



# 2015 Tribal Accomplishments



May 2016

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details OEI's initiatives and activities conducted during 2015 conducted in support of the Tribal Strategy.<sup>1</sup> It is intended to be a tool for fostering communication between EPA and tribal governments, and for identifying future opportunities to collaborate based on a shared commitment to the environment through robust data collection, program support, and policy development. The 2015 accomplishments are summarized and organized under each of the four goal areas described in the Tribal Strategy, and include activities such as collection and application of tribal environmental data, outreach efforts, workgroup participation and support, partnerships, and regulatory enhancements. Overall the 2015 report is streamlined, providing a succinct, easy to read summary of efforts by OEI and its partners to provide the tools that support complex decision-making regarding the environment.

## ACRONYMS

<b>AIEO</b>	EPA American Indian Environmental Office	<b>OCFO</b>	EPA Office of the Chief Financial Officer
<b>EPA</b>	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	<b>OEI</b>	EPA Office of Environmental Information
<b>HIC</b>	Headquarters Indian Program Coordinator	<b>TCU</b>	Tribal Colleges and Universities
<b>ITEP</b>	Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals	<b>TGG</b>	Exchange Network Tribal Governance Group
<b>NAPLP</b>	Native American Political Leadership Program	<b>TRI</b>	Toxics Release Inventory
		<b>TSC</b>	National EPA - Tribal Science Council

## Goal 1: Strengthen Government-to-Government Relationships with Tribes and Tribal Partners

**Consultation Training.** OEI conducted training for over 100 staff within OEI and among staff in EPA's Office of Research and Development and Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention on the requirements of EPA's Consultation policy.<sup>2</sup> Training included practical examples specific to each

<sup>1</sup> The purpose of [OEI's Tribal Strategy](#) is to maximize the quality and usefulness of the environmental information and analytical tools available for making informed decisions in Indian country and other tribal lands.

<sup>2</sup> [EPA's Consultation Policy](#) sets a broad standard for when EPA should consider consulting with federally recognized tribal governments based on Executive Order 13175 and the 1984 EPA Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations.

Office's work and staff and other resources available to assist with questions or with the consultation process.

**National-EPA Tribal Science Council Collaboration.** Throughout 2015, OEI participated in regular discussions with EPA's Tribal Science Council (TSC) about activities to address two national tribal science priorities identified by the TSC: climate change and the integration of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in environmental science, policy, and decision-making.

**Cybersecurity Grants Term and Condition.** Working in collaboration with EPA's Office of Grants and Debarment, the agency's lead office for grant administration, OEI staff coordinated with tribes and tribal partnership groups, including the Exchange Network Tribal Governance Group (TGG), National Tribal Air Association, Region 5 Tribal Environmental Conference attendees, and Regional Tribal Operations Committee from Regions 4 and 10, to obtain their feedback, identify concerns, and provide an opportunity for input on language in the final cybersecurity grants term and condition.

**2016-2017 National Program Manager Guidance.** OEI participated with partner offices in an ongoing Agency-wide effort to develop the 2016-2017 National Program Manager Guidance. Building on earlier efforts to engage and consult with tribes, OEI provided specific input with regard to tribal data and information efforts included in the draft Guidance.

**E-Enterprise & Exchange Network Governance Open Call for Tribes.** Led by EPA's Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO), OEI and other call participants discussed the future governance of the Exchange Network and E-Enterprise and in doing so, provided tribes with an opportunity to learn more about Agency considerations with respect to E-Enterprise and Exchange Network governance, provide feedback, ask questions, and raise potential concerns.

**EPA Tribal Program Website Revitalization.** Headquarter Indian Program Managers (HICs) met with the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) to discuss layout and content updates to EPA's Tribal Program webpage. Coordination among HICs led to the identification of key topics for each program area and necessary crosswalks to media program webpages, thereby providing a more efficient means of conveying essential topic areas and topics of greater tribal interest for website users.

**Environmental Justice Policy Implementation.** HICs provided consolidated feedback on the Agency's implementation of the [EPA Policy on Environmental Justice for Working with Federally Recognized Tribes and Indigenous Peoples](#). The purpose of the policy is to clarify and integrate environmental justice principles in a consistent manner in the Agency's work with federally recognized tribes and indigenous peoples throughout the United States, and with others living in Indian country to protect their environment and public health.

## Goal 2: Strengthen Tribal Capacity to Collect, Analyze, and Share Data and Information

**2015 Exchange Network Grants to Tribes.** EPA awarded 34 Exchange Network grants totaling approximately \$8.5 million for FY 2015. Four Exchange Network grants valued at approximately \$1,238,607 (or 14 percent of the total amount awarded as part of the Exchange Network Grant

program) were awarded to tribes.<sup>3</sup> Tribal awardees included: Seldovia Village Tribe, Kaw Nation of Oklahoma, Otoe-Missouria Tribe of Indians, and Redwood Valley.

**FY2016 Exchange Network Draft Grant Solicitation Comment Period.** EPA sought comments from tribes on the draft FY 2016 Solicitation Notice for the Exchange Network Grant Program. Comments are incorporated where possible into the final solicitation notice.

**Regions 1 and 6 Regional Tribal Operations Committee Meetings.** OEI provided an overview of FY16 Exchange Network Grants Solicitation Notice, discussed opportunities for tribal applicants, and answered questions raised during these sessions.

**2015 National Exchange Network Meeting.** The 2015 Exchange Network National Meeting was held in Philadelphia, PA, and via live webcast. The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP), through a cooperative agreement with EPA to increase tribal participation in the Exchange Network, provided eight travel scholarships to tribal participants to enable their participation in the 2015 Exchange Network Meeting. Presentations given by tribal representatives or concerning tribal issues included Tribal Emergency Response and Joint-Tribal Water Quality Exchange (WQX) Project and Collaborating with other Tribes in Oklahoma. Eleven tribal representatives participated in the meeting.

**E-Enterprise for the Environment Portal.** OEI assisted the OCFO E-Enterprise (EE) team in developing a consultation strategy for tribal governments and in outreach to the Exchange Network TGG and ITEP to ensure tribes were aware of the opportunity to consult with EPA in developing requirements for the EE Portal.

**Implementation of TRI Tribal Rule.** OEI conducted a review of TRI facilities reporting for calendar year 2014 to determine reporting accuracy of facilities believed to be in Indian country.<sup>4</sup>

**2015 Tribal Lands and Environmental Forum.** OEI staff provided demonstrations showing how to use EPA tools (such as Envirofacts and TRI Explorer) to search EPA data by tribal boundaries or within proximity to a tribe's boundaries vs searching EPA data by city, state, or zip code. Discussed how these searches could assist some tribes by potentially reducing data gathering costs associated with Phase 1 site assessments.

### Goal 3: Facilitate the Collection and Analysis of Quality Tribal Data

**TRI Factsheets for Indian Country.** A new option was added to the set of existing online factsheets summarizing TRI data that filters the information based on tribal boundaries.

**EPA Tribal Identifier Data Standard & TRIBES Web Services.** OEI collaborated with EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs to support implementation of the Tribal ID data standard into the

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<sup>3</sup> The Exchange Network Grant Program provides funding to states, tribes, inter-tribal consortia, and territories to develop and implement the information technology and information management capabilities they need to actively participate in the Exchange Network. This grant program supports the exchange of environmental data and collaborative work within the Exchange Network.

<sup>4</sup> Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA, 1986) established the Toxics Release Inventory, which tracks the management of certain toxic chemicals that pose a threat to human health and the environment.

Office of Water’s Underground Injection Control National Database and the Office of Land and Emergency Management’s National Oil Database.

**2014 TRI National Analysis.** Provided ability for users to dynamically and geographically search by tribe in the "[Where You Live](#)" section of the National Analysis.

**Federal Tribal Boundary Subgroup.** OEI represented the Agency on a newly formed subgroup of federal agencies collaborating on tribal data and boundaries under the Federal Geographic Data Committee National Boundary Working Group.

**EPA Tribal Treaty Rights Visualization.** OEI continued its collaboration with the AIEO to optimize representation of data from the U.S. Forest Service depicting tribal lands ceded to the United States (“cession data”), tribal boundary data, and the ability to overlay other relevant data layers of interest to EPA.

## Goal 4: Expand the Use of Tribal Data and Analytical Tools

**Tribal ecoAmbassadors.** EPA's [Tribal ecoAmbassadors Program](#) partners EPA scientists with Tribal College and University (TCU) professors to address environmental problems. In November, six TCUs received competitive awards totaling \$160,000 through the American Indian Higher Education Consortium’s longstanding Tribal ecoAmbassador partnership with EPA. OEI staff participated on the application review panel, along with other EPA headquarters and regional staff, and provided technical support. The six awardees are:

- Haskell Indian Nations University
- Institute of American Indian Arts
- Keweenaw Bay Ojibwa Community College
- Northwest Indian College
- Salish Kootenai College
- Turtle Mountain Community College

**Washington Internships for Native Students (WINS).** OEI sponsored three WINS interns during summer 2015 to work on various TRI, Exchange Network, and Facility Registry Service (FRS) projects. The interns also led an informative session with OEI’s Tribal Program Coordinator to discuss their background, areas of study, and provide their perspectives on EPA’s work with federally recognized tribes, treaty rights, and consultation with tribal governments.

**TRI Reporting - Facilities in Indian Country.** OEI TRI program coordinators worked with TRI tribal contacts to explain the benefits of participating in the TRI Data Exchange (TDX) data download method for direct receipt of annual TRI reports from facilities and determine tribal interest in participation.

**ITEP Partnership.** Through an ongoing cooperative agreement between OEI and the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) totaling \$800,000 over a five year period, a number of activities undertaken during 2015 enhanced the use and relevance of tribal environmental data. ITEP and the TGG worked with the Gila River Indian Community to host the [2015 Tribal Exchange Network Conference](#) in February, which was attended by nearly 100 professionals representing over 40 tribal

organizations.<sup>5</sup> ITEP also continues to work with the TGG to mentor tribes in need of assistance in implementing and improving their Exchange Network project activities. ITEP's support of the TGG also enabled their continued involvement in various Exchange Network governance activities. ITEP worked with EPA and the TGG to develop content for newsletters, and other informational resources, as well as hosted calls/webinars for tribes on Exchange Network and E-Enterprise.

**Native American Political Leadership Program (NAPLP).** HICs coordinated a discussion with the George Washington University's NAPLP to discuss opportunities for EPA to provide work experience in areas of interest to Native American student volunteers during their semester in Washington, D.C.

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<sup>5</sup> A detailed agenda and presentations from the 2015 Tribal Exchange Network conference are available for download from <http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/tribal-en-events.html>.