

A TRIBAL AGENDA FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PUBLIC HEALTH

Day 1

WELCOME TO THE LAND OF THE COEUR D'ALENE (SHITSU'UMSH) TRIBE

5 DOMAINS OF EPH

ENVIRONMENTAL TRAUMA
DECOLONIZE OUR GREED

WATER QUALITY POST FLOOD TESTING
SOIL SAMPLING ROUND AGRICULTURAL RUNOFF

BUILT ENVIRONMENT
WALKABILITY OF COMMUNITY
SOLAR PANELS ON TRIBAL BUILDINGS
ENERGY AUDITS

WATER
RIVER CLEAN UP

LAND
RECLAMATION OF LAND FOR TRADITIONAL USE & PURPOSES

NATIVE AMERICAN FARM BILL COALITION
TRIBAL FOOD SAFETY INSPECTION AGENCY CURRENTLY IN HANDS OF THE STATE

FOOD & WILD LIFE

INTENTIONALLY SECURE FOOD SOURCE IN FACE OF ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY

FIRE
SACRED RELATIONSHIP
WILDFIRE PREVENTION
STRUCTURAL FIRE FIGHTING → EMS SERVICES

WE ALL BALANCE EACH OTHER OUT

OUR KNOWLEDGE IS GETTING LOST

NATURAL RESOURCES
↓ ↑ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

SHARE

ORAL TRADITION - BRING IT BACK

REDUCE EMISSIONS

BURN BANS

AIR

BURN OPERATIONS
SMUDGE POTS
DIESEL → PROPANE

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY

TRIBAL REPRESENTATIVES DEVELOP FOOD SAFETY CODES & MODELS

Inaugural NW Tribal Environmental Public Health Gathering: Building a Tribal Community of Practice for Environmental Health

Summary and Follow-Up Report

August 2-3, 2022

NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA INDIAN HEALTH BOARD

**Hosted by the
NPAIHB Environmental Public Health Team**

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at the Coeur d'Alene or Schitsu'umsh Casino in Worley, Idaho.



**Environmental
Public Health**

**Northwest Portland
Area Indian Health Board**

Dear colleagues, relatives, and friends:

We hope this email and document find you doing well in 2023. It has taken us a bit longer than we hoped to follow up on our inaugural Northwest Tribal Environmental Public Health (NWTEPH) Gathering in August 2022 but here we are. We look forward to reconnecting with you around this important work in the coming months. For those who could not attend the NWTEPH Gathering last year, we plan to continue these in the years ahead. We will continue to reach out to you and look forward to engaging with each Environmental Health representative from every Northwest Tribe over the coming months.

The Gathering was planned to serve as a forum for

- Introducing our (NPAIHB) Environmental Public Health (EPH) Program
- Hearing from you about what your Tribal communities are doing in Environmental Health (EH) and sharing and swapping stories around your efforts, needs, and successes
- Identifying common themes around forming a Northwest Tribal Environmental Health Community of Practice
- Discussing issues of Environmental Justice and Health Equity requiring collective action to address

These were lofty goals for our first regional conference, and we may not have hit the mark exactly, but we've got the conversation going. Let's carry the momentum forward and continue to work toward justice and equity in Tribal Environmental Health.

This document is meant to:

- Serve as a call to collective action on Tribal Environmental Health and includes an overview of the key issues of Environmental Justice, Climate Change, Health Equity, and Capacity Development that were not fully expressed at the Gathering
- Provide a summary report of the Gathering, including outcomes and action items
- Outline a plan for launching a community of practice in Environmental Health for Northwest Tribes

Thank you for taking the time to read this. After weathering the worst of the pandemic, it is time to be together and begin to heal and recover. I hope the Gathering was able to serve some of that purpose as well.

We are here to work with you to provide Environmental Health services, support, and advocacy for your Tribal communities. Please contact me via cell phone or email (below) with any questions, comments, or issues you have to discuss.

Respectfully,

Celeste Davis, REHS, MPH (Chickasaw Nation)
Environmental Public Health Program Director
Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board (NPAIHB)

Introduction

What follows is a summary of the conversations had at the Inaugural NW Tribal Environmental Public Health Gathering in early August 2022. This summary is compiled from notes, participant materials (e.g., flipcharts), presentation slides, and other prepared materials. Our intent is to capture themes and other information to support Tribes and Tribal employees with the continued development of their environmental health and public health programs.

Given all of that, ways you might use this report include:

- Reviewing and reminding yourself of projects you may have heard about during the gathering
- Giving ideas on projects that you might undertake at your Tribe or thoughts on who to reach out to for partnership/collaboration
- Helping those at your Tribe who weren't able to attend the Gathering, but who are engaged in projects that ultimately support EPH
- Sharing with tribal leadership to help them better understand the scope of EPH programs and the resources necessary to build them
- Providing you with information to guide your individual or program workforce development
- Showing your family or social network and helping raise the public's knowledge about environmental and public health

THE VISION

A Call to Action for Justice and Equity in Tribal Environmental Public Health Systems

Health scientists estimate anywhere from 10% to 25% of the burden of disease can be prevented by creating healthier built and natural environments. In order for our people to achieve the highest level of health, we must make decisions that transform tribal communities into healthy, sustainable, and equitable places for the next seven generations. This transformation can only occur through tribal sovereignty, the use of traditional knowledge, the honoring of treaty rights, and adherence to the federal trust responsibility.

We will transform our communities by shining a light on environmental injustices and health disparities and showing the federal and state governments that Tribes have the people, knowledge, and right to achieve justice, equity, and the highest health status if we can exercise sovereignty and are provided with the resources needed and promised. We will do this through a shared understanding of tribal environmental health, developing tribal environmental health program capacity, and taking collective action to advocate for sovereignty, environmental justice, and health equity.

A critical component for the success of the NPAIHB Environmental Public Health (EPH) Program and those that it serves is to create a true community of practice (CoP). A CoP will be built on the relationships with our Tribes, focused on environmental public health practice, and powered through engagement and information exchange. With that foundation, CoP participants can improve the knowledge, methods, tools, and resources for providing environmental public health services. We will focus our efforts on developing capacity and support for the Tribes of the NW in creating and delivering EPH programs that serve their needs on their terms.

For Tribes to receive environmental justice (EJ), federal and state agencies must make significant funding investments for every Tribe in the nation. Just as Tribes have faced environmental injustices for hundreds of years, getting equity will take many years.

What we can and will do now is to use our voices and influence to make sure Tribes are at the table and have the information to:

- Make decisions that protect and create healthy environments
- Advocate for tribal sovereignty to develop and regulate their own environmental laws
- Increase funding tribal environmental protection programs
- Push for full funding of environmental health from the Indian Health Service (IHS)
- Receive funding for environmental public health through block grants or direct funding from the CDC

To address the concerns heard at the Gathering, we will make sure that “Tribes” are always mentioned when EJ is spoken – even if we must speak up from the audience, raise issues of equity as opposed to equality – Tribes need reparations and must receive more funding in order

to make up for past injustices - that is equity in action; advocate for socio-economic factors to be included in criteria for funding or measures to track EJ; and allow tribal-specific definitions and initiatives on EJ that include systems-thinking, Indigenous values, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK), so considerations include animals, people, and the environment.

CoP Membership

The EPH CoP will only include representatives from the NPAIHB EPH Program and representatives working in tribal programs. We believe that keeping our CoP closed to those in other governments or entities will allow for open and transparent communication and sharing and will allow us to listen and speak to issues most important to our communities and us.

Benefits of creating such a CoP:

- Gives Tribes a place to discuss and strategize ways to meet their EPH needs in ways that align with our values and TEK
- Gives Tribes a place to discuss and strategize the ways to use and influence IHS funds, services, and resources – as well as other Health and Human Services (HHS) or state agency funds, services, and resources
- Focused on tribal issues without having to abide by or adhere to outside agency standards or rules

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The policies and plans described below are foundational to creating healthier environments in Tribal Environmental Public Health.

Environmental Justice

The U.S. EPA defines Environmental Justice (EJ) as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. This goal will be achieved when everyone enjoys:

- The same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards
- Equal access to the decision-making process to have a healthy environment in which to live, learn, and work

NWTEPH Gathering attendees agreed that this definition of EJ needs to be revised to reflect tribal considerations. They shared the following ideas:

- Environmental justice definition doesn't explicitly talk about Tribes
- "Sameness" is inadequate because it's only talking about "equality"
- Acknowledging historical injustices which caused the need for these regulations
- Lack of space for sacredness
- Socioeconomic impact of EJ is not explicitly included
- Still a human-focused hierarchy and not including the animals, traditional food systems, nature, and environment
- Misses a relational worldview

Climate Change

One of the biggest environmental injustices is the impact of climate change on Tribal Nations. Tribes in the NW face a multitude of environmental and health hazards associated with climate change. Climate change is increasing the number of extreme heat days; increasing the frequency and severity of wildfires, flooding events, and storms; raising ocean and sea temperatures; leading to extreme drought conditions; changing animal migratory patterns; trapping toxic emissions in our ambient air; and other environmental changes. These environmental changes can lead to health impacts like heat-related illness, increased risk of heart attacks for those with existing CVD, increased risk for hospitalization due to exacerbation of asthma or other lung diseases due to poor air quality from wildfires or emission pollution, loss of traditional foods, depression and stress, increased risk of vector borne illnesses, and other health risks or impacts.

We will use our role as experts and advocates in environmental health at a regional level to leverage our existing program resources to document tribal priorities with regard to:

- Addressing climate change in their communities
- Building capacity in planning and policy to improve the Tribes' abilities to address climate change
- Raising awareness with IHS, CDC, EPA, and other agencies about tribal needs for addressing climate change
- Advocating for policy changes so Tribes have access to the resources they need to minimize the environmental and health impacts from climate change

Health Equity

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) continue to face persistent health disparities and higher rates of heart disease, influenza, diabetes, asthma, injuries, and other conditions, and a life expectancy of nearly six years less than the all-races population. AI/AN peoples' opportunities to achieve optimal health is affected by the social conditions in their communities, and we face significant adverse social determinants of health. In order to achieve health equity, we must eliminate the fundamental causes of disease and injury.

A robust and growing body of evidence implicates structures of political and capital power, including economic and public policy, as having a significant role in population health. The lack of power and discriminatory and unequal policies that affect tribal communities leads to unequal access to quality education and health care, limited job opportunities, poverty, and adverse material conditions in the built environment. Adverse structural and social health determinants lead to health and well-being inequities.

Achieving health equity will take decades of effort and require all systems of society to move upstream to identify and address adverse social conditions that lead to poor health outcomes and illness. Identifying and addressing the adverse social conditions in tribal communities will

only be successful if health system reforms occur in partnership with other tribal community systems and are supported by tribal information to guide broader federal structural, policy, and social changes.

The NPAIHB and the Tribes need full funding from IHS and flexible funding from the CDC for environmental public health to address the environmental and social determinants of health that affect our tribal population's health status. We will advocate for full funding and mandatory appropriations for the IHS, direct or block grant funding for environmental public health and emergency preparedness and response from the CDC and others, and for legislation and policies that are inclusive of Tribes, respect tribal sovereignty, and establish equity as priorities for measuring positive policy impacts.

Capacity Development

Capacity development can be described as a continuous process through which individuals, groups, organizations, and communities obtain, strengthen, and maintain the activities, approaches, methods, and strategies to improve their performance and generate results to achieve their objectives. One of the priority initiatives and key goals of the EPH Program is to partner with NW Tribes to develop their capacity to deliver environmental health services and programs to their communities.

The NPAIHB EPH Program capacity development efforts aim to focus on the individual and organizational level, and the range of capacities we seek to develop include technical, operational, and systemic. Future efforts will expand to networks, systems, and complex ecosystems of diverse parties focusing on developing adaptive and influencing capacities in order to drive the social changes needed to achieve justice and equity.

Listed here are some of the activities, approaches, methods, and strategies we will use to develop EH capacity:

- Consultancy services related to specific needs, teaming up to conduct inspections or investigations, performing risk assessments, etc.
- Training and mentoring staff through modeling and interactive sessions (e.g., shadowing inspections and then performing inspections)
- Partnering with Tribes to develop a resource library of material for EPH Programs
- Establishing peer exchange to drive improvement and maintenance of Tribal EPH Programs
- Developing the Community of Practice (CoP)

A STEP TOWARDS OUR VISION

In August 2022, the NPAIHB Environmental Public Health team invited tribal employees to the Inaugural NW Tribal Environmental Public Health Gathering at the Coeur d'Alene or Schitsu'umsh Casino in Worley, Idaho.

The focus was Building a Tribal Community of Practice for Environmental Public Health (EPH), and sessions were designed to engage people in conversations around the following topics:

- Mapping Tribe's EPH ecosystems
- Learning about tribal activities and needs across the five domains of EPH
- Understanding and responding to ecological grief
- Expanding the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in EPH
- Developing and sustaining EPH programs
- Introducing the IHS Tribal EPH Toolkit
- Creating a tribal definition of EPH
- Sharing tribal success stories of creating tribal networks to achieve shared goals (Spokane, CRITFC), air quality programs (Nez Perce), developing and sustaining an EPH program (Coeur d'Alene), and tailoring community health assessments to include TEK (Coquille Indian Tribe)

Attendees appreciated that the Gathering was just for tribal members and employees, giving them the space to talk openly about their needs without having to consider federal, state, or local representatives' interests and concerns.

The images that follow are an illustrative summary of what was discussed over the course of the Gathering. These images were created by Mari Shibuya (www.marishibuya.com), who is an artist, muralist, scribe, and facilitator. The goal of their work is to highlight the regenerative, healing power of Creativity and Community, the wisdom inherent within our interconnection, the power of visual information, and the importance of reimagining growth through an equitable and liberatory lens. She currently lives in Seattle, WA.

Day 1



Day 2



Day 3



WHAT WE HEARD

This section provides a summary of Gathering conversations and activities by topic.

MAPPING TRIBAL EPH ECOSYSTEMS

Gathering Summary

Each Tribe was invited to map their EPH ecosystem as a way to visualize the connection between various programs at tribes and help the Community of Practice see the work happening across the region.

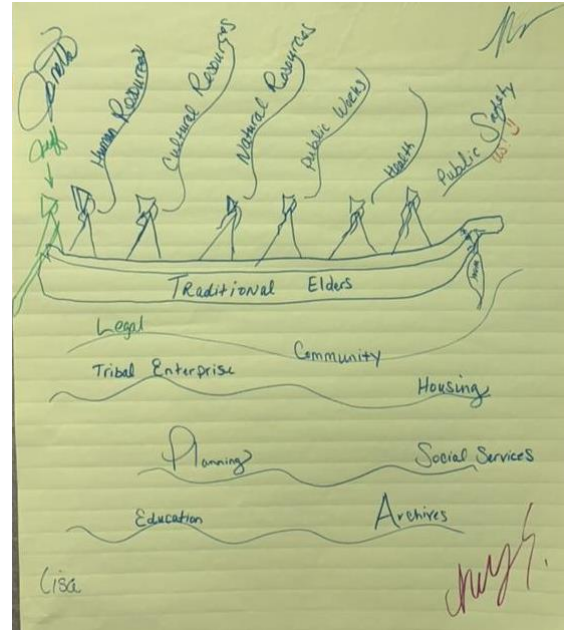
This highlighted how EPH touches nearly every department in tribal government so to some degree, EPH belongs to everyone.

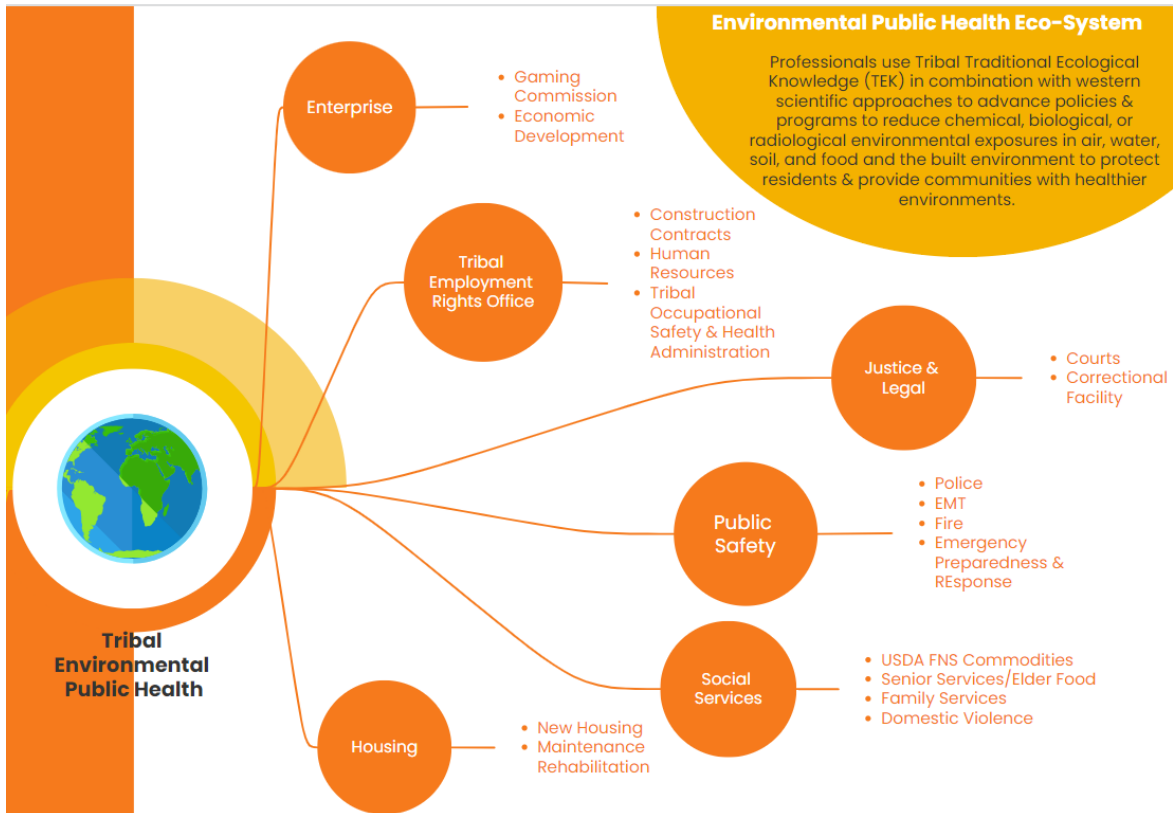
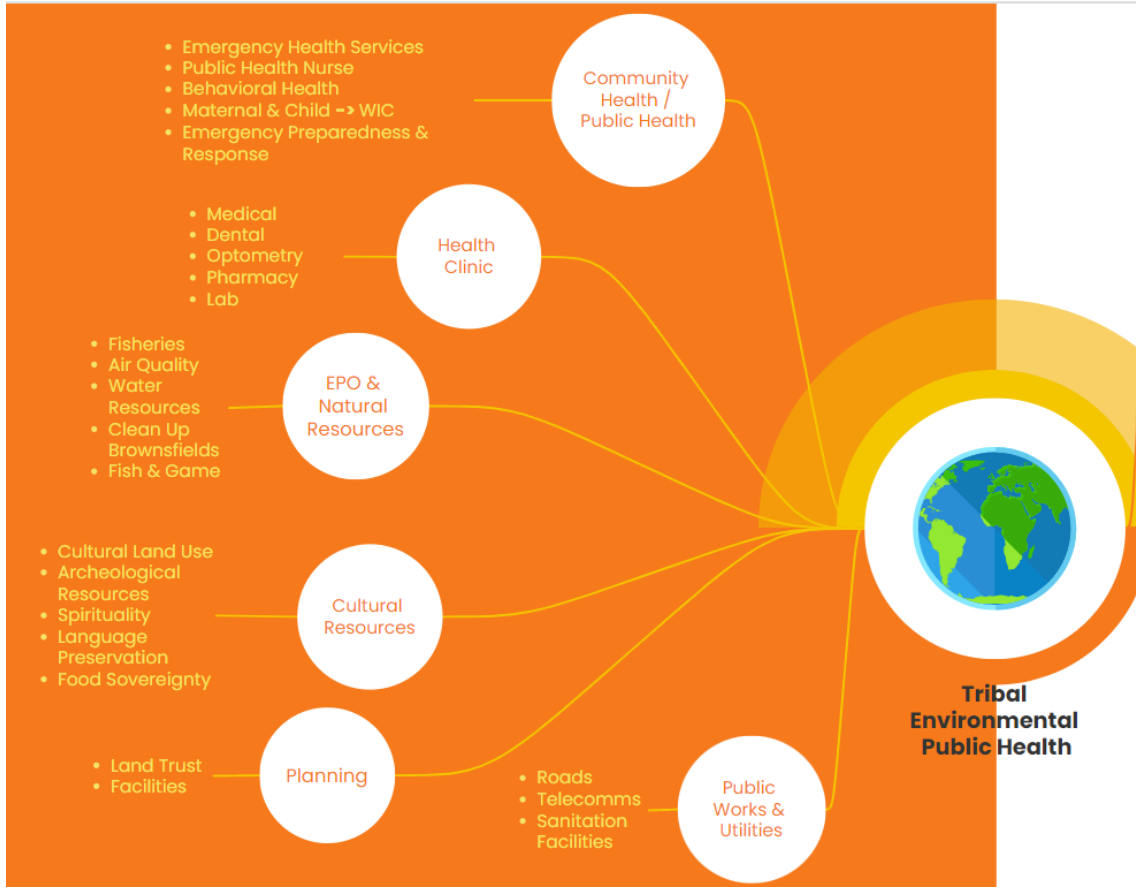
There was mention of the following intersections and overlaps along with the need to better coordinate and connect in ways that improve efficiency and effectiveness:

- Environmental health & natural resources
- Environmental health & emergency preparedness
- Environmental health & environmental science

For example, regarding environmental health & environmental science, the Northwest Indian College has a Native Environmental Sciences Program but it does not include much regarding environmental impacts on human health. At the same time, people discussed the unmet need for health and human resources and that environmental services are underfunded. Figuring out how to better coordinate and/or connect the needs and opportunities here would be helpful.

All of these intersections and overlaps underscore the difficulty of creating an aligned approach to EPH as well as developing capacity within the Tribe.





TRIBAL ACTIVITIES & NEEDS ACROSS THE FIVE DOMAINS OF EPH

Gathering Summary

A couple of the sessions focused on giving attendees the opportunity to share what their Tribe is doing to address environmental public health across the five domains of EPH (air, water, land, food & wildlife, built environment) and identify issues that need to be addressed, now and in the future. These conversations are summarized in Tables 1 and 2.

The purpose of these sessions was to recognize and illustrate the range of activities and needs while building an inventory of what is happening across the Pacific Northwest. Taken as a whole, the inventory helps to demonstrate how much interconnection there is across the five domains. This supports Tribes in not only seeing what is possible but understanding who they can reach out to in order to access knowledge embedded in other parts of the region.

A few people mentioned that the five domains should be expanded to include fire and plants. Fire (wildfires) impact air quality and land so EPH needs associated with wildfires can be addressed through those domains. Plants are included with food and wildlife so EPH needs associated with plants can be addressed through those domains.

Table 1. Current Activities Underway to Improve Tribal Environmental Public Health

Air	Water	Land	Food & Wildlife	Built Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasis on reducing emissions ● Address agricultural emissions (smudge pots, ag burning, converting diesel to propane) ● Tribes to make burn bans ● Wood stove replacement programs (alt clean heat sources) ● Promote non-gas vehicles ● Pressure nearby industries to reduce emissions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● River protection through trash cleanup and restrict river tubers ● Post-flood water quality testing needs to improve ● Soil sampling improvements around agricultural runoff & incorporating septic codes ● Changes in rivers impacting fish population ● Tsunami zone rules are limiting options ● Outreach & education re: private well water testing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Restore access to traditional land ● Reconnecting community to the land ● Healing environmental trauma ● Intersection of fire, energy, natural resource dept and efforts in land management ● Integrating structure firefighting and tribal EMS services ● Big industries on reservations are hard to regulate ● Invasive species control ● Fertilizer (nitrate) control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● COVID-19 & wildfires have highlighted food security issues ● Food sovereignty is critical ● Training people with original tools and ways ● Food Safety Modernization Act ● Farm Bills do not include Tribes, Native American Farm Bill Coalition working on this ● Wild horse regulation ● Reduce the impact of recreation on food & wildlife 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase renewable energy sources, e.g. solar panels on tribal buildings ● FEMA for resources and funding, especially mitigation for natural disasters ● Role of transit/ transportation and improving walkability for health and safety ● Solid waste plans need improving; no/poor service if not in tribal housing ● One Tribe created a tribal payroll tax - solved funding but not popular

Source: Notes from Gathering attendee activities and report outs

Table 2. Needs and Ideas to Further Improve Tribal Environmental Public Health

Air	Water	Land	Food & Wildlife	Built Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Authority for correction and enforcement ● Appropriate burning techniques, training, policies ● Monitoring the night sky and light pollution ● Educate future leaders ● Stop removing trees ● Need air quality measuring technology ● Wood stove replacement ● Comprehensive plan to improve residential air quality, esp. winter ● Air monitors & info available to public ● Updated equipment to do incident reporting heat signature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Policies for private septic inspections & regulations ● Test all bodies of water and make public to tribal members ● Accessibility to clean drinking water ● Learn how other Tribes are cleaning & maintaining rivers & fish populations ● Control aquatic invasive species ● Consider impact of timber cutting (mudslides, fish pop.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More land! ● We need to decolonize our own greed & reconnect to land & community ● Continue to address land equity concerns for gatherers, hunters ● Address hazardous fuel control ● Green energy projects need more tribal consultation as they impact traditional gathering areas ● Need funding to clean up contaminated sites ● Project funding ● More responsible logging ● Responsibility to tree family communities ● More learning about prescribed burns ● Need to own fire suppression unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plant more native plants around already standing tribal buildings ● New bills to support native plants ● Tribal control of food programs ● Access & rehabilitation of traditional food sites ● Stop public harvesting of traditional plants/foods ● Private lessons on food sovereignty ● Don't allow rakes ● Staff & money to raise food for communities ● Bring back burning huckleberries to support their growth ● Plant trees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase renewable energy sources, e.g. solar panels on tribal buildings ● Tribal energy independence ● Highlight importance of Incident Command Plan ● Cleaning spills ● Training for HAZMAT due to brownfields, drug labs ● Tribal member homelessness ● Energy efficient/zero emissions housing ● Climate-ready/smoke-ready housing ● Retrofits ● New construction to be built for long term ● Ensuring outside projects consult w Tribe ● Tribal transfer station ● Education about composting & recycle

Source: Notes from Gathering attendee activities and report outs

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO ECOLOGICAL GRIEF

Gathering Summary

Danica Love Brown, MSW, PhD, NPAIHB Behavioral Health Director, shared a presentation called *Our Vision of Health for Future Generations*. This was followed by a presentation from Dr. Kyle Hill, PhD, MPH, Assistant Professor at the University of North Dakota, called *Ecological Grief to Gratitude: An Exercise in Adaptation*. The purpose of these sessions was to deepen people's understanding of ecological grief and its role in public health.

Dr. Love Brown's presentation helped to understand the importance of using indigenous storywork and original teachings to frame healing - to heal the people, we have to heal the land.

Highlights from Dr. Love Brown's presentation include:

- Relational restoration
- Narrative transformation
- Survivance
- Using a healing framework for the health of future generations



Dr. Hill's presentation helped to make a direct link between the crisis of Ecological Grief and its impact on Indigenous communities and our need to bring TEK forward in EPH in more concrete, systemic ways.

Highlights from Dr. Kyle Hill's *Ecological Grief to Gratitude: An Exercise in Adaptation* presentation include:

- Ecological grief comes from disruption of place and connection to the land
- Identity is constructed in relationship to the land, its use, and knowledge of it.

- The shift from grief to gratitude comes from connecting to traditional ways - ceremony, songs, only harvesting what we need
- Connecting to traditional ways is protective of indigenous health
- Approaches that support Climate Justice / Resilience



EXPANDING THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN EPH

Gathering Summary

Attendees underscored the need and desire to expand the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) in environmental public health approaches, programs, and services throughout the Gathering. Attendees believe TEK is a vital, necessary, and core component of tribal health and well-being, and therefore TEK needs to “always be at the table for all the domains”.

TEK is necessary to restore the loss of traditional ways and provide a more holistic approach to EPH challenges. Federal, state, and local approaches are too siloed. Here are some attendee comments to highlight the importance of TEK:

“Kids don't have the ability to inherit traditional knowledge with fishing, cleaning, hunting, gathering. They are losing the ability to can and preserve food through winter because there is not enough oral tradition.”

“Bring it [TEK] back because THAT has a lot to do with this. Our fisheries people aren't just fisheries people - they have their hands in every one of these things [The 5 Domains of Tribal Environmental Public Health].”

CREATING A TRIBAL DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

Gathering Summary

There was a brief discussion around the following definition of environmental health from the *Report of the Committee on the Future of Environmental Health*:

“Environmental health and protection is the art and science of protecting against environmental factors that may adversely impact human health or the ecological balances essential to long-term human health and environmental quality. Such factors include, but are not limited to: air, food and water contaminants; radiation; toxic chemicals; disease vectors; safety hazards; built environments and habitat alterations.”

Attendees shared that they appreciated the following:

- That the definition includes ecology because that includes relationship to the land
- That the definition includes **art** because that makes room for TEK
- Protecting against environmental factors is good and broad but is "protecting" the best word?

Attendees shared that they would like to see a different definition that included or considered:

- The interconnectedness of impacting while simultaneously being impacted
- Culture along with art and science, that science + culture are a blend
- Trauma across the lifespan and through the generations, that long-term needs to be regarded in this same way
- Being written for the people it intends to serve
- Positive aspects along with protective factors, there are aspects of the environment that help us
- The role of sharing knowledge and oral tradition within and across Tribes
- The idea of learning to be a better community member in service to EH

DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING EPH PROGRAMS

Gathering Summary

Information, questions, and discussions about developing and sustaining tribal EPH programs were woven throughout the two-and-a-half days.

THE IHS TRIBAL EH TOOLKIT

As a part of this work, the EPH team provided an introduction to the [Indian Health Service \(IHS\)](#)

[Tribal Toolkit](#) which was developed by Celeste Davis, MPH, REHS in 2016-2017 before she left IHS and joined NPAIHB.

The Toolkit is intended to guide Tribal public health leaders, administrators, and staff in the assessment, development, implementation, and improvement of the delivery of their environmental health programs. It is primarily to be used for working with direct service Tribes and/or those Tribes looking to assume responsibility for their environmental health services under P.L. 93-638, Title I or Title V. This Toolkit can also help those Tribes who have already assumed environmental health services under P.L. 93-638, Title I or Title V, strengthen and expand their delivery capabilities.

Key elements discussed that are available in the Toolkit, include:

- A roadmap and work plan for developing tribal EH programs and services (Toolkit p. 6-8)
- A summary of the 6 key elements and challenges to developing an effective EH program (Toolkit p. 9 and p. 19-21)
- The Portland Area Capacity Assessment Tool (PACAT), which helps Tribes determine their needs and readiness to develop and deliver their own EH programs and services (Toolkit p. 37-51)

The Chehalis Tribe used the PACAT and the Toolkit to help them assess and develop their capacity to improve and sustain their EH programs and services, resulting in a positive 638 of their EH program that they continue to successfully operate.

ATTENDEE OBSERVATIONS AND NEEDS RELATED TO DEVELOPING AND SUSTAINING EPH PROGRAMS

There was an understanding of the need for more EPH services across the region, within and between Tribes. In addition, we heard:

- People understand that it takes time to build programs
- Collective action is empowering
- We need to generate nation-to-nation building and interconnectivity
 - This will allow us to see how our organizational structures and needs for public health are similar across tribal organizations
 - We can tap into the commonalities between us for collaboration, networking, and resource sharing
- We need to educate our youth
 - Older generations have a responsibility to pass on traditional knowledge
 - We should invite youth to attend and participate in meetings and to assist and develop policies, giving them a chance to present ideas
 - We need to teach youth their treaty rights

- We need to continue to address land equity concerns for the gatherers and hunters in traditional areas
 - Allow community members that hold traditional knowledge to attend tribal meetings locally in order to help protect land use rights and to maintain access to that land for gathering, hunting, fishing, and ceremonial purposes
- Our organizations need opportunities for consistent capacity development
- We need clear direction on funding opportunities and generating policies

CHALLENGES TO ELEVATING THE IMPORTANCE OF EPH WITHIN TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Participants talked about the difficulty in engaging leadership around EPH issues, especially as information moves up the chain of command. It's important for Gathering participants to bring these conversations back to their tribal governments. Very often, tribal leadership is engaged with competing priorities which makes communication difficult.

Engaging tribal governments can be a challenge, as there is no easy way to share information across departments. One example given of an outreach effort was having an educational dinner to share with leaders to share their department needs. The perception is generally that it's only emergency management or other things that have less to do with EPH.

Moving Forward

Needs and Next Steps

- The EPH Program will draft a resolution in support of the environmental health efforts and strategies mentioned above—especially focused on Environmental Justice and Health Equity for Seven Generations—to go to the Tribal Health Delegates for approval
- The EPH Program will work within the NPAIHB Public Health Committee to raise awareness and elevate the importance of EH for the Delegates and Tribal Health Directors
- Identifying specific community EH needs and issues so that we may focus our efforts and resources toward your priorities, as well as creating a database or list of issues by Tribe so that we can seek funding and other resources to help you address those issues
- Launching a NW Tribal EPH CoP
- Next NWTEPH Gathering - planning for Summer or Fall or 2024

The Gathering laid the foundation for a shared understanding of Environmental Public Health and what we hope to accomplish with the NW Tribes. It is our belief that the CoP will

operationalize how we develop and sustain a strong NW Tribal Environmental Public Health system.

Creating a Community of Practice

We will be working with you to create a community of practice (CoP) to support you in developing your tribe's environmental health program. A primary purpose of the CoP is to share ideas, and take collective action and advocate for the specific needs of our tribes and people for seven generations.

We will focus our efforts on developing the capacity of CoP participants to provide environmental public health services to Tribes.

Our vision, to be further developed in partnership with you, is:

- Hold routine virtual meetings to keep collective efforts around EPH going
- Hold one in-person meeting each year
- Host and support topic area groups/committees
- Hold in-person multi-day gatherings every other year specifically for tribal members and tribal employees working on issues related to environmental public health

The work of the CoP is a continuation of the inaugural Northwest Tribal Environmental Public Health (NWTEPH) Gathering in August 2022:

- Creating a NW tribal description of EPH
- Mapping tribal ecosystems
- Learning about tribal activities and needs across the five domains of EPH
- Expanding the role of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in EPH
- Developing and sustaining EPH programs
- Elevating the importance of EPH within tribal governments
- Further developing IHS's Tribal Toolkit so it is culturally aligned
- Understanding and responding to ecological grief
- Sharing tribal success stories to strengthen our network
- Presenting issues and initiatives to the NPAIHB for resolution support as needed
- Applying for grants and other funding opportunities to support our CoP work
- Sponsoring training on EPH topics
- Strategic planning and group facilitation
- Work with individual Tribes to develop tactics and strategies for strong community engagement and health equity around EJ, Climate Change, and other critical environmental health issues

TRIBAL PRESENTATIONS

SPOKANE

Spokane Tribal Network - Melodi Wynne, Ph.D., Community & Cultural Psychology

Key topics:

- Food sovereignty
- Connection to people, self, land
- Sacred Relationship to fire – cultural burns
- Youth Education
- Knowledge sharing

Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) - Buck Jones, Salmon Marketing

Key topics:

- Sustainability
- Putting fish back in the river is the goal
- Salmon are culturally relevant and not just commerce
- Overfishing
- Hydropower/dams
- Fishing rights
- Poor living conditions near the river
- COVID-19 response
- Increase in tribal collaborations and partnerships
- Food distribution

NEZ PERCE Air Quality - Johna Boulafentis, MA, Environmental Outreach Specialist

Key topics:

- Tribe is tracking air quality through fire.airnow.gov
- Agricultural burning
- Green cleaning
- Wood stove burning project
- Indoor air quality assessments
- Asthma interventions
- Provide hands-on education to young people
- Pesticide investigations
- Emergency management