



SOUTHERN UTE INDIAN TRIBE

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U.S. EPA Approves Southern Ute Indian Tribe's Water Quality Standards

Southern Ute Indian Reservation – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced its approval of the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's water quality standards. Melvin J. Baker, the Tribe's Chairman, stated the Tribe's appreciation for the announcement.

“EPA's approval of the Tribe's water quality standards is the culmination of years of work by the Tribe and its staff,” said Chairman Melvin J. Baker. “The tribal approval process included consulting with EPA and the State of Colorado and an outreach and engagement process with tribal members and stakeholders. The Tribe appreciates the EPA's approval and looks forward to implementing the standards and issuing water quality certifications to protect water resources on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation.”

The Tribe's water quality standards serve the primary functions of (1) establishing water quality goals for water bodies on the Southern Ute Indian Reservation over which the Tribe has authority to set water quality standards and (2) providing the legal basis for regulatory pollution controls. Water quality standards describe the desired condition of a water body and the means by which that condition will be protected or achieved. Water bodies can be used for purposes such as recreation (e.g., swimming, fishing, boating), protection of aquatic life, agricultural, public water supply, industrial, navigation, and other purposes.

The Tribe's water quality standards are intended to protect public health and welfare, enhance the quality of water, and serve the purposes of the federal Clean Water Act (“CWA”). As required under the CWA and EPA's implementing regulation, the Tribe's water quality standards include: (1) designated uses for Reservation water bodies, (2) numeric and narrative water quality criteria designed to protect each designated use, (3) anti-degradation policies and procedures to ensure consideration of the maintenance of high-quality waters and the protection of water quality supporting attainment of the designated uses, and (4) general policies to protect water quality. The numeric and narrative water quality criteria incorporate all the EPA's CWA section 304(a) criteria recommendations available when these water quality standards were developed. Any new CWA 304(a) criteria recommendations will be considered during future triennial reviews of these water quality standards.

For information and a copy of the Tribe's standards please visit: <https://www.southernute-nsn.gov/justice-and-regulatory/epd/water-quality/>.