

**Tribal Infrastructure Task Force (ITF) Meeting Summary  
September 18, 2014, 1:00 PM – 2:30 PM (Eastern)**

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Andrew Baca	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) American Indian Environmental Office
Brian Bennon	Intertribal Council of Arizona
Marta Berg	Region 9 Tribal Caucus
Mike Black	U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Mark Calkins	Indian Health Services (IHS)
Dave Clark	Rural Community Assistance Partnership
David Conrad	U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
Sheila Frace	EPA Office of Water (OW), Office of Wastewater Management (OWM)
Mimi Guernica	EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery
David Harvey	IHS
Jennifer Hughes	Representative of Mni Wiconi Water Supply Project
Rosemarie Kelley	EPA Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance
Kellie Kubena	EPA OW, OWM
Darrell Larush	US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Facility
Apple Loveless	EPA OW, OWM
Krista Moravec	Horsley Witten Group
Ken Norton	National Tribal Water Council
Jacki Ponti-Lazaruk	US Department of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA-RD)
Carol Rogers	IHS, Division of Sanitation Facilities
Nicole Sager	Yurok Tribe Planning Department
Nicole Schindler	EPA OW, Office of Ground Water and Drinking Water
Janice Simms	EPA Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response
Ben Shuman	U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utility Service
Mike Smith	US Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Pilar Thomas	DOE Office of Indian Energy
Stephanie von Feck	EPA OW, OWM
Dennis Wagner	EPA Region 10, Alaska Operations Office
Michaëlle Wilson	EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery, Federal, State and Tribal Programs
Felicia Wright	EPA OW

**A. WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW**

Sheila Frace opened the meeting and noted that Matt Richardson was not with them today because his wife was having twins. Before introductions she wanted to acknowledge personnel shifts in the federal family. Ron Ferguson retired from Indian Health Services (IHS). Dana Baer

covered for a couple of months then subsequently retired. The new director is Mark Calkins, who is on the call today. He has a lot of experience in the field, and will bring a wealth of experience to ITF.

In addition, as work has started to intersect more with solid waste issues, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has been brought in. Two senior executives are here from DOE today: David Conrad, director of the Tribal and Intergovernmental Affairs Office; and Pilar Thomas, Deputy Director of the Office Indian Energy Policy and Programs. While not on the agenda, they were asked to share a few words on DOE efforts related to tribes.

Mark Calkins introduced himself. He started at IHS in 1991 in the Homes and Appeals in Fresno, California. He then transferred to the Sacramento District Office and spent eight years in California. In 1999, he transferred to the Tucson area as a senior field engineer then later into a consultant position. He spent seven years in Tucson then went to the Aberdeen and Great Plains area as the Sanitation Facilities Construction director in 2006 where he has been since.

David Conrad from the DOE introduced himself. Prior to DOE, he was director of Intergovernmental Affairs for the Osage Nation in Oklahoma, which is his tribe, and then Executive Director for the National Tribal Environmental Council in Albuquerque and Tribal Liaison for the City of Seattle. He also served with the Nez Perce Tribe in their nuclear waste clean-up efforts.

Sheila thanked everyone for joining in. It has been a while since the last full call. She provided a brief recap from that meeting, which was a very worthwhile call. They talked about a survey of tribal representatives relative to participation, what they are getting out of the partnership, and how to move forward. They also talked about a variety of efforts underway directed towards sustainability, operations and maintenance (O&M), and how they keep the water & sanitation systems operating. She thought it was a very informative and productive discussion. Many good connections were made.

Sheila then went over the agenda and noted that they would make one addition.

- David Harvey will provide an update on the O&M workgroup.
- Over the past year and a half, there has been a greater involvement in solid waste in terms of presentations and adding discussion. David will also talk about the new solid waste subgroup.
- Sheila and Jacki Ponti-Lazaruk will talk about discussions within the federal family and their strategy and future activities moving forward. There will be an opportunity for the DOE partners to briefly discuss their activities on tribal lands. They can be added to the next ITF agenda for a more in-depth discussion.
- Finally, there will be time for discussion to hear what participants have on their minds, any comments, and anything they would like to discuss during the next meeting.

Sheila asked if other topics should be added.

Brian Bennon commented that the Intertribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) would like to bring to the group's attention a resolution recently passed by the National Congress of American Indians relating to capacity development. Earlier this year it passed resolution ANC 14052, titled Support for Sustained Federal Funding for Tribal Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Programs and Funding Parity with State Operator Certification Programs. It is calling on the federal government to recognize the need for sustained funding for EPA-approved tribal operator certification programs. It dovetails nicely into the O&M report that was sent out with the meeting invitation. Is there a way to forward it to everyone?

Sheila thanked Brian, and asked him to please send the documents to Kellie Kubena – she will then share it with everyone.

## **B. ITF O&M WORKGROUP UPDATE**

David Harvey reported on the O&M workgroup efforts. They are at a milestone moment. After two years they have completed a report with recommendations on how to complete an assessment of O&M costs in tribal lands. The report was attached to today's meeting invitation as well as a factsheet. Initially, they have been talking about increasing access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation and the barriers to achieving those goals. One of the prime barriers identified by the group is the need for O&M funding including support for tribal utility capacity. The group has also talked about appropriate O&M capital for water infrastructure to ensure that the facilities last through their design life, and provide public health protection over the longest period possible.

The group is also aware that support for O&M work is underfunded. In order to understand the level of underfunding, a proposal was developed to identify how to collect data on a national scale. This information is described in the report. They hope the outcomes of this effort can be used to improve the targeting of capital infrastructure funding and program resources, and to increase awareness of tribal leaders and communities about the connection between O&M costs and capital infrastructure. If completed, the work will hopefully enrich the discussion regarding the delivery structure of current federal funding of capital infrastructure programs. The proposal describes in detail how the effort would happen. It would necessitate EPA, IHS, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, and the State of Alaska, as well as some contractor support. There will be some screening tools. They are currently assessing the need to complete an information collection rule request for completion of the survey. They are also looking for support from federal agencies to contract the services that need to be completed by contractors. There has been strong support for collecting the information described in the report, but efforts are currently still in the discussion phase.

After ITF members have read the report, it would be helpful to receive questions and comments, which can be sent to David or Kellie. At this time, modifications could still be made to the approach.

Brian Bennon commented that the ITCA has not yet had a chance to read the document, but he was sure they would have comments. It appears that an additional element is needed for the analysis to include the funding needs for tribal operator certification endeavors under the

National Tribal Operator Drinking Water Certification Program. It looks like the proposed method is to obtain information through surveys, using a random selection of tribal utilities, but he was not sure if this particular concern of theirs would be captured in that type of method.

David responded that he was probably correct, but a result of the findings could show that insufficient O&M support is provided by utilities, which could then be related to a need for continued certification. While the outputs would not directly get at what he is requesting, a quick connection and a case made for O&M support could be made.

Brian also commented that tribal utility government typically follow two different models. One model is through the independent business type models where rate structures are available, and in the other model, tribal utilities are part of the tribal government itself, and funding comes from the general fund. He is not sure how a survey of this nature could capture that difference and be able to judge a tribal utility that is using one model against another. In the eyes of an engineer from either IHS or the federal government, one utility may be viewed as adequately funded whereas another utility may not meet the federal government's model of governance. Is that being covered in this analysis?

David responded that no presumed model of governance will be incorporated into the approach. He understands Brian's point. This group is aware that models of governance that are independent or are separate from a tribal council are more sustainable and have a better ability to provide good O&M. The proposed survey is not designed to be able to sample at a sufficiently precise level to make the distinction because it would be much too resource-intensive to collect the data. They hope to be able to identify organizations that are well run, contact them to discuss their budgets and how they are set up. They will be able to produce factsheets about the benefits of organizational structures as a result of this work, but they are not going to misrepresent it by stating that one is better than the other from a statistical standpoint.

Brian hopes that the surveys will recognize that utility governance is a need of support for capacity building, but he is not sure if that will occur.

David responded that the ITF recognizes the issue through the ITF Commonalities document on the website. It identifies commonalities of successful utilities, and that is one of the higher bullet items on the list. Overall in these discussions, it is recognized. This effort is not going right at that question. This is not a new issue and it has been discussed already. They will look for other avenues to promote it, but it may not occur as part of the survey.

Marta Berg noted that in the proposed Phase I, there is a reference to adequately funded benchmark utilities. Do they have a definition of those? How is the proposal intending to go about identifying them?

David responded that there are no adequately funded benchmarks available at this time. They have completed the literature review and had many discussions. They have to start somewhere. They are always talking about the need for O&M and the lack of O&M, but discussions have occurred in the abstract, with no numbers. The best approach that they could devise, and they are open to other suggestions, is through a prescreening instrument, which is included in the

appendix of the report. The prescreening instrument will be sent to the federal government and technical assistance providers to tribal organizations. They would ask whether these systems are in compliance with the regulations, and whether these utilities have a rate structure and budgets to be able to perform O&M. When they get that information back, they will go out to talk to those utilities either directly or through a contractor and gather additional information about their capacity and O&M. Based on that, they will have a picture of what they believe will be the gold standard. Any time someone is named to the gold standard, someone will question that. That will be the part of the study that is going to be the most difficult to get at.

Marta followed up by saying that if no utilities are “adequately funded,” the results of the study should not produce a definition of need that is based on less than what is really required to be adequately funded. If the most sustainable or most successful among the group are still lacking in some areas, she would like to see that recognized. The goal is not to identify the needs to bring everyone up to a less than gold standard. It would be to identify what is needed to bring everyone up to the gold standard.

Dave responded that he understands her concern and they could report on the nuance and say these are the standards based on the systems that were deemed the best performers. They would choose their language carefully.

Marta added that another step could potentially be identified to take the better performing utilities, and identify what it would take to get them to the gold standard, if “gold standard” is the appropriate term. The intent would be to capture need and to achieve the goals to ensure the delivery of safe drinking water and longevity of the systems. She wants to make sure that resource amounts and types are identified to achieve that standard, even if the benchmark tribes are not quite there. When will input on the proposal be due to EPA?

David responded that their input is welcome now until they find the funds. He anticipates it will be another 30 days until they try to move anything forward, so participants should provide comments by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

Marta asked if she could share this with the Region 9 Tribal Caucus.

David responded yes.

Marta said she would like to see if there is any tribal input on this and without Linda Reeves, she does not know if there are any Region 9 drinking water people participating, but would like to check in with them. They always have good comments.

David responded that the contractor used to develop the report was the same one EPA used to do the infrastructure needs assessment for tribal drinking water.

Pilar Thomas asked if there was a climate change component and if resiliency measures are a part of the sustainability question. Sheila responded that where that has come up in prior discussions is in the selection of appropriate infrastructure in the first place, less so than when the infrastructure is in place.

Pilar also asked a question about power outages. When the reservation loses power, how does the utility keep the water system running?

David commented that sustainability and power outages are part of the appropriate infrastructure discussion. For this, they are under the assumption that they have the appropriate infrastructure. They may find out that they do not, and they could note that as part of the findings in the report. Most of the information will be gathered through information that exists at EPA from sanitary surveys that are required through primacy of drinking water systems. Also, IHS has information on the infrastructure that they built for those systems, so they will pre-populate the survey with the infrastructure already in place. There may be some budget information to be verified with the tribe. The tribe may identify that they need a generator because the power goes out several times a week. They probably would already know that, but if they did not, they could note that the appropriate infrastructure is not available. Again, the survey was not designed to answer that question statistically, but it could be an output to say that they need to look at this further.

### **C. NEW SOLID WASTE SUBGROUP STATUS AND NEXT STEPS**

David Harvey reported on the new solid waste subgroup (“ITF Waste Program Sub-Workgroup”) status and next steps. A letter (dated August 28, 2014) was sent to tribal leaders and housing directors with the seals from the five departments and agencies on the ITF soliciting tribal involvement in a solid waste subgroup. In 2013 when the memorandum was redrafted and signed, solid waste was incorporated into the ITF. It has always been part of the IHS Sanitary Facilities Construction Program. Many of the management and sustainability aspects of wastewater and drinking water systems apply equally and directly to solid waste management, but there are some behavioral changes that make solid waste management unique.

Solid waste is a challenge because there are limited resources to address those challenges. They hope to come together and identify how to make the tribal communities free from solid waste issues to the greatest extent possible. They hope to be able to develop some strategies to engage with tribal communities to promote sustainable waste management practices. About 22 people have expressed interest in participating, and more will likely join. There were a couple of IHS staff, he and Carol Rogers from headquarters, and felt they would like to have people from the field who are actually working on the issue. Marta will help with some of the outreach. The group will be fairly large, and will have to have some work teams. If participants are interested and feel like they have something to contribute, they should email the address in the letter by the end of this month: [tribalITF@epa.gov](mailto:tribalITF@epa.gov). The first call will be held in mid-October. That call will provide an opportunity to make a statement about their interest and hopes for the group. Dave will propose a way to divide work. They will likely start out making sure everyone understands the action plan. Dave asked if there were any questions.

Marta commented that their next Region 9 Regional Tribal Operation Committee meeting and conference will be taking place the week of October 14<sup>th</sup>. Most of the tribes and EPA and other agencies from that area are going to be in Sacramento and not available for a call.

Michaëlle Wilson from the EPA Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery wished to notify participants about something that *may* be discussed at the White House Council on Native American Affairs scheduled for September 30<sup>th</sup>. The EPA Assistant Administrator is interested in having the White House Council talk about waste management issues. He will be meeting with their Administrator to discuss this with her and may decide to raise it, or address it in some other way. However, since this is the last time they will be together before that meeting, she wanted to mention it. She will share any additional information she gets.

Sheila commented that given the solid waste discussion, their guests from DOE may add a new meeting to their calendars. She asked them to comment on their future activities.

Pilar Thomas thanked everyone for inviting them. She is the Acting Director at the Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs. Their primary responsibility is to work with tribes and Alaska Native Villages and corporations on energy development. The intersection between energy and infrastructure is obvious. They have become interested in the discussion around tribal infrastructure issues, especially water systems, telecommunication systems, and other critical infrastructure. The DOE as a whole has a pretty high profile to play in the President's climate action plan and a lot of that around climate change impacts and resiliency. They are beginning to conduct studies around climate change impacts and tribal vulnerabilities to climate change. They will be looking for support of energy systems in general.

They are all familiar with some of the tribal challenges, given their remote and generally rural location. With energy reliability and energy security, many tribes are at the end of the power line or on co-op systems that are not necessarily well maintained, so their access to reliable energy can be a challenge. With extreme weather, and most recently the extreme winter weather in The Plains when three or four tribes lost power for three to four weeks, water systems were severely affected. They see this on a regular basis in Indian Country when they work with tribes around energy issues. In many tribal locations, their water utilities are the largest users of power on the reservation. The interconnection between a sustainable water systems and energy is incredibly important.

They are very interested in the O&M costs research, and in seeing how much of the costs are dedicated to energy. She would guess it is the largest cost of a utility. They see a clear connection between working with this group, their federal family members, and tribes around mitigating the costs of energy and utility operation. This can be increasing energy efficiency, designing the utility to be as efficient as possible, or adding other types of energy technology to mitigate energy costs, such as solar panels, and certainly taking the waste captured in those systems and turning it into energy. This is being done by an increasing number of utilities around the country. There is a huge opportunity for DOE to leverage their work around energy development in Indian Country and work around taking waste, solid or liquid, and turning it into energy.

One of DOE's goals is bring the technology developed in the department into Indian Country. DOE recently published a water-energy nexus report. There is a big component in the department around wastewater systems and technologies that will help reduce the energy footprint of wastewater systems. They are now looking at working with their sister offices to

support demonstration projects in Indian country around new energy technologies. As they get closer to some of that later in fiscal year 2015, they will be looking to the ITF for opportunities to move forward with some of these projects.

She also introduced an effort about sustainable utilities and energy efficiency. They are working with the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to bring tribal utilities into this technical assistance effort. They are providing a lot of technical assistance to small municipal utilities who share many of the same challenges as tribal utilities. They have a program in place and will come back to this group to help tribal utilities with their energy challenges (i.e., sustainability). In addition to having the people to do the work, good energy footprint is needed to make a utility sustainable. They see an opportunity to marry with the department and get as much of this pushed into Indian Country. Thank you for your time and giving us a chance to tell what they are doing. Please feel free to use us as a resource for free technical assistance.

Marta commented that the tribes in Region 9 would be very enthused to know about the services they are offering, particularly funding, but also technical assistance. Is there a way or place to find out about services they are providing?

Pilar commented that the best resource is their website: [www.energy.gov/indianenergy](http://www.energy.gov/indianenergy). They have a funding opportunity announcement (FOA) open right now for clean energy and energy efficiency deployment projects. Tribal utilities are eligible for that funding. If they want to put solar panels on their water system, they are eligible to apply for funding to do that, or if they want to do other types of energy efficiency upgrades to their utilities. If there are questions the website does not answer, they can be reached by phone or email: [indianenergy@hq.doe.gov](mailto:indianenergy@hq.doe.gov).

Marta also commented that the waste energy programs would also be very interesting for the tribes in Region 9. Will they be participating in the ITF solid waste subgroup?

Pilar commented that they have expressed interest in participating in that subgroup. They are doing some work in Alaska and presented to the DOE Assistant Administrator in May about the waste to energy technology. They are interested in conducting demonstration projects and have quite a few tribes now involved in demonstration projects around waste to energy systems. They are closely monitoring the projects and offering technical assistance because their goal is to replicate what works. Many tribes are interested in deploying waste to energy technologies to help them with their solid waste challenges or make a business of it. The first place they looked to was Alaska because their solid waste and energy issues are incredibly acute. She did a presentation about two years ago and has a lot of information she can share on the current state of technology and opportunities.

The website also provides archived webinars. They are looking at a way to down-select all the great ideas they have for webinars for the upcoming year. Maybe they could pass that by the group to get their input on which should stay on the list or things they can participate together on for a webinar series on technical assistance.

Jacki Ponti-Lazaruk, USDA Rural Department, asked whether they have connected with their Alaska office.

Pilar said they are working with Jim Nordlund.

Jacki suggested they work with Tasha Deardorf, who runs the USDA Rural Alaskan Village Grant Program.

Dennis Wagner (EPA Anchorage) responded that she has been involved.

#### **D. NEW ITF STRATEGY AND FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

Sheila commented that the ITF has been in existence for a while, and periodically the federal partners reevaluate where they are, where they are going, what their budget realities are, and try to refocus their near-term (18-24 month) activities. Since their last call, they have been through this re-evaluation. She wanted to talk about one additional area that could be explored in the near future. Both the O&M project and the new solid waste work group are still high on their list, and will lead to further work and outcomes, either project or research into the future. The ongoing coordination is being applied to their funding as well as training and technical assistance initiatives, and that will continue.

The last time they reconstituted their membership, there were many discussions around providing access to drinking water/sanitation/solid waste services on tribal lands, but also about the need to do that in a more sustainable manner, and to promote sustainability. The listening sessions with tribes helped move that process further: the sessions were very valuable as best practices were presented. There are many best practices, but clearly no one size fits all approach to sustainability. As a federal family, they discussed what the next step should be. They are not necessarily the ones to train, to conduct the outreach, to really get these new concepts to resonate in some of these tribal areas. They talked about the need to develop strategic partnerships with national tribal organizations to continue some of the internal ITF conversations more broadly among the tribal community. They would like to explore viewpoints with tribes and identify common views on these sustainability topics, as well as the role they can play in helping utilities. They are hoping to truly reach out and work with tribal organizations to have conversations, seek input, and deliver this message in a way that promotes tribes talking to the tribes, rather than solely involving the federal government. They have already reached out to the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) as a first potential partner. They wanted to mention that as one of their new areas that they will be exploring and wanted the group's thoughts and suggestions.

Jacki further commented that, with their federal colleagues, they have been working on a number of fronts related to water and waste disposal beyond solely tribes (e.g., rural areas in general). They have developed some tools that can be leveraged (e.g., the workshop in a box and sustainability tools). It may be better to bring in parties who are in the field doing this work, and present the tools that may be helpful, guide them on how to get through the process that seemed to be a success with other workshops and trainings, and really improve outreach. They want to make sure they are having an impact. Throughout the ITF, each of the federal agencies is funding projects, and they are continuing to invest in infrastructure and improve the quality of life across Native American and Alaska Native communities. Their focus has shifted to a more sustainable approach. The outreach included these calls, but participation was low. They want

to make sure that they are getting the message out, but also getting input. This is clearly not the most effective venue, and they wanted to hear input from the group, and determine if the group would like to help launch this effort.

Brian commented that he finds this fascinating. It is timely because there are a lot of synergies going on. The next NCAI annual conference is October 26-31. The Intertribal Council of Arizona has partnered with the United South and Eastern Tribes (USET) on a number of things, including a full-day workshop at the conference on this topic. Unfortunately it was not submitted in time for this conference, but they do have a 20-minute time slot for a presentation. If the group agrees, he can bring it up, so a larger workshop can be set up to work on tribal water, wastewater, and solid waste capacity building efforts with the federal partners.

Jacki agreed, and asked if he was familiar with their workshop in a box.

Brian responded yes, and they have been using it.

Jacki responded that they really wanted it to be a viral tool, and would welcome that. If he could get the word out, they could talk further about how they can assist him in getting a bigger workshop.

Brian had one more suggestion. From their perspective, it looks like the ITF group is somewhat inaccessible to the tribes. It has always been an invitation only type of approach. There is no listing on the website that he is aware of. For example, nobody has been inviting the ITCA until very recently. He is not sure if there is an understanding among the federal family about the tribal participation/consultation procedures that the ITF group intends to use, since each agency has their own policies in implementing the executive orders. Perhaps that should be looked at because some are still unaware of what ITF is and what they are doing. They just completed their twice a year water utility operator workgroup. IHS presents every year, but it is never brought forward to the operators. A lot of work could still be done, especially if they are looking at new endeavors.

Michaëlle Wilson commented that they and the Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery have been invited by NCAI to submit an idea for a short session on waste management issues. They just received an invitation last week. They will submit an idea and keep the group informed if it is selected. She also wanted to mention that they are interested in alternate workshops resources. Also, all tribes were invited to participate in the waste workgroup, and the invitation went out twice.

Jacki responded that they also sent out a wide invitation to participate in the ITF, but Brian's point is well taken. She had not thought of it from that perspective and appreciated the comment.

Marta observed that ITF efforts could explore some of the barriers tribes and tribal utilities are facing in more detail. In connection with the previous infrastructure work, the access subgroup explored at length the barriers, and developed strategies for overcoming those barriers. Many were approved for implementation by the ITF. That exercise led to some great successes. The

ITF work in that regard has been referenced quite a lot in decision making, policy making and prioritization, and even budgeting. She is not suggesting much detail, but with respect to O&M, the listening sessions were focused on more successful utilities. She is not sure there is an understanding of the barriers to achieve that level. She thinks it may be useful information to have as future efforts are developed. Workshops may or may not address the kinds of barriers tribes are facing.

Sheila responded that that is a good comment. Without explicitly stating it, it was thought that this would come out of the more personal engagement with tribes and members on some of these issues. This will help identify common views, issues, and the federal role. She is always concerned about the budget constraints they have been seeing over the last few years because the first thing on everyone's mind is everyone has monetary needs beyond what they are provided.

They have shown historically where they have been able to accomplish things within their budget. EPA's budget is a case in point, with the increase in the Tribal Set-Aside and the addition of the ability to shift funds from drinking to clean water. It has an impact, but while they are working on that, they really cannot talk about it until it is completed. She hopes that these conversations can also identify things that the federal family could do. That is the value in bringing in some of the tribal organizations. They have some capabilities and roles they could play that the federal government could not accomplish as well. She hopes that some of the conversation is about getting those together with common goals to identify how they work together and how they help each other.

Marta shared that Region 9 has experienced success in establishing a regional multi-agency work group to address drinking water and wastewater needs for the local tribes. It coincided with the starting up of the ITF. Through that effort, there were representatives from the federal agencies, and also technical assistance providers, private funding organizations, and many tribal representatives. They came up with collaborative projects to address tribal needs that were brought to that forum. They are trying to start something like that to address solid waste related issues in the region. Having federal encouragement for more local activities could also be useful.

Sheila responded that it was a good point.

### Discussion

Sheila asked if there were any other thoughts, suggestions, or offers for assistance, or specific follow-up items. There were none.

### Thank you

Sheila thanked everyone for their participation. Correspondence to the ITF should be sent to Kellie Kubena, and she will make sure it gets to the appropriate person or persons. It was a very good discussion with a number of follow up items. If participants have specific suggestions for venues for starting some of this dialogue with tribes more broadly, please send them. If

participants have ideas for tribes that could benefit from some of the opportunities that were presented, please share the web addresses.

We will meet up with the federal family again to determine the next time for our next meeting. They understand that it is difficult to carve out the time. They want to make sure they have enough to discuss to make it worthwhile for participants.

## ACTION ITEMS

- ITF Principals - to consider adding DOE to the next ITF Principal's agenda and explore ways to incorporate DOE into the ITF MOU.
- EPA - to distribute to ITF members NCAI resolution ANC 14052, "Support for Sustained Federal Funding for Tribal Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Programs and Funding Parity with State Operator Certification Programs." (*Completed*) See: <http://www.ncai.org/resources/resolutions/support-for-sustained-federal-funding-for-tribal-water-wastewater-operator-certification-programs-and-funding-parity-with-state-operated-certification-programs>
- All ITF members – review and provide comment on the "Recommended Approach to Assessing O&M Costs at Tribal Utilities – Fact Sheet and Report to David Harvey (IHS) or Kellie Kubena (EPA) by October 15, 2014.
- All ITF members – FYI, here are links to
  - DOE Water/Energy nexus report mentioned at the meeting: <http://www.energy.gov/articles/department-energy-releases-water-energy-nexus-report>
  - DOE Office of Indian Energy link: <http://www.energy.gov/indianenergy/office-indian-energy-policy-and-programs>
  - DOE survey links for the 2015 DOE Tribal Renewable Webinar Series with thirty webinar ideas, please take a look at the three surveys, your input will be greatly appreciated.
    - Part One (1 - 10 webinar ideas) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CFPLX7G>
    - Part Two (1 - 10 webinar ideas) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CBGQLJ3>
    - Part Three (1 - 10 webinar ideas) <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/8M3GJDK>
- Brian Bennon – to mention ITF sustainability tools and activities at upcoming NCAI annual conference (October 26-31, 2014).
- ITF Principals – to schedule future ITF meetings and distribute invitations.
- Matt Richardson – to schedule ITF Principal's meeting in mid-November.