



# Qagan Tayagungin Tribe Environmental Department

MARCH 2013

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## Program Update

By: Cathy Adams

Spring is just around the corner, and with it comes the Earth Day Fair! We will be having our 6<sup>th</sup> annual Earth Day Fair on April 27, 2013 in the QT Community Center. More information on this is on page 4.

Environmental Youth Group meets at Boys and Girls Club at 4:00 every Friday and Environmental Teen Group meet every Thursday at 7:00. Please feel free to join us!

Our office is still digging for clams on a monthly basis to check for paralytic shellfish poisoning. It is very important to our community to

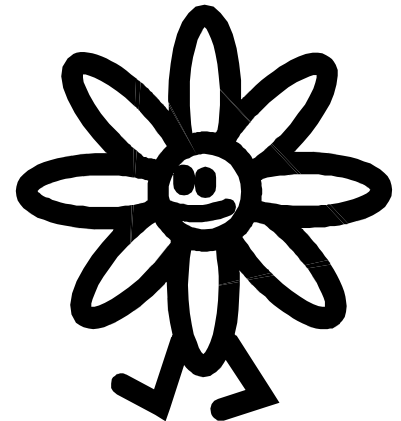
be informed about the PSP level, so they make informed decisions about whether to consume shellfish.

We are still collecting electronic waste for recycling. We do pick-ups for elders who are unable to drop their old electronics off.

The Environmental Assistant went to the Alaska Forum on the Environment in February, where she learned about invasive species youth led programs. More information on this is on page 3.

Our office is currently working on outdoor air quality. We will be surveying the

community in the coming months about the stationary and mobile sources of pollution that influence air quality. When we have gathered all the data, we will have a better idea of what air quality monitoring would best suit the community.



## Air Quality Complaints

By: Cathy Adams

Are you experiencing problems due to the amount of pollutants in the air such as discomfort or respiratory distress? The Qagan Tayagungin Tribes Environmental Department is collecting air quality complaints. A complaint form is located on the QT Tribe's website in our environmental section. When we have gath-

ered information on where air pollution problems are located, we will be able to determine what can be done to improve the air quality in our community. We are doing this to find ways to make our community better. If you could fill out the form to file a present complaint, it would be greatly appreciated.

To get to the air quality complaint form on our website, visit:

<http://www.qttribe.org/Environmental>

On the left side panel under Environmental is a link to the air quality complaint form.

# Wash Your Reusable Bags

By: Cathy Adams



**Make sure to wash your Reusable Grocery Bags**

The QTT Environmental Department encourages people to shop with reusable grocery bags. Some large cities, such as San Francisco and Seattle, have banned the use of plastic bags, and there has been an unexpected side effect—an increase in food-borne illnesses. Research conducted by Loma Linda University proved reusable grocery bags are a breeding

ground for E. coli and other harmful bacteria. The bacteria levels found in reusable bags were significant enough to cause a wide range of serious health problems, and can even lead to death. There is a solution to this problem - bags need to be washed after each use. Washing bags at either temperature will kill the bacteria. When using reusable bags, be careful to separate raw foods from

other food products, as cross-contamination problems result from raw foods like apples coming in contact with any kind of meat. People should not use the reusable bags, use for food, for other purposes like books or gym clothes because high risk of other bacteria. If your reusable bags aren't made of cloth, they should be wiped down with a sponge/cloth and disinfectants after each use.

# Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning Update

By: Karis Porcincula

The QTT Environmental Department is still collecting clams every month to be tested for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP). So far, all the results since September have come out good. In January the results were 44 micrograms, and in February the results were 59 micrograms, which

are both under the FDA limit of 80 micrograms and are still considered safe to eat. The next date for collecting clams is March 29, 2013. After the clams have been collected we will send them out via Pen Pak on Pen Air for testing by the State of Alaska.

The Qagan Tayagungin Tribe neither encourages nor discourages the consumption of the local shellfish, but provides this information for the community members to make an educated decision regarding shellfish consumption.



# Ocean Acidification

By: Cathy Adams

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists detected signs of ocean acidification in the North Pacific off the coast of Alaska. To understand how ocean acidification affects Alaskan waters, NOAA scientists created a mooring network collect constant data on factors, such as the amount of carbon dioxide in the water, contributing to the acidification. The monitoring buoys will act as an alert system for threatening pH levels,

which could have an adverse effect on Alaska's fisheries.

Ocean acidification occurs as oceans absorb the rising quantities of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. When dissolved, carbon dioxide forms carbonic acid, creating a more acidic environment, which threatens marine ecosystems.

Coral and shellfish are the first to be affected because they use calcium carbonate to develop their skeletons, which is normally done in pH balanced seawater. These organisms are at

the lower end of the food chain, meaning the larger predators are affected by eating them.

NOAA has placed two monitoring buoys so far, one in southeast Alaska and the other near Seward, although our region should still remain concerned.

If we keep pouring carbon dioxide into our atmosphere, ocean acidification will affect the way we live. For more information, go to: <http://www.iaea.org/newscenter/news/2012/acidification.html>

# Are You Plastic Food Containers Safe?

By: Cathy Adams

Did you know all plastic food storage containers are not created equal? Located on the bottom of your food container is a recycling code number. If you find numbers 3 - 7, do not use these containers for food. Number 3 is polyvinyl chloride (PVC), also known as vinyl. It has DEHA, which is used as hydraulic fluid and in aircraft lubricants. It can cause liver cancer. Number 4 contains low density polyethylene which is found in clothing and furniture. Number 5 contains polypropylene which is found in medicine bottles. Number 6 contains polystyrene found in carry out containers and egg cartons. . Number 7 primarily contains polycarbonate, which contains bisphenol A (BPA), which can cause prostate and mammary gland cancer. The plastics industry defends their products, saying they are safe. The FDA admits chemicals in plastics can leach into food. Using plastic containers is very convenient, but you should be careful which recycling number is on your containers.

Here are a few tips to help you get started:

When using plastic containers, the safer choice recycling numbers are: 1, 2, 4, and 5.

Polycarbonate (number 7) is easy to recognize as it is hard and clear.

Common items made from this are baby bottles, water bottles, bowls and tableware.

As your plastic containers age and get scratched up, they leach more toxins. Either get rid of them, or use them for things other than food.

Wait until your leftovers cool before storing them in a plastic container.

Storing food while warm accelerates the transfer of toxins.

Never microwave your food in plastic containers. Items that say "microwave safe" just means it won't melt or warp. It doesn't mean it won't leach toxins.

If you use plastic wrap, make sure it is a brand free of both BPA and PVC, like Ziploc, Glad and Saran

Wrap, which are promoted to be free of toxins.

Remember, if you are pregnant or nursing, BPA chemicals are passed through your bloodstream directly to your baby. If possible, use glass or ceramics rather than plastics to store your food. Reusing glass jars is a win-win situation; you will be keeping your food safer while recycling!



## Trip to the Alaska Forum

By: Karis Porcincula

In February, I attended the Alaska Forum on the Environment in Anchorage, AK. I went to breakout sessions all from 8am to 5pm on subjects such as: invasive species, marine debris, youth showcases, youth led project planning, paralytic shellfish poisoning, tribal environmental program development, tribal air

quality, children's environmental health, and the GAP closing talking circle. I learned a lot of information on how to keep our environment clean and how to incorporate youth in Environmental projects. I also attended many of the keynote speaking events in which speakers talked about the main issues in our environment

today. It was a great experience for me to attend the forum for a second year and I now know what kind of projects I can do to help our community of Sand Point become an environmentally friendly place.



The bag monster and I at the AK Forum

# Earth Day Fair

By: Karis Porcincula



Come help us celebrate our Earth and make it a better place!

The Earth Day Fair is approaching us fast. This year, the Earth Day Fair will be held on April 27, 2013 at the QTT Rec Center. We are going to start the day off with a green walk, then head to the rec center for informational fun and games. Times are still to be decided and will be posted by the second week of April. We encourage everyone would participate in the green walk. We will be picking up trash for the first

clean up of the year! It won't be anything big, just something for us to start the spring/summer off clean. After, at the fair, there will be plenty of games, fun, and prizes. We also will announce our Earth Day Fair Theme Contest winner who will be receiving a Kindle Fire HD for their hard work.

This year is the 6th annual Earth Day Fair. We are also looking for volunteers to

help out with the games and green walk. If you would like to be a volunteer, please contact us at the QTT Environmental Department at 383-6968, and give us your name and a number so we can contact you. Anyone is welcome to come help out, and attend. We hope to see you all there. There will be a schedule published soon on the times of events when they have been established.

## Tub & Tile Cleaner

- 1 2/3 cup water
- 1/4 cup liquid soap
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 2 Tbsp. vinegar
- 3 drops of essential oils (optional)

Add Soap to water and let dissolve. Stir in baking soda, then add vinegar. Store in a squirt bottle and shake before using. Rinse thoroughly to avoid leaving any residue.

# Spring Cleaning

By: Karis Porcincula

It's about that time of year again where we start cleaning our houses and getting them ready for summer time. When cleaning our houses, we tend to use many environmentally unfriendly chemicals.

One example is when we clean mold and mildew. Many of us use some sort of bleach product that isn't

healthy for the air. Instead, you can mix equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle, spray the area, and wipe clean. This is an environment friendly cleaning product. Another example is when we clean our floors. Many of us use some kind of bleach or pine sol to get our floors clean. An all purpose floor cleaner you can try instead is

using 2 tablespoons of liquid soap or detergent and 1 gallon of hot water. Mix together in your mop bucket as you would other products, mop your floors, and wipe clean.

These are just two examples of environmentally friendly cleaning products. For more environmentally friendly cleaning products, visit:

<http://www.wswmd.org/recipes>

# Electronic Waste Update

By: Karis Porcincula

The QTT Environmental Department is still collecting electronic waste for recycling. It is almost time to send another shipment to Total Reclaim in Seattle, WA. If you

have any electronics you don't have space for, need, or aren't using, drop them off to the Qagan Taya-gungin Tribe Environmental Department office in the QTT office located on the first floor of the city building, across from the first

flight of stairs. If you are an elder, or are disabled and unable to drop off your old electronics, give us a call and we will come pick it up. Thank you for helping us recycle and making Sand Point a more beautiful place to reside.

Old Computers are something we recycle



# Environmental Groups Update

By: *Karis Porcincula*

The QTT Environmental Department is still meeting with the youth Environmental Groups weekly. We are informing them of their environment and how they could help with saving it.

The Environmental Youth Group is held every Friday from



3-4pm, at the Boys and Girls Club with the Environmental Coordinator. She is currently teaching them about recycling and making fun projects to show how easy recycling is.

The Environmental Teen Group is held every Thursday night from 7-8pm, at the Teen Center with the Environmental Assistant. The teens are currently learning about Marine debris

and litter in their communities. Just recently the Environmental Assistant did a trash pick-up outside the Teen Center, around the dumpsters, and came up with a full heavy bag of trash.

The youth groups are held weekly and we really appreciate working with the youth and hope to keep working well with the youth in the future.

## Qagan Tayagungin Tribe Council Members & Staff

### Council Members

**David O. Osterback**  
*President, (Seat E)*

**Dennis Gundersen**  
*Vice President (Seat C)*

**Glen Gardner Jr.**  
*Secretary/Treasurer (Seat D)*

**Peter Devine Jr.**  
*Council Member (Seat A)*

**Dick Jacobsen**  
*Council Member (Seat G)*

**Rayette McGlashan**  
*Council Member (Seat F)*

**Alvin Osterback Jr.**  
*Council Member (Seat B)*



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**Laresa Moses**  
*Finance Director*

**Joyce Gould**  
*Administrative Assistant*

**Cathleen Adams**  
*Environmental Coordinator*

**Karis Porcincula**  
*Environmental Assistant*

**Tabitha Holmberg**  
*Agate Coordinator*

**Jamal Bernsten**  
*Agate Assistant*

**Anabel Largo**  
*Janitor*

**Dennis McGlashan Sr.**  
*Maintenance*

# Indoor Air Quality

By: Cathy Adams

Did you know the air inside your home can be more polluted than the air outside? Since we spend up to 90 percent of our time inside, the health risks are greater from poor indoor air quality than the air outside.

Common indoor air pollutants include: dust mites, pollen, mold, radon, carbon monoxide, excessive carbon dioxide, and other chemical fumes. According to the EPA, indoor air pollution is typically two to five times worse than the air outdoors. Sometimes it can even be 100 times worse. Secondhand smoke from tobacco products is a major indoor air pollutant, since it contains over 4,000 chemicals, 50 of which are known to cause cancer.

In cold climates, people tend to

spend more time in homes and buildings made air tight to save heat, and keep out the cold.

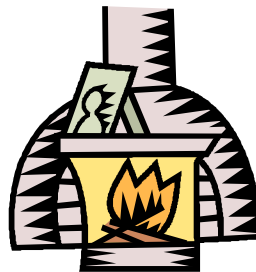
However, without fresh air and adequate ventilation, indoor pollutants and the results of humidity can rise to unhealthy levels.

Smoke from woodstoves contributes pollution to air indoors, as well as outside. Fumes and toxic pollutants from equipment, fuels, and chemicals kept in homes to prevent freezing, can escape into the confined air. There are things we can do to improve the air quality in our homes. Keeping floors clean by vacuuming at least twice weekly and mopping picks up the dust vacuuming leaves

behind. Placing a large door mat in front of your door will reduce the amount of dirt and pollutants introduced into your home.

Make your home a no-smoking zone. Use the power of nature to help clean the air indoors-get some plants! Plants remove chemicals from the air and can actually

thrive on substances harmful to people. Remove your shoes when you come indoors, this will prevent dust and chemicals from getting on your floors. Check your furnace filters every two months and either replace or clean it regularly. Use natural cleaning products that do not contain volatile organic compounds or toxic chemicals. By just making a few changes, we can reduce the pollution in our homes.



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