



2023 Highlights of the Tribal PFAS Working Group

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The Tribal PFAS Working Group was formed in April 2020 to help address and reduce PFAS in Indian Country. In its third year, the working group continued to identify research or case studies of the impacts of PFAS on tribes. The following highlights the activities conducted by the working group in 2023.

Presentations and Webinars

Co-lead of the Tribal PFAS Working Group, Page Hingst, Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska, and Kaylene Ritter, Abt Associates, held a two-day workshop titled "Like Diamonds, PFAS are Forever" at the 2023 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum on August 15-16, 2023.

The two-day workshop covered various topics related to PFAS. Kaylene Ritter provided background information on PFAS. Page Hingst provided a presentation on tribal-specific PFAS concerns. Other presentations included remedial investigations, current PFAS litigation, and case studies. Matt Klausen of EPA, provided an update on the EPA PFAS Roadmap. The recorded workshop can be viewed at <https://mediaspace.nau.edu/channel/2023%2BTribal%2BLands%2Band%2BEnvironment%2BForum/308511642>

The Tribal PFAS Working Group hosted an Open House (webinar) on December 14, 2023. The Open House webinar included background information on the working group and featured a presentation titled *PFAS on Tribal Lands* by Dr. Kimberly Garrett, Northeastern University - PFAS Project Lab. Open house attendees expressed concerns about the effects of PFAS on drinking water, fish, wild rice, and wildlife. The recording of the webinar can be viewed at <https://mediaspace.nau.edu/channel/National+Tribal+Water+Council/116196612>



The Tribal PFAS Working Group invites guest speakers to its monthly calls in order to gain a wider perspective and understanding of current PFAS topics. The following presentations were held during the working group meetings.

- *Modeling for PFAS Contamination* by Dr. Kimberly Garrett, PFAS Project Lab, on February 9, 2023

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2023 Highlights of the Tribal PFAS Working Group *(continued)*

- *PFAS Settlement with DuPont and 3M* by Frank Holleman, Sonosky, Chambers, Sachse, Endreson & Perry, LLP, on October 12, 2023

Policy Response: Tribal PFAS Working Group Developed Comment Letters on EPA Proposed Rulemaking Actions

- Tribal PFAS Working Group submitted a comment letter on the EPA's National Enforcement and Compliance Initiatives for FY 2024-2027 on March 13, 2023.
- Tribal PFAS Working Group submitted a comment letter on the EPA Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulations for PFAS on May 26, 2023.

For additional information, please visit the Tribal PFAS Working Group's web page at <https://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/Issues/PFAS>, or contact co-leads Page Hingst, Tribal Science Council, at page.hingst@santeeoep.com or Dianne Barton, National Tribal Toxics Council, at bard@crtifc.org.

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

EPA Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes: 2023 Revisions to the Policy and Guidance - Webinar

In December 2023, the EPA revised the *EPA Policy on Consultation with Indian Tribes* and the companion *Guidance for Discussing Tribal Treaty or Similar Rights*. The documents were revised in response to the *2021 Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships* that required each agency to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order 13175.

EPA will be holding an informational webinar for Tribes on the revised documents:

- **January 29, 2024 (2:00 PM ET)**
To register: <https://events.gcc.teams.microsoft.com/event/817bc9b9-b5dd-4e1f-ac4a-0b4e71e504fd@88b378b3-6748-4867-acf9-76aacbeca6a7>

For more information and to access the revised documents, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/tribal/consultation-tribes#:~:text=EPA%20Policy%20on%20Consultation%20with%20Indian%20Tribes,-The%20EPA%20Policy&text=It%20defines%20when%20and%20how,to%20ensure%20accountability%20and%20transparency.>

2024 EPA Clean Water Act (CWA) Tribal Forum on May 14-16, 2024, in Washington, D.C.

The U.S. EPA Office of Water is hosting the second Clean Water Act (CWA) Tribal Forum to be held May 14-16, 2024 at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. The CWA Tribal Forum will focus on a more advanced understanding of the CWA authorities most relevant to Tribes, and the implementation of those authorities in Indian country. The Forum is intended for Tribes with experience administering water quality programs who are interested in taking a deeper dive with CWA implementation to discuss challenges, benefits, and available tools. The Forum will include discussions led by Tribal representatives and EPA on a variety of session topics such as Tribal water quality standards (WQS); Indigenous Knowledge and Tribal water quality programs; Waters of the United States rule and implementation; CWA Section 401 certification and implementation; CWA Section 404(g) rule development and implementation.

This is an in-person forum. A virtual or hybrid option is not included. Please register for the forum here:

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=uuQPpMer_kiHkrQ4iZnKAK6wOuc3ZPFMs3p5m93a4YFUNIizMEVFTEJKNVgzMko2OVNENkFHRFExUi4u

Updates & Announcements *(continued)*

The capacity of this forum is limited to 70 Tribal participants. Once registration capacity is reached, we will maintain a waitlist. EPA is unable to provide travel funding or reimbursement for attendees. This forum is open to Tribes across the United States. Registration is not open to the general public.

For questions, please contact Holly Galavotti, galavotti.holly@epa.gov

National Association of Wetland Managers - Annual State, Tribal, Federal Coordination Meeting Accepting Applications for Travel Scholarships

Deadline: May 3, 2024

The National Association of Wetland Managers (NAWM) will be hosting its Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting on June 17-20, 2024, in Shepherstown, West Virginia. A limited number of scholarships are available to assist individuals in need to cover travel, lodging and/or registration costs to attend the annual coordination meeting. The deadline to apply is May 3, 2024. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nawm.org/2024-annual-stfc-meeting-scholarship>

EPA's National Rivers and Streams Assessment

On December 19, 2023, the EPA released the National Rivers and Streams Assessment (NRSA) that presents the results of the 2018-2019 survey of perennial rivers and streams in the United States. This third collaborative survey examines the health of rivers and streams on a national scale and is designed to provide statistically valid results on the condition of broad regions and other subpopulations. For more information on the survey and to access the results, please visit: <https://riverstreamassessment.epa.gov/webreport/>

TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Proposed Issuance of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Wildfire General Permit under the Clean Water Act

Deadline: January 28, 2024

EPA has initiated consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the proposed issuance of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Wildfire General Permit (WGP) under the Clean Water Act (CWA). EPA's WGP is a new NPDES general permit that will propose to cover discharges from certain Federal operators to waters of the U.S. from the aerial application of two categories of wildland fire chemicals, long-term fire retardants and water enhancers. The draft WGP will be proposed to have a five-year permit term and cover all areas where EPA is the NPDES permitting authority.

EPA held two identical informational webinars and listening sessions for tribal officials on November 15 and December 5, 2023. The deadline to request one-on-one consultation meetings with the EPA is January 15, 2024.

The deadline to submit a comment is January 28, 2024. Consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.



Have a story, idea, or update to share?

Email us at elaina.doral@nau.edu.





SAVE THE DATE

FEB 20th
2 PM (EST)

The National Tribal Water Council is hosting an informational webinar and providing a tribal perspective on the **Final 2023 Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Improvement Rule.**

Webinar Speakers:

Ken Norton
National Tribal Water Council

James Grijalva
University of North Dakota

Jill Grant
Jill Grant & Associates

To Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://nau.zoom.us/j/86838635888?pwd=Y3NLVjh2MGxwOUtnY2s1VHNYL2luUT09>

Meeting ID: 868 3863 5888 | Password: 584920

Tribal Consultation Opportunities *(continued)*

EPA's Lead and Copper Rule Improvements

Deadline: February 5, 2024

On November 30, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the proposed Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI). EPA invites the public to review the proposed LCRI and supporting information and once published in the *Federal Register*, provide written comments in the public docket associated with this rulemaking at www.regulations.gov, Docket ID Number: [EPA-HQ-OW-2022-0801](https://www.regulations.gov/docket/EPA-HQ-OW-2022-0801).

EPA held an informational webinar on December 6, 2023. A virtual public hearing is scheduled for **January 16, 2024**, at which the public will be invited to provide EPA with verbal comments. To register: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/epas-proposed-lcri-public-hearing-tickets-767835214797?aff=erelpanelorg>

The deadline to submit a comment is February 5, 2024. Information on the rule summary, fact sheet, and supporting materials may be found at <https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/proposed-lead-and-copper-rule-improvements>.

EVENTS & WEBINARS

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

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

- Tribal Utility Management: January 31-February 16, 2024 (Blended)

To register or to view the 2023 training schedule, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

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

- January 25, 2024: ITRC Contaminants of Emerging Concern Identification Framework
- February 27, 2024: Microplastics
- February 29, 2024: ITRC PFAS Introductory Training

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

EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

- January 30, 2024: Tools, Training, & Technical Assistance to Increase Water System Resilience
- February 27, 2024: Lead Service Line Inventory Guidance

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

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

EPA Tools and Resources Webinars

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

- February 14, 2024: Chemical Safety for Sustainability Online Tools

EPA Water Utility Resilience Workshops and Webinars

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

- February 22, 2024: Water Contaminant Information Tool (WCIT) – Learning the Basics

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

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

- February 28, 2024: PFAS Treatment Using In Situ Groundwater Remediation Techniques

National Association of Wetland Managers' Tribal Wetland Program Webinars

- March 4-7, 2024: Southwest Tribal Clean Water Act Training (In-person; Albuquerque, NM)

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

NTWC MEMBERS

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

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Vacant

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