

## **DRINKING WATER / WASTEWATER WORKGROUP REPORT**

**Prepared by:** Linda Reeves, EPA Lead; Tom Keegan, Tribal Lead

**Date Prepared:** July 19, 2011

**GOAL:** The Drinking Water / Wastewater Workgroup's goal is to improve tribal access to drinking water and wastewater sanitation through regional and national efforts, and interagency and collaborative efforts to address both physical infrastructure needs and asset protection activities, including maintaining and increasing funding.

### **PRIORITIES:**

#### **Infrastructure Funding**

1. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Funding

- 13 drinking water projects: 4 complete, 6 under construction  
Contact: Sara Ziff (415) 972-3536
- 46 clean water projects: 37 under construction, 2 complete  
Contact: Erskine Benjamin (415) 972-3561

2. No DWWSA Solicitation in FY 2011

EPA Region 9 will not be issuing a Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside (DWWSA) solicitation this Fall. This year tribes submitted 32 proposals totalling \$29 million; however, only \$4 million is available to fund high priority project. In FY 2012, EPA Region 9 will consider for funding all high priority proposals not funded in FY 11.

#### **Interagency Coordination**

3. Participate in the National Infrastructure Task Force and Access Subgroup to achieve the Goal to Increase Tribal Access to Safe Water by 50% by 2015

In an April 2011 letter to Tribal Leaders, HUD, HHS, USDA and EPA provided an update on the progress to provide access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation (see <http://www.epa.gov/tp/pdf/infra-task-force-progress.pdf>). Between 2003 and 2009, combined funds have provided 80,941 tribal homes access to safe drinking water and 43,562 tribal homes access to basic sanitation, which is 4 and 3.5 times greater than the number of homes the federal partners committed to under the Millennium Development Goals.

The letter also invited new tribal participants to the Infrastructure Task Force. The following EPA Region 9 tribal participants will serve on the new Infrastructure Task Force:

Ken Norton, Director, Environmental Protection Agency, Hoopa Valley Tribe

Peggy O'Neill, Director Planning Department, Yoruk Tribe

Michael Reed, Chief Executive Officer, Cocopah Indian Housing and Development

David Saddler, Manager, Water / Wastewater and Propane Department Tohono O'odham Utility Authority

Marta Burg, RTOC Legal Advisor

Contact: Linda Reeves (415) 972-3445

4. Lead Regional Interagency Drinking Water / Wastewater Workgroup  
An interagency meeting was held 10/21/10 at the Annual Tribal Environmental Conference in San Francisco, including action items to implement new collaborative projects, gather data for a tribal O&M study, and create a tribal resource clearinghouse. A Sustainable Infrastructure Resource Fair occurred 2/7/11 with over 100 participants, including 20 representations of resource providers. A California Technical Assistance coordination meeting occurred on 2/8, and there have been monthly meetings of the Arizona Multi-Agency Tribal Infrastructure Collaborative (MATIC).  
Contact: Linda Reeves, Tom Keegan (707) 857-1810 x117, Marta Burg
5. Implement Tribal Water Collaborative Projects – see attached status report

### **Operation and Maintenance**

6. Create Tribal Operation and Maintenance Study (national or regional)  
The Access Implementation Plan recommends a tribal Operation and Maintenance study. The study could identify tribal operation and maintenance costs per home, as compared with like sized non-tribal systems, and include highlights of specific tribal water systems challenges, like Kashia. The study could also highlight successful tribal operation and maintenance programs, such as those that do full cost pricing and variable rate billing.

Next steps: Interested tribes can contribute existing O&M data to identify need.

7. Develop programs to lower tribal sampling and analysis costs through bulk discounts at labs and achieve greater compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act

- **ITCA Monitoring Assistance Program**

ITCA has partnered with the Yavapai Apache Tribe to pilot a Monitoring Assistance Program.

Contact: Patrick McMullen ITCA (602) 258-4822, Kevin Ryan (415) 972-3806

- **California Rural Water Association (CA RWA) Preferred Provider Program**

CA RWA created a preferred provider program for its members which offers numerous discounted services, including laboratory analytical services at an average 20% discount (see [calruralwater.org](http://calruralwater.org)).

Contact: Dustin Hardwick CA Rural Water Association (800) 833-0322

8. Resource Clearinghouse

Need: Tribes can help each other by sharing surplus equipment/infrastructure/resources through a clearinghouse which will include the categories the retired equipment can be used for, recognizing that federal design specifications may limit use of clearinghouse equipment. The Redwood Water Resources Network has something similar (<http://rwrn.org/equipment/equipment.html>) and the Native American Water Master Association may be interested.

Next step: Tom Keegan will work with Ron Sundberg and Lee Schegg of RCAC.

Contact: Tom Keegan

9. Support tribal asset protection projects

Status: Asset protection is an eligible GAP task. Since FY 07, GAP has provided a total of \$806K of GAP funds for asset protection activities benefits dozens of tribes.

Contact: Destinee Cooper, 415-972-3790

10. Change California regulations to ensure that tribal wastewater operators can use their experience working at tribal facilities to obtain California wastewater operator certification

Status: The Office of Operator Certification (OOC) is in the process of amending the Operator Certification Regulations, Sections 3670-3719.19, Chapter 26, Title 23, of the California Code of Regulations.

Proposed Timeline

Spring 2012 - public notice

Announcements regarding the regulation amendments will be posted on the OOC website [http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water\\_issues/programs/operator\\_certification/index.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/operator_certification/index.shtml) and email notifications sent to OOC mailing list. To receive OOC announcements, please subscribe to "Wastewater Operator Certification" email list at:

[http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email\\_subscriptions/swrcb\\_subscribe.shtml](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/resources/email_subscriptions/swrcb_subscribe.shtml).

Contact: Tom Keegan

**Drinking Water Needs Survey**

11. Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey

The Safe Drinking Water Act requires the USEPA, in consultation with the Indian Health Service (IHS) and Indian tribes, to prepare surveys and assess the needs of drinking water systems serving American Indians and Alaska Native Villages. The American Indian and Alaska Native Village Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey (DWINS) was last conducted in 1999. Results from the survey are used in conjunction with IHS's Sanitation Deficiency System (SDS) list to determine annual USEPA regional funding allotments for the Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside program. EPA Region 9 has submitted 15% of the surveys for the selected tribal systems. All surveys will be submitted by November 2011.

Contact: Sara Ziff

Workgroup Transparency

Visit the Workgroup website (blog):

<http://rtocwaterworkgroup.blogspot.com/>

Username: RTOCwaterworkgroup

Password: waterworkgroup

Contact: Linda Reeves

## **Status of Tribal Water Collaborative Projects and Needs - July 2011**

### **Projects Ongoing**

#### Big Valley Drinking Water and Wastewater

Need: Numerous trailers lack access to drinking water.

Status: IHS provided \$120,000 of ARRA funds for a feasibility study to address the need. IHS is developing Scope of Work for feasibility study. Contact: Sarah Ryan, Big Valley; Dave Mazorra, IHS (916-930-3960, x345)

#### Hopi Drinking Water Supply for First and Second Mesa

Need: EPA is providing DWTSA funds for a new water source to address arsenic needs in First and Second Mesa. Arsenic treatment options are not feasible due to the presence of vanadium in the water supply which interferes with many of the arsenic treatment. The entire project will cost \$15-20M, requiring a phased approach with the participation of many agencies.

Status: EPA awarded Phase 1 for a well which will be drilled in 2011. EPA will provide additional funds in FY 11 for Phase 2 of the project. The Hopi Tribe and IHS are also working to secure USDA funding.

Contact: Bessie Lee, EPA (415-972-3776)

#### Kashia Operation and Maintenance

Need: High operational costs for few homes, complex treatment plant, remote location, dependence on one operator, O&M manual lacks needed detail.

Next steps: EPA, IHS and RCAC are working with the tribe to evaluate how best to address needs.

#### Navajo Feasibility Study for Homes Lacking Access

Need: A feasibility study is needed to evaluate alternatives to serve homes lacking access.

Status: EPA funded a Navajo Water Hauling Feasibility Study and Pilot Program through the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources (DWR). Navajo Nation EPA developed draft water hauling guidelines. In April 2011, water delivery began in the Black Falls and Grand Falls areas of western Navajo.

Contact: Najam Tariq, Navajo

#### Tohono O'odham Modular Bathrooms

Need: Funds are needed to construct modular bathrooms for 300 homes that cannot be connected to existing public water systems because they lack indoor plumbing.

Status: USDA invited the Tohono O'odham Utility Authority (TOUA) to apply for funds for the first phase of the project which will allow for the construction of modular bathroom for 100 homes. TOUA also applied for State ARRA funds.

Contact: David Saddler, TOUA

#### Washoe Leaking Fixtures

Need: Elders need help fixing leaking faucets and toilets. San Diego Gas and Electric provided tribes with assistance to fix similar problems.

Next steps: Janice Waddell of USDA Rural Development provided information on funding programs to Chad Malone of the Washoe Tribe.