has done over the years in her role with NTC, engaging with AIEO as the Secretary. He extended appreciation to her dedication and passion; Shawn will be missed. Looking forward to meeting and working with new NTC members, Caddo Nation, San Felipe Pueblo, and Laguna Pueblo. Wish the best of luck as they step up in this role. RA McQueen noted the establishment of OMDP, the important role it will play in cleaning up hard rock mines in the southwest. 4-month detail, Felicia Wright, to get the OMDP up and running. Lisa Barrios will be Acting Deputy Director for AIEO.

b. Highlights – November as Native American Heritage Month – EPA grants to tribes (GAO) 11-18-20 joined former chairman of Quapaw, and Chief Bend of Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians – keynote speakers to EPA staff across the nation. National Tribal program to create a timeline of achievements. Encouraged to view the timeline on EPA's website to the tribal link. GAO report published a few weeks ago – evaluate hos the fed agencies are doing their jobs. OETA and other EPA participated in this. The GAO met with 10 different tribes and highlighted their efforts. Jicarilla Apache Nation – education community and other about the dangers of Radon. Report made no determination of sufficiency for any grant program. GAO made a number of actions to assist with grant efforts – PPGs, information and training on tribes as grantees, specific info on quality assurance plans and GAP programs. Will be developing more detailed actions in response to the report. Ful report can be found online, and the link will be shared. https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-21-150

IX. Tribal Leader Roundtable Discussion, Comments and Concerns (1 Hour)

a. Tribal leaders on?

b. Non-Tribal leaders
    - Laguna Pueblo – Greg Jojola – greetings to everyone on the call. Mentioned that we are not able to see each other/face-to-face and on behalf of the Pueblo of Laguna, wanted to share with EPA the state of emergency that they are in. Join Laguna in addressing the issues of pandemic. Since the white man came, we have experienced pandemic after pandemic and our small communities continue to experience the loss of life, which is also the loss of language, culture, etc. Pueblo of Laguna has been hit pretty hard and provided some the statistics for the community (was unable to capture). Emergency operations staff are stressed, and it shows. Governor Herrera has executive orders, which means that if you are a tribal employee, you are going to be asked to help. Notified EPA and others about the roles they are now fulfilling in order to step up and provide assistance to their Pueblo and asked if EPA dollars can be used to cover staff salary while serving in different capacity. Be understanding with reports, sampling, etc., when asking for extensions. There are a lot of Pueblos and Tribes on the line, and we are speaking for them. Asking for EPA's support, regionally to fight for dollars for us, as well as headquarters, for he needed funding to come to our communities.
    - Pueblo of Jemez – Tammy Belone – echoed Greg comments and provided an update for the Pueblo of Jemez and also shared that the Pueblo has experienced the loss of life. The Pueblo is on lock down and she is working from home. Thanked EPA's water division and program for allowing them the opportunity to extend their grants. May not have the opportunity to get sampling done, but it does not mean we won't complete them.

c. Action Items from Leadership Discussion
    - N/A

X. Discussion on Tribal Recycling During the Pandemic (1 Hour)

a. *Meghan Radtke* - EPA Office of Land and Emergency Management (National Recycling Strategy) – Provided a presentation and will ask her to share. Talked about the Sustainable Materials Management Program at EPA.

b. *Tammy Belone-Pueblo of Jemez* – Assisting their transfer station attendants with training and capacity building for the management of the solid waste collection facility. Recycling and cleaning up of illegal dumpsites. Used GAP funds as an outreach and education to the community. Was also able to use the NM RAID grant to assist with capacity building for the Jemez Pueblo. Recycling and collection of cardboard from the community. Partnered with a woman-owned business to pick up the baled cardboard, so the attendants don't have to make the trip 3 times a month. Outreach and education will also be a huge component of this grant.

c. *James Williams-Muscogee (Creek) Nation* – Recycling during COVID-19 pandemic. Recycling has become a challenge during the pandemic, staff has been reduced. Less items to recycle at the offices. Plastics are down and cardboard boxes have gone up due to people that are home shopping. It is challenging to collect a lot of this now. Put big bins outside, so they can place items outside in a central location to drop off alley cats and collection boxes. Worker safety is number one priority and they disinfect the trucks and PPE is priority. Education and outreach are still going for the smaller kids and some schools recycle with them, however, due to the pandemic, the recycling efforts have been impacted. Earth day and America's Recycles Day events still happened. Recycling

started with GAP funds about 10 years ago. Still room to improve, within the community and employee sector. Start with the kids…change the culture. Feels it's a little safe by wearing the PPE and using the disinfectant.

- *Randy asked the question about reuse centers and Tribal members cleaning around in and around their homes at the beginning of the pandemic.*
    - *Caddo Nation – Spring cleaning conducted annually. Asked if she could get an extension for the bins (dumpsters) to allow for people to throw away bulky items. Runs a recycling roll-off for cans, paper, and plastics; this runs year-round. Have 2 bins, one at the transfer station (empty) and they switch out the bins. Possibly adding a cardboard compactor.*
    - *Reuse center – Chickasaw Nation – not allowed to open it up and are able to take items in, but just cannot open. Art project with Seniors by using recyclable materials.* He will send the link out to RTOC members so they can view and vote.
    - *San Felipe Pueblo - Going back to the plastic waste crisis, Lisa Hopinkah added that she confirmed with Freedman Recycling, the common recycling facility in which most of NM uses to send plastic to, that they must sell domestically to make floor mats and hoses, so that's definitely good news in the short run. Senator Udall's "break free from plastic act." Lisa Hopinkah will share the link:* *https://lowenthal.house.gov/media/press-releases/congressman-lowenthal-and-senator-udall-introduce-landmark-legislation-break*

XI. BREAK (10 Minutes)

XII. EPA Division Reports (Until Lunch Break) - **SEE REPORTS** - Robert Houston – Acting Director for the Communities, Tribes and Environmental Assessment

a. *Water Division* – Charles McGuire – Troy Hill has come to water division – deputy director. Special assistant –Lots of activity with WOTUS – jurisdictional water, NPDES, 3Ts, etc. identified some deadlines in the report. Top action words – resilience and resurgence, prioritization, #2 compassion. #1 – flexibility. Prepare your grants earlier than later. Do not wait until last minute. Reach out to Charles and his staff.

b. *Air and Radiation Division* – David Garcia – Air permits and state implementation plans. R6 permitting authority on Tribal lands – coordinate and collaborate re: consultation. Proposed actions on 3 facilities in OK.

c. *Land, Chemical and Redivision* – Highlight: Agencies recycle week and had a summit with participants across the country. Thanks, given to James Williams. National Brownfields Conference is now scheduled for September 2021 in Oklahoma City. Working on a Tribal Recycling Workshop with ENIPC to put on, got rescheduled to fall 2021 at Santa Ana Pueblo Wellness Center.

d. *Enforcement Compliance Division* – Cheryl Sigler – Retirement of Jerry Sanders this summer, 2020. Introduction of Bryant Smalley – submitted highlights within the R6 report that was submitted to me. Highlight the most critical things 1. Critical nature of our drinking water on Tribal lands for public health reasons is addressed. Offer technical assistance if needed to work closely with Tribes to get his addressed. 2. On-going effort followed him from superfund. Osage Nation, working 1.5 years ago, federal credential

spill prevention and countermeasure for oil spill. Will continue this effort and have training for their inspectors. Training was supposed to in-person, but it has transitioned to virtual and will be in the spring of 2021. 3. He is new, knows not everyone has his contact info 214-665-7368 or can always contact Randy Gee.

- *Tracy Horst* - Bryant, would love to receive information about SPCC Federal Credentialing course.

LUNCH 12:00 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. CDT/11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. MDT

XIII. Continue EPA Division Reports

a. *Superfund and Emergency Management* –
   - Questions – Tim Kent – Human Health Risk Assessment – are you talking calendar year? No, FY2021. Wayne – new office being formed; will they examine tar creek or have involvement? Interesting question – just had a meeting re: all of R6 mining sites. Said this morning, the 1st priority is on the uranium mines. 1 person and trying to get the office up and running. Office coves hard rock mining includes tar creek. Tim Kent – Tribal Superfund Workgroup – are going to have a conference call with Mike? About some of his work and how the Tribal SFWG can help out. Karmen Billie-Badonie asks where will the new office be located at, in NM? The office will be in downtown Denver, CO (federal facility next to Golden, CO).

b. *Communities, Tribes and Environmental Assessment* – Mentioned the retirement of Arturo Blanco, and that they just sent out the funding noticed for GAP, Water and Air, which will be due in February and at this time, if your Tribe or Pueblo is having hardship to get these proposals in, work with EPA and your Project Officer to get these in for FY 2022. ETEPs, all Tribal partners have these submitted and will be working with Tribal partners on the 1st round of ETEPs that are up for renewal and are developing a plan to get these done. If you need help reaching a program or anything, please reach out to Randy, and the liaisons for assistance.
   - Mike Martin – Peoria Tribe – will there be a date sent out re: PPGs. Deadline for PPGs is the same deadline as the Water, March 1st.
   - Wayne Isaacs – ETEPs, when is the due dates on this for revisions/updates? All ETEPs have been submitted and they have been waiting on headquarters for guidance through the GAP Guidance but will be working on those up for renewal by 9/30/21. Work on a rotating basis. Flexibility is the key word. Improve them as we move forward.

c. *Mission Support Division* – REMINDER – on a continuing resolution through December 11th. Not sure what will happen after this date, but they will keep us informed of any changes that may impact the work of the Tribes. Implement for FY 2021 – training on PPGs and other grants. Chris Watkins and his team, to identify the appropriate training we all want to see.

d. *Laboratory Services Division* – Ben Benepal has retired – worked with EPA for 20 years. Wes McQuitty? Working on an electronic format for a training in 2021. Working on HQ's QAPP Lean process. Will provide any updates on the next RTOC. Extensions will expire on 12/20/2020 for QMPs and QAPPs.
   - Jeremy Fincher – What's the status of the EPA lab being set up in Ada, OK?

Action Item - Status of the EPA lab being set up in Ada, OK? Sala will follow up on this and send the information to Randy.

- Response to action item above: Sala heard back on your question about the move via our new Director, Jeremy Fincher! Here's what he's passed on. "Planning phase is largely complete, however, initiation of the Architectural & Engineering work is on hold pending COVID-19 reductions in Texas and Oklahoma." – COMPLETED.

Discussion on Tribal Environmental Outreach During the Pandemic (1Hour)

e. Victoria Atencio-Pueblo of Santa Ana – request presentation. Movies can be found on Santa Ana Facebook page and the Wellness Page. Have you seen the need for translation from the community, i.e., from Spanish? As an Environmental Education she works with multi-generations so it's important for her to be able to do the translation. She comes from a community that speaks Keres, although different dialects, but she is able to education. Katherine Becker – great job on the collaboration with Dr. DuBois and others re: the forecast webinars. How were they able to make the connection with Dr. DuBois and if they were able to interact TEK with Western Science. https://www.facebook.com/SantaAnaDNR. Victoria's email: victoria.atencio@santaana-nsn.gov.
f. Mike Martin-Peoria Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma – has a video to show. Chelsea will be showing and sharing the video. Shared the video link with Randy Gee to share with Tribal Partners.

XIV. **BREAK (5 Minutes)**

XV. New Business- Tribal Citizen Science Update (Santo Domingo Pueblo) – shared my presentation. David Grey asked when the 5-page white paper would be released. Early 2021.

XVI. Old Business- Update on COVID-19 Sampling (Cherokee Nation) – request presentation from Wayne.
   a. Phillip also shared some information – showed the thermal/temperature scanner – FDA certification. Ask Phillip if he can share the information that he showed on the meeting.
      - They will send me their information.

XVII. Other Business
   a. Schedule for 2021 Meetings
      - April (TX) – The week of April 12th – combining with the Annual Tribal Summit
      - July (NM) – SCP proposes the week of July 12th.
      - November (OK) – SCP proposes the week of Nov. 29th.

- Action item for next conference call – dates for July and November 2021 – next RTOC conference call will be January 12, 2021.

   b. Workshop, Training & General Announcements – RTOC
      - Caddo Nation training with Shipley – completed 1, looking into coordinating a virtual training – NEPA Training.

XVIII. Review of Action Items – RTOC Secretary, Cynthia Naha & Mark Allen, Ombudsman & Randy Gee, Regional Indian Coordinator

XIX. Closing Remarks – Tribal Leaders; EPA Regional Administrator and Cherokee Nation, Co-Chairs
   a. Randy mentioned those retiring.
   b. Phillip thanked his Project Officers.

c. Ken McQueen – last RTOC and gave thanks. Recognized the great work that the Pueblos/Tribes are doing.
d. Wayne Isaacs – thanked everyone. His term as co-chair is coming to an end.

XX. Adjournment & Closing Prayer

a. Michael T. Sandoval
b. 1st Motion to adjourn – Muscogee Creek Nation
c. 2nd by Caddo Nation
    - Meeting adjourned