

**Clean Water Act Workgroup Report**  
**Region 9 Tribal Operations Committee**  
May 2, 2012

**Operation and Maintenance (O&M), and Management Training for Tribal Water and Wastewater Operators.**

It is critical Tribes partner with Federal agencies, so that they can provide sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation needs on reservation lands (for tribal members). These partnerships will garner an understanding amongst the Tribes, the importance of utility management plus the acquisition of the necessary skills to operate and maintain Tribal drinking and wastewater facilities.

EPA is partnering with Tribes and Alaskan Native Villages in providing a series of in-person training workshops to help increase participants' skills and knowledge in the operation of wastewater and drinking water treatment systems. The training is intended for water system operators, wastewater system operators, tribal utility managers, tribal council members and leaders involved with water utility management. Tribes and Alaskan Native Villages who have received 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds will be given enrollment priority. Other tribal water and waste water system operators are invited in cooperation with IHS, as space allows. In the past over 175 participants have attended trainings and have received positive reviews.

The next course will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico on May 15-17, 2012. Please visit the website for more information at [www.horsleywitten.com/tribalARRA](http://www.horsleywitten.com/tribalARRA) or contact Erskine Benjamin, EPA Region 9 at 415-972-3561.

**Office of Water announces a new cooperative agreement with United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) to Facilitate and Support the Operations of the National Tribal Water Council (NTWC).**

In early March of 2012 the Office of Water awarded a new 4 year cooperative agreement to USET. USET was chosen to facilitate and support the operations of the National Tribal Water Council from FY2012 through FY2016. The cooperative agreement sets out the following goals:

- Support the NTWC as a primary technical water resource network and forum for Tribes:
- Increase communications and raise awareness of Tribes on priority water issues. Enable Tribes to have greater input on actions to protect water quality.
- Information exchange and sharing best practices.
- Technical assistance and analyses on water topics.

- Conducting studies and prioritizing tribal water issues based on cumulative input.

Expected outcomes are:

- Increased development and coverage of Tribal water programs in Indian country Improve tribal access to safe drinking water
- Enable Tribes to find workable sustainable solutions for their communities, based on what is working in similar Tribal and non-Tribal communities.

### **EPA's Office of Water releases new draft strategy on Response to Climate Change--open for comment until May 17.**

On April 2, 2012 EPA released the draft "National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change. The draft describes how EPA's water-related programs plan to address the impacts of climate change on watersheds, wetlands, coastal and ocean waters, and water quality. In addition it provides long-term visions, goals and strategic actions for the management of sustainable water resources for future generations. The 2012 strategy also has a Tribal component which describes climate change strategies and actions specific to Indian Country.

EPA conducted tribal consultations over the past year on the Strategy and is now seeking public comment. Public comments on the draft strategy will be accepted until May 17, 2012.

To read or submit a comment on the draft "National Water Program 2012 Strategy: Response to Climate Change," visit:  
<http://epa.gov/water/climatechange>. If you have questions regarding the strategy, please contact Cheryl McGovern at 415-972-3415 or [mcgovern.cheryl@epa.gov](mailto:mcgovern.cheryl@epa.gov).

#### **CWA Workgroup Contacts:**

**Ken Norton, Hoopa Valley Tribe**  
**Janis Gomes, EPA R9 (WTR-10)**