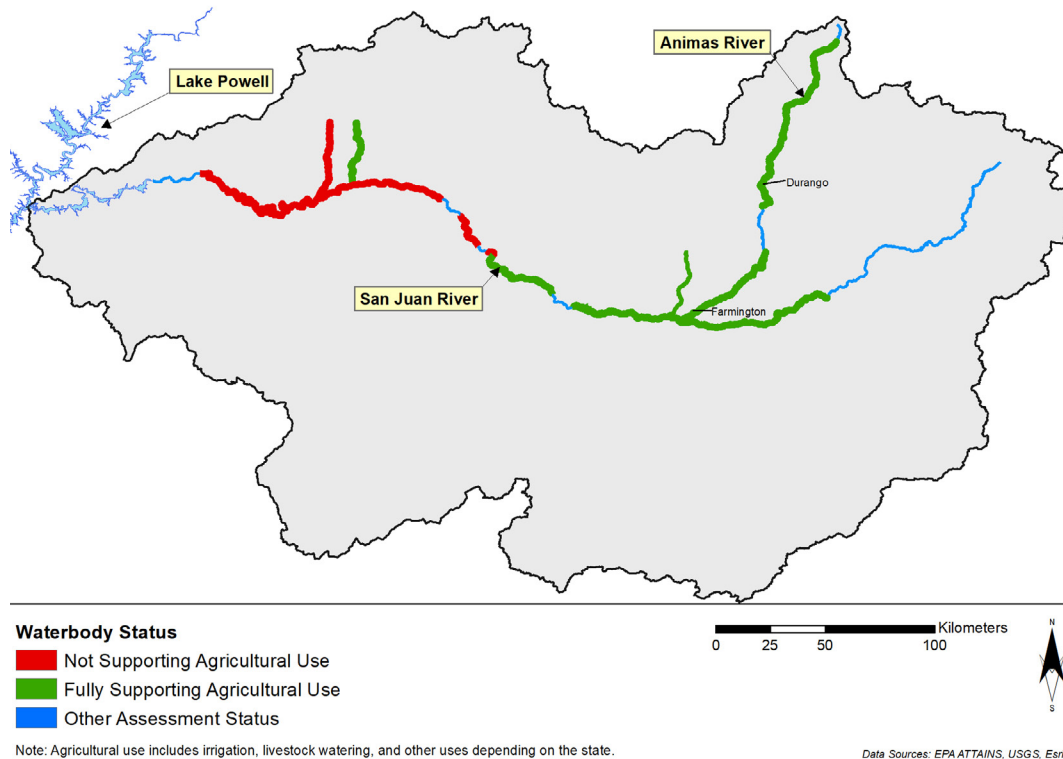


Under the Clean Water Act (CWA), EPA regulates the quality of and discharges of pollutants into our nation’s surface waters. States and tribes regularly monitor and assess surface water quality, communicate water quality conditions to the public, and work to address natural and human-caused water quality issues. The San Juan Watershed in the southwestern United States comprises the San Juan and Animas Rivers and their tributaries. The headwaters of the Animas River lie in a naturally ore-rich mineral belt that was the site of significant historical mining activity. While some metals in the waters of the upper Animas River are naturally occurring, many come from acid mine drainage and runoff from mining disposal piles.

The lower Animas River is diluted by incoming waters with lower levels of metals as the Animas flows southward through Durango, CO to Farmington, NM where it joins the San Juan River. The Animas is the largest free-flowing perennial tributary to the San Juan and can have an important influence on San Juan water quality.

The San Juan River is a source of water and power for over 4 million people. The river crosses diverse landscapes and receives waters from multiple tributaries before it reaches Lake Powell and converges with the Colorado River.

STATE AND TRIBAL ASSESSMENTS¹



This map presents state and tribal assessments of water quality relative to the standards they established under the CWA for agricultural uses. These standards protect livestock that drink the water and crops that are irrigated with the water. Green segments are meeting standards for agricultural uses. Red segments are not meeting standards for agricultural uses. Blue segments were not assessed or not reported or are in the process of being assessed.

¹ This map does not include information for Ute Mountain Ute or Southern Ute Indian Tribes. The Southern Ute was authorized as treatment in a similar manner as a state (TAS) for CWA Section 303(c), and as of July 2020, is in the process of preparing their water quality standards package for EPA review and approval. The Ute Mountain Ute have tribally-adopted and federally-approved water quality standards and are in the process of developing an assessment methodology. The tribes can be contacted directly with any questions related to water quality.

KEY POINTS



EPA, states, tribes and other federal, non-profit, and local entities have conducted extensive monitoring to evaluate watershed condition.



The states and tribes in the watershed have assessed surface water quality based on their respective standards under the CWA. Assessments are updated periodically in accordance with established state and tribal assessment cycles.

- According to CWA reporting for 2020, Colorado determined that waters assessed in the upper and lower Animas River are meeting established state standards for agricultural uses.
- According to CWA reporting for 2018 to 2020, New Mexico determined that the lower Animas River and upper San Juan River in New Mexico were meeting state surface water quality standards for agricultural uses, including for livestock watering and irrigation.
- According to CWA reporting for 2011 to 2017 Navajo Nation determined that waters assessed in the San Juan River and certain tributaries to the San Juan River were not meeting established tribal standards for agricultural use due to levels of certain metals in the water.
- According to CWA reporting for 2016, Utah determined that waters assessed in the lower San Juan River and Lake Powell were meeting established state standards for agricultural uses. Utah determined that an assessed tributary to the lower San Juan River was not meeting standards for agricultural use due to levels of metals and salts.



From 2018 through 2021, EPA is working in collaboration with states and tribes to collect water quality and sediment samples at 39 locations across the watershed. These samples are analyzed for metals and other parameters.

- Results to date showed sporadic excursions above EPA's national water quality recommendations for concentrations of metals that protect livestock and crops.
- Some metals, including nickel and copper, are prevalent in higher concentrations in the upper Animas due to mining activities, but diminish further downstream.
- All available data from these monitoring efforts can be found on [EPA's San Juan Watershed website](https://www.epa.gov/san-juan-watershed).