



Development Center for Appropriate Technology
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DCAT PPN DRAFT – (updated unilaterally by David Eisenberg/DCAT 9/7/12)

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The Development Center for Appropriate Technology (DCAT) is currently engaged in a groundbreaking project that builds on the years of work we have been doing to help create a sustainable context for building regulation. The project involves supporting the process of Native American tribes developing their own system to manage building and development on tribal lands. It is an extraordinary opportunity, both in the challenges that it embodies and in the potential to begin from a place of honoring relationships and all of creation, not just human creations.

As a part of this effort we have been working with the Pinoleville Pomo Nation (PPN) to develop a new type of tribal green building code — although "code" is likely not the right word for it—that is aspirational and holistic, allowing for consistent input from tribal citizens regarding cultural and social practices and values, including protecting the natural world and the health and safety of people.

This has been part of an EPA-sponsored initiative to develop green building codes that respond well to tribal needs. In cooperation with EPA Region 9, we have established workgroups to study issues of affordability, technical support, training and capacity building. We have charted a path to influence federal agency policies towards tribal green building, and to lobby Congress for more supportive law. We also have identified a handful of tribes adopting and adapting existing green building codes, or drafting their own. The PPN is in the latter category, trying to draft its own codes that are locally and culturally appropriate, while borrowing heavily from other sources.

With input from DCAT, the PPN has attempted to develop not so much a code as a project review process, similar in rationale to the appeals boards that operate in many local jurisdictions to assist building departments with projects that are outside the normal scope of their experience. We have a loose framework identifying building principles we would like to achieve, but we have left some details to be sorted out by a Review Committee. We have drafted a bit of language about who should be on the Review Committee (a mix of technical, cultural and managerial representatives) and how the Committee should function (proposing specific standards that might apply to the project in question, such as the Arizona grey water or California straw bale standards, proposing alternatives designs where appropriate, recommending qualified consultants, etc.). We also have a building that is currently under construction that has many green features: grey water systems, natural materials, composting toilets, solar panels.

We'd like to ask you to help us run through a first test case of this type of code. That is, to look at the project design we have in question, the draft code, and tell us where there are gaps between the two, and recommend how to fill them. We are hoping that if we have a reasonably successful first run at applying such a code, that we can propose to HUD, USDA and other agencies that they allocate funds for the operation of such a Review Committee. We also want to demonstrate to tribes a successful path towards developing safe and creative, culturally-appropriate building projects that can be financed with federal funds and by private financial institutions.. We feel that might spur a burst of innovative building in Indian Country, where cultural values are consistent with green building, and where political barriers to new projects can be cleared relatively quickly.

Please let us know if you have any questions. And we hope you'll join us in this exciting effort.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Eisenberg", with a long, sweeping underline.

David Eisenberg
Development Center for Appropriate Technology

Potential List of Desired Areas of Technical Expertise

Architect / Designer
Civil Engineer/Permaculture / Landscape Architect
Structural engineer (with seismic experience for where relevant)
Mechanical engineer / MEP (mechanical/electrical/plumbing)
Materials Specialist – including natural, local, alternative, non-toxic
IAQ / IEQ
Fire Safety
Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
Building Science
General and Specialized Plan Review and Inspection
Construction Management

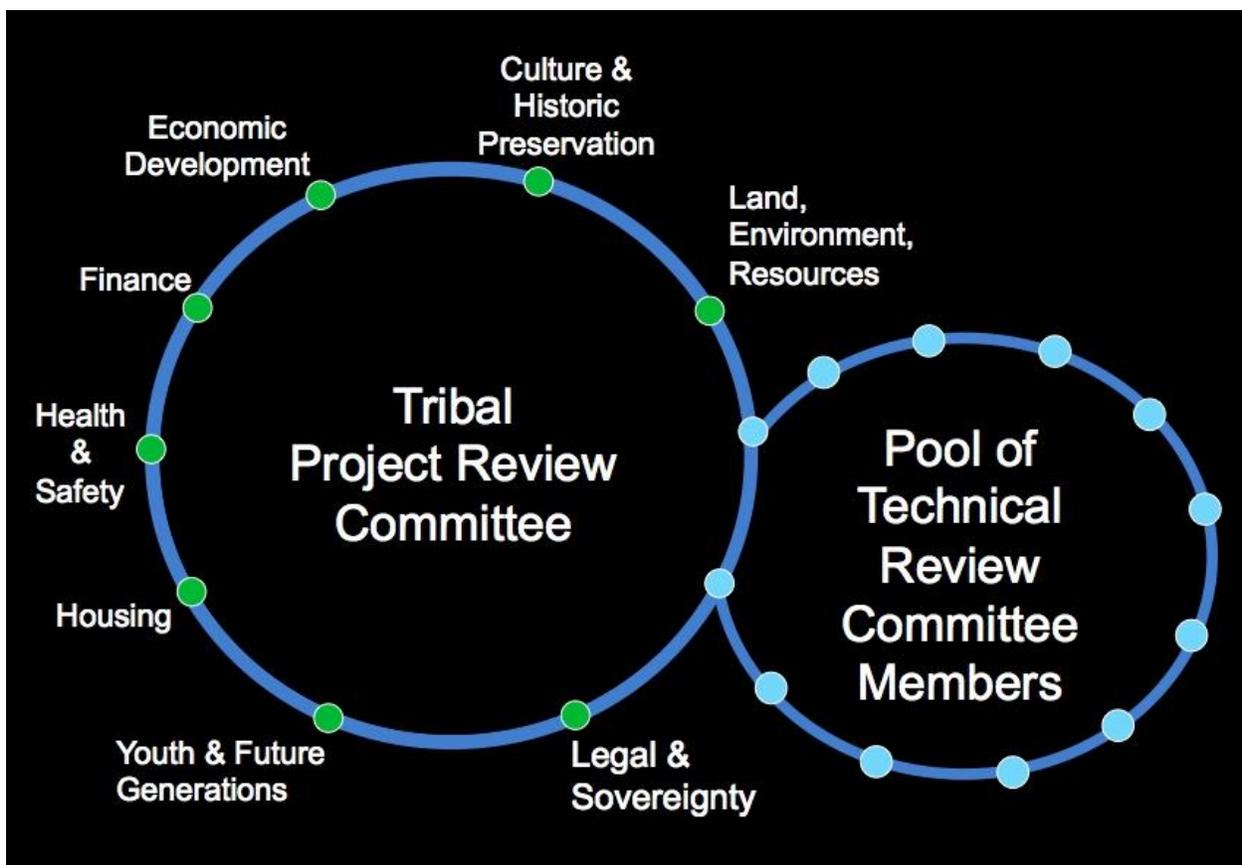


Diagram developed for the Pinoleville Pomo Nation of the proposed committee structure with possible tribal committee makeup and a pool of qualified and committed technical experts who would be available to be drawn upon as needed for specific projects and specific expertise.

Potential Membership makeup of the Sustainable Design review advisory committee:

- One person nominated by the PPN Environmental Department to assist with land resource use and other environmental assessments.
- One person nominated by the PPN Tribal Historic Preservation Office to assist with cultural and social assessments of designs.

- One person nominated by the Tribal Council to represent economic development interests.
- One person nominated by the Tribal Council responsible for finance.
- One person nominated by the Tribal Council who can review designs and projects for impacts on human health and safety.
- One person nominated by the PPN Housing Department to assist with compliance, planning, and cost issues related to housing.
- One person nominated by the Tribal Council to represent young people and future generations.
- One person nominated by the Tribal Council to assist with legal and regulatory issues, particularly to assess project impacts on tribal sovereignty and self-sufficiency.
- A minimum of two persons selected for each project, to be drawn from a larger pool of experts from different organizations nominated by the Tribal Council and appropriate departments, who are qualified to review and interpret engineering and construction documents and to lead research into emerging building technologies and strategies. These persons shall also be able to evaluate regulatory and other barriers to construction.