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Klawock Cooperative Association Tribal Environmental Department's Water Programs

By Ann Wyatt,
NTWC Member



Klawock Cooperative Association (KCA), Tribe Environmental Department conducts water quality monitoring, paralytic shellfish poisoning (PSP) shellfish and water sampling, nutrient and filter sampling, and shellfish biomass shellfish surveying.

KCA joined the Southeast Alaska Tribal Ocean Research (SEATOR) network in 2013 to respond to potential threats harvesters face when collecting subsistence shellfish. The KCA Environmental Program has a responsibility to protect the health of its citizens and communities in addition to traditional natural resources. Since its formation, KCA has worked with SEATOR to reduce risks of paralytic shellfish poisoning, identify harmful algal blooms, and to assess each local community's vulnerability to changing marine chemistry. As the partnership's monitoring capacity and lab assets have grown, KCA's interests have broadened to include assessing shellfish for the emerging toxin domoic acid, which causes amnesic shellfish poisoning. Currently, KCA has limited capacity to address this concern. Given the increasing risk of harmful algal blooms and novel biotoxins as Alaskan waters warm, managing the risks of a potential new biotoxin has become a high priority.

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP) Shellfish Sampling. KCA staff collects blue mussels bi-weekly at Big Salt and the Klawock Boat Launch. If the toxin levels are over 80 μ /100 g, additional collections of shellfish are sampled every week. Staff collects water samples for microscopic data, which determines if there is presence of a Harmful Algae Bloom (HAB). Staff also collects nutrient and water filter samples.

Currently, KCA staff collects and analyzes bi-weekly net tow phytoplankton samples at each of the target shellfish collecting beaches, but the phytoplankton microscopy is focused on identifying dinoflagellate genus *Alexandrium*, which produces toxic HABs that cause paralytic shellfish poisoning in humans. The staff builds capacity by

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increasing the routine weekly microscopy to identify Pseudo-nitzschia morphotypes (small and large) and performs qualitative cell counts to identify rough bloom densities. This is achieved by establishing the appropriate thresholds for the presence of Pseudo-nitzschia morphotypes that are associated with seawater toxin concentrations that begin appearing in shellfish. KCA staff also collects one-liter water sample that is used to identify particulate toxins in seawater. Shellfish samples consist of blue mussels, cockle clams, and little neck clams. Blue mussels represent the sentinel species as they uptake toxins quickly and will be used as an early warning for other desired subsistence species. All water filters and shellfish samples are shipped to Sitka Tribe of Alaska Environmental Resource Lab (STAERL) for analysis.

Nutrient Sampling: KCA Environmental Department staff collects nutrient samples once a week at the Klawock Boat Launch, freezes them and sends them to University of Alaska SE, where researchers are working on a project that could potentially predict harmful algae blooms in the future.

Water Filter: Water sampling is conducted weekly at both places – Klawock Boat Launch and Big Salt – and samples are sent to STAERL for analysis as part of their project.

Biomass Shellfish Survey: KCA Environmental Department staff collects shellfish biomass surveys, which determine if a beach has a stretch of clams, the relative clam density, and whether the clams are reaching a size indicative of productive environment. At Big Salt, a low tide is best for sampling, using shovels, buckets, measuring tape, strings, etc. A spot is randomly picked and the collected clams are measured for size and length and counted. The data is sent to SEATOR for their clam survey data project. They then provide KCA staff a summary of the clam survey data.

Water Quality Monitoring: KCA Environmental Department conducts water quality monitoring for basic baseline data and a in few spots for hydrocarbons. This is the second year of data collection and KCA does not yet have the complete summary. The staff monitors the Klawock Watershed, Klawock Inlet, Klawock Estuary, Klawock River, Klawock Lake and 3 Mile Creek. After year three (3), KCA will have more complete data.

The KCA staff appreciates the EPA for Indian General Assistance Program funding, which enables them to conduct these projects.

SEATOR's tribal partners include:

- Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- Chilkoot Indian Association
- Craig Tribal Association
- Douglas Indian Association
- Hoonah Indian Association
- Hydaburg Cooperative Association
- Ketchikan Indian Community
- Klawock Cooperative Association
- Metlakatla Indian Community
- Organized Village of Kake
- Organized Village of Kasaan
- Petersburg Indian Association
- Skagway Traditional Council
- Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- Sun'aq Tribe of Kodiak
- Wrangell Cooperative Association
- Yakutat Tlingit Tribe

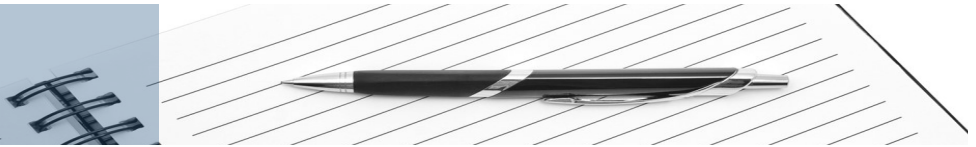
<http://www.seator.org/>



Left: Shellfish biomass survey; Middle: Shellfish biomass survey; Right: Phytoplankton water sampling



Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities



Public Comment Opportunity: Proposed Information Collection Request (ICR) for 2020 Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment (DWINSA)

ENDS: April 6 2020

- The EPA has issued a proposed ICR for the upcoming 2020 DWINSA, providing an opportunity for the public to provide input on the 2020 DWINSA.
- From September 6, 2019 to November 28, 2019, the EPA consulted with tribes on the forthcoming 2020 DWINSA, seeking input on the proposed policies and methods for the 2020 DWINSA. The Agency is currently reviewing and considering the comments that it received from tribes during the consultation period.
- The proposed ICR provides another opportunity for commenting on the upcoming 2020 DWINSA. The EPA is particularly interested in receiving input from tribes on the estimates of the time burden on sampled water systems to respond to the survey questionnaire as well as the importance of including American Indian and Alaska Native Village systems in the 2020 DWINSA effort.

For more information: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2020-02-05/pdf/2020-02263.pdf>. Comments should be submitted through Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2020-0017 online via <https://www.regulations.gov>.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Draft Guiding Principles for Consulting with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) Corporations

ENDS: April 14, 2020

In 2004, through two Consolidated Appropriations Acts, Congress directed all federal agencies to hereafter consult with corporations established under ANCSA in 1971 “on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order 13175.” The EPA has a long history of engaging with ANCSA corporations and now seeks to formalize this process. The proposed action is also responsive to the findings and recommendations of the Government Accountability Office’s draft report, “Tribal Consultation Additional Federal Action Needed for Infrastructure Projects (GAO-19-22),” which recommended that the EPA “develop a documented policy or clarify existing policy to implement the statutory requirement to consult with [ANCSA corporations] on the same basis as Indian tribes under Executive Order 13175.” For more information: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Public Comment Opportunity: 2020 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Multi-Sector General Permit

ENDS: May 1, 2020

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be seeking public comment on the proposed 2020 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP) for stormwater discharges associated with industrial activity in areas where the EPA is the NPDES permitting authority. Key proposed changes in the permit include new requirements for permit eligibility, authorization, monitoring, and updates to the stormwater control fact sheets.

Comments can be submitted on www.regulations.gov for docket ID # EPA-HQ-OW-2019-0372. The EPA is hosting an informational webcast to give an overview of the proposed changes to the permit on Thursday, April 9, 2020 at 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM (EST). To register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7302889564627695629>.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-industrial-activities>

Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities *(Continued)*

Public Comment Opportunity: Proposed Decision to Regulate PFOA and PFOS in Drinking Water - Regulatory Determination 4

ENDS: May 11, 2020

The EPA has announced a 60-day public comment period for its preliminary regulatory determinations for eight contaminants on the fourth Contaminant Candidate List (CCL 4). The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) directs the EPA to publish a list of contaminants (referred to as the Contaminant Candidate List, or CCL) to assist in priority-setting efforts. The EPA is making preliminary determinations to regulate perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) in drinking water and to not regulate six contaminants (i.e., 1, 1-dichloroethane, acetochlor, methyl bromide (bromomethane), metolachlor, nitrobenzene, and RDX).

The EPA will seek comment on these preliminary determinations until **May 11, 2020** (60 days after publication in the Federal Register). Instructions for submitting comments are included in the announcement in the Federal Register via <https://www.regulations.gov> through Docket ID No. EPAHQ-OW-2019-. For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/ccl/regulatory-determination-4>.

Funding Opportunities



Reduction in Lead Exposure Via Drinking Water

Application Deadline: April 20, 2020

The EPA is soliciting applications from eligible applicants to reduce lead in drinking water in disadvantaged communities through infrastructure and/or treatment improvements or facility remediation in schools and child care facilities. The goal of these projects is to address conditions that contribute to increased concentrations of lead in drinking water. Tribes that have water systems within their jurisdiction are eligible to apply.

Application packages must be submitted via www.grants.gov by **Monday, April 20, 2020**. Questions about this RFA must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by Agency Contact: Brianna Knoppow E-mail: WIINDrinkingWaterGrants@epa.gov For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/wiin-grant-reduction-lead-exposure-drinking-water-under-sdwa-section-1459b>

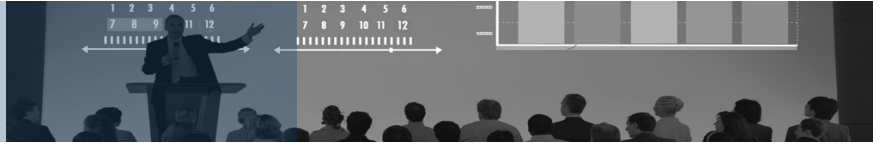
Tribal Wildlife Grant

Application Deadline: May 5, 2020

The U.S. Department of Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service Tribal Wildlife Grants Program provides a competitive funding opportunity for Federally Recognized Tribal Governments to develop and implement programs for the benefit of wildlife and their habitats, including species of Native American cultural or traditional importance and species that are not hunted or fished.

Deadline for proposal submission is **Tuesday, May 4, 2020**. For more information, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/grants.html>

Upcoming Events



****Please note that some events may be cancelled or postponed in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is advised to check on the registration links for the most up-to-date information.***

Association of State Wetland Managers, Inc. - Building Wetland Program Capacity in an Ever-changing Environment (*Changed to Online Format)

April 7-9, 2020

Registration Fee: \$465 member/\$590 non-member

An annual meeting for state and tribal wetland program managers that will cover changes to Clean Water Act and how states and tribes need to re-evaluate their programs in order to protect state/tribal waters. For more information, please visit: <https://www.aswm.org/wetland-programs/state-wetland-programs/10209-2020-state-meeting>



Resources

Tribal Climate Health Project

This is a national webinar training series on how to develop a climate change adaptation plan that addresses both environmental and human health impacts. The training provides tools, templates and other resources to help tribal environmental and health professionals.

- April 21, 2020 (10:00 AM – 11:30 AM MST)
- May 19, 2020 (10:00 AM – 11:30 AM MST)

For more information, visit <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8077001825854440972>

EPA Small Systems Monthly Webinar Series

- April 28, 2020: Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and Algal Toxins

To register and access recorded webinars, visit <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/small-systems-monthly-webinar-series>

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- April 29, 2020: Water Treatment Modeling Tools for Removing PFAS and other Organic Contaminants

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



White Rainbow (Picture by Ann Wyatt)

National Tribal Water Council Membership Recruitment

The National Tribal Water Council is currently accepting applications from tribal water professionals to fill two open membership positions, as described below. The Council is seeking an individual that is passionate and vocal about tribal water issues. Tribal water professionals with hydrology experience are encouraged to apply.

1) Region 6 Representative

Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized tribe or tribally authorized organization from EPA Region 6, which includes the following states: New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana.

2) At-Large Member

Open to all tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized tribe or tribally authorized organization.

Interested individuals must submit an application form, letter of interest and a resumé. NTWC will begin reviewing and considering application submissions on **April 17, 2020**, and will continue to accept applications until both membership positions have been filled. For additional information about the NTWC and to view a copy of the NTWC membership application packet, please visit the NTWC's website at: www.nau.edu/ntwc. To express your interest or obtain more information, please contact Elaine Wilson at elaine.wilson@nau.edu or (480) 340-2306.

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

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