



EPA Region 7 Communities Information Digest

December 13, 2016

Welcome to the latest EPA Region 7 Digest!

EPA Region 7's Communities Information Digest provides communities with the latest news about funding technical assistance opportunities, webinars, conferences, and other activities related to human health and the environment.

An * indicates a new item.

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December is Winter Holiday Safety Month



Did you know?

Nearly half of holiday decoration fires happen because decorations are placed too close to a heat source.

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.

-Water your Christmas tree every day. A dry tree is dangerous because it can catch on fire easily.

-Consider using battery-operated flameless candles, which can look, smell and feel like real candles.

<https://www.usfa.fema.gov/prevention/outreach/holiday.html>

Headlines

National

[*EPA Announces Publication of Draft Recreational Ambient Water Quality Criteria and/or Swimming Advisories for the Cyanotoxins](#)

EPA recently published draft recreational water quality criteria and/or swimming advisories for the cyanotoxins microcystin and cylindrospermopsin. EPA has identified recommended concentrations of the cyanotoxins to protect human health while swimming or participating in other recreational activities in and on the water. Once final, states can consider adopting these criteria into their water quality standards and using them for Clean Water Act purposes. EPA is accepting comments on the draft criteria document for 60 days.

[*EPA Finalizes Stronger Standards for Workers Who Apply Riskiest Pesticides](#)

The EPA recently finalized standards for applicators who apply restricted-use pesticides that are not available for purchase by the general public, and require special handling. This action will reduce the likelihood of harm from the misapplication because the pesticides may only be applied by a certified applicator or someone working under their direct supervision.

[*EPA's National Lakes Assessment Finds Nutrient Pollution in Most Lakes](#)

EPA released the results of a national assessment showing that nutrient pollution is widespread in the nation's lakes, with 4 in 10 lakes suffering from too much nitrogen and phosphorus. Excess nutrients can cause algae blooms, lower oxygen levels, degrade habitat for fish and other life, and lower water quality for recreation. The National Lakes Assessment also found an algal toxin – microcystin – in 39 percent of lakes but below levels of concern. Low concentrations of the herbicide atrazine were found in 30 percent of lakes.

[*EPA Reinvests in America's Water Infrastructure With New Water Finance Program](#)

The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) of 2014 created a new federal loan and guarantee program at EPA to accelerate investment in our nation's water infrastructure. It was designed after the proven and highly successful TIFIA infrastructure loan program at the US Department of Transportation. WIFIA authorizes EPA to provide long-term, low-cost rate loans, at U.S. Treasury rates, for up to 49 percent of eligible project costs for projects that will cost at least \$20 million for large communities and \$5 million for small communities (population of 25,000 or less).

[*EPA Releases Updated Federal Interagency Report on Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate](#)

An updated report addressing ways to build resilience to climate change for water resources has been released by the federal Water Resources and Climate Change Workgroup. "Looking Forward: Priorities for Managing Freshwater Resources in a Changing Climate" updates a 2011 National Action Plan and outlines priority actions to make progress in three key areas: data and research; planning and decision support; and training and outreach. Fourteen federal agencies were involved in developing this report and are undertaking efforts to build the nation's preparedness to extreme events.

[*HUD Launches New Community Investment Tool](#)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) recently unveiled the Community Assessment Reporting Tool (CART) – an innovative reference and mapping tool created to help answer the question, "*How is HUD investing in my community?*" CART provides a snapshot of HUD investments across a community, cutting the time it takes to generate this information from several business days to minutes. CART uses geospatial technology to show the wide variety of HUD investments by city, state, county, metropolitan area, or congressional district.

[*Partnership Seeking Input for Projects to Strengthen National Defense and Preserve Working Lands](#)

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) joined the Department of the Interior (DOI) and the Department of Defense (DoD) to announce the Sentinel Landscapes Federal Coordinating Committee will now accept applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Sentinel Landscape designation process.

[*Energy Department Announces American Institute of Chemical Engineers to Lead New Manufacturing USA Institute](#)

The Acting Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy David Friedman recently announced that the American Institute of Chemical Engineers will lead the tenth Manufacturing USA Institute to be stood up during the Obama Administration. This announcement represents a critical step in the Administration's effort to double U.S. energy productivity by 2030.

[*EPA Releases Final Report on Impacts from Hydraulic Fracturing Activities on Drinking Water Resources](#)

The EPA is releasing its scientific report on the impacts from hydraulic fracturing activities on drinking water resources, which provides states and others the scientific foundation to better protect drinking water resources in areas where hydraulic fracturing is occurring or being considered. The report, done at the request of Congress, provides scientific evidence that hydraulic fracturing activities can impact drinking water resources in the United States under some circumstances. As part of the report, EPA identified conditions under which impacts from hydraulic fracturing activities can be more frequent or severe.

[*Climate and Health Assessment Kits Now Available from EPA](#)

EPA has developed eight communication kits that summarize key points from *The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment* for the different populations that are disproportionately affected by climate-change impacts. The agency is providing these materials for use and modification by anyone seeking to communicate the health impacts of climate change to a range of audiences.

[*Climate Adaptation: The State of Practice in U.S. Communities](#)

This is the first study to examine, in depth, actions that multiple municipalities are taking to address climate-change-fueled events like flooding, heat waves, wildfires, and intense storms. The study found that more municipalities are preparing for climate risks than is conventionally believed, that many of those actions support multiple community goals and values, and that despite the progress, much more work is necessary to address climate risks comprehensively.

[*New Federal Council On Community Solutions Launched](#)

President Obama signed an Executive Order establishing a Community Solutions Council that, harnessing best practices learned over the past eight years, creates a lasting structure for Federal agencies to continue improving coordination across government and strengthening partnerships with communities, the private sector, and other stakeholders.

[*New U.S. DOE Report Shows Potential Growth of Distributed Wind Energy Through 2050](#)

The U.S. DOE released a first-of-its-kind assessment of the potential future growth of distributed wind energy in the United States through 2050. Distributed wind differs from utility-scale wind in that it is installed at or near the point of end-use to meet on-site demand, such as at a farm, industrial or manufacturing facility, or rural home.

[*EPA's Policy and Program Impact Estimator](#)

EPA's Policy and Program Impact Estimator, launched in summer 2016, is an Excel spreadsheet calculator designed to help municipalities, counties, and tribes estimate life-cycle GHG reductions from implementing new or expanded materials recovery policies and

programs. It addresses municipal solid waste from single-family and multi-family homes and businesses, as well as construction and demolition debris.

[*Energy Department Announces Winners of 2016 Federal Energy & Water Management Awards](#)

The Energy Department today recognized 30 winners across the federal government with the 2016 Federal Energy and Water Management Awards. These annual awards highlight federal agencies' commitments and accomplishments in leading the nation toward more sustainable energy, water and vehicle fleet use and saving taxpayer money and reducing pollution.

[*USDA Expands Farm Loans for Native Americans Farming and Ranching on Tribal Land](#)

USDA has recently approved and obligated the first loan under the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Loan program (HFIL). The program provides revolving loan funds to qualified intermediary lenders, allowing qualified tribes and individuals the ability to purchase tribal farmland that has multiple owners.

[*USDA Invests \\$33 Million to Improve Water Quality in High-Priority Watersheds](#)

USDA recently announced an investment of more than \$33 million in 197 high-priority watersheds across the country to help landowners improve water quality through the Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS) National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI). The NWQI helps farmers and ranchers implement voluntary conservation practices, such as nutrient management, cover crops, conservation cropping systems, filter strips, terraces and buffers, which protect and improve water quality where it is needed most.

[*Comment Period Extended: Technical Support Materials for EPA's Aquatic Life Ambient Water Quality Criterion for Selenium - Freshwater 2016](#)

The EPA is extending by sixty days the period during which stakeholders may provide comments on the Agency's draft technical support materials for the selenium aquatic life criterion. The comment period will now close on February 10, 2017. This will allow sufficient time for stakeholders to gather data and provide substantive comments. Comments on the technical support materials are accepted at regulations.gov (Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2016-0551).

[*Rebuilding Healthy Homes Guide to Post-Disaster Restoration for a Safe and Healthy Home](#)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's developed a consumer-friendly resource to provide best practices for creating healthy homes after the impact of a natural disaster. The "Rebuild Healthy Homes: Guide to Post-Disaster Restoration for a Safe and Healthy Home" provides essential information to homeowners for restoring homes damaged by disasters. The Guide includes how-to methods, tips, and improvement ideas for safe restoration.

[*USDA Awards \\$6.7 Million for Research to Support Healthy Agroecosystems](#)

USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced 18 grants totaling more than \$6.7 million for research to discover how components of the agroecosystem from soil, water and sun to plants, animals and people, interact with and affect food production. These awards are made through NIFA's Bioenergy and Natural Resources Program, Agroecosystem priority area of the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative (AFRI).

[*Report: Climate Change and Indigenous Peoples: A Synthesis of Current Impacts and Experiences](#)

growing body of literature examines the vulnerability, risk, resilience, and adaptation of indigenous peoples to climate change. This synthesis of literature brings together research pertaining to the impacts of climate change on sovereignty, culture, health, and economies that are currently being experienced by Alaska Native and American Indian tribes and other indigenous communities in the United States. 2016.

[*Nominate a Wetlands Hero for the 2017 National Wetlands Awards](#) - Nominations are due December 21

The National Wetlands Awards program has recognized excellence in wetlands protection since 1989. The Environmental Law Institute hosts the Awards with the support of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, NOAA Fisheries, U.S. Forest Service, Federal Highway Administration, and private sponsors.

[EPA Seeks Input on the Gap of Water Quality Standards Coverage in Indian Reservation Waters](#) Comments are due by December 28

On September 19, 2016, Administrator McCarthy signed an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANPRM) requesting public comment on the establishment of federal baseline water quality standards (WQS) under the Clean Water Act (CWA) for Indian reservation waters that currently do not have EPA-approved WQS to protect water quality.

[EPA Calls for Nominations for 2017 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards](#)

The EPA announced its call for nominations for the 2017 Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Awards for companies or institutions that have developed a new process or product helping to protect public health and the environment. Nominations for innovative technologies featuring greener chemicals and products, are due to the agency by **December 31, 2016**.

[*Solar in Your Community Challenge Launches](#) - Early Applications are due January 6, 2017

SunShot is accepting applications for its newest prize competition, the Solar in Your Community Challenge, which aims to expand solar electricity access to all Americans, especially underserved segments such as low- and moderate-income households. Offering \$5 million in cash prizes and technical assistance over 18 months, the challenge supports teams across the country to develop projects or programs that expand solar access, while proving that these business models can be widely replicated and adopted.

[*EPA Presidential Environmental Education Awards for Teachers and Students](#) Applications Due on March 1, 2017

The award recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning. Award winners receive up to \$2,500 to continue their professional development in environmental education. Additionally, the teacher's local education agency will receive up to \$2,500 to fund environmental educational activities and programs. Youth can receive the Presidential Environmental Youth Award (PEYA).

[*Using a Total Environment Framework \(Built, Natural, Social Environments\) to Assess Life-long Health Effects of Chemical Exposures](#) - Requests for Proposals are due by March 2, 2017

The EPA has released the Using a Total Environmental Framework (Built, Natural, Social Environments) to Assess Life-long Health Effects of Chemical Exposures Request for Applications. Through its Science to Achieve Results (STAR) Research Grants Program, the EPA is seeking applications for research investigating how pollution affects human health in the context of the total environment - built, natural and social.

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Funding & Technical Assistance Opportunities

[Photovoltaic Research and Development 2: Modules and Systems](#) December 14

[Kansas Organization of Recyclers Video Contest](#) December 15

[Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies \(FASTLANE\) Grants](#) December 15

[*2017 Youth Garden Grant](#) December 15

[FY17 Guidelines for Brownfields Cleanup Grants](#) December 20

[FY17 Guidelines for Brownfields Assessment Grants](#) December 22

[SunShot Technology to Market 3](#) December 30

[Solar Forecasting 2](#) December 30

[USDA Solid Waste Management Grants](#) December 31

[Freshwater Harmful Algal Blooms – Request for Applications](#) January 4

[FY 2018 Environmental Research and Development Program \(SERDP\)](#) January 5

[HHS Environmental Regulatory Enhancement Program for Tribal Governments](#) January 9

[USDA National Conservation Innovation Grants](#) January 9

[*2017 Kinship Conservation Fellows](#) January 16

[AmeriCorps State and National Grants, Corporation for National and Community Service](#) January 17

[*National Forest Foundation Matching Awards Program](#) January 17

[*Center of Excellence for Chemical Alternatives Assessment](#) **January 17**

[*Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\) 2017 AmeriCorps State and National Grants](#) **January 18**

[Organic Agriculture Research and Extension Initiative](#) **January 19**

[*Partners for Places Round 10 Grant Cycle](#) **January 30**

[Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Grants](#) **January 31**

[EPA Environmental Justice Small Grants](#) **January 31**

[USDA Rural Energy for America Program](#) **January 31**

[Environmental Education Grants, Captain Planet Foundation](#) **January 31**

[NOAA Educational Partnership Program Undergraduate Scholarship](#) **January 31**

[NOAA Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarship](#) **January 31**

[Endowment for Forestry and Communities Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant \(HWCG\) Program](#) **February 1**

[*Center of Excellence for Chemical Alternatives Assessment](#) **February 3**

[DOE Deployment of Clean Energy and Energy Efficiency Projects on Indian Lands Program](#) **February 7**

[Anticipating the Environmental Impacts and Behavioral Drivers of Deep Decarbonization](#) **February 10**

[Drought Response Program: Drought Contingency Planning Grants](#) **February 14**

[Drought Resiliency Projects](#) **February 14**

[Small Business Innovation Research and Small Business Technology Transfer](#) **February 17**

[*EPA Presidential Environmental Education Awards for Teachers and Students](#)
March 1

[*Using a Total Environment Framework \(Built, Natural, Social Environments\) to Assess Life-long Health Effects of Chemical Exposures](#) **March 2**

Ongoing Opportunities

[USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program Grants](#)

[River Network National Rain Barrel Program](#) Through June 2017

[POWER \(Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization\) Grants](#) Applications accepted on a rolling basis

[Tribal Climate Change Funding Guide](#) Regularly updated grants and programs

[EDA Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Program](#)

[USDA Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) Local USDA Service Center

[Apply for a Fruit Tree Planting Foundation Orchard in Your Community](#)

[American Planning Association Community Planning Assistance Teams](#)

[Climate Solutions University Adaptation Plan Assistance](#)

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Meetings, Conferences, & Events

[Sustainable Foods Summit](#) January 18-20, San Francisco, CA

[AGU Chapman Conference on Extreme Climate Event Impacts on Aquatic Biogeochemical Cycles and Fluxes](#) January 22-27, San Juan, Puerto Rico

[Kansas City Urban Stormwater Conference](#) January 23-24, Kansas City, MO

[Kansas Natural Resources Conference](#) January 26-27, Wichita, KS

[New Partners for Smart Growth Conference](#) February 2-4, St. Louis, MO

[2017 Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference](#) February 5-8, Lincoln, NE

[Climate Leadership Conference](#) March 1-3, Chicago, IL

[National Environmental Justice Conference and Training Program](#) March 8-10, Washington, D.C.

[11th Annual Iowa Water Conference](#) March 22-23, Ames, IA

[Children's Environmental Health Network Translational Research Conference: New Challenges](#) April 5-7, Arlington, VA

[ASFPM National Conference](#) April 30-May 5, Kansas City, MO

[*California Resource Recovery Association \(CRRA\) 2017 Conference](#) August 20-23, San Diego, CA

[2017 National Brownfields Training Conference](#) December 5-7, Pittsburgh, PA

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Webinars and Conference Calls

[*Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization: Meet the Funders - Infrastructure](#) December 14 12-1:30 p.m. CST

Brownfield grants from the EPA are one of many sources of funds that can support redevelopment of contaminated sites. This webinar will highlight a number of infrastructure redevelopment resources available from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and EPA's Office of Water to leverage your brownfield dollars. The webinar will also feature a presentation from a community that has successfully used grants, loans and other support from these agencies for its revitalization efforts.

[EPA Tools and Resources Webinar: Green Infrastructure Modeling Toolkit](#) December 14, 2:00 p.m. CST

This webinar will present a toolkit consisting of five EPA green infrastructure models and tools, along with communication material, that can be used as a teaching tool and as a quick reference resource for use by planners and developers when making green infrastructure implementation decisions, and can also be used for low impact development design competitions.

[*Federal Agency MOU to Protect Natural Resources Treaty Rights](#) December 14, 1-2:00 p.m. CST

Attend this webinar with interagency staff of the White House Council on Native American Affairs to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on protecting treaty rights related to natural resources through federal interagency coordination and collaboration. This one-hour webinar will feature a presentation by signatory agencies to the MOU, including a walk-through of the MOU text, a discussion of implementation activities, and a question-and-answer session.

[*Clean Energy Group Webinar – McKnight Lane: A Rural Low-Income Resilient Solar + Storage Housing Project](#) December 14, 1:00 p.m. CST

The McKnight Lane Redevelopment Project in Waltham, Vermont, is doing what no affordable housing project has done before: It is offering rural, low-income tenants zero-energy, affordable housing that also includes resilient solar + storage systems. The solar + storage systems allow the homes to island from the grid and operate independently during a grid outage. In this webinar, guest speakers will discuss how this project came together, and how the resilient solar + storage systems will benefit the tenants, ratepayers in the community, and the local utility.

[*Road-test the “Federal-Local Partnerships Playbook”](#) December 15, 12-1:30 p.m. CST

The 21st Century Cities Initiative at Johns Hopkins University recently published the Federal-Local Partnerships Playbook. The Playbook is designed as a resource for teams of federal employees working hand-in-hand with local communities to address stubborn challenges or respond to unexpected crises. The Playbook reflects the new, strategic, and modern approach

to the federal government's partnerships with local communities, as modeled through place-based initiatives like Strong Cities, Strong Communities and Promise Zones.

[*Restoring the Carbon Balance - Session 1: The Budget Imperative](#) December 15, 12-1:30 p.m. CST

The capacity of the Earth's atmosphere to safely hold excess carbon without too much warming is limited.

Unless that pace is dramatically accelerated, the planet will almost certainly exceed its "carbon budget" within two decades, if it hasn't already. This concern has led the International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to conclude that Negative Emissions Technologies (NETs), which remove CO₂ from the air, will be needed to meet climate goals. NETs are still in the research, development or demonstration stages of commercialization and may not be ready in time, or feasible at the necessary scale.

[*ITRC Geospatial Analysis for Optimization at Environmental Sites](#) December 15, 12-2:15 p.m. CST

The purpose of ITRC's Geospatial Analysis for Optimization at Environmental Sites (GRO-1) guidance document and this associated training is to explain, educate, and train state regulators and other practitioners in understanding and using geospatial analyses to evaluate optimization opportunities at environmental sites.

[*SERDP & ESTCP Webinar: "Advances in the Assessment and In Situ Treatment of Contaminated Sediments"](#) December 15 11:00 a.m. CST

Join SERDP and ESTCP for two presentations on Department of Defense (DoD) research efforts on the assessment and in situ treatment of contaminated sediments. First, Mr. Gunther Rosen from the Navy's Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR) will discuss the development and demonstration of an in situ toxicity and bioaccumulation testing technology. Second, Dr. Bart Chadwick, also from SPAWAR, will talk about pilot-scale performance of in situ treatment with reactive carbon amendments for contaminated sediments at an active DoD harbor site.

[FY2017 EJ Small Grants Request for Proposals Pre-application Assistance Calls](#)

Planning on applying to the FY2017 EJ Small Grants RFP? Have questions? Call-in to the pre-application assistance calls for the EJ Small Grants RFP. Dial conference call number: 1-866-299-3188. Then input conference code: 202-564-0152# to join the call. All potential applicants nationwide are welcome to call in. See a schedule of the remaining pre-application calls below:

- Thursday, January 12, 2017: 3:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 24, 2017: 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

On-Going and On-Demand Webinars

[Communicating Climate Change Scenarios With Decision Makers](#)

Research hydrologist Dr. Holly Hartmann discusses approaches for communicating with decision-makers on climate change, water management and planning.

[Leveraging Resources for Brownfields Revitalization Webinar](#)

This previously recorded webinar discusses available tools to assist communities in leveraging resources to address community revitalization goals and challenges. It includes a presentation on Dubuque, Iowa's efforts to leverage its own resources to attract other federal, state, public and private sources of funding and technical assistance.

[EPA Computer Training Helps Water and Wastewater Utilities Build Resilience](#)

The training covers several topics including: identifying and funding potential hazard mitigation projects, developing and updating an Emergency Response Plan (ERP), coordinating mutual aid and assistance during emergencies, conducting damage assessments, and many more.

[EPA Sensible Steps to Healthier School Environments 10-Part Webinar Series](#)

Student Curriculum: Recipes for Healthy Kids, and a Healthy Environment

Each 45-minute lesson empowers kids to take steps in their everyday lives to improve the environment for their communities and reduce their environmental risk.

[LeanPath presents: Five Food Waste Myths to Debunk – Now!](#)

This webinar will explore five myths about food waste and the facts you need to debunk them in your kitchen.

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