



Introducing NTWC's Region 10 Representative, Mary Verner

Mary Verner serves as Director of Ecology for the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe whose reservation and ancestral lands are considered to be within the State of Washington. Mary's work includes policy level strategic planning to protect water supplies against the effects of climate change. Mary's career has included serving as Natural Resources Director for the Spokane Tribe, where she was deeply involved in establishing and protecting tribal water quality standards and repatriating wetland and riparian habitats. She was a member of the team who secured US EPA Superfund designation to clean up uranium mine and mill sites on the reservation and conducted a natural resources damage assessment to determine the Tribe's specific fish consumption rates and human health standards. Mary also served in Washington State government leading the Department of Ecology Water Resources Program, among other executive positions. She is excited to join the National Tribal Water Council as the Region 10 representative and hopes to



contribute to our shared work to protect the water.

Mary shares a little about herself

To share a bit about me outside my official job duties - I head outdoors for adventures as often as possible with friends and family, especially my two children and grandchildren. My pastime is restoring a settler's homestead and wet prairie habitat on my 30-acre farm in southwestern Washington, on the ancestral lands of the Chehalis people. When there's down time, I love to read just for


fun instead of for email management.

My apologies to you in advance for my goofy sense of humor, and I should warn you that my mind sometimes comes up with things that I don't understand. But I know we share a passion for tribal sovereignty and water stewardship so I hope you will forgive me.

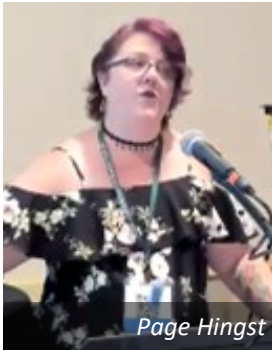
I'm looking forward to meeting each of you!

 **CONTACT INFO:**
Elaine H. Wilson
NTWC Manager
(480) 452-6774
Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu

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2023 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum: “Like Diamonds, PFAS are Forever!”



Page Hingst

Page Hingst, Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska, and Kaylene Ritter, Abt Associates, conducted a two-part workshop titled “Like Diamonds, PFAS are Forever” at the 2023 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum on August 14-15, 2023. The two-part workshop consisted of an overview of PFAS, case studies, testing options, and EPA PFAS Roadmap.

The workshop was provided in-person and virtually over two days with a four-hour session each day. There were approximately 52 participants for part one and approximately 50 participants for part two. During part one, participants were asked to introduce themselves and answer two questions, if applicable. The questions included:

- Does your tribe have a PFAS contamination issue?
- What are your main concerns about PFAS contamination?

Participant feedback included wanting to know more about PFAS, obtaining more information on PFAS testing, site investigations, addressing the disposal of PFAS contamination.



Kaylene Ritter

In Part 1 session, Kaylene Ritter began the workshop with a presentation on *PFAS 101*. PFAS consists of a very large class of synthetic chemicals that are persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic. Ms. Ritter provided information on PFAS sources and pathways in the environment. Jeff Morris, [Abt Associates](#), provided the next presentation on exposure pathway case studies. Mr. Morris presented two case

studies: PFAS tree canopy study and PFAS trophic magnification study. Part one session concluded with a presentation on the [EPA PFAS Roadmap](#) provided by Matt Klasen, EPA PFAS Council Manager. Mr. Klasen provided an overview of EPA’s approach to addressing PFAS and goals, key roadmap progress, and opportunities under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to address PFAS. A few key EPA actions included developing a *Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for six PFAS*, and an *Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to Inform Potential Future Regulations to Designate PFOA and PFOS as CERCLA Hazardous Substances*. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>.

Part 2 session included six presentations. The session started with Page Hingst discussing *Tribal-Specific PFAS Concerns*, which included health effects and exposure pathways that affect tribal members, such as through cultural activities. The second presentation on *PFAS in Tribal Lands* was provided by Dr. Kimberly Garrett, [PFAS Project Lab](#) - Northeastern University. Thereafter, Matt Klasen continued his presentation on the EPA PFAS Roadmap that included addressing PFAS in various media with cross program actions. EPA has a [PFAS Analytical Tools](#) that provides testing, reporting, and occurrences information to the public. The next presentation focused on remedial investigations provided by Linda Nguyen, Oneida ESC Group, and provided examples. Jamie Holmes, Abt Associates, provided an overview of current litigation involving PFAS across the country. The session ended with discussing how PFAS may impact climate change effects.

To access the workshop presentations: <https://mediaspace.nau.edu/channel/2023%2BTribal%2BLands%2Band%2BEnvironment%2BForum/308511642>

Page Hingst is the co-lead for the Tribal PFAS Working Group, which consists of members from five (5) tribal partnership groups – National Tribal Water Council (NTWC), Tribal Science Council (TSC), National Tribal Toxics Council (NTTC), Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee (TWRSC), and Tribal Pesticide Program Council (TPPC). For more information, please visit: <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/Issues/PFAS>

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

U.S. EPA and Department of the Army Issued Final Rule to Amend the Final *Revised Definition of "Waters of the U.S. Rule"*

On August 29, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of the Army (the agencies) issued a final rule to amend the final ["Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'" rule](#), which published in the *Federal Register* on January 18, 2023. This final rule conforms the definition of "waters of the United States" to the U.S. Supreme Court's May 25, 2023, decision in the case of *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. Parts of the January 2023 Rule are invalid under the Supreme Court's interpretation of the Clean Water Act in the [Sackett decision](#). Therefore, the agencies have amended key aspects of the regulatory text to conform it to the Court's decision.

The conforming rule, "Revised Definition of 'Waters of the United States'; Conforming," [published in the Federal Register](#) and became effective on September 8, 2023. Please see EPA's [Definition of WOTUS Rule Status and Litigation Update webpage](#) for information about the status of the January 2023 Rule, as amended by this conforming rule and litigation. For more information, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/wotus>

CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification Improvement Rule

On September 14, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or the Agency) announced the final 2023 Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Improvement Rule (2023 Rule). The final rule is grounded in the fundamental authority granted by Congress to states, territories, and Tribes to protect water resources that are essential to healthy people and thriving communities over the past 50 years. The final rule will become effective 60 days after it is published in the *Federal Register*. More information on the final 2023 Rule may be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-401/final-2023-cwa-section-401-water-quality-certification-improvement-rule>

Northwest Climate Conference - Online - October 2-4, 2023

On October 2-4, 2023, Boise State University will host the 12th Northwest Climate Conference (NWCC) as a fully virtual conference. This conference has provided a networking and learning community for practitioners, scientists, tribal members, and community organizers interested in climate change impacts and adaptation in the Northwest for over a decade. The NWCC is committed to supporting equitable climate adaptation outcomes and building equity and diversity in climate science, policy, and adaptation practice. There is a registration fee of \$150. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nwclimateconference.org/>

2023 Tribal Climate and Health Summit - Pala, CA - November 8-9, 2023

This year's theme is *Centering on Health: Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Tribal Adaptation Strategies that Safeguard Health*. In recent years, many Tribes have taken steps towards understanding and addressing their unique climate vulnerabilities. This Summit will bring together experts and practitioners in Tribal health and climate adaptation to focus on how to take actions that ensure that Tribal health and wellbeing is prioritized and protected. Throughout the 2-day training, attendees will participate in interactive instruction and peer-to-peer learning activities that will build knowledge about developing, implementing, and evaluating adaptation plan strategies that safeguard Tribal health and are rooted in traditional knowledge and values. Organizers, guest speakers, and attendees will be invited to share successful practices that are increasing Tribal resilience to a variety of climate exposures throughout the US. The summit will also recognize Tribes for significant progress championing health adaptation.

For more information, please visit: <http://tribalclimatehealth.org/registration-is-open-for-the-2023-tribal-climate-and-health-summit/>

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Grant Program

Deadline: November 6, 2023

EPA has announced the opening of the Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Grant Program, which aims to provide funding to assist public water systems in underserved communities that are disadvantaged communities or communities with a population of less than 10,000 individuals for the purpose of increasing drinking water system resilience to natural hazards.

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity include a public water system, a water system located in an area governed by an Indian tribe, and a State (on behalf of an underserved community) that serves a community that is underserved and disadvantaged or has a population of less than 10,000 individuals.

The application is open until November 6, 2023. Questions about the announcement can be sent to ResilienceGrant@epa.gov up until October 16, 2023.

The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted on www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/drinking-water-system-infrastructure-resilience-and-sustainability. The RFA will provide more details on the opportunity and instructions on how to apply. Applications for this funding opportunity will be accepted at Grants.gov. The opportunity number is EPA-OW-OGWDW-23-01, assistance listing number 66.448.

NOAA Fisheries: Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants

Deadline: November 8, 2023

Nearly \$85 million in funding is available for fish passage and tribal capacity building under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. This funding will support U.S. federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and tribal organizations in implementing fish passage work and building tribal organizational capacity. In collaboration with NOAA, selected partners will use these funds to build tribal organizational capacity and implement projects that reopen migratory pathways and restore access to healthy habitat for tribally-important species. Selected projects may also provide community and economic benefits, such as enhancing climate resilience by removing or improving aging infrastructure.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/restoring-tribal-priority-fish-passage-through-barrier-removal-grants>

TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Proposed Rule to Revise CWA Section 404 Tribal and State Program Regulations

Deadline: October 13, 2023

On July 19, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a proposed rule to revise the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 Tribal and State Program Regulations. The proposed regulatory revision will streamline and clarify the requirements and steps necessary for states and Tribes to administer programs protecting waterways from discharges of dredged or fill material without a permit. EPA's proposal would address key barriers identified by states and Tribes to administering CWA section 404 while expanding opportunities for Tribes to meaningfully engage in permitting actions.

EPA held two virtual tribal input sessions on August 15 and August 30, and a public hearing on September 6.

- For a copy of the tribal input session presentation, please visit: <https://tcots.epa.gov/ords/tcotspub/f?p=106:5::1736:::>

Tribal Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities *(continued)*

- For a copy of the public hearing presentation, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/cwa404g/current-agency-efforts-regarding-assumption-under-cwa-section-404>.

The deadline to submit comments is October 13, 2023. Comments may be submitted at [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov). For more information, please visit www.epa.gov/cwa404g.

EPA's Proposed Renewal of the forthcoming National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) under the Clean Water Act

Deadline: October 27, 2023

EPA has initiated consultation and coordination with federally recognized tribes on the proposed renewal of the forthcoming National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) under the Clean Water Act. EPA renews this permit every five years, and the current PGP is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2026.

EPA's PGP regulates discharges of biological pesticides and chemical pesticides that leave a residue in waters of the United States. The PGP covers pesticide discharges from the following pesticide use patterns: (1) mosquito and other flying insect pest control, (2) weed and algae control, (3) animal pest control, and (4) forest canopy pest control. With limited exceptions, EPA directly implements the NPDES program in Indian country where tribes are not approved to administer the NPDES program.

Additional information about the PGP can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/pesticide-permitting>.

EPA will hold two identical informational webinar and listening sessions for tribal leaders and staff. During the webinars, tribes will have an opportunity learn more about the current PGP and EPA's plan for reissuance of the 2026 PGP, ask questions, and provide input.

- **Informational Webinar and Listening Session #1:** Tues., Sept. 19, 2023 (10:00 – 11:30 AM ET)
Microsoft Teams Webinar Link: [Click here to join the meeting](#) (
Meeting ID: 290 651 862 087 Passcode: j3ENdu
Teleconference Number: (206) 800-4483, 949181440#
- **Informational Webinar and Listening Session #2:** Thurs., Sept. 21, 2023 (3:00 – 4:30 PM ET)
Microsoft Teams Webinar Link: [Click here to join the meeting](#)
Meeting ID: 297 311 909 769 Passcode: amaTGa
Teleconference Number: (206) 800-4483, 998293943#

The deadline to submit a comment is October 27, 2023. Consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

EVENTS & WEBINARS

Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. – National Tribal Water & Wastewater Operator Training & Certification Program Certification Program

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. National Tribal Water and Wastewater Operator Training and Certification Program is providing online, in-person, and blended training. To register or to view the 2023 training schedule, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

Upcoming courses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Water Treatment Level 1: October 23-November 10, 2023 (Blended)

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

Tribal Climate Health Project's Tribal Health and Adaptation Peer-Learning Roundtable Webinars

The Tribal Climate Health Project has developed training to assist Tribes begin to prepare, cope, build resilience to, and recover from the health and other impacts of climate change.

This advanced training from the Tribal Climate Health Project is for Tribal-serving practitioners, including environmental and health professionals, who have gained some level of transferable, real-world climate and health knowledge and experience through their work with Tribes. This training is open to Tribes and Tribal-serving professionals throughout the United States who work within the intersections of climate change, health, and community well-being. For the complete schedule and to access recorded webinars, please visit: <http://ped.palatribe.com/tcha-webinar-vi/>

Below is the upcoming schedule:

- September 21, 2023: Accessing and Protecting Cultural Data and TEK for Climate Trend Analysis and Real-time Acton
- October 19, 2023: Reporting and Sharing Successes with Decision Makers, Stakeholders, and other Tribes

EPA Technical Assistance Webinar Series: Improving CWA-NPDES Permit Compliance

- September 21, 2023: Mathematical Fundamentals
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To register, please visit: https://www.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_cTKtGghRRfWQMzaawiiXSQ

National Association of Wetland Managers' Tribal Wetland Program Webinars

- September 21, 2023: Education and Outreach Efforts to Support Tribal Wetland Programs
- November 2, 2023: Approaches to Sustainable Funding for Tribal Wetland Programs

To register, please visit: <https://www.nawm.org/wetland-programs/tribal-wetland-programs/calendar-of-tribal-wetland-and-water-resource-training-events>

Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information (CLU-IN) Training

- September 28, 2023: 6PPD & 6PPD-quinone: Understanding and Mitigating the Emerging Global Contaminants
- October 5, 2023: Strategies for Preventing and Managing Harmful Cyanobacteria Blooms Part 1
- October 12, 2023: Strategies for Preventing and Managing Harmful Cyanobacteria Blooms Part 2
- November 7, 2023: Microplastics

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

EPA Water Utility Resilience Workshops and Webinars

- September 18, 2023: How to Prepare Your Utility for Disasters: A webinar for very small drinking water systems that serve under 3,301 people (Focus on hurricane and cybersecurity scenarios)
- October 10, 2023: How to Prepare Your Utility for Disasters: A webinar for very small drinking water systems that serve under 3,301 people (Focus on drought and water contamination scenarios)

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresiliencetraining/register-water-utility-resilience-workshops-and-webinars-now>

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

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

- October 18, 2023: PFAS and Emerging Contaminant Technology Transfer to States and Tribes

EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/small-drinking-water-systems-webinar-series>

- October 31, 2023: Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5)

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

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

- October 25, 2023: Methods and Information to Support the Development of Aquatic Life Criteria to PFAS

NTWC MEMBERS

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

Ken Norton

*Hoop Valley Tribe
Region 9 (NTWC Chair)*
kenpnorton@gmail.com

Michael Bolt

*Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Region 4 (NTWC Vice Chair)*
michbolt@ebci-nsn.gov

Daniel Kusnierz

*Penobscot Indian Nation
Region 1*
dan.kusnierz@penobscotnation.org

Brian Patterson

*Oneida Nation
Region 2*
bpatterson@oneida-nation.org

Shaun Livermore

*Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Region 4 - At-Large*
slivermore@pci-nsn.gov

Nancy Schuldt

*Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa, Region 5*
nancyschuldt@fdlrez.com

Celeste Hockings

*Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior
Chippewa Indians, Region 5*
chockings@ldftribe.com

Jaclyn McCasland

*Delaware Nation
Region 6*
jmccasland@delawarenation-nsn.gov

Denise Jensen

*Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska
Region 7*
denise.jensen@winnebagotribe.com

Chauncey Means

*Confederated Salish and Kootenai
Tribes Region 8*
chauncey.means@cskt.org

Eric Morrison

*Salamatof Tribe
Region 10 - Alaska*
emorrison@salamatoftribe.org

Ann Wyatt

*Klawock Cooperative Association/Tribe
Region 10 – Alaska*
annwyatt@klawocktribe.org

Scott Hauser

*Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation
Region 10 - At-Large*
scott.hauser@usrf.org

Mary Verner

*Snoqualmie Tribe
Region 10*
mary.verner@snoqualmietribe.us

Yolanda Barney

*Navajo Nation
Region 9*
ybarney@navajo-nsn.gov

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email: itep@nau.edu