



## Introducing the New Region 6 Representative, Debbie Dotson

Greetings from northeast Oklahoma!

My name is Debbie Dotson, and I am the Water Quality Officer for the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma. I grew up and still live in rural southwest Missouri, only a few miles from the Oklahoma state line. As a kid, you would often find me playing in the creek near my house, catching crawdads and fish, and exploring the pastures and woods with my cousins. My grandmother would take me for walks and teach me the names of the trees, flowers, and insects, and show me edible plants and fruits that grew wild around us. I credit her for inspiring my love for biology and history—and homemade bread.



I graduated college with a degree in biology and minor in chemistry, but I was not sure where that would lead me as a career. I worked in laboratories prior to working for the Eastern Shawnee Tribe and still use some of those skills today. I found my real passion is field work and coordinating educational projects with my work in water quality.

When I'm out sampling, I'm documenting a snapshot of that moment, and a collection of snapshots creates a big picture and provides a true story of the water body. Often this story guides future work and provides evidence of issues. The story of water can be shared in data sets, GIS, modelling, and in education.

Education is one of the favorite aspects of my job, especially working with young people and telling them the story of the water with macroinvertebrates, fish, and making science fun at events like our annual Kid's Fishing Derby, Culture Camp, and Lost Creek Water Festival. I hire a college student intern each summer and I often learn from their youthful insights as they learn water quality from me.



### CONTACT INFO:

**Elaine H. Wilson**  
NTWC Manager  
[Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu](mailto:Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu)

**Elaina Doral**  
NTWC Program Coordinator  
[Elaina.Doral@nau.edu](mailto:Elaina.Doral@nau.edu)

### NEWSLETTER

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, please click [here](#) where you can manage your NTWC Listserv and other ITEP Listserv subscriptions.



VISIT US AT:  
<https://nau.edu/ntwc>

## Debbie Dotson, NTWC Region 6 Representative *(continued)*

---

Water quality is complicated with lots of battles for legal, health, scientific, or cultural reasons. In my area, we have Superfund sites from legacy lead and zinc mining in Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma that affect the land and waters in our area. Years of legal battles, monitoring, and meetings between tribes, states, and federal agencies are slowly progressing to restoration projects. Two upcoming projects will be on Eastern Shawnee sampling sites, and I hope to tell the story of Lost Creek before and after restoration.

I look forward to days at the creek and the river, still catching crawdads and fish. I am privileged to do something I enjoy, and I am thankful for the opportunity to represent the Eastern Shawnee Tribe, Region 6 tribes, and advocate for tribal waters. I am not a tribal citizen but have a deep respect for the resilience of tribal people and tribal culture.

When I'm not at work, I'm with family, spoiling my three rescue dogs, or working in the student ministry at church. I enjoy music of all kinds, football, art, thrift stores, and crime shows.

Ne-yi-wa (thank you, pronounced N'yah-weh in Shawnee)

Your other Shawnee word for the day: Na-pe (water, pronounced Neh-pee)

To learn more about the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Environmental Program, please visit: <https://www.estoo-nsn.gov/services/page/environmental-protection-services>



## NCAI's Webinar Series on Understanding the EPA's New Regulatory Revisions to Water Quality Standards for Protecting Tribal Reserved Rights Rule



*Ken Norton, NTWC Chair  
Hoopa Valley Tribe*

The National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), in partnership with the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC), National Association of Wetland Managers (NAWM), and the American Bar Association Section of Environment, Energy, and Resources, held a two-part webinar series on the EPA's Tribal Reserved Rights Rule on January 23 and 30, 2025. On April 26, 2024, the EPA finalized the [Reserved Rights Rule](#) that requires the EPA and states to consider Tribal reserved rights, such as fishing, hunting, and gathering, when establishing or revising water quality standards (WQS).

The first webinar was held on January 23, 2025, and was moderated by NTWC Chairman Ken Norton, Hoopa Valley Tribe (Region 9). The first webinar focused on the rule's key components, examined how the EPA and states will consider Tribal reserved rights when developing WQS, and on the ground insights from Nancy Schuldt, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.



*Nancy Schuldt, NTWC R5 Rep  
Fond du Lac Band of Lake  
Superior Chippewa*

The second webinar was held on January 30, 2025, and explored state implementation challenges and opportunities. Donna Downing, NAWM, moderated the second webinar and included the following speakers: Jennifer Wigal, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality; Dana Vanderbosch, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency; and Daniel Cordalis, Native American Rights Fund.

There were approximately 550 participants that attended the webinar series. The recordings of the webinars are available at: <https://www.ncai.org/section/ies>

# UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Call for Abstracts: 2025 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Annual National Conference

**Deadline: March 7, 2025**

The 2025 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society (NAFWS) Annual National Conference will be hosted by the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes of the Wind River Reservation, to be held May 12-15, 2025, in Riverton, Wyoming. The NAFWS is accepting abstracts for 30-minute presentations through March 7, 2025. Additionally, the NAFWS can provide travel assistance and the deadline to apply is March 7, 2025. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nafws.org/product/2025-annual-national-conference/>

## National Association of Wetland Managers 2025 Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting, April 8-11, 2025

The National Association of Wetland Managers will be holding its annual coordination meeting on April 8-11, 2025, in Stevenson, Washington. The purpose of this annual meeting is to support state and Tribal wetland program managers, and other wetland professionals as they respond to challenges in the coming year. A limited number of scholarships are available to U.S. state and Tribal agency staff to assist those in need to cover travel, lodging and/or registration costs. For more information, please visit: <https://nawm.org/2025-annual-state-tribal-federal-coordination-meeting>

## 2025 Tribal Drinking Water Conference, April 21-24, 2025

The Rural Community Assistance Corporation and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency are hosting the 2025 Tribal Drinking Water Conference on April 21-25, 2025, in Reno, Nevada. Ensuring both the quality and ample supply of drinking water is a multifaceted duty. Tribal Utilities must possess financial stability, managerial competence, and technical expertise to meet immediate water needs while safeguarding community health sustainably. Join the EPA and RCAC to expand your skills, gain insights, earn contact hours, network, and enjoy engaging activities. For more information, please visit: <https://www.rcac.org/trainings/2025-tribal-drinking-water-conference/>

# TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

## EPA's Proposed National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Perchlorate

**Deadline: February 28, 2025**

The EPA is initiating consultation and coordination on the forthcoming proposed rulemaking, the National Primary Drinking Water Regulation for Perchlorate, as required by recent court orders. The EPA is developing the proposed regulation to improve public health protection by reducing perchlorate exposure from drinking water. The proposed rule would impact owners and operators of public water systems subject to the rule requirements as defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act, along with primacy agencies that enforce drinking water regulations in their jurisdiction. There are approximately 1,000 Tribal public water systems and the Navajo Nation has primacy for over 170 public water systems. The consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Contact Erin Partlan at (202) 564-0155 or email at [partlan.erin@epa.gov](mailto:partlan.erin@epa.gov) for questions. Comment letters should be submitted via email to [NPDWRperchlorate@epa.gov](mailto:NPDWRperchlorate@epa.gov).

## Tribal Consultation Opportunities (*continued*)

---

### EPA's Draft National Recommended Water Quality Criteria for the Protection of Human Health for PFOA, PFOS, and PFBS

**Deadline: February 24, 2025**

The EPA has released draft national recommended health-based levels (human health criteria) for three per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in water bodies. The three PFAS are perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS), and perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS). Human health criteria are not legally enforceable, rather they are information for local entities to consider when making local decisions about water quality.

The EPA will accept written comments on the draft human health criteria until February 24, 2025. Section 304(a) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) directs the EPA to develop and publish water quality criteria that accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge about the effects of particular pollutants on human health and welfare. The EPA's CWA Section 304(a) human health criteria are recommendations to states and Tribes authorized to establish their own water quality standards under the CWA. Once final, these recommended criteria can be used by states and authorized Tribes to develop their own water quality criteria that help protect people from exposure through consuming water, fish and shellfish from inland and nearshore water bodies that may be contaminated by any of these PFAS. For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/wqc/human-health-water-quality-criteria-pfas>

### EPA's Proposed Update to the Office of Civil Enforcement's 2007 *Questions and Answers on the Tribal Enforcement Process*

**Deadline: March 3, 2025**

The EPA is initiating consultation with federally recognized Tribes on a proposed update to the Office of Civil Enforcement's 2007 *Questions and Answers on the Tribal Enforcement Process* ("Questions and Answers"). The Questions and Answers document implements the Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance's *Guidance on the Enforcement Principles Outlined in the 1984 Indian Policy* to ensure compliance at federally-regulated facilities in Indian country.

Additional information is available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System. At any point in the Tribal consultation process, Tribes may submit written comments and questions to Matt Castelli via email at [castelli.matthew@epa.gov](mailto:castelli.matthew@epa.gov).

### EPA Released Three Draft Chapters of the Water Quality Standard Handbook on Designated Uses, Antidegradation, and WQS Variances

**Deadline: March 12, 2025**

On December 12, 2024, the EPA released three draft chapters of the WQS Handbook on Designated Uses, Antidegradation, and WQS Variances for a 90-day public comment period. The WQS Handbook provides a plain language discussion of the relevant regulatory and statutory requirements and the EPA's recommendations for how states, authorized Tribes and U.S. territories can develop and implement WQS consistent with both. The EPA has updated Chapter 2 on Designated Uses, Chapter 4 on Antidegradation, and developed a new chapter on WQS Variances to include the EPA's most recent WQS programmatic policy and guidance to implement the regulation at 40 CFR Part 131.

All comments must be submitted through the Docket. Visit the EPA's [WQS Handbook webpage](#) to review the three draft chapters and for information on how to provide comments.



# EVENTS & WEBINARS

## Native American Water Association

The Native American Water Association is a National Non-Profit, 501(c)6 Organization founded to provide Tribal water and wastewater operators, managers, utility commissions and Tribal leadership with continued training and technical assistance. To register: [https://www.eventbrite.com/o/native-american-water-association-22061331832#live\\_events](https://www.eventbrite.com/o/native-american-water-association-22061331832#live_events)

- February 26-27, 2025 (Carlsbad, CA): Tribal Advanced Wastewater Systems Operations

## Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information Training & Events

- February 25, 2025: PFAS Beyond the Basics – Sampling, Analysis, Surface Water, & Air Occurrence
- March 6, 2025: Microplastics

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

## Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

The Native American Fish & Wildlife Society (NAFWS) is a national tribal organization established informally during the early 1980s. NAFWS was incorporated in 1983 to develop a national communications network for the exchange of information and management techniques related to self-determined tribal fish and wildlife management. For more information: <https://www.nafws.org/events-training/>

- February 20, 2025: USFWS Small Grants Process – What it is and how can it help Tribes get funding?
- March 13, 2025: Professional Development Webinar Series – Conference 101



**NOW AVAILABLE**

## National Tribal Water Council's White Paper

The NTWC undertook extensive research and produced a white paper regarding the concerns about the Clean Water Act Section 301(h) Waiver of the Asplund Water Pollution Control Facility in Anchorage, Alaska.

Click [HERE](#) to read the NTWC's white paper.

# NTWC MEMBERS

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

**Ken Norton**

*Hoopa Valley Tribe  
Region 9 (NTWC Chair)*  
[kenpnorton@gmail.com](mailto:kenpnorton@gmail.com)

**Chauncey Means**

*Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes  
Region 8 (NTWC Vice Chair)*  
[chauncey.means@cskt.org](mailto:chauncey.means@cskt.org)

**Daniel Kusnierz**

*Penobscot Indian Nation  
Region 1*  
[dan.kusnierz@penobscotnation.org](mailto:dan.kusnierz@penobscotnation.org)

**Brian Patterson**

*Oneida Nation  
Region 2*  
[bpatterson@oneida-nation.org](mailto:bpatterson@oneida-nation.org)

**Andria Greene**

*Upper Mattaponi Tribe  
Region 3*  
[andria.greene@umitribe.gov](mailto:andria.greene@umitribe.gov)

**Rainee Tetreault**

*Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians  
Region 4*  
[raintetr@ebci-nsn.gov](mailto:raintetr@ebci-nsn.gov)

**Shaun Livermore**

*Poarch Band of Creek Indians  
Region 4 - At-Large*  
[slivermore@pci-nsn.gov](mailto:slivermore@pci-nsn.gov)

**Nancy Schuldt**

*Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior  
Chippewa, Region 5*  
[nancyschuldt@fdlband.org](mailto:nancyschuldt@fdlband.org)

**Celeste Hockings**

*Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior  
Chippewa Indians, Region 5 - At-Large*  
[chockings@ldftribe.com](mailto:chockings@ldftribe.com)

**Deborah Dotson**

*Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma  
Region 6*  
[ddotson@estoo.net](mailto:ddotson@estoo.net)

**Kayla Vondracek**

*Ponca Tribe of Nebraska  
Region 7*  
[kvondracek@poncatribе-ne.gov](mailto:kvondracek@poncatribе-ne.gov)

**Yolanda Barney**

*Navajo Nation  
Region 9*  
[ybarney@navajo-nsn.gov](mailto:ybarney@navajo-nsn.gov)

**Eric Morrison**

*Salamatof Tribe  
Region 10 - Alaska*  
[emorrison@salamatoftribe.org](mailto:emorrison@salamatoftribe.org)

**Ann Wyatt**

*Klawock Cooperative Association/Tribe  
Region 10 – Alaska*  
[annwyatt@klawocktribe.org](mailto:annwyatt@klawocktribe.org)

**Scott Hauser**

*Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation  
Region 10 - At-Large*  
[scott.hauser@usrtf.org](mailto:scott.hauser@usrtf.org)

**Mary Verner**

*Snoqualmie Tribe  
Region 10*  
[mary.verner@snoqualmietribe.us](mailto:mary.verner@snoqualmietribe.us)

To manage your ITEP/NTWC listserv subscriptions, go to [http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/About/itep\\_Newsletters#ntwc](http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/About/itep_Newsletters#ntwc)

©2025 Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals at Northern Arizona University

email: [itep@nau.edu](mailto:itep@nau.edu)

## World Wetlands Day

2 February 2025



To learn more about wetlands, please visit the following:

- <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands>
- <https://www.nawm.org/>
- <https://www.worldwetlandsday.org/>