

Brownfields Tribal Response Program Accomplishment/Success Story

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Tribal Response Program
Cooperative Agreement No. RP-00J26506-0

Project Period: October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016

Quarter: 2

1/1/2016-3/31/2016

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Prepared by:

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Element(s) Addressed:

- 1. *Timely survey and inventory of brownfields sites in state or tribal land.***
- 2. Oversight and enforcement authorities or other mechanisms and resources.*
- 3. *Mechanisms and resources to provide meaningful opportunities for public participation.***
- 4. Mechanisms for approval of a cleanup plan and verification and certification that cleanup is complete.*

**Names presented in the report are shortened for confidentiality purposes.*

The ANTHC Tribal Response Program (TRP) worked hard to provide a centered focused community outreach this quarter. One case to highlight this quarter, is the work with the community of Ninilchik. Late June of 2015, Ms. Britt received a call from Ms. O, a Ninilchik community member, asking for assistance with an open contaminated site in their community which she (and other community members) perceived to be the direct cause of an increase in cancer, tumor, and cyst growth in community members of all ages. The site in topic was the Klukwan Forest Products site that was first reported to DEC in 1991. Ms. O presented her concerns with a drafted resolution to the community council, but was met with resistance for fear that the Ninilchik Native Association would be responsible for legally pursuing the responsible party, Klukwan Inc. This chain of events, led Ms. O to contact ANTHC. Ms. Britt received background information from Ms. O and then proceeded to inquire with the State of Alaska about what could be done to help the community.

To serve this community fully, Ms. Britt thought it would be best to contact the Project Manager of the Klukwan Forest Products site to gain the historic and recent information on the site and to see where the State of Alaska stands in regulating clean-up authority on the site, which has remained delinquent for years. Ms. Britt contacted the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (SOA DEC) Contaminated Sites Program Program Manager of the Ninilchik site to discuss the site details. It was discovered that Klukwan, Inc., assumed responsibly for the site, therefore a completed clean-up has yet to be performed. SOA DEC has and continues to issue letters to Klukwan, Inc., as well as work with them on a clean-up timeline. SOA DEC explained that they have zero enforcement capabilities at the moment, but will continue to issue letters.

With the site information in hand, Ms. Britt proceeded to contact Dr. Ali Hamade, Environmental Public Health Program Manager, for his guidance on the matter. Dr. Hamade and his team have worked with other Alaska TRPs in the past (Yakutat) to provide guidance on topics of environmental toxins. Dr. Hamade introduced Ms. Britt to a Dr. O'Brien, of the Alaska Cancer Registry, to provide insight on

cancer, tumor/cyst rates in Ninilchik. Ms. Britt also contacted ANTHC's Cancer Program and Alaska Native Tumor Registry for more information. Both sources reported minimum increases in cancer and tumor rates, but encouraged that community members step forward with their diagnosis so that they may capture accurate data.

Ms. Britt consistently kept in contact with Ms. O to inform her of all she learned from the situation. In February of 2016, during one of their conversations, Ms. O asked that Ms. Britt contact her Tribal Administrator, to inform the community the next steps that could take place.

Ms. Britt had a long and pleasant conversation with the Ninilchik Tribal Administrator, offering to visit the community to discuss the findings from the Alaska Cancer Registry and ANTR and to encourage participation in these programs as well as to discuss the state of the Klukwan site with any concerned citizens or in a public meeting. Ms. Britt also offered to assist with a TBA and DBAC for the site, providing information on these resources.

Currently, the Klukwan Forest Products site is still open. The last report from DEC Project Manager in March 15, 2016 stated that the Work Plan for Site Investigation at the Klukwan Forest Products site has been reviewed with activities consist of collecting soil samples for field screening and laboratory analysis from the former removal areas and soil treatment cell.

The ANTHC TRP successfully helped to calm the growing fears of community members in Nilnilchik and offered resources and assistance to pursue in further investigation of the site.