



## The Tribal PFAS Working Group's Involvement in the Tribal Lands and Environment Forum

By Elaine H. Wilson, NTWC Program Manager

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The Tribal PFAS Working Group (TPWG) recently participated in the 2024 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF) held the week of August 12, 2024, in Eugene, Oregon. The TPWG represented by the co-leads of the working group, Page Hingst, Santee Sioux Nation of Nebraska, a member of the Tribal Science Council; and Dianne Barton, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, chair of the National Tribal Toxics Council (NTTC), along with ITEP staff Elaine Wilson, who serves as NTWC Program Manager, assisted in facilitating three events at the TLEF.

### PFAS 101 Workshop

On Monday, August 12, 2024, Page Hingst moderated and led an all-day workshop titled, "PFAS 101." Several other speakers were involved including Kaylene Ritter of Natural Nexus; Dr. Kimberly Garrett of The PFAS Project Lab/Northeastern University. Both Kaylene and Dr. Garrett participate in the TPWG as partners and have provided research studies on PFAS contamination, exposure, and remediation. Other speakers included Dan Kusnierz of the Penobscot Indian Nation, who is a member of the National Tribal Water Council, and the TPWG, who was part of the Tribal Panel; and there were also two EPA staff (Matt Klasen, Matt Small) who presented that day. Approximately 40 forum participants attended in person, while 36 participants attended online virtually. A short questionnaire was distributed to the attendees to gauge the level of knowledge and understanding they had about PFAS and/or emerging contaminants prior to the workshop. The level of knowledge varied with the largest percentage of respondents selecting "Limited" knowledge at 64%, followed by "Intermediate," at 36%, and no one selected "Advanced" or "None."



Workshop presenters: Dr. Kimberly Garret, PFAS Project Lab (Above); and Dan Kusnierz, Penobscot Indian Nation (Below)



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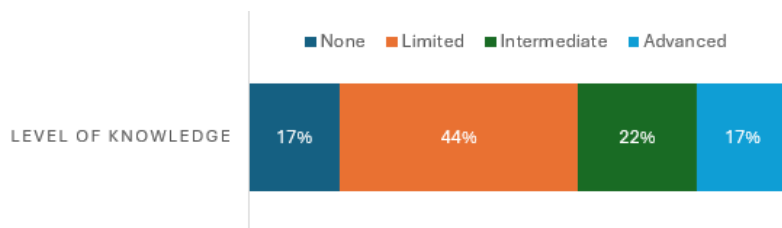
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<https://nau.edu/ntwc>

## Tribal PFAS WG at 2024 TLEF *(continued)*

Some of the specific challenges or concerns that tribal representatives noted related to contaminated soil, funding to test household wells, funding for cleanup, and having no recourse for tribes to persecute offenders.

### Table Talk Session

On Tuesday, August 13, during the Table Talk Session, Ms. Wilson interacted with approximately 15 forum participants on the topic of PFAS. In this session, a questionnaire was also distributed and the outcome of that questionnaire is below, in terms of knowledge level of PFAS.



Some of the specific challenges or concerns that tribal representatives noted related to drinking water residuals, maintaining cultural practices, disposal, impacts on first foods, and tribal school well contamination.

### Multi-Media Meetup

On Wednesday, August 14, the Tribal PFAS Working Group hosted a table at the Multi-Media Meetup. The TPWG members that assisted were Page Hingst, Dianne Barton, Elaine Wilson; and Kade Lenz of the Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Epidemiology Center, and a member of the NTTC. About a dozen forum attendees stopped by the table to inquire about PFAS. A brochure of the TPWG and a PFAS fact sheet were distributed throughout these events.

Overall, tribal representatives were very interested in learning more about PFAS and its impacts on tribal communities. Many of the responses about PFAS topics they would like covered in future workshops included biomagnification, sampling methodology, human health impacts, ways to protect the community, remediation, sampling, disposal of contaminated soil and water treatment byproducts, among others.

The PFAS 101 workshop recording is now available at: <https://mediaspace.nau.edu/channel/2024+Tribal+Lands+and+Environment+Forum/349437462>

*The Tribal PFAS Working Group is an ad hoc working group comprised of six national tribal partnership groups (i.e., National Tribal Water Council, Tribal Science Council, National Tribal Toxics Council, Tribal Pesticide Program Council, Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee, National Tribal Air Association), and is supported by the Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP) staff who work with the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC). For more information, please visit: <https://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/Issues/PFAS>*

## **NEW!** National Tribal Water Council Recently Amended its Bylaws

For the past year, the National Tribal Water Council was in the process of reviewing, updating and amending its bylaws. The NTWC Bylaws were last amended on April 24, 2013.

The newly amended bylaws were completed in July 2024 and sent to the NTWC members for final approval. On August 14, 2024, the NTWC members voted to approve and amend the bylaws. The document is available on the NTWC website at: [https://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/About/Bylaws\\_Meeting\\_Minutes](https://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/About/Bylaws_Meeting_Minutes)



## NTWC Accepting Applications to Fill Four Open Membership Positions: Region 3, Region 6, Region 7, and At-Large

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 employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization to fill four (4) open positions.

### Region 6

*Open until Filled; Review of Applications to begin September 3, 2024*

The position is open to tribal water professionals from Region 6 (Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas).

### Region 7

*Open until Filled; Review of Applications to begin September 3, 2024*

The position is open to tribal water professionals from Region 7 (Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, and Nebraska).

### **NEW!** At-Large

*Open until Filled; Review of Applications will begin December 1, 2024*

The position is open to tribal water professionals organization from throughout the United States (Regions 1 through 10).

### **NEW!** Region 3

*Open until Filled; Review of Applications will begin December 1, 2024*

The position is open to tribal water professionals from Region 3 (District of Columbia, Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia).

### 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).

# UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual EPA Drinking Water Workshop, September 17-19, 2024

The EPA's Office of Research and Development and Office of Water in partnership with the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA) is hosting the 21<sup>st</sup> Annual EPA Drinking Water Workshop on September 17-19, 2024, in Cincinnati, OH. The workshop will focus on PFAS and lead (Pb) topics. It is being designed for government agencies responsible for drinking water regulations compliance and treatment technologies permitting. For this year, the workshop will only be open to Tribal, state, and territory agencies (within the United States) responsible for public water systems to optimize networking, increase engagement, and promote a shared learning experience. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/21st-annual-epa-drinking-water-workshop-small-system-challenges-and-solutions#About>

## 2024 Tribal Exchange Network Conference, October 16-17, 2024

The Tribal Exchange Network will be hosting its conference titled "Tribal Data: Sharing Stories, Supporting the Future" on October 16-17, 2024, in Spokane, Washington. The **TENC24** aims to expand Tribal capacity for environmental data sharing, management, and analysis through informational, interactive sessions that foster connection and collaboration opportunities, and strengthen Tribal participation in the Exchange Network.

The [Tribal Exchange Network Group \(TXG\)](#) and the [Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals \(ITEP\)](#) host this FREE event for Tribal staff and other partners working with environmental data, particularly those seeking to leverage information technology solutions to streamline their work and enhance data management capacity. Others who may benefit from attending include those serving in Tribal leadership roles, Tribal staff developing and/or supporting information technology (IT) tools or systems, and other collaborators.

Sessions will be conducted in-person and online through Zoom Events. For more information contact [NEIEN@nau.edu](mailto:NEIEN@nau.edu).

## Native American Fish and Wildlife Society 2024 Alaska Regional Conference, October 16, 2024

The Native American Fish and Wildlife Society is hosting an Alaska Regional Conference on October 16, 2024, in Anchorage, Alaska. NAFWS is providing travel scholarships to assist with travel, hotel and per diem. Priority is given to Tribes, Tribal organizations, and Tribal students with a focus on Alaska Natives and Alaska residents. Registration is free for members and \$50 for non-members. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nafws.org/product/2024-alaska-regional-conference/>

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

## Climate Pollution Reduction Grants – Implementation Grants: Tribes and Territories Competition Selections

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced 34 selected applications for \$300 million in grants to Tribes and one U.S. territory to implement community-driven solutions to tackle the climate crisis, reduce air pollution, advance environmental justice, and accelerate the clean energy transition. The selected applications will fund projects proposed by 33 Tribal recipients and the Municipality of Saipan in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The grants will be funded through the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program, which was created under the Inflation Reduction Act as part of the Biden-Harris Administration's Investing in America agenda. For more information visit: <https://www.epa.gov/inflation-reduction-act/cprg-implementation-grants-tribes-and-territories-competition-selections>

## Funding Opportunities *(continued)*

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### Tribal Wetland Program Development Grant - Fiscal Year 2024 Tribal Wetland Program Development Grants

**Deadline for Applications: October 1, 2024, by 11:59 PM ET**

Under this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) WPDGs provide Tribes and Intertribal Consortia an opportunity to develop and/or refine comprehensive Tribal wetland programs. This funding opportunity is meant to:

- Develop the capacity of Tribes to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition.
- Use one or more of the "Core Elements" from the [Tribal, State, Territory Wetlands Program Core Element Framework](#) to achieve this goal.

The EPA anticipates approximately \$3,800,000 in federal funding to be available for assistance agreements that will have one to four year project periods. A full application can be found at [EPA-OW-OWOW-24-04](#) and [Tribal Wetland Program Development Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity | US EPA](#). If you have any questions, please contact Myra Price at [price.myra@epa.gov](mailto:price.myra@epa.gov) or [WPDG-RFA@epa.gov](mailto:WPDG-RFA@epa.gov).

## TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

### EPA's Proposed Renewal of the Multi-Sector General Permit

**Deadline: October 25, 2024**

The U.S. EPA initiated consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the renewal of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP) for stormwater discharges associated with industrial activities under the Clean Water Act. EPA renews this permit every five years, and the current MSGP is scheduled to expire on February 28, 2026.

Under the Clean Water Act, specific categories of industrial activities listed in 40 CFR 122.26(b)(14) must obtain coverage under an NPDES permit for stormwater discharges. EPA is typically the NPDES permitting authority in Indian country. As a result, facilities with stormwater discharges from industrial activities in Indian country need permit coverage under EPA's MSGP or under an individual NPDES permit issued by EPA. Industrial facilities intending to seek coverage under EPA's MSGP must submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) certifying that they have met the permit's eligibility conditions and that they will comply with the permit's requirements. More information about the MSGP can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-industrial-activities>.

The deadline to submit comments is October 25, 2024. The EPA will hold two listening sessions via webinar for Tribal leaders and staff:

- **September 18, 2024** (11:00 AM – 12:30 PM ET)  
MS Teams Webinar Link: [Join the meeting now](#)  
Meeting ID: 283 185 477 625; Passcode: cqMiRK  
Teleconference Number: +1 206-800-4483, 34369275#
- **September 19, 2024** (3:00 – 4:30 PM ET)  
MS Teams Webinar Link: [Join the meeting now](#)  
Meeting ID: 262 316 844 659 Passcode: QFPTEa  
Teleconference Number: +1 206-800-4483, 713106800#

For additional information on this proposed MSGP permit renewal, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-industrial-activities>.



Have a story, idea, or update to share?

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



# 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 trainings.

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

- Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) Federal Regulations: September 18-27, 2024 (Blended)
- Wastewater Lagoons: October 8-18, 2024 (Blended)

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

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### EPA Water Utility Resilience Trainings

- September 12, 2024: Climate Change and Financial Strength of Water Sector Utilities
- September 19, 2024: How to Prepare Your Wastewater Utility for Disasters

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresiliencetraining/register-epa-water-utility-resilience-trainings>

### EPA Emergency Response Research Webinar Series

- September 11, 2024: Premise Plumbing & Wildfires
- October 9, 2024: Cybersecurity & the Water Security Test Bed

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

### EPA Tools and Research Webinar Series

- September 18, 2024: Assessing Community Vulnerabilities to Potential Contaminant Releases from Extreme Events
- October 16, 2024: PFAS

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

### EPA Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Research Webinar Series

- September 25, 2024: Coastal Dissolved Oxygen Dynamics and a Brief Introduction to the Hypoxia Task Force
- November 20, 2024: HABs Toxicity and Health Effects of Anatoxin-A

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/harmful-algal-blooms-hypoxia-and-nutrients-research-webinar-series>

### EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

- September 24, 2024: PFAS – National Primary Drinking Water Regulation, Initial Monitoring Requirements, Implementation, and Community Engagement and Risk Communication
- October 29, 2024: PFAS – Treatment, Occurrence, and Analytics

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

### Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information Training & Events

- October 22, 2024: ITRC – Contaminants of Emerging Concern Identification Framework
- November 7, 2024: ITRC - Microplastics

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

## Events & Webinars *(continued)*

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### EPA Computational Toxicology Communities of Practice Webinar

- September 26, 2024: Using Environmental RNA to Understand the Effects of Pollution on Aquatic Ecosystems

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/chemical-research/computational-toxicology-communities-practice>

### EPA Environmental Justice Webinar Series for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples

- September 25, 2024: Indigenous Food Sovereignty
- October 30, 2024: Cumulative Impacts

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-tribes-and-indigenous-peoples#webinars>

## NTWC MEMBERS

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

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