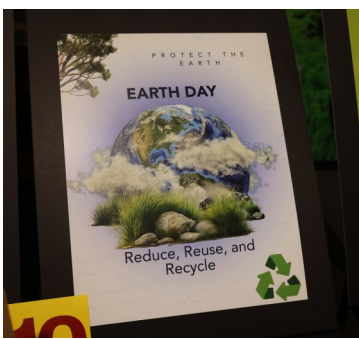




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Earth Day at Eastern Shawnee Tribe's Treehouse

By Debbie Dotson, Water Quality Officer - Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma



Eastern Shawnee people came from the woodlands of the Ohio River Valley to Oklahoma, the first to be forcibly moved on foot to northeastern Oklahoma. The Tribe today pays homage to those woodland homelands in several ways, and one recent building renovation turned the original bingo hall building into a beautiful facility called the Treehouse. The walls are forests; the structural beams are now tree trunks. Wildlife replicas like deer, turkey, bear, birds, and raccoons are found as part of the indoor scenery with a bark lodge doorway. What a great place for celebrating Earth Day!

The building was visited by preschoolers from two local schools, teachers, staff from the Tribe, and several folks just checking it out. Departments from the Tribe set up stations at the event including 477, CCDF, ICW, Haven, Education, Tribal Police, Wellness Center, and our Environmental Department. Tribal Police K-9 officer Glitch was a fan favorite with all ages.

Four Feathers Recycling staff had a sorting activity for preschoolers to learn how to sort plastic, paper, cardboard, and cans using pictures of recyclable items and mini recycle bins. The students took home a booklet about recycling, stickers, tattoos, and an earth ball.

A friend from US Fish and Wildlife Service at the Neosho National Fish Hatchery attended with some great recycled

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Eastern Shawnee Tribe's Treehouse *(continued)*

art and projects to demonstrate the many things that you can do with ordinary trash like plastic bags, CDs, milk jugs, water bottles, candy wrappers, old records, and even a plastic princess dress that a person could wear.

Other creative Earth Day projects included making pinecone bird feeders with the Haven Program, a station to color your own tote bag with fabric markers and stencils, activity bags to color, and tree cookies that the kids could learn about a tree and then decorate them.



A poster contest with entries from local high school students was on display and every adult attending voted for their favorite. It was impressive to see the creativity in each design, and several people commented that it was hard to pick just one favorite. We had thirteen entries from Wyandotte High School with a winner for first place and a three-way tie for second place.



There was an Eastern Shawnee staff recycled art contest, and our winner was a beautiful globe craft.

We look forward to growing the event each year.

To learn more about the Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Environmental Program: <https://www.estoo-nsn.gov/services/page/environmental-protection-services>

National Tribal Water Council & U.S. EPA Office of Water 2026 Spring In-Person Meeting Highlights

The National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Water met on May 6-7, 2026, for their 2026 Spring In-Person Meeting in Washington, D.C. The meeting provides an opportunity for information exchange and dialogue between EPA staff and NTWC members.



The first day included welcome remarks from NTWC Chair Ken Norton, Hoopa Valley Tribe; Deputy Assistant Administrator Caitlin McHale, EPA Office of Water; and Principal Deputy Assistant Administrator Victoria Tran, EPA Office of International and Tribal Affairs. EPA staff provided updates on Office of Water programs, current regulations, water quality monitoring, PFAS, and projected funding. The second day included NTWC's Roundtable and EPA presentations on data centers, water reuse, and mining in Alaska.

NTWC members commented on the recent 30-day comment period for the Tribal Reserved Rights Rule and definition of "Waters of the U.S." Last July, EPA Administrator Lee Zeldin reaffirmed the 1984 Indian Policy that includes key principles of government-to-government relations, trust responsibility, tribal sovereignty, and implementation. NTWC discussed the importance of tribal consultation and providing adequate time for Tribes to comment on key regulations that impact tribal waters and resources.

The next in-person meeting will be hosted by the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Rainee Tetreault, NTWC Region 4 Representative, in late September 2026.

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

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. The deadline to submit a proposal is May 22, 2026. For more information, please visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/tlef2026>

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 Updated Fact Sheet: The Economic Benefits of Protecting Healthy Watersheds

EPA published an update to the 2012 fact sheet, [The Economic Benefits of Protecting Healthy Watersheds](#) (EPA-841-F-25-002, April 2026). The updated fact sheet compiles state-by-state evidence demonstrating the measurable economic returns of watershed protection across six benefit categories: drinking water treatment cost savings; natural hazard mitigation; recreation and tourism; subsistence hunting, fishing and foraging; quality of life and health; and property values.

2026 National Training Workshop on Water Quality Data, Assessment, & Plans

EPA is hosting the 2026 National Training Workshop on Water Quality Data, Assessment, and Plans. The virtual workshop runs **from 1:00 to 5:00pm EDT on June 2, 3 and 4**. The workshop fosters technical development of program staff by strengthening the knowledge and skills to perform the core functions of the Clean Water Act 303 (d) Program, which includes the identification of impaired waters, development of TMDLs and other water quality plans and communication of data and information to the public.

Use the following links to register for each day of the workshop individually.

- Click [HERE](#) to register for Tuesday, June 2
- Click [HERE](#) to register for Wednesday, June 3
- Click [HERE](#) to register for Thursday, June 4

If you have any questions or run into any issues with registration, please reach out to Lauren Mosesso Mosesso.Lauren@epa.gov.



Join Our Council

Seeking Applicants for:

- 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 & Wisconsin).
- At-Large Representative
Open to tribal water professionals employed by a federally recognized Tribe or tribally authorized organization in the U.S. (Region 1 through 10).

Interested applicants must submit an application form, letter of interest, and professional resume.



Why Join Us

Contribute your skills, passion, and voice to advocate for Tribes on water quality issues and concerns.

The application packet is available on the NTWC website <https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/>.

TRIBAL CONSULTATION & PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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's Draft FY 2026–2030 EPA Strategic Plan & FY Evidence Plan

Deadline: May 28, 2026 (Extended Date)

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>. The deadline for submitting written comments is May 28, 2026. EPA will honor consultation requests received by May 11, 2026.

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>

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>

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 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 Water Utility Resilience Events

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

- May 20, 2026: How Water Sector Utilities are Building Resilience to Natural Hazards: Utilities Recount their Engagement with EPA SWIFT Technical Assistance
- May 27, 2026: Addressing Power Outages in Risk and Resilience Assessments and Emergency Response Plans
- June 3, 2026: Cybersecurity 102

Environmental Finance Center Network

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

- May 19, 2026: Community Engagement in Stormwater Planning
- June 3, 2026: **Tribal Training** – Managing Septic Systems in a Changing Climate
- June 9, 2026: Septic System Challenges Across Scales – Collaborative Approaches to Outreach and Management

Clean-up Information (CLU-IN) Training & Events

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

- June 9, 2026: PFAS Chemistry Explained

2026 Tribal Community Resilience Webinar Series

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

- May 14, 2026: Water
- June 4, 2026: Forestry
- July 2, 2026: Fish and Wildlife

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

EPA Emergency Response Research Webinar Series

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/emergency-response-research/webinar-series>

- June 10, 2026: Fire Suppression Contaminated with PFAS

NTWC MEMBERS

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

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Click [HERE](#) to access the NTWC's Core Priorities for 2026-2028

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Snoqualmie Tribe and the Mount Si High School Green Team 6th annual Earth Day event

Left: Volunteers participating in restoration activities; **Right:** Robert de los Angeles, Chairman of the Snoqualmie Tribe, speaking at the Earth Day event