

# Circle Speaker

OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2021

WHITE CLAY & NAKODA ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

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L-R: Farrell Bell, Juan Siliezar, Alonso Treviso, Haley Young, Hector Casitillo and Eugene Bueno.

## UST Decommission in Hays, MT

By Kermit Snow Jr, BTRP Compliance Officer



This project was a long time coming, something that was first mentioned around five years ago by Region 8 USEPA. Actually, we were first made aware of these tanks back in 2005 when I was the Air Quality Coordinator and EPA contacted us about doing a site visit to see what we would be dealing with. We then set up a site visit with Region 8 EPA, along with the help of Shawn Lahr (Blackfeet Env. Dept.) to do an in-

vestigation on the abandoned tanks. They pretty much sat dormant after that until I received a call from Denver in 2015 or 2016 about some possible money to help take these tanks out. We then started talking to the owners of Village Grocery to get the information on what was on the property. I found out then, that I would be doing a lot more research on UST's, which would end up helping me in my present job as the BTRP Compliance Officer. I was very anxious to get this started when I received the call from Denver, but it seemed we ran into different obstacles when trying to get this started. Just as it seemed we

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## UST Decommission in Hays, MT

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would get under way, the Covid-19 Pandemic hit and put a halt to our plans and delayed us about two years. We finally got the go ahead to start and we were notified that the Contractor's would be on site to start on October 11, 2021.

The primary Contractor was GSI (Native Hawaiian Owned) and their Sub-Contractor Overley's. We also had on hand one person from GeoSearch to help locate the tanks with his Ground Penetrating Radar tools. GeoSearch was instrumental, as we were told there were six tanks, although we only found four. He did his due diligence and went over a large area looking for the other two, but did not find anymore. This was also something we found out back in 2005-06 and also while researching the MTDEQ UST site, where they also showed there being six tanks. The first thing done every morning, was a safety meeting conducted by Farrell Bell (GSI) and signing the Health and Safety Plan HASP) after each meeting before any work could start. This was also my first time being involved in a decommission of UST's and will help in future projects. While digging between the tanks and store, we encountered a strong odor of fuel. One of the first sampling events by Farrell and Haley Young (GSI) was from where the odor was coming from, taking 3 grab & 3 jar samples. This was then done around all the tanks when the digging was done. They also took samples from the dirt pile that was excavated from digging out the tanks. Day 2 started with pulling all the pumps on top of each tank, pulling the two dispensers out, cutting pipes from dispensers, where we did find some product still n pipe. While digging out pipe, we did encounter more odor and they commenced to take more samples. All contaminated soil from the day before and Day 2 was put on plastic that was set out by Overley's. We then also dug and took more soil samples around piping. On Day 3, the Vacuum truck arrived and they then started rinsing & flushing out each tank and pipe, this was done three times to each tank and pipe and then taken to an approved site. We then went back to the front and side of store to do some more digging and sampling downgrade of pipes. We went at distances of 6-8' deep, then 5', 10', 35', 60', and finally stopped at 130'. The dry ice then ar-

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## UST Decommission in Hays, MT

(Continued from page 2)

rived and was put in each tank, tank #1- 6 buckets, #2- 4 buckets, #3- 4 buckets and #4- 4 buckets. Each night they also put a fence around the tank pit and covered all the sample pits. Day 4 consisted of removing each tank and sending them to Havre for disposal. Farrell and Haley then started taking more samples from each tank site, where we found out that the contamination was deeper at one site and excavated more soil and sampled. Day 5 we started bright & early, as we had clean soil arriving, with first truck arriving at 7 am and dumping and loading up contaminated soil to take back to Havre. We would end up with eight side dumps coming and going that day, Havre is around 80 miles one way. Day 6 (Saturday) started with continued backfilling & compacting the clean soil, I believe we ended up doing around eight lifts by days end. Day 7 began with more backfilling and compacting, using three more trucks from Havre. The Overlay crew started to pick up and landscape everything that was done from previous days. Day 8 began with first truck with clean soil arriving at 7:15 am and two more following later. The last truck arrived at 9:40 am and the job was officially finished around 1 pm. As we were finishing up, I noticed the work of the Overlay crew, they did awesome work all week, but how they ended showed their dedication to how they approach their work. This is nothing against the two younger guys, they did great work also, but it was great watching Alonso & Hector in the way they did their jobs. They wanted perfection and also wanted it done right. They showed the younger guys how they wanted it and how it should be done. You never know who is going to look at your work and you don't want anyone saying it wasn't done right. They are a credit to their employer. It was also great working with Farrell and Haley, who showed great professionalism in their duties, they definitely knew what they were doing and made me feel good every time they asked me if they should do more or if that was what I wanted. Like I said, this was my first decommission and I learned a lot from these ladies. There is still more to do here, but we were budgeted for only so much, but we know where the work has to be done. I want to thank Farrell Bell & Haley Young of GSI, Alonso Treviso, Hector Castillo, Juan Siliezar, and Eugene Bueno of Overlay's for a great 8 days of work. Aho



# DEQ Seeks Public Comment on Draft Environmental Assessment for Proposed Exploration Project in Phillips County



By Moira Davin | November 29, 2021

<https://deq.mt.gov/News/pressrelease-folder/news-article40>

HELENA—The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is seeking public comment on a Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a proposed exploration project near Zortman, Mont. in Phillips County. The new exploration project is proposed by Luke Ployhar on private land at the former Zortman Mine. The proposed project is not a full-scale mine and the operator would have to apply for a separate permit and undergo a separate environmental analysis should he wish to operate a full-scale mine.

DEQ received a complete application for an exploration license from the landowner. The proposed exploration project includes excavating one trench, approximately 350 square feet and 25 feet deep, to extract a 125-ton bulk sample for metallurgical testing. The project includes construction of an access road that would be left in place after project completion for use by the landowner. The entire project is anticipated to last approximately 10 days and disturb 0.18 acres. DEQ would require all disturbances except the road to be reclaimed.

The proposed exploration project would take place within the former mine operation boundary and a small area would be located within a reclaimed area of the former mine. The applicant has been notified of the Comprehensive Environmental, Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) which is the law that governs Superfund sites. Superfund remediation at the former mine site was led by the Bureau of Land Management and they have also been notified of the proposed project.

fied of the proposed project.

This is the second proposed exploration project in this area. DEQ released a final EA in February of 2021 for a proposed exploration project from Blue Arc. That project would extract a 1,000-ton bulk sample and disturb 1.4 acres. The applicant is required to post bond before receiving a license to begin exploration activities. At this time, DEQ has not received bond for that project.

Both projects are considered in the cumulative impacts section of the new EA.

DEQ prepared a draft EA to analyze potential impacts from the proposed exploration project. DEQ will accept public comments on the draft EA until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 11, 2022. To submit substantive comments or view the document, please visit the DEQ website at: <https://deq.mt.gov/News/publiccomment-folder/news-article1>

An exploration license is not an operating permit to mine. An exploration license authorizes activity for the purpose of determining the presence and extent of an ore body. An exploration license does not authorize the mining of an ore body. If a proposed project meets the requirements of Montana law (82-4-332, Montana Code Annotated), DEQ must issue the exploration license. The draft EA is not a decision document and is a disclosure of the potential impacts from the project.

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## New Brownfields/Tribal Response Coordinator

By Ina Nez Perce, Fort Belknap Environmental Manager

Once again we are pleased to announce that a new Brownfields Coordinator has been selected for the Brownfields Tribal Response Program in the Environmental Protection Department. Although the notice is somewhat late, please join us in welcoming William R. Cochran to this position. He began his job on August 16, 2021. William previously



worked in the Brownfields Program as the Coordinator a few years ago and is very knowledgeable about the Brownfields program - a plus for the Department! We look forward to working with William and making this a great program! His office is located downstairs and can be reached at 406-353-8411 or [william.cochran@ftbelknap.org](mailto:william.cochran@ftbelknap.org).

*Circle Speaker*

# New Nonpoint Source Pollution Coordinator

By Ina Nez Perce, Fort Belknap Environmental Manager

We are pleased to announce that a new Nonpoint Source Coordinator has been selected for the Nonpoint Source Program in Environmental Protection Department. Please join us in welcoming Morris "Davy" Belgard to this position. He began his new job on October 1, 2021. Morris previously worked in the Brownfields Program as the Environmental Technician. As many of you know, Morris also worked in this position a couple of years ago and is very knowl-

edgeable about the program. We look forward to Morris continuing to make this Program a success!

His office is located downstairs and can be reached at 406-353-8431 or [mbelgard@gmail.com](mailto:mbelgard@gmail.com).



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## U.S. to Sharply Cut Methane Pollution that Threatens the Climate and Public Health

Contact Information: EPA Press Office ([press@epa.gov](mailto:press@epa.gov)) | November 2, 2021

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/us-sharply-cut-methane-pollution-threatens-climate-and-public-health>

WASHINGTON (Nov. 2, 2021) Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) took an important step forward to advance President Biden's commitment to action on climate change and protect people's health by proposing comprehensive new protections to sharply reduce pollution from the oil and natural gas industry – including, for the first time, reductions from existing sources nationwide. The proposed new Clean Air Act rule would lead to significant, cost-effective reductions in methane emissions and other health-harming air pollutants that endanger nearby communities. As part of today's action, to inform a supplemental proposal, EPA is seeking comment on additional sources of methane to further strengthen emission controls and increase reductions from oil and gas operations. EPA is issuing the proposal in response to President Biden's Executive Order on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis.

"As global leaders convene at this pivotal moment in Glasgow for COP26, it is now abundantly clear that America is back and leading by example in confronting the climate crisis with bold ambition," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** "With this historic action, EPA is addressing existing sources from the oil and natural gas industry nationwide, in addition to updating rules for new sources, to ensure robust and lasting cuts in pollution across the country. By building on existing technologies and encouraging innovative new solutions, we are committed to a durable final rule that is anchored in science and the law,

that protects communities living near oil and natural gas facilities, and that advances our nation's climate goals under the Paris Agreement."

One third of the warming from greenhouse gases occurring today is due to human-caused emissions of methane, a potent greenhouse gas that traps about 30 times as much heat as carbon dioxide over 100 years, and sharp cuts over the next decade will have a near-term beneficial impact on the climate. In the United States, the oil and natural gas industry is the largest industrial source of methane emissions, emitting more methane than the total emissions of all greenhouse gases from 164 countries combined. Oil and natural gas operations also emit smog-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and toxic air pollutants such as benzene that harm public health.

The proposal builds on the work of leading companies that are using the latest cost-effective technology to reduce methane emissions in the field and leverages lessons from the work of some major oil- and gas-producing states that require, or are proposing to require, oil and gas operations to reduce methane emissions. EPA analyzed the proposed rule's impact on natural gas and oil prices from 2023 to 2035 and estimates that changes would be small – pennies per barrel of oil or thousand cubic feet of gas.

The proposed rule would reduce 41 million tons of methane emissions from 2023 to 2035, the equiva-

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# U.S. to Sharply Cut Methane Pollution that Threatens the Climate and Public Health

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lent of 920 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. That's more than the amount of carbon dioxide emitted from all U.S. passenger cars and commercial aircraft in 2019. In 2030 alone, the rule would reduce methane emissions from sources covered in the proposal by 74 percent compared to 2005.

Pollution from oil and gas activities can occur in or near communities where people live, work and go to school – including minority and low-income communities, which are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Based on an analysis of populations exposed to oil and gas pollution, EPA believes the proposed rule is likely to reduce these harmful effects.

EPA's Regulatory Impact Analysis estimates the value of cumulative net climate benefits from the proposed rule, after taking into account the costs of compliance as well as savings from recovered natural gas, is \$48 to \$49 billion from 2023 to 2035 – the equivalent of about \$4.5 billion a year. The climate benefits are estimated using the social cost of greenhouse gases and represent the monetary value of avoided climate damages associated with a decrease in emissions of a greenhouse gas. In addition to these benefits, EPA estimates that from 2023 to 2035, the proposal would reduce VOC emissions by 12 million tons and hazardous air pollution by 480,000 tons.

It would accomplish this through 1) updated and broadened methane and VOC emission reduction requirements for new, modified, and reconstructed oil and gas sources, including standards that limit emissions from additional types of sources (such as intermittent vent pneumatic controllers, associated gas, and well liquids unloading) for the first time under the Clean Air Act; and 2) requirements that states develop plans to limit methane emissions from hundreds of thousands of existing sources nationwide, along with presumptive standards for existing sources to assist in the planning process.

### Key features of the proposed rule include:

- a comprehensive monitoring program for new and existing well sites and compressor stations;
- a compliance option that allows owners and operators the flexibility to use advanced technology that can find major leaks more rapidly and at lower cost than ever before;

- a zero-emissions standard for new and existing pneumatic controllers (with a limited alternative standard for sites in Alaska), certain types of which account for approximately 30 percent of current methane emissions from the oil and natural gas sector;
- standards to eliminate venting of associated gas, and require capture and sale of gas where a sales line is available, at new and existing oil wells;
- proposed performance standards and presumptive standards for other new and existing sources, including storage tanks, pneumatic pumps, and compressors; and
- a requirement that states meaningfully engage with overburdened and underserved communities, among other stakeholders, in developing state plans.

EPA also is requesting information on additional sources of methane for the Agency to consider in developing a supplemental proposal to reduce emissions even further. In addition, EPA is taking comment on how to structure a community monitoring program that would empower the public to detect and report large emission events for appropriate follow-up by owners and operators for possible further development in a supplemental proposal. EPA intends to issue the supplemental proposal in 2022, and to issue a final rule before the end of 2022.

As it developed the rule, EPA conducted extensive public outreach to hear from the public and diverse perspectives including states, Tribal nations, communities affected by oil and gas pollution, environmental and public health organizations, and representatives of the oil and natural gas industry, all of which provided ideas and information that helped shape and inform the proposal.

EPA will take comment on the proposed rule for 60 days after it is published in the Federal Register. The Agency also will hold a virtual public hearing, and will host virtual trainings to help communities, Tribes and small businesses learn more about the proposed rule and participating in the public comment process. Those trainings begin November 16.

For more information on today's proposed rule and to register to attend a training, visit <https://www.epa.gov/controlling-air-pollution-oil-and-natural-gas-industry>

# Preparing for Winter Months

By Mitchell Healy, Water Quality Coordinator | November 30, 2021



Hello to all of the Fort Belknap Indian Community. The cold winter months are here and fairly certain we all aware of how cold it can get and how much snow Mother Nature can dump on us, and the issues that can occur during these extreme weather conditions. We don't want to be unprepared if something were to happen, so it's very critical for all of us to help ourselves out and prepare before the cold weather comes. Some of the things to do include:

- If you have a fireplace – have sufficient wood to last throughout the winter, maybe up until May or June. Also, check the fireplace and chimney for cracks and debris, to ensure that the toxic fumes are vented through the chimney and not through cracks back into your home.
- Check your furnace is working properly well before it gets cold. Change batteries in thermostat if you need to, change the filter, and if you're unsure, have an experienced maintenance person inspect your furnace for you.
- We all experienced a power outage a few years back and there was no power for a week or longer for some communities across the State, catching many people off guard and unprepared. So, would recommend getting a gas generator that can provide sufficient power for electric heaters and necessities. If you're able to afford outdoor generators that are installed to your home circuit breaker, that would be an optimal solution, but for most, that is not realistic. So, gas generators will definitely help out, but make sure you have a couple gas cans filled up and stored away in your shed.
- Having a couple bags of charcoal and charcoal fluid is pretty handy for cooking on your grill, just in case.
- Winterize windows and doors – make sure windows and doors are secured tightly and there are no cracks around the border. Winterize your windows with plastic on the outside and inside, and

winterize your doors with weather strip.

- If the outside temperatures are freezing cold, it would be ideal to turn on all your inside faucets to a slow drip overnight to prevent the pipes from freezing.
- If you have a ceiling fan that you can change the direction of the fan to counter clockwise on low setting, to circulate the warm air downwards.
- If you have a snow blower or any other equipment used for moving snow, inspect and test that it operates before it gets cold.
- Stock up on de-icer for your sidewalks and driveway. Make sure you have good solid snow shovels and ice breakers. If you have a ATV or UTV and could put a snow plow on it, make sure that everything is ready to go.
- Keep extra blankets and a cold weather kit in your vehicles, if you're traveling.
- Keep jumper cables and a tow rope in your vehicles, and any other essential equipment such as a portable air compressor.
- Plug in your vehicles if you have a block heater, if not, maybe get one installed at local dealership or automotive shop. Also be good idea to get your vehicle inspected before it gets cold, such as checking if the battery needs replacing and any other parts that could possibly cause issues during cold temperatures.
- Put a bottle of heat in your gas tank from time to time.
- If you have pets, be good idea to reinforce the dog house with hay bales and straw bedding, or build a dog shelter.

These are just some tips that can help out in case of an emergency and are just ideal to do or have throughout the winter months. It's better to be over prepared than unprepared. Hope this little bit of information helps you out. Stay Safe, and wish everybody good health.





Above: Fort Belknap Agency Transfer Site

# Compliance Assistance Offered to Prairie Mountain Utilities

By Ina Nez Perce, Environmental Manager

In the last 10+ years, the Fort Belknap Indian Community's Environmental Protection Department/Brownfields Program has offered compliance assistance to the Prairie Mountain Utilities (PMU) on the transfer sites located in our three main communities on the Fort Belknap Reservation – Fort Belknap Agency, Hays, and Lodge Pole. During this time we have assisted PMU with visual “inspections” of each site on a monthly basis, purchased small 3-yard canisters in each community to address the growing population, and purchased 40-yard canisters to be placed at transfer sites to collect waste and later to haul the waste to a landfill located 40 miles west of Fort Belknap. This year has been no exception, we assisted PMU with purchasing materials to ensure

that waste placed and hauled to the local transfer sites remain within the perimeters of the sites and not scattered throughout the community. PMU has completed the new barriers at the Fort Belknap Agency Transfer site and are currently working on the barriers for the Hays Transfer Site. PMU will then complete the barriers at the final transfer site in Lodge Pole, weather permitting. We would like to thank PMU for their good spirit of cooperation and their efforts to improve their services to the community. We would also like to thank the current Solid Waste Manager, Dalbert Begay and his crew for going above and beyond to improve the transfer sites. The transfer sites are looking great!!

Below: Hays Transfer Site



# EPA Administrator Regan Announces Comprehensive National Strategy to Confront PFAS Pollution

Contact Information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov) | October 18, 2021

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-action-plan-address-water-related-challenges-indian-country>

WASHINGTON (Oct. 18, 2021) – Today U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael S. Regan announced the agency's comprehensive Strategic Roadmap to confront PFAS contamination nationwide. The Roadmap is the result of a thorough analysis conducted by the EPA Council on PFAS that Administrator Regan established in April 2021. EPA's Roadmap is centered on three guiding strategies: Increase investments in research, leverage authorities to take action now to restrict PFAS chemicals from being released into the environment, and accelerate the cleanup of PFAS contamination. North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper and other elected leaders will join Administrator Regan at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC, for the announcement.

"For far too long, families across America – especially those in underserved communities – have suffered from PFAS in their water, their air, or in the land their children play on," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. "This comprehensive, national PFAS strategy will deliver protections to people who are hurting, by advancing bold and concrete actions that address the full lifecycle of these chemicals. Let there be no doubt that EPA is listening, we have your back, and we are laser focused on protecting people from pollution and holding polluters accountable."

"This roadmap commits the EPA to quickly setting enforceable drinking water limits for these chemicals as well as giving stronger tools to communities to protect people's health and the environment," said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. "As we continue partnering with the EPA on this and other important efforts, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal and the larger budget resolution would provide critical help by dedicating significant resources to address PFAS contamination."



The Strategic Roadmap delivers on the agency's mission to protect public health and the environment and answers the call for action on these persistent and dangerous chemicals. Today, alongside the release of the Roadmap, the agency is announcing a new national testing strategy that requires PFAS manufacturers to provide the agency with toxicity data and information on categories of PFAS chemicals. The PFAS to be tested will be selected based on an approach that breaks the large number of PFAS today into smaller categories based on similar features

and considers what existing data are available for each category. EPA's initial set of test orders for PFAS, which are expected in a matter of months, will be strategically selected from more than 20 different categories of PFAS. This set of orders will provide the agency with critical information on more than 2,000 other similar PFAS that fall within these categories.

The Roadmap lays out:

- Aggressive timelines to set **enforceable drinking water** limits under the Safe Drinking Water Act to ensure water is safe to drink in every community.
- A **hazardous substance designation** under CERCLA, to strengthen the ability to hold polluters financially accountable.
- Timelines for action—whether it is data collection or rulemaking—on **Effluent Guideline Limitations under the Clean Water Act for nine industrial categories**.
- A **review of past actions on PFAS taken under the Toxic Substances Control Act** to address those that are insufficiently protective.
- Increased **monitoring, data collection and research** so that the agency can identify what actions are needed and when to take them.
- A final **toxicity assessment for GenX**, which can be used to develop health advisories that will help

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# EPA Administrator Regan Announces Comprehensive National Strategy to Confront PFAS Pollution

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communities make informed decisions to better protect human health and ecological wellness.

- Continued efforts to build the **technical foundation needed on PFAS air emissions** to inform future actions under the Clean Air Act.

“I’m encouraged that EPA is giving this urgent public health threat the attention and seriousness it deserves,” **said Senator Tom Carper**. “This is truly a soup-to-nuts plan—one that commits to cleaning up PFAS in our environment while also putting protections in place to prevent more of these forever chemicals from finding their way into our lives. After the previous administration failed to follow through on its plan to address PFAS contamination, EPA’s new leadership promised action. I look forward to working with them on living up to this commitment.”

“Communities contaminated by these toxic forever chemicals have waited decades for action,” **said Ken Cook, President of the Environmental Working Group**. “So, it’s good news that Administrator Regan will fulfill President Biden’s pledge to take quick action to reduce PFOA and PFOS in tap water, to restrict industrial releases of PFAS into the air and water, and to designate PFOA and PFOS as hazardous substances to hold polluters accountable. It’s been more than 20 years since EPA and EWG first learned that these toxic forever chemicals were building up in our blood and increasing our likelihood of cancer and other health harms. It’s time for action, not more plans, and that’s what this Administrator will deliver. As significant as these actions are, they are just the first of many actions needed to protect us from PFAS, as the Administrator has said.”

EPA’s Strategic Roadmap is a critical step forward in addressing PFAS pollution. Every level of government – from local, to state, to Tribal, to federal will need to exercise increased and sustained leadership to continue the momentum and make progress on PFAS. President Biden has called for more than \$10 billion in funding to address PFAS contamination through his Build Back Better agenda and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal. These critical resources will enable EPA and other federal agencies to scale up the research and work, so that they meet the scale of the PFAS challenge.

Over the coming weeks, EPA will be working to part-

ner for progress on PFAS. The agency will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders to continue to identify collaborative solutions to the PFAS challenge, including two national webinars that will be held on October 26 and November 2. Please RSVP to the webinars using the hyperlinked dates.

## Background

In April 2021, Administrator Regan established the EPA Council on PFAS to address the dangerous impacts of PFAS contamination and meet the needs of EPA’s partners and communities across the United States. To date, under the Biden-Harris Administration, EPA has:

- Launched a national PFAS testing strategy.
- Restarted rule development process for designating PFOA and PFOS as CERCLA hazardous substances.
- Built momentum to set national primary drinking water standard for PFOA and PFOS,
- Announced actions to stop companies from dumping PFAS into America’s waterways.
- Formed a workgroup to champion regulating PFAS as categories.
- Proposed a rule to expand data collection efforts on PFAS.
- Started planning to conduct expanded nationwide monitoring for PFAS in drinking water.
- Announced robust review process for new PFAS.
- Released preliminary Toxics Release Inventory data on PFAS.
- Updated a toxicity assessment for PFBS after rigorous scientific review.
- Released a draft PFBA toxicity assessment for public comment and external peer review.

Additional information on the Strategic Roadmap: [www.epa.gov/pfas](http://www.epa.gov/pfas).

## Acronyms:

- ⇒ (EPA) Environmental Protection Agency
- ⇒ (PFAS) Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances
- ⇒ (CERCLA) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
- ⇒ (PFOA) Perfluorooctanoic acid
- ⇒ (PFOS) Perfluorooctanesulfonic acid
- ⇒ (EWG) Environmental Working Group
- ⇒ (PFBS) Perfluorobutane sulfonic acid
- ⇒ (PFBA) Perfluorobutanoic acid

# What is a Watershed Restoration Plan

By Morris “Davy” Belgard, Nonpoint Source Coordinator



Well folks I'm back in Nonpoint Source Pollution. My co-worker went back to school to further her education. Good for her!!

A watershed restoration plan (WRP) is a broad assessment of a watershed that identifies nonpoint source pollution, its sources of pollution, and effects on the watershed. Included is a set of strategies to measure and mitigate known pollutants, thus providing a structure for managing efforts to both restore water quality in degraded areas and to protect overall watershed health.

WRPs offer the opportunity for communities to work together to improve local water quality, placing no requirements on private landowners while providing avenues for funding that would otherwise be unavailable, such as through the Section 319 Grant Program, funded by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and administered here in Montana by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ). The draft Peoples Creek WRP uses much of what is known about the watershed from DEQ's Peoples Creek Planning Area Sediment and Metals TMDL and Framework Water Quality Improvement Plan (DEQ, 2012), which describes the watershed, lists impairments, and makes recommendations for mitigating sources of pollutants. For more specific information, related to methodologies, definitions, allocation development criteria, and other details outside the scope of this WRP, refer to DEQ's TMDL for Peoples Creek: HUC 10050009. Rather than providing detail, this WRP offers broad scopes for project tasks and relies heavily on tables to compile information from various sources. The tables allow us to present relevant restoration and project information in brief yet wide-ranging descriptions. As the projects are

adopted, the appropriate stakeholders and technical experts will develop project specifics, scopes of work, design, and other related details. In the near-term, the emphasis of the Peoples Creek WRP is on educating the public about the issues facing the watershed and the potential for restoration.

Nine Key Elements, EPA lists nine key elements critical for achieving water quality improvements and that must be included in all WRPs supported with Section 319 funding.

The elements are summarized below.

1. Identify causes and sources of pollution.
2. Estimate pollutant loading into the watershed and expected load reductions.
3. Describe management measures to achieve load reductions in targeted critical areas.
4. Estimate the required technical and financial assistance and the relevant authorities needed to implement the plan.
5. Develop an information/education component.
6. Develop a project schedule
7. Describe interim measurable milestones.
8. Identify indicators to measure progress.
9. Develop a monitoring component.

The Peoples Creek WRP will be focusing on three segments in the Little Rocky Mountains: South Big Horn, Swift Gulch, and King Creek. Each will be divided into two working segments: Upper and Lower, the upper is in or near the abandoned mine complex, Zortman Landusky Inc. (ZMI) and the lower segments being on the Fort Belknap Indian Community. So with that, I'll close and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe Happy New Year.



## The Story of the Aquatic Study: **What Kind of Contamination and damage have the Mines done to the Aquatic Resources of the Reservation?**

The project was carried out by Bill Bell, Anna Doney, Chris Christenson, Donna Young, Liz McClain and many Natural Resource students

The investigation was designed to meet the requirements of a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) which was described in Section X, Subsection (b) of the Consolidated Consent decree i.e. U.S.A. and the State of Montana versus Pegasus Gold Corporation and Zortman Mining, Inc., and Gros Ventre Tribe, Assiniboine Tribe, Fort Belknap Community Council, and Island Mountain Protectors Assn., versus Pegasus Gold Inc., Pegasus Gold Corp, and Zortman Mining, Inc., Civil Action No.95-95; 95-96 BLG-JDS. Resolution No.232-97 passed by the Fort Belknap Community Council supported the Work Plan, developed by the Fort Belknap College (now Aaniiih Nakoda College) Water Laboratory. Mr. Kenneth "Gus" Helgeson, President of Island Mountain Protectors Assn. signed off on this project. Before any of the tasks could begin a Quality Assurance Program had to be developed with Standard Oper-

ating Procedures (SOP's) in place to include all aspect of field and laboratory operations and to include a Quality Management Plan (OMP). By following these EPA approved procedures all data gath-

and installed at the college following EPA rules and regulations. Specialized documents were followed in conducting the various tasks. For example; 5<sup>th</sup> ed., EPA/600/4-90/027F for Toxicity testing, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., EPA 600/R-99/064 for sediment and tailings analyses (done by Inter-Mountain Laboratories in Sheridan Wyoming), EPA-822-B-00-025 for stressor identification of Swift Gulch, EPA 841-B-99-002 used for periphyton collection methods, EPA Region VIII, U.S. EPA Contract No. 68-W5-0022 for fate and transport of cyanide heap leach contamination. Both ground and surface water routes for



Figure 1: Spirit Mountain and Landusky Mine

ered could be used in a court of law. And indeed there were times in the study where planes flew in to the landing strip at the airport and data given to lawyers working on behalf of the Tribes. All of us working on the project were under a 'gag order' not to discuss our data. Specialized laboratory and field equipment were acquired

contamination were a Focused Feasibility Study (FFS) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The Zortman/Landusky Mines were designated as CERCLA sites in June 2004 by BLM (Executive Order 12580).

*(Continued on page 13)*

## The Story of the Aquatic Study

(Continued from page 12)

Specifically, the SEP work plan was designed to obtain the appropriate data to characterize the impact of the recent and historic mining activities to the resources of the Fort Belknap Reservation. The study was to investigate the degree and extent of these impacts to groundwater, surface water, sediments and ecological systems. Data was gathered to qualify (through cultural knowledge) and quantify the magnitude of contamination, and to evaluate the risk to the ecological system. All activities for the project were done simultaneously as weather permitted.

All data from the study is stored in named organized boxes in Sitting High in the Aaniiih Nakoda College Archives. Dr. Sean Chandler, President of ANC is the contact person for the archives.

The surface water quality study focused on those drainages whose origins were closest to the mines and the direction of flow was onto the Fort Belknap Reservation. Extensive field and laboratory work focused on this area. This was in the Peoples Creek Drainage and included King Creek, Swift Gulch and Lodgepole Creek. King Creek's origin is now the high walls of acid generating rock (ARD) in the Little Rocky Mountains (Island Mountains, Fur Cap Mountains), reflecting both historic and modern (cyanide heap leach) mining coming from the Landusky mine site. There was removal of waste rock/tailings (TDD No.9809-0001) from King Creek some years ago. Here the heavy metals in the water exceeded levels allowed for surface water.

Today tailings and contaminated water after rain and storm events from this same area have gone past the Sun Dance and Pow Wow

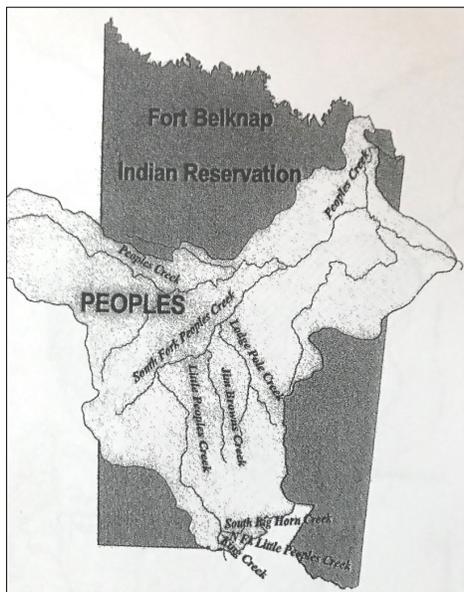


Figure 2: Peoples Creek Drainage

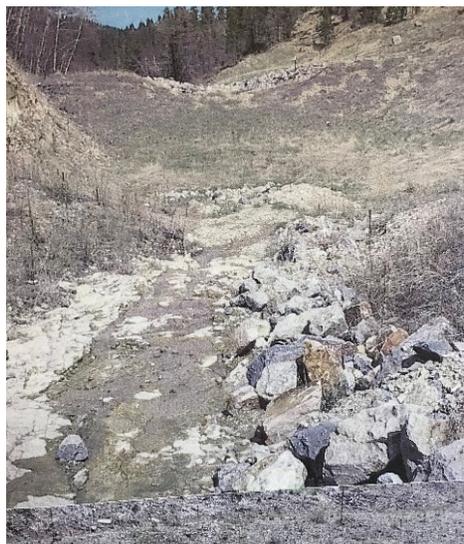


Figure 3: King Creek Drainage

grounds. Even after the mines shut down in 1997 King Creek remains a severely impacted drainage and there is no normal flow.

Swift Gulch is the 'canary in the coal mine' with its headwaters a tributary of South Big Horn Creek. It has been totally disrupted by

mining activity and reclamation efforts. With extensive field and laboratory studies we found that the contamination from the mine, as it continues toward the reservation, is rapidly moving with rain or storm events.

Lodgepole Creek and headwater tributaries Glory Hole Creek and Ross Gulch drain the northern end of Zortman mine. A visual journey down Lodgepole Creek indicates historic flow pathways and channels no longer in use. The surface water flow was partly made up by groundwater discharges. As the water usages by the mines was to deplete, divert or both, this underlying groundwater decreased. Where there is sporadic flow the recordings by the Hydrolab indicate water quality, conducive to both diverse macroinvertebrates and periphyton but neither in abundance if the channels were full of water.

There are USGS monitoring wells that were installed years ago for studies of groundwater in both shallow alluvium and bedrock in and around the Little Rocky Mountains (Fur Capped, Island Mountains). The water levels in these wells (Hays/Little People's Creek) and well water levels in Lodge Pole were monitored monthly, weather permitting (1999-2003) and accounted for 46 wells (see Final Aquatic Study Volumes for data). The water levels from the Hays/Little Peoples Creek wells showed no change, and from the Lodgepole wells little change was noted in the water levels year after year. From 1999 to 2003 certain wells were selected by location and drainage area for water

(Continued on page 14)

## The Story of the Aquatic Study

(Continued from page 13)

quality analyses. These were done for each of these wells after water levels were taken. The field equipment could measure: turbidity, pH, conductivity, temperature, alkalinity, iron, chloride, cyanide, fluoride, hardness, nitrite, phosphate, sulfate and sulfide; see graphs for these data for each well in the final Aquatic Study documents. It should be noted that some wells in Hays/Little Peoples Creek always tested positive for cyanide. Those in Lodgepole also contained cyanide as well as high sulfate concentrations.

The interaction between the groundwater flow system and surface water represents the most important aspect of determining how contaminants migrate away from the mine areas. In 1979 the Fort Belknap Tribal Community Council voted unanimously to oppose the creation of a huge mine using the cyanide heap leach process. The Land Board assured the Tribal Council that there would be no impact on either the water quality or quantity with this venture. A DRAFT EIS was completed and sent out for comment and when returned stated that an in depth study be done on the HYDROLOGY of the area as such complete information was not known at the time. The Land Board let the draft EIS stand, without the, in depth study, and gave approval for the heap leach mining to begin. We are living this bad decision today! The hydrology consultant for the Aquatic Study wrote a report based on research and analyses and stated water quality and quantity are issues to be supported by water rights litigation beneficial to the Fort Belknap Indian Community.

Tailings and sediments in King Creek, Swift Gulch and Glory Hole Creek/Lodgepole Creek were sampled and analyzed together for heavy metals and cyanide. These samples were collected all along each of the drainages reflecting heavy metal contamination with some exceeding health levels allowed in surface water (see Final Aquatic Study for detailed sampling data).



Figure 4: Hydrolab testing water in Swift Gulch



Figure 5: Lodgepole Creek Historic Channel

From 1999 to 2003 the biological integrity of the drainages was documented by extensive site visits. These have continued by both ANC and EPO to this day. The field portable Hydrolab can assess the water quality in real time and se-

lected sites were monitored throughout the project. Algae and benthic macroinvertebrates were collected, but kept to a minimum to avoid having an impact on what few were in these ephemeral streams. Toxicity testing using a live organism (EPA/ 600/ 4-90/ 027F) throughout these drainages was done in the laboratory at Aaniiih Nakoda College. Water from Snake Butte Reservoir was used as a control water for these tests as it is good quality water evidenced by abundant aquatic organisms in it.

One in abundance is a small 'water flea' (Daphnia) as they are called and are indicators of good water so introducing a small 'water flea' into the collected water sample from any of the streams we could observe their survival. Daphnia did not live long if in Swift Gulch water, for 8 hours or 24 hours if samples were taken high up by the mine or the reservation boarder. These results are consistent with toxic mine water finding its way onto the Fort Belknap Reservation.

Throughout the duration of the project, videos were made of the drainages and well sampling events and a five minute CD was produced documenting tasks of the project.

Long term monitoring is being carried out by both the Environmental Protection Office personnel as well as research being done by ANC's Natural Resource Department.

A small library has been developed that document in detail the

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## The Story of the Aquatic Study

(Continued from page 14)

tasks of the Aquatic Study and Mining activity. It is located in Sitting High in the Archives and accounts for many boxes filled with detailed data collected throughout the duration of the study. There are thousands of pages which represent thousands of hours of Bill Bell, Anna Doney, Chris Christenson, Donna Young and student

interns work walking drainages, sampling wells, working in the laboratory, and keeping logs of all they did. Often this information of their being ever vigilant was given to lawyers to enable them to strengthen court cases against the Zortman/Landusky mine pollution that has resulted in the Fort Belknap Community becoming

‘environmental refuges in your own Land’.



Figure 6: Water Flea (*Daphnia* used in toxicity testing)

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# EPA Announces Action Plan to Address Water-Related Challenges in Indian Country

Contact Information: EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov) | October 14, 2021

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-action-plan-address-water-related-challenges-indian-country>

**WASHINGTON** – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released an action plan to strengthen the agency’s partnership with Tribes and Alaska Native Villages on water issues. Actions taken under this plan will address critical challenges and provide vital water protections to support public health, environmental protection, cultural activities, and subsistence practices in Indian Country.

“Pursuant to the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to upholding the federal trust responsibility, EPA has developed an action plan that outlines the steps it is taking to deliver on this commitment by supporting Tribal nations as they protect and steward their waters,” **said Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs Jane Nishida.**

“Under this plan, the Office of Water intends to play a significant role in delivering on the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to Tribal nations.” **said Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox.** “This action plan provides a blueprint for EPA to better understand the water challenges facing our Tribal partners and to identify the best tools to make progress. We will seek out additional funding for Tribal infrastructure, advance water programs with distinct and measurable Tribal benefits, and partner with Tribal nations to enhance their capacity to protect and steward water resources.”

Long-standing water challenges are negatively impacting Tribes and Alaska Native Villages, which are

more likely than other populations in the United States to lack access to piped drinking water and essential wastewater services. The action plan, Strengthening The Nation-To-Nation Relationship With Tribes To Secure A Sustainable Water Future, will help address these challenges by:

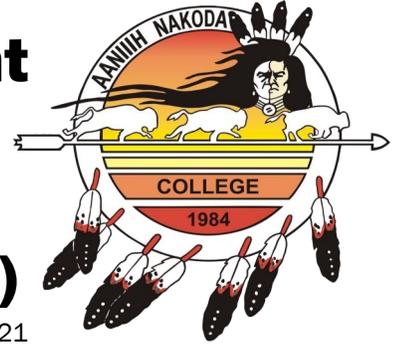
- Promoting robust coordination and meaningful consultation with Tribal nations.
- Strengthening and expanding water governance in Indian country.
- Increasing infrastructure funding and capacity development.
- Honoring the federal trust responsibility and protecting Tribal reserved rights related to water resources.

“EPA’s Office of Water plan encompasses many of the National Tribal Water Council’s priorities,” **said NTWC Chairman Ken Norton.** “Together, we recognize that providing Tribal communities with safe water to drink, basic sanitation, and CWA protections make a difference in the lives of our Tribal peoples. The plan outlines specific actions that can be immediately initiated and continue over the next three years to improve the health and well-being of Tribal communities across the nation.”.

To view the Tribal action plan and learn more about EPA’s National Tribal Water Program, go to: <https://www.epa.gov/tribalwater>.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Aaniiih Nakoda College is a Recipient of a \$3.5 Million Grant from the National Science Foundation's TCU Enterprise Advancement Center (TEA)



Submitted by Michael Kinsey | Aaniiih Nakoda College | Fort Belknap, MT | November 30, 2021

Aaniiih Nakoda College (ANC) received \$3,500,000 in funding from the National Science Foundation's (NSF) Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) Enterprise Advancement Center (TEA). The funding will be used to establish and operate the Buffalo Research and Education Center over a five-year project period. The center will serve as an intellectual hub for research and education efforts that address the values, needs, and aspirations of the FBIC and enrich the relationship between the people of Fort Belknap, the tribal buffalo herd, and the prairie ecosystem.

There are two main objectives to fulfill the purpose of the center: (1) conduct research on ecological research on the Fort Belknap buffalo herd and its associated grassland habitat and species and (2) provide academic training and community education to prepare future caretakers of tribal wildlife and associated natural resources and to increase community knowledge of sustainable management of Fort Belknap's buffalo herd and its habitat.

As part of the center's research, seven research projects will be conducted with project partners to address identified needs and priorities of the FBIC and support the sustainable management of the tribal buffalo herd and surrounding prairie ecosystem. In addition, the Buffalo Research and Education Center personnel will be working in close collaboration with tribal buffalo and project partners to:

1. Monitor the Snake Butte buffalo herd to determine how resource selection and social interactions influence herd movement.
2. Conduct a buffalo-rangeland interaction study correlating herd movement data with detailed vegetative surveys.
3. Determine post-release dispersal patterns, survival rates, and home-range estimates for the reintroduced swift foxes.
4. Conduct population and habitat surveys for black-footed ferrets and carry out plague mitigation ef-

forts.

5. Develop survey protocols and conduct population surveys of Fort Belknap's five ungulate species.
6. Examine the keystone effects and associations between prairie dogs and grassland birds.
7. Conduct an interpretive phenomenological study to assess community perceptions of the meaning and value of the Fort Belknap buffalo herd.

Research efforts will be made in collaboration with a partnership with ANC faculty and students, FBIC Buffalo Program (FBBP), Fort Belknap Fish and Wildlife Department (FBFWD), and visiting faculty fellows from the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI), World Wildlife Fund (WWF), and Little Dog Wildlife, Inc.

To fulfill the second objective of offering formal academic training and education opportunities to ANC students and Fort Belknap community members. The center has nine educational activities planned for (1) curriculum development for a series of upper-division courses in buffalo ecology, grassland ecology, and/or wildlife ecology to create a specialized option within ANC's Aaniiih Nakoda Ecology BS degree program; (2) offer undergraduate research opportunities during each year of the project to allow students to work as research assistants on one of the seven research projects listed above; (3) offer a one-year fellowship to students in years four and five of the project to work with the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute (SCBI); (4) collaborate with the Fort Belknap Community Buffalo Group (FBCBG) to organize and facilitate bi-monthly meetings to increase community engagement and awareness of the FBBP and strengthen ties between various stakeholders, and to increase community benefit from the FBBP; (5) provide social and economic benefit studies to prepare a series of concept papers, business plans, and/or feasibility studies exploring strategies for leveraging trib-

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## ANC is a Recipient of a Grant from the National Science Foundation's TEA Center

(Continued from page 16)

al lands, wildlife, and other natural resources to enhance community benefit and economic well-being; (6) host Buffalo speaker series and radio programs, (7) host Buffalo community festival in the fourth year of the project to honor the 50th anniversary of the buffalo's return to Fort Belknap (1974-2024); (8) outreach in local schools with goal of providing fun and engaging opportunities for children and youth to learn about and appreciate the reservation's plants and animals, as well as the grassland ecosystems they inhabit; and (9) develop a tribal buffalo community of practice by establishing a community made up of TCU staff/faculty engaged in buffalo research, education and/or management; tribal buffalo managers; and other scientists and practitioners working with buffalo on tribal lands.

ANC President Sean Chandler said, "The new funding from NSF's TEA Center to establish the Buffalo Research and Education Center will empower Aaniiih Nakoda College faculty and students to take an active responsible role in becoming better stewards to our animal relatives, land and environment. Using the philosophies of our Indigenous Lifeways, I know that our ANC team and partners will help improve the health and well-being of the Aaniin and Nakoda People."

For more information on the Buffalo Research and Education Center, contact Michael Kinsey at (406) 353-2607 Ext. 3926, [makinsey@ancollege.edu](mailto:makinsey@ancollege.edu).

### About The National Science Foundation

The National Science Foundation (NSF) is an independent Federal agency created by the National Science Foundation Act of 1950, as amended (42 USC 1861-75). The Act states the purpose of the NSF is "to promote the progress of science; [and] to advance the national health, prosperity, and welfare by supporting research and education in all fields of science and engineering." NSF funds research and education in most fields of science and engineering. It does this through grants and cooperative agreements to more than 2,000 colleges, universities, K-12 school systems, businesses, informal science organizations, and other research organizations throughout the US. The Foundation accounts for about one-fourth of Federal support to academic institutions for basic research. NSF receives approximately 55,000 proposals each year for research, education, and training projects, of which approximately 11,000 are funded. In addition, the Foundation receives several thousand applications for graduate and postdoctoral fellowships. The agency operates no laboratories itself but does support National Research Centers, user facilities, certain oceanographic vessels, and Arctic and Antarctic research stations. The Foundation also

supports cooperative research between universities and industry, US participation in international scientific and engineering efforts, and educational activities at every academic level.

Facilitation Awards for Scientists and Engineers with Disabilities (FASSED) provide funding for special assistance or equipment to enable persons with disabilities to work on NSF-supported projects. See the NSF Proposal & Award Policies & Procedures Guide Chapter II.E.6 for instructions regarding preparing these types of proposals. In addition, the National Science Foundation has Telephonic Device for the Deaf (TDD) and Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) capabilities that enable individuals with hearing impairments to communicate with the Foundation about NSF programs and employment or general information. TDD may be accessed at (703) 292-5090 and (800) 281-8749, FIRS at (800) 877-8339. In addition, the National Science Foundation Information Center may be reached at (703) 292-5111.

### About The Program

The Tribal Colleges and Universities Program (TCUP) provides awards to Tribal Colleges and Universities, Alaska Native-serving institutions, and Native Hawaiian-serving institutions to promote high-quality science (including sociology, psychology, anthropology, economics, statistics, and other social and behavioral sciences as well as natural sciences), technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, research, and outreach. Support is available to TCUP-eligible institutions (see the Additional Eligibility subsection of Section IV of this solicitation) for transformative capacity-building projects through Instructional Capacity Excellence in TCUP Institutions (ICE-TI), Targeted STEM Infusion Projects (TSIP), TCU Enterprise Advancement Centers (TEA Centers), and Preparing for TCUP Implementation (Pre-TI). Collaborations involving multiple higher education institutions led by TCUP institutions are supported through Partnerships for Geoscience Education (PAGE) and Partnerships for Documentary Linguistics Education (PADLE). Finally, research studies that further the scholarly activity of individual faculty members are supported through Small Grants for Research (SGR) and Science Education Alliance Phage Hunters Advancing Genomics and Evolutionary Science in Tribal Colleges and Universities (SEA-PHAGES in TCUs). Through the opportunities highlighted above and collaborations with other National Science Foundation (NSF) units and other organizations, TCUP aims to increase Native individuals' participation in STEM careers and improve the quality of STEM programs at TCUP-eligible institutions. TCUP strongly encourages the inclusion of activities that will benefit veterans.

### About TCU Enterprise Advancement Centers (TEA Centers)

TEA Centers are intended to coalesce the STEM and/or STEM education research expertise into a team designed to support and promote the STEM goals, needs, aspirations, or interests of the chartering reservation or tribe(s). TEA Centers may address a critical tribal or community need or focus on a realm of research or design beyond the scope of individual research grants or interest to multiple tribes.

# EPA Announces Appointments of Regional Administrators for Regions 2, 4, and 8

<https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-announces-appointments-regional-administrators-regions-2-4-and-8>

WASHINGTON, DC (Nov. 18, 2021) - Today, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Administrator Michael S. Regan announced that President Biden will appoint three new Regional Administrators to lead EPA's work protecting human health and the environment in their respective regional offices. The following individuals will be appointed:

## Region 2

Lisa Garcia will become EPA's Regional Administrator for Region 2. Garcia will lead the implementation of the Biden-Harris environmental agenda in New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and eight Indian Nations.

"Lisa's leadership will be instrumental to EPA's work addressing the complicated intersection of environmental and economic challenges in Region 2. She brings a wealth of experience in fighting for climate justice and equity that will be invaluable as we deliver on our mission to protect communities from Puerto Rico to the U.S. Virgin Islands, and in New Jersey and New York, from pollution," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.**

"I am honored to be appointed as Regional Administrator for EPA region 2, and to help advance President Biden's and Administrator Regan's priorities to integrate environmental justice in all we do to tackle climate change, ensure all communities have clean drinking water, and reduce toxic pollution in our air, water, and soil," **Lisa Garcia said.** "With the passage of the historic infrastructure deal in Congress, I stand ready to serve with the amazing EPA staff and take action toward a more just and resilient planet."

Lisa Flavia Garcia is a lawyer that has been using the power of law and policy over the past 20 years to advocate for environmental and climate justice. Garcia was appointed to EPA in 2009, serving as associate administrator and advisor to EPA Administrators Jackson and McCarthy. She helped to lead the team responsible for the creation and implementation of Plan EJ 2014 -EPA's first EJ strategic plan- and the design of EJSCREEN. Garcia then worked as Vice President for Litigation at Earthjustice, and in 2019

joined GRIST magazine to lead a new program called Fix, Grist's climate solutions lab focused on amplifying the voices of climate justice leaders. Earlier in her career, Garcia served as the Director of EJ and Indian Affairs at the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation and as Assistant Attorney General at the NYS Attorney General's Environmental Protection Bureau. She was also an Associate Professor at Rutgers Law School, staff attorney at NYPIRG, and a legislative fellow for Senator Robert Torricelli and NJ State Senator Byron Baer.

## Region 4

Daniel Blackman will become EPA's Regional Administrator for Region 4. Blackman will lead the implementation of the Biden-Harris environmental agenda in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and with six Tribes.

"Daniel brings deep experience in the region that will be an asset as we work to confront issues in overburdened and underserved communities, ensure public health protections for all, and make progress on our critical climate change goals," **said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.** "I'm excited to have him working with us."

"I am honored to play a critical role in President Biden and Administrator Regan's ambitious commitment to combat the climate crisis, reduce pollution, and to ensure more Americans can participate fully and equally in our economy. This includes bringing accountability and transparency throughout the region and working to fulfill President Biden's environmental justice commitments," **said Daniel Blackman.**

Daniel Blackman has spent over a decade advising policymakers at the Georgia state capitol and advocating on behalf of Georgia ratepayers and small businesses in energy-related matters before the state's Public Service Commission. He served as chairman of the Georgia Chapter of the Sierra Club and board member for the ACLU. Blackman has worked throughout EPA Region 4 to secure environ-

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## EPA Announces Appointments of Regional Administrators for Regions 2, 4, and 8

(Continued from page 18)

mental, health, and economic justice and to convene stakeholders with federal agencies. His work in addressing groundwater contamination at nuclear plants and its impact on public health and safety has given him the opportunity to testify numerous times before the Nuclear Regulatory Commission; and his commitment to working throughout the Southeastern United States to push for legislation that addresses toxic ash left behind from burning coal has given him the opportunity to play a key role in the transitioning from coal to clean energy in the United States.

### Region 8

KC Becker will become EPA's Regional Administrator for Region 8. Becker will lead the implementation of the Biden-Harris environmental agenda in Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and with 28 Tribal Nations.

"With her background on critical climate change and environmental justice issues, KC is an excellent choice to lead our Region 8 team. She is experienced in stakeholder engagement and will ensure voices from throughout the region are heard on key issues," said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan.

"I am so honored to have the opportunity to serve the Biden Administration as EPA Region 8 Administrator.

The aggressive and critical agenda that President Biden and Administrator Regan have announced to address climate change, repair aging water infrastructure, and drive down methane emissions requires an 'all hands on deck' approach. I am ready to use my experience to help states, Tribal governments, businesses, and communities in Region 8 implement these important pieces of the Biden agenda," KC Becker said.

KC Becker recently completed four terms in the Colorado legislature, culminating as Speaker of the House. Becker led the Colorado Democrats to its biggest majority in the legislature in over 50 years, and the first majority female legislative chamber in the country. Prior to serving in the Colorado legislature, she served four years on Boulder, Colorado's city council. She worked for nearly seven years as an attorney-advisor in the Solicitor's Office at the US Department of the Interior, practicing administrative and natural resources law. While in the Colorado legislature, Becker led landmark legislation to reform Colorado's oil and gas sector, created a first in the nation Office of Just Transition, and passed nationally-leading legislation requiring the state of Colorado to put forward a plan to meet carbon reduction goals. Becker lives in Boulder with her husband and two sons.

*Kécinbáasbétáaniiisiin*  
*Owotgay Amba Washday*  
*Feliz Navidad*  
*Happy Hanukkah*  
*Happy Kwanzaa*  
*Merry Christmas*  
*Yuletide Greetings*  
*Happy Winter Solstice*

*Happy St. Nicholas Day*  
*Season's Greetings*  
*Happy Birthday Jesus*  
*Peace & Goodwill*  
*Happy Holidays*  
*Joy to the World*  
*Happy New Year*  
*Bah Humbug!*

**However you say it this time of year,  
or in what language...**

**"Be good to one another, Love one another!"**

Fort Belknap Environmental Protection Department

Fort Belknap Indian Community  
**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT**

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