

Circle Speaker

OCTOBER—DECEMBER 2020

WHITE CLAY & NAKODA ENVIRONMENTAL NEWSLETTER

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Biden set to select top North Carolina environmental official to lead EPA

BY REBECCA BEITSCH - 12/17/20 01:11 PM EST

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/530685-biden-set-to-select-michael-regan-to-lead-epa?userid=344566>

President-elect Joe Biden plans to select Michael Regan to lead the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), picking a longtime EPA insider to lead the agency, according to multiple Thursday reports.

Regan, 44, is currently the secretary for North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the state's EPA equivalent. He would be the first Black man to hold the role of EPA chief.

He previously worked for the EPA under the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations before heading to the Environmental Defense Fund as its southeast regional director.

Picking Regan suggests Biden is eager to have a longtime expert at an agency responsible for the bulk of the Trump administration's environmental rollbacks.

During President Trump's tenure, the EPA has rolled back regulations on power plants and other industrial emissions like those from the oil and gas sector, along with those on emissions from vehicles — all which will need to be reversed in order to put the U.S. on track to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 as Biden has promised.

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Biden set to select top North Carolina environmental official to lead EPA

(Continued from page 1)

“The Biden team was very impressed with his tenure leading North Carolina’s Department of Environmental Quality, how he held polluters accountable, including by reaching the largest coal ash cleanup settlement in US history,” a source familiar with the transition team’s thinking told The Hill.

“And the team was also impressed by how he worked to give communities disproportionately harmed by environmental injustices a larger voice in state environmental and natural resource decisions.”

Biden has pledged to make environmental justice and the disproportionate burden of pollution faced by communities of color a cornerstone of his environmental agenda alongside cutting emissions and boosting renewable energy.

Regan’s previous work aligns with many of Biden’s climate goals. Regan’s previous time at the EPA centered on air and energy programs. And in North Carolina, he formed an Environmental Justice and Equity Board for DEQ and helped craft the state’s plans to reach carbon neutrality by 2050.

Biden has pledged to make environmental justice and the disproportionate burden of pollution faced by communities of color a cornerstone of his environmental agenda.

Kierán Suckling, executive director of the Center for Biological Diversity, said Regan would need to “move with lightning speed” to begin addressing a host of problems at the agency.

Former EPA administrators have repeatedly bashed the direction the agency has taken under the Trump administration, arguing EPA has ignored its missions of protecting human and environmental health.

Those who know Regan argue he is a great pick to help right the ship after doing the same in North Carolina.

“He has certainly had a difficult situation coming in with respect to morale and rebuilding confidence in the staff. He did inherit a difficult situation; his predecessor was pretty destructive to the agency,” Stan Meiburg, a former acting deputy administrator for the EPA during the Obama years who now teaches at Wake Forest University said of Regan’s time in North

Carolina.

He told The Hill he sees parallels with the EPA under Trump.

“The career staff have had a tough four years. I think there was a sense science wasn’t always at the heart of decisions the agency was making, and that’s been tough,” he said.

Regan would join a team of other high-ranking environmental regulators set to be part of the Biden administration.

Former EPA administrator Gina McCarthy is expected to serve in a newly created climate coordinator role, while former Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm will lead the Department of Energy.

While environmental groups were largely excited by the pick, they stressed the need for Regan to be an active participant in addressing climate change.

“We will do everything in our power to support and push Regan to repair the damage done by the Trump administration, take bold action on climate solutions, and genuinely address environmental injustice that has been allowed to go on too long,” Earthjustice president Abigail Dillen said in a statement.

If confirmed, Regan would be the second African American to lead the department.

**Fort Belknap Environmental Department—
Wishing our very own, a very**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Cody Shambo

(Celebrated in October)

Dennis Longknife

(Celebrated in December)

Kermit Snow

(Celebrated in December)

What Is Rural Blight?

By Morris Belgard, Brownfields Technician

“Vacant, abandoned, and decaying buildings plague rural communities, ... Rural America, often portrayed as “forgotten” or “dying,” has an uncertain road before it. The question of how society as a whole approaches the decaying rural built environment—which will in turn affect rural safety, health, economics, aesthetics, and overall quality of life—will play an important role in shaping that fate.” ~ Ann Eisenberg, Univ. of S. Carolina

Each community is plagued with old, outdated structures; abandoned trailers, abandoned homes, buildings that has outlived their usefulness, and becomes a safety concern for the community at large because of rodent droppings, unstable building structure and can become a safe haven for unwanted activities.



Methods of construction and materials use constantly evolves, as regulators discover materials used in building of a such as insulation, flooring tiles and paints used in the 1900's until 1970's were cancer causing. Lead base paints were found to damage internal organs and cause behavioral problems in infants and adolescents. Asbestos building materials made of vermiculite were used for floor tiles and insulation in home and schools, from ceiling to wall to water pipes.



Visiting with community members in Hays, MT, I got mixed messages about the John Capture Center or to us older ones, Hays Grade School, especially around my age about the historic and nostalgic value of the building. I believe was constructed in 1957, 1958 or 1959, and is worthy of restoration and occupation for reuse of the building. I was told.



On the other side, it's old full of lead paint, asbestos tiles and wrapped pipes, and was burnt and bricks were torn out to fight the fire, tear it down and rebuild a new office complex.

After some research I found that Human Urban Development (HUD) as the HUD Exchange, Neighborhood Stabilization Act (NPS), S-2301(b) of the Home Recovery Act of 2008 or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, PL. 111-5 either of these programs would fund either the most financial feasible cost be it either demolition or refurbish.

As the John Capture Center stands today is a hazard and sore eyesight in Hays besides being the first structure a visitor sees entering Hays.

Please continue to wash your hands and wear protective face masks for your family and community.

Indigenous activists speak out against plans to import radioactive material to southeast Utah

Residents complain of health problems and believe the environment is being damaged

By Zak Podmore | Dec. 10, 2020, 3:07 p.m.

<https://www.sltrib.com/news/2020/12/10/indigenous-activists/?fbclid=IwAR2209awMFniOs9Tie58emZJyCnmAr80FxAxws1Fv5UR2HhHagxdlSsNk>



(Corey Robinson | Tribune file photo) Protesters gather in White Mesa, Utah, on May 14, 2017, for a protest march against the White Mesa Mill, the last conventional uranium mill still operating in the United States.

When locations were chosen more than half a century ago for the dozens of uranium mills that dot the Four Corners landscape, one common factor was almost always considered: proximity to productive uranium mines.

The region's best uranium deposits typically only contain a small percentage of the valuable radioactive mineral, and being able to process the material at a nearby mill was critical to saving on transportation costs.

For the last conventional uranium mill still operating in the United States, however, the business model has changed. San Juan County's White Mesa Mill, which is owned by the Denver-based company Energy Fuels Resources, hasn't processed ore from local mines in recent years. Instead, it has survived primarily by accepting uranium-bearing material from around the country and, more recently, as far away as Japan. State regulators are also considering an application from the company to import material from Estonia.

Members of the Ute Mountain Ute community of

White Mesa, which is located three miles from the mill site, spoke out against the mill's continued operation on Tuesday at an annual town hall event that was held virtually this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The event, which was sponsored by a coalition of 12 grassroots community groups and environmental organizations, featured presenters from across Indian Country who spoke about the legacy of uranium production and nuclear waste storage on Native Americans as well as the White Mesa Mill.

"The White Mesa Mill was originally designed to run for 15 years before being closed and cleaned up, but the mill is still in operation 40 years later," said Talia Boyd, cultural landscapes program manager for the Grand Canyon Trust and a member of the Navajo Nation, who noted uranium production has had a disproportionate impact on Indigenous peoples. "Community members are concerned about public health impacts and contamination of land, air and water as well as the mill's ongoing desecration of cultural and sacred sites."

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Indigenous activists speak out against plans to import radioactive material to southeast Utah

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The mill has accepted radioactive material from the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, and Energy Fuels has expressed interest in processing tailings from the more than 500 abandoned uranium mines that have yet to be cleaned up on the Navajo Nation.

Scott Clow, environmental programs director for the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, said that such proposals address a real need to remediate contaminated sites on tribal lands, but that they also “pit tribes against tribes.”

“We all want those places to be cleaned up, but we don’t want it to go to White Mesa,” Clow said.

Thelma Whiskers and Michael Badback of the White Mesa Concerned Community group said emissions from the mill can be smelled in White Mesa on a regular basis, adding they believe the facility has had negative health impacts on local residents.

“Let’s just keep ... fighting to not have [the mill] close to the reservation,” Whiskers said. “I care for the community members and the children and the grandchildren.”

Energy Fuels has repeatedly told The Salt Lake Tribune the mill is in compliance with all environmental regulations and both air and water quality are actively monitored, but Clow expressed concerns about the state’s repeated decision to relax compliance limits for certain contaminants present in the groundwater directly beneath the mill. The company has argued the contaminants, including chloroform and nitrate/chloride, are nonradioactive and originated with previous industrial activity on the site or are naturally occurring.

In an effort to better understand both the potential environmental and health impacts of the mill, Clow said the tribe has projects underway with both the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Two new monitoring wells were drilled this fall between the mill and the community with EPA funding in order to better track potential water quality changes, Clow said, and a branch of the CDC is helping the tribe plan epidemiological work in the White Mesa community that could provide more information

about health concerns among residents.

Other speakers at the event addressed the legacy of uranium production elsewhere in Indian Country.

Taracita Keyanna of the Red Water Pond Road Community Association spoke about the 1979 Church Rock Spill on the Navajo Nation in New Mexico, which remains the second-largest radioactive disaster in world history after the Chernobyl meltdown in the former Soviet Union.

“A lot of the land in our community has been disrupted and we can no longer use it [for livestock],” she said. “We can’t grow crops because the EPA has stated that if we grow crops we’ll be further exposed to uranium contamination. We can’t drink the water.”

Keyanna added the uranium contamination has had not only physical health consequences but has caused spiritual and mental health impacts as well, all of which have been exacerbated by the pandemic.

“It feels like a prison,” Keyanna said. “We’re not only prisoners during this pandemic, but we’ve kind of always been prisoners [since] this uranium industry started in our community.”

Leona Morgan, co-founder of the Indigenous-led group Haul No!, which opposes Energy Fuels’ plans to mine for uranium near Grand Canyon National Park and haul ore across the Navajo Nation, encouraged meeting participants to oppose a separate proposal currently being considered by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission that could result in radioactive material being hauled from the Church Rock area to the White Mesa Mill for processing.

Tom Goldtooth, executive director of the Indigenous Environmental Network, called the mill’s activities near the Ute Mountain Ute land, like the mining and milling that took place on the Navajo Nation decades ago, an example of “environmental racism and environmental injustice.”

“It’s not just an individual human rights issue,” he said, addressing the residents of White Mesa. “It’s a collective rights issue for your people to live in a safe and healthy environment: your homeland.”

Tribal Water Quality Standards Update

By Mitchell Healy, Water Quality Program Coordinator | December 14, 2020

Hello, to all of the Fort Belknap Indian Community. Hope that you all have been healthy and safe during the difficult time that COVID19 has caused, and for all of us to continue to stay positive and work together.

In the meantime, I'd like to share an update on something very important to the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation and is definitely beneficial for tribal members to be aware of and to be involved with. Your involvement is actually critical and would be an opportunity for you to share your concerns, comments, questions, etc. What I'm referring to are the Tribal Water Quality Standards (TWQS) that have been in development status for quite some time now and is getting close to the next steps.

So, what are TWQS? In simplest terms, it is a regulatory document with the purpose of setting water quality goals and developing strategies to protect our tribal surface waterbodies from harmful levels of pollution and to ensure designated uses are being attained or achieved. Surface waters would include wa-

ters such as: streams, ponds, lakes, reservoirs, wetlands, springs, rivers, etc. The general concept is water protection, but there are comprehensive steps, legalities, and varying degrees of factors that all are part of this document and are significant in how it would be implemented on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation.



As mentioned, this is a very complex document and is the major reason why it has been in the developmental stages for as long as it has been. The TWQS are not approved yet and the goal is to have the remaining minor revisions resolved during the FY21 year or by September 2021. Once completed, there

are processes to abide by in order to get the TWQS approved. It should be clarified that there is more than one process and there is a major distinction between them. These processes include: 1) Tribally-Adopted Water Quality Standards; and 2) Federally-Approved Water Quality Standards. The following table briefly summarizes these processes.

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PROCESS		REQUIREMENTS	IMPLEMENTATION
1	Tribally-Adopted Water Quality Standards	Precursor to Federally-Approved WQS Informational presentation to FBICC Tribal Attorney Review Public Comment Period (On-Reservation/Tribal Members Only) Response to Public Comments Document Tribal Council Adoption through Resolution	Clean Water Act does not apply Establish water quality goals to protect water resources Watershed Assessments Not intended to be a Regulatory Document for violations unless there were an existing Tribal Water Code/Ordinance/Law
2	Federally-Approved Water Quality Standards	Apply for Treatment in a Manner Similar to a State (TAS) Application for 401 Certification and 303 (c) Water Quality Standards Tribal Attorney Review Public Comment Period (Nationwide/all Stakeholders) U.S. EPA Review and Approval of both the WQS and TAS Application	Clean Water Act applies Section 401 offers states and authorized tribes opportunities to affect the issuance of a range of federal licenses and permits, but it is up to the state or tribe whether to take or waive each such opportunity as it arises

Tribal Water Quality Standards Update

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As you have read thus far, obtaining any level of Tribal Water Quality Standards will take time, and as we progress closer and continue to move forward with each step, your involvement and support (all tribal members) will be very essential to having protection of our water resources for future generations, however, regardless if we have TWQS or not, we all should be doing our part in keeping our waters clean and safe for future generations and keep this in mind when you're out there enjoying the streams, ponds, etc., other life needs the water as well and we use the water for many different uses, besides swimming and fishing. For future reference, if there is a stream



you're concerned about or if you have any questions about our waters, then contact me at my work phone: 353-8433 or by email: mitchellhealy@yahoo.com.

#RESPECT THE WATER WE HAVE LEFT



Brownfields in 2020: Pandemic Mode

Kermit Snow Jr., BTRP Compliance Officer

Wahey Neet Ine. Hello my relatives. Star date 2020, these are the times of Mother Earth, we are still in lockdown, the outside world still in chaos and a new leader waiting to be crowned. We ask ourselves, can we boldly go where no man has gone before? Well, as they say, "the show must go on". What that show will look like, we can only wonder and try and make the best of a bad situation. I look forward to, not the way things were, but to better days with a more promising outlook on our future. It is hard to fathom working in lockdown away from your co-workers this long and no end in sight, I crave that interaction with others, the feel of the office camaraderie. You can only do so much away from the office, I'm not saying you can't get work done, but you can only do so much. We need each other to bounce ideas off of, someone to talk to when you have questions and need answers right now. We need to get out in the field, whether it be warm or cold out, something to stimulate us, the feel of Mother Earth. We have projects that need to be done with us actually being outside with our Contractor's, meetings face to face, inspections that need to be done, exploring new projects in different

communities, getting together with other departments and collaborating on how we can help each other. We need our Earth Day activities for our children, seminars that are needed for our communities with help from outside sources, community meetings to let them know what we are doing and to get ideas from them on how we can help them. These are just some of the things that are missing from this past year that zoom and Microsoft meetings can't really give us. Although, the Virtual Tribal Lands and Environment Forum was kind of awesome, but I still miss seeing my friends (Family) in person.

I have been trying to stay busy none the less, but it still isn't the same. I have been reviewing DES Updates, TERC meeting notes, safety plans that come through and need to be approved, attending virtual RTOC meeting, my 8-Hour HazWoper Refresher online, and many webinars dealing with UST's, Brownfields thru KSU-TAB, some courses through SafetyFest (virtual), helped with the Election as Security Detail, participating in ITEP's Tribal Hazard Mitiga-

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Brownfields in 2020: Pandemic Mode

(Continued from page 7)

tion Planning course, and virtual staff meeting. I also did my 4 hour Asbestos refresher online, although I would rather have done that in person. There are some things you can't do in the office, such as Transfer Sites and UST inspections, they need to be done in person. I had intended to set up a meeting with our Utilities Department and TANF, to see how we can help each other by putting some of their clients to work in keeping the sites clean. As soon as this pandemic ends, I will set up this meeting and try and see

how we can help each other and keep our Reservation clean. We are anxiously waiting to get back to work on the Old Agency Landfill, the Old Lodge Pole Elementary School, and possibly the Pink Church. I am looking forward to the time we can get back in our offices, to be with our work families and enjoy what we had before this pandemic came and separated us. I think first up, would be a dinner to welcome us all back, lol. So, until we see each other face to face again, mask up and stay safe. Aho

Winter Safety While Hunting

By: Cody Shambo, Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician

As many of you know Montana is one tough place to live. Weather here can change in a heartbeat. Hypothermia is the biggest risk when hunting in cold weather. Hyperthermia is a lot more common than you think. The temperature does not need to be 40 degrees below zero to become hypothermic. It can occur at temperatures as high as 50 degrees. If your body temperature drops only 2 degrees C you become hypothermic.

I'm sure many of you have gotten stuck or broke down when hunting. Maybe a fog settles in and you lose your bearings. Or possibly it gets dark on your way back to your vehicle and you get turned around in the dark. These are only a few scenarios I have personally experienced but I'm sure almost every hunter has as well. With all that said I would like to give some tips about being safe while out hunting in Montana's extreme winters.

- The first and most important thing to do is to let someone know where you plan to hunt, when you are leaving, and who is with you.

- Dress accordingly. Dress as though you are going to get stranded and have to walk out.
- Bring extra winter clothes such as coveralls and an extra waterproof coat. You can always take layers off but you can't put them on if you don't bring them.
- If you do break down or get stuck, **STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE**. You are more likely to be found in your vehicle.
- Bring all the obvious stuff such as a blanket, shovel, tow rope, jumper cables, spare tire.
- Bring a GPS if possible. Most people I know use an app on their phone called onX Hunt. Which uses your phones GPS to track your location.
- Bring a phone charger.
- One of the most overlooked items to throw in your vehicle is trash bags. Because they are so light they can be put in your pocket or hunting pack. As far as winter safety they can be used to keep warm in case of an emergency.

PLEASE BE SAFE AND GOOD LUCK!



BLM Withdraw Public Meeting

By Colette Werk, Nonpoint Source Coordinator

History is important and while it may seem like a long time ago it really wasn't and the effects of this entire situation can still be felt today. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is proposing a 20 year withdrawal of 2,688.13 acres of public land within and around the Zortman-Landusky mine. The withdrawal would protect the public land to no future mining of any kind. While this withdrawal sounds like the right thing to do, especial regarding the history and current environmental issues, it does not address private land around the mine.

For a man named Luke Ployhar, he sees the potential of bringing mining back to the Little Rocky Mountain range. He owns a few small strips of land adjacent to the public land that the BLM wants to withdraw. Unfortunately, the BLM withdrawal does not include his private land claims but he does need to get approval from the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) through the state of Montana.

He is based out of Bozeman, Montana and owns a mining company called Blue Arc LLC. If given consent from the DEQ he plans on removing 1,000 tons of rock that would be shipped to Nevada for testing to determine the quality for potential mining activities. He currently owns 60 mining patents in the Little Rockies that he had bought years ago. His family has been miners their entire lives and believes mining silver in the Little Rocky Mountains can help bridge the gap of making mining economically feasible again.

His approval process isn't as open to consultation from the surrounding communities as the BLM is but does need approval before his mining company can do anything. He has stated, "a lot of bad things happened 20 years ago but technology has solved a lot of the problems that Pegasus created." Open cyanide heap leaching has since been banned in Montana with Initiative 137, which was passed on November 6, 1998. He does not mention what new technology is available today that will not hinder any more environmental harm. He is confident his company can do the job.

On December 7th, BLM held a public meeting over Zoom because of COVID-19 restrictions. Listening in I noticed there were many of the Fort Belknap commu-

nity members voicing their opinions. Most were more concerned about Mr. Ployhar and his proposed mining project but BLM staff stated they had no control over his claims, just that they are taking comments on the public land in and around the mine. There wasn't much opposition to the withdrawal process, just a lot of concerned community members about Mr. Ployhar reopening a mine. It was astonishing to see the community show up in support of the withdrawal and showed their concern of the possible new development of the mine. Time can pass as Mr. Ployhar mentioned but people don't forget and many seem concerned about his new development.

Treatment of the water is perpetual and so are the costs that came with mining in the Little Rocky Mountains. No matter how advanced technology can be, the environment will still suffer at the cost of one man's dream. One man once had the same dream and now tax papers pay for clean-up that never really disappears. Mr. Grinnell said Indians could only see what's right in front of them, well I see how the streams run orange and how the mountain is now gone. I think most of the Fort Belknap Indian Community can see. For myself, I'm looking Mr. Grinnell, just like you said and I can assure you the fog isn't there anymore.

Public comment is still being taken until January 5th and encouraged by the community. It must be written and can be mailed or emailed to the address below.



U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management

Submit Comments by January 5, 2021 to:

**BLM—Malta Field Office
Attn: Field Manager
501 South 2nd St E
Malta, MT 59538**

Or Email: mrlee@blm.gov

Before including your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

Montana launches an Online Portal to Connect Hemp Buyers and Sellers

By: Stephen Dale Fox, Hemp Program Coordinator

As you may know hemp cultivation is new to the state of Montana, with the first legal crops planted being in 2017. The Department of Agriculture realizes that the hemp market in Montana is still developing and has created an online portal called Hemp Marketplace to advance the hemp industry. The Hemp Marketplace provides a platform to connect licensed sellers of hemp and hemp byproducts to hemp buyers free of charge.

It's basically an online bulletin board separated into "Hemp for Sale" and "Hemp to Buy". The listings consist of what types of products that are being offered or being sought. It also breaks down whether or not the hemp is organic and if it's been tested in a laboratory. It also classifies the hemp products into four classes based on hemp seed certification. All products sold or bought on the "Hemp Marketplace" must contain less than 0.3 percent THC.

For more information on the hemp Marketplace, visit <https://agr.mt.gov/Topics/Topics-H-N/Hemp-Marketplace>.

Source: Montana Department of Agriculture



Hemp Cultivation as a Possible Solution for the High Unemployment Rate on the Fort Belknap Indian Community

The Fort Belknap Indian Community has been approved for regulatory plans by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Since the 2018 Farm Bill, the USDA was in charge of creating a federal regulatory program that oversees and approves the policies submitted by the states and Indian tribes.

The Fort Belknap Indian Community has the opportunity to use hemp for economic growth. For the most part, Indian reservations have always had a higher unemployment rate than the rest of the Nation. Imagine being able to provide these communities with some type of assistance for this ongoing problem. Fort Belknap can now look to hemp cultivation to possibly create a surge of employment. The Fort Belknap Indian Community controls the regula-

tion of hemp cultivation which gives tribal hemp growers with a competitive advantage. Fort Belknap tribal hemp growers will not have to face many of the problems and backlash compared to non-Indian hemp cultivators in the state of Montana.



With the current Tribal Council providing so much support for hemp cultivation on the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation, the hemp program has a real chance of succeeding. Some Councilmen have played a major role in getting the hemp program established. Fort Belknap Indian community is not taking a back seat

in developing a Tribal Hemp Program. Instead they have done the exact opposite. The biggest challenge in starting a program like this is finding people willing to take a chance on the developing market.

It's Not Just Water—The Science and Importance behind Collecting Representative Water Samples

By Jeremy Walker, Environmental Specialist

A water-quality analysis and the source of water supply for the facility—these are the first two items Kiewit requests when proposing a solution for a new facility. Limited water information invites the risk of either over or under designing the water- and waste-water treatment systems for industrial water-treatment applications. Outlined below are the proper sampling methods and parameters for clients to consider when building a new facility.

Water-quality analysis begins with the collection of the water sample, defined as a quantity of water representative of the source that was collected and sent to a laboratory for analysis. While many think the analysis begins in the laboratory, it truly starts during the collection of the sample. Sample collection is critically important, and the majority of errors during water-quality analysis occur during this stage of the process.

Water sampling should always start by defining the purpose of the analysis. Sampling personnel and analytical chemists need to discuss the entire measurement process, from sample collection to final analysis. The ultimate consumer of the water quality needs to be made aware of the entire sampling process, including sample delivery and sample analysis.

All of these steps should be outlined in a water sampling and analysis Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). At a minimum, the SOP should contain the following information:

- When, where and how to collect the sample, including the standard used (i.e. Standard Methods, SW-846, etc.)
- Sampling equipment, including maintenance and calibration
- Sample containers, volumes needed and preservatives for each analyte
- Sample labeling, shipping and chain-of-custody procedures
- Sample record keeping

The SOP should be written according to the purpose of the analysis and in advance of performing field sampling. A well-considered SOP will help the client:

- Avoid misconceptions, misunderstandings and problems if there are changes in project personnel
- Offer guidelines and direction to sampling personnel
- Provide documentation for quality assurance (QA)

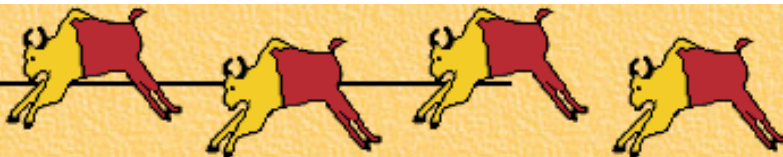
Sampling location and frequency are important in water-sampling strategy. In the case of the water source for an industrial project, the sampling site should represent the long-term supply for the facility. If temporal variability in water quality is suspected, multiple samples should be collected over a period of time to establish the variability of analytes and their maximum and minimum values.

Field sampling is the first phase where QA is required, and the uncertainties associated with this analytical step are often ignored. A badly designed sampling plan frequently leads to wrong conclusions. When designing industrial water-treatment systems, these very conclusions can delay the project's scheduled completion and add unnecessary costs that can total millions of dollars. Overall, poor sampling makes laboratory results useless. Unfortunately, in most cases of industrial project development, the sampling plan is outside the control of both the project engineer and the owner.

Kiewit encourages early involvement of the project engineer in the development of water-sampling plans. This will facilitate the design of an accurate water/waste-water treatment system at the lowest cost for the consumer.

Water sampling is extremely important for the Fort Belknap Indian Reservation for 2 big reasons the Zortman/Landusky Mines and the Winters Doctrine. Winters Doctrine is mostly pertaining to water quantity and the Zortman/Landusky mine is water quality with some emphasis on water quantity.

Information from <https://www.kiewit.com/plant-insider/environmental/its-not-just-water-science-and-importance-behind-collecting-representative-water-samples/>



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aaniih Nakoda College Nic?-Mni (Water) Center News



By Michael Kinsey | December 22, 2020

Wooheeh! The Aaniih Nakoda College Nic?-Mni Center is currently in the process of a publication called “The Checklist of Diatoms of the Middle of The Milk River.” Once approved by the Tribal Council, the article will be published in the scientific journal the *Check list: The Journal of Biodiversity*. The publication focuses on the identification of diatoms that were collected from the middle of the Milk River, from 2012-2016. The authors of article include Dan Kinsey, Liz McClain, Victor Gone, and Truan Yellow-Stone. Collection of diatoms can be used as indicators of environmental conditions depending on individuals present or not present within an assemblage, which is why the identification of these diatoms is important.

Figure 1. Picture of the Milk River



The Nic?-Mni Center staff/faculty also participated in the community wide Zoom meeting held by the Bureau of Land Management on the withdrawal of the Zorman-Landusky Mine. The BLM proposed withdrawal of 2,688.13 acres of public land in the Zortman-Landusky Mine reclamation area and accepted public comment on December 7th. Nic?-Mni Center staff also wrote comments against the recent application to MT-DEQ for an issued Exploration License on November 30th.

Looking ahead, the Nic?-Mni Center will be hosting a virtual Water Forum in April. The forum was originally planned to happen last April, but due to the ongoing pandemic the forum was cancelled. The Water Forum will present water-related issues to the community, and more information will soon come.

Lastly, the Nic?-Mni Center has been working with consult Hydrologist, James Sweirc, and a house well sampling program is being developed. The purpose of the program is to sample private wells, and the samples will then be analyzed. However, due to the ongoing pandemic, efforts have been halted. Once restrictions are lifted, the Nic?-Mni Center looks to move forward with the program.

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Emissions hit new record, put world on track for 3C warming - U.N.

By Nina Chestney

https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN28J14R?utm_campaign=Hot%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmt=102524812&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-J65xyoQGeZ5ai36ue7a3frUe3_iSVKC_dGjvBU3bQamGitDznAlWXss5ftCGx1YuFKvVJgtBwAw7wrCOS1DG0s8lbTw&utm_content=102524812&utm_source=hs_email

LONDON (Reuters) - Greenhouse gas emissions reached a new high last year, putting the world on track for an average temperature rise of 3 degrees Celsius, a U.N. report showed on Wednesday.

The report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) - the latest to suggest the world is hurtling toward extreme climate change - follows a year of sobering weather extremes, including rapid ice loss in the Arctic as well as record heat waves and wildfires in Siberia and the U.S. West.

On Monday, researchers at Europe's Copernicus Climate Change Service said last month was the hottest -ever November on record.

"The year 2020 is on course to be one of the warmest on record, while wildfires, storms and droughts continue to wreak havoc," said Inger Andersen, UNEP's Executive Director.

The annual "emissions gap" report measures the gap between anticipated emissions and those consistent with limiting the global temperature rise this century as agreed in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Under the global climate pact, nations have committed to a long-term goal of limiting the average temperature rise to below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit it even further to 1.5C.

Emissions have, however, grown by an average 1.4

percent per year since 2010, with a steeper increase of 2.6 percent last year due, partly due to a large increase in forest fires.

Total 2019 emissions of carbon dioxide equivalent (GtCO₂e) hit a new record of 59.1 gigatonnes.

This year, there has been a temporary emissions dip as economies slowed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The resulting drop in travel, industrial activity and electricity generation are likely to work out at a 7% reduction in emissions, the report said. That translates to only a 0.01C reduction in global warming by 2050.

Green investment under government stimulus packages to pull economies out of the pandemic-induced slump could cut up to 25% off emissions predicted in 2030.

Such packages could put emissions in 2030 at 44 GtCO₂e - within the range that gives a 66% chance of holding temperature rises to below 2C, but still insufficient to achieve the 1.5C goal.

The United Nations and Britain are holding an online event on Saturday to mark the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement, and governments are under pressure to come forward with tougher climate targets before the end of the year.

A growing number of countries have committed to net zero emissions by mid-century but these need to be translated into strong near-term policies and action, the UNEP report said.

"The levels of ambition in the Paris Agreement still must be roughly tripled for the 2C pathway and increased at least fivefold for the 1.5C pathway," it added.

PHOTO: Meltwater from the Laohugou No. 12 glacier, flows through the Qilian mountains, Subei Mongol autonomous County in Gansu province, China, September 27, 2020.



Trump EPA finalizes rollback making it harder to enact new public health rules

New cost-benefit requirements could minimize the way the agency calculates the benefits of curbing harmful air pollution

By Juliet Eilperin and Brady Dennis | Dec. 9, 2020 at 8:38 a.m. MST

https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2020/12/09/trump-air-pollution/?utm_campaign=Hot%20News&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=102524812&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-8FkxK9GDP1bsJKr3EbD2rRUuSvpsJsx_OtOCUsdYKznCWa-tUf3v665uwvhPIPQr1EQE_2OWEL61CBDKupS9dAN_H7qA&utm_content=102524812&utm_source=hs_email



PHOTO - The John E. Amos coal-fired power plant owned and operated by Appalachian Power in Winfield, W.Va., on Feb. 6. (Stacy Kranitz for The Washington Post)

The Trump administration finalized a rule Wednesday that could make it more difficult to enact public health protections, by changing the way the Environmental Protection Agency calculates the costs and benefits of new limits on air pollution.

The new cost-benefit requirements, which apply to all future Clean Air Act rules, instruct the agency to weigh all the economic costs of curbing an air pollutant but disregard many of the incidental benefits that arise, such as illnesses and deaths avoided by a potential regulation. In other words, if reducing emissions from power plants also saves tens of thousands of lives each year by cutting soot, those “co-benefits” should not be counted.

“This is all about transparency and conducting our work in a transparent fashion” EPA Administrator Andrew Wheeler said Wednesday, as he announced the rule during a webinar at the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank. “Our goal with this rule is to help the public better understand the why of a rule-making, in addition to the what.” He argued that the agency’s past approach “has meant inconsistent rules and a disoriented private sector.”

Wheeler said the change would not prevent the EPA from factoring in indirect benefits of new regulations in the future but that it requires the agency to be “upfront” about these calculations. “We will also re-

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Trump EPA finalizes rollback making it harder to enact new public health rules

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quire reports that distinguish between domestic and international benefits,” Wheeler added, “so that Americans can see what their regulators are doing for people here in the United States.”

The move is one of several major environmental rollbacks that the administration is pushing through before President Trump leaves office next month. Earlier this week, it rejected calls to tighten national standards for fine particle pollution, known as PM 2.5, which ranks as the country’s most widespread deadly air pollutant. The EPA also plans to finalize a rule in coming weeks that will restrict the kinds of scientific studies the agency can use in crafting public health rules.

Trump's rolled back more than 125 environmental policies. Nearly 50 more are on the way.

The EPA’s proposal has faced withering criticism from environmental advocates, who suggested it will not withstand legal challenges. The incoming administration is also likely to overturn the rule, although this would take time because there are legal procedures that must be followed to eliminate an existing regulation.

Wheeler on Wednesday dismissed criticism of the effort as misleading, saying environmental groups and some media “are ignoring what we are trying to do here and mischaracterizing this. This is all about transparency.”

Some conservative and industry groups praised the move, saying the change marked an overdue change in how the EPA shapes its regulations.

Daren Bakst, a senior research fellow in agricultural policy at Heritage’s Roe Institute for Economic Policy Studies, said the move would address the “abuses” of past administrations when it came to weighing the costs and benefits of new regulations.

In a statement, the American Chemistry Council also backed the change.

“Ensuring a clear, consistent and correct appraisal of benefits and costs in the regulatory process is a com-

monsense idea with bipartisan support,” said Karyn Schmidt, senior director of regulatory and technical affairs. “The ‘good government’ reforms included in the rule will improve decision-making as to where to allocate resources while supporting capital investment that drives economic growth.”

But the shift also sparked sharp criticism, with critics suggesting it represented a last-minute attempt to hamper future administrations.

“A lame duck Trump EPA is exiting with a legacy of lawbreaking and lying about the health benefits of clean air and climate safeguards, to hamstringing future EPAs and thwart stronger protections,” said John Walke, clean air director for the Natural Resources Defense Council. “The president’s minions know this midnight rollback will be reversed by an incoming Biden administration or the courts; so this cynical act is sheer sabotage, designed to waste resources and the time it will take to reverse it.”

In August, a collection of national health and medical organizations, including the American Lung Association and the Asthma and Allergy Foundation of America, blasted the EPA’s rationale for the changes.

“In the proposal, EPA repeatedly references comments made to the agency highlighting the need for this rule because of an assumed tendency to underestimate costs or overestimate benefits,” the groups wrote. “Nowhere in the proposal exists justifications for that claim. On the contrary, reducing emissions [has] consistently exceeded expectations.”

And Richard Revesz, who directs the New York University School of Law’s Institute for Policy Integrity, noted that the administration’s approach is “inconsistent” with existing federal guidance, which states that “in performing a cost-benefit analysis all costs and benefits should be taken into account, whether they’re direct or indirect.”

“They’re basically saying that the indirect consequences of regulation must be taken into account if they’re negative, and should be ignored if they are positive,” Revesz said in a panel discussion that the institute hosted last week. “I mean, there’s no scenario under which an approach like that is rational in any way.”

Biden makes historic pick with Haaland for Interior secretary

BY REBECCA BEITSCH - 12/17/20 02:36 PM EST

<https://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/529495-biden-names-haaland-as-interior-secretary?userid=344566>



Rep. Deb Haaland (D-N.M.) has been selected to lead the Interior Department in President-elect Joe Biden's administration, making history as the first Native American tapped for a Cabinet position.

Haaland, who has been backed by a number of progressive groups as well as tribes, would take over a sprawling, 70,000-person agency with a mandate from Biden to help deliver on his climate promises.

If confirmed by the Senate, Haaland would likely deliver a significant turnaround for an agency that has rolled back environmental and endangered species protections and expanded oil and gas drilling. Biden has pledged to bar any new oil and gas leasing on public lands — an effort likely to require action from Interior.

Haaland, a member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe, was one of the first two Native American women elected to Congress, alongside Rep. Sharice Davids (D-Kan.), and was an early backer of the Green New Deal.

Her potential nomination generated significant momentum, particularly after news that she was being vetted by the Biden team.

She would make history not only as a Cabinet secretary but as the first Native American to take the reins of an agency with significant responsibility to tribes — an area where critics say the department has often fallen short.

“It’s a mystical opportunity for this agency to do

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Biden makes historic pick with Haaland for Interior secretary

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something historic,” said Rep. Raúl Grijalva (D-Ariz.), who had initially been backed by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus for the Interior job before it threw its weight behind Haaland.

“The agency that was set up eons ago, Interior, to basically disenfranchise and colonize Indigenous America, for Deb to be secretary America will have its first Indigenous person in a Cabinet but more historic, in Interior, in the agency that was set up for that purpose. Maybe I’m naive but there are certain political scripts that are almost written for you,” he said.

But he added he didn’t want the historic nature of her selection to overshadow the experience she would bring to the job. Haaland has led the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands.

“We’re talking about a formidable candidate with a great deal of support from various constituencies,” Grijalva said of Haaland. “It would be good for the Biden administration, good for history, and it’d be good for the agency that badly needs to be repaired and reprioritized. This is a woman that has the capacity for the job.”

Biden’s pick followed news that House Democratic leadership would back the choice, even as their majority reaches its narrowest margin in modern history.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) said Wednesday she would make “an excellent choice.”

New Mexico law doesn’t require Haaland to vacate her seat until she is confirmed for a new position, at which point the state would have a maximum of 91 days to hold an election.

Haaland’s selection marks victory for the Native Americans, progressives and environmental groups that campaigned hard for the congresswoman as the Biden team also considered Sen. Tom Udall (D-N.M.) and former Interior Deputy Secretary Michael Connor, who is also Native American, for the job.

Last week NDN Collective, an indigenous rights group, Sunrise Movement, a youth climate organization, took the unusual step of asking Udall to step aside and back Haaland for the job.

Haaland was an early backer of the Green New Deal, opposes fracking, and has pushed back against the Trump administrations shrinking of monuments like Bears Ear and Grand Staircase Escalante.

“Haaland is a perfect choice — she is a fierce ally of our movement who has fought for renewable energy job creation in the House,” Sunrise said in a statement.

“With a progressive leader at the helm, we can make real progress on stopping climate change and ensure sovereignty and dignity for all native people and justice for all.”

Many Senate Democrats applauded the choice, though Haaland’s progressive backing could make her a more difficult pick to get through the Republican-led Senate.

“My friend Deb Haaland is a fighter for America’s public lands & a champion for Native communities. I’m delighted by her historic nomination to lead Interior. She’ll help our nation honor its promises, & make real change to protect our lands & waters for generations to come,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren wrote on twitter.

Other environmental groups likewise praised the choice, arguing Haaland would steadily reverse a number of Trump era decision that have expanded development of public lands.

“We now need someone at the Interior Department who can correct the mistakes of the past four years, someone whose passions for the environment run deep,” Steve Blackledge, senior director of the conservation program for Environment America, said in a statement.

“Rep. Haaland has shown a deep conviction for protecting the lands that make America, America the Beautiful.”





Burning wood this winter? Check out these 5 tips to keep your family and neighbors healthy

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEPAIAQ/bulletins/2aa4593>

Wood Smoke and Your Health

Smoke may smell good, but it's not good for you. Wood smoke consists of tiny particles that can get into your eyes and lungs, where they may cause burning eyes, runny nose, and illnesses (such as bronchitis). Tiny smoke particles can irritate your lungs, cause inflammation, and affect your immune system. Particles found in wood smoke can make asthma symptoms worse and trigger asthma attacks.

Wood smoke can also make you more prone to lung infections, likely including SARS-CoV-2, the virus that cause COVID-19. According to the CDC, people who currently have or who are recovering from COVID-19 may be at an increased risk of health effects from exposure to wood smoke due to compromised heart

and/or lung function related to COVID-19. Learn more at <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/wood-smoke-and-covid-19>

Remember, wood smoke doesn't stay in one place. Tiny smoke particles can travel far and enter your neighbor's home through open windows, vents, and tiny cracks (like those around door and window frames). As a result, smoke from your fire can affect your neighbor's health too.

What You Can Do about Wood Smoke

Whether you heat your home with wood or enjoy an occasional fire, you can keep the air inside your home and your neighbor's home healthier with these

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Burning wood this winter? Check out these 5 tips to keep your family and neighbors healthy

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best wood-burning practices and tips:

1. Save money and time. Burn only dry, seasoned wood and maintain a hot fire.
2. Have a certified technician inspect and service your appliance.
3. Keep your home healthy by upgrading to a more efficient, cleaner burning appliance (e.g., gas, air source heat pump or EPA-approved wood-burning wood stove).
4. Use a portable air cleaner in the room(s) where you spend the most time. Make sure to choose an air cleaner that's the right size and does not generate ozone.
5. Observe your local laws and burn bans. Check with your state or local air quality office or fire department to find out what rules apply in your area.

Burn Wise

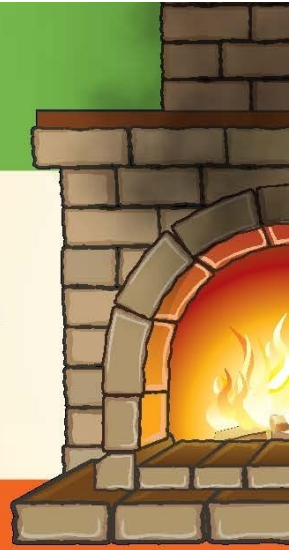
Program of U.S. EPA

WOOD SMOKE AND YOUR HEALTH

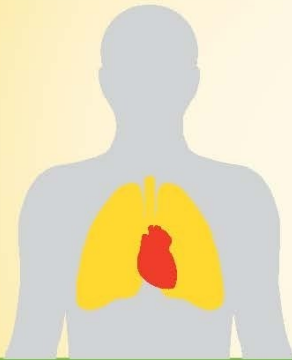
Wood smoke may smell good but it's not good for you. With a few simple steps you can help reduce wood smoke to protect your health and the air we breathe.

DID YOU KNOW?

One old, inefficient wood stove can emit as much air pollution as 5 dirty old diesel trucks.



Tiny particles in wood smoke can affect your health



HEART IMPACTS

Increases the risk of heart attack, irregular heartbeat, heart failure, stroke and early death.



LUNG IMPACTS

Triggers asthma attacks and aggravates other lung diseases and damages children's lungs.

WHO IS AT GREATER RISK?

- Older adults
- Children and teens
- People with heart or lung disease

Four easy steps to reduce wood smoke

1

Burn dry, seasoned wood that has been split, stacked, covered and stored.



2

Test wood with a moisture meter (20% moisture or less is best).



3

Use a cleaner-burning gas or wood stove.



4

Provide sufficient air to the fire; never let it smolder.



Learn more at www.epa.gov/burnwise



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