

## Friday April 8 | Whitehouse Listening Session on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

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**To:** "Sarche, Michelle" <[MICHELLE.SARCHE@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:MICHELLE.SARCHE@cuanschutz.edu)>

**Subject:** Friday April 8 | Whitehouse Listening Session on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Dear Colleagues,

Passing along some information about the public listening session tomorrow and other tribal consultation events planned by the Whitehouse on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Federal Policy.

Here is a quick recap:

Public Listening Session:

When: Friday, April 8, 2022, 3:00-5:00 pm EDT

Who: Knowledge holders, practitioners, environmental stewardship managers, spiritual leaders, elders, and others with experience or interest in ITEK and Federal government decision making

Register

here: [https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_nYHMg0SzSB-lqsEb6XLpgg](https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_nYHMg0SzSB-lqsEb6XLpgg)

Attached are the Whitehouse press release and memo from November 2021 referenced below

Link to the information below is here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/news-updates/2022/03/07/announcing-tribal-consultation-and-public-input-opportunities-on-indigenous-traditional-ecological-knowledge-in-federal-policy/>

# Announcing Tribal Consultation and Public Input Opportunities on Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Federal Policy

MARCH 07, 2022 • [OSTP BLOG](#)

By: Alondra Nelson, Deputy Assistant to the President, Deputy Director for Science and Society performing the duties of the Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy

Brenda Mallory, Chair, Council on Environmental Quality

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Today we are excited to announce a series of opportunities for Tribal Consultation and public engagement to discuss the White House's efforts to elevate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge (ITEK) in Federal decision-making. At the Biden-Harris Administration's 2021 Tribal Nations Summit last November, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) [issued](#) a memorandum, [Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Federal Decision Making](#), recognizing the importance of ITEK and committing to elevating its role in Federal scientific and policy processes.

ITEK is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, practices, and beliefs that promote environmental sustainability and the responsible stewardship of natural resources through relationships between humans and environmental systems. It is applied to phenomena across biological, physical, cultural and spiritual systems. ITEK has evolved over millennia, continues to evolve, and includes insights based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons, and skills passed from generation to generation<sup>1</sup>.

As announced in the November memorandum, the White House is now developing guidance on inclusion of ITEK in Federal decision making and policy processes for release later this year. The guidance will include best practices on collaborating with

Tribal Nations and Native communities to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes, how to address Federal Government-wide challenges around ITEK such as navigating Federal laws and interagency processes, and how to appropriately respect knowledge holders' rights to decline participation in collaborative efforts. The guidance will be designed to complement existing agency guidance on ITEK and will build on past efforts to elevate ITEK in Federal scientific and policy decisions. To that end, OSTP, CEQ, and the White House Domestic Policy Council have convened an Interagency Working Group on ITEK with more than 25 Federal Departments and Agencies, including the Departments of Commerce, Defense, Agriculture, Labor, Transportation, Education, and Energy; the Environmental Protection Agency; the Smithsonian; and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

We also recognize that this process must be shaped by the communities and people with deep expertise and significant life experience with ITEK. We commit to ensuring that input from Tribal Nations, Native communities, and knowledge holders shapes this effort from beginning to end.

Tribal Nations, Native communities, and the public can inform development of the Federal guidance on ITEK in several ways. Written public comments can be sent to [ITEK@ostpeop.gov](mailto:ITEK@ostpeop.gov) by end of day Thursday, May 5, 2022. We will also host a series of formal Tribal Consultations and listening sessions detailed below. In addition to the sessions scheduled below, we commit to additional engagement opportunities later this year at the next stage of the guidance development process.

Initial Tribal Consultations and Listening Sessions:

**Tribal Consultation 1:**

When: April 5, 2022, 3:30-5:30 pm EDT

Who: Tribal leaders from Federally recognized Tribal Nations

**Tribal Consultation 2:**

When: April 29, 2022, 3:00-5:00 pm EDT

Who: Tribal leaders from Federally recognized Tribal Nations

**Public Listening Session:**

When: Friday, April 8, 2022, 3:00-5:00 pm EDT

Who: Knowledge holders, practitioners, environmental stewardship managers, spiritual leaders, elders, and others with experience or interest in ITEK and Federal government decision making

Register here: [https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN\\_nYHMg0SzSB-IqsEb6XLpgg](https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_nYHMg0SzSB-IqsEb6XLpgg)

Additionally, engagement events are being planned for Hawai'i and Island communities.

As many speakers will be accommodated as the scheduled time allows. Representatives from White House Tribal Affairs, OSTP, and CEQ will facilitate the Consultations and virtual listening sessions and manage the discussion and order of remarks. Specific questions to guide feedback at these Tribal Consultations and Listening Sessions are listed here:

- What would you like Federal employees to know about ITEK?
- Thinking about the areas where you engage with the Federal government, how would you like to work with Federal departments and agencies in the future to ensure that ITEK properly informs Federal processes and policies? What challenges do you foresee?
- What terminology should be used (e.g, Indigenous Knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge) when referring to this body of work in the Federal context?
- Are there existing guidance documents, agreements, or practices that provide good examples of how ITEK should be elevated in Federal processes and policies?
- The fifth [National Climate Assessment](#), currently underway, is a congressionally-mandated report that assesses observed and projected impacts of climate change across the United States. How do you recommend ITEK be represented in the development processes and content of National Climate Assessments?

This is a critical initiative for the Administration, because we know that by working with knowledge holders in the right ways, we can achieve better outcomes for people and for the planet. We look forward to working with you as we advance this important and exciting effort.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Traditional Ecological Knowledge Fact Sheet (Feb. 2011), <https://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/pdf/tek-fact-sheet.pdf>; Inuit Circumpolar

Council, Indigenous Knowledge, <https://www.inuitcircumpolar.com/icc-activities/environment-sustainable-development/indigenous-knowledge/>.