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STEDTalk

THE QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR ALL THINGS ENVIRONMENTAL



RTOC



The Soboba Tribal Environmental Department understands that the goal for the betterment of the environment is one that the Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians is not striving for alone. It's because of this, Soboba was proud to be the host of the Spring 2026 RTOC (Regional Tribal Operation Committee) at the Soboba Casino Resort Event center from June 15-17. With the goal of promoting Tribal Sovereignty, RTOC invited EPA Region 9 tribes from all over Arizona, California, Nevada and the Pacific Islands. Participants from all over joined in-person, and online, with over 100 in-person joining in Soboba Casino, and about 60 joining virtually. Not just limited to Tribal Staff; EPA personnel, nonprofit partners, and higher education institutions were also invited to join, all with the goal of working together to address regional environmental concerns while respecting Tribal Sovereignty

Commencing with an introduction from the STED Director, Christian Aceves, the event was overseen by the Tribal co-chair Roman Orona and EPA co-chair Mike Martucci. Christian Aceves helped introduce all the participants to the work Soboba has undergone, working to increase energy resources on the reservation. This was complimented by the focus on Soboba's rich history, addressing the long commitment Soboba has connecting to the land and its efforts in preserving it. With the implementation of additional projects and efforts, the tribe demonstrated its ultimate goal of protecting natural resources for all generations. Tours of the solar field were given with participants remarking positively to the demonstrations.



With the commencement of the second day of RTOC, discussions centered on strengthening tribal-to-tribal collaboration through breakout sessions, peer learning exchanges, and talking circles that allowed tribal leaders and environmental professionals to openly share challenges, build capacity from one another's experiences, and reinforce the collective value of coordinated tribal engagement, all of which underscored the importance of maintaining strong networks of cooperation as participants acknowledged the upcoming reduction in RTOC meetings by the USEPA from four annually to two, adding urgency to the need for consistent and reliable opportunities for tribes throughout Region 9 to convene, learn, and elevate shared concerns.

With the final day of RTOC, the meeting opened its doors to USEPA representatives to discuss the tribal concerns gathered throughout the week, followed by breakout sessions that enabled all participants to contribute their expertise across environmental topics including solid waste, water, air quality, and other technical challenges. These discussions provided a structured forum for tribes to ask questions, share knowledge, and engage directly with federal partners. A virtual appearance by USEPA Assistant Administrator Usha-Nairu Turner offered further opportunity for direct dialogue, during which participants expressed significant concern regarding the USEPA's proposal to reduce RTOC meetings from quarterly to bi-annual sessions, a change that would diminish the frequency of tribal engagement, limit opportunities for peer-to-peer coordination, and constrain the ability of tribes to raise timely issues. The day concluded with planning for the next RTOC in San Francisco and a shared sense of commitment among tribes to continue strengthening collaboration with Soboba and each other, despite the challenges posed by reduced federal convenings.

Community Waste Collection Event



STED was pleased to host its Community Waste Collection Event on July 2nd, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., offering invited guests the opportunity to bring any waste they could transport to the transfer station. With limited restrictions on the quantity or size of acceptable materials, participants arrived with truckloads of waste. Special emphasis was placed on collecting household hazardous waste (HHW) such as used oil, paint, and old propane tanks, all accepted with enthusiasm. Our Soboba Tribal Environmental Department staff, Jonathan Marquez and Christian Aceves, assisted by offloading trucks, trailers, and sorting HHW. Collection was fruitful with six 40-yard bins totaling 320 cubic yards of municipal solid waste, while HHW efforts documented the collection of 36 propane cylinders, 131 gallons of paint cans, 55 gallons of used oil and gasoline alongside many other HHWs.

Later in the day, the Soboba youth summer program joined the STED team at the transfer station, where volunteers were given goggles, gloves, and vests to help clean and maintain the site. Dozens of trash bags were collected as volunteers worked alongside staff, and afterward they cooled off with popsicles and Gatorade while learning valuable lessons in environmental health and safety. Fun, interactive games were given into the discussion of the types of waste and special prizes were given out to those who participated. All volunteers left knowing they had contributed to the beauty and safety of Soboba, reinforcing the importance of community involvement and environmental stewardship throughout the event.

Summer Youth Engagement



The fun and engagement with the youth doesn't end with just the collection event, STED was very excited to be a part of our Summer Youth Engagement Program here in Soboba. STED worked hard to create an entirely unique bingo card for the special occasion of working with the youth. The card included over 100 unique animals, plants, and characteristics that can be found all over Soboba. Animals that could be found for anybody curious enough, and plants they could even find in their backyard was the goal for teaching the youth about the beauty of Soboba. Cards were read and special prizes were given out to the winners.

The festivities did not end there, with the conclusion of bingo, all participants were asked to come outside to the park of the Soboba Sports Center. STED encouraged the youth to find any fallen leaves or petals and collect them to decorate their very own nature crown. Enthusiastic youth from all ages were escorted by their leads in all directions, eager to find something to make them stand out. With handfuls of nature, the youth returned and were given a strip of recycled eco-friendly construction paper, and with the guide of the leads, they all began to decorate their own crown. Enthusiastic approaches were made in style, size and decorations everyone made to their crowns, really using it as a chance to show their unique ways of self-expression.

As some finished sooner than others, extra coloring pages were given out, all with animals found here in Soboba, which made sure all participants were able to get enough time to finish their crown. With the conclusion, a final picture was taken and concluded STED's portion of the engagement with happy smiles and the youth eager for their lunch time.

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STAFF MEMBERS

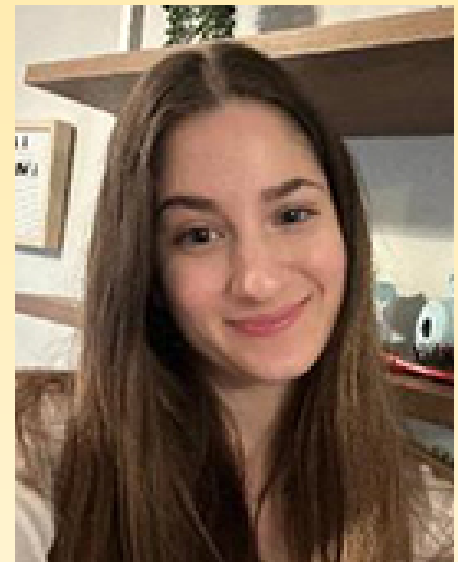


Hello, my name is DeAnn Bejar, and I am the new Administrative Assistant for Soboba's Environmental Department. I am truly grateful for the opportunity to be part of the Soboba community and to contribute to the continued growth and preservation of this beautiful land. With more than 15 years of administrative experience, I have developed strong skills in data entry, scheduling and customer service. I take pride in anticipating needs and providing proactive solutions that support efficient and successful office operations.

Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with my husband, my two adult children, and my family. I am excited to support the Soboba Tribal Environmental Department and help ensure smooth operations that protect and sustain the Soboba community and its natural resources.



Hello everyone, my name is Tayler Stewart and I am the new Environmental Specialist at STED. I graduated from Cal Poly Pomona in 2024 with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology focused on conservation. I am honored to have the opportunity to apply what I have learned in order to protect and preserve Soboba's beautiful and vast environment. In my free time, I enjoy watching movies, going to church, reading books, and going to the gym. Overall, I am excited to be able to work alongside a group of highly knowledgeable individuals at Soboba to preserve/enhance our renewable resources.





OIL DISPOSAL

Two hundred millions gallons of used oil are improperly disposed of each year!



WASTE OIL



Used oil are refined crude or synthetic oils.
Used Oils include: Engine lubricating oils, gear oils, gearbox oils.

OIL COLLECTION



Soboba's Transfer Station, specifically the hazardous waste shed accepts used oil in containers. The Transfer Station is open the first full weekend of every month from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM

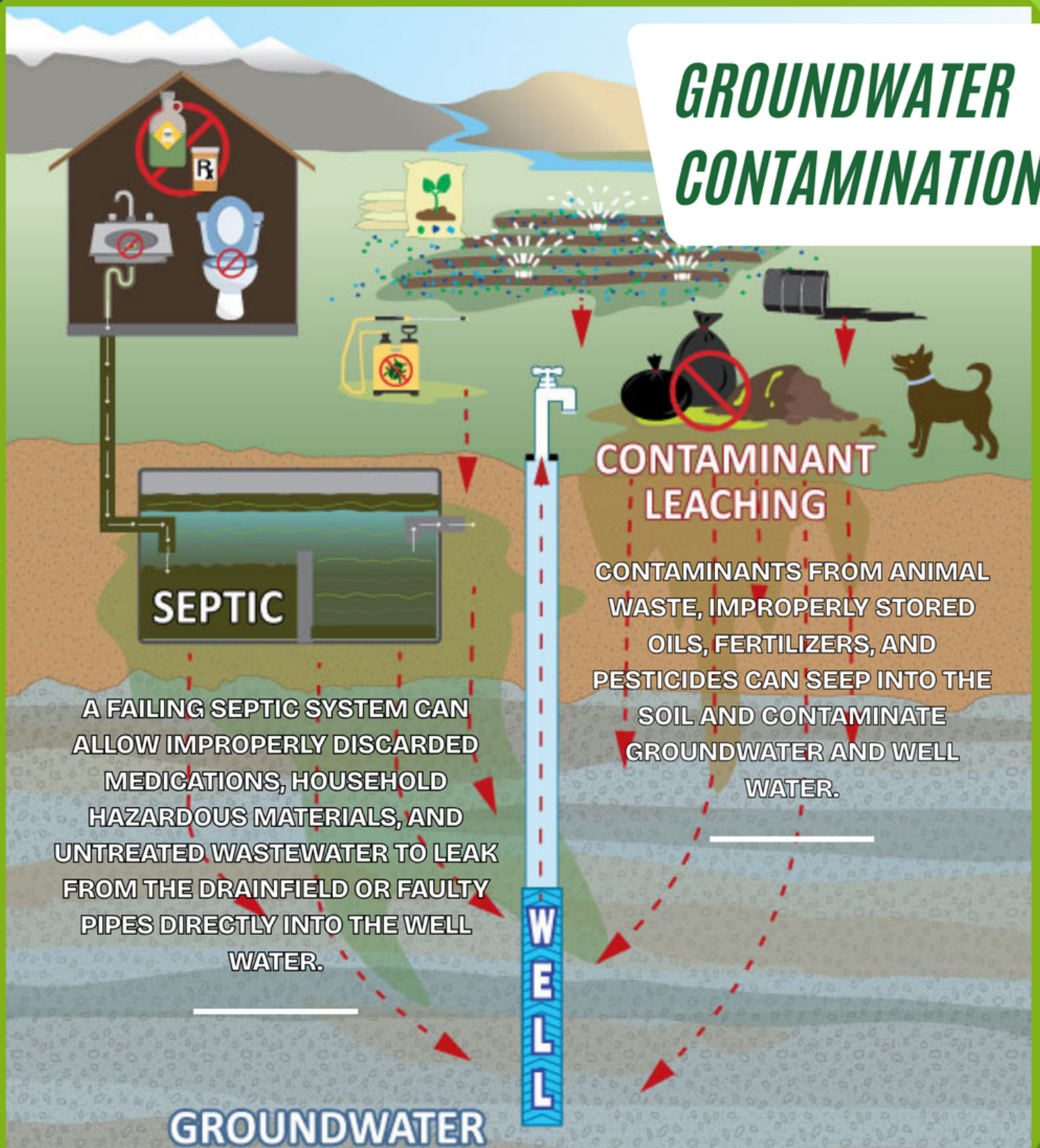
CONTAMINATED OIL



Used Oil can be contaminated by water, dirt, heavy metals, pesticides, and other non-petroleum products which can cause used oil to not be recycled.

DO YOU HAVE USED OIL? WHEN IN DOUBT DON'T THROW AWAY, CALL STED EXT: 4129

GROUNDWATER CONTAMINATION



Drinking water from a contaminated well can be dangerous and potentially toxic.

Proper purification methods are costly and intrusive. Boiling water and commercial purifiers are not enough to fully purify the water.

Do not attempt to drink contaminated water.



Visit Our Website
<https://epa.soboba-nsn.gov/>



Our Location
607 Donna Way, San Jacinto, CA, 92583



Proper Waste Management

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PLASTICS
 RECYCLABLE
 CANAL
 CHEMICAL
 FLOODING
 HAZARD
 REUSE

WASTE
 GARBAGE
 SCATTER
 SCRAPS
 MANAGEMENT
 DISEASE
 LANDFILLS

SEGREGATE
 DISPOSE
 PRODUCTS
 SUPPORT
 UNSAFE
 IMPROPER
 FERTILIZER

BIODEGRADABLE
 TRASH
 CLEAN
 BOTTLES
 ENVIRONMENT
 REDUCE
 POISON

ONCE COMPLETED BRING IT TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL DEPARTMENT FOR A PRIZE