

JUNE 2024



U.S. EPA Office of Water

National Tribal Water Program Updates

News and Announcements

EPA Announces Final Rule to Improve Public Awareness of Drinking Water Quality

On May 15, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced a final rule to make annual drinking water quality reports more understandable and accessible to the public. These reports are an important tool that drinking water systems use to inform residents about water quality and any contaminants that have been found in the water. Starting in 2027, this final rule will ensure that these reports are easier to read and support access to translations in appropriate languages while enhancing information about lead in drinking water. EPA is also taking steps to streamline the delivery of reports by encouraging electronic methods.

The final rule will support public education by more clearly communicating important information in water quality reports and improving access to the reports. Water systems are currently required to provide annual drinking water reports to customers each year, and with this rule systems serving over 10,000 customers will be required to distribute reports twice per year. The final rule also introduces a new reporting requirement that will provide EPA with better information to make decisions on oversight, enforcement, regulatory revisions, and training and technical assistance. Today's final rule will require states to submit compliance monitoring data they already receive from public water systems to EPA annually.

Learn more about [EPA's Revised Consumer Report Rule](#), including upcoming webinars and fact sheet that provides more detail on the new requirements.

Free Climate Change Risk Assessment Technical Assistance from EPA's Creating Resilient Water Utilities Initiative

Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater (water sector) utilities, along with other water sector stakeholders, are eligible to receive free climate change risk assessment technical assistance from EPA's [Creating Resilient Water Utilities \(CRWU\)](#) initiative. Through this technical assistance process, CRWU will assist approximately 75 water sector utilities / communities in identifying long-term climate change adaptation strategies, as well as potential funding options to implement adaptive measures.

If you are, or know of, a water sector utility that would like to receive this free technical assistance opportunity, please indicate your interest via email to Aliza Furneaux (furneaux.aliza@epa.gov) no later than Friday, August 15, 2024.

EPA will notify the utilities chosen to receive technical assistance by early September, and will assign each utility an assessment start-date of either October 2024 or January, April, or July 2025. If you'd prefer technical assistance sooner than later, CRWU has a few

opportunities to assist you now. In your email response, please indicate you are immediately ready to engage.

More details on the technical assistance process are provided below and if you'd like to see what other utilities have already done related to climate change risk assessment, visit EPA CRWU's Adaptation Case Studies Map.

Technical Assistance Process

Using EPA [CRWU's Resilient Strategies Guide](#) or [Climate Resilience Evaluation and Awareness Tool](#), water sector utility owners and operators will be guided through a risk assessment process to:

1. Better understand potential risk from climate change threats;
2. Identify potential adaptive measures to become more resilient to those threats; and
3. Explore potential funding sources for implementation of those potential adaptive measures.

Recognizing partner utilities' significant time constraints, EPA provides efficient technical assistance with substantial facilitation support. This opportunity requires the utility to dedicate approximately 35 to 40 hours, spread across two to four months, to the assessment process. Utilities typically designate a lead staff member to serve as a point-of-contact on the assessment. Additional utility staff and experts may be invited to contribute during certain meeting topics as well.

More Than 200 Tribes and Four Territories Prepare Climate Action Plans with Support from President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act

On May 6, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced that more than 200 Tribes, plus American Samoa, the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, have published climate action plans with financial support made possible by President Biden's [Investing in America agenda](#). The planning process is supported by EPA's [Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program](#), which offers a unique opportunity for Tribal and territorial governments to develop strategies to reduce harmful pollution and address environmental justice concerns, while building the infrastructure, industry, and competitive economy for a clean energy future. EPA received 81 plans in total from Tribes and Tribal consortia representing more than 200 Tribes, along with four plans from territories.

The Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program created under the Inflation Reduction Act — the largest climate investment in U.S. history — is enabling community-driven solutions to the climate crisis and helping accelerate America's clean energy transition. The program is covered under President Biden's [Justice40 Initiative](#), which set the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

As a key deliverable of the initial \$250 million planning phase of the program, EPA provided grantees with resources to develop and submit Priority Climate Action Plans focused on high-priority, implementation-ready activities to reduce GHG emissions. Plans developed by Tribes and territories were due on April 1, and plans developed by states and large metropolitan areas were due on March 1.

PCAPs submitted to EPA lay the groundwork for the second phase of the CPRG program: \$4.6 billion in competitive implementation grants, available specifically to planning grant recipients and other eligible entities, to fund GHG reduction measures contained within the PCAPs. In addition to the \$4.3 billion general competition, Tribes and territories were eligible to apply for a \$300 million Tribe and territory competition. PCAPs also help prepare Tribes and territories to access a broader set of funding opportunities, including other programs under President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The deadline for the CPRG Implementation Grants Tribes and Territories Competition was May 1.

Together, the CPRG planning grants and competitive implementation funding will support the deployment of technologies to reduce GHG emissions and other harmful pollution across the country, facilitate the transition to a low-carbon economy, promote Tribal sovereignty, and advance environmental justice by prioritizing public health and environmental benefits to overburdened communities.

[View the Priority Climate Action Plans from CPRG planning grantees](#)
[More information on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants](#)
[CPRG Training, Tools and Technical Assistance](#)
[Sign up for notifications about the Climate Pollution Reduction Grants program](#)

See the full [news release here](#).

EPA Announces Final Rule to Protect Water Quality Where Tribes have Treaty and Reserved Rights

On May 2, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a final rule that will help protect water quality where Tribes hold and assert rights to aquatic and aquatic-dependent resources. For the first time, this action establishes a clear and consistent national framework for EPA and states to consider Tribal treaty and reserved rights when establishing Water Quality Standards under the Clean Water Act. In addition, this rule advances the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to uphold the United States' treaty and federal trust responsibility to federally recognized Tribes. When implemented, this final rule will better protect waters that Tribes depend on for fishing, gathering wild rice, cultural practices, and other uses.

Historically, EPA has addressed Tribal reserved rights under the Clean Water Act on a case-by-case basis in state-specific actions. This practice fostered uncertainty for Tribes, states, and entities seeking to comply with Clean Water Act requirements. EPA's final rule provides clarity and transparency by revising the federal water quality standards regulation to better protect Tribal reserved rights under the Clean Water Act. With this action, EPA is ensuring that water quality standards are established taking into consideration Clean Water Act-protected aquatic and aquatic-dependent resources where Tribes hold and assert rights to those resources under federal treaties, statutes, or executive orders. This final regulatory framework will be applied consistently while accounting for local conditions and factors to inform the development of specific water quality standards.

With this action, EPA is honoring the federal trust responsibility and striving to protect Tribal reserved rights related to water resources, consistent with commitments outlined in the agency's 2021 action plan, [Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Tribes to Secure a Sustainable Water Future](#).

The final rule will be effective 30 days after publication in the Federal Register. Learn more about EPA's [final Tribal Reserved Rights rule](#).

See the full [news release here](#).

Empowering Communities with the EPA Flooded Homes Cleanup Guidance Tool and Updated Stormwater Smart Outreach Tools Now Available in Spanish

Extreme weather events such as tropical storms and heavy rainfall present a variety of challenges for communities across the country. Flooding is one of the most common types of natural disasters impacting people in the United States. A flooded home can result in various health hazards, in addition to financial and social challenges for homeowners and their families. In many cases it takes weeks for people to re-enter their homes after a flood event, and failure to remove contaminated materials before re-entering a flooded home can increase risk of long-term health impacts. Standing water and wet materials can contain microorganisms such as viruses, bacteria, and mold. Unfortunately, not all

homeowners are aware of the health hazards or what to do when experiencing a flood. To address this issue, EPA scientists developed a website to inform the public about flooding-related health hazards.

The [EPA Flooded Homes Cleanup Guidance website](#) provides tips and informational videos for people impacted by flooding to prepare for re-entering their home and beginning cleanup. The site also explains the different health risks associated with flooding such as asbestos, mold, and lead paint.

The website is relevant to communities impacted by disasters involving water intrusion. The impact of this tool has national significance for addressing the needs of communities impacted by flooding to help improve their health and well-being. The human-centered design approach and the involvement of actual community members affected by flooding helped ensure the website addressed the needs, interests, and values of the community and provided the information in a user-friendly manner.

Additionally, EPA's [Stormwater Smart](#) tools are now available in Spanish! You will find the Spanish versions with their corresponding English version on the webpage, each ready for downloading and customizing. The Stormwater Smart collection includes brochures, infographics, one-pagers, and social media posts to educate the public.

Public Engagement Opportunities

EPA Seeking Public Comment on Proposed Mercury Water Quality Criterion to Protect Aquatic Life in Idaho

On April 3, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency issued a proposed rule to revise water quality criteria protecting aquatic life from the harmful effects of mercury in Idaho. EPA is under a court order to take this action. The proposed mercury criterion includes fish tissue and water column elements, whereby the fish tissue elements are proposed to supersede the water column element when sufficient fish tissue data are available. The EPA will hold two online public hearings and will accept public comments for 60 days.

Public Comment

EPA will accept comments until **June 10, 2024**. You may submit written comments through the [Federal eRulemaking Portal](#), or by mail (identified by Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2023-0325) sent to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, EPA Docket Center, Office of Water Docket, Mail Code 28221T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20460. Comments can also be submitted by hand delivery or courier as described in the [Federal Register notice](#).

Public Hearings

EPA held two public hearings during the public comment period, on May 28 and 29. EPA will consider all oral comments provided during the hearings along with written comments submitted via the docket for this rulemaking (Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2023-0325).

Additional information, including a link to a pre-publication version of the proposed rule, has been posted to EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/mercury-criterion-protect-aquatic-life-idaho>.

Funding & Technical Assistance Opportunities

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$225 million to Improve Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure for Tribes and Alaska Native Villages

On May 22, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced over \$225 million in funding to improve access to safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater services for American Indian Tribes and Alaska Native Villages. Through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda, EPA is able to provide one of the largest annual investments in water

infrastructure funding to Tribes to help them advance public health and environmental protections, such as identifying and replacing lead service lines, or addressing harmful emerging contaminants in drinking water and wastewater, like PFAS.

The FY 2024 funding will be administered through the following programs:

- \$69.4 million in Clean Water Indian Set-Aside through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and annual appropriation funds;
- \$133.8 million in Drinking Water Infrastructure Grants Tribal Set-Aside through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and annual appropriation funds;
- \$19.3 million in Emerging Contaminants in Small or Disadvantaged Communities Tribal Grant Program through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds;
- \$2.85 million in Small, Underserved, and Disadvantaged Communities Tribal Grant Program through annual appropriation funds.

In the past, EPA's funding to Tribes and Alaska Native Villages have been used for everything from establishing clean, safe wastewater treatment to pesticide reduction to waterways where fish consumption is critical to establishing backup power sources for wastewater systems after extreme weather like the wildfires. And with today's announcement, Tribes across the country will be able to apply for funding to do more critical water infrastructure work.

Some examples of Tribal Investments made possible by President Biden's Investing in America Agenda include:

- \$1,586,000 was awarded the Tohono O'odham Nation to install a new arsenic treatment facility for groundwater wells on the Sells public water system. The system was experiencing rising arsenic levels that are close to the maximum containment level (MCL) of 10 parts per billion. The project will serve 1,014 homes in the Sells and Big Fields communities.
- The San Carlos Apache Tribe received \$985,778 to construct two new groundwater wells to supply the Bylas community public water system, whose current water source is impacted by E. coli contamination. Construction of the new wells was completed in early 2024.
- The \$1,787,500 forgivable loan that the Fallon-Paiute-Shoshone Tribe in Nevada received to continue a project to enhance an existing wastewater treatment lagoon and install a lift station resulting in improved sanitation and environmental health.
- The \$2 million for the Clearwater River, the Nez Perce Reservation in Idaho to help ensure salmon is healthy for consumption. Thanks to the BIL funding through the Columbia River Basin Restoration Program, the Nez Perce Tribe will use permanent and semi-permanent practices to reduce pesticides that infiltrate waterways in the Clearwater River watershed. Reducing pesticides in waterways benefits all living things that rely on the waters of the Columbia River Basin.
- The \$600,000 investment to help eight Tribes in California fund the sighting and installation of back-up power generators for their wastewater treatment systems. After some of the California wildfires these wastewater systems lost power and this investment will help ensure critical infrastructure is available during extreme weather.
- The \$989,000 to help the Muscogee (Creek) Nation in Oklahoma address the Reservation's overloaded wastewater treatment lagoon system. Upgrades will help properly treat wastewater for over 200 homes and help resolve problems with discharges of raw sewage.

[Learn more about EPA's Tribal Water program.](#)

[Learn more about EPA's Tribal Drinking Water Funding Programs.](#)

[Learn more about EPA's Clean Water Indian Set-Aside Program.](#)

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$30.7 Million to Support Water Systems in Small and Rural Communities

On May 21, EPA announced its selection of training and technical assistance providers who will have \$30.7 million to support water systems and private well owners in small and rural communities. This grant funding will support water systems with building technical, financial, and managerial capacity and will also assist private well owners with improving

water quality, including actions such as testing for PFAS contamination. Since 2012, this grant has provided over \$170 million in funding to technical assistance and training providers. These providers meet communities where they are and help them with water infrastructure challenges through circuit-rider and multi-state regional technical assistance programs, training and site visits, and focused efforts diagnose and trouble-shoot system operational and compliance-related problems and identify solutions.

The selected recipients of this year's funding are:

Rural Community Assistance Partnership

- \$13 million to provide training and technical assistance for small public water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, including assisting communities in conducting lead service line inventories and providing training on cyber-security.
- \$3.4 million to work with private well owners to help improve water quality including testing for PFAS contamination.

University of New Mexico

- \$5 million to provide training and technical assistance for small public water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, including improving financial and managerial capacity.
- \$1.2 million to work with small publicly owned wastewater and on-site/decentralized wastewater systems to improve water quality.

National Rural Water Association

- \$7.9 million to provide training and technical assistance for small public water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, including improving financial and managerial capacity and assisting systems in identifying and responding to potential cybersecurity threats.

EPA's free Water Technical Assistance (WaterTA) also provides services that support communities to identify water challenges, develop plans, build capacity, and develop application materials to access water infrastructure funding. WaterTA's services will build the technical, managerial, and financial capacity of water utilities, and enables them to have the capability to maintain regulatory compliance, improve resiliency, and sustainably provide safe drinking water to their communities. For more information visit:

<https://www.epa.gov/dwcapacity/training-and-technical-assistance-small-systems-funding>.

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$3 Billion for Lead Pipe Replacement to Advance Safe Drinking Water as Part of Investing in America Agenda

On May 2, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced **\$3 billion** from President Biden's Investing in America agenda to help every state and territory identify and replace lead service lines, preventing exposure to lead in drinking water. Lead can cause a range of serious health impacts, including irreversible harm to brain development in children. To protect children and families, President Biden has committed to replacing every lead pipe in the country. Today's announcement, funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and available through EPA's successful Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), takes another major step to advance this work and the Administration's commitment to environmental justice. This funding builds on the Administration's [Lead Pipe and Paint Action Plan](#) and EPA's [Get the Lead Out Initiative](#).

Working collaboratively, EPA and the State Revolving Funds are advancing the President's [Justice40 Initiative](#) to ensure that 40% of overall benefits from certain federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. Lead exposure disproportionately affects communities of color and low-income families. The \$9 billion in total funding announced to date through EPA's Lead Service Line Replacement Drinking Water State Revolving Fund program is expected to replace up to 1.7 million lead pipes nationwide, securing clean drinking water for countless families.

EPA projects a national total of 9 million lead service lines across the country, based on data collected from the updated 7th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment. The funding announced today will be provided specifically for lead service line identification and replacement and will help every state and territory fund projects to remove lead pipes and reduce exposure to lead from drinking water

Alongside the funding announced today, EPA is also releasing a [new memorandum](#) that clarifies how states can use this and other funding to most effectively reduce exposure to lead in drinking water. Additionally, EPA has developed [new outreach documents](#) to help water systems educate their customers on drinking water issues, health impacts of lead exposure, service line ownership, and how customers can support the identification of potential lead service lines in their homes.

For more information, including state-by-state allotment of 2024 funding, and a breakdown of EPA's lead Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, please visit [EPA's Drinking Water website](#).

See the full [news release here](#).

Biden-Harris Administration Announces \$41 million in Available Grants to Upgrade Stormwater and Sewer Infrastructure

On May 9, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the availability of nearly \$41 million in funding through the Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant program to help communities address stormwater and sewer infrastructure needs. Safely managing stormwater is critical to preventing contaminants, including untreated sewage, from polluting waterways. EPA's grant funding is available to states to support projects in cities and towns that will strengthen their stormwater collection systems to be more resilient against increasingly intense rain events made worse by the climate crisis.

Additional funding for stormwater and wastewater upgrades is available through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. Through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, EPA is providing \$11.7 billion to states to upgrade wastewater infrastructure through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Additionally, the seventh round of EPA's WIFIA financing is available—with \$6.5 billion through WIFIA and \$1 billion through SWIFIA. EPA is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA, a loan program exclusively for State infrastructure financing authority borrowers. [Learn more about submitting a letter of interest for a WIFIA loan](#).

These programs advance President Biden's Justice40 Initiative, which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

Learn more about the [Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant program](#).

See the full [news release here](#).

EPA Funding Opportunities and Information

Check out available EPA funding opportunities on [Grants.gov](#).

Information about other EPA funding opportunities can be found at the links below:

- [EPA Grants](#)
- [Tribal Drinking Water Grants](#)
- [Federal Water and Wastewater Resources for Tribes](#)

- [Water Finance Clearing House](#)
- [Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center](#)
- [Water Research Grants](#)
- [Drinking Water Grants](#)
- [Funding Sources for Small and Rural Water Systems](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Funding Opportunities](#)

Training, Tools, Workshops, and Webinars



EPA Tools and Resources Training Webinar Series: EnviroAtlas

EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) hosts this free bimonthly public webinar series to provide in-depth overviews and step-by-step tutorials on popular EPA science-based models and tools. In addition, the [EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series](#) translates EPA research and shares research resources and information that are useful, practical/applied and available to meet stakeholders' research needs. Webinars are typically held bimonthly on the first Thursday from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. (ET). For more information, please see the [EPA Tools and Resources Training Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Thursday, June 6, 2024
- Time: 3:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: Registration information will be available on the [EPA Tools and Resources Training Webinar Series website](#) at a later date.
- Topic: [EnviroAtlas](#)
- Presenter: Anne Neale, EPA ORD

June Tribal Climate Intensive Training Series: Building Capacity to Act on Climate Change

Hosted by the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Climate change poses significant challenges to Tribal communities across the United States, impacting their cultural, economic, and environmental resilience. To address these challenges, the National Tribal Caucus's Climate Subcommittee is hosting a Tribal and Indigenous Climate Intensive.

This program will offer four days of webinars on a variety of climate-related topics. Through the Intensive, the NTC Climate Subcommittee aims to empower Tribes and Indigenous communities with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop effective climate adaptation plans, conduct vulnerability assessments, and leverage EPA programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. It also aims to build capacity in EPA staff to support Tribal action.

A four-day training series aimed at helping Tribes prepare for climate impacts, draft adaptation plans, conduct vulnerability assessments, and access grant or technical assistance opportunities to address their climate needs.

Training Information

- Dates: June 10-13, 2024
- Audience: Tribal staff and EPA POs and staff who serve Tribes and Indigenous

- communities.
 - Registration: View the schedule and register for individual training sessions at the following link: <https://www.epa.gov/tribal/june-tribal-climate-intensive-training-series>
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EPA Healthy and Resilient Communities Research Webinar Series: Cumulative Impacts of Potential Flood Exposures, Resources Access, and Social Vulnerability on Health Outcomes

EPA's Office of Research and Development began hosting this webinar series in 2023 to communicate research and tools intended to help communities and local decision makers protect their assets and reduce vulnerabilities. Topics include site remediation and restoration, community health and wellbeing, and community resilience. The webinars in the series are free and typically held on a quarterly basis on the second Tuesday of the month from 3:00 to 4:00 p.m. ET.

The series will be of particular interest to local government, Tribal Nations, and nonprofit organization (NGOs), particularly when focused on community planning, resilience, and superfund; universities with community/environmental justice-focused research; and consultants and tech assistance providers. For more information, please see the [Healthy and Resilient Communities Research Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Tuesday, June 11, 2024
- Time: 3:00-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register](#).

About the Webinar

This webinar will cover geospatial model development and model applications in cumulative impacts research. The presentation will discuss the basic concepts and data that drive the models, as well as case studies that illustrate their utility in decision-making, goal setting and goal tracking. The research is grounded in environmental justice and resilience frameworks and is meant to connect local disparities to broader resilience outcomes, with a focus on delivering information at multiple geographic scales.

About the Presenter: Kyle Buck, Ph.D.

Kyle is a human geographer in the EPA's Office of Research and Development in Gulf Breeze, Florida. His research projects range from assessing multi-hazard risks, to chronic disease epidemiology, and the impact of community disparities on resilience and sustainability outcomes. His work at the EPA includes the development of models and frameworks to assess the human-environment interface, including natural hazard risk assessments, a child well-being application, and residential segregation impacts on sustainability. Kyle's current research focuses on model development that links community infrastructure to sustainability and resilience outcomes in households and neighborhoods, and the interpretation of social characteristics in the context of community revitalization efforts. He has a Ph.D. from the University of South Carolina.

EPA Emergency Response Research Webinar Series: FEPA's Wind Tunnel: Modeling Urban Wind Flow & Dispersion

EPA's Office of Research and Development hosts this webinar series to share current research activities and results. This webinar series covers the latest information on research supporting EPA's response to chemical, biological, and radiological incidents, as well as natural disasters. This forum allows EPA to communicate directly with partners and stakeholders to foster collaboration and dissemination of information. Webinars are typically held on the second Wednesday of the month. Webinar dates and topics are subject to change. For more information, please see the [EPA Emergency Response Research Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, June 12, 2024
 - Time: 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern Time
 - Registration: [Click here to register.](#)
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Monthly Exchange Network Forum

The [Exchange Network Forum](#) is a monthly online venue to discuss how to improve and better use the Exchange Network's services and partnerships to share information among EPA, States, Tribes, and Territories. The Forum will convene on the second Thursday of each month from 1:00-2:00 p.m. Eastern. The minutes and recording from previous EN Forum webinars are [available online](#).

These gatherings will provide an opportunity for Exchange Network partners to:

- Learn about important Exchange Network information and updates;
- Share challenges and opportunities to improve the Exchange Network's collaborative model, communication channels, and technical framework; and
- Learn about innovative ways EPA, States and Tribes are using the Exchange Network.

Webinar Details

- Date: Thursday, June 13, 2024
- Time: 1:00-2:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register](#) for the entire Exchange Network Forum series.

For more information about the Exchange Network Forum, please contact Alex O'Neill with EPA's Office of Information Management at Oneill.Alexander@epa.gov.

EPA Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series: Inorganics Treatment: Arsenic and Nitrate

EPA's Office of Research and Development (ORD) and Office of Water (OW), in collaboration with the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators (ASDWA), host this free webinar series to communicate the latest information on solutions for challenges facing small drinking water systems. The series topics vary each month and are primarily designed for state, territory, and tribal staff responsible for drinking water regulations compliance and treatment technologies permitting. Others may also benefit from the webinars, including water system operators, technical assistance providers, NGOs, local government personnel, academia, and private sector.

Webinars are typically held on the last Tuesday of the month from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. ET with an optional Q&A session from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. ET. For more information, please see the [Small Drinking Water Systems Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Tuesday, June 25, 2024
- Time: 2:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register.](#)
- [June 2024 SDWS Flyer \(pdf\)](#)

1. Biological Nitrate Treatment: Innovations and Challenges

This presentation will focus on a biological nitrate treatment pilot study conducted at a water treatment plant. The study used an innovative denitrification system and nitrogen gas sparging to lower dissolved oxygen concentration, and it sometimes achieved complete denitrification. This discussion will also focus on the challenges of matching the acetic acid feed to a variable influent nitrate concentration and addressing clogging by bacterial flocs. The treatment approach showed promise; however, reactor design enhancements are needed to bring this technology to small systems. Asher Keithley, EPA Office of Research and Development.

2. Arsenic Refresher

This presentation will provide an overview of arsenic chemistry and treatment considerations. Arsenic accumulation in the distribution system and potential release back to the water will also be discussed, based on retrospective data analysis from EPA's arsenic demonstration program. Simoni Triantafyllidou, EPA Office of Research and Development

3. An Arsenic Case Study in California: Oasis Mobile Home Park

This presentation will provide an overview of EPA Region 9's enforcement case with Oasis Mobile Home Park for violation of the Arsenic Rule. Key topics will include environmental justice, enforcement, technical conditions, and community and stakeholder engagement. The unique challenges and successes of trying to bring a small public water system back into compliance will also be discussed. Maria Alberty, EPA Region 9

EPA Drinking Water Training: 2024 State Asset Management Initiatives

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2024
- Time: 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register.](#)
- [2024 State Asset Management Initiatives Webinar Flyer \(pdf\)](#)

Asset management is the practice of managing infrastructure capital assets to minimize the total cost of owning and operating them while delivering the service level customers desire. This management framework has been widely adopted by the water sector as a means to pursue and achieve sustainable infrastructure. The EPA will introduce the recently published [2024 Asset Management Initiatives Document](#), highlighting asset management activities states are implementing as described in their capacity development strategies. The presentation will also give a quick introduction to other key asset management resources and relay how states are promoting asset management.

This presentation is intended for primacy agency staff and technical assistance (TA) providers. Continuing education credits will not be given for this webinar.

EPA Environmental Justice Webinar Series for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples

EPA's [Environmental Justice Webinar Series for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples](#) seeks to enhance EJ integration, build capacity, raise awareness of EPA and other federal programs and resources, and provide technical assistance to Tribes and Indigenous Peoples on priority environmental, public health, and other EJ concerns.

These webinars are planned to be held regularly as topics are selected and content is ready (monthly or bi-monthly), for 1.5 hours per session, allowing for a question and answer period. The presenters will include EPA, other federal agency, tribal and indigenous representatives, as well as other stakeholders, as appropriate. Most webinar topics have been recommended by tribes, indigenous peoples, and/or pertain to priorities identified by tribes and other indigenous peoples. Tribes and indigenous peoples are welcome to recommended topics for future webinars.

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2024
- Time: 2:30-4:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register.](#)

Please visit the [Environmental Justice for Tribes and Indigenous Peoples website](#) to view past webinar recordings and sign up for webinar notifications.

EPA Water Research Webinar Series: Ecosystem and Human Health Risks from Tires as a Complex Pollutant

EPA's Office of Research and Development hosts this free webinar series to share current research activities and results. Through innovative science and engineering, EPA's researchers are developing cost-effective, sustainable solutions to 21st century complex water issues. The scientific results and innovative technologies developed support EPA's mandate to protect the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of our Nation's water resources, and to ensure safe drinking water and water systems. Free webinars are typically held on a quarterly basis on the last Wednesday of the month from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. ET. For more information, please see the [EPA Water Research Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2024
- Time: 2:00-3:15 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register.](#)
- [June 2024 Water Research webinar flyer \(pdf\)](#)

Infrastructure Finance Webinar: Opportunities to Advance Water Reuse

Various federal infrastructure funding programs exist to support community and state water management and infrastructure funding needs, including water reuse. These programs include EPA's Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, the Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART Title XVI Program, and USDA's Rural Development. In this webinar, representatives from across the federal government will briefly discuss their funding programs, application requirements, and examples of previous water reuse projects funded under those programs.

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, June 26, 2024
- Time: 1:00-2:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: [Click here to register.](#)

Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Research Webinar Series: Nutrients and Climate Interactions

Hosted by EPA's Office of Research and Development, Office of Water, and regional offices, this free webinar series is focused on communicating the latest, cutting-edge research related to nutrients and the priority impacts of nutrient pollution: harmful algal blooms (HABs) and hypoxia.

Topics will include regional priorities; regulatory updates; and cutting-edge EPA research related to monitoring and forecasting, prevention, control, and response. Webinars are typically held bimonthly from 2 to 3 p.m. ET on the last Wednesday of the month. For more information, please see the [Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Research Webinar Series website](#).

Webinar Details

- Date: Wednesday, July 31, 2024
- Time: 2:00-3:00 p.m. Eastern Time
- Registration: Registration information will be available at the [Harmful Algal Blooms, Hypoxia, and Nutrients Research Webinar Series website](#) at a later date.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes to inform implementation of the new Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program. As specified in Safe Drinking Water Act at 42 U.S.C. § 300j-3c note, the Indian Reservation Drinking Water Program will fund projects on reservations that serve federally recognized Indian Tribes, with 50% of the available funds required for use for projects in the Upper Missouri River Basin, Upper Rio Grande River Basin, Columbia River Basin, Lower Colorado River Basin, and Arkansas-White River Basin. Projects for this program are to focus on improving water quality, water pressure, water services, sanitation, or wastewater services on Indian reservations.

Consultation Period

The consultation period for this action extends from **May 21, 2024 to July 22, 2024**. The consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Listening Sessions

The EPA will hold two listening sessions via webinar for Tribal leaders and staff on **June 4th and 11th, 2024, 2:00-3:00 pm (EDT)**.

You may submit written comments and requests for individual government to government consultation to Julian Oliver, Email: oliver.julian@epa.gov. Mr. Oliver can be reached by phone at (202) 564-1485. Please contact him with any questions.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Permit Application under the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act for a Scientific Research Activity Offshore of Massachusetts and New Hampshire

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is providing notice of its tentative determination to issue two research permits pursuant to the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution. This notice is in reference to the "Permit Application under the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act for a Scientific Research Activity Offshore of Massachusetts and New Hampshire" for which the EPA initiated Tribal consultation on February 14, 2024. This information is available on the [EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System](#).

These research permits would authorize the transportation and disposition of an alkaline solution into ocean waters during research studies at two locations offshore of Massachusetts for the purpose of conducting a scientific study of a marine carbon dioxide removal method referred to as ocean alkalinity enhancement. Ocean alkalinity enhancement is a proposed ocean-based climate change mitigation technique intended to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and store it for long periods of time in the ocean.

Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution has proposed a two-phased study. Phase 1 would occur over several days in the summer of 2024 south of Martha's Vineyard (approximately 9.5 miles south of the nearest shoreline in Nomans Land Island, Massachusetts). Phase 2 would occur over a couple of weeks in the summer of 2025 within the Wilkinson Basin (approximately 38 miles northeast from the nearest shoreline in Cape Cod, Massachusetts).

Public Comments

Comments will be accepted until July 1, 2024. The Public Notice announcing the EPA's tentative determination can be found on [EPA's MPRSA permitting website](#). To access supporting information about each of the proposed activities, including the MPRSA tentative permits, please visit the [Federal Rulemaking Portal](#) and search for Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2023-0591 (Phase 1) or Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OW-2024-0189 (Phase 2).

Listening Session

A listening session will be held virtually on June 17, 2024, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm EDT regarding the EPA's tentative determination. Registration is required to attend this listening session and can be completed following this [Registration link](#). Please submit any requests for language translation or other accommodations through the registration no later than June 7, 2024.

The EPA invites interested Tribal governments to request individual government-to-government consultation with the EPA by contacting Betsy Valente, (202) 564-9895, valente.betsy@epa.gov. The Tribal consultation period for the tentative determination to issue two research permits pursuant to the Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act to Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution will conclude at the end of the 30-day public comment period on **July 1, 2024**.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: MPRSA General Permit Reissuance for Ocean Disposal of Marine Mammal Carcasses including Puget Sound

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to re-issue a general permit for ocean disposal of marine mammal carcasses as the original permit expired in January 2024. The proposed general permit will be similar to the 2017 permit, with the exception of including authorization for disposal of marine mammal carcasses in the ocean waters of Puget Sound. Prior to the issuing the original (2017) general permit, the EPA had issued emergency permits under the *Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act* on a case-by-case basis for the ocean disposal of carcasses of cetaceans (e.g., dolphin, whale) and pinnipeds (e.g., seal, sea lion). To date, the EPA authorizes marine mammal carcass disposals in the ocean waters of Puget Sound by emergency permits on a case-by-case basis. The EPA's proposed action to re-issue a general permit for the ocean disposal of marine mammal carcasses would enable timely authorization for disposal in ocean waters, as necessary and minimize burdens associated with case-by-case permitting. Since the general permit has lapsed, the EPA has been authorizing marine mammal carcass disposals in ocean waters on a case-by-case basis and will continue to do so until the general permit is re-issued.

The general permit authorization to transport and dispose of a marine mammal carcass in ocean waters is available for (1) any officer, employee, agent, department, agency, or instrumentality of Tribal, federal, state, or local unit of government, as well as any Marine Mammal Health and Stranding Response Program Stranding Agreement Holder, and (2) any Alaska Native, who already may take a marine mammal under the *Marine Mammal Protection Act* and *Endangered Species Act*. The proposed general permit will not interfere with hunting or whaling rights protected by treaty or other relevant authorities.

Additional information about the *Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act* and the 2017 Marine Mammal Carcass Disposal Permit can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/ocean-dumping/ocean-disposal-marine-mammal-carcasses>.

Potential Impact to Tribes

Tribes, especially those that have traditional practices involving the hunting of large marine mammals, may be interested in engaging in coordination or consultation for this permit re-issuance. While the permit was designed to not interfere with hunting or whaling rights or Tribal practices of harvesting large sea mammals, the EPA invites engagement by Tribes who might have information that would assist the EPA in 1) ensuring there are no impacts to Tribal rights and 2) developing an effective and environmentally sound permit.

Opportunities for Tribes to Engage

The EPA is offering an opportunity for coordination and consultation with Tribes on the proposed permit re-issuance from **April 3 through June 3, 2024**. The consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

Interested Tribal governments may request government-to-government consultation with the EPA before the end of the consultation and coordination period by contacting Cheryl

Whether or not you participate in this consultation and coordination process, you will also have the opportunity to provide input on the re-issuance of the general permit during the public comment period once it has been proposed to the public, which is anticipated for summer 2024. The proposed general permit will be published in the Federal Register and will be accessible at www.regulations.gov.

Tribal Consultation Opportunity: Developing the Sixth Proposed Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6) for Public Water Systems

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is initiating consultation and coordination with federally recognized Indian Tribes on the development of the sixth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR 6) for public drinking water systems (PWSs). Under the Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR) program, the EPA collects data for contaminants suspected to be present in drinking water, but that do not have health-based standards set under the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). SDWA requires the EPA to issue a new list of no more than 30 unregulated contaminants for monitoring every five years. The data collected during monitoring serve as a primary source of occurrence information that helps the agency make determinations about future drinking water regulations and other actions to protect public health under SDWA.

The EPA's consultation and coordination period for this action began March 10, 2024 and will end **June 20, 2024**. The consultation materials are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS) website located at: <https://tcots.epa.gov>.

The official EPA contacts for this consultation and coordination process are Brenda Bowden (bowden.brenda@epa.gov, (513) 569-7961) and Rachel Kaiser (kaiser.rachel@epa.gov, (513) 569-7835). Please do not hesitate to contact them via email or phone should you have any question or if you would like to request alternate arrangements to the process outlined in the attached consultation and coordination plan. Tribal governments are welcome to request one-on-one consultation meetings on this action by sending a written request to [Brenda Bowden](#) and [Rachel Kaiser](#) by June 10, 2024.

Consultation Period Extended: Proposed Establishment of the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) Under the Federal Advisory Committee Act

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is proposing to reorganize the National Tribal Caucus (NTC) as a Federal Advisory Committee (FAC) under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and to increase the proportion of elected or traditionally appointed Tribal leaders that serve on the group. In conjunction with this proposal, EPA is reviewing the characteristics of the NTC to strengthen the operations of the group and increase collaboration with the other EPA Tribal Partnership Groups. These proposed changes will clarify the process by which EPA receives Tribal leadership recommendations on technical programs and budget planning, elevate the NTC as the preeminent group of Tribal representatives that provides advice directly to EPA leadership on items of national significance under EPA's purview, and strengthen EPA's ongoing commitment to collaboration and partnership with Tribes and the government-to-government relationship. This proposal reflects the commitment of the EPA to engage directly with Tribal leaders and ensures that Tribal leaders engage at the highest levels of the Agency on environmental issues that impact Indigenous communities.

Potential Tribal Impacts

Reorganizing the NTC as a FAC would not affect the mission and goals of the group and EPA's American Indian Environmental Office would continue to facilitate regular meetings of the group. However, there are inherent differences among the current operations of the NTC and a FAC. In particular, characteristics of a FAC would include:

- Two-year charter renewal requirements, as well as two-year terms for all members.
- Charge questions to be posed to the FAC by EPA which would focus group advice to EPA and be informed by publicly available input.
- Public availability and Federal Register notices for charter renewals and meeting announcements. Members of the public, including representatives of all federally recognized Tribes, would be allowed to attend FAC meetings but would not be considered part of the group. Meeting material and minutes would be made available to the public.
- Regular reporting on administrative matters from EPA to the General Services Administration (GSA) on the operations of the group, such as the group's charter renewal status and a comprehensive annual review.
- The FAC may form subcommittees or workgroups for any purpose consistent with the charter. This would allow the FAC to address individual issues of interest identified by members of the group as they arise.

Learn more about the current NTC, including the current 2012 Charter, on the [NTC website](#). Learn more about the Federal Advisory Committee Act on [EPA's FACA website](#).

Tribal Consultation

EPA's anticipated timeline for the consultation period was previously expected to extend from April 11th to June 10th, 2024, however EPA has extended the consultation period an additional 60 days. Written comments are now requested no later than August 9th, 2024. A revised consultation plan to show this change is available on the [Tribal Consultation and Opportunities System \(TCOTS\) website](#). EPA appreciates input provided on any aspect of the proposal to change to a FAC or on a future FAC charter or operations of the group.

Please reach out to Daniel Vaught at vaught.daniel@epa.gov or (202) 564-6038, if you have any questions regarding this Tribal consultation opportunity, if you would like to request government-to-government consultation with EPA on this matter, or if you would like to provide written input to EPA.

Information regarding this consultation opportunity, including the Consultation Notification Letter and this Consultation and Coordination Plan, are available on the Tribal Consultation and Opportunities System (TCOTS): <https://tcots.epa.gov/>

- April 11, 2024: Initiation of Tribal consultation and coordination period
- May 17, 2024: Requested deadline for consultation meeting requests
- ***EXTENDED* August 9, 2024: Close of the consultation and coordination period – requested deadline for written comments**

All EPA Tribal consultation materials including letters and consultation plans are available on EPA's Tribal Consultation Opportunities Tracking System (TCOTS).

To search information on a consultation action [click here](#).

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ABOUT

The National Tribal Water Program Updates is a monthly e-newsletter created to provide time-sensitive information and important engagement opportunities and activities of interest for Tribes related to the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act. Included

information may pertain to: Tribal consultations, funding announcements, training opportunities, future meetings and conferences, and recent news and announcements from the Agency.



To ensure receipt of the National Tribal Water Program Updates E Newsletter and associated updates, please be sure to check your Spam/Junk folders periodically and adjust the approved senders settings on your respective email platforms.

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