



National Tribal
AIR ASSOCIATION

NTAA MONTHLY UPDATE MAY 2026

CONTENTS

- Spotlight
- Feature Article
- NTAA Updates
- ITEP/TAMS Announcements
- EPA Information
- Other Announcements

Spotlight: National Tribal Forum on Air Quality

The 2026 National Tribal Forum on Air Quality (NTFAQ) was held at the Tulalip Resort and Casino in Washington. We extend a sincere thank you to the Tulalip Tribe for graciously hosting this year's forum and welcoming attendees from across Indian Country.

The conference featured a strong lineup of informative breakout sessions, valuable networking opportunities, and engaging special events. The week began with a lively Welcome Night hosted by Zane Jacobs, setting the stage for connection and collaboration. On Tuesday evening, participants gathered for the Breath of Fresh Air Fun Run, which saw an excellent turnout and highlighted the importance of wellness alongside our professional work.



NTAA EC

Wednesday's Virgil Masayesva Award Luncheon honored two outstanding leaders with the Virgil Masayesva Environmental Excellence Award: Tanda Roberts, Environmental Manager, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and Janice Archuleta, Air Quality Program Manager, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. That evening, attendees enjoyed a special film screening at the beautiful Hibulb Cultural Center, hosted in the longhouse exhibit. Four impactful films were featured: [Elements: Air](#), [Pay Attention](#), [How Humans Regenerate Earth](#), and [POW!](#)

Contact:

Miranda O'Neill
Program Manager
Miranda.Oneill@nau.edu

Marty Johnson
Program Coordinator
Marty.Johnson@nau.edu

Newsletter:

The NTAA Monthly Update is an e-newsletter providing updates and resources to Tribes regarding air policy, grants, and resources. To advertise an announcement, please email Marty.Johnson@nau.edu. To subscribe or unsubscribe from our newsletter, click [here](#).

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Thursday was dedicated to experiential learning, with field trip options that included visits to the Qwuiloolt Estuary, a Boeing Test Site, and additional tours of the Hibulb Cultural Center, complete with hands-on crafting activities.

The conference concluded with a heartfelt celebration honoring Mansel Nelson, ITEP's Indoor Air Quality Program Manager, who will be retiring at the end of the year. His leadership and contributions to Tribal air quality efforts were warmly recognized.

We thank everyone who contributed to making the 2026 NTFAQ a success and look forward to seeing you next year at the 2027 National Tribal Forum on Air Quality, to be held at the Ak-Chin Indian Community at Harrah's Ak-Chin.



Breakout Session



Qwuiloolt Estuary



Fun Run

FEATURE ARTICLE

Earth Day 2026: Our Power, Our Planet

As environmental professionals, every day is Earth Day, but each year, on April 22nd, people all over the world come together to celebrate this remarkable place we call home. This year's theme was "Our Power, Our Planet." According to [Earthday.org](https://earthday.org), "Our Power. Our Planet. refers to the role of people and communities worldwide in sustaining environmental protections that affect the cost of living, public health, infrastructure reliability, and long-term stability. Environmental conditions influence food systems, water availability, energy access, disaster risk, and economic resilience across all regions. Community participation has historically shaped these outcomes across countries and political systems."

We love to hear from communities and Tribes about how they celebrate Earth Day, however big or small. If your community or Tribe puts on an event, consider registering your event on [Earthday.org](https://earthday.org).

The Hopi Tribe's Department of Natural Resources put on an Earth Day 2026 celebration, "Itaa Öqalmakiwa, Itaa Tuuwaqatsi – Our Power, Our Planet" at the Hopi Veteran's Memorial Center. As part of the event, they put on a student poster contest inspired by the theme of "Our Power, Our Planet."

The Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe held an Earth Day celebration between youth and elders with an art contest. They celebrated the connections between youth and elders, learning from one another, and the love shared in the exchange of information. There were over 75 community members in attendance for the inaugural Earth Day event, which was tied to the Leech Lake Band's Climate Adaptation Plan.



The Upper Mattaponi Tribe of Virginia hosted a river trip for its Tribal citizens along the Mattaponi River. Through partnership with the Department of Wildlife Resources and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, various sampling and field science methods were displayed, including electroshocking the water for fish sampling and plant ID. This is an annual trip that the Tribe hosts to promote Tribal citizens to interact and understand their namesake river.



Upper Mattaponi Tribe River Trip

Every community has a unique way of celebrating Earth Day, a reflection of that community's distinctiveness. And there may be some who don't need a special day or event to celebrate our planet because they celebrate it every day. Regardless of how you or your community celebrates Earth Day, it is good to take some time to reflect and feel gratitude for those who work day in and day out fighting to protect our land, air and water.

Mental Health Awareness Month

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to recognize the importance of caring for our mental well-being. As environmental professionals, our work is meaningful—but it is not always easy. Protecting the health of our air, land, and communities can feel like an uphill battle, especially when progress takes time.

It's important to remember that many environmental successes are achieved through the long game. Restoration and protection require patience, persistence, and balance. This work is a marathon, not a sprint—and to sustain ourselves for the journey, we must also take care of our mental health.

Here are a some ways to support your well-being:

- Take breaks from social media or constant news updates
- Use mental health days when you need them.
- Step outside during the workday for fresh air or a short walk.
- Surround yourself with people who support you and value the work you do.
- Advocate for yourself and practice saying “no” when your plate is full.
- Encourage coworkers and community members to do the same.

The connection between mental health and environmental change—particularly climate change—is becoming increasingly clear. Extreme weather events, concerns about food security, and the loss of threatened and endangered species can all contribute to stress and emotional strain.

Resources are available to help support this growing need. For example, the National Academies is offering a webinar on Climate Change and Brain Health, which explores how environmental stressors can impact mental well-being. The webinar will be held on Thursday, May 28th. Click [here](#) for more information.

Taking care of ourselves strengthens our ability to care for our communities and the environment—both now and for future generations.



NTAA ANNOUNCEMENTS

2025 State of Tribal Air Report (STAR) Now Available

The State of Tribal Air Report 2025 is now available on our [website](#) for your reading pleasure. The NTAA's STAR is an annual publication intended to provide an understanding of the importance and impact of Tribal air programs. Nationally vetted Tribal needs, priorities, and recommendations are all outlined, and the successes and challenges experienced by the environmental professionals are highlighted by way of person narratives submitted by the Tribes themselves.

NTAA Workgroups

EPA Air Policy Call

Thursday, May, 28 2026

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. MST

Zoom [Link](#)

Wildfire Smoke Workgroup

Thursday, June 11, 2026

1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. MST

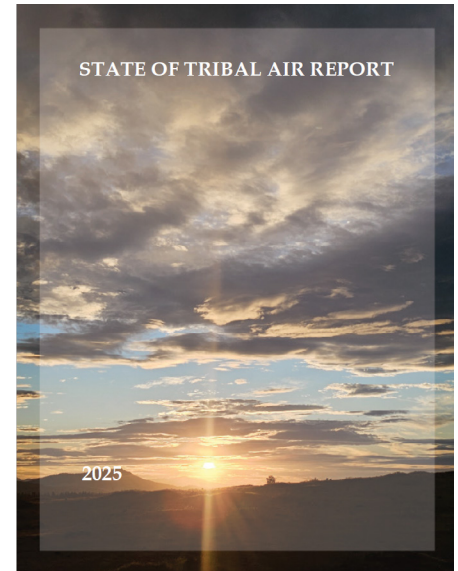
Zoom [Link](#)

Alaska Tribal Air Workgroup

Wednesday, June 24, 2026

11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. MST

Zoom [Link](#)



Welcome to our newest Executive Committee Member, Cody Barta!

Cody is the Region 7 alternate. Cody works for the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska as their Environmental Specialist. Cody has worked with the EPA and Tribal Councils to educate the public about environmental issues. We are happy to have his expertise on the EC and we look forward to working with him!



Welcome our newest Member Tribe!

The Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indians make our 162nd Tribe! They became a member in April and we want to welcome them as our newest member. For more information on becoming an NTAA Member Tribe, click [here](#).

ITEP/TAMS UPDATES

Critical Minerals Webinar Series:

Wind Turbine Recycling: Technical and Planning Considerations for Native Nations

Monday, May 18, 2026 at:

Hawaii -Aleutian Time (HST): 8:00 a.m.

Alaska Time (ADT): 10:00 a.m.

Pacific Time (PDT): 11:00 a.m.

Mountain Time (MDT): 12:00 p.m .

Central Time (CDT): 1:00 p.m.

Eastern Time (EDT): 2:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register



Tribal Lands and Environment Forum Save the Date (TLEF)

August 17-20, 2026

Okana Resort

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Click [here](#) for more information and to register



AIAQTP & TAMS Office Hours:

Click [here](#) to join AIAQTP & TAMS office hours. Each month ITEP, EPA, and Tribes will host a rotating schedule of office hours. Please join a lively discussion and ask questions about Grants, Indoor Air Quality, and the TAMS Center. Click the link above to see the Office Hours Schedule.

Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center (TAMS)

Oh QAPP Office Hours

TAMS Staff will be live EACH Thursday to discuss issues related to QAPPS, QREST and Data Management.

Every Thursday 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. EST

[Link](#) Meeting ID: 865 1626 9184



EPA ANNOUNCEMENTS

EPA FY 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan and Learning Agenda Now Available

The Strategic Plan communicates the agency's priorities and serves as the basis for agencywide planning and budget development. Tribal considerations are reflected across the Strategic Plan and are integrated into the agency's efforts to advance President Trump's priorities and Administrator Zeldin's Powering the Great American Comeback Initiative.

The Strategic Plan is complemented by the agency's Learning Agenda. The Learning Agenda identifies and addresses key questions across priority areas for the agency through the identification, development, and analysis of high-quality evidence. The FY 2027 Evidence Plan lays out activities planned for the coming fiscal year under the Learning Agenda. An updated annual Evidence Plan will be submitted each fiscal year through FY 2030.

The EPA is inviting comments on the draft FY 2026-2030 EPA Strategic Plan and the draft FY 2027 Evidence Plan. Comments and request for Tribal consultation are due by Thursday, May 28, 2026.

Click [here](#) for more information.

Consultation & coordination contacts:

- Strategic Plan: EPAStrategicPlanTribalMailbox@epa.gov
- Evidence / Learning Agenda: EvidenceandEvaluation@epa.gov

Title V Operating Permit Policy and Guidance Document Index

On May 11th, EPA issued guidance clarifying the agency's review process of Clean Air Act (CAA) title V permits to streamline and expedite approvals. Click [here](#) for more information.

The guidance clarifies that state, local, and Tribal permitting authorities may submit title V permit applications to EPA before opening the public comment periods, then conduct public comments concurrently with EPA's review. Click [here](#) to read the guidance.

Proposed Rule: Revision to "Begin Actual Construction" in the New Source Review (NSR) Preconstruction Permitting Program

EPA is issuing a proposed rule to revise the New Source Review (NSR) preconstruction permitting program's definition of "begin actual construction." EPA's proposed definition will address which physical on-site construction activities a source owner or operator may, prior to obtaining an NSR permit, lawfully undertake that would not constitute activities on an emissions until that are of a permanent nature. This action is intended to provide additional flexibility for source owners or operators and permitting authorities to determine, on a case-by-case basis, what constitutes beginning actual construction of a new stationary source or a major modification prior to which an NSR permit must be obtained. Click [here](#) for more information. There will soon be a 45-day public comment period on this proposed rule. We will post a link on the website, when available.

[EPA Tools and Resources Webinar Series](#)

EPA's Office of Applied Science and Environmental Solutions (OASES) hosts monthly public webinar series to translate EPA research and share research resources and information that are useful, practical/applied and available to meet stakeholders' research needs. Free webinars are typically held the third Wednesday of every month from 3:00 -4:00 p.m. (ET)

FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

DOE Energy Infrastructure Reinvestment Financing

This program will guarantee loans to projects that retool, repower, repurpose, or replace energy infrastructure that has ceased operations or that enable operating energy infrastructure to avoid, reduce, utilize, or sequester air pollutants or anthropogenic emissions of greenhouse gases. Grant deadline is 09/30/2026. Click [here](#) for more information.

NDN Collective Community Action Fund

The 2026 Community Action Fund Grant Cycle is Now Open! With grants up to \$20,000 USD the Community Action Fund (CAF) grantsupports Indigenous-led direct actions and organizing efforts that are often urgent and time sensitive. The CAF prioritizes frontline, grassroots and community-based efforts that defend Indigenous Peoples' rights, communities and Nations, including responses to climate disasters. Applications accepted on a rolling basis until 10/16/2026. Click [here](#) for more information.

DOE Office of Indian Energy: On-Request Technical Assistance

Rolling Deadline. Indian tribes and Alaska Native villages can apply annually to receive on-request technical assistance with energy planning; housing, building energy efficiency, and resilience; project development; village power; and policy and regulation. Assistance is provided by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Indian Energy and its national laboratories, along with other partnering organizations, at no cost. Click [here](#) for more information.

USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants

Applications accepted continuously. This program provides grants to assist rural communities that have had a significant decline in quantity or quality of drinking water. Grant may fund waterline extensions from existing systems, construction of new water lines; repairs to existing systems, construction of new wells, reservoirs, transmission lines, treatment plants, and other water sources. Priority is given to areas with less than 10,000 people, low-income areas, and communities facing imminent decline and shortage of water. Click [here](#) for more information.

Native Resilience Webinar Series: Preparing for snow drought, and water stress in Tribal agriculture

The Native Resilience Working Group will hold a four-part webinar series in spring 2026 focused on snow drought, water stress, and their impacts on Tribal agriculture. Virtual series held February - May 2026. Click [here](#) for more information.

OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS cont.

National Wildfire Awareness Month

May is designated as National Wildfire Awareness Month because it is the time of year when the weather becomes warmer and wildland vegetation, also known as fuels, begin to dry out. This signals the need to begin planning for wildfires. Dedicating a month to wildfire awareness aims to promote prevention and preparedness efforts among communities that live within areas prone to wildfires. Here are some resources to help your community prepare for wildfire.

[Wildfire Awareness Month: Guide on How to Prepare | WFCM](#)

[National Wildfire Awareness Month - EMERGENCY ACTION PLANNING](#)

[Wildfire Community Preparedness Day | NFPA](#) (was on May 2nd, but there are a lot of great resources)

National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Webinar

Ecological Drought: Drought Dashboards to Improve Drought Monitoring, Inform Tribal Resilience, and Preserve Ecological and Cultural Resources

Tuesday, May 26, 2026, 2 p.m. ET/11 a.m. PT

This webinar will focus on recently developed drought dashboards and tools to improve drought monitoring, inform tribal drought resilience, and preserve ecological and cultural resources.

Click [here](#) to register

Tribal Exchange Network Group (TXG)

Tribal Exchange Network Group (TXG)

Monthly Tribal Data Drop-In Session

Thursday, May 21, 2026 from 11:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Pacific

Click [here](#) to register



NACAA

[Washington Update](#)



Environmental Law Institute

Click [here](#) to view ELI's Calendar of seminars, courses & special events.



National Academies: Science, Engineering, Medicine

Click [here](#) to view National Academies schedule of events.