



## NTWC & EPA Office of Water 2024 Spring In-Person Meeting



**Front (L to R):** Celeste Hockings, Elaine Wilson, Ken Norton, Eric Morrison;  
**Back (L to R):** Holly Galavotti, Elaina Doral, Scott Hauser, Chauncey Means,  
Nancy Schuldt, Mary Verner, Dan Kusnierz, Rainee Tetreault, Brian Patterson

The National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) and the U.S. EPA Office of Water conducted its 2024 spring in-person meeting on April 16-17, 2024. The two-day meeting was held at the William D. Ruckelshaus Conference Center, EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The NTWC meets in person semi-annually to discuss water quality issues important to tribes.

The first day of the meeting started with opening remarks from Ken Norton, NTWC Chair; Mae Wu, Deputy Assistant Administrator – Office of Water; and Jane Nishida, Assistant Administrator – Office of International and Tribal Affairs. The first day consisted of program updates and budget information from various programs within the Office of Water, such as tribal drinking water and clean water infrastructure, Clean Water Act (CWA) 319, CWA 106, and the tribal wetlands program. The meeting continued with regulatory updates on the proposed Tribal Treaty Rights rule, Baseline Water Quality Standards rule, revised CWA 401 rule, CWA 404(g) rule, and Waters of the U.S. Overviews were provided on GAP Hub, Executive Order 14112 (*Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination*), and EPA’s Tribal Climate Adaptation Efforts. The first day concluded with presentations on the final PFAS national drinking water standard, the EPA PFAS Roadmap and the Tribal PFAS Working Group 2024 Priorities.

The second day started with the introduction of two new NTWC members: Celeste Hockings, Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians (At-large, Region 5) and Rainee Tetreault, Eastern Band of Cherokee



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## NTWC & EPA Spring Meeting *(continued)*

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Photo: Eric Morrison (R10) and Rainee Tetreault (R4)

Indians (Region 4). The second day continued with a discussion on mining reform and a presentation from the Department of the Interior's Interagency Working Group. Additionally, the discussion examined mining and water quality issues affecting Alaska Native Tribes. The American Indian Environmental Office provided an overview of the proposed restructuring of the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act. NTWC members asked questions, and provided initial reactions on the proposed restructuring and NTWC plans to develop a comment letter. The meeting ended with a presentation from the Office of Research and Development's Homeland Security Research Program focusing on water-specific tribal products, such as the water on wheels (WOW) water treatment cart.

The Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa will host the next NTWC/EPA in-person meeting in the fall 2024.

## UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### EPA Announced Final Water Quality Standards Regulatory Revisions to Protect Tribal Reserved Rights

On April 26, 2024, the EPA Administrator signed a final rule that revises the Water Quality Standards (WQS) regulation at 40 CFR Part 131 to explicitly address how the EPA and states must consider Tribal reserved rights. It is defined in this rule as rights to Clean Water Act-protected aquatic and/or aquatic-dependent resources reserved to Tribes through treaties, statutes, or executive orders in establishing WQS, where Tribes assert these rights for consideration. This rule creates a regulatory framework that will be applied consistently to help ensure that future WQS reflect consideration of and provide protection for applicable Tribal reserved rights, such as the right to fish for subsistence and/or gather wild rice.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/revising-federal-water-quality-standards-regulation-protect-tribal-reserved-rights>

Final Rule Fact Sheet: [https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-05/tribal-reserved-rights-final-rule\\_fact-sheet\\_508.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-05/tribal-reserved-rights-final-rule_fact-sheet_508.pdf)

### EPA's Final PFAS National Primary Drinking Water Regulation

On April 10, 2024, EPA announced the final National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) for six PFAS. EPA finalized a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation (NPDWR) establishing legally enforceable levels, called Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs), for six PFAS in drinking water. PFOA, PFOS, PFHxS, PFNA, and HFPO-DA as contaminants with individual MCLs, and PFAS mixtures containing at least two or more of PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and PFBS using a Hazard Index MCL to account for the combined and co-occurring levels of these PFAS in drinking water. EPA also finalized health-based, non-enforceable Maximum Contaminant Level Goals (MCLGs) for these PFAS. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/and-polyfluoroalkyl-substances-pfas>.

For more information on PFAS, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/pfas>

## Updates & Announcements *(continued)*

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### EPA Virtual Water Quality Standards Academy, June 3-7 and 10, 2024

The EPA announced that registration for the June 2024 Virtual Water Quality Standards Academy is now OPEN. Registration is free and open to the public. Registration will close on May 22, 2024, or when capacity is reached.

Water quality standards (WQS) are provisions of state, territorial, authorized Tribal or federal law approved by the EPA that describe the desired condition of a water body and the means by which that condition will be protected or achieved. The WQS Academy provides WQS development and implementation information to WQS professionals associated with the federal, state, Tribal and local agencies as well as the private sector. This highly structured and interactive training course ensures that attendees have a fundamental knowledge of WQS requirements and how they interact with other CWA implementing programs.

The 6-day *virtual* WQS Academy session will be held Monday June 3 to Friday June 7, and Monday June 10. The session will run approximately 11:30 am to 4:30 pm (Eastern Daylight Time). To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/water-quality-standards-academy>

### Tribal and Indigenous Climate Intensive, June 10-13, 2024

The National Tribal Caucus and EPA are hosting a four day, free, web-based training series aimed at helping Tribes prepare for climate impacts, draft adaptation plans, conduct vulnerability assessments, and access grant/technical assistance opportunities.

#### Training Schedule:

Overview Sessions (click the link to register for both sessions)

- Monday, June 10, 1-2:50 pm ET: [Conducting a Vulnerability Assessments and Writing a Climate Action Plan](#)
- Tuesday, June 11: 1-2:50 pm ET: [Overview of EPA Programs, Technical Assistance, Capacity Building and Funding for Climate Change](#)

EPA Program and Partnership Group Sessions: Each session will be led by a program office and their [Partnership Group](#). Click the link to register for individual sessions.

- Tuesday, June 11, 3-4:30 pm ET, [ORD and the Tribal Science Council: Tribal work addressing Climate Change](#)
- Wednesday, June 12, 12-1:30 pm ET, [OCSP and the Tribal Pesticide Program Council: Pesticides and Climate Change](#)
- Wednesday, June 12, 1:30-2:50 pm ET, [OEJECR and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council: Environmental Justice and Climate Change](#)
- Wednesday, June 12, 3-4:20 ET, [OLEM and the Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee Climate in Tribal Cleanup, Prevention, and Response Programs](#)
- Thursday, June 13, 12-1:30 pm ET, [OW and the National Tribal Water Council, Climate Priorities in the Water Program](#)
- Thursday, June 13, 1:30-2:50 pm ET, [OAR and National Tribal Air Association, Climate Impacts on Air Quality and Health](#)
- Thursday, June 13, 3-4:20 ET, [OCSP and the National Tribal Toxics Council: Toxics and Climate Change](#)



Have a story, idea, or update to share?

Email us at [elaina.doral@nau.edu](mailto:elaina.doral@nau.edu).





## Membership Recruitment for Region 6 and Region 7 Representatives

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. The Council is currently accepting applications from tribal water professionals to fill two open positions.

### Region 6 Representative

Applications accepted until **July 31, 2024**

This position is open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas).

### Region 7 Representative

Applications accepted until **August 15, 2024**

This position is open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska).

### Member duties include, but not limited, to:

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

We are seeking individuals that are passionate and vocal about tribal water issues. Interested applicants must submit the following: application form, letter of interest, and professional resumé. Please refer to the Council's [membership application information packet](#) for additional details.

To express your interest or obtain more information, please contact Elaine Wilson at [elaine.wilson@nau.edu](mailto:elaine.wilson@nau.edu).



# TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

## EPA's Sixth Proposed Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6) for Public Water Systems

**Deadline: June 20, 2024**

EPA is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the development of the sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) for public drinking water systems. Under the UCMR, EPA collects data for contaminants suspected to be found in drinking water, but that do not have health-based standards set under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

EPA will be holding upcoming webinars to describe potential approaches for developing UCMR 6, which includes prospective drinking water analytical methods and contaminants, possible sampling design, and other monitoring considerations. An informational webinar is scheduled as follows:

- Webinar #3: Informational webinar for Tribal Governments - May 20, 2024 (2:30-4:00 PM EDT)  
Microsoft Teams, to join click [here](#).  
Meeting ID: 226 544 196 275 | Passcode: UmVDuJ

The deadline to request for a one-on-one consultation meeting is June 10, 2024. The deadline to submit a comment is June 20, 2024. Consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>. For additional information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/information-about-public-water-systems>

## Proposed Restructuring of the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) Under the Federal Advisory Committee Act

**Deadline: August 9, 2024**

The U.S. EPA has proposed to restructure the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) as a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and to increase the proportion of elected or traditionally appointed Tribal leaders that serve on the group.

In conjunction with this proposal, EPA is reviewing the characteristics of the NTC to strengthen the operations of the group and increase collaboration with the other EPA Tribal Partnership Groups. These proposed changes will clarify the process by which EPA receives Tribal leadership recommendations on technical programs and budget planning, elevate the NTC as the preeminent group of Tribal representatives that provides advice directly to EPA leadership on items of national significance under EPA's purview, and strengthen EPA's ongoing commitment to collaboration and partnership with Tribes and the government-to-government relationship. Learn more about the current NTC, including the current 2012 Charter on the [NTC website](#). Learn more about the Federal Advisory Committee Act on [EPA's FACA website](#).

Please reach out to Daniel Vaught, AIEO, at [vaught.daniel@epa.gov](mailto:vaught.daniel@epa.gov), if you have any questions regarding this Tribal consultation opportunity, would like to request government-to-government consultation with EPA on this matter, or if you would like to provide written input to EPA. The deadline to request for a consultation meeting is July 17, 2024.

EPA will host a third informational webinar on Thursday, May 30, 2024 (2:00-3:30 pm ET). To join: [MS Team Link](#)

The deadline to submit a comment is August 9, 2024. Consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

## First Nations Development Institute: Advancing Tribal Nature-Based Solutions Grants

**Deadline: May 22, 2024**

Tribes and Native communities are on the front lines of climate change, experiencing extreme weather, rising sea levels, extended drought, warming temperatures, and melting permafrost. Many tribes and Native communities are located in remote and coastal locations, which increases their vulnerabilities to flooding and wildfire. Furthermore, subsistence and cultural practices rely on healthy ecosystems that are stewarded by Native peoples.

To support climate action that addresses adaptation and disaster preparation, First Nations established the second project under its newly created Climate Initiative, Advancing Tribal Nature-Based Solutions. This project is designed to provide tribes and Native nonprofits with resources to support climate action that addresses adaptation and disaster preparation (e.g., wildfires, flooding, drought) through the application of nature-based solutions based on Native knowledge. First Nations expects to award six (6) grants up to \$200,000 each to eligible tribes and organizations. For additional information and/or to apply, please visit: <https://www.firstnations.org/rfps/advancing-tribal-nature-based-solutions-grant>.

## EPA FY24 Exchange Network Grant Program

**Deadline: May 22, 2024**

The purpose of the Exchange Network (EN) grant program is to foster better environmental management and decision-making through increased access to timely, high quality, environmental information. [An applicant's proposed project goals and outputs should align with one or more EN Funding Areas as described in Section I-B of the Solicitation Notice \(SN\) and EPA's FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.](#) Applicants are encouraged to read the full text of the Strategic Plan at the following website: <https://www.epa.gov/planandbudget/strategicplan>.

The SN for Fiscal Year 2024 Exchange Network (EN) Grant Program is published at Grants.gov and is available at the following site: [EPA-OMS-24-01 FY 2024 National Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program](#). Applications are due to EPA by 11:59 PM Eastern Time, Wednesday, May 22, 2024. Additional guidance tools, including optional fillable templates for the cover letter, project narrative (work plan), and budget narrative attachment form, plus a budget calculation tool, is available through the grants.gov listing and on the EN website at: <https://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/exchange-network-grant-program#Resources>.

## Nationwide Fishing Trap Removal, Assessment, and Prevention Program

**Deadline: May 30, 2024**

The Virginia Institute of Marine Science, in partnership with the NOAA Marine Debris Program, announced a request for proposals under their Nationwide Fishing Trap Removal, Assessment, and Prevention (TRAP) Program. Using funding from NOAA's Marine Debris Program provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science will award up to \$1,475,000 in grants to remove derelict fishing traps throughout coastal waterways of the United States while collecting data to prevent future gear loss. Projects may range from \$50,000 to \$200,000.

Priority will be given to projects that provide ecological and/or economic benefits; integrate innovative, sustainable approaches to derelict fishing trap disposal; and take place in sanctuaries, reserves, tribal or Indigenous community fishing grounds, or other protected areas. Projects throughout the coastal United States, including United States territories and Freely Associated States, are eligible for consideration. Eligible applicants include American Indian and Alaska Native governments and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Organizations; non-profit 501(c) organizations; state, territorial, and Freely Associated State government agencies; local governments; commercial (for-profit) organizations; and educational institutions.

Proposals are due on May 30, 2024, 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT). For more information, please visit: <https://trapprogram.org/>

# EVENTS & WEBINARS

## Source Water Collaborative: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Learning Exchange Webinar

The Source Water Collaborative is hosting its 4th webinar as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Webinar Series on May 30, 2024 from 2:30 – 4:00 PM Eastern Time titled *Redefining “Disadvantaged Communities” in a New Water Infrastructure Era*.

BIL created a number of opportunities for equitable outcomes for disadvantaged communities in the financing of water infrastructure. The law now requires SRF programs to provide 49% of BIL money to disadvantaged communities as principal forgiveness loans or grants. This allows additional communities that have struggled to access water infrastructure funding to receive the support they need. To register: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_kgH7BkZfTZySvYifw6syzA#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_kgH7BkZfTZySvYifw6syzA#/registration)

## National Association of Wetlands Managers - Annual State, Tribal, Federal Coordination Meeting

The National Association of Wetlands Managers (NAWM) will be hosting its Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting on June 17-20, 2024, in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nawm.org/2024-annual-stfc-meeting-scholarship>

## ITEP Tribal Lands and Environment Forum, August 12-15, 2024

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) announced the 2024 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum to be held in Eugene, Oregon. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> annual forum for environmental professionals from Tribes, US EPA, state/local/federal agencies, and community organizations to meet, share knowledge and learn from one another on how to improve management, protection and restoration of Tribal lands. The registration fee is \$175 (in-person) and the deadline to register is July 29, 2024. For more information, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/tlef2024/home?authuser=0>

## National Tribal & Indigenous Climate Conference, September 9-12, 2024

The Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) announced the 2024 Biennial National Tribal and Indigenous Climate Conference (NTICC) to be held in Anchorage, Alaska.

ITEP works with a number of support programs including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Tribal Resilience Program. The NTICC invites relatives from tribal nations and Indigenous Peoples to attend, listen, learn and share the important work conducted to protect tribal cultures, non-human relatives and the environment. For additional information, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/nticc2024/2024-save-the-date>

## 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 trainings.

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

- Online Short Training Seminar - Standard Operating Procedures for Water Utilities: May 22, 2024
- Online Short Training Seminar - Principles of Source Water Protection: May 22, 2024
- Wastewater Collection – Level 1: June 17-28, 2024 (Blended)

To register or to view the 2023/2024 training schedule, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

## Events & Webinars *(continued)*

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### EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

- May 21, 2024: Technical Assistance for Lead

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

### EPA Office of Research and Development

- May 22, 2024: Using Wetlands to Reduce Nutrient Loadings to Rivers and the Coast

To register, please visit: [https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8617110662791/WN\\_rNkVrz3SRkmNMhssVA2LiA#/registration](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/8617110662791/WN_rNkVrz3SRkmNMhssVA2LiA#/registration)

### Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

- May 23, 2024: Wetlands Mapping on Tribal Lands – Opportunities and Funding

To register, please visit: <https://www.nafws.org/events-training/>

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

- May 21, 2024: ITRC Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CEC) Identification Framework
- May 23, 2024: ITRC PFAS Beyond the Basics: PFAS Fate and Transport, Site Characterization and Source ID Training
- June 13, 2024: ITRC PFAS Beyond the Basics: PFAS Treatment Technologies Training

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

### EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- June 26, 2024: Ecosystem and Human Health Risks from Tires as a Complex Pollutant

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

## COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITY

### USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service: Source Water Protection

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced the opportunity to work with NRCS to identify high priority source water protection (SWP) areas and priority agricultural and forestry practices land owners can implement to get up to 90 percent cost-share incentive payments to protect drinking water sources. These funds will support farmers who implement conservation practices that provide water quality benefits to sources of drinking water. EPA is committed to protecting source water and helping to promote available funds to effectively protect drinking water and public health.

The national bulletin requires NRCS State Conservationists to refine local source water protection priority areas by August 23, 2024 in accordance with the 2018 Farm Bill. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) increases the funding for the NRCS conservation programs subject to the SWP Farm Bill provision to \$18 billion dollars to implement [Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities](#) that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and/or sequester carbon. Many Climate-Smart Mitigation Activities can provide a water quality benefit to source water as well, which means that **\$1.8 billion is available to perform SWP now through 2031**, when IRA funds expire.

There is no limit to the number of selected priority conservation practices to protect source water in the selected priority SWP areas. The 2018 Farm Bill authorizes NRCS State Conservationists to provide a higher cost-share reimbursement (up to 90% of the cost) for the selected priority conservation practices that will benefit source water.

You can contact your NRCS State Conservation Offices [here](#) and learn more about engaging with your local USDA Service Center [here](#). For more information on NRCS' source water protection efforts click [here](#).



# Resignation of NTWC Region 6 and Region 7 Representatives



Photo: Jaclyn McCasland

NTWC would like to recognize the contribution and dedication of Jaclyn McCasland, Delaware Nation, and Denise Jensen, Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. In late April, Jaclyn announced her resignation as the NTWC Region 6 representative. She served on the NTWC for two years.

In May, Denise announced her resignation as the NTWC Region 7 representative. She served on the NTWC for 15 years and was a strong voice for tribal water protection.

NTWC wishes both Jaclyn and Denise the best in their future endeavors.

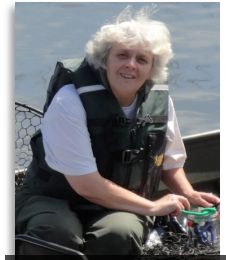


Photo: Denise Jensen

## NTWC MEMBERS

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

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