



National Tribal Water Council's Core Priorities for 2026-2028

The National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) is pleased to share its 2026–2028 core water priorities., which will guide the Council’s engagement with EPA, federal partners, and Tribal governments, and reflect NTWC’s ongoing commitment to protect water resources and amplify Tribal voices. The NTWC is committed to advancing the health and sustainability of clean and safe water throughout Indian Country. Its work strengthens Tribal sovereignty and cultural, spiritual, and sustenance lifeways, and supports the implementation of the *1984 EPA Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations*.

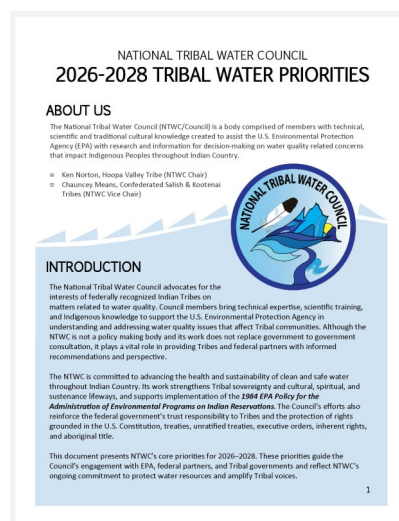
NTWC’s tribal water priorities are as follows:

1. Trust and Accountability

- Advocate for consistent adherence to the 1984 [EPA Indian Policy](#) in decisions that affect Tribal Nations.
- Uphold the federal trust responsibility and ensure that treaty obligations are honored.
- Promote strong Nation to Nation relationships through meaningful, timely consultation and appropriate timelines for federal rulemaking.
- Support Tribes in protecting, managing, and stewarding their lands, waters, and natural resources.

2. Tribal Water Quality and Governance

- Provide technical guidance and share effective models to assist Tribes in developing and strengthening water quality programs and standards.
- Encourage and support Tribal efforts to establish their own ordinances, standards, and policies to safeguard water quality.
- Assist Tribes with limited capacity that face health, environmental, or resource-based threats.
- Address jurisdictional challenges involving state and federal waters that flow through or affect Tribal lands.
- Share resources that support effective consultation, coordination, and intergovernmental processes.



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<https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/>

NTWC's Core Priorities for 2026–2028 *(continued)*

3. Funding Advocacy

- Advocate for restoring and increasing EPA funding to critical Tribal water programs, including:
 - * Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants Tribal Set-Aside and related drinking water infrastructure improvements.
 - * Drinking Water State Revolving Fund operator training, certification, and technical assistance.
 - * Clean Water Indian Set-Aside, CWA Sections 106 and 319, and Wetland Program Development Grants.
 - * Tribal General Assistance Program (GAP).
 - * Funding to address emerging contaminants, including PFAS and lead service line replacement.

4. Partnerships and Collaborations

- Strengthen partnerships and enhance collaborations across Indian Country and with federal agencies.
- Encourage Tribes to engage and educate Members of Congress and relevant federal partners.
- Expand coordination beyond EPA to include agencies such as USGS, BIA, IHS, BOR, NRCS, USFWS, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Coordinate with agencies and organizations to make efficient and effective use of shared knowledge, technical expertise, and resources.
- Maintain outreach and collaboration with intertribal organizations and environmental partners.
- Align Tribal priorities to amplify collective impact and strengthen advocacy across Indian Country.

The priorities document is available on the NTWC's website at <https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/tribal-water-priorities/>.

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Native American Fish and Wildlife Society 2026 Annual National Conference

The 2026 Native American Fish and Wildlife Society Annual National Conference, hosted by the Oneida Indian Nation of New York, will be held from May 4-7, 2026 at the Turning Stone Resort Casino in Verona, NY. For more information, please visit: <https://www.nafws.org/product/2026-annual-national-conference/>

A Meeting of Sacred Waters: A Global Gathering of Indigenous Voices

A Meeting of Sacred Waters 2026 is a global gathering to highlight Indigenous-led solutions in support of our ancestral waters and lands. Through the collective experiences of Indigenous Peoples from the US and abroad, this global exchange explores solutions to restore balance for the wellbeing of humanity and the environment. The conference will be held June 22-25, 2026, at the Isleta Resort & Casino Hotel in Albuquerque, NM. For more information, please visit: <https://web.cvent.com/event/b6db810b-9687-4105-a4fb-6a68908cb4c6/websitePage:7c571964-6c1f-4b25-a856-6cf3b4ce38c6>

Tribal Lands & Environment Forum 2026

The Tribal Lands & Environment Forum website is now active. The forum will be held August 17-20, 2026, at the OKANA Resort in Oklahoma City, OK. Participants may register as an attendee, sign up to be a sponsor or exhibitor, or submit a session or training proposal. For more information, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/tlef2026>

Recordings Available for National Invasive Species Awareness Week

The Northern American Invasive Species Management Association offered various webinars during the National Invasive Species Awareness week, February 23-27, 2026. The recordings are now available at: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA8Berx4-LkOOLtMzI5pw9_HMW1x1tumh

Updates & Announcements *(continued)*

NEW! EPA Launches PFAS OUT Initiative

On April 15, 2026, EPA launched a new initiative called PFAS OUTreach - or PFAS OUT. PFAS OUT is a proactive outreach initiative to provide information on resources, including funding and technical assistance, to drinking water systems with PFAS challenges. This outreach will provide practical, interactive location-specific resources, including webinars and information, on how to access funding and technical assistance to address PFAS.

PFAS OUT is a proactive outreach initiative to provide information on resources, including funding and technical assistance, to drinking water systems with PFAS challenges. This outreach will provide practical, interactive location-specific resources, including webinars and information, on how to access funding and technical assistance to address PFAS. This initiative reflects EPA's commitment to cooperative federalism, a core pillar of Administrator Zeldin's Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative, by working hand-in-hand with states, utilities, and local partners to deliver durable, science-based solutions that protect public health.

[Learn more about PFAS OUT.](#)

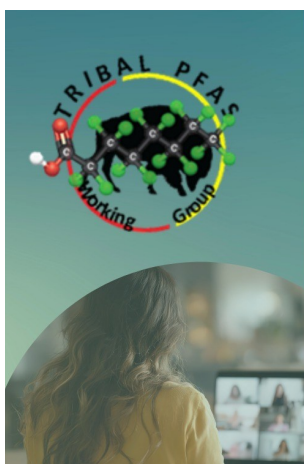
EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management - Engagement Sessions on Soil with Low Concentrations of PFAS

EPA's Office of Land and Emergency Management is hosting a series of virtual engagement sessions to receive input from interested parties regarding management of surface soils containing low concentrations of per- and polyfluorinated substances or PFAS. By "low concentrations," EPA means concentrations at about the same levels found in U.S. soil that is not located near any known PFAS sources. These sessions will *not* cover topics that relate to cleanup of soils contaminated with PFAS from specific known sources.

The agency will host four sessions for specific groups to share their experiences, concerns, and approaches. These groups are states and territories, Tribal organizations, environmental groups and nongovernmental organizations, and the business community. A fifth session will be available for anyone who cannot attend their specific group session. EPA encourages you to register for the session of interest to you, and to share information about this opportunity with others.

- Engagement Session for Tribal Organizations: April 30, 2026 (2-3:30 PM ET); Register by April 23 [HERE](#)
- Engagement Session #2: May 12, 2026 (3:30-4 PM ET); Register by May 5 [HERE](#)

For more information and to register, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/hw/engagement-sessions-soil-low-concentrations-pfas>.

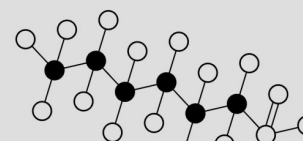


Join the Conversation: How has PFAS Affected Your Tribe?

The Tribal PFAS Working Group holds monthly calls and would like to invite tribal representatives and researchers to hear testimonials and presentations on how PFAS and other emerging contaminants have impacted tribal lands and resources.

If you are interested in sharing your story at one of our monthly calls, we'd love to hear from you. Please reach out to Elaine Wilson, NTWC Project Manager, at elaine.wilson@nau.edu to join our call.

For more information:
<https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/pfas-working-group/>



TRIBAL CONSULTATION & PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EPA's Upcoming Proposal to Rescind the 2024 Water Quality Standards Regulatory Revisions to Protect Tribal Reserved Rights

Consultation period ends April 21, 2026

EPA initiated consultation with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the agency's intention to propose to rescind the 2024 *Water Quality Standards Regulatory Revisions to Protect Tribal Reserved Rights* ("2024 Rule"). The 2024 Rule revised the EPA's regulation at 40 C.F.R. Part 131 to explicitly require that states consider reserved rights to CWA-protected aquatic and/or aquatic-dependent resources when a federally recognized Tribe holds such rights through federal treaties, statutes, or executive orders and asserts them for consideration in the WQS context. The agency reviewed the 2024 Rule in the context of ongoing litigation brought by 12 states in the U.S. District Court for the District of North Dakota to ensure compliance with the law. As a result of this review, the EPA determined that the 2024 Rule goes beyond the agency's authority under the CWA.

The EPA intends to propose revision to the federal water quality standards (WQS) regulation at 40 C.F.R. Part 131 to rescind the agency's 2024 Water Quality Standards Regulatory Revisions To Protect Tribal Reserved Rights. These regulatory provisions are relevant to situations where Tribes assert reserved rights to aquatic or aquatic-dependent resources in waters where states have jurisdiction to establish WQS. The EPA's actions have no bearing on the existence or meaning of any specific Tribal reserved rights.

The EPA is interested in hearing about Tribes' experiences with the 2024 Rule. The agency intends to use the input received through the Tribal consultation process to inform the proposed rule. For more information, please visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/revising-federal-water-quality-standards-regulation-protect-tribal-reserved-rights>

NEW! EPA's Draft FY 2026-2030 EPA Strategic Plan & FY Evidence Plan

Deadline: May 11, 2026

On April 15, 2026, EPA is providing advance notice of an upcoming consultation opportunity with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the draft *FY 2026-2030 EPA Strategic Plan* and draft *FY 2027 Evidence Plan* (which supports the agency's *Learning Agenda*).

The *Strategic Plan* communicates the agency's priorities and serves as the basis for agencywide planning and budget development. It covers important areas of interest to Tribes. The *Strategic Plan* is complemented by the agency's *Learning Agenda*. The *Learning Agenda* identifies and addresses key questions across priority areas for the agency through the identification, development, and analysis of high-quality evidence. The *FY 2027 Evidence Plan* lays out activities planned for the coming fiscal year under the *Learning Agenda*. An updated annual *Evidence Plan* will be submitted each fiscal year through FY 2030.

The draft *FY 2026-2030 EPA Strategic Plan* advances the five pillars of [EPA's Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative](https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-lee-zeldin-announces-epas-powering-great-american-comeback): <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-administrator-lee-zeldin-announces-epas-powering-great-american-comeback>.

The deadline for submitting written comments and requesting a consultation is May 11, 2026. EPA will honor consultation requests received by May 11, 2026. Given the expedited timeline to finalize and publish the *Strategic* and *Evidence Plans*, EPA will not grant extensions to these deadlines.

The consultation and coordination period will include a virtual Tribal informational session on April

27, 2026 from 3:00 - 4:30 PM ET. The informational session will be hosted on Microsoft Teams and can be accessed through this invitation: <https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/25460813470120?p=k8R16niU4Qs3Fi2VPA>

Tribal Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities *(continued)*

EPA Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Implementation Tools

Deadline: April 30, 2026

To support practical implementation of the Lead and Copper Rule Improvements (LCRI), the EPA developed two draft documents, Access Tips and Service Line Inventory Tips, to provide information to water systems on lead service line inventories, replacement requirements, and flexibilities in the rule. The EPA is seeking public input on these two documents. To submit comments, please provide the EPA with feedback via email at LCRI@epa.gov by **April 30, 2026**. For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/dwreginfo/lead-and-copper-rule-implementation-tools#Tips>

EPA's CWA Financial Capability Assessment (FCA) Guidance

Deadline: May 26, 2026

EPA invites public comments on its [Clean Water Act \(CWA\) Financial Capability Assessment \(FCA\) Guidance](#). As part of EPA's ongoing effort to ensure effective and practical implementation of the CWA, the agency is revisiting the guidance to improve clarity, address community concerns, and strengthen support for public health protection.

Financial capability is one of several factors EPA considers when evaluating implementation schedules for long-term CWA control plans. The FCA Guidance, most recently updated in 2024, outlines how to assess a community's financial capacity when negotiating schedules under permits and enforcement actions. It also describes methodologies for evaluating economic impacts in water quality standards (WQS) variances, antidegradation reviews, and where appropriate, decisions to revise designated uses.

EPA requests public comments on ways to more effectively assess the financial capacity of utilities undertaking water infrastructure projects to meet CWA requirements and inform WQS decisions. The agency also welcomes input on additional perspectives or considerations that should be reflected in future updates to the FCA Guidance. Specifically, the agency seeks feedback on approaches to measure the severity and prevalence of poverty in a community, approaches to incorporate cost of living in assessment, approaches to determine compliance schedule length, and approaches and application of the FCA to determine cost in WQS decisions.

EPA is hosting two public stakeholder engagement webinars.

- April 29, 2026 (10 AM MST); To register: https://usepa.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/BJQ1QwCAR_qV5ey5u_OyJA#/registration
- May 7, 2026 (10 AM MST); To register: <https://usepa.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/xEIEZ6vARuKXz4SE5ZbXrQ#/registration>

EPA Announcement of the Draft Sixth Contaminant Candidate List

Deadline: June 1, 2026

On April 2, 2026, EPA published the draft Sixth Contaminant Candidate List (CCL 6). The CCL is a list of contaminants that are currently not subject to any proposed or promulgated national primary drinking water regulations but are known or anticipated to occur in public water systems. Contaminants listed on the CCL may require future regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act ([SDWA](#)).

The draft CCL 6 includes 75 chemicals, 4 chemical groups (microplastics, pharmaceuticals, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and disinfection byproducts (DBPs), and 9 microbes. EPA is seeking comments on the draft CCL 6 and the process used to select the contaminants. Instructions on how to submit comments are included in the *Federal Register* notice. For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/ccl/draft-contaminant-candidate-list-6-ccl-6>



Membership Recruitment for Region 3, Region 5, & At-Large Representatives

Applications Accepted until Filled



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 quality. The Council is currently accepting applications from tribal water professionals to fill three (3) openings.

Tribal water professionals with knowledge in the Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act are encouraged to apply. Also, an applicant with a background in water infrastructure, drinking water, wastewater, and operations and maintenance, is strongly encouraged.

Region 3 Representative

Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization in Region 3 (Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, & West Virginia).

Region 5 Representative

Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization in Region 5 (Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin).

At-Large Representative

Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization in the United States (Regions 1 through 10).

Member duties include, but not limited, to:

- Participating in monthly virtual calls;
- Attending two in-person meetings annually; and
- Creating and participating in crafting response documents to policy and/or rulemaking actions.

Interested applicants 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, please contact Elaine Wilson at elaine.wilson@nau.edu. More information may be found on the NTWC website <https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/>.

EVENTS & WEBINARS

Tribal Exchange Network Group – Monthly Tribal Data Drop-in Sessions

Held the third Thursday of every month from 10:00-11:30 AM (Pacific)

<https://www.tribalexchangenetwork.org/trainings-events>

Rural Community Assistance Corporation (RCAC) Trainings

RCAC partners with underserved rural and Indigenous communities to achieve their vision and well-being through technical assistance, training, financial resources and advocacy. To learn more about RCAC trainings, please visit:

<https://www.events.rcac.org/rcac/Calendar.asp>

Upcoming training course:

- May 5, 2026: Safe Drinking Water Act for Tribes – online training for Tribal water operators in Alaska

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 online, in-person, and blended trainings. To register or to view the 2025 training schedule, please visit: <https://itcaonline.com/programs/environmental-quality-programs/tws-tmap/tws-training-events/>

Upcoming training courses:

- Wastewater Treatment Level 1: May 11-15, 2026 (online); May 18-22, 2026 (Camp Verde, AZ)
- Wastewater Lagoon: June 15-19, 2026 (online); June 22-26, 2026 (Santa Ana Pueblo, NM)
- Water Distribution Level 1: July 6-10, 2026 (online); July 13-17, 2026 (Flagstaff, AZ)

EPA Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Webinars

To register: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/4717750765888/WN_P0pzi6JsQc2OkWlQ-PdXCw#/registration

- April 22, 2026: Algal Blooms in U.S. Lakes Increase after Wildfire Smoke Events

EPA Water Utility Resilience Events

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/waterresilience/register-epa-water-utility-resilience-events>

- April 28, 2026: Cybersecurity Procurement Checklist Tool Training

Environmental Finance Center Network

To register: <https://efcnetwork.org/training-events/>

- April 23, 2026: Wastewater Treatment Primary Sedimentation and Solids Removal
- April 30, 2026: Introduction to Water Distribution System Modeling Part 1

University of Minnesota – Aquatic Invasive Species Webinar Series

To register: <https://maisrc.umn.edu/ais-detectors/webinars>

- May 6, 2026: Genetic Options for Controlling Invasive Carp Species

2026 Tribal Community Resilience Webinar Series

To register: <https://arizona.zoom.us/meeting/register/MMmC31wDSSevL6pVaQQhuw#/registration>

- May 14, 2026: Water

EPA Technical Assistance Webinar Series

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/compliance/technical-assistance-webinar-series-strengthening-cwa-npdes-permit-compliance-protect>

- May 21, 2026: Going through a Wastewater Plant Upgrade

NTWC MEMBERS

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

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