



Highlights of the 2025 National Tribal Water Council & EPA Office of Water Spring In-Person Meeting

The National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) and the U.S. EPA Office of Water held its 2025 spring in-person meeting on May 21-22, 2025, at the William D. Ruckelshaus Conference Center at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. NTWC members met with EPA staff and discussed topics related to the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act during this two-day meeting.

On May 21, 2025, the meeting began with opening remarks from NTWC Chair Ken Norton, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and Benita Best-Wong, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of Water. The meeting continued with updates from the EPA Office of Water programs, including the Tribal drinking water and clean water infrastructure funding and technical assistance, CWA 106, CWA 319, and Wetland Program Development Grant programs. EPA staff provided a regulatory update on the definition of “Waters of the United States” and information on the CWA 401 program, the water quality variance process, Water Quality eXchange (WQX) system and the National Aquatic Resource surveys.



Photo: Brian Patterson, Onieda Nation (R2)



Photo: Rainee Tetreault (R4), Debbie Dotson (R6) & Kayla Vondracek (R7)

On May 22, 2025, the meeting started with opening remarks from NTWC Chair Ken Norton and Victoria Tran, Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of International and Tribal Affairs. The meeting continued with an introduction of new NTWC members Deborah Dotson, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma (R6); Kayla Vondracek, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska (R7); and Andria Greene, Upper Mattaponi Tribe (R3). NTWC members discussed issues important to their tribe or in their regions during the roundtable session.

EPA staff provided a demonstration on the Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) application and its uses for tribal water programs. There was a discussion of the regulatory framework of minerals and mining in Alaska. Lastly, the Office of Research and Development’s Safe and Sustainable Water Resources Program provided information on several projects. EPA staff informed the NTWC about the [memorandum](#) clarifying the CWA Section 401 certification and upcoming Federal Register notice.

The next in-person meeting will be scheduled in the fall of 2025.



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NEWSLETTER

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<https://nau.edu/ntwc>



Front Row (L to R): Elaine Wilson, Ken Norton, Benita Best-Wong, and Eric Morrison; Back Row (L to R): Brian Patterson, Mary Verner, Debbie Dotson, Scott Hauser, Rainee Tetreault, Chauncey Means, Kayla Vondracek, Shaun Livermore, Sam Russell, Elaina Doral, Andria Greene, Holly Galavotti, Nancy Schuldt, and Dan Kusnierz

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society – Invasive Species Management Planning and Field Techniques Workshop, June 10-12, 2025

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society and Oneida Nation are excited to announce the Invasive Species Management and Field Techniques in-person training. This training will take place at the Oneida Casino Hotel on June 10-12, 2025. In this training, participants will learn the basics and elements needed in management planning; the importance of protecting cultural resources from invasive species like Phragmites and Eurasian Water Milfoil; there will be both classroom and field elements while integrating ID and Impact Assessment. The registration fee for non-members is \$150. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nafws.org/product/invasive-species-management-planning-and-field-techniques-workshop-2025/>

EPA Pacific Northwest Tribal Clean Water Act Training, November 17-20, 2025

The training will address Clean Water Act (CWA) programs including Section 106, Section 319, Section 303(d), water quality standards, and wetlands and will be useful to Tribes who work on these programs or are interested in pursuing Treatment in a similar manner as a State (TAS) status for one or more programs. The training workshop is targeted to Tribes who conduct water quality monitoring, issue water quality certifications, and address water quality issues, nonpoint source pollution, and impaired waters/TMDLs. Tribal staff from across the country are invited, although there will be a focus on examples and applications for Tribes in the Pacific Northwest.

The training workshop is free to attend, and registration is open! For more information, please visit: <https://nawm.org/trainings/pacific-northwest-tribal-clean-water-act-training>

Tribal Exchange Network Group – Monthly Tribal Data Drop-in Sessions

Held the third Thursday of every month from 10:00-11:30 AM (Pacific)

<https://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/trainings-events>

Join us on

Thursday, June 12th

11 AM (PDT) / 2 PM (EDT)



Model Predicts PFAS Buildup in Wild Animals



Elsie Sunderland

*Fred Kavli Professor of
Environmental Chemistry
and Professor of Earth and
Planetary Sciences,
Harvard University*

Our featured presenter Elsie Sunderland discusses the research funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Superfund Research Program to develop a model that predicts how PFAS move and build up within food webs. The model also considers features of different animals, such as their size, feeding rate, metabolism, and excretion, and the complex interactions between animals that make up different food webs.

Join via Zoom by clicking [**HERE**](#)

Meeting ID: 860 9712 2226

Password: 368789

TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

EPA issues Memo on Scope of CWA 401 Certifications

On May 22, 2025, the EPA [issued](#) a memorandum clarifying the specific and limited role that states and Tribes play in the federal licensing and permitting processes under Clean Water Act (CWA) section 401.

Under CWA section 401, states and authorized Tribes review water quality impacts that could result from federally licensed or permitted projects. As the lead federal agency, EPA is responsible for developing regulations and guidance to ensure effective implementation of CWA programs, including for Section 401. Through the memorandum, the agency is reiterating its longstanding position that states and Tribes must utilize section 401 only for its statutory purpose – to protect water quality. The memorandum clarifies that a state’s or Tribe’s evaluation is limited to considering negative impacts to water quality, and only such impacts that prevent compliance with applicable water quality requirements. This direction is consistent with all prior regulations and guidance documents for section 401 certification.

The memorandum also announces EPA’s intent to issue a forthcoming Federal Register notice and docket to obtain public input on implementation challenges and regulatory uncertainty related to the 2023 rule’s scope of certification. The agency will address such challenges and uncertainty through additional future guidance or rulemaking. [Read this memo and learn more about section 401 of the CWA.](#)

EPA’s Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for PFOA and PFOS

Extended Deadline: August 14, 2025

The EPA released the Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS) for public comment. The draft risk assessment reflects the agency’s latest scientific understanding of the potential risks to human health and the environment posed by the presence of [PFOA and PFOS in sewage sludge](#) that is land applied as a soil conditioner or fertilizer (on agricultural, forested, and other lands), surface disposed (e.g., placed in a sewage sludge-only landfill called a monofill), or incinerated.

The EPA will accept written comments on the draft risk assessment through August 15, 2025, via Regulations.gov (Docket ID no. EPA-HQ-OW-2024-0504). For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/draft-sewage-sludge-risk-assessment-perfluorooctanoic-acid-pfoa-and-perfluorooctane>

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service FY 2025 Tribal Wildlife Grant

Deadline: June 20, 2025

The Tribal Wildlife Grants Program provides technical and financial assistance to federally recognized Tribes for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife and their habitats. Funding may be used for conserving any plant or animal species of interest to a Tribe, including those of Native American cultural or traditional importance. Activities may include, but are not limited to:

- planning for wildlife and habitat conservation
- fish and wildlife conservation and management actions
- fish and wildlife related laboratory and field research
- habitat preservation

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/service/tribal-wildlife-grants>

CONSIDER JOINING OUR WATER COUNCIL



SCAN HERE
for the application

WHO WE ARE

The National Tribal Water Council is a technical and scientific body established to advocate for the best interests of federally-recognized Indian and Alaska Native Tribes in matters pertaining to water quality.

WHAT WE DO

- **Policy Response:** Conducts analysis of water policies and initiatives that impact Tribes and responds by preparing comment letters, white papers, or briefs.
- **Information Exchange:** Engage and collaborate with national, regional, tribal organizations, or working groups.
- **Set Priorities:** Publish a biennial "Tribal Water Priorities" document that identifies Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) priorities.

OPEN POSITIONS: AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVE

The Council is accepting applications from tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Regions 1 to 10 to fill two (2) vacancies for the At-Large positions.

Tribal water professionals with knowledge in the CWA and SDWA are encouraged to apply. Also, an applicant with a background in water infrastructure, drinking water, wastewater, and operations and maintenance, is a plus but not required.

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU

Member duties include, but not limited to:

- Participating in monthly virtual calls;
- Attending two in-person meetings annually; and
- Creating and participating in crafting response documents to policy and/or rulemaking actions.

To express your interest or obtain more information, please contact Elaine Wilson at elaine.wilson@nau.edu.

<https://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/>

EVENTS & WEBINARS

EPA Healthy and Resilient Communities Research Webinar Series

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/research/healthy-and-resilient-communities-research-webinar-series>

- June 10, 2025: Restoring Aquatic Ecosystems to Improve Human Health and Well-being

EPA Water Utility Resilience Workshops and Webinars

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/register-epa-water-utility-resilience-events>

- June 10, 2025: Cybersecurity 103
- June 11, 2025: Water Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (WCAT)

Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information Training & Events

To register: <https://clu-in.org/training/>

- June 10, 2025: Microplastics

Environmental Finance Center Network

To register: <https://efcnetwork.org/training-events/#events>

- June 12, 2025: What to Expect When Your Wastewater Plant is Inspected

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/research-states/epa-tools-and-resources-webinar-series>

- June 18, 2025: EPA's Flood Cleanup Resources – Promoting Community Resilience through Risk Communication

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/water-research-webinar-series>

- June 25, 2025: Risk-Based for Fit-for-Purpose Water Reuse – State of the Science

NTWC MEMBERS

For more information on our members, visit [Meet the Council](#).

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