

EPA Establishes MOU for Water Research with Chickasaw Nation *Sustainable Management Strategies to Address Water Quality*

Background

EPA’s Office of Research and Development (ORD) has established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Chickasaw Nation, a federally recognized American Indian tribal nation.

The MOU provides a framework for cooperation and coordination between the parties, building on and replacing a previous MOU signed in 2008. The new MOU is focused on sustainable management strategies to address complex water quality issues.

Ada, Oklahoma, is the home of ORD’s Robert S. Kerr Environmental Research Center, which is EPA’s center of expertise for groundwater remediation and ecosystem restoration research. The Chickasaw Nation Headquarters is in Ada as well. The Chickasaw Nation, in coordination with the Choctaw Nation, are presently engaged in a water resources planning effort for the area upon which they rely for their water supply. It is the Chickasaw-Choctaw Regional Water Plan.

Purpose and Objective

This MOU is intended to provide a mechanism for EPA and the Chickasaw Nation to promote technical coordination and access to each other’s facilities. Specifically, they will pursue coordinated and cooperative research, development, and assessment programs. They will apply sustainability principles and metrics to development

projects, municipal water supply systems, and water resource management. The program will aid both parties in efforts to sustain and improve community health, meet environmental protection goals, and provide sustainable resources for future generations.

Roles

EPA’s contribution is to conduct research and scientific studies on ground water and ecosystem protection and restoration, environmental sustainability, and watershed management. The Chickasaw Nation will conduct focused water resource planning ensuring long-term sustainability of water resources, water supply security, and drought resiliency.

The Chickasaw Nation’s planning effort will consist of research, community outreach, and initiative development and implementation activities in support of the Chickasaw-Choctaw Regional Water Plan. One aspect of this is the Arbuckle-Simpson Drought Contingency Project, which focuses on water conservation, water supply security, and drought resiliency for the communities within the Chickasaw Nation.

Goals of the MOU

1. Develop research strategies that will lead to sustainable management of regional resources.
2. Identify existing mechanisms (data, information, and tools) and approaches that can be used to include sustainability objectives into ongoing management activities.
3. Provide scientifically-informed technical support to improve environmental quality.

Intended Impacts

This MOU provides a scientific path forward for development and application of sustainable management strategies to address complex water issues now and well into the future.

Additional Information

- <https://www.epa.gov/research>
- <https://www.chickasaw.net/>

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