



National Tribal Water Council's 5-Key Water Priorities for the New Administration

In mid-December 2020, the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) developed a list of 11 tribal water priorities (i.e., 2020/2021 Transition Brief) that would be shared with the incoming new U.S. EPA administration. From that initial 11 priorities, the NTWC identified five (5) key priority actions for the newly appointed EPA Administrator, and the Office of Water. A letter outlining the five (5) key priorities was transmitted to EPA Acting Administrator Ms. Jane Nishida, EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs, and asked that the key priorities be shared with the new EPA Administrator Mr. Michael Regan.

It is the goal of the NTWC to advocate for tribes regarding pertinent water issues and priorities. The NTWC looks forward to working with the new administration regarding these priorities along with others important to tribes. The key five (5) priorities are as follows:

1. Navigable Waters Protection and Clean Water Act Section 401 Certification Rules

The NTWC requests the EPA to withdraw its defense of legal challenges brought against the Navigable Waters Protection and CWA Section 401 Certification rules. The rules were issued without proper tribal consultation and have a substantial impact on tribal waters, treaty rights, trust obligation, and tribal cultural resources.

2. Tribal Baseline Water Quality Standards Rule

The NTWC urges the EPA to complete and advance the Tribal Baseline Water Quality Standards rule. The rule will help fill the regulatory gaps that exist in Indian Country and assist tribes with safeguarding their water supply and quality.

3. Increase funding for the Safe Drinking Water Tribal Set-aside Program

The NTWC requests that the EPA allocate 5% of the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to the Tribal Safe Drinking Water Tribal Set-aside Program. Tribes need additional



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NTWC's 5-Key National Water Priorities *(continued)*

funding to address the disparity of safe access to drinking water. Approximately 6% of tribal homes still lack access to safe drinking water, particularly tribes in the southwest and Alaska.

4. Restructure the FY 2022-2023 National Water Program Guidance and Strategic Plan

The NTWC requests the EPA Office of Water reinstate the 13 tribal measures that were removed due to the FY 2018-2019 lean management process. The tribal measures provide critical program information for the protection of human health and environment on tribal lands.

5. EPA Office of Water Infrastructure Task Force

The NTWC requests the EPA Office of Water to reactivate the Infrastructure Task Force to address ongoing critical needs in Indian Country pertaining to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. The task force and workgroup provide an opportunity to understand the barriers faced by tribal sanitation and drinking water facilities.

As previously mentioned above, the NTWC developed the 2020/2021 Transition Brief. The brief includes water priorities important to tribes and NTWC recommends that the EPA address them within the first 100 days of the new EPA administration.

To read the full brief, please visit: [2020-2021 NTWC Transition Brief Final.pdf \(nau.edu\)](#)

Updates and Announcements

EPA's Operating and Managing Small Wastewater and Water Utilities Webinar Series

The EPA is hosting a training webinar series for tribal and small community operators and leaders on "Operating and Managing Small Wastewater and Water Utilities." This webinar series will use presentations, case studies, and group discussions how best to operate, maintain, and manage small utilities. The webinars are scheduled from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM PST.

Here are the webinar schedule and topics:

- April 1, 2021: Wastewater Treatment System O&M for Small Communities [Register Here](#)
- April 8, 2021: Drinking Water System O&M for Small Communities [Register Here](#)
- April 15, 2021: Finding and Retaining Good Leaders and Staff [Register Here](#)
- April 22, 2021: Asset Management - Planning for the Future [Register Here](#)
- April 29, 2021: Emergency Response and Cyber Security [Register Here](#)

To learn more about Small and Rural Wastewater Systems, please visit: [Small and Rural Wastewater Systems | US EPA](#)

EPA Signed Final 2021 Financial Capability Assessment for CWA Obligations

On January 12, 2021, EPA signed a federal register notice finalizing the 2021 Financial Capability Assessment (FCA) for Clean Water Act (CWA) Obligations. The 2021 FCA helps communities accurately demonstrate the financial burdens they face and increases EPA's transparency as it consistently applies FCA methodologies across the country.

When announced in the Federal Register, EPA intends that the recommended expanded matrix for water quality standards (WQS) decisions in Appendix D, along with the [electronic spreadsheet tools for the public sector](#), would replace the worksheets and calculations for the public sector sections of the [Interim Guidance for Water Quality Standards](#). This replacement would then guide states and authorized tribes in determining the degree of economic

Updates and Announcements *(continued)*

impact for use in WQS decisions for public entities including revisions to designated uses, WQS variances, and antidegradation reviews. To access the pre-publication FR notice and other documents, please visit: [Economic Guidance for Water Quality Standards](#) | [Water Quality Standards: Regulations and Resources](#) | [US EPA](#)

Tribal Consultation and Public Comment Opportunities

Public Comment Opportunity: EPA's Proposed Revisions to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule

Ends: May 10, 2021

On March 11, 2021, the EPA published the proposed revisions to the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5) for public water systems and announcement of public meeting. UCMR 5 will provide EPA, states, and communities with scientifically valid data on the national occurrence of unregulated contaminants in drinking water.

The deadline to submit comments is May 10, 2021, for Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2020-0530. The EPA is holding a virtual stakeholder meetings on April 6 and 7, 2021 (2:00 - 4:00 PM EST). To register, click [here](#).

For additional information and submit comments, please visit www.regulations.gov. For information on UCMR 5, please visit: [Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule](#) | [Monitoring the Occurrence of Unregulated Drinking Water Contaminants](#) | [US EPA](#)

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. The EPA is holding an informational webinar for tribes on April 14, 2021 (2:00 - 4:00 PM EST). To register, click [here](#).

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](#)



Lynx Lake, Prescott, Arizona

Grant Opportunities

Bureau of Indian Affairs - Tribal Climate Resilience Program

Deadline: April 23, 2021

The Tribal Climate Resilience Program supports tribes as they prepare for climate change impacts on tribal treaty and trust resources, economies, infrastructure, and human health and safety. The Program will provide funding for projects that support tribal climate resilience as tribes incorporate science (including Traditional Knowledge) and technical information. The Program also supports tribal ocean and coastal management and planning.

The deadline to submit a grant application is April 23, 2021. For more information on the program, please visit: [Tribal Climate Resilience Program | Indian Affairs \(bia.gov\)](#) or www.grants.gov.

U.S. EPA Environmental Justice Grants

Deadline: May 7, 2021

The U.S. EPA is accepting applications for Environmental Justice Small Grants and Collaborative Problem-Solving Grant.

- Environmental Justice Small Grants Program
This program supports and empowers communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues.
- Environmental Justice Collaborative Problem-Solving Cooperative Agreement Program
This program provides funding for projects that address local environmental and public health issues within an affected community.

Areas of emphasis include projects focusing on:

- COVID-19 impacts on underserved communities (both)
- Climate/Disaster Resiliency (both)
- Ports Initiative projects (small grants)
- Projects from small non-profits of 10 or fewer employees (small grants)
- New applicants and grantees (both)

Available funding include \$50,000 each for small grants and \$160,000 each for CPS awards. The deadline to submit an application is May 7, 2021. For more information, please visit: [Environmental Justice Grants, Funding and Technical Assistance | Environmental Justice | US EPA](#) or www.grants.gov.

Events and Webinars

Association of State Wetland Managers Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting

April 12-15, 2021

The Association of State Wetland Managers will be holding their Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination meeting on April 12-15, 2021 virtually. This year's meeting will focus on, but limited to:

- Federal policy updates and significant court cases;
- Wetland science and climate change resiliency; and
- Wetland Program Capacity: adapting to new regulations and COVID-19

The deadline to register is Friday, April 2, 2021. Registration rates are \$240 for members and \$340 for non-members for all four days of the meeting. For more information, please visit: [ASWM Annual State/Tribal/Federal Coordination Meeting](#)

International Indian Treaty Council Webinar Series

- April 2, 2021: Harvesting and Using Wild Plants

To register: [Webinar Registration - Zoom](#)

Global Council for Science and the Environment

- April 7, 2021: Indigenous Knowledge & Western Science: Collaboration, Relationship, and Climate Solutions

To register: [Indigenous Knowledge & Western Science: Collaboration, Relationship, and Climate Solutions | Session 1 | Global Council for Science and the Environment \(GCSE\) \(gcseglobal.org\)](#)

Native American Water Association

The Native American Water Association is a non-profit organization that provides tribal water and wastewater operators, managers, utility commissions and tribal leadership with training and technical assistance.

Upcoming trainings:

- Mathematics for Water and Wastewater Operators Summary: April 8, 2021 (10:00 AM MST)
- Nitrification/Denitrification Summary & Problem Solving: April 22, 2021 (9:00 AM MST)
- Biological Wastewater Treatment Process Control Made Easy: May 5, 2021 (9:00 AM MST)

For more information and to register, please visit: [Native American Water Association Events | Eventbrite](#)

USGS Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASC)

The USGS Climate Adaptation Science Center is hosting a webinar on Navigating the Climate Adaptation Science Centers: A National Network of Climate Adaptation Support for Native Nations on April 28, 2021. Tribal resilience liaisons from several CASCs will provide an introduction to the CASC, share examples of cultural resource projects, and how to engage with CASCs for support.

- April 28, 2021 (10:00 AM to 11:00 AM MST). To register: [Registration \(gotowebinar.com\)](#)

EPA Small Systems Monthly Webinar Series

- April 27, 2021: Very Small Systems
- May 25, 2021: Harmful Algal Blooms and Algal Toxins
- June 29, 2021: Tribal Community Water Systems

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

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- April 28, 2021: Enhanced Aquifer Recharge: Influence of Stormwater on Groundwater Quality and Aquifer Recharge
- May 26, 2021: Life Cycle Costs of Water Infrastructure Alternatives: New Tools for Stormwater Life Cycle Cost Analysis

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

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

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