

# INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

## ISSUE SUMMARY:

Indigenous Knowledge, often referred to as Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment. EPA understands that Indigenous Knowledge is one of the many important bodies of knowledge that contributes to the scientific, technical, social, and economic advancements of the United States, and to our collective understanding of the natural world. EPA is committed to promoting awareness and gaining understanding of Indigenous Knowledge and considering its inclusion and application in federal research, policies, and decision making. In support of that goal, EPA has been an active participant on the Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge within the White House's National Science and Technology Council. In December 2022, with the help of EPA, this Subcommittee released government-wide Indigenous Knowledge guidance titled, "[Guidance for Federal Departments and Agencies on Indigenous Knowledge](#)."

In light of this Guidance, EPA responded by creating and deploying an EPA-wide Indigenous Knowledge Training to educate staff regarding what Indigenous Knowledge is, and how it can be recognized, considered, and applied in federal research, policy, and decision-making at EPA. Five "live" trainings occurred throughout FY24, with almost 2000 EPA employees attending. A recorded version of the training is accessible internally to EPA employees on EPA's [Indigenous Knowledge intranet site](#), which also features additional Indigenous Knowledge-related resources, including a recorded discussion between Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe and Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer, author of *Braiding Sweetgrass*.

## UPCOMING MILESTONES:

FY25 activities TBD

## BACKGROUND:

Indigenous Knowledge-related work is discussed and reported out within the White House Council on Native American Affairs' (WHCNAA) Climate Change, Tribal Homelands, and Treaties Committee, as well as the National Science and Technology Council Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge, consistent with the November 30, 2022 OSTP-CEQ [Memorandum](#) on Indigenous Knowledge Guidance Implementation.

## KEY EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS:

☐ Congress ☐ Industry ☐ States ☒ Tribes ☐ Media ☒ Other Federal Agency

## MOVING FORWARD:

EPA will continue to be an active participant on the Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge and the [WHCNAA](#) Climate Change, Tribal Homelands, and Treaties Committee (co-lead).

LEAD OFFICE/REGION: OITA/AIEO

OTHER KEY OFFICES/REGIONS: WORKING WITH  
OTHER NPMS, AS APPLICABLE, AS IT RELATES TO IK  
QUESTIONS, POLICIES, AND/OR REQUESTS