



Tribal Lands and Environment Forum Workshop Recap “Beyond the Unknown: Understanding Emerging Contaminants”

On August 17, 2026, the Tribal PFAS Working Group (TPWG) and the National Tribal Toxics Council co-hosted a one-day workshop titled “Beyond the Unknown: Understanding Emerging Contaminants” at ITEP’s 2026 Tribal Lands and Environment Forum (TLEF). The workshop topics included PFAS Case Studies, Tribal Impacts on PFAS Contamination in Tribal Foods, Cultural Practices and Lifeways, PFAS testimonials of impacts, trifluoroacetic acid (TFA), risk communication, pharmaceuticals, microplastics and toxic inventory program. There were 63 attendees with 35 in-person and 28 virtual attendees.

TPWG co-lead Page Hingst and ITEP staff Elaine Wilson hosted and moderated the workshop, while TPWG co-lead Dianne Barton and ITEP staff Elaina Doral attended virtually. TPWG work group member Negonne Blair, PhD, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), presented on CTUIR’s Toxic Inventory Program. Additionally, Two TPWG work group partners Kaylene Ritter, PhD, Natural Nexus, presented PFAS case studies; and Kimberly Garrett, PhD, City University of New York, provided a pre-recorded presentation on pharmaceuticals.

On Wednesday, August 19, the TPWG and the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC) participated in the Multi-Media Meetup. ITEP staff and NTWC Project Manager Elaine Wilson hosted the NTWC/TPWG outreach table. Approximately 25 to 30 people stopped by the table to learn more about NTWC and TPWG. NTWC postcards and PFAS fact sheets were available to participants. They were also able to sign up to receive NTWC’s monthly newsletter.

The TPWG hosts monthly virtual meetings on the second Thursday of each month at 1 PM (CT) and is open to all tribal representatives. If you have an interest in learning more about PFAS or would like to share your story about how PFAS has impacted your tribal community, we’d love to hear from you. You may reach out to Elaine at Elaine.Wilson@nau.edu to request to participate and/or to share your story. To learn more about the TPWG and view past webinars and presentations, visit TPWG’s webpage at <https://itep.nau.edu/ntwc>.



Click [HERE](#) for the workshop recording.



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NEWSLETTER

To subscribe or unsubscribe to this newsletter, please click [here](#) where you can manage your NTWC Listserv and other ITEP Listserv subscriptions.



VISIT US AT:

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

ANNOUNCEMENT

National Tribal Air Association Webinar: Understanding Data Centers – Policy Considerations and Resources for Tribal Communities; **October 14, 2026**

Learn about emerging federal and state policy trends and potential impacts on Tribal communities. Be informed about governance resources to support decision-making. Understand more about how Tribal nations are navigating new considerations related to energy, water, land use, economic development, and sovereignty. Know where to find legal resources and understand tactics available to Tribes. Know how to comment on and evaluate permits and air quality impacts. For more information: <https://www.ntatribalair.org/>

TRIBAL CONSULTATION & PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITIES

EPA Build America, Buy America Act Waivers

Deadline: October 4, 2026

EPA is seeking comments on a proposed extension of the manufactured products element of the General Applicability Joint public interest waiver to Indian Tribes. This extension would continue to waive the manufactured products requirement of section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Pub. L. No. 117-58) for Federal Financial Assistance agreements awarded to Indian Tribes through December 31, 2026.

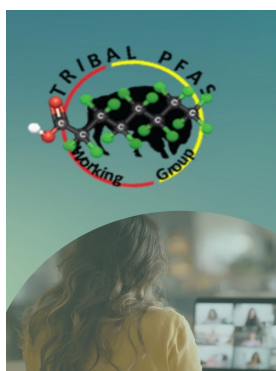
Please use the following link to review the proposed waiver extension: <https://www.epa.gov/baba/build-america-buy-america-baba-act-waivers-open-public-comment>. The comment period closes on October 4, 2026. Please submit comments to the US EPA Office of Water email box at BABA-OW@epa.gov.

EPA Updated Definition of “Waters of the United States” Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

Deadline: October 9, 2026

On September 4, 2026, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of the Army (“the agencies”) announced the signing of a Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (SNPRM) to gather input on additional regulatory alternatives they will consider alongside the 2025 *Updated Definition of “Waters of the United States”* proposed rule. A 30-day comment period for the SNPRM closes on October 9, 2026. The purpose of this supplemental proposal is to provide an opportunity for public input on the new regulatory alternatives that the agencies will consider along with the regulatory revisions proposed in 2025 as they develop a final rule to fully implement the Supreme Court’s 2023 decision in *Sackett v. EPA*. To access the supplemental proposed revisions: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2026-09/wotus_snprm_9-2026_0.pdf

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/wotus/updated-definition-waters-united-states>



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 *(continued)*

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Definitions and Exclusions Proposed Rule

Deadline: October 19, 2026

EPA is publishing a proposed rule that would update its regulations for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting related to certain discharges by mobile vessels into ocean waters more than three nautical miles offshore. This action would ensure that the agency's NPDES regulations align with the clear statutory language and authority provided by Congress under the Clean Water Act. In doing so, the proposed rule would remove duplicative regulatory authority, allowing certain offshore activities to be covered by alternative statutory authorities established by Congress to protect ocean waters and ecosystems, such as the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act (MPRSA) and Vessel Incidental Discharge Act (VIDA).



EPA is holding a Tribal Consultation Webinar on September 29, 2026 (3:00-4:00 PM ET).

Microsoft Teams Webinar Link:

<https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/226662310515817?p=g8xtTxCOms0ncnTg4a>

Meeting ID: 226 662 310 515 817 Passcode: W6Hy7qb3

Written comments may be submitted during the Tribal consultation and coordination period via email to Kenda Conley at conley.kenda@epa.gov. Comments must be submitted by **October 19, 2026**, for Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2026-6965. To learn more about the proposed rule visit: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes/npdes-regulations>

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:

- Hydrant Maintenance & Repair (in-person): September 22, 2026, Elko, Nevada

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 course:

- Water Operator Math (online): November 30-December 11, 2026



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).

- 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/>

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

Eurofins Environment Testing Webinar

- September 22, 2026: Making Sense of Microplastics III: Public Health in the Plastic Age

To register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/7450092236178645084>

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

- October 8, 2026: Microplastics
- October 13, 2026: ITRC PFAS Introductory Training

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

Environmental Finance Center Network

- September 15, 2026: Chlorine Disinfection and Calculations for Drinking Water Operators
- October 1, 2026: Sanitary Sewer Evaluation Surveys

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

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

- October 21, 2026: Partnering to Address Lead (Pb)

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

NTWC MEMBERS

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

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