

A Tribal Perspective: The Pueblo of Sandia's Water Quality Program

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Biographical Sketch of Author

Scott Bulgrin is employed as the Water Quality Officer for the Pueblo of Sandia and has been in the position since March 2000. Prior to working for the Pueblo of Sandia Scott worked with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Arcata, California working with endangered species and juvenile salmonids. Scott has over 15 years experience in the environmental field and has spent a majority of his career working for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in the area of water quality.

Abstract

The Pueblo of Sandia, a federally recognized Indian Tribe has had a water quality program since 1994. Located just north of Albuquerque, the State of New Mexico's largest city, the Pueblo of Sandia is bordered to the north by the Town of Bernalillo, to the east by the Sandia Mountains, and to the west by the Rio Grande, Village of Corrales, and the City of Rio Rancho. With the Rio Grande being one of the most polluted and endangered rivers in the United States, the Pueblo of Sandia was the first tribe in the United States to apply for Water Quality Standards under the Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987. This was done with the specific intention of protecting ceremonial use of surface waters and the environment. Water Quality Standards were approved by EPA on August 10, 1993. This presentation will highlight the water quality program at the Pueblo of Sandia. The Pueblo of Sandia's water quality program is involved with various aspects of water quality including: surface water monitoring, ambient toxicity testing, NPDES permitting, compliance, and enforcement, storm water runoff, wetland rehabilitation, Bosque restoration, water quality standards, and endangered species monitoring. One goal of the Pueblo of Sandia's water quality program is to create community awareness and involvement in water quality issues. This is accomplished by developing water quality education programs for the community and hiring Tribal student interns during the summer for the program. The goal of this presentation is to show non-Tribal entities and other Tribes what one New Mexican Tribe is accomplishing through its water quality program and the capacity it is building within and outside the Tribal boundaries.