



Introducing the new NTWC At-Large Representative, Joan Flecksing

As the Director of the Meskwaki Nation Dept. of Natural Resources, I am honored with the responsibility for the natural resource management and environmental health of Tribal lands for the Meskwaki Nation, The People of the Red Earth. I work in support of the initiatives and staff of the department, while always striving to ensure the protection, preservation, and restoration of the natural and environmental resources of the Sac and Fox Tribe in the Mississippi in Iowa, always in honor of the culture of the Meskwaki People. Having been raised in rural Iowa, the youngest of twelve children, I grew up with a strong connection to the land, for one's sustenance, its spiritual relevance and recreation. This instilled in her passions for conservation and land management, sustainable agriculture, and public service.



I grew up near Toddville, Iowa, in a homestead setting. My first job was as a farmhand on a local llama farm, where I cared for about 40 llamas, from age 12 to 17. It was as a young teen that I decided I wanted to grow up to be a Park Ranger, and so I attended Kirkwood Community College to study Parks and Natural Resources. As a KCC student, I began working as an intern for the State Of Iowa Department of Natural Resources at Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area and Palisades-Kepler State Park. I continued my education at Upper Iowa University, where I earned a Bachelor of Science in Conservation Management and Public Administration. In 2001, I would be hired as the Park Manager of Pleasant Creek State Recreation Area, near Palo, IA, where I would serve Iowans in managing one of our busiest state recreation areas in natural resources management, public works, facilities, construction, operations, law enforcement, and administration. I would also partner to establish and co-own a buffalo ranch, eventually maintaining a 130 head herd of Buffalo.

Desiring to continue to develop as a leader, I sought to earn my Master of Public Administration, in order to grow as a leader in conservation in Iowa. I would next serve as the Director of Operations at a private non-profit in Cedar Rapids, Matthew 25, who works in green construction initiatives, neighborhood revitalization, urban farming, and sustainability. After graduating from Drake University with an MPA in 2021, I went on to serve as the Chief Operations Officer of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids.



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NEWSLETTER

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Joan Flecksing, NTWC At-Large Rep *(continued)*

I am the youngest of 12 children, raised near Toddville, IA, just north of Hiawatha and Cedar Rapids. We attended Catholic schools in Cedar Rapids, and I graduated from Regis High School in 1995. My Father is German and Scottish, and his ancestors came to the northern Linn County area in 1838 and began farming. My Mother is from Long Beach, California and is Mexican Indian (Tarahumara), Californian Indian and French. I am also a mother, as I have two children, Olivia and Dominic, and I am a wife. In my free time I enjoy our son's athletic activities, prairie restoration, historical structures, museums, and family hikes with our two dogs, Rover and Hazel.

I am honored to be welcomed as an At-Large Representative for the National Tribal Water Council, where I hope to contribute my experience in natural resource management in one of the earth's most heavily disturbed ecologies, known as Iowa. I believe that collectively, the Tribes have the unique power and responsibility to restore Mother Earth's life-giving water to its own rightful health.

To learn more about the Meskwaki Nation's Natural Resources Department: <https://www.meskwaki.org/mnr/>

Highlight of the NTWC & EPA Office of Water 2026 Fall In-Person Meeting

The 2026 Fall In-Person Meeting was held September 22-25, 2026, in Cherokee, North Carolina. The meeting was hosted by Rainee Tetreault, NTWC Region 4 Representative, with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The first day started with opening remarks from Ken Norton, NTWC Chair and Kristy Eubanks, EPA Region 4 Deputy Regional Administrator.

The meeting included presentations from the Office of Water programs covering topics on Tribal water infrastructure funding and technical assistance, CWA regulatory updates, and the Office of Tribal and International Affairs Tribal Partnership Network Review. The meeting proceeded with the NTWC business session, welcomed new member Joan Flecksing, Meskwaki Nation (Region 7, At-Large), and a presentation by Leigh Mitchell, Director of the Environmental Resource Management at United South and Eastern Tribes (USET), on USET's water operator certification and training program. NTWC members went on two site visits to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians' drinking water treatment facility and a dam removal project.

In addition to NTWC members and ITEP staff, the meeting was attended by four EPA staff, Indian Health Service staff, and Leigh Mitchell of USET. The featured discussions centered around drinking water challenges, technical assistance and water infrastructure concerns.



Site visit to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians Drinking Water Facility



Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - Dam Removal Project

UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

EPA's Virtual Water Quality Standards Academy, December 7 – 11 and 14, 2026

The virtual Water Quality Standards (WQS) Academy will be held December 7-11 and on December 14. The 6-day virtual WQS Academy session will run from approximately 11:30am to 4:30pm, Eastern Standard Time, to allow for participation from multiple U.S. time zones.

Water quality standards (WQS) are provisions of state, territorial, authorized Tribal or federal law approved by the EPA that describe the desired condition of a water body and the means by which that condition will be protected or achieved. The WQS Academy is designed for WQS professionals associated with federal, state, Tribal and local agencies as well as the private sector. This highly structured and interactive training course ensures that attendees have access to the most up to date WQS information to effectively develop and implement a WQS program consistent with the Clean Water Act.

Registration for this upcoming session will begin in October. Stay tuned for future updates via the [WQS Academy webpage](#) and the [WQSnews listserv](#) regarding registration.

Combatting Lead in Tribal Communities Workshop, December 9-10, 2026

The National Tribal Toxics Council, Zender Environmental Health, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is holding workshop “Combatting Lead (Pb) in Tribal Communities” on December 9-10, 2026, in Albuquerque, NM. Many of the workshop sessions will be livestreamed so online participants can join. A few sessions, including lead testing demonstrations and small group discussions on next steps, will be available only to in-person attendees. To register: <https://www.eventcreate.com/e/TribalLead>

If you have any questions about the workshop, please contact Francine Stdenis at stdenis.francine@epa.gov or 202-564-3829.

National Water Quality Monitoring Council Virtual Gathering, March 9 – 11, 2027

Please join the 2027 NWQMC Virtual Gathering, an exciting opportunity to connect with your colleagues and peers in the water monitoring community, from **March 9 to 11, 2027** in a **100% virtual format**. This Virtual Gathering, consisting of 3 consecutive ½ days, will provide opportunities for all water stakeholders – federal, state, Tribal and local water professionals, nonprofits, academia, water consultants and industry, and volunteer and community scientists – to network, develop new skills, build partnerships, and exchange information in anticipation of the **15th National Monitoring Conference** to be held in spring 2028! Location to be determined.

If you are passionate about monitoring **groundwater, streams, rivers, lakes, wetlands, estuaries, and oceans**, and eager to share your expertise, we invite you to become a **Champion** for the 2027 NWQMC Virtual Gathering. Each Champion will be responsible for proposing, organizing, and facilitating a session to be considered as part of the content of the Virtual Gathering. For more information: <https://nwqmcconference.org/2027-virtual-gathering-themes/>

Northeast Water Summit for Nations and Tribes, May 24 – 27, 2027

The 2027 Water Summit will be hosted by the Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point and located at Bar Harbor and Acadia National Park in Bar Harbor, ME. The National Association of Wetland Managers (NAWM) is working with EPA to help put together the Water Summit. There is no charge to attend the summit. To enable planning for the summit, we ask that you register as soon as possible and by Friday, October 30, 2026, at the latest. For more information, please visit: <https://nawm.org/2027-northeast-water-summit-for-nations-and-tribes-registration-form>



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/>

GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Funding Opportunity for Indian Tribes and Intertribal Consortia for Nonpoint Source Management Grants Under Clean Water Act Section 319

Deadline: November 9, 2026

The purpose of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to support eligible Tribes and intertribal consortia to implement approved Nonpoint Source (NPS) management programs developed pursuant to CWA Section 319(b) (1). The Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) authorizes the EPA to award grants to eligible Tribes and intertribal consortia to implement approved NPS management programs. This NOFO will fund implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and measures that have been outlined in Tribal NPS Management Program Plans to address NPS pollution sources that have been identified in a Tribe's Assessment Report.

For more information: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/current-tribal-section-319-grant-information#competitive>

EVENTS & WEBINARS

3rd International Invasive Species and Climate Change Conference, December 1-2, 2026

Please join us for the 3rd annual International Invasive Species and Climate Change Conference (IISCCC) organized by the Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change (RISCC) Network on December 1 and 2, 2026. This year's theme is, "Redefining invasive species management in a changing world." This conference is VIRTUAL allowing for more international attendance while reducing our carbon footprint. To register and learn more: <https://naisma.org/event/invasive-species-and-climate-change-conference-day-1/>

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 course:

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

Environmental Finance Center Network

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

- October 22, 2026: Water Research Seminar – Microplastics in Chesapeake Bay Oysters
- November 10, 2026: Basic Water Hydraulics – Concepts & Calculations for Drinking Water Operators

Events & Webinars *(continued)*

EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series

- October 21, 2026: Partnering to Address Lead (Pb)
- November 18, 2026: Effectiveness of Incineration in Treating PFAS

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

EPA Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Research Webinar Series

- October 28, 2026: Predicting the Biological Impacts of Hypoxia in Coastal Waters

To register: <https://www.epa.gov/water-research/harmful-algal-blooms-hypoxia-and-nutrients-research-webinar-series>

EPA Water Utility Resilience Workshops and Webinars

- October 20, 2026: Cybersecurity 202
- October 27, 2026: Water Cybersecurity Assessment Tool (WCAT) Webinar
- October 29, 2026: Cybersecurity 203

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

Eurofins Environmental Testing Webinar

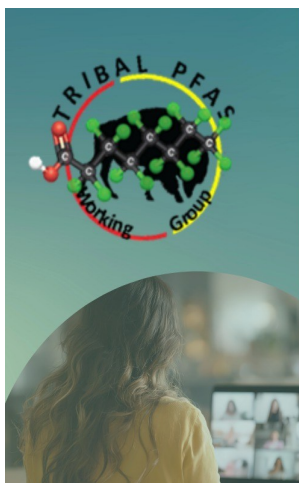
- November 10, 2026: Preparing for UCMR 6 – Challenges, Solutions, and Potential Outcomes

To register: <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8207759102584307545>

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

- November 12, 2026: PFAS Sorption Based Technologies for Separation & Concentration of PFAS from Water

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

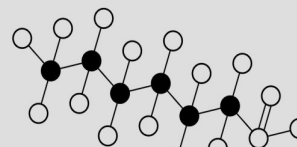


Join the Conversation: How has PFAS Affected Your Tribe?

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/>



NTWC MEMBERS

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

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Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians - Dam Removal Project