



Introducing the New NTWC At-Large Representative, Celeste Hockings

*"Zhaangodebwaanikwe indizhinikaaz.
Waswagoning indoonjibaa. Migizi nindoodem.
Hello, my name is Strong Hearted Lakota Woman,
but in the Western world, I go by Celeste Hockings. I
am Oglala Lakota and
Anishinaabe from the Lac du
Flambeau, Wisconsin area."*

Celeste Hockings began her working career with the Tribal Natural Resource Department for the Lac du Flambeau Band of Lake Superior Chippewa Indians (LdF Tribe) during the summers of 2010-2014 as the Tribal Water Resource Intern. After graduating from University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in May 2014 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Wildlife Ecology and Management, she was hired as the Aquatic Ecologist/Data Manager under the Water Resource Program-Natural Resource Department. In 2016, Celeste was promoted to the Water Resource Program Manager/Aquatic Ecologist until her newest promotion in December 2022 to the Natural Resource Director.



Celeste's guidance in life is being able to protect, enhance, and provide clean and healthy water (and air and land) for all beings. During her time working for the Water Resource Program, she has gained

experience in multiple aspects that it takes to run an efficient and effective program, from water regulations and enforcements, to applying for funding and assisting other Tribal programs and Tribal members, to working with multiple federal, state, and local agencies. Celeste also focuses on providing education and career opportunities to local youth that have interest in the Natural Resource Department. She recognizes

that they are our future and will lead after she is gone.

Outside of work, Celeste has been married to her friend and partner in life, Adam, for six (6) years. Celeste and Adam have three dogs (Amik, Breezy and Lou) that go with them on many hikes, road



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trips and camping excursions. She is also a riding (horseback) instructor for the Scholl Community Impact Group, which provides purposeful, supervised interactions with horses for families and individuals with physical, cognitive or emotional disabilities. The newest wonderful news for their small family is that Celeste and Adam are expecting a baby girl in the new year.



Announcing Vice Chair Michael Bolt's Retirement

Last month, longtime Vice Chair Michael Bolt announced his resignation as the National Tribal Water Council's Region 4 representative. Mr. Bolt was an initial member of the Council, having served since 2007. The National Tribal Water Council presented Mr. Bolt with a certificate of appreciation for his 16 years of service in recognition of his support to tribal nations and the protection of water resources. Michael Bolt has been the Water Quality Section Supervisor for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for more than 20 years. The National Tribal Water Council thanks Michael Bolt for his work and wishes him the best on his retirement.

Chair Ken Norton Provided Testimony at the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works

Chair Ken Norton was invited by the Office of U.S. Senator Alex Padilla to attend a hearing conducted by the Environment and Public Works Committee on September 20, 2023. NTWC Chair Norton, along with Brian Bennon, Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc., and Jola Wallowing Bull, Northern Arapaho Tribal Engineering Department, provided oral testimony and answered questions from committee members regarding needs and challenges of drinking water infrastructure in tribal communities.

Chair Ken Norton provided [written testimony](#) on the challenges of maintaining and operating tribal drinking water and wastewater systems with limited resources. Additionally, tribes face high turnover rates for tribal water operators due to lack of competitive pay. Chair Norton also provided examples of the challenges his tribe, Hoopa Valley Tribe, encounters when providing water and wastewater services to tribal members.



To view the recording of the hearing, please visit:

<https://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/hearings?ID=78D33CE1-8DA5-4D0C-885F-60C563EE95D6>



Membership Recruitment for Region 4 Representative

Applications Accepted until **December 31, 2023**

The National Tribal Water Council is a technical and scientific body established to advocate for the best interests of federally-recognized Indian and Alaska Native Tribes in matters pertaining to water. The Council is currently accepting applications from tribal water professionals for one (1) open position.

Region 4 Representative

This position is open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization from Region 4 (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee).

Member duties include, but not limited, to:

- Participating in monthly conference calls;
- Attending bi-annual meetings; and
- Creating and participating in crafting response documents to policy and/or rulemaking actions.

We are seeking individuals that are passionate and vocal about tribal water issues. Interested candidates must submit the following: application form, letter of interest, and professional resumé. Please refer to the Council's membership application information packet for additional details.

To express your interest or obtain more information, please contact Elaine Wilson at elaine.wilson@nau.edu or (480) 452-6774.



Open House Webinar



December 14th

1:00-3:00 PM (CT)

Join us during this webinar to learn more about the Tribal PFAS Working Group and hear a presentation on *PFAS on Tribal Lands* by Dr. Kimberly Garrett.

The webinar will include a Q&A session.



Featured Speaker

Dr. Kimberly Garrett

PFAS Project Lab

Northeastern University

Click Here to Join:

[https://nau.zoom.us/j/85349980391?
pwd=RytoME1FNVEzTE84NVdCLzFHOEtWUT09](https://nau.zoom.us/j/85349980391?pwd=RytoME1FNVEzTE84NVdCLzFHOEtWUT09)

Zoom Meeting ID: 853 4998 0391 | Password: TPWG2023

To learn more about the Tribal PFAS Working Group, please visit: <http://www7.nau.edu/itep/main/ntwc/Issues/PFAS>

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

U.S. EPA Finalized Reporting and Recordkeeping Requirements for PFAS under the Toxic Substances Control Act

EPA has finalized the reporting and recordkeeping requirements for Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). In accordance with obligations under TSCA, EPA is requiring any person that manufactures (including import) or has manufactured (including imported) PFAS or PFAS-containing articles in any year since January 1, 2011, to electronically report information regarding PFAS uses, production volumes, disposal, exposures, and hazards.

The finalized rule will assist EPA to understand who is using PFAS, how they are being used, and in what quantities. This rule will produce actionable data that can be used by EPA, as well as state, local, and Tribal governments to craft policies and laws that protect people from dangerous “forever chemicals.”

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/assessing-and-managing-chemicals-under-tsca/tsca-section-8a7-reporting-and-recordkeeping>

U.S. EPA and Department of the Army Issued Final Rule to Amend the Final *Revised Definition of “Waters of the U.S.”* Rule

On August 29, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Department of the Army (the agencies) issued a final rule to amend the final [“Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States’” rule](#), which published in the *Federal Register* on January 18, 2023. This final rule conforms the definition of “waters of the United States” to the U.S. Supreme Court’s May 25, 2023, decision in the case of *Sackett v. Environmental Protection Agency*. Parts of the January 2023 Rule are invalid under the Supreme Court’s interpretation of the Clean Water Act in the [Sackett decision](#). Therefore, the agencies have amended key aspects of the regulatory text to conform it to the Court’s decision.

The conforming rule, “Revised Definition of ‘Waters of the United States’; Conforming,” [published in the Federal Register](#) and became effective on September 8, 2023. Please see EPA’s [Definition of WOTUS Rule Status and Litigation Update webpage](#) for information about the status of the January 2023 Rule, as amended by this conforming rule and litigation.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wotus>.

CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification Improvement Rule

On September 14, 2023, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA or the Agency) announced the final 2023 Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification Improvement Rule (2023 Rule). The final rule is grounded in the fundamental authority granted by Congress to states, territories, and Tribes to protect water resources that are essential to healthy people and thriving communities over the past 50 years. The final rule will take effect on November 27, 2023.

Additional information on the final 2023 Rule may be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/cwa-401/final-2023-cwa-section-401-water-quality-certification-improvement-rule>

2023 Tribal Climate and Health Summit – Pala, CA – November 8–9, 2023

This year’s theme is *Centering on Health: Planning, Implementing, and Evaluating Tribal Adaptation Strategies that Safeguard Health*. In recent years, many Tribes have taken steps towards understanding and addressing their

Updates & Announcements *(continued)*

unique climate vulnerabilities. This Summit will bring together experts and practitioners in Tribal health and climate adaptation to focus on how to take actions that ensure that Tribal health and wellbeing is prioritized and protected. Throughout the 2-day training, attendees will participate in interactive instruction and peer-to-peer learning activities that will build knowledge about developing, implementing, and evaluating adaptation plan strategies that safeguard Tribal health and are rooted in traditional knowledge and values. Organizers, guest speakers, and attendees will be invited to share successful practices that are increasing Tribal resilience to a variety of climate exposures throughout the US. The summit will also recognize Tribes for significant progress championing health adaptation.

For more information, please visit: <http://tribalclimatehealth.org/registration-is-open-for-the-2023-tribal-climate-and-health-summit/>

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Grant Program

Deadline: November 6, 2023

EPA has announced the opening of the Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Grant Program, which aims to provide funding to assist public water systems in underserved communities that are disadvantaged communities or communities with a population of less than 10,000 individuals for the purpose of increasing drinking water system resilience to natural hazards.

Eligible applicants for this funding opportunity include a public water system, a water system located in an area governed by an Indian tribe, and a State (on behalf of an underserved community) that serves a community that is underserved and disadvantaged or has a population of less than 10,000 individuals.

The application is open until November 6, 2023. Questions about the announcement can be sent to ResilienceGrant@epa.gov up until October 16, 2023.

The Request for Applications (RFA) is posted on www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/drinking-water-system-infrastructure-resilience-and-sustainability. The RFA will provide more details on the opportunity and instructions on how to apply. Applications for this funding opportunity will be accepted at [Grants.gov](https://www.epa.gov/grants). The opportunity number is EPA-OW-OGWDW-23-01, assistance listing number 66.448.

NOAA Fisheries: Restoring Tribal Priority Fish Passage through Barrier Removal Grants

Deadline: November 8, 2023

Nearly \$85 million in funding is available for fish passage and tribal capacity building under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act. This funding will support U.S. federally recognized tribes, Alaska Native Corporations, and tribal organizations in implementing fish passage work and building tribal organizational capacity. In collaboration with NOAA, selected partners will use these funds to build tribal organizational capacity and implement projects that reopen migratory pathways and restore access to healthy habitat for tribally-important species. Selected projects may also provide community and economic benefits, such as enhancing climate resilience by removing or improving aging infrastructure.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/grant/restoring-tribal-priority-fish-passage-through-barrier-removal-grants>

TRIBAL CONSULTATION OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Proposed Renewal of the forthcoming National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) under the Clean Water Act

Deadline: October 27, 2023

EPA has initiated consultation and coordination with federally recognized tribes on the proposed renewal of the forthcoming National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Pesticide General Permit (PGP) under the Clean Water Act. EPA renews this permit every five years, and the current PGP is scheduled to expire on October 31, 2026.

EPA's PGP regulates discharges of biological pesticides and chemical pesticides that leave a residue in 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. With limited exceptions, EPA directly implements the NPDES program in Indian country where tribes are not approved to administer the NPDES program.

Additional information about the PGP can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/pesticide-permitting>.

EPA held two identical informational webinar and listening sessions for tribal leaders and staff on September 19 and 21, 2023. The deadline to submit comments is October 27, 2023. Consultation materials and copies of the webinar slides are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

EVENTS & WEBINARS

Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. – National Tribal Water & Wastewater Operator Training & Certification Program Certification Program

The Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc. National Tribal Water and Wastewater Operator Training and Certification Program is providing online, in-person, and blended training.

Upcoming courses include, but are not limited to, the following:

- SDWA Federal Regulations: January 15-26, 2024 (Blended)
- Tribal Utility Management: January 31-February 16, 2024 (Blended)

To register or to view the 2023 training schedule, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

Tribal Climate Health Project's Tribal Health and Adaptation Peer-Learning Roundtable Webinars

The Tribal Climate Health Project has developed training to assist Tribes begin to prepare, cope, build resilience to, and recover from the health and other impacts of climate change.

This advanced training from the Tribal Climate Health Project is for Tribal-serving practitioners, including environmental and health professionals, who have gained some level of transferable, real-world climate and health knowledge and experience through their work with Tribes. This training is open to Tribes and Tribal-serving

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

professionals throughout the United States who work within the intersections of climate change, health, and community well-being. For the complete schedule and to access recorded webinars, please visit: <http://ped.palatribe.com/tcha-webinar-vi/>

Below is the upcoming schedule:

- October 19, 2023: Reporting and Sharing Successes with Decision Makers, Stakeholders, and other Tribes

Tribal Superfund Working Group Virtual Gathering: Presentation and Discussion on Tools to Help with PFAS Project

Tribal Superfund Working Group is hosting presenters from EPA and the Tribal PFAS Working Group, who will speak about the PFAS Analytic Tools, Tribes, and contaminated sites on October 31, 2023. Presenters include Page Hingst, Tribal PFAS Working Group; Kaylene Ritter, Abt Associates; and Nick Spalt, EPA.

Join the discussion on **October 31, 11:00 am Pacific; 2:00 pm Eastern.**

Zoom link: <https://nau.zoom.us/j/88250663839?pwd=VHVrTVVVPYU1DazFMQ1FPK3FSTzZRQT09>

Meeting ID: 882 5066 3839

Contaminated Site Clean-Up Information (CLU-IN) Training

- October 20, 2023: Tools for PFAS Site Characterization - PFAS Sources and Mapping
- November 7, 2023: Microplastics
- November 9, 2023: Tools for PFAS Site Characterization - Standards, Passive Sampling, and Modeling of PFAS

To register, please visit: <https://clu-in.org/training/>

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

- October 18, 2023: PFAS and Emerging Contaminant Technology Transfer to States and Tribes

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/research-states/epa-tools-and-resources-webinar-series>

EPA Water Research Webinar Series

- October 25, 2023: Methods and Information to Support the Development of Aquatic Life Criteria to PFAS

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/water-research-webinar-series>

EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series

- October 31, 2023: Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 5)

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/small-drinking-water-systems-webinar-series>

EPA Water Utility Resilience Workshops and Webinars

- November 14, 2023: How to Prepare Your Utility for Disasters - A webinar for very small drinking water systems that serve under 3,301 people (Focus on drought and water contamination scenarios)

To register, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresiliencetraining/register-water-utility-resilience-workshops-and-webinars-now>

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

National Association of Wetland Managers' Tribal Wetland Program Webinars

- November 2, 2023: Approaches to Sustainable Funding for Tribal Wetland Programs
- March 4-7, 2024: Southwest Tribal Clean Water Act Training (In-person; Albuquerque, NM)

To register, please visit: <https://www.nawm.org/wetland-programs/tribal-wetland-programs/calendar-of-tribal-wetland-and-water-resource-training-events>

NTWC MEMBERS

For more information on our members, visit [Meet the Council](#).

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Region 4

Vacant

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