



Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska Water Resources Program

By Denise Jensen
NTWC Member



The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska Reservation is located in northeastern Nebraska (113,000 acres) and in northwestern Iowa (1,800 acres) divided by the Missouri River. Reservation land base consists of rolling hills, pristine forests, highly productive farmland, pasture, creeks and streams, small ponds, lakes and wetlands. Surface water resources include, but not limited to, approximately 500 miles of creeks and streams, 7.5 miles of Missouri River and 3,680 acres of wetlands.

The Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska has close cultural ties with the water, thus the overall goal of the Water Quality Program, undertaken by the Environmental Protection Department, is to determine the condition of the natural environment, and protect the health and welfare of tribal members and other individuals residing within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation. A few of the projects undertaken by the Tribe are listed below.

Basic Stream Monitoring

Basic stream monitoring is conducted once a month starting in the spring (April) for 6 months at 12 sites involving 9 creeks. Parameters of interest include water temperature, pH, specific conductance, total dissolved solids, dissolved oxygen, turbidity, flow, total phosphorus, nitrate and nitrite nitrogen, total kjeldahl nitrogen, total nitrogen, sulfate, chloride and E. coli. Data generated is used to determine current surface water health and to collect additional data of ambient stream conditions for the antidegradation provisions for future Tribal Water Quality Standards.

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NEWSLETTER

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Omaha Creek

Physical and Biological Monitoring / Habitat Assessment

Physical and biological monitoring includes visual habitat assessment data collection and is conducted once starting mid spring (May) at 12 sites involving 9 creeks. These 12 sites are the same for Basic Stream Monitoring. Physical observations are made to determine dominant land use and condition, riparian cover and bank structure. Aquatic insects, known as benthic macroinvertebrates, are captured using a dip net and then identified to "order." Visual habitat assessment is also conducted. Data generated is used to gather physical information about the water body, and the watershed through which it flows, and to identify the aquatic organisms living in the water body indicating the degree of pollution affecting the water body.

Kelly Pond Research

Mercury contamination of mainly predator fish species, black crappie and largemouth bass, caught from Kelly Pond was discovered in 2005. Much has been done already but only through continued monitoring and research can the Tribe fully understand the extent of the contamination, its source and prevent future degradation of the natural environment and potential negative impacts on human health. Monitoring of the water and fish tissue continues. Continuing research includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Fish tissue monitoring for mercury by assisting EPA Region 7 staff during Regional Ambient Fish Tissue sampling;
- Informing the community about the condition of fish caught from Kelly Pond and any further

developments as they occur by placing articles in the Winnebago News, Winnebago Website, and/or Facebook page, if needed;

- Surface water sampling is conducted one time between June and August. The data generated is used to determine surface water quality ensuring a healthy habitat for a thriving fish population;
- Obtaining vital information that provides direction for promoting a healthy natural environment, ensures human health and welfare, and identifies potential sources of mercury contamination.

Domestic Drinking Water Well Monitoring

As funding is available, ground water samples are collected from domestic drinking water wells of individuals, tribal or non-tribal residents within the exterior boundaries of the Reservation who volunteer to participate in the project. Grab samples are collected from an indoor or outdoor faucet connected to the residence's domestic drinking water source, but not connected to a treatment system. The data is used to ensure that residents of the Reservation not connected to a public water system have access to a safe drinking water source, and provide the Tribe with ground water resource information.



Kelly Pond

Available Resources on COVID-19 and Water

The EPA and CDC have provided information on COVID-19 and its impact on drinking water and wastewater programs. Here are a few resources:

- CDC Guidance for Reducing Health Risks to Workers Handling Human Waste or Sewage:
https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/global/sanitation/workers_handlingwaste.html
- Recording of the April 14 webinar on EPA's Pandemic Incident Action Checklist, as well as additional COVID-19 resources for tribal water utilities:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3lyC0KG6_1o&feature=youtu.be
- Joint EPA-CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes:
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-public-spaces-workplaces-businesses-schools-and-homes>
- Frequent Questions about EPA Grants and Coronavirus (COVID-19):
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/frequent-questions-about-grants-and-coronavirus-covid-19>
- For more COVID-19 related information, please visit EPA's coronavirus website at:
<https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>

Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities



Public Comment Opportunity: Proposed 2020 Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP)

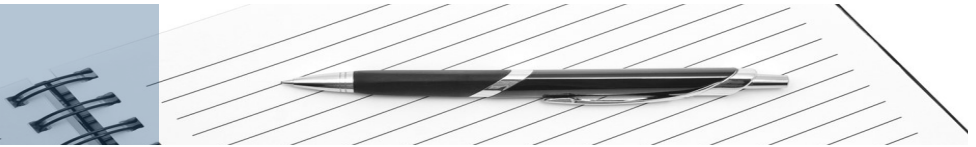
ENDS: June 1, 2020

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is 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 hosted two informational webcasts on March 10 and April 9, 2020 to give an overview of the proposed changes to the permit. To view a recording of the webinar, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-industrial-activities#webcasts>.

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

Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities



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

ENDS: June 10, 2020

The EPA is seeking public comment on 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).

Instructions for submitting comments are included in the announcement in the Federal Register via <https://www.regulations.gov> through Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2019-0583.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/ccl/regulatory-determination-4>.

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

ENDS: July 13, 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 current consultation period for the EPA's Draft Principles for Consulting with Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act Corporations has been extended 90 days until July 13, 2020. This extension is to allow more time for tribal governments and ANCSA corporations to provide input during the COVID-19 response.

For more information: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Proposed Renewal of the 2021 National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Pesticide General Permit under the Clean Water Act

ENDS: July 24, 2020

The EPA is consulting with tribes on the proposed renewal of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Pesticide General Permit (PGP) under the Clean Water Act. The EPA renews this permit every five years, and the current PGP is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2021. The EPA's PGP regulates discharges of biological pesticides and chemical pesticides that leave a residue into waters of the United States. The PGP covers pesticide discharges from the following pesticide use patterns: (1) mosquito and other flying insect pest control; (2) weed and algae control; (3) animal pest control; and (4) forest canopy pest control.

Informational webinar will be held on June 9, 2020 (2:30-3:30 PM EST). To register for the webinar, please visit: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/5553559970861187342>.

For additional information: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Funding Opportunities



Funding Opportunity: State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement – COVID-19 Projects

Application Deadline: June 30, 2020

The EPA is working to improve the environment and public health conditions of low-income and minority communities through our daily efforts to ensure all Americans have clean air, safe water, and access to information to make decisions to protect personal and public health. As part of these efforts, EPA has re-opened the State Environmental Justice Cooperative Agreement Program (SEJCA) and expanded its availability to include states, local governments, tribes and territories.

The grant funding will be used to support public education, training, and emergency planning for communities impacted by COVID-19. Projects could include sharing information related to EPA-approved disinfectants to combat COVID-19; addressing increased exposure of residents to in-home pollutants and healthy housing issues; and training community health workers.

Deadline for proposal submission is **Tuesday, June 30, 2020**. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/state-environmental-justice-cooperative-agreement-program> (Corrected link)

Funding Opportunity: Tribal Wildlife Grant

Application Deadline: July 6, 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 **Monday, July 6, 2020**. For more information, please visit: <https://www.fws.gov/nativeamerican/grants.html>



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.

- June 16, 2020: Adaptation Plans Part 1 (10:00 AM – 11:30 AM MST)

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

EPA Small Systems Monthly Webinar Series

- June 30, 2020: AWIA Risk and Resilience Check List and AWIA Lessons Learned
- July 28, 2020: Small Systems Compliance

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

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- June 24, 2020: Water Reuse for Agricultural Purposes
- August 26, 2020: Wildfires & Resulting Impacts to Water Bodies Used as Drinking Water Sources

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



Navigable Waters Protection Rule Published in the Federal Register

The EPA and Department of the Army's final Navigable Waters Protection Rule was published in the Federal Register on April 21, 2020. The definition was simplified to four categories of jurisdictional waters and lists 12 categories of exclusions. The final rule will become effective on June 22, 2020. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/nwpr>

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

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