Cherokee Nation
Environmental Practices

The Cherokee Nation Environmental staff goes beyond the steps of completing environmental review records. They have actually assisted Tribal members whose homes have been eligible to be placed on the National Register of Historic Properties. For example, a Tribal member was living in one of the first homes ever built in the City of Vinita and was able to receive recognition as a place with historic significance and a certificate from the State of Oklahoma placing the home on the National Register of Historic Properties. The Cherokee Nation held a big event that included the state, congressional representatives, presentation of the certificate from the State of Oklahoma, and a presentation by the Cherokee Nation with a plaque that is proudly displayed on the home. Her ancestors were the individuals who built the home over 100 years prior to this honor.

The Cherokee Nation uses an automated tracking system that was developed in house. The system currently lists the following items:

- Applicant Name
- Legal description of property (broken down by section, township, range, latitude and longitude location, etc.)
- Entity Requesting the Environmental Review (Cherokee Nation Housing Authority, Commerce, Mortgage Assistance Program, etc.)
- Type of ER (Categorical Exclusion, Environmental Assessment, etc.)
- Assigned Staff member to complete review
- If the item is an emergency
- Legal citation in HUD regulation for determination [example: (58.35(a)(3)(i)]
- Type of activity – (Rehab of 1 SFD, Mortgage Assistance, Other, etc.)
- Lead Based Paint Activities
- Archeological Field Inspection required – Check Box
- Noise assessment mediation required – Check Box
- Flood Plain Check Box – Checked if property is in 100 year flood plain

- Comments Field: Description for "Other" activities or year house was built, if not in flood plain but close enough participant should be advised, etc.
- Reviewed by (a second staff member will review for completeness)
- Date ER is completed

Staff can scan the entire record including email communication into the automated system for easy retrieval. They are able to email the completed assessment to the requesting entities for inclusion in their files. They use a five-year aging schedule for their Environmental Reviews and approvals. Many times, a participant may have had housing rehabilitation assistance and then need emergency housing rehabilitation assistance in a subsequent year (i.e., Rehabilitation of HVAC and carpet one year, and then roof and gutters another year due to storms.) The Environmental office is able to quickly locate the ER that was completed in the prior year and use the ERR for the current need if it is still applicable (Example where it might not be applicable: if staff have a prior knowledge that floods maps are being modified; prior remodel did not involve ground disturbance but new rehabilitation will include ground disturbance); thus minimalizing the stress and workload on the Environmental staff.

The Cherokee Nation Environmental office uses I-Pads and wireless communications that enable them to immediately access their database system with project descriptions and addresses while they are in the field. This allows staff who is monitoring incoming requests to coordinate resources and to avoid costly second trips. Staff members who are out doing a site assessment can be contacted and notified of a new request that has been received for a nearby location. Staff is then able to access the system for recording GPS locations and pictures immediately into the system. Therefore, allowing for a cost savings to the Tribe and for efficient flow of workload.

For further information, contact:

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