



## Introducing the New NTWC Navajo Nation Representative, Yolanda Barney



As a kid, I was able to express my art and storytelling but I didn't know that I would have a 29 year job in environmental protection. My art showed sky scrapers with air pollution and the theme was "where did all the flowers go".

I was interested in plant biology with an emphasis in native medicines. My degree from the University of New Mexico was in Botany. I have a minor in art (oils, drawings, print, photography and other media). I followed my dream in art until I realized that I had to be very good at art and that I had to be aggressive in selling my art. In reality, I had to use my biology degree to find a job.

I was hired as an Environmental Specialist II when the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency was starting to develop its programs. I began my career in protecting water within the Navajo Public Water Systems Supervision Program. The work involved developing the laws and regulations for drinking water to ensure that all piped water to homes, businesses, and schools met the

requirements for safe drinking water. My work involved personnel, grant writing, and developing a program for enforcement, database management, training, and engineer construction permit reviews.

The program applied for primary enforcement authority to the USEPA Region 9 and received primacy in December 2000. Staff became proficient in conducting sanitary survey inspections, entering water quality data, ensuring operators of public water systems become certified specific to the type of system they operate, developing training for the operators, and conducting engineering reviews with construction permitting requirements for new/renovated/extensions of drinking water infrastructure.

Using the permit fees that were generated, a Domestic Wastewater Program was developed. The Domestic Wastewater Program regulates lagoons, septic tanks, and water treatment plants. The program conducts sanitary survey inspections, enforcement, and ensures operators are certified.

I eventually became the Environmental Department Manager in early 2022 and I now oversee the Navajo Water Quality Program, the Navajo NPDES Program, as well as the Navajo PWSSP, Navajo Domestic Wastewater Program, and the Navajo Underground Injection Control Program.

I am a mother, a wife, a grandmother, an environmentalist, and a farmer/rancher.



### CONTACT INFO:

Elaine H. Wilson  
NTWC Manager  
(480) 452-6774  
[Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu](mailto:Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu)

### NEWSLETTER

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VISIT US AT:

<https://nau.edu/ntwc>

### National Tribal Water Council is accepting applications for a Region 8 Representative

**Deadline: August 31, 2022**

The National Tribal Water Council is accepting applications from tribal water professionals to fill an open membership position, which is open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming).

Below is a sample list of member duties, and it is not limited to the following:

- Participating in monthly conference calls and attending bi-annual meetings;
- Collectively crafting response documents to policy and/or rulemaking actions;
- Reviewing and discussing water-related issues in Indian Country; and
- Assisting the NTWC in informing tribes on a wide variety of water issues.

We are seeking individuals that are passionate and vocal about tribal water issues. Interested individuals must submit the following documents: application form, letter of interest, and professional résumé. Please refer to the Council's membership application information packet for additional details. A copy of the recruitment packet is available on the NTWC website at <https://www.nau.edu/ntwc>.

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

### Request for Proposals: 2022 Tribal Exchange Network Conference

The 2022 Tribal Exchange Network Conference will be held on October 18-20, 2022, in Flagstaff, AZ and online. The conference aims to expand tribal capacity for environmental data sharing, management, and analysis through informational, interactive sessions. The conference is now accepting proposals and requests for presentations. For more information, please visit: <http://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/events.html>

### EPA Announces New Drinking Water Health Advisories for PFAS

On June 15, 2022, EPA issued the final health advisories (HAs) for two per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS): 1) hexafluoropropylene oxide (HFPO) dimer acid and its ammonium salt (referred to as "**GenX chemicals**"); and 2) perfluorobutane sulfonic acid and its potassium salt (**PFBS**).

EPA also issued interim updated drinking water health advisories for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) that replace the advisories issued in 2016. These updated health advisory levels, which are based on new science, will remain in place until EPA establishes a National Primary Drinking Water Regulation.

Final health advisories:
GenX: 10 parts per trillion (ppt) PFBS: 2,000 ppt
Interim health advisories:
PFOA: 0.004 ppt PFOS: 0.02 ppt

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/drinking-water-health-advisories-has?fbclid=IwAR1F-T9mSVUBTzKwstWJ3IIV9y6f2IhiGLRyYNhlukhgNaePI20xGgUMokY>



## Grant/Cooperative Agreement Opportunities

### NOAA Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage Through Barrier Removal Grants

**Deadline: August 29, 2022**

Up to \$12 million in funding is available under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to implement fish passage work and build tribal organizational capacity. This funding will support Indian tribes, tribal commissions, and tribal consortia in implementing tribal priority fish passage projects, including organizational capacity building that benefit migratory fish in coastal ecosystems, including the Great Lakes.

In collaboration with NOAA, selected Indian tribes and tribal commission or consortia partners will use these funds to implement barrier removal efforts that benefit tribally-important migratory fish, and to build tribal organizational capacity to participate in developing current and future fish passage projects. Funding will support fisheries and protected resources, while also enhancing community resilience to climate hazards by removing or improving aging infrastructure.

The deadline to submit an application is August 29, 2022. To learn more about the grant, please visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/restoring-tribal-priority-fish-passage-through-barrier-removal-grants>

### EPA 2022 Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Centers RFA

**Deadline: October 4, 2022**

The EPA is soliciting application from eligible applicants to provide an array of direct technical assistance services to underserved communities and those working to address environmental justice issues. Funds per award will total approximately \$6 million depending on funding availability and incrementally funded with periods of performance of three years.

Eligible entities include:

- Public and private universities and colleges
- Public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations (includes institutions of higher education such as community colleges, and philanthropic organizations),
- Intertribal Consortia - a coalition between two or more Indian tribal governments authorized by the governing bodies of those tribes to apply for and receive assistance and participate in self-governance

EPA is hosting an informational [webinar](#) on August 25, 2022. The deadline to submit an application is October 4, 2022. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/environmental-justice-thriving-communities-technical-assistance-centers>

### EPA Tribal Wetland Program Development Grants

**Deadline: October 7, 2022**

The EPA is soliciting application from eligible applicants to develop and refine tribal wetland programs. The Tribal Wetland Program Development Grants assist tribal government agencies and intertribal entities in developing or refining tribal programs which protect, manage, and restore wetlands. The primary focus of these grants is to develop/refine tribal wetland programs.

The deadline to submit an application is October 7, 2022. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/tribal-wetland-program-development-grant-request-applications>



## Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities

All consultation materials may be found at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>

### EPA's Continued Consultation and Coordination on the Draft Clean Water Act Section 106 Tribal Grant Guidance

**Deadline: October 14, 2022**

On July 29, 2022, the EPA extended the comment period for the Draft Clean Water Act Section 106 Tribal Grants Guidance. The extension provides tribal partners with the opportunity to give substantial and meaningful feedback on the revised guidance.

The draft Section 106 Tribal Guidance reflects advances in tribal water quality programs over the last 15 years and provides tribes with more accurate, comprehensive, and up to date information to support tribal water quality programs. The draft includes:

- Updated grant, programmatic, and technical content
- Improved overall structure to reflect the natural program progression
- Added information on other EPA programs and topics
- Increased flexibility for meeting program requirements

The comment period ends on October 14, 2022. Comments may be submitted using an online response form, email, or letter. Consultation materials may be found at: <https://tcots.epa.gov/ords/tcotspub/f?p=106:5::1168::RR,2::>

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-pollution-control-section-106-grants/draft-clean-water-act-section-106-tribal-grant-guidance>



## Events and Webinars

### 19<sup>th</sup> Annual EPA Drinking Water Workshop: Small System Challenges and Solutions August 29-September 1, 2022

EPA's free annual drinking water workshop, held in partnership with ASDWA, will be held on August 29- September 1, 2022, and will provide in-depth information and training on solutions and strategies for handling small drinking water system challenges. Attendees have the option to attend in-person or attend five select selections that will be live streamed.

The workshop will provide current information, resources, and training needed to help in building systems capacity and sustainably and with providing equitable access to drinking water. To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/19th-annual-epa-drinking-water-workshop-small-system-challenges-and-solutions>

### 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 in their goals to strengthen tribal sovereignty and self-determination, and protect health and environment in Indian Country.

Upcoming events include:

- Practice Water Distribution Certification Exam: August 31 (9:00 AM MST)

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)

## ▶ Events and Webinars (*continued*)

### EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- October 11, 2022: Water Toxicity Sensor Challenge
- November 16, 2022: Real-time Risk Characterization Tool for Harmful Algal Bloom

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

### EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

- October 25, 2022: PFAS

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

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

- August 31, 2022: Water System Partnerships – Regionalization Solutions for Drinking Water and Wastewater

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/technical-assistance-webinar-series-improving-cwa-npdes-permit-compliance>

## ▶ NTWC Members: For more information, visit [Meet the Council](#)

#### **Ken Norton**

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

#### **Brian Patterson**

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

#### **Nancy Schuldt**

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

#### **Region 8 Representative**

*Vacant*

#### **Ann Wyatt**

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

#### **Michael Bolt**

*Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians  
Region 4 (NTWC Vice Chair)*  
[michbolt@nc-chokeee.com](mailto:michbolt@nc-chokeee.com)

#### **Shaun Livermore**

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

#### **Jaclyn McCasland**

*Delaware Nation  
Region 6*  
[jmccasland@delawarenation-nsn.gov](mailto:jmccasland@delawarenation-nsn.gov)

#### **Heather Bartlett**

*Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of  
Indians  
Region 10*  
[hbartlett@cowcreek-nsn.gov](mailto:hbartlett@cowcreek-nsn.gov)

#### **Yolanda Barney**

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

#### **Daniel Kusnierz**

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

#### **Kathleen Brosemer**

*Sault Ste. Marie Chippewa  
Region 5*  
[kbrosemer@saulttribe.net](mailto:kbrosemer@saulttribe.net)

#### **Denise Jensen**

*Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska  
Region 7*  
[denise.jensen@winnebagotribe.com](mailto:denise.jensen@winnebagotribe.com)

#### **Eric Morrison**

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

#### **At-Large Representative**

*Vacant*

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