TRIBAL WASTE Journal

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Building Tribal Capacity through the National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program

- Collaborative Knowledge Sharing
- Why Reinvent the Wheel?
- Capacity Building and Self-Sufficiency, a Perfect Pair
- Peer Matching Benefits: The Mentor, Mentee, and the Environment

EPA
United States Environmental Protection Agency

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- Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa – Mentor Shannon Judd
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EPA's National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program Enhances Tribal Capacity

About the Program

To strengthen tribal capacity and develop sustainable waste management programs, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) facilitates the National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program. Evolving from several successful regional efforts, the Peer Matching Program assists in connecting participating tribes (mentors) and successful tribal waste management programs with tribes (mentees) that need assistance.

Peer matches are voluntary opportunities for tribes, tribal consortia, and Alaska Native Villages that are working on similar waste management issues to exchange experiences and practical knowledge through a mentoring program. Tribes, tribal consortia, and Alaska Native Villages can address a particular challenge, such as designing and supervising construction of a transfer station. Peer matching also supports collaboration and builds relationships among the tribes and with EPA.

"EPA can play an important role in providing technical and financial assistance for capacity building activities by facilitating information sharing between tribes to more efficiently protect human health and the environment."

Lorraine Graves, EPA Region 2

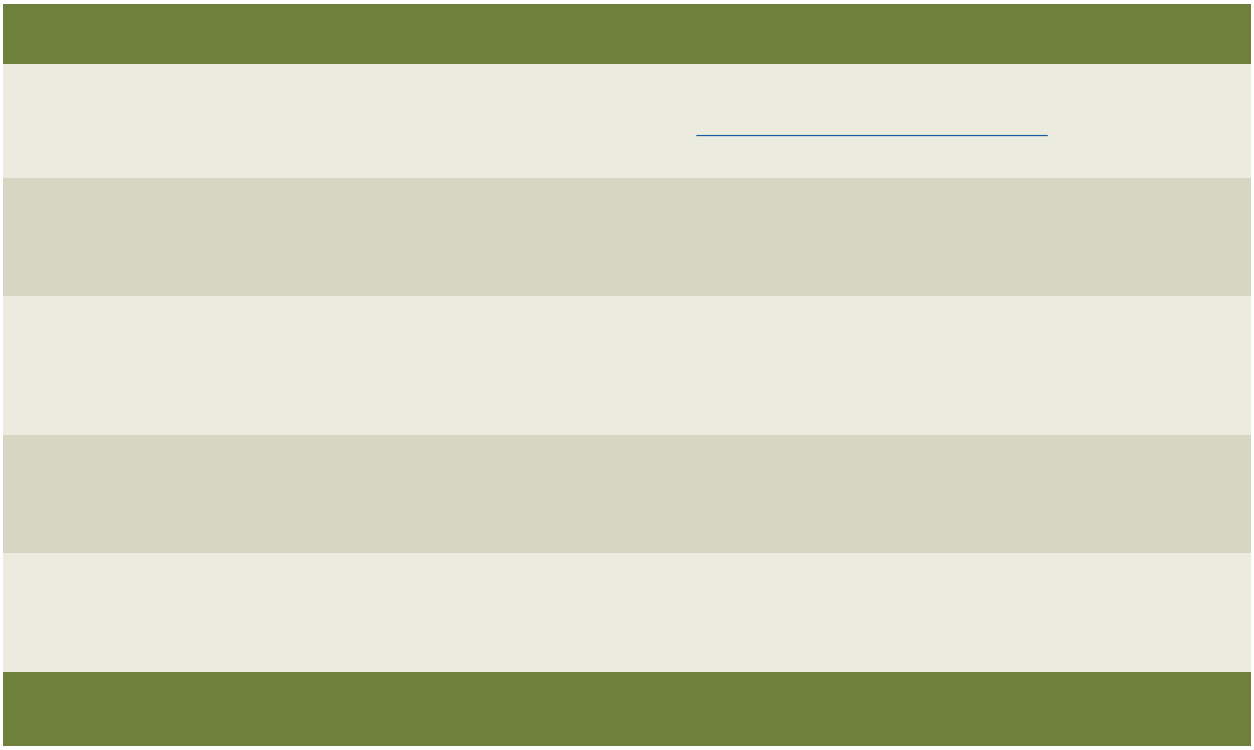
NATIONAL TRIBAL WASTE MANAGEMENT PEER MATCHING PROGRAM

Shared Responsibility for Waste Management

The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976 provided a comprehensive national program to encourage source reduction, recycling, and safe disposal of municipal waste. In addition, RCRA mandated requirements for treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste to minimize present and future risks. Throughout the early 1980s and '90s, EPA developed and refined hazardous waste regulations under RCRA.

EPA has a shared responsibility with tribal governments to support the protection and restoration of tribal lands and resources that are under tribal stewardship. Today, EPA Headquarters and regional staff focus on tribal waste activities under RCRA and provide both financial and technical assistance to tribes to develop and implement waste management programs through the development of Integrated Waste Management Plans (IWMPs).

National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program: How it Works



Roles and Responsibilities of the Mentor, Mentee, and EPA

Mentor	Mentee	EPA
• Peer mentors, or the staff from the mentor tribes, tribal consortia, or Alaska Native Villages, provide expertise and knowledge to the tribe requesting assistance. • Mentors have knowledge of a waste management process or project and can leverage their own experience to assist the tribe requesting assistance. • Mentors are volunteers who participate in the program. In some cases, mentors are recruited by EPA based on a particular need. • A mentor is not intended to take the place of a general contractor, consultant, or other position that is traditionally paid.	• Mentees have a specific waste management program need. • Mentees have identified a specific challenge, such as development of an Integrated Waste Management Plan or waste enforcement codes; construction and operation of a transfer station, recycling facility, or landfill; or implementation of best practices for pollution prevention or recycling programs. • A mentee is approaching a key decision point in the design or implementation of a waste management program solution. • Mentees may have limited funding for travel or associated costs for formal waste management program training. • Mentees anticipate that waste management projects will be completed within a one-year timeframe.	• EPA Headquarters, in collaboration with EPA regions, facilitates matches and works with the matched tribes throughout the mentoring process. • EPA facilitates communication and provides support as agreed upon by the two tribes. • EPA provides information on available funding to support the program, such as through the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP).

Sharing Knowledge Benefits Everyone:

Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force and the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

The Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF) assisted the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) with finding a solution to its solid waste management issues. An EPA grant allowed the tribes of the Haudenosaunee Nations, which includes SRMT, to travel to a series of seminars to learn more about developing an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP).

Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force

The HETF was established in 1992 by the Haudenosaunee Confederacy (also known as Iroquois or Six Nations) to assist Haudenosaunee Nations (Mohawk, Oneida, Onondaga, Cayuga, Seneca, and Tuscarora) in exercising their rights and responsibilities with regard to their environmental concerns. EPA, under the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP), provides funding to HETF to work on a variety of environmental issues. HETF serves as a vehicle for environmental information sharing with its own members, and with others. HETF is composed of delegates chosen by each Haudenosaunee Nation who are committed to identifying environmental problems in their communities.

The Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force (HETF) helps tribal members work together to promote environmental agendas. The HETF Consortium's Communication Forums provide tools for solving environmental problems.

St. Regis Mohawk Tribe

The SRMT historically discarded its waste at a community open dump operated by the town of Bombay, which caused environmental impacts. After the dump was closed, Franklin County took over the responsibility for solid waste disposal, constructed a sanitary landfill, and charged costly fees. The SRMT did not have a solid waste management service, and people in the community had to make arrangements with several nontribal haulers to have their waste and recyclables collected for fees. The cost plus the driving distance of approximately 25 miles to the nearest transfer station was not a reasonable solution, and some open dumping continued. The SRMT wanted to change this behavior, so it developed a solid waste program that was spearheaded by previous SRMT Director of Solid Waste Management, Laura Weber. The tribe received a grant of $300,000 from EPA that enabled the implementation of its solid waste program, including a recycling/reuse center.

Voluntary Seminars and Knowledge Sharing Build Confidence

During the development of the solid waste program, the SRMT implemented a series of voluntary seminars to educate tribes on specific programs. They developed the seminars based on feedback EPA received via questionnaires sent to the Six Nations asking what solid waste topics they wanted to learn about. EPA provided the Mohawk Tribe with solid waste expertise and travel funding through a grant to assist other tribal nations in attending the seminars. Lorraine Graves of EPA Region 2 office stated that one big benefit of disseminating the information at the seminars was that the tribes are more receptive to messages from other tribes and tribal members.

This peer match was initiated because of the SRMT's need to protect its land from continued environmental impacts. SRMT then transmitted its knowledge to other tribal nations. Ms. Graves stated that the peer match changed participants' approach to a "can do" spirit after the seminars. The Six Nations used EPA grant money for the development of IWMPs and the implementation of several clean-up days to include cleaning up tires, TVs, electronics, and other items.

Photo credit: Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Environment Division

The SRMT waste transfer and recycling/reuse center

> "If one is willing to take responsibility and willing to learn (mentees), there are many who are willing to share their knowledge and experience (mentors)."
>
> Les Benedict of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force

The seminars built confidence through increased knowledge and accomplishment. Applicable resources were shared among tribes, thereby reducing the time and effort that went into creating IWMPs. Garrett Smith, EPA Region 2, said this is a case where tribes helped tribes.

SRMT Transfer Station Has Positive Impacts on the Community

The SRMT waste transfer station and recycling/reuse center opened during the summer of 2001 as a result of the capacity built during the peer match program. The opening of the waste transfer station and recycling/reuse center was critical to implementing the tribe's solid waste management system, which is necessary in promoting the long-term protection of Mohawk lands while contributing to the economic and social progress of the community.

The opening of the waste transfer station and recycling/reuse center was the first step in implementing a program that provides a long-term solution to managing solid waste in a manner that is respectful of the earth and people. The SRMT Environment Division will continue to develop this program to ensure a cleaner, safer community for this generation and future generations of Mohawk people.

Three Heads Are Better Than One

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa

Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is situated along the shores of Lake Superior in Michigan. Lacking local and economically feasible waste disposal options, the KBIC needed technical assistance focused on implementing an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP) and developing a transfer station. During 2010, with EPA Region 5's assistance, the KBIC was matched with the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. These tribes had built transfer stations that are equidistant from the KBIC. It was useful for the KBIC to look at the different options because both tribes handle waste management in a slightly different way. Dolly Tong, EPA Region 5 Tribal Solid Waste and Pollution Prevention Coordinator, stated that the tribes in this close-knit region were happy to help and share their knowledge. She said that through a Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) grant, the KBIC received travel funds to visit each transfer station in person, which would not have otherwise been possible.

Collective Knowledge, Experience, Skills, and Insights Provide Solutions

The Bad River Band and the Fond du Lac Band used their experiences with the implementation of IWMPs and shared valuable tools and insight with the KBIC. The Bad River Band had been paying a private vendor to haul away recyclable materials. The vendor then sold those recyclable materials, receiving a hefty profit. The money that the tribe paid to haul away materials and the lost revenue from the value of the recyclable materials were eventually brought back to the community when the transfer station was built, providing the Bad River Band self-sufficiency and solid waste service jobs.

An initial challenge was that the KBIC was not sure what items to budget for in its IWMP. Dave D'Acquisto, Solid Waste Program Manager for the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, assisted the KBIC by providing his budget plan and access to vendor prices to Char Spruce, KBIC Environmental Specialist. Mr. D'Acquisto recommends buying your own equipment such as compactors and not renting from private vendors; "It makes more economic sense," he says.

Mr. D'Acquisto also recommends getting the tribal council involved; have them specifically approve development of IWMP and ordinances. It is very important that the ordinances be enforced, thereby assisting tribes in cleaning up and keeping their land clean.

Mr. D'Acquisto said that getting the tribal council involved and on-board is a critical foundation. Educating the council members will help them make informed decisions. Likewise, increasing the tribe's awareness of solid waste issues and the financial benefits of a self-sustaining waste management system (without a private vendor involved) will help the council and tribal members see the benefits more clearly.

Working toward self-sufficiency by getting the third-party vendor off the reservation instead of letting that firm take a cut of the money was Mr. D'Acquisto's main goal. Mr. D'Acquisto says that if you can make a profit from waste management, why wouldn't you? Not only are you taking care of your own community's needs and protecting the environment, you can also generate income for the community.

Shannon Judd of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe mentored the KBIC by conducting document reviews, participating in all calls, providing input on the IWMP process, and assisting with site tours. In addition, bringing the KBIC to see the Carlton County transfer station helped to stimulate ideas. Ms. Judd said the staff at the county transfer station offered their expertise and special insights. Ms. Judd highly recommends visiting existing sites and meeting the people working on the sites. She says that site visits help the mentor see the challenges of the tribe. For the mentee, it is highly beneficial to see the layouts of different transfer stations. The staff involved are always happy to help, especially if they have been through the same challenge themselves. "We don't want [the KBIC] to have to reinvent the wheel," said Ms. Judd. She said it felt like "an honor" to be contacted, help on a project, and make it a little easier for someone else. "I feel that mentoring is personally rewarding," she said.

Planning for an Integrated Waste Management Plan

Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network and the Makah Tribe

Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network

The Tribal Solid Waste Advisory Network (TSWAN) was formed in 1997 in an effort to address solid waste management and environmental issues in Indian Country by transferring and sharing knowledge among tribes. TSWAN is currently a nonprofit organization of 34 federally recognized Tribes and other tribal consortia throughout Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Alaska. TSWAN started because it seemed that tribes were always "reinventing the wheel," says Ms. Kami Snowden, Executive Director of TSWAN. She says that one area in which tribes benefit from shared knowledge is developing an Integrated Waste Management Plan (IWMP). Through an EPA grant, TSWAN built a template and a checklist to help tribes draft their own IWMP. This gave tribes a way to tailor their IWMP to their needs. Another such template that TSWAN developed is for an Environmental Sustainability Plan. This template helps tribes sustain their IWMP after it is implemented. Both of these templates help answer pertinent questions such as, "How ready are you to implement and sustain an IWMP?" Even though TSWAN was developed by Pacific Northwest tribes it also helps tribes nationally, not just in EPA Region 10. Ms. Snowden says the bottom line is that the templates assist tribes in conducting the planning process for the IWMP internally without having to spend money on consultants.

A great example of peer matching is the collaboration among the Makah, Colville, and Umatilla Tribes. The Makah Tribe, located on the remote northwest tip of the Olympic Peninsula at Neah Bay, Washington, benefited from expertise provided by the Colville Tribe and the Umatilla Tribe, both of which are in the Pacific Northwest. The Colville Tribe had previously assisted the Umatilla Tribe, and then joined forces to assist the Makah Tribe. "It was like a waterfall effect," says Ms. Snowden of TSWAN. When the Makah Tribe needed a transfer station, the Colville and Umatilla Tribes communicated this need to their respective councils and asked for approval to share their resources. The Umatilla Tribe offered the engineering plans for its transfer station, and the Colville Tribe provided experienced construction workers. The Makah Tribe retrofitted the plans to conform to the specific conditions on its site "and saved $20,000," says Steve Pendleton, Environmental Program Manager with the Makah Tribe.

Makah Tribe Collaborated with Federal and Local Governments on a New Transfer Station

The Makah Tribe, the U.S. Air Force, Indian Health Service (IHS), Cape Flattery's School District, the U.S. Coast Guard, and residents from neighboring communities all used the Warmhouse Beach open dump, located approximately three miles northwest of Neah Bay in Clallam County, WA to dispose of trash. The dump received municipal solid and hazardous wastes from the early 1970s until 2012 and was the tribe's only option for disposing of its waste. The dump had to be closed, but a new solid waste transfer station needed to be opened first. (The open dump is now a Superfund site.) The Makah Reservation is small and remote, and figuring out the location of the transfer station within the reservation without impacting coastal lands posed an environmental issue.

Financial assistance for the planning phase came from EPA and IHS. The Makah Tribe also secured funding from U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development to complete the design, prepare construction drawings and specifications, and construct the facility. In 2012, the Makah Tribe, after much determination and problem solving, opened a solid waste transfer station. Mr. Pendleton indicated that the Makah Tribe needed a closed system to protect ground and surface water, and thanks to the experience and assistance from the Umatilla tribe, "we tweaked their plans to fit our needs."

With the assistance of TSWAN's Pacific Northwest tribal alliance and with the Colville and Umatilla Tribes stepping up to help, the Makah Tribe was able to conquer a tough issue and is continuing today with its quest to protect the local Puget Sound environment. In addition, the IWMP templates and checklists developed by TSWAN give the tribes the resources needed to save time and money. Mr. Pendleton says that this peer match assisted them, and "Now that we are where we are, we are the mentor! Now tribes are calling us, and we are helping them. When we meet at TSWAN folks are asking us for help ,and others that are not TSWAN members are coming and wanting to join."

> "There was definitely a willingness to share, and when the tribes get together the value of the face-to-face interactions is priceless."
>
> Kami Snowden of TSWAN

The Makah Tribe's Commitment to Going Green

The Makah Tribe took it a step further and committed to green practices and sustainable construction and operation by avoiding wetlands, choosing a previously disturbed site, and reusing portions of an old shop building for the new waste facility. Other sustainable practices include rainwater harvesting; use of natural stormwater controls; and energy conservation; as well as diversion of household hazardous waste, reusable materials, recyclable materials, appliances, and junk vehicles. Mr. Pendleton says, "This is not just about the development of a transfer station; it is bigger than that. Outreach and education in communities is a huge part of any solid waste program. We are reaching out to the community schools to give the kids an understanding of how environmental stewardship works in the community."

A Rewarding Endeavor for EPA and Tribal Representatives

All parties involved in the peer matching activities have experienced the rewarding feeling that comes from helping others and seeing them succeed.

Within EPA Region 2 Tribal Waste Program, Lorraine Graves and Garrett Smith have been supporting tribal peer matching for years. Ms. Graves stated, "when you witness the true spirit of wanting to help – that's the reward. It is a spirit of cooperation and competitiveness. If they can do it, so can we!" She also stated that EPA is charged with increasing capacity building among tribes. "If you can assist by promoting self-determination, through increased knowledge, the tribes in turn have a better understanding and are very interested in solving their own waste problems." Mr. Smith indicated that the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) was committed to develop a solid waste program and EPA assisted the SRMT to determine the components of their program. This helped the tribe to obtain a grant from EPA to develop a solid waste program, and construct a waste transfer station. "They are very ambitious, enterprising people, always looking at new materials that have the ability to be recycled and always looking for new frontiers," he said.

The Value of Giving and Receiving

"Peer matching is something that we as native people have been doing for centuries. This is not a new thing. We have been sharing and trading ideas along with other natural resources for a very long time.This comes ***naturally*** *for us. It's been a way of life for us since time inmemorial."*

Steve Pendleton
(Makah Tribe)

"To find a tribe who is experiencing success and is able to share it with another tribe, culturally—this is highly beneficial. Tribal entities have a cultural commonality."

Les Benedict
(SRMT)

"Peer matching can be a productive, cost-effective, culturally relevant method of providing technical assistance on a wide range of waste-related topics."

Char Spruce
(Keweenaw Bay Indian Community)

Peer Mentors Look to Pay-It-Forward

A common theme throughout the peer matching case studies is the sharing of knowledge and the positive experience of both the mentors and the mentees, during and after the peer match. The relationship between the mentor and mentee is focused on doing something solely to benefit others, like the pay-it-forward concept. As an extension of this concept, mentees have found that if you gain solid waste management knowledge from someone, it makes sharing this knowledge a lot easier.

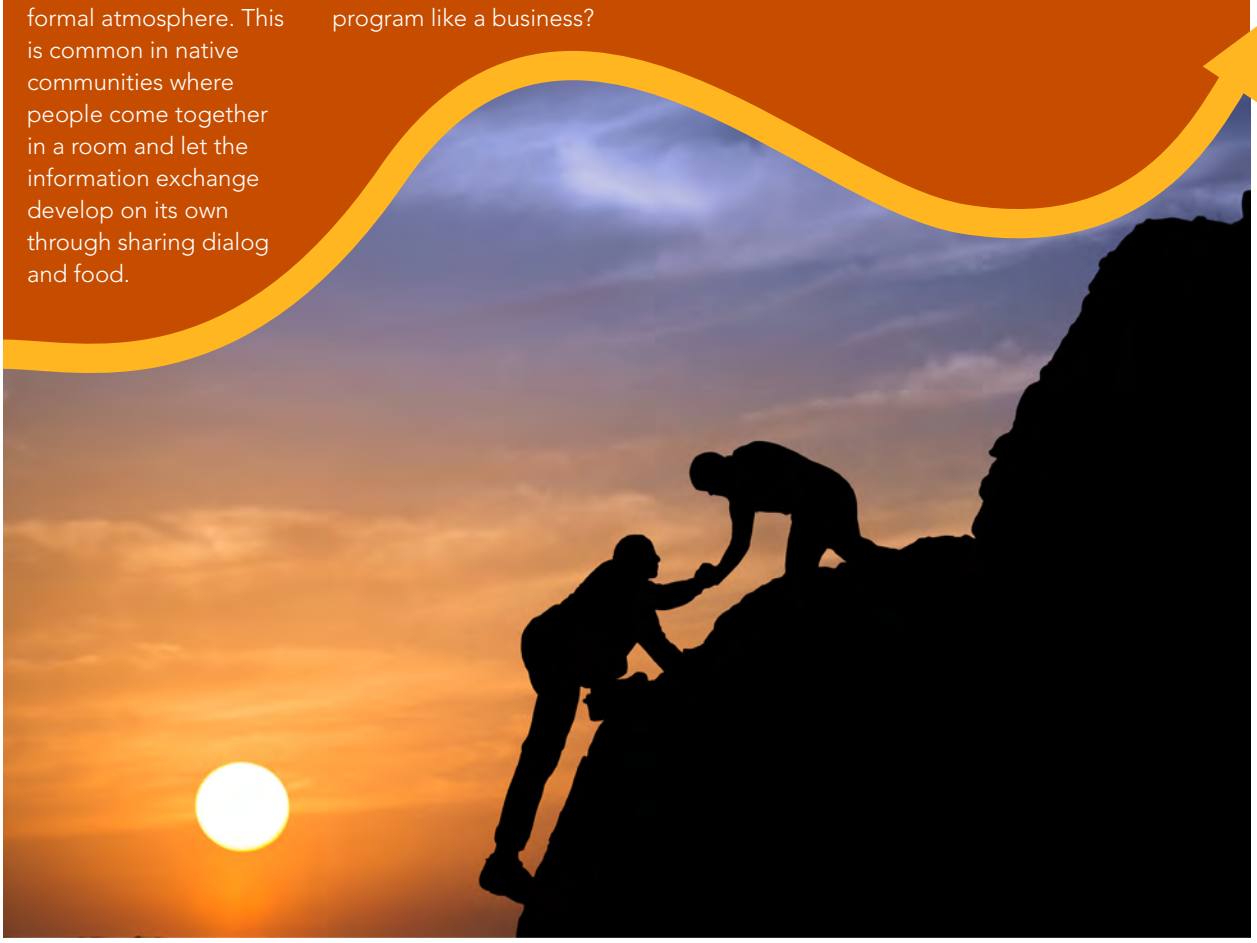
There is a cultural commonality among native cultures in that they highly value their role as stewards of natural resources. Fulfillment of this role, however, is often constrained by a lack of resources and technical capability. Capacity building and collaboration through peer matching strengthens tribes' ability to define problems and identify and implement waste management solutions, and is an important ingredient for supporting environmental stewardship.

Les Benedict of the St. Regis Mohawk Tribe and the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force said that the Mohawk Tribe has a willingness to learn, take responsibility, and share information. He also stated that information exchange seems to flow more easily in a less formal atmosphere. This is common in native communities where people come together in a room and let the information exchange develop on its own through sharing dialog and food.

Dave D'Acquisto, Solid Waste Program Manager for the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, said—it is better to give than to receive; that is what our people do. How can we help each other to rise above, go with the change, and conduct a solid waste management program like a business?

Shannon Judd of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe said that it is a great opportunity to share in different situations – it's nice to work with someone who has gone through it, when the situation is relevant to what you are trying to do.

Kami Snowden, Executive Director of TSWAN, an alliance whose primary goal is to share technical expertise, information, and opportunities with one another, stated that in her experiences in assisting the Umatilla Tribe there was definitely a willingness to share.



Peer Matches Improve Waste Management and Save Money

"Let us put our minds together and see what life we can make for our children."

Sitting Bull

Self-Sufficiency

Being involved in a peer match can assist a tribe in becoming self-sufficient. Self-sufficiency involves more than cleaning up tribal lands, protecting Mother Earth, and managing waste. It also involves harnessing the potential to generate income by implementing different waste programs. Once Dave D'Acquisto, Solid Waste Program Manager for the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Tribe, was able to eliminate the third-party vendor that was hauling away and selling the tribe's recyclable materials, a $60,000 value, the Bad River Tribe was able to receive this profit. Now the tribe has its own sustainable solid waste and recycling program in place and has expanded the program to include household hazardous waste and dumpster services.

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) previously had a contract hauler that was charging a flat fee per container, whether full or not. However, if the container exceeded the waste limit, the cost of this was significant. This factor, along with other environmental considerations mentioned earlier, were reason enough for the SRMT to become self-sufficient. The SRMT recycling program has expanded in the last three years to include electronic waste. Today, the solid waste program includes recycling and reusing auto tires, scrap metal, and wood chips generated by community projects, and the SRMT is working on a textile recycling program and composting. In addition, there is an exchange program for reuse of household products. The SRMT program is very successful and is proud to have a high profile within the community.

Building Competence and Confidence

Finally, what is evident in all of the experiences shared by the various organizations and tribal members, both mentors and mentees, is the concept that with knowledge and accomplishment comes competence. With that competence also comes confidence to take on additional challenges. There is an abundance of resources readily available to help spread knowledge, both online and in the minds of those willing and eager to share.

Working Together for the Common Good

When people, collectively, work toward a common goal, such as developing a sustainable waste management program, the strength of the group's resources, knowledge, and efforts combined are more powerful than one lone person trying to take on the task by himself or herself.

Another common goal is investing in the preservation of tribal lands for generations to come. By increasing tribal capacity and establishing a waste management system, tribes gain control over their waste management, empowering them to protect human health and the environment. By taking this goal a step further and incorporating financial self-sufficiency, the outcome can be a successful, sustainable waste management program.

The types of knowledge and resources shared among tribes and presented in this Tribal Waste Journal are very diverse, from tangible plans to moral support. Each case study discusses the waste management issues faced by mentees and the various ways in which the mentors helped. In the case studies, one group brought labor from experienced construction workers while another shared its financial experience. Other resources offered were a feasibility study; engineering drawings; checklists; educational outreach; and proven techniques for making presentations. Mentors also helped with the development of an IWMP; development of solid waste enforcement codes; development of recycling programs; and other waste management efforts. With this collective knowledge and experience, tribes can overcome environmental challenges by working collaboratively to build tribal capacity and sustainable waste management programs through the National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program.

Resources for Building Sustainable Tribal Waste Management Programs

National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program

https://www.epa.gov/tribal-lands/forms/national-tribal-waste-management-peer-matching-program

This website provides additional information on the National Tribal Waste Management Peer Matching Program, including information on funding, a participation request form, a factsheet, and other program information.

Cleaning Up, Protecting and Preserving Tribal Lands

https://www.epa.gov/tribal-lands

This website will provide you with the resources to assist in the prevention and cleanup of waste on tribal lands. This includes information on waste management codes and ordinances; developing an Integrated Waste Management Plan; tribal partnership groups that assist in building stronger partnerships between resource agencies and tribes; and grants on various environmental protection topics.

EPA Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP)

https://www.epa.gov/tribal/indian-environmental-general-assistance-program-gap

GAP grants assist federally recognized tribes and tribal consortia in planning, developing, and establishing solid and hazardous waste management programs on tribal lands.

Tribal Pollution Prevention Network

http://tribalp2.org/

The major objective of the national Tribal Pollution Prevention Network (Tribal P2) is to share information and identify solutions to address environmental issues affecting the tribal nations using pollution prevention methodologies. Tribal P2 consists of environmental professionals from tribal entities; local, state and federal agencies; academia; and non-profit organizations around the nation. Their mission is to work collaboratively with tribes throughout the United States in reducing the environmental and health risks associated with the generation of waste on tribal lands. Membership in the Network now stands at more than 300 individual participants, with more than 100 tribes participating.

Tribal Partnership Groups

https://www.epa.gov/tribal/tribal-partnership-groups

Tribal partnership groups allow tribes to exchange information through regional and national working groups, tribal consortia, and focused committees. There are numerous partnership groups, including ones that focus on particular environmental topics or broader issues such as communication or partnership strengthening.

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP)

http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/Home/

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) at Northern Arizona University has fiduciary responsibility for several partnerships between EPA and tribes. ITEP's mission is to strengthen tribal capacity through education, research, partnerships and policy-based services. ITEP accomplishes its mission through several programs, including the Tribal Solid Waste Education and Assistance Program.

Future Capacity Builders!

Activities for Kids

The 3Rs. Have you heard of them?

The 3Rs refer to the terms often used when talking about waste: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Reducing is cutting back on the amount of trash we make, reusing is finding a new way to use items so that we don't throw them out, and recycling is using trash to make new goods.

After we throw trash away, we don't have to worry about it, right? Wrong! If you think about how much trash you throw out each day and then multiply that times seven billion people on the planet… that's a lot of trash! Using the 3Rs will help reduce the amount of trash we throw away and help our communities. By Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling we can preserve our environment and save energy.

Learn more at www.epa.gov/recycle.

Composting!

Reducing wasted food by composting, from uneaten leftovers to spoiled produce, can help reduce the amount of waste that winds up in our landfills. Compost is a mixture of decomposing organic matter (e.g., food waste, leaves, and lawn clippings) used to improve the physical properties of the soil, such as texture and aeration. Composting at home is easy!

Composting requires three basic ingredients:

Browns - This includes materials such as dead leaves, branches, and twigs.

Greens - This includes materials such as grass clippings, vegetable waste, fruit scraps, and coffee grounds.

Water - Having the right amount of water, greens, and browns is important for compost development.

Learn more at www.epa.gov/recycle/composting-home.

VERMICOMPOST!
Did you know that worms can help compost?

By feeding red worms your fruit and vegetable scraps or yard waste, they create nutrient-rich fertilizer!

How Can YOU Help to Protect the Environment?

- Be a role model and reduce, reuse, recycle!
- Volunteer for litter pick up events and ask your friends to join you!
- Join an environmental organization, such as a club at your school or a local conservation group.

Try the matching game below to see how well you know your 3Rs and composting!

Waste Management Matching Game

When you can, it's best to avoid having waste in the first place. But, when you do have something to get rid of, be sure to make the best choice for the planet. Draw a line (or lines) from the items pictured below to the best ways to dispose of them.

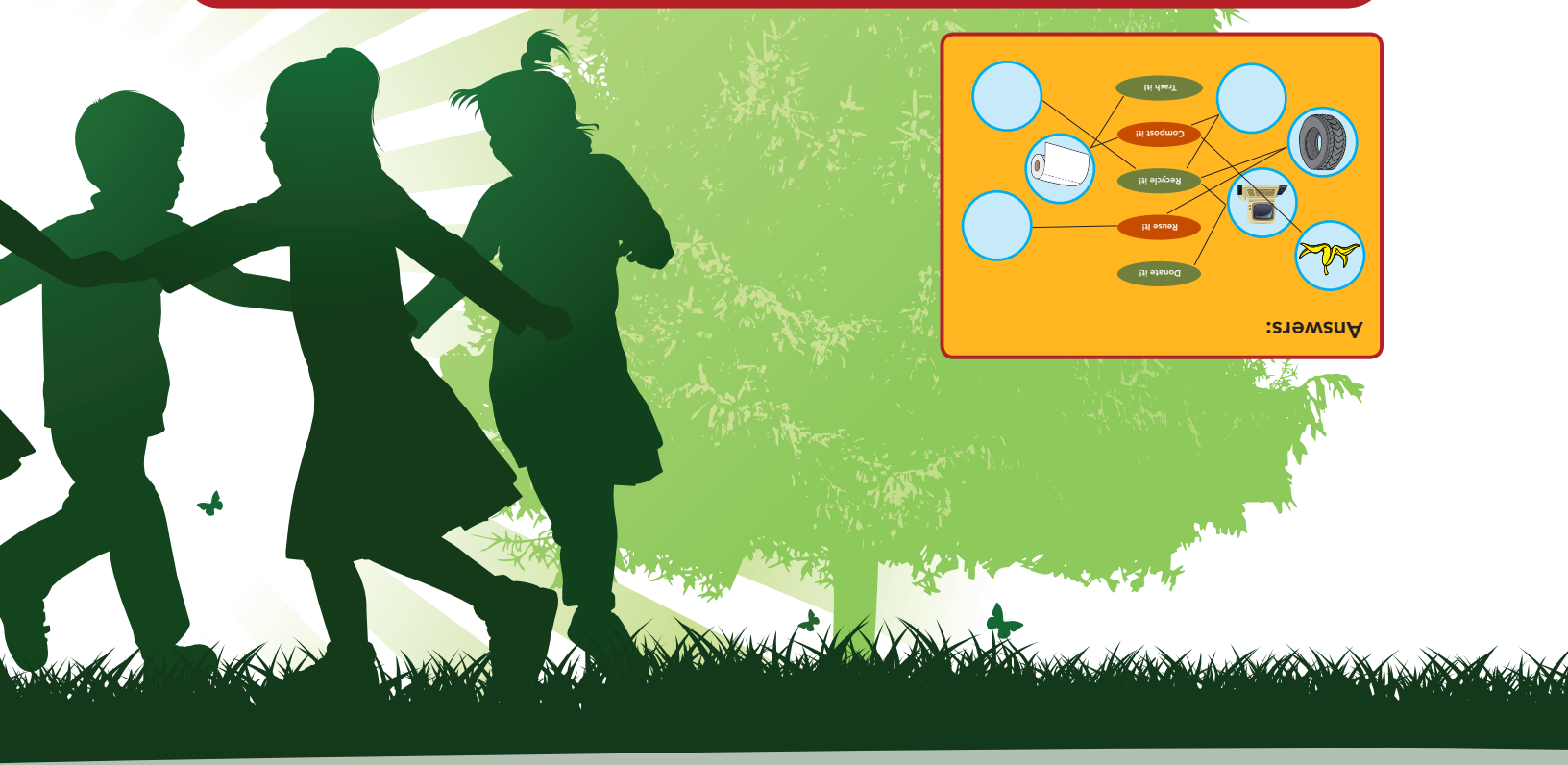
Donate it!

Reuse It!

Recycle it!

Compost it!

Trash it!



Answers:

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