Helping to support tribes’ management, analysis, and sharing of their environmental data
Presentation Overview

- Introduction to the Exchange Network (EN)
- Tribal perspectives about the Exchange Network (EN)
- The Tribal Exchange Network Group (TXG)
- Opportunities for tribal support and assistance
- Contacts and links for more information
The Exchange Network (EN)

- **GOAL**: better environmental management and decision-making through increased access to timely, high-quality environmental information
- Partner-driven network of technology, resources, and collaborations for improved data-sharing
- EPA-supported grant opportunities for building capacity
- Foundation and model for the E-Enterprise for the Environment initiative
Value of the Exchange Network (EN)

- Access to high quality, timely data at lower cost
- Robust security measures to control data access
- Strengthened information management and technology capabilities
- Data access to professionals at different levels of government and the public
- Open government transparency
Why are tribal perspectives needed? *(From the TXG)*

- “Because **tribes are different in how they collect and share data.** Tribes typically have limited resources (e.g. technology, financial, staffing support, etc.)” – BryAnna Vaughan, TXG

- “**Every tribe has different concerns and priorities,** and available resources can vary widely. Many tribes have addressed issues in innovative ways that can be an inspiration for others.” – April Hathcoat, TXG

- “To insert **individual tribal needs** per their homeland/watershed in EPA's Regional framework.” - Bruce Jones, TXG
• Tribes know best what tribal programs need to succeed and overcome the challenges faced.

• We need to keep the pace of data management and exchange to a level at which tribes can stay involved.

• If tribes do not speak up for their specific data management needs, then others with less knowledge of tribes will.

In other words...
The *Tribal Exchange Network Group (TXG)* promotes tribal sovereignty, capacity, and equity to enhance participation in the Exchange Network

- Advocate for improved access to funding and resources that support tribal needs,
- Communicate tribal priorities and perspectives on EN activities,
- Provide mentoring, training, and technical assistance for tribes.

TXG is supported by the [Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP)](http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/about-us.html) through a cooperative assistance agreement with US’ EPA Office of Mission Support.

How does the TXG do this?

TXG Charter (updated 2021)
- Defines TXG organization, membership criteria, and decision-making processes

TXG Membership
- 8 members with 15+ EN grants awarded

Tribal Needs Assessment (2018)
- Describes tribal needs and capacity for environmental data management and collection activities

TXG Strategic Plan for 2020-2025
- Guides priority focus areas and work plan implementation and assessment
A brief history of the TXG and EN

2000: First pre-Exchange Network “One Stop” grants awarded

2002: Exchange Network partnership and governance established

2008: Tribal Governance Group (TGG) formed (Chartered: 2013)

2015: E-Enterprise launched & Leadership Council (EELC) established

2020: TGG renamed itself the Tribal Exchange Network Group (TXG)

The **mission of the TXG is to**...

**Support tribes’** management, analysis, and sharing of their environmental data, so they can use this data to **advocate for their interests** in order to preserve tribal lifeways, maintain cultural integrity, and enhance tribal members’ sense of place.
The purpose of the TXG is to...

- **Promote tribal sovereignty** by supporting tribes to make informed environmental decisions;
- **Facilitate access to resources and tools** for improving data management and exchange solutions;
- **Communicate and collaborate** with US EPA, EN, and EE partners to increase understanding of the unique tribal cultural values and environmental concerns.
Frank Harjo
GIS Manager/TXG Chair
Muscogee Nation, OK

April Hathcoat
Director, Cherokee Nation Environmental Program, OK

Bruce Jones
SSHIAP Manager, NW Indian Fisheries Commission, WA

Leonard Bruce
Senior Planner & Policy Analyst
Gila River Indian Community, AZ

Bryanna Vaughan
Water Quality Coordinator, Bishop Paiute Tribe, CA
Goal #1. Increasing tribal capacity to manage, analyze, and share environmental data and information electronically

Mentoring tribal staff working with environmental data and information technology, including EN project implementation

Supporting training and assistance activities that provide tribes with relevant skills and knowledge
Goal #2. Improving collaboration and coordination between tribes and EPA

Engaging with tribal, EPA, and other professionals at the Tribal EN Conference, and other national and regional Tribal/EPA events

Communicating with EPA-supported national and regional tribal partnership groups, committees, and consortia
Goal #3. Expanding access to resources for tribes that enhance engagement in the Exchange Network.

Working with EPA to provide feedback on the annual EN grant solicitation priorities as they apply to tribes

Promoting access to funding resources and other solutions for addressing restrictions on Operations and Maintenance (O&M) costs for tribal programs
TXG Mentoring & Technical Support Activities

**Purpose:** Build technical capacity of tribal programs to elevate tribal government's abilities to make informed environmental management decisions using technology. (Make the daily lives of tribal professionals dealing with data EASIER!)

**Tribal mentoring support:**
- No cost to tribal staff
- One-on-one or small-group settings
- Virtual and/or in-person support by Tribal Professionals with direct experience
- One-time and/or recurring sessions as needed

**Example tribal mentoring activities:**
- Establishing a water quality data system
- Creating charts and reports with ‘R’
- Assistance planning an EN grant project

"R Chat" virtual session, 2020

Request Help from a TXG Mentor Online
TXG mentoring & technical support (cont.)

• Tribes and the EN Conference
  • Information-sharing and networking for tribal, EPA, and other EN professionals
  • Presentations, panel discussions, poster sessions, and more
  • Past events are archived online

• Tribal Data and Technology Academy
  • Short workshops for tribes to develop real-world data management skills
  • Hands-on lessons with individualized assistance and mentoring
  • More information
TXG Communication and Collaboration Activities

- Coordination with national, regional and media-program tribal and EPA partners
- Outreach on TXG at conferences, meetings, and other events
- Tribal Exchange Network Conference
- Tribal professional development and networking activities
  - Openscapes (Open science and environmental data community)
  - Carpentries (Data and Software Carpentry community)
TXG Advocacy and Engagement Activities

• TXG is an EPA-supported Tribal Partnership Group with membership criteria and organizational principles outlined in the TXG Charter
• Coordination with EPA and EN partners promote tribal access, equity, and inclusion for the Exchange Network
  • more balanced funding support for tribal programs, including for Operation and Maintenance costs (O&M)
  • leveraging and expanding resources that support low-cost, scalable technology solutions
• Members also participate in other boards and work groups to offer tribal perspectives and support EN and EE tribal partners
  • Management Board & Interoperability and Operations Team
  • Software licensing support needs workgroup
Why participate?

“I have met other individuals who are working through some of the same challenges and have been able to learn from their experience. Plus, we have fun while doing work!” – April Hathcoat

“[Provide] tribes with the skills and knowledge to manage and utilize EN grant funding to build decision making tools.” – Frank Harjo

“Be a voice for tribes and stand up for the needs of tribal environmental programs.” – BryAnna Vaughan
How to get involved

TXG Membership Request Form

EN Tribal Mentor Request Form

www.tribalexchangenetwork.org

txg@tribalexchangenetwork.org
Contacts

**TXG Email:** txg@tribalexchangенetwork.org

**TXG Website:** www.tribalexchangенetwork.org

**Exchange Network Partnership**
www.exchangенetwork.net

**EPA Exchange Network**
www.epa.gov/exchangенetwork

**ITEP Contact:**
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