

## **New Innovations in Training Issues That Have Been Encountered with USEPA Region VIII Tribes**

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### **Abstract:**

The Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Water Quality Program and Gold Systems, Inc. have been administering and developing the USEPA Region VIII Tribal STORET Program since 2000. In that time the end users, Tribal personnel have overcome major difficulties that confront many tribal programs. One such obstacle that prevented many of the Region VIII tribes from succeeding dealt with retaining technically trained and qualified staff to complete tasks associated with STORET.

To address this problem, Southern Ute and Gold Systems provided several regional workshops for tribal users. In many cases, the tribes sent only one staff member to attend the trainings, and then could not retain the qualified staff due to high tribal employment turnover. The regional trainings were initially considered to be a success with USEPA as tribes began to format and import their historic data. Unfortunately in many cases, retaining these trained individuals became a larger issue as they left for better paying positions outside of the tribes.

In 2004, Southern Ute and Gold Systems had to re-evaluate the costs associated with providing on-going training to tribal users. As a result of the assessment, the Peer Trainers Network was created to address the on-going training needs of tribes. The Peer Trainers Network is composed of tribal users of all levels of experience who can provide training opportunities to tribal water quality managers and their staff. The main goal and objective of the Peer Trainers Network is to provide a cost effective method to provide training and assistance to each of the tribes in the region. The peer trainers are located throughout the region and in many cases can provide on-site assistance without extensive travel. By creating a network of experts throughout the region, the regional tribal water quality programs are able to complete STORET tasks knowing that the loss of one member will not result in a significant setback for the Tribe.

Since the development of the Peer Trainers Network, tribes have had many successes in working with STORET. Over the past year, the Peer Trainers have been instrumental in assisting 14 tribes to migrate their water quality data into the Regional Data Warehouse as required by USEPA. In completing this data migration into the Regional Warehouse, the Peer Trainers and tribes have been able to secure future funding for their water quality programs.

During the upcoming year, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe will begin work with Gold Systems to transition from their Current STORET / WebSIM implementation to a WQX solution. As the new system is rolled out across the region, the Peer trainers will once

again be instrumental in providing support and training to the region VIII tribes as they each make this transition.

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