

December 2020, Vol 2, Issue 12



National Tribal Water Council - A Year End Message

As we come to a close in 2020, we want to thank you our readers for your time in reading the articles that are shared in these NTWC newsletters. We hope that it's been beneficial.

This year was very challenging for all of our tribal nations, tribal communities, and villages across the nation. However, we know that as tribal nations we have been resilient for millennia and we all continue to thrive through times like the one we just experienced this year. Our ancestors have been resilient and we too will do the same.

As the New Year 2021 begins in a few short days, and with an upcoming new administration under president-elect Joe Biden, the National Tribal Water Council is taking the opportunity to outline several priority actions that are important and crucial to tribes. A transition brief has been developed and it will be shared with the EPA, tribes, the National Tribal Caucus, National Congress of American Indians, and tribal organizations. A copy of the transition briefing document will be available on the National Tribal Water Council's website at <https://NAU.edu/ntwc> if you wish to view it.

Our goal in 2021 and beyond is to continue to advocate for the health and sustainability of clean and safe water, and for the productive use of water for the health and well-being of Indian Country, Indian communities, Alaska Native Tribes and Alaska Native Villages.

Wishing you and your families a safe holiday season.



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NEWSLETTER

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<https://nau.edu/ntwc>

Ute Mountain Ute Water Quality Program

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Water Quality Program Manager, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe | NTWC Member

The Ute Mountain Ute Environmental Programs Department is responsible for administering public health and environmental protection programs on Ute Mountain Ute Tribal lands with the mission of improving the quality of life for all Tribal Members. Over the years, we've worked to develop water and air quality departments as well as brownfields and climate change programs.

We began our water quality program in the early 90s and received treatment in a similar manner as a state (TAS) status in 2005 to administer water quality standards. Visit our website at <http://www.utemountainuteenvironmental.org> to learn more about our department and to see our proposed triennial revisions to our current water quality standards. We're working to include additional protection for groundwater, sediments and ephemeral stream systems in this revision.

Working through Covid-19 continues to be a struggle. Our area is rural and working from home sometimes with limited or no cell phone and internet connectivity is difficult. Despite the challenges, we have been able to move a handful of water quality projects forward since spring of 2020, mostly coordinating with emails. Field work has been fairly safe, although the new usual of each employee taking a separate vehicle to the field can result in an awkward number of cars and trucks, it has been nice to work productively with partners outdoors.

Below is a highlight of several of the activities we've been able to complete this year:



Remote solar groundwater well and drinker, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation. Summer, 2020.

We worked with Colorado University to install sensors with telemetry for several remote solar groundwater wells on the Reservation. Data regarding pumping rates and amounts will be used in tandem with satellite imagery and groundwater modeling to create local drought forecasts and detect changes to aquifers to help with management decisions. You can find out more about the Drought Resiliency Impact Platform (DRIP) program online at this website: <https://www.colorado.edu/center/mortenson/DRIP>

Ute Mountain Ute Water Quality Program *(continued)*



Well installation near White Mesa

Our tribal community of White Mesa is located near the only active conventional uranium mill/radioactive disposal site in the United States, and we continue to work to protect water resources around the site - springs and aquifers are at risk. This summer we installed two new groundwater monitoring wells between the site and the community. We collected the rock cores and sent them to EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) lab in Ohio where we'll run geochemical tests on the material using a grant from EPA's Regional

Applied Research Effort (RARE) program. The mill says the contamination in the aquifer, which continues to get worse quarter by quarter, is natural and the state regulators agree. We don't agree and hope our tests will help prove the mill is the source.

Old vanadium and uranium mines upstream of our Reservation lands in Utah are loading Cottonwood Wash with dangerous levels of uranium and gross alpha. We visited locations in the watershed this summer to collect water samples and field information to help design a remediation and characterization project in partnership with United States Geologic Survey, EPA, the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Department of Energy. We're close to securing a significant amount of grant funds and hope to start on the ground work in spring of 2021.



Cottonwood Wash

Conducting a Rapid Stream Riparian Assessment with the Mancos Watershed Group, Mancos River, Colorado.



We're working with partners in the Mancos River Watershed to standardize data collection efforts and implement stream restoration projects over 100 stream miles across federal, state and tribal jurisdiction and formed a stream team to collect physical, chemical and biological data at multiple locations along the river.

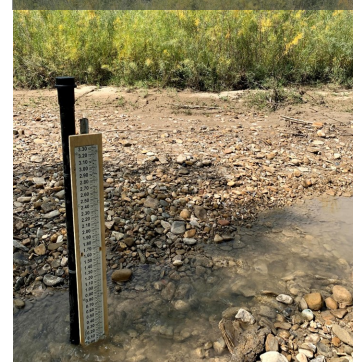
We're working to expand our program to collect continuous water quality data and installed three recording gauge setups on the Mancos River on the Reservation. Using a pressure transducer, temperature/conductivity logger and staff gauge, we will be able to continuously record stream flow along with temperature and conductivity. Although over 70

stream miles of the Mancos River are on the Reservation, the Tribe has junior water rights, and upstream users in combination with drought conditions are becoming more common in our changing climate and are all leaving the river dry for long periods. We're hoping to study flow durations and frequencies to help determine the amount of flow increases we need to secure to restore riparian ecology.

Thank you for taking the time to read and learn about our ongoing water program activities we have going on. Please feel free to get in touch anytime.

www.utemountainuteenvironmental.org/index.cfm/water-quality/

Recording Stage Gauge, Mancos River, Ute Mountain Ute Reservation.



Updates and Announcements

National Water Quality Monitoring Council Call for Award Nominations

The National Water Quality Monitoring Council is seeking nominations for three awards recognizing excellence, leadership, and collaboration in water quality monitoring to protect public health and the environment. The deadline for nominations is **Friday, January 8, 2021**. Award recipients will be recognized at the virtual National Monitoring Conference during the week of April 19, 2021.

For more information on the award categories or to submit a nomination, please visit: https://www.nalms.org/2021nmc/call-for-award-nominations/?utm_source=Master+List&utm_campaign=6eeef21d7-NMC+Call+for+abstracts+20200908&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_caeffd9c94-6eeef21d7-182734841

How's My Waterway - Informational Webinar

The EPA's *How's My Waterway* is a tool that assembles publicly available water quality data into a user-friendly package that provides information on water quality in our nation's waters. Map-centric and mobile-friendly, *How's My Waterway* works on all different screen sizes—from desktop computers and tablets to mobile phones. The Agency's goal is that EPA, partners and the public will use *How's My Waterway* to learn about water, explore data and find out what is happening to improve the health of our waters. The tool provides the public with an easily accessible and understandable summary of water quality at the community-, state- and national-level.

Enter your zip code on How's My Waterway (<https://mywaterway.epa.gov>) and explore the waters near you.

Vessel Sewage Management Strategies Webcast Recording

Vessel sewage discharges may negatively impact human health and the environment. The recorded webcast provides information on how discharges from recreational, commercial, and military vessels are regulated under the Clean Water Act, highlighting vessel sewage regulations and management strategies.

The recording and presentation slides are available on EPA's Watershed Academy webpage: <https://www.epa.gov/watershedacademy/vessel-sewage-management-strategies-webcast>.

Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Proposed Rulemaking for Market-Based Approaches under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program

Ends: January 7, 2021

The EPA is proposing a rulemaking to address Market-Based Approaches under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program. The proposed regulation will provide clarity to NPDES permitting authorities, regulated entities, and stakeholders interested in participating in market-based compliance approaches, including water quality trading. The action may be of interest to tribes interested in participating in water quality trading to meet permit effluent limitations for tribally owned facilities or to generate pollutant reduction credits from tribally owned point source or nonpoint source facilities. The action may interest tribal governments that provide certification under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act for permits that include conditions allowing for the use of market-based approaches.

The consultation period will end on January 7, 2021. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/water-quality-trading>. Information on this consultation opportunity can be found at <https://tcots.epa.gov/>.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Criminal Negligence Standard for State Clean Water Act 402 and 404 Programs

Ends: February 1, 2021

The EPA is proposing a rulemaking that would revise the implementing regulations for the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 402 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) and the CWA Section 404 Dredged and Fill permitting program. The proposed regulation seeks to clarify that States, Tribes, and Territories who have been approved or are seeking approval to administer the permitting programs under CWA Sections 402 and/or 404 are not required to have the same criminal intent standard that is applicable to EPA under CWA Section 309.

Currently, there are no federally recognized tribes that have been approved to administer CWA programs under Section 402 or 404. Tribes may obtain a better understanding of the applicable criminal intent standard for neighboring approved state programs and the overall process for state permitting.

The consultation period will end on February 1, 2021. Information on this consultation opportunity can be found at <https://tcots.epa.gov/>.

Funding Opportunities

FY2021 Tribal CWA 319 Competitive Grant Request for Applications

Deadline: January 14, 2021

The EPA's FY2021 Tribal Clean Water Act Section 319 Competitive Grant is targeted to support implementation of nonpoint source (NPS) best management practices to control sources of NPS pollution. Applicants may include other eligible activities that support implementation work, but an application should primarily focus on implementing best management practices that will directly protect or restore water quality.

The EPA will be hosting two informational webinars about the competitive grant.

The deadline to submit an application is January 14, 2021 through grants.gov. Questions about the grant may be submitted to tribal319grants@epa.gov by January 5, 2021. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/tribal-nonpoint-source-program>

FY20 and FY21 Tribal Wetland Program Development Grant

Deadline: January 15, 2021

The EPA FY20 and FY21 Tribal Wetland Program Development Grants assist state, tribal, local government agencies and interstate/intertribal entities in developing or refining programs that protect, manage, and restore wetlands. The focus of this grant is to develop and refine tribal wetland programs.

The deadline to submit an application is January 15, 2021. Questions about the grant may be submitted to Myra Price (price.myra@epa.gov). For more information about the grant, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/tribal-wetland-program-development-grant-request-applications>

Upcoming Events

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 live online training courses. Each course consists of sequential lessons that are provided in a series of live online classes that are 3-hours in length.

Upcoming courses include, but are not limited to:

- Level 1 Water Treatment: February 1 to March 10, 2021
- Level 1 Wastewater Collection: February 22 to March 10, 2021
- SWDA Training: March 17-29, 2021

For more information, training schedule, and to register, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

Upcoming Webinars

EPA Small Systems Monthly Webinar Series

- January 26, 2021: Disinfection Byproducts Control
- February 23, 2021: Lead and Copper
- March 30, 2021: PFAS Occurrence and Treatment

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/small-systems-monthly-webinar-series>

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- March 31, 2021: Fit-for-Purpose Water Updates and Life Cycle Comparisons of Non-potable Reuse Scenarios

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/water-research-webinar-series>



Ruin Spring near the community of White Mesa and Bears Ears National Monument, Utah. Fall, 2020.

NTWC Members – For more information, visit [Meet the Council](#).

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