



Region 9  
The Pacific Southwest

# Environmental Results through Tribal/EPA Partnerships



U.S. EPA Region 9 Tribal Program Office  
[http://www.epa.gov/region09/cross\\_pr/indian/success/index/html](http://www.epa.gov/region09/cross_pr/indian/success/index/html)

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Fiscal Year 2005 Accomplishments



Dear Readers,

I am pleased to share with you our *Tribal and EPA Environmental Accomplishments Report for the Pacific Southwest, fiscal year 2005*. This is our fourth report and it provides a valuable overview of accomplishments in collaboration with tribes in Region 9.

This past year, U.S. EPA Administrator Steven L. Johnson formally reaffirmed our Agency's Indian Policy, a policy that we have followed since 1984. EPA's Indian Policy recognizes the United States' unique legal relationship with tribal governments. This relationship includes recognition of the right of tribes, as sovereigns, to self-determination and acknowledges the primary role of tribal governments in managing reservation environments.

An important part of EPA's mission is working in partnership with federally recognized tribes to protect tribal environmental health and resources. Towards this end we are honored to work collaboratively with tribes in one of the most diverse areas of the country, from the Hualapai Reservation at the Grand Canyon to the Monument Valley at Navajo Nation to the Washoe traditional areas of Lake Tahoe. In undertaking this responsibility, the Region works on a government-to-government basis with the federally recognized tribes of the Pacific Southwest to protect more than 27 million acres, approximately 10% of the region's land base.

EPA currently has active environmental partnerships with over 130 of the 146 tribes in the Pacific Southwest Region. These tribes, working in collaboration with EPA, are able to accomplish our shared goals for clean air, water and land, and healthy communities. This year EPA and tribes of the Southwest achieved many environmental successes, including providing safe drinking water, closing open dumps, cleaning up leaking underground storage tanks, inspecting pesticide application operations, and restoring watersheds.

This report not only shares the accomplishments of tribes and the EPA for 2005 but it also inspires us to continue working collaboratively with tribal governments to protect the future of tribal lands and generations yet to come.

For more information on these and other tribal environmental accomplishments, please visit our website at [www.epa.gov/region09](http://www.epa.gov/region09).

Sincerely,

Wayne Natri  
Regional Administrator

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# Table of Contents

<b>Tribal Results</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Clean Air</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Clean &amp; Safe Water</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Protecting Tribal Lands</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Healthy Tribal Communities</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Compliance and Stewardship</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Region 9 Tribal Program Office</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>EPA Pacific Southwest/Region 9</b>	<b>13</b>

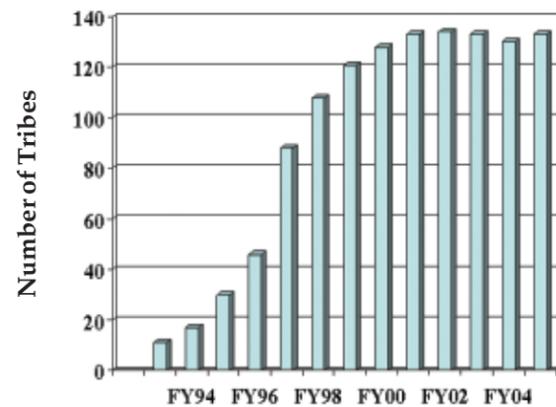
Cover Photos: North Summit Lake, Nevada by Jared Vollmer  
White House Ruins, Arizona by Michael Hingerty  
Yosemite Valley, California by Amanda Flick

Beadwork by Lori Seidner Clark

# Tribal Results

EPA's Pacific Southwest Region includes 146 Indian tribes and nearly 40% of the tribal land in the United States. Tribal lands are subject to federal and tribal environmental laws, but many tribes have lacked the capacity or funding to carry out environmental programs. In recent years, a change has been occurring. Tribes have forged productive partnerships with other agencies and neighboring communities. In 2005, 129 tribes and four coalitions developed environmental programs and 73 tribes (nearly half) are monitoring the environment.

## Number of Tribes Developing Environmental Programs

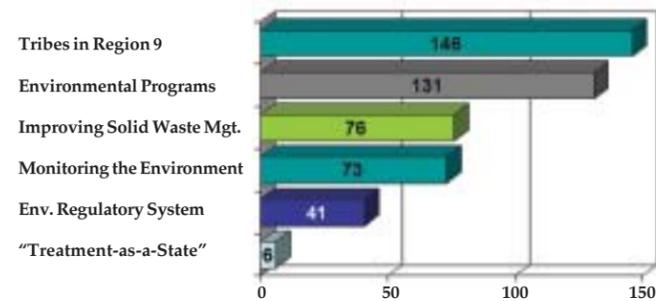


Environmental conditions on many reservations in the Pacific Southwest Region are challenging. More than one third of reservation households are at or below the poverty level. Nineteen percent of homes lack complete plumbing. More than 800 open dumps are found on tribal lands. Over a third of the Region's tribes are located in areas that do not meet air quality standards.

EPA is working in partnership with tribes to face these challenges head-on. Together, we are achieving positive results! Working as partners, the tribes and EPA have made significant progress in protecting tribal lands, waters, air and other resources.

Tribes and states in the Pacific Southwest Region are very active in collaborative environmental efforts. Both Nevada and California environmental agencies host trainings on working effectively with tribal governments. This year, Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano joined EPA in recognizing the accomplishments of the **Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community**.

## Environmental Capacity Building



Future Pyramid Lake Paiute tribal environmental leaders tour Region 9 offices

In 2004, EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to end all dumping and investigate the extent of contamination at the Speedy's oil storage facility on the **Navajo Nation**. Since issuing the order, EPA and the Navajo Nation have overseen the closure of illegal disposal trenches, and removal and proper disposal of liquid wastes and contaminated soil from the site. Together, EPA and the Tribe ensured compliance with oil spill prevention rules, which included the installation of new storage tanks and a concrete oil/water separator. In 2005, EPA also fined an oil production company \$40,000 for oil spill prevention violations at three facilities on Navajo Nation lands near Bloomfield, New Mexico.



Gila River Indian Community - wild horses

# Compliance and Stewardship

In 2005, EPA took eight enforcement actions against facilities operating on tribal land. In settling these actions, EPA included supplemental environmental projects to benefit the tribe whose resources were harmed. For example, Mobil Oil agreed to pay nearly \$1 million for Clean Air Act violations at their production facility on the **Navajo Nation**. As part of that settlement, the company will spend approximately \$500,000 on operational improvements to control air pollution at its oil field. In addition, Mobil will spend approximately \$100,000 on a public health project that will provide x-ray equipment, an x-ray processor and a pulmonary function testing machine to the tribe's Montezuma Creek Community Health Center.



*Pala Band of Luiseno Mission Indians new Environmental Technician and Assistant - positions paid for by tribe*

Tribes are progressing in developing their own compliance programs. For example, the **Pala Band of Mission Indians** conducts annual inspections of all businesses on the reservation. With funding from the Tribe, new environmental and assistant air technicians were hired.



*Romic Southwest, Gila River Indian Community*



*Oil rig on the Navajo Nation*

EPA also fined a hazardous waste company on tribal lands in Arizona nearly \$68,000. The company corrected the violations and will also spend \$100,800 on life-saving and air monitoring equipment for the **Gila River Indian Community's** fire and environmental departments.

# Clean Air

Tribes and EPA are working together to understand and improve air quality. Many tribes in the Pacific Southwest face significant air pollution challenges. Forty-eight out of 146 tribes, or nearly one-third, are in areas that do not meet the EPA 8-hour ozone standard. Twenty-eight of these tribes are also located in areas designated by EPA as not meeting the fine particulate standard. Many air quality problems are caused by pollution drifting from other areas.

**Twenty-nine tribes received EPA grant support for air quality activities and 25 tribes are operating a total of 53 air monitors.**



*Paiute Shoshone Indians of the Bishop Colony auditing Great Basin Air District air monitoring equipment*

Several tribes have used EPA's General Assistance Program (GAP) to conduct air assessment projects.

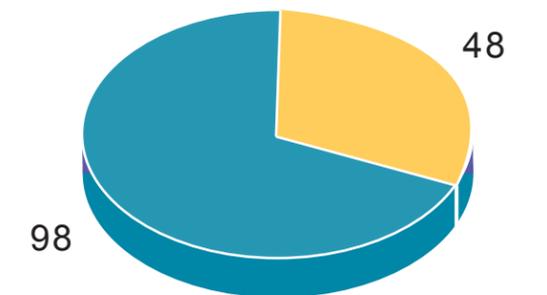
The **Paiute Shoshone Indians of the Bishop Colony's** air activities include meteorological monitoring, maintaining equipment and burn permit program.



*Pala Band of Luiseno Mission Indians PM 2.5 monitor*

**Navajo Nation** and EPA entered into a delegation agreement this year, under which the tribe now administers the federal Title V operating permit program for industrial facilities. This is the first time any tribe in the United States has assumed CAA regulatory authority over such facilities.

## Pacific Southwest Tribes Located in Air Quality Non-Attainment Areas:



■ Non-attainment ■ Attainment

# Clean & Safe Water

Clean and safe water remains a critical, integral piece of EPA 's partnership with tribes. In the Pacific Southwest, tribes face diverse challenges in providing safe drinking water, sanitation, and protecting watersheds and fisheries. Many tribes in the Region intertwine water with cultural activities and daily life.

Over 7,700 tribal homes have received safer drinking water since 1996. Over 1,800 homes have better wastewater disposal facilities.

About 1,250 homes received upgraded water infrastructure in 2005.

Sixty tribes restored watersheds using the tribal Non-point Source Program.

## Providing Water Safe to Drink

Tribes and EPA are working in partnership to provide safe drinking water for tribal community members. In 2005, EPA awarded \$7.3 million in new funding for additional safe drinking water projects at seven tribal communities.



Paiute Shoshone Tribe of the Fallon Reservation arsenic removal water treatment plant

The **Fallon Paiute-Shoshone Tribe** successfully completed construction of an arsenic removal treatment plant providing safe drinking water for the community.

The **Hoopa Valley Tribe** used the EPA Drinking Water Tribal Set-Aside program to build a microfiltration plant which treats water from the Trinity River.



Hoopa Valley Tribe - microfiltration treatment

**Big Valley Rancheria** used their EPA pesticide grant to conduct pesticide exposure assessments for six tribes in Lake County, California. The tribe assessed pathways of pesticide exposure for tribal members, such as use of tule reeds for traditional purposes.



Big Valley Band of Pomo Indians - tule boat



Fort Mojave dance group

This year alone, 55 children in the **Hopland, Yurok, and Fallon Paiute-Shoshone tribes** were tested by the Tribal Blood Lead Screening and Outreach program. Tribes provided outreach materials on the hazards of lead to nearly 1,000 tribal members.



Cortina Indian Rancheria of Wintun Indians, Environmental Youth Camp

## Conducting Environmental Education & Outreach

Many tribes use the General Assistance Program to conduct environmental outreach and education. Several tribes hosted Earth Days and sponsored workshops including inter-tribal youth camps and native cultural resource gathering days. The **Cortina Indian Rancheria** brought together around 300 young people from 11 tribes in Northern California for a series of environmental camps and activities at Lake Berryessa.



Consecpcion Silva Ramirez, San Jose De La Zorra, Mexico



Hualapai Reservation, restoration of Spencer Creek after feral animal removal

# Healthy Tribal Communities

## U.S./Mexico Border

This year marks the first time EPA and tribes have provided safe drinking water to sister indigenous communities in Mexico. In August 2005, the **Pala Band of Mission Indians** and Aqualink, a California nonprofit organization, completed an assessment of the drinking water systems serving seven indigenous communities in the Baja California border region. Based on Aqualink's report, EPA is providing \$66,000 to construct drinking water infrastructure for these communities. Mexico will be providing an unprecedented \$900,000 U.S. dollars to provide safe drinking water and extend electricity to **Santa Catarina** and the **Ejido Quilhuas Tribe**.



San Jose De La Zorra, Baja - hand dug well

In 2005, the **Hopi Tribe** and **Pala Band of Mission Indians** continued to implement and oversee Integrated Pest Management Programs at a day care and schools on their reservations, reducing children's exposure to pesticides.

**With funding from EPA, tribal inspectors observed approximately 1,000 applications of pesticides.**

**Approximately 420 children and 15 pregnant women have been tested for lead poisoning by tribes in EPA's Pacific Southwest Region.**

**The Navajo Nation Pesticide Program conducted approximately 20 pesticide use inspections at schools on the reservation.**



Tohono O'odham Community of the Quitovac in Sonora, Mexico - drinking water system rehabilitation

The **Tohono O'odham Utility Authority** is currently constructing a new drinking water system for the O'odham community of Quitovac in Sonora, Mexico. This project will provide safe drinking water for the village, and for the boarding school of 100 O'odham children.

## Reducing Pesticide and Toxic Exposures

Pesticide inspections ensure tribal community health and safety. Outreach and education programs alert tribal members about pesticide exposure and usage.

## Protecting Water Quality

In 2005, 95 tribes received funding from EPA's Pacific Southwest Regional Office to protect rivers, streams and wetlands under the Clean Water Act, and most tribes monitored their water resources.



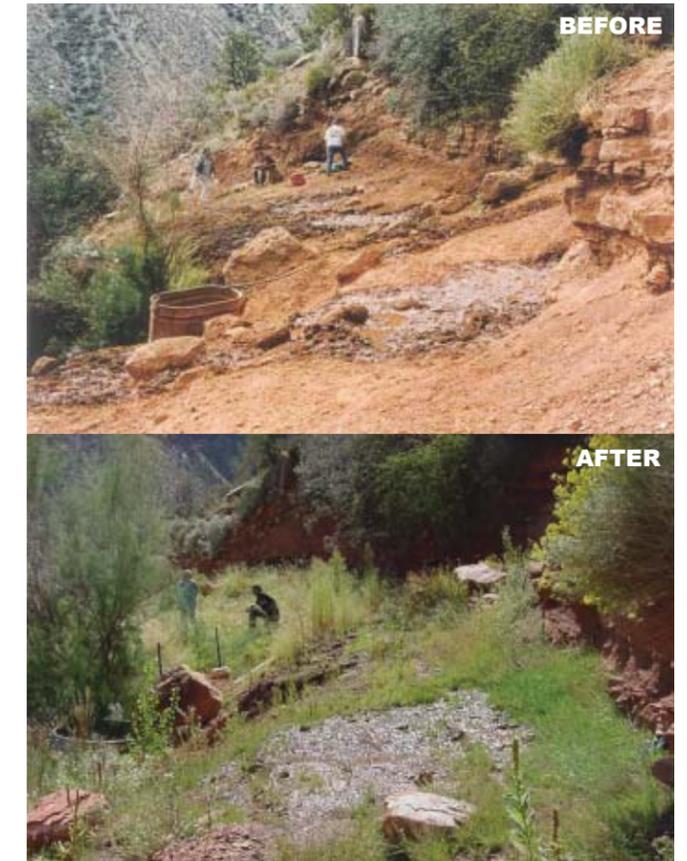
Luana Hillman (left) and Susan Corum (right) of California's Karuk Tribe - sampling water at Iron Gate Reservoir on the Klamath River

Several Klamath Basin tribes, including **Hoopa, Karuk, Quartz Valley Reservation, Resighini Rancheria** and **Yurok**, responded to toxic blue-green algae conditions on the Klamath River. These tribes demonstrated collaborative partnerships by participating in monitoring efforts with EPA, the State of California, the Salmon River Restoration Council and other local agencies. Together, tribes and agencies warned residents and recreational users of the Klamath River to use caution when near toxic algae blooms.



Karuk Tribe of California Water Quality Crew: Sonny Mitchell, Susan Corum, Luana Hillman

The **Hualapai Tribe** enacted Water Quality Standards and tribal ordinances which authorized enforcement to modify wildlife management and ranching practices. The tribe restored riparian wetlands by building fences in grazing areas, and removed feral animals around springs.



Hualapai Tribe wetlands restoration of Red Springs Project

The **Torres-Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians** broke ground in 2005 on an 85-acre, \$1.5 million wetland pilot project. The project will improve water quality and enhance local wildlife habitat. EPA, the State of California, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and the Salton Sea Authority joined the Torres-Martinez Chairman in the groundbreaking ceremony.

The **Fallon Paiute-Shosone Tribe** received a grant from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for mechanical removal and piling of invasive, non-indigenous salt cedar on 800 acres within tribal wetlands. Approximately 70 acres of salt cedar were removed from the reservation wetlands.

# Protecting Tribal Lands

EPA works collaboratively with tribes in one of the most diverse areas of the country, from the Monument Valley at Navajo Nation to the Yurok Reservation at the mouth of the Klamath River. EPA works on a government-to-government basis with the federally recognized tribes of the Pacific Southwest to protect more than 27 million acres, approximately 10% of the region's land base.

Both ordinary trash and hazardous waste threaten tribal lands. For example, tribal lands across the Pacific Southwest host over 800 open dumps, 175 abandoned or uncontrolled leaking underground storage tanks, and six Superfund caliber mine sites. In 2005, EPA was able to help many tribes close dumps, clean up metal waste, dispose of household hazardous waste, deal with abandoned vehicles and develop recycling programs.

## Underground Storage Tanks

In 2005, EPA launched an initiative to assess and clean up abandoned leaking underground storage tank sites on tribal lands. Assessment and cleanup began at nine sites on the **Hopi** and **San Carlos Reservations**. The tribes are also gathering information on other sites to determine eligibility and priority for assessment and cleanup.

The final cleanup plan was implemented at the Tuba City underground storage tank site on the **Hopi Reservation**. All cleanup systems were installed, approximately 7,000 pounds of contamination were removed, and contaminant concentrations in the ground are decreasing.

At the **Navajo Nation**, thanks to increased inspections and enforcement, underground tank compliance rates jumped from 2% in 2002 to 54% in 2004.

## Closing Open Dumps

The **Hopland Band of Pomo Indians** completed clean-ups at three open dump sites on their reservation. The project was funded by EPA and the California Integrated Waste Management Board, Farm and Ranch grant program.

**In 2005, EPA and tribes inspected 79 underground storage tanks, issued 17 field citations, and conducted 19 UST inspector trainings with over 156 tribal participants.**

**Tribes closed 158 dumps this year with EPA GAP and solid waste grant assistance. These dumps range in size from small scatter sites to larger community dumps.**

**54 tribes recycled a total of one million pounds of materials with GAP and solid waste funding.**

**39 tribes have prepared an integrated solid waste management plan.**

**38 tribes have conducted household hazardous waste collection.**

With funding from EPA and the Bureau of Land Management, the **Tohono O'odham Nation** Solid Waste Management Program cleaned-up 84 sites which had accumulated approximately 40 tons of waste from undocumented migrants crossing the U.S.-Mexico border. The **Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe** successfully closed all dumps on their reservation.

## Cleaning up Superfund Sites

The **Yerington Paiute Tribe**, EPA, the State of Nevada, Bureau of Land Management, and other agencies investigated the 3,500 acre abandoned Anaconda copper mine. In December 2004, the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection asked EPA to take over the lead for this site. EPA issued an enforcement order to the responsible parties requiring short-term response actions. EPA conducted preliminary radiological screening using EPA's laboratory scanner van in the town of Yerington and on the **Yerington** and **Walker River Paiute reservations**. This included residential areas, where no anomalous radiation associated with the mine materials off site was found.



Leviathan Creek, Washoe Tribal Land downstream from Leviathan Mine

In 2005, EPA approved year-round acid treatment for the Leviathan Mine, now under development, with critical input from the **Washoe Tribe**. EPA worked closely with Washoe experts to begin the investigation of downstream resources — that impacted plants, animals, soil and water — affected by acid

mine drainage. Several field events with Washoe participation helped to identify ecosystems and species for further investigation.

At the Rio Tinto Mine site, the responsible parties are completing their analysis of cleanup alternatives based on comments received from the **Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of Duck Valley**, EPA and the State of Nevada. EPA and the **Tohono O'odham Nation** made significant progress this year to reach agreement, in concept, on the Cypress Tohono Mine closure plan to be carried out by the Cypress Tohono Corporation.

## Revitalizing Brownfields

EPA provided Brownfields funding for several projects on tribal lands. EPA's Tribal Response program assisted the **Navajo Nation**, **Gila River Indian Community** and **Tohono O'odham Nation** in establishing and enhancing their response programs, and developing an inventory of Brownfields sites. At the **Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community**, the tribe used their Brownfields site assessment and cleanup grant to fully characterize and extinguish an underground fire at the 40-acre Old Tri-Cities Landfill. The tribe will complete the cleanup this year and evaluate development opportunities for the closed landfill.

The **Wiyot Tribe**, located at the **Table Bluff Reservation**, received a Brownfields grant to conduct environmental cleanup at Indian Island, a 6-acre shell mound on the island known as the historic location of the Tolowat Village of the Wiyot. Working with EPA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and California's North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, the tribe is moving forward on cultural and environmental restoration projects at the site. The cultural restoration involves the creation of a sacred tribal gathering place, a place to once again hold the World Renewal Ceremony. The Wiyot Tribe expects to begin cleanup in 2006.