

Highlight of NTWC Mid-Year Activities



As we approach mid-year, the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) offers a highlight of its current activities. Under the new administration, the NTWC has developed comment letters in response to proposed and revised policies and regulations.

Below is a summary of NTWC's completed activities:

2020/2021 Transition Brief

The NTWC submitted this brief to Radhika Fox, EPA Office of Water Assistant Administrator, and the brief listed 11 priority actions that the NTWC recommends action or addressed by the EPA because of a weakened protection of tribal waters and other resources on tribal lands.

NTWC's 2020-2021 National Water Priorities

The NTWC submitted a letter to Jane Nishida, EPA Acting Administrator, identifying five (5) key priority actions that are most critical to the protection of tribal waters and tribal nations. This includes re-evaluating the Navigable Waters Protection Rule and the Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification rules, and the importance of completing and advancing the tribal baseline water quality standards rule.

NTWC/EPA Spring 2021 Virtual Meeting

Each year the NTWC and EPA Office of Water staff meet twice a year to discuss, promote, and advance water issues of importance to tribes and the EPA. During this virtual meeting, the NTWC had an opportunity to dialogue with Radhika Fox, then Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of Water, Benita Best-Wong, Deputy Assistant Administrator of the Office of Water, and Joann Chase, Director of the American Indian Environmental Office.



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NEWSLETTER

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<https://nau.edu/ntwc>

Highlight of NTWC Mid-Year Activities (*continued*)

EPA's Implementation of Executive Order 13175 Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments

On March 31st, the NTWC submitted a comment letter on the EPA's implementation of consultation and coordination with tribal governments as part of President Biden's January 26th Tribal Consultation memorandum for all federal agencies.

Over the last several weeks, the NTWC was reviewing and providing recommendations on EPA Office of Water's Draft Tribal Action Plan (TAP). The TAP outlines and prioritizes four areas EPA will focus on over the next four years in order to strengthen the Nation-to-Nation Relationship to Secure a Sustainable Water Future for Indian Country.

In July, the NTWC will be working on comment letters on proposed and revised EPA policies and regulations, including the Clean Water Act Section 401 Rule, establishing baseline tribal water quality standards, and Clean Water Act Water Quality Standards Regulations revisions.

Additional activities include updating the NTWC Program Priorities document for FY 2021-2022, participating in the Tribal PFAS Work Group, and continuing to develop a Tribal Water Quality Standards guidebook.

For additional information and to view the documents mentioned above in the bulleted list, please visit the NTWC website by clicking [HERE](#).

Updates and Announcements

National Tribal Water Council is Seeking Applications for New Members

Deadline: August 13, 2021

The National Tribal Water Council is currently accepting applications from tribal water professionals to fill two (2) open membership positions:

- **Region 2 Representative:** Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 2, which includes the following states: New Jersey and New York.
- **Region 10 Representative:** Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 10, which includes the following states: Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington.

Member duties include but are not limited to:

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

We are seeking individuals that are passionate and vocal about tribal water issues. Interested candidates must submit an application form, letter of interest and professional resume. The application deadline is August 13, 2021. For additional information, the application packet is available on the NTWC website: <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/>

Updates and Announcements (*continued*)

NEW! National Park Service (NPS) Tribal Programs and Funding Overview Webinar

The webinar will provide an overview of the National Park Service's tribal programs and funding opportunities available to tribes. Additionally, the webinar will discuss the Plant Gathering Regulation and plans to update the rule, tribal access to sacred sites, and information on climate change. The webinar is scheduled on **Wednesday, June 30, 2021, at 1:00 PM (EDT)**. To register, please visit: [Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](https://gotowebinar.com)

NEW! Release of the Federal Agencies 2021 Spring Regulatory Agenda

The EPA released the 2021 Spring Regulatory Agenda on June 11, 2021. The agenda includes information on proposed regulatory and deregulatory actions under the Biden Administration. To access the agenda, please visit: [Agency Rule List - Spring 2021 \(reginfo.gov\)](https://www.reginfo.gov)

NEW! Registration Now Open - ITEP 2021 Virtual Tribal Lands and Environment Forum

Registration is now open for the ITEP 2021 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF). This year's forum will be virtual and held during the week of August 16-20, 2021. You may register at: [Tribal Lands and Environment Forum - \(secure-platform.com\)](https://triballandsandenvironmentforum.secureplatform.com)

Additionally, ITEP is soliciting videos to showcase during the special cultural event following the opening plenary. The videos may be one to three minutes long demonstrating traditional dances, music, cooking, plants, or stories. The deadline to submit a video is Monday, July 26, 2021. To submit a video, please visit: [Cultural Videos and Music File RequEDT for the 2021 Tribal Lands & Environment Forum: Virtual Gathering \(google.com\)](https://culturalvideosandmusicfile.requedt.com)

Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Guidance for Assessing Chemical Contaminant Data for Use in Fish Advisories, Volume 4 Risk Communication

Ends: July 15, 2021

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes and requesting comments on guidance for assessing chemical contaminant data for use in fish advisories, volume 4 risk communication. This guidance provides tribes, states, and territories information on how to develop, implement, and evaluate a risk communication program in order to have clear and effective risk communication methods for fish and shellfish advisories.

The deadline to submit comments is **July 15, 2021**. For additional information, please visit <https://tcots.epa.gov> for the consultation materials. To read the guidance, please visit: [Develop Risk Communication Programs for Fish and Shellfish Consumption Advisories | Advisories and Technical Resources for Fish and Shellfish Consumption | US EPA](https://www.epa.gov/fisheries/develop-risk-communication-programs-for-fish-and-shellfish-consumption-advisories)

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Notice of Intention to Reconsider and Revise the Clean Water Act Section 401 Rule

Ends: September 7, 2021

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the Notice of Intention to Reconsider and Revise the Clean Water Act Section (CWA) 401 Rule. CWA Section 401 provides states and tribes with a powerful tool to protect the quality of their waters

Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities (*continued*)

from adverse impacts resulting from federally licensed or permitted projects.

The consultation ends on **September 7, 2021**. The EPA is holding two tribal consultation webinars on Tuesday, July 29, 2021 (2:00 to 4:00 PM EDT) and Wednesday, July 7, 2021 (2:30 to 4:30 PM EDT). To register for the webinar, please visit: [U.S. EPA: CWA Section 401 Tribal Consultation Kick-off Webinar Tickets, Multiple Dates | Eventbrite](#)

For additional information, please visit <https://tcots.epa.gov> for the consultation materials. For more information on the CWA Section 401, please visit: [Section 401 of the Clean Water Act | US EPA](#)

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Potential Promulgation of Tribal Baseline Water Quality Standards under the Clean Water Act

Ends: September 13, 2021

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on an upcoming rulemaking that would establish tribal baseline water quality standards (WQS) under the Clean Water Act for waters on Indian reservations that currently do not have EPA-approved WQS in place.

Water quality standards define the goals for water bodies and establish the criteria that must be met to support those goals, serving as the foundation for controlling pollution as mandated by the CWA. With the proposed rulemaking, the EPA will be better equipped to work with tribal governments to improve water quality in impaired waters and prevent future degradation of tribal waters.

The consultation ends on **September 13, 2021**. The EPA is holding a listening session for tribes on Thursday, July 8, 2021 (1:00 to 3:00 PM EDT). To register for the webinar, please visit: [Promulgation of Tribal Baseline Water Quality Standards Under the Clean Water Act | Water Quality Standards: Regulations and Resources | US EPA](#)

For additional information, please visit <https://tcots.epa.gov> for the consultation materials.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Potential Revisions to the Clean Water Act Water Quality Standards Regulations

Ends: September 13, 2021

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes to inform of potential revisions to the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) water quality standards (WQS) regulations. Many tribes, through treaties and equivalent agreements with the U.S. government, hold reserved rights to aquatic or aquatic-dependent resources in waters outside the boundaries of federal Indian reservations, or in areas otherwise subject to state and federal jurisdiction. EPA's Office of Water is considering pursuing a change to the federal WQS regulations at 40 CFR Part 131 to explicitly and sustainably protect tribal reserved rights in state waters, consistent with existing legal obligations. This action is separate from and complementary to the EPA's action to establish baseline WQS under the CWA for waters on Indian reservations that do not have EPA-approved WQS currently in place.

The consultation ends on **September 13, 2021**. The EPA is holding a listening session for tribes on Thursday, July 19, 2021 (3:00 to 5:00 PM EDT). To register for the webinar, please visit: [Revising the Federal Water Quality Standards Regulations to Protect Tribal Reserved Rights | Water Quality Standards: Regulations and Resources | US EPA](#)

For additional information, please visit <https://tcots.epa.gov> for the consultation materials.

Grant Opportunities

EPA Multipurpose Grants to States and Tribes to Address Environmental Changes

Deadline: July 9, 2021

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing the availability of Multipurpose Grant (MPG) funding to support states, Tribes and territories in addressing high-priority environmental issues, including PFAS, environmental justice and climate change.

A total of \$1,500,000 will be available to tribes delegated federal regulatory authority through the treatment in a similar manner to a state (TAS) process, and tribes approved to operate certain environmental regulatory programs through non-TAS approval provisions found in federal environmental statutes and regulations. MPG funds are to be used to implementation activities performed by a tribe pursuant to the authority delegated or approved for the tribe.

For more information, please visit: [Multipurpose Grants to States and Tribes](#) | [EPA Grants](#) | [US EPA](#)

Events and 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 live online training. 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:

- Wastewater Treatment - Level 1: August 2 – September 8, 2021
- Wastewater Treatment - Level 2: August 19 – September 23, 2021

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

USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center Webinar

Climate change is contributing to significant alterations of key processes in both the “Ridge-to-Reef” watersheds of the Pacific Islands and the “Icefield-to-Ocean” watersheds of Alaska, with impacts cascading through terrestrial, freshwater, and nearshore marine ecosystems via the movement of water, energy, biota, and nutrients.

- July 13, 2021 (3:00 PM EDT)

For more information and to register, please visit: [Upcoming Webinar: Ridge-to-Reef and Icefield-to-Ocean: Collaborative Research in Extreme Environments \(usgs.gov\)](#)

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society

- July 28, 2021: Asian Carp Update & Management Plan

For more information, please visit: [Asian Carp Update & Management Plans - Native American Fish and Wildlife Society \(nafws.org\)](#)

Events and Webinars (*continued*)

EPA Small Systems Monthly Webinar Series

- July 27, 2021: Drinking Water Microbes 102
- August 30 - September 2, 2021: 18th Annual EPA Drinking Water Virtual Workshop

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

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- June 30, 2021: Road Salts and Freshwater Salinization Syndrome: An Emerging Water Quality Threat
- August 25, 2021: Valuing Aquatic Ecosystem Health at a National Scale: Modeling Biological Indicators Across Space/Time

For more information, please click [HERE](#).

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

- August 18, 2021: PFAS Technical Support and Scientific Advancements

For more information, please visit: [EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series | EPA Research to Support States | US EPA](#)

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Freshwater Mussel Conservation Webinar

- August 10, 2021 (2:00 PM EDT): Assessing the Water Quality Effects of Freshwater and Saltwater Bivalves

For more information, please visit: [DOI Talent WebEx Enterprise Site](#)

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

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