

NEN' EL TUU

The CVTC Tribal Response Program Newsletter

Saen (Summer) 2023

Volume 5 | Issue 3



NTS'E BA HNIYAES?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

- **Bede Nt'aennen?** *Who is this?*
A 90-second Interview: *Page Hingst*
- **Nts'e cu tkot'aen?:** What Else is Happening? Upcoming FREE events!
- **Nakosu'!** You guys clean up! (Element 4)
- **Hwdzax dadelii:** He is foretelling something dangerous. PFAS: The Contaminant You Probably Haven't Heard of Before
- **Hnats'et'aen:** We are playing.
- **Slaaghe dela dezenda?** Can you help?



xost'aan'

Sitka rose

Photo Credit: Stephanie Freeman

BEDE NT'AENEN? WHO IS THIS? (a 90-second interview)

1. What's your name?

Page Hingst

2. What's your job?

I am the 128(a) Tribal Response Program Manager for the Santee Sioux Nation located in northeast Nebraska. My job entails working on brownfields, above and underground storage tanks, hazardous waste, and emergency response.

3. Have you ever been to Alaska?

No, but would love to!

4. How long have you been working in your position/field?

7 and half years

5. What's something you wish the general public knew about your job?

That because I work in the Environmental Department, doesn't mean that all I want to do is give people fines. In all actuality, I do not have the authority to give fines or enforce environmental laws. Here in our environmental department, we want to educate and make the environment better for all people who live on the Santee Sioux Nation Reservation.

6. Most routine part of your job?

Administrative work such as writing reports.

flowers -

c'e'taan unetnigi



7. Weirdest/Wildest thing you witnessed while working?

In 2019, we had a 500 year flood on the Santee Sioux Nation Reservation. It was in March and the ground was still frozen. A bomb cyclone came through and dropped 2 1/2 inches of rain on frozen ground and rivers. Because the ground was still frozen, it wasn't able to absorb the rain. A creek that runs right by the office sounded like roaring rapids. I came to work at 8:00 am and by 9:00 am, I was leaving the office frantically trying to get home because everything was flooding. The Tribe lost power and water for 8 days. It was the wildest thing I have ever seen!

8. Favorite animal?

My favorite animal is a dragon. Some may say they are mythical but I tend to believe they once lived long ago.

9. Seasonal Question: Would you rather eat ice-cream every day, or s'mores every night?

Ice cream everyday!! :)

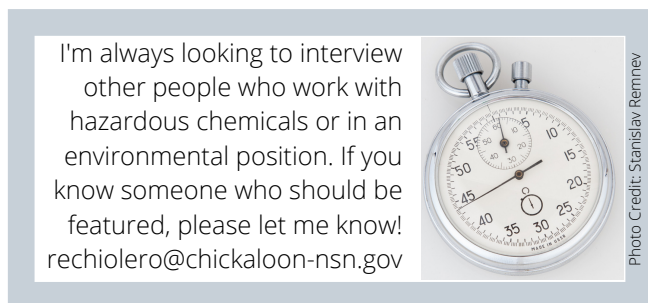
NTS'E CU TKOT'AEN? WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING? Tribal Response Program Outreach & Other FREE Happenings

Hwtsiic na'aaye (August)

- 11 (Fri): Family Hangout Night (6-8p) Black Birch Books, Wasilla - Grab your family or bestie and head to the bookstore for a fun evening of snacks, boardgames and movies! Some snacks will be provided. Bringing some to share is encouraged!
- 13 (Sun): One Health Fest (11a - 4p) Palmer Train Depot - a free festival for all ages celebrating "One Health" - a concept that our health & wellbeing is directly connected to our community, our culture, & our environment! We will have live music, food trucks, vendors, workshops, and lots of fun activities.

Ditsiigi na'aaye' (September)

- 13 (Wed): Night at the Museum - Game Night (3 - 6:30p) - Wasilla Museum Come play Brownfield Bingo and other games at the Wasilla Museum!



NAKOSU! YOU GUYS CLEAN UP!

It's the fourth thing a Tribal Response Program is supposed to accomplish:

ELEMENT 4: *Approval of cleanup plans/verification that cleanup is complete.*

What does this mean?

This means that that Tribes include in their response program mechanisms to approve cleanup plans and to verify that response actions are complete. Written approval by a Tribal Response Program official of a proposed cleanup plan is an example of an "approval mechanism".

Unfortunately it's not that easy, because like Element 2 we've discussed previously, "in Alaska, DEC has the capacity and statutory authority to approve cleanup plans and verify that cleanup efforts fulfill a responsible party's obligations." Even so, the Tribal Response Program Coordinator is still responsible for doing work under this element.

Some examples of work Tribal Response Program Coordinators can do to fulfill this element include:

- verifying that contaminated sites that are in the DEC's database under "institutional controls" (IC) still have those controls in place (e.g. warning signs, fencing, etc.)
- becoming certified samplers and make sure that the testing is done accurately and that contamination is below state-set limits
- Participating in Alaska Regional Response Team (ARRT) meetings (<http://alaskarrt.org/>)
- Providing comments on proposed plan updates or policy guidance
- Professional Spill Drill Training (like 40-hour Hazardous Waste Operations Management (HAZWOPER))

There are many ways that TRP Coordinators can meet the requirements of this element since Tribal Response Programs are given a lot of flexibility. However, it's always important to check with your EPA Project Manager to make sure your proposed activity is approved.





You might not know what PFAS chemicals are, but you've already been exposed to them. In fact, most humans on the planet now have PFAS in their bodies. Let's learn about what these chemicals are, and what we can do about it. (Tsin'aen to Page Hingst for providing the PFAS flyer in this issue!)

What is PFAS?

1. What even are they?

- PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a large group of man-made chemicals that have been widely used in various industries since the 1940s. They are currently classified as "emerging contaminants of concern" by the US EPA. One example: teflon.

2. Common uses of PFAS chemicals:

- PFAS chemicals are known for their resistance to heat, water, and oil, which makes them useful in many applications such as non-stick cookware, water-repellent fabrics, firefighting foam, and food packaging. They are found in thousands of consumer products all over the world.

3. Environmental persistence:

- PFAS chemicals last in the environment, meaning they do not break down easily (or at all). This has led to their accumulation in water, soil, and wildlife, posing long-term risks. It is why they are known as "forever chemicals".

5. Regulatory actions:

- Recognizing the potential risks, many countries and regulatory bodies have taken action to regulate or phase out certain PFAS chemicals. For example, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established health advisory levels for some PFAS compounds in drinking water. The State of Alaska is currently working on an action plan and cleanup levels for PFAS contamination.

(<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/pfas/action-plan/>)

Where is PFAS?

In regards to PFAS in the environment, it has been said that "where you look for it, you find it." In Alaska, PFAS is found particularly near military installations and airports where firefighting foam containing PFAS has been used. Some notable places where PFAS can be found in Alaska are:

1. Military installations: Several military bases in Alaska, including Eielson Air Force Base and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, have been identified as potential sources of PFAS contamination due to historical use of firefighting foam.

2. Drinking Water: PFAS contamination in groundwater and surface water sources has raised concerns about potential impacts on drinking water supplies in affected areas.

3. Wildlife: PFAS contamination has been found in fish, wildlife, and subsistence resources in certain regions of Alaska, potentially posing risks to traditional subsistence practices and food security.

4. Plants: PFAS chemicals have also been found in living plant tissues, also posing risks to traditional subsistence practices and food security.



From: Groundwater Resources Association of California
GRAIOI Week, July 11-15, 2022 (Accessed: 31 July 2023)

Why this matters:

1. Health risks:

- Understanding the potential health effects associated with PFAS exposure can help individuals make informed decisions to protect themselves and their families. By being aware of the risks, you can take appropriate measures to minimize exposure and seek necessary medical attention if needed. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), PFAS has been found in the blood of 97% of all Americans tested for it. (<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/pfc/index.cfm#:~:text=One%20report%20by%20the%20Centers,blood%20of%2097%25%20of%20Americans.>)

Studies on humans have linked PFAS exposure to:

- high cholesterol
- ulcerative colitis
- cancer (testicular, kidney)
- preeclampsia
- liver damage
- thyroid disease
- decreased vaccine response
- asthma
- decreased fertility
- lower birth weight

2. Environmental impact:

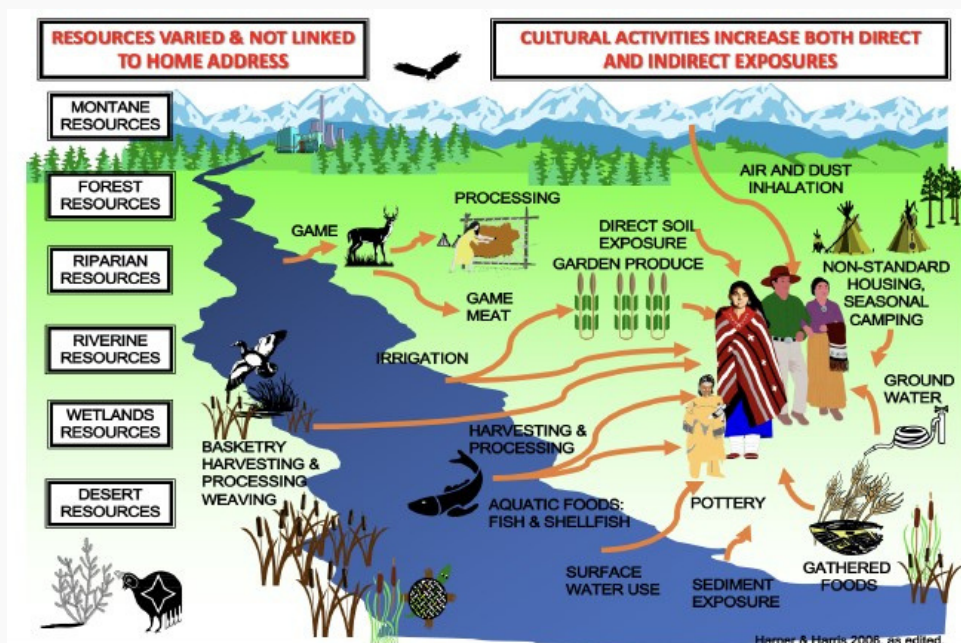
- PFAS chemicals are persistent and can accumulate in the environment, posing risks to ecosystems and wildlife. Being aware of their impact can contribute to responsible environmental stewardship and support efforts to mitigate contamination and protect natural resources.

3. Consumer choices:

- Knowledge about PFAS chemicals empowers consumers to make informed choices. By understanding where PFAS can be found in everyday products, such as cookware or food packaging, individuals can seek out alternatives or products labeled as PFAS-free, promoting safer options and influencing market demand.

4. Advocacy and Policy:

- Awareness of PFAS chemicals enables individuals to engage in advocacy efforts aimed at stronger regulations and policies. By staying informed and voicing concerns, you can contribute to the development of robust regulations, increased transparency, and improved monitoring of PFAS contamination.



You can learn more about PFAS contamination in Alaska by visiting:

<https://dec.alaska.gov/spar/csp/pfas/>



PFAS and Your Health: A Resource for Tribal Communities



"Drinking water at a side-street water tap"
Johannes Roesler, CCBY 2.0



"Fish management Celilo falls"
Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission



USDA Lance Cheung
PD 1.0

What are PFAS?

Why are they a concern for our health?

PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) are a class of chemicals that are used to make consumer products to make them nonstick, waterproof, and stain-resistant. They are found in carpets and upholstery, waterproof apparel, non-stick cookware, grease-proof food packaging, and even dental floss. They are also used in many industrial processes and in firefighting foams for putting out fuel fires.

Recent studies show that almost everyone has some amount of PFAS in their blood.

There is still a lot that is unknown concerning PFAS but there are numerous health effects and unknown sources where contamination can occur.

More info on PFAS: www.pfas-exchange.org

Tribal PFAS Working Group:
www7.nau.edu/itep/ntwc/Issues/PFAS

Studies have linked exposure to PFAS in human studies with:

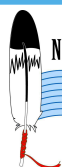
- High cholesterol
- Ulcerative colitis
- Cancer (testicular, kidney)
- Preeclampsia
- Liver damage
- Thyroid disease
- Decreased vaccine response
- Asthma
- Decreased fertility
- Lower birth weight

Studies have linked exposure to PFAS in animal studies with:

- Cancer (liver, kidney, pancreatic)
- Liver damage
- Delayed mammary gland development
- Developmental problems
- Effects on brain developments
- Immune system effects



PFAS-REACH
PFAS Research, Education,
and Action for Community Health

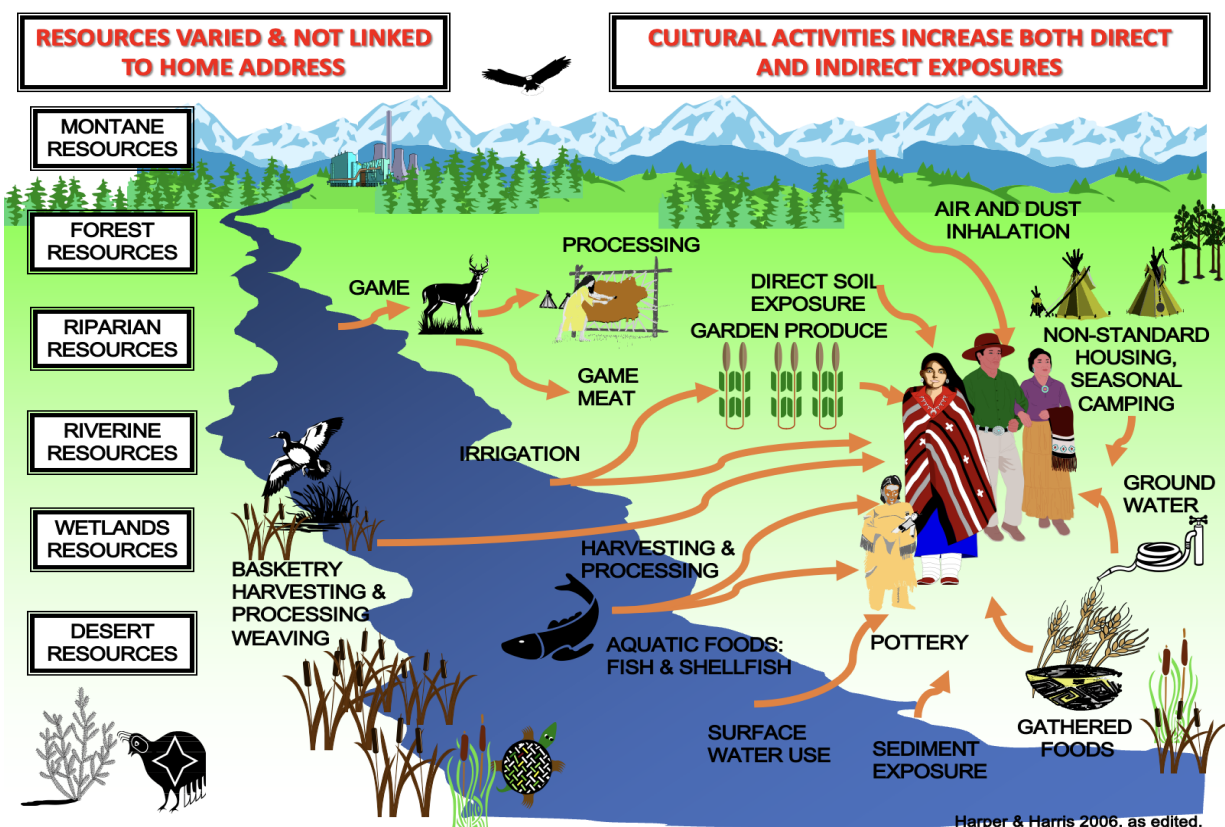


NATIONAL TRIBAL WATER COUNCIL



PFAS Project Lab
Northeastern University

PFAS Exposure and Exposure Prevention



In your personal life:

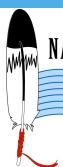
- ✓ Avoid stain-resistant carpets, upholstery, as well as stain-resistant treatments, and waterproofing sprays.
- ✓ Avoid products with the ingredient PTFE or other "fluoro" ingredients listed on the label.
- ✓ Choose cookware made of cast iron, stainless steel, glass, or enamel instead of Teflon.
- ✓ Consider filtering your drinking water with an activated carbon or reverse osmosis filtration system.
- ✓ Eat more fresh foods to avoid take-out containers and other food packaging.
- ✓ Avoid microwave popcorn and greasy foods wrapped in paper. Look for nylon or silk dental floss that is uncoated or coated in natural wax.

In your community:

- ✓ Tell retailers and manufacturers you want products made without PFAS. Urge your local water utility to test for PFAS.
- ✓ Ask your local health department or an agency such as CDC, ATSDR, or Indian Health Service to set up a water and blood testing programs.
- ✓ Encourage your Tribe to create health-protective drinking water limits for PFAS.
- ✓ Ask your Tribal governmental officials about restrictions on PFAS in consumer products and remediation of contaminated sites.
- ✓ Watch out for advisories on PFAS contamination in your local area. Consider staying away from areas with known PFAS contamination.



PFAS-REACH
PFAS Research, Education,
and Action for Community Health



NATIONAL TRIBAL WATER COUNCIL



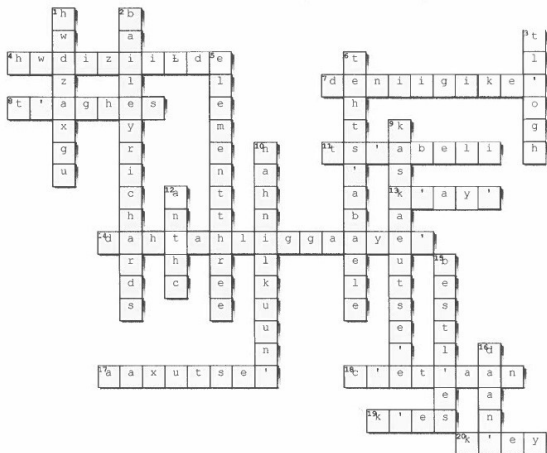
PFAS Project Lab
Northeastern University

HNATS'ET'AEN: WE ARE PLAYING

Oh dear! This little sos (bear) seems to have misplaced his **bow tie** in this field of c'et'aan unetniigi (flowers). Can you find it?

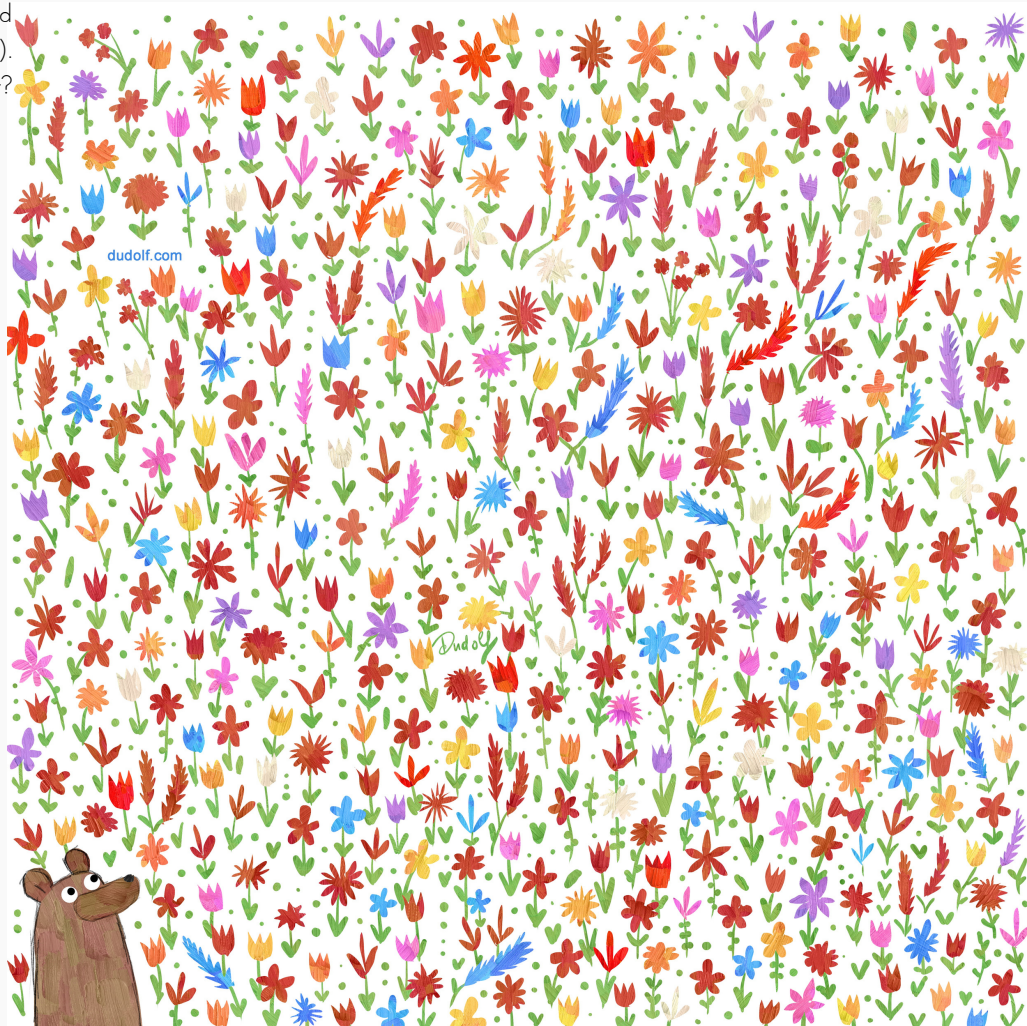
Spring 2023

Spring has sprung! Look through the newsletter to find the hidden Ahtna words. The clues here are in English, most of the answers will be in Ahtna. Look for the sprout! (-^o)!



Duughe
tatiis'aan.

(I lost it around here.)



ts'endziidi - bee
utsit'ahwdelggeyi - yarrow



@brownfieldbear

SLAAGHE DELA DEZENDA?

CAN YOU HELP?

Curious about the Tribal Response Program?

Wanna talk about brownfields or have me do a presentation?

Got an idea for an article you'd like to see? I'd love to hear from you!

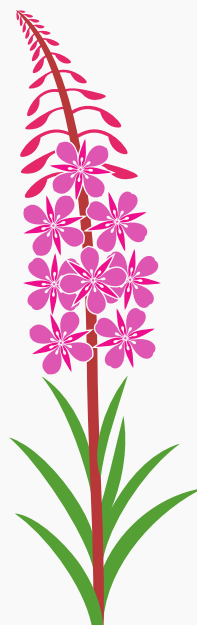
Richard Chiolero

CVTC Tribal Response Program Coordinator

phone: 907.761.3908

email: rechiolero@chickaloon-nsn.gov

website: <https://www.chickaloon-nsn.gov/tribal-response-program/>



tl'ac'usk'a' -
fireweed