



Highlights of National Tribal Water Council Mid-Year Activities

As we approach mid-year, the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) offers a highlight of its activities in the first half of the year. Below is a summary of NTWC's completed and ongoing activities.

EPA Consultation Opportunities and NTWC Responses

NTWC submitted two comment letters in response to *EPA's Proposal to Rescind the 2024 Water Quality Standards Regulatory Revisions to Protect Tribal Reserved Rights*, and *EPA's Proposed Rule to Revise the CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification Regulations*, which NTWC collaborated with the National Tribal Caucus on comments to this proposed rule.

NTWC Core Water Priorities for 2026-2028

In April, NTWC released its 2026-2028 core water priorities that will guide the Council's engagement with EPA, federal partners, and Tribal governments; it reflects the Council's continued commitment to protect water resources and amplify Tribal voices. The document includes four priorities: 1) Trust and Accountability; 2) Tribal Water Quality and Governance; 3) Funding Advocacy; and 4) Partnerships and Collaborations. The priorities document is available on the NTWC's website at <https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc/tribal-water-priorities/>.



Collaborations and Partnerships

The Council continues to collaborate with the National Tribal Caucus on comment letters and sharing current NTWC activities and initiatives to the Caucus. Additionally, the NTWC continues to engage with the Native American Rights Fund as part of the Clean Water Act Convening meetings.

Vice Chair Chauncey Means gave remarks during the ITEP Tribal Wellbeing for Seven Generations' **Living Waters, Resilient Nations Tribal Water Cohort Workshop** on May 27, 2026, focusing on the important work of the NTWC and its collaborations and partnerships with other entities to advance tribal water protection, tribal sovereignty



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NEWSLETTER

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VISIT US AT:

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

NTWC Mid-Year Activities *(continued)*

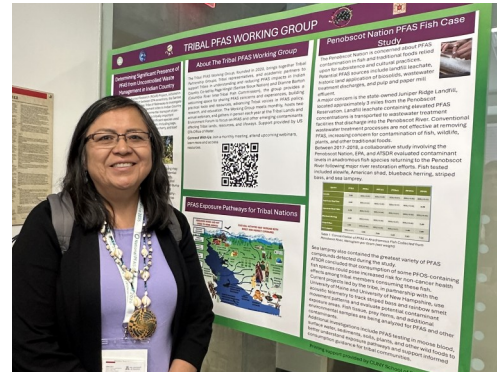
and amplify tribal voices. Additionally, an overview of NTWC's mission and core priorities were shared with the cohort.

Tribal PFAS Working Group

NTWC members meet monthly with members from the Tribal Science Council, National Tribal Toxics Council, Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee, National Tribal Air Association, Tribal Pesticide Program Council, and tribal environmental representatives as part of the Tribal PFAS Working Group.

Elaine Wilson, NTWC Project Manager, attended the National PFAS Conference June 8-10, 2026, in Tucson, Arizona. Elaine participated in a session titled "Toxics and Indigenous Perspectives" that focused on PFAS challenges faced by Tribal Nations. The working group developed and presented an informational poster.

The working group recently hosted its summer webinar with featured guest speaker Dr. Ian Pepper, University of Arizona, July 9, 2026. Dr. Pepper presented on the National Collaborative PFAS Study that evaluates the presence and mobility of PFAS in biosolids and assesses potential crop uptake of PFAS from these soils.



Elaine Wilson at the National PFAS Conference

Ongoing and Upcoming Activities for the Remainder of 2026

The NTWC's ongoing work includes:

- Continuing efforts to recruit for four NTWC vacancies for representatives from Region 3, Region 5, At-Large Representative, and an Alaska Representative. A recruitment flyer is available on NTWC's website.
- Coordinating the NTWC and EPA Office of Water **2026 Fall Meeting in Cherokee, North Carolina**. Rainee Tetreault, NTWC Region 4 Representative, and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians will be hosting the meeting.
- Assisting and co-hosting the **Tribal PFAS Working Group's** one-day workshop titled "Beyond the Unknown: Understanding Emerging Contaminants" at the **2026 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF) on August 17, 2026, in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma**. If you're attending TLEF, we'd love to have you join us for the workshop.

UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS

National Congress of American Indians' Webinar on A Tribal Leader's Guide to the AI Era

National Congress of American Indians is hosting a webinar titled "Sovereignty First – A Tribal Leader's Guide to the AI Era" on July 22, 2026. As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, Tribal Nations face critical decisions about how to protect their natural resources, safeguard Tribal data sovereignty, and ensure emerging technologies align with Tribal values. By exercising governance over AI, Tribal Nations can also harness these tools to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages, strengthen self-determination, and create high-quality economic and workforce opportunities for Native people.

Please join the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) for an exclusive virtual briefing to help Tribal decision-makers move past the "tech hype" and build actionable, sovereign AI strategies. To register, click [HERE](#).



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).

NEW

- Alaska Representative

Open to tribal water professionals employed by an Alaska Native Tribe or tribally authorized organization in the State of Alaska.



Why Join Us

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

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

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

TRIBAL CONSULTATION & PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Notification of Consultation Opportunity: CWA 312(n) Uniform National Discharge Standards Phase II Batch 3 Rulemaking

Deadline: July 14, 2026

The EPA, in coordination with the Department of War (DoW), is initiating consultation with federally recognized Indian Tribes on a proposed rulemaking to establish national standards for discharges incidental to the normal operation of vessels of the Armed Forces (e.g., U.S. Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Air Force) that operate nationwide in coastal and inland waters. The standards to be developed in this proposed rulemaking would be the third and final batch of Phase II performance standards for marine pollution control devices under the Uniform National Discharge Standards (UNDS) program.

The EPA and DoW are developing performance standards for three discharges: clean ballast, compensated ballast, and dirty ballast. These performance standards are intended to reduce environmental impacts associated with vessel discharges, stimulate the development of improved pollution control devices and environmentally sound military practices, and establish nationwide standards. This proposed rulemaking will not affect vessels operated by Tribes because the rule only regulates discharges from vessels of the Armed Forces of the United States. However, Tribes may be interested in this action because vessels of the Armed Forces of the United States, including Coast Guard vessels, may operate in or near Tribal waters.

For more information about these discharges, please visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/vessels-marinas-and-ports/uniform-national-discharge-standards-unds-rulemaking-process>.

EPA Proposed PFOA and PFOS Compliance Extension Rule

Deadline: July 20, 2026

The proposed PFOA and PFOS Compliance Extension Rule upholds the federal drinking water Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonic acid (PFOS) while strengthening practical implementation by providing an option for drinking water systems to request two additional years - to 2031 - to comply with the enforceable limits. Following the proposed rule published in the Federal Register, the EPA will accept written comments on the proposed rule in the public docket for 60 days at www.regulations.gov under Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2025-1742.

<https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/proposed-pfoa-and-pfos-compliance-extension-rule>

The EPA held a virtual public hearing on July 7, 2026, where the public was invited to provide the EPA with verbal comments on the proposed rules. During the hearing, the agency presented information on the proposed rule and exemption schedule and received comments from the public.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/20/2026-10086/extending-the-compliance-deadline-for-the-pfoa-and-pfos-maximum-contaminant-levels>

EPA Proposed Recission of Regulatory Determinations and Removal of Related Provisions for Four PFAS Substances (PFHxS, PFNA, GenX, and the Mixture of these Three PFAS plus PFBS)

Deadline: July 20, 2026

The proposed rule to Rescind Regulatory Determinations and Regulations for PFHxS, PFNA, HFPO-DA, and Hazard Index Mixtures corrects the Biden Administration's failure to follow the clear requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) in promulgating regulations for perfluorohexane sulfonic acid (PFHxS), perfluorononanoic acid (PFNA), hexafluoropropylene oxide dimer acid and its ammonium salt (HFPO-DA) (commonly known as GenX

Tribal Consultation & Public Comment Opportunities *(continued)*

chemicals), and Hazard Index mixtures of these three PFAS plus perfluorobutane sulfonic acid (PFBS). Following the proposed rule published in the Federal Register, the EPA will accept written comments on the proposed rule in the public docket for 60 days at www.regulations.gov under Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2025-0654. <https://www.epa.gov/sdwa/proposed-pfas-rescission-rule>

For more information, please visit: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/05/20/2026-10085/rescission-of-regulatory-determinations-and-removal-of-related-provisions-for-four-pfas-substances>

Sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6) Proposed Rule

Deadline: August 31, 2026

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) requires that once every five years the EPA issue a list of unregulated contaminants to be monitored by public water systems (PWSs).

The sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6) was proposed on July 1, 2026. UCMR 6 proposes sample collection for 30 chemical contaminants between 2028 and 2030 using analytical methods developed by the EPA, including certain PFAS. This monitoring provides a basis for future actions to protect public health.

EPA's data collection effort under this new UCMR will continue to inform the agency's PFAS OUT initiative to help drinking water systems 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, and location-specific resources, including webinars and information on how to access funding and technical assistance to address PFAS. All water systems will be able to access [PFAS OUT](#) resources and can secure technical assistance through EPA's [RealWaterTA](#).



Two identical public webinars will be held on August 11, 2026, and August 12, 2026. [Register for the webinars.](#)

Comments may be submitted online: <https://www.regulations.gov>, Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2023-0469. For more information about the current and previous UCMR cycles, please visit EPA's [UCMR website](#).

Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk from PFOA and PFOS in Biosolids

Comments are due September 4, 2026

On July 1, 2026, the U.S. EPA released the memorandum *Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk from PFOA and PFOS in Biosolids*. This memorandum includes draft guidance that, if finalized, would provide recommendations that may be helpful to operators of wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) and related facilities, landowners and farmers, state and Tribal water agencies, and the public. It provides voluntary recommendations for potential ways to mitigate risks from PFOA and PFOS when managing sewage sludge and biosolids.

The draft guidance is being released for a 60-day public comment period. Comments are due September 4, 2026. The EPA also may use public comments filed to help inform any future agency actions.

- Document: [Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk from PFOA and PFOS in Biosolids \(pdf\)](#)
- Federal Register Notice: [Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk From Perfluorooctanoic Acid \(PFOA\) and Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid \(PFOS\) in Biosolids; Establishment of a Public Docket; Request for Feedback](#)
- [Press Release](#)
- [Biosolids website](#)

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 Treatment Level 1: August 17-21, 2026 (online); August 24-28, 2026 (Camp Verde, AZ)
- Water Treatment Level 1: September 28-October 2, 2026 (online); October 5-9, 2026 (Portland, OR)

Eurofins Environmental Testing Webinar

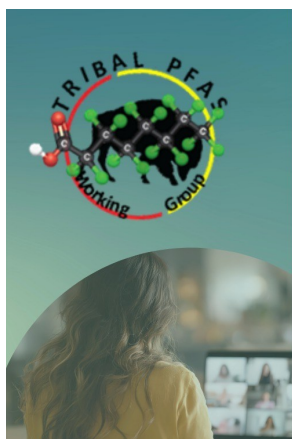
- July 21, 2026: AI, Data Centers, and the Environmental Testing Opportunity

To register: <https://register.gotowebrinar.com/register/1043780038996766809>

Environmental Finance Center Network

- July 23, 2026: Wastewater Systems Solids Handling
- July 30, 2026: Cleaning Our Waterways – Green Infrastructure Solutions for 6PPD-Q
- August 6, 2026: Connecting with Your Community – Bridging the Gap Between Operations and Communication

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

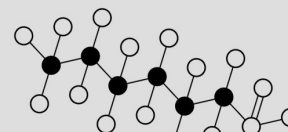


Join the Conversation: How has PFAS Affected Your Tribe?

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/>



EPA Announces \$227 Million in Funding for Tribes and Alaska Native Villages to Improve Water Infrastructure

EPA announced more than \$227 million in funding for American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages to improve drinking water and wastewater services that will help Tribal communities access safe and reliable drinking water and will help them protect their environment from wastewater discharges. Federally recognized Tribes can use these funds to advance public health protections by making necessary investments in water infrastructure, which can help support compliance with Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act requirements and address important public health challenges such as removing lead pipes or addressing per- and polyfluorinated substances (PFAS) in drinking water. If your water system is facing challenges, we encourage you to learn more about EPA's [RealWaterTA](#) program.

The FY 2026 funding will be administered through the following programs:

- \$71 million: [Clean Water Indian Set-Aside](#) (CWISA), including \$4.5 million for CWISA Emerging Contaminants (CWISA-EC)
- \$134 million: Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants
- \$19 million: Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities (EC-SDC) Tribal Grant Program
- \$3 million: Small, Rural, and Tribal (SmaRT) Drinking Water Assistance Grant Program (formerly known as the Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities (SUDC) Tribal Grant Program)

NTWC MEMBERS

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

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