Southern Ute Indian Tribe CWA Program Overview
CWA 106 Water Quality Monitoring Program

- The Tribe has Treatment as a State for implementation for 3 Clean Water Act programs; Section 106, WQS, and 401 Certification
- Monitors 5 major rivers and 42 monitoring locations
- Chemical, physical and biological data collected each location
- Water quality data used to assist the Water Quality Standards Development
- Water Quality Data reported to EPA and available to the general public
- Groundwater Monitoring
- Outreach and Education
- Emergency Response
WQP data documents the progress of recovery, from 416 Fire & the Gold King event.
Surface Water Monitoring
Groundwater Sampling
FY2018 – FY2023
• Water quality monitoring on the Animas and Florida Rivers
• Installation of a telemetry unit and real-time publicly available data
• Ethnographic study of cultural uses of plants in the Bonita Peak Mining District
• Plant toxicology study

FY2020 – FY2025
• USGS nutrient and aluminum tracking studies
• Emerging contaminants study: PFAS, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals
• Fish tissue study: trace metals, PCBs, and PAHs
SUIT 319 Program Focus

Implement BMP’s to improve water quality since Treatment as a State (TAS) status in 1997

Agricultural BMPs

Stream restorations projects

Education and outreach to tribal membership and the community.

Watershed scale planning based on guidance from 106 monitoring

Monitoring Stations Average Inorganic Nitrogen Concentrations Within The Southern Ute Indian Reservation
Pre and post restoration photos – spring creek
Outreach and Education
SUIT Water Quality Standards

1992 Water quality program established, and data collection begins

1996 Tribe develops WQS applying to all water bodies on Reservation and submits TAS application and standards to EPA for approval. To avoid a jurisdictional dispute, Tribe agrees to postponement of EPA’s consideration.

2006-2007 Tribe and State discuss intergovernmental agreement modeled after air quality agreement (a jurisdictional sharing approach).

2008 Tribal Council approves alternative approach.

2012-2018 Water quality program revises WQS, refines uses, adds sections, consults with EPA. Draft standards were subject to internal tribal entity review and comment and review and comment by Tribe’s water quality standards review team.

2015 Tribe submits TAS application

2018 EPA grants treatment as a state (TAS) authority to Tribe to administer WQS and 401 certification programs.

May 22 to June 23, 2020 & August 31 to October 30, 2020: Tribal Member Comment Period

November 23, 2020 through January 29, 2021: State of Colorado Comment Period

May 3 to June 15, 2021: Treatment-as-a-State Comment Period

August 23rd - October 22nd, 2021: General Public Comment Period

February 8th, 2022: SUIT Council approval

May 6th, 2022: EPA approval
Questions

Rachel Vaughn: rvaughn@southernute-nsn.gov