

VOLUME 4 ISSUE 2 • FEBRUARY 2026

The CW Tea



Monthly Newsletter from CWT Training Academy



A Month for Love - of the Environment and its People

Environmental justice is rooted in the principle that all communities deserve equal protection from environmental harm and equal access to environmental benefits—especially clean, reliable water. Access to safe drinking water and healthy waterways is essential for public health, economic stability, and cultural well-being, and clean water is emerging as a unifying priority. **Upgrades to drinking water systems, improvements in stormwater management, and renewed focus on source water protection are reducing long-standing risks while creating jobs and strengthening local economies.**

Advances in data collection, digital reporting transparency (page 2), and community science are also empowering residents to participate more directly in decisions that affect their water, with the intention of building trust and improving outcomes. It takes a collective effort, both public and private, permitted and non-permitted, to achieve the outcomes desired.

Advancing environmental justice requires prioritizing clean water where cumulative efforts make demonstrable difference in the health of the community and its environment. Ensuring equitable access to clean water strengthens public health, supports local economies, and lays the groundwork for sustainable systems that serve all beneficial uses of the resource. **Looking ahead, 2026 offers a chance to build on this progress. When policy, science, investment, and community leadership align, environmental justice can focus on prevention, resilience, and shared prosperity.** Stewardship and management of environmental systems supports everyone. There is no single way to do it. It takes investment, energy and knowledge to lead informed management systems.

Looking for ways to be a strong environmental leader? Check out our course spotlight on page 3 and invest in yourself, your environment, and your neighbors.

Nathan Hardebeck, Owner of CWT and CWT Training Academy



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NPDES E-REPORTING: PAPERLESS REPORTING

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Electronic Reporting Rule aims to modernize how water quality data and permit information are submitted under the Clean Water Act by replacing traditional paper-based reporting with electronic reporting. **The rule requires regulated entities such as industrial facilities, municipalities, and others with NPDES permits to submit key compliance and permit-related reports electronically using EPA or approved state electronic systems instead of mailing paper forms.** Electronic reporting improves timeliness, accuracy, consistency, and public access to NPDES compliance data.



First published in 2015, the rule's implementation occurred in two phases. Phase 1, effective in 2016, required electronic submission of Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs) and biosolids program reports, a rule that has been enacted and in place in most states ever since.

Phase 2 went into effect on December 21, 2025, and expands electronic reporting to include Notices of Intent (NOIs) and Termination (NOTs) under general permits, stormwater certifications and waivers, annual reports, and other program specific reports. This Phase affects essentially anyone who holds a NPDES permit of any type across the country.

To be compliant, facilities need to:

1. **Identify their e-reporting system:** NetDMR (EPA) or state-specific system (e.g., Washington's WQWebDMR, Idaho's IPDES portal, Montana's FACTS, Oregon's YDO).
2. **Register users:** Create accounts, assign roles (preparer, signatory, data provider). **THIS IS A CRITICAL STEP TO SET UP CORRECTLY**
3. **Validate data flows:** Set up links between lab results, sampling logs, and electronic reporting system.
4. **Train staff:** Staff must know how to enter, validate, and sign reports electronically.
5. **Perform a dry run:** Submit test DMRs in advance to avoid errors in December.



Recordkeeping and reporting is a significant portion of managing a NPDES permit. It is often not prioritized and difficult to retroactively complete if ever audited by a regulatory agency or citizen group. Remember - absence of information is assumption of guilt!



HUMAN-CENTERED Leadership Bundle



Transform yourself and hone your management skills with The Human-Centered Leadership Bundle. This on-demand training package includes 6 different inspiring and easy to digest training videos on varying aspects of effective leadership.

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Ranging from 25–50 minutes each, the trainings take very little time, can be taken whenever you want, are practical and easy to implement into your management style, and most of all you'll come away from each inspired to lead with Human Centered focus!

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HUMAN **CENTERED** MOVEMENT

DRAFT NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM PLAN - CALIFORNIA



[Read about the 2025-2030 Implementation Plan here](#)

Overview of the Draft Plan:

The draft 2025–2030 Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program Implementation Plan outlines California’s strategy for reducing water quality impacts from nonpoint source pollution, which is pollution that does not originate from a single, identifiable discharge point. Common NPS sources include stormwater runoff from roads, agricultural fields, forestry practices, grazing activity, mining, and large-scale development. The plan serves as a roadmap for coordinating among the co-lead agencies (The State and 9 Regional Water Boards, along with the California Coastal Commission) to protect and restore surface waters and groundwater across the state.

Priority Waters and Pollutants:

The plan prioritizes watersheds and groundwater basins with known impairments, drinking water vulnerabilities, or environmental justice concerns. Key pollutants of concern include sediment, nutrients, pathogens, pesticides, metals, salts, and trash, with special attention to climate-driven stressors such as wildfire, drought, and extreme precipitation.

Program Framework:

The Strategic Approach outlined in the plan is designed for flexibility and adaptive management in order to change as needed over the five year implementation period; however, the general goals of the plan are:

- Control & Reduce NPS Pollution
- Interagency Collaboration
- Grant Administration & Funding
- Innovation & Research
- Performance Tracking & Evaluation
- Environmental Justice & Equity

Measures of Program Success:

The main performance measures for the NPS program are the number of primarily nonpoint source-impaired waterbodies partially or fully restored by NPS program actions, and the volume and/or mass of nonpoint source pollutant load reductions.

Next Steps:

Public comment is accepted on this draft plan through February 12, 2026, after which the State Water Board will finalize the plan.

We have discussed how the USEPA is planning to roll out two major general permits in 2026 that will shape industrial and construction stormwater compliance: the Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP) for industrial facilities, and the Construction General Permit (CGP) for construction sites.

In addition, and often in response, many states are updating their state-specific Industrial and Construction Stormwater General Permits which may include additional covered sectors, lower benchmarks, and even increased employee training requirements. **This page in each edition of the 2026 CWT Newsletter will feature state-specific permit updates that may be of interest to you.**

Delaware - CGP

- Previous Construction General Permit was from 2021
- Major changes in the new permit include clear expectations on site-wide dust control, soil stabilization, buffer requirements, and dewatering limitations.
- Overall, better alignment with state and federal construction permitting
- A CGP fact sheet was made available in late 2025
- New permit goes into effect March 11, 2026.



DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES AND
ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Interested in a crash course on EPA permitting, the Clean Water Act, MSGPs, ISGPs, CSGPs, and more? Check out our Stormwater Regulations Overview training that provides an overview of the stormwater industry and regulations that govern it, no matter where you live or work in the country.

CHANGES TO NEPA IN 2026

Changes to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) from 1969 were made final in January of 2026, and include major modification to the previously government wide application of the NEPA rules. While the statute of NEPA still exists, each federal agency now makes its own agency-specific NEPA procedures, rather than being bound to the tenets of the original rule. The change removes several prior regulatory requirements, including formal definitions for cumulative impacts, exhaustion of administrative remedies, and certain procedural guidance, and marks the most significant amendment to NEPA since it was enacted nearly 60 years ago.

Policy, Compliance, and Regulatory Corner



Helping you navigate change in 2026

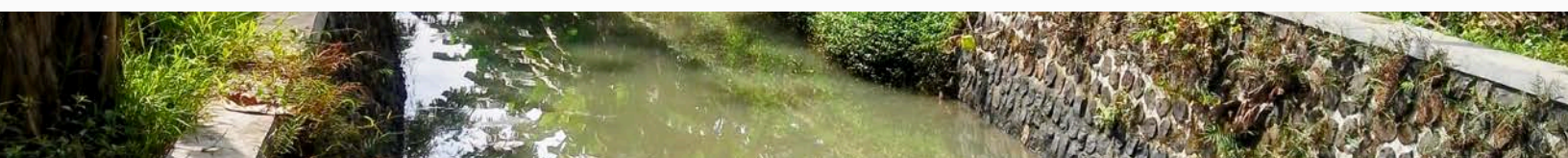
This change means that while impacts to the environment from federal actions must still be determined, Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and Environmental Assessments (EAs) may be prepared with more flexibility, without any minimum page or content requirement, and in a format determined by the discretion of each federal agency, potentially resulting in more variability in performance goals and outcomes.

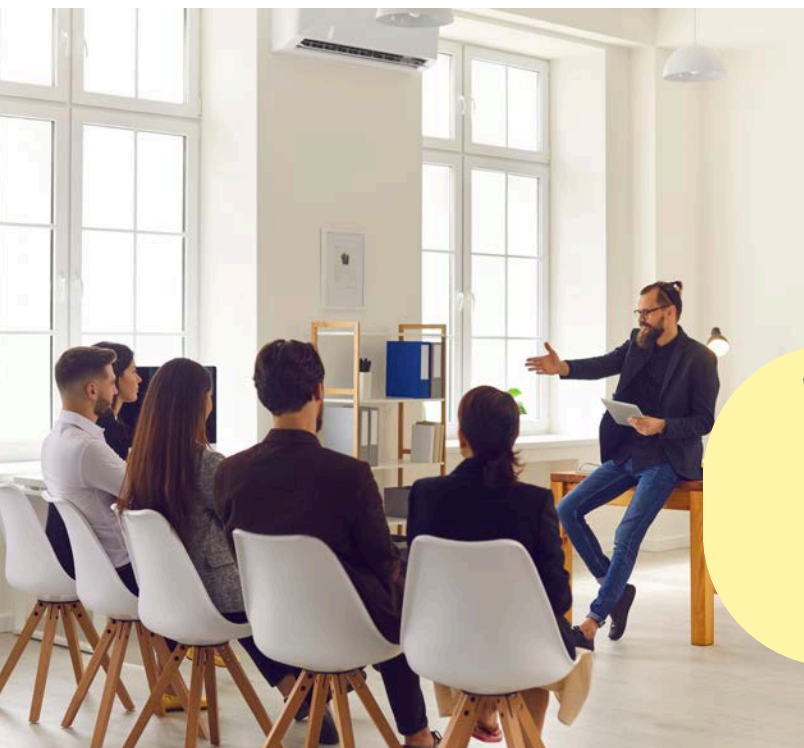
SPOTLIGHT ON: Nonpoint Source Pollution

Nonpoint source pollution (NPS) is one of the most persistent and challenging water quality issues in the United States because it comes from many diffuse, everyday activities rather than a single pipe or discharge. Rainfall and snowmelt wash pollutants such as sediment, nutrients, bacteria, metals, pesticides, trash, and oils off landscapes and into rivers, lakes, and streams. Common sources include agricultural fields, grazing lands, construction sites, roadways, urban stormwater runoff, forestry operations, and even residential yards. **Because these pollutants are spread across watersheds and tied to land use and weather patterns, they are difficult to monitor, regulate, and control.**

Unlike point sources, NPS pollution is not typically regulated through individual discharge permits, so states rely on broader, land-based approaches. Many states use Clean Water Act Section 319 programs to set statewide NPS management plans, prioritize impaired waters, and fund implementation of best management practices (BMPs) such as erosion controls, nutrient management, riparian buffers, and green infrastructure. **Addressing nonpoint source pollution requires coordinated, watershed-based solutions that combine regulation, voluntary or economic incentives, behavior-change education, and long-term efforts.** Successful programs also emphasize collaboration among landowners, local governments, tribes, agencies, and community organizations.

Read California's new draft approach to nonpoint pollution source control on page 3!





UPCOMING EVENTS

Trainings, conferences, fun, and other happenings to keep you in the know in 2026

We are booking our public, private, in-person, and virtual courses and trainings into **Summer 2026** now! Reach out to info@cwtaacademy.com or visit cwtaacademy.com to check out all of our event offerings

Come See the Academy! **Register here!**

- CESCL RE-Certification - February 24, Burlington, WA
- CESCL Full Certification - February 25-26, Sedro-Woolley, WA
- CESCL RE-Certification - April 21, Burlington, WA
- CESCL Full Certification - April 22-23, Sedro-Woolley, WA



Show your love for the outdoors with some new **PUDLEGear!**

Other Events and Happenings

- Evergreen Rural Water of Washington Conference
February 10-12, Ridgefield, Washington
- Urban Water Institute Conference
February 25-27, Indian Wells, California
- IECA Annual Conference and EXPO
March 1-4, Fort Worth, Texas
- WaterReuse Association Symposium
March 8-11, Los Angeles, California

