

EPA Region 9 – End-of-Year Report

FISCAL YEAR 2019

Regional Priorities

1. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AT THE U.S.- MEXICO BORDER
2. INDIAN TRIBES
3. PACIFIC ISLAND TERRITORIES AND FREELY ASSOCIATED STATES
4. IMPROVING OCEAN HEALTH
5. AGRICULTURE
6. AIR QUALITY IMPROVEMENT
7. AGENCY OUTREACH TO THE REGULATED COMMUNITY
8. COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE AND ENFORCEMENT
9. DEPLOYMENT OF EPA'S LEAN MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Looking Back

"I could not be more proud of the work we do in Region 9 to make the air, water, and land cleaner — and the population healthier — in EPA's largest and most populous region. The professionalism and dedication of our staff have paid huge dividends for Region 9 over this past year. Next year will be even better"

Mike Stoker
Regional Administrator

This past year, we focused our energy, talents and resources to accomplish these priorities:

Environmental Protection at the U.S.-Mexico Border

Bring a broad array of federal, state and local partners together to address the transboundary flows of sewage into the United States.

- Region 9 convened 15 stakeholder meetings in 2019 along the Arizona and California sections of the border with Mexico. We convened three in the San Diego area to update federal, state, and local elected officials and organizations on options to control transboundary sewage flows from the Tijuana area into California.

Fund and work closely with North American Development Bank (NADB) to produce a feasibility analysis of high-priority infrastructure options in the United States and Mexico to stem transboundary sewage flows.

- The NADB report, issued in August 2019, is facilitating interagency discussions intended to yield consensus agreement on infrastructure priorities.

Work closely with the EPA Office of International and Tribal Affairs, the EPA Office of Water, the states and the Department of Justice to support the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC).

- EPA joined with IBWC and the State of Arizona to identify integrated solutions to ongoing transboundary pollution issues in Nogales and Sonora, including infrastructure funding strategies.
- These efforts resulted in substantial improvements in collaboration by Arizona and IBWC towards workable solutions and will inform discussions of funding needs with Congress and the White House.
- Region 9 helped lay the foundation for a new border agreement at the International Border 2020 meeting in Mexico City.
- Participating parties agreed to a five-year plan as opposed to the traditional 10-year plan.

- Successfully added a section to the agreement making marine debris and beneficial water reuse a stated goal, incorporating two of the Administration's top international environmental priorities.

Indian Tribes

Increase tribal capacity to enhance environmental protection and public health and improve environmental and human-health conditions in partnership with the 148 tribal governments in Region 9.

Host quarterly tribal operations committee meetings.

- Convened a very successful annual tribal conference in October with nearly 500 participants.
- Scheduled Region 9's next tribal conference for February 2020 in the Reno-Sparks area of Nevada.

Promote cleanup of abandoned uranium mines on Navajo land.

- Led educational visits and meetings to muster resources for the cleanup of abandoned uranium mine sites.
- Briefed stakeholders, Members of Congress, and headquarters staff on the challenges encountered.

Work closely with EPA's Office of International and Tribal Affairs on issues of concern to tribes.

- Supported the Assistant Administrator's tour of Navajo land and his presentation to the Regional Tribal Conference.

Focus on reaching parity regarding access to safe drinking water in Indian Country.

- Spent \$1.7 million to provide onsite technical support, training, and operator certification services to tribal public water systems.
- Awarded \$7.9 million to improve infrastructure at tribal drinking water facilities.

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Pacific Island Territories and Freely Associated States

Improve and augment the grant processes for Pacific island water treatment and solid waste infrastructure and maintenance.

- Region 9 awarded \$30 million in FY19 to the U.S. Pacific island territories for water and wastewater infrastructure projects.
- Helped Guam initiate construction of a major upgrade to the Northern District Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Supported a \$174 million partnership between EPA and Guam that DOD is funding to upgrade civilian wastewater facilities impacted by the military.
- Encouraged Hawaii to utilize State Revolving Funds (SRF) to achieve needed infrastructure improvements.

Respond to any crisis in the Pacific islands as part of our ongoing federal disaster response.

- Performed response mission after Category 5 Super-Typhoon Yutu struck Tinian and Saipan in Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).
- Onboarded a disaster recovery coordinator to address the remaining aftermath of Super-Typhoon Yutu, who will oversee the expenditure of over \$50 million in recovery funds.

Provide technical assistance to the Freely Associated States (FAS) in the Pacific.

- Completing the deployment of a circuit rider to the FAS with funding provided by the Department of Interior and Department of State to advance strategic interests in the Pacific.

Ensure that federal facilities in the Hawaiian islands live up to the highest environmental standards.

- Working with the Navy to make the Red Hill fuel facility (the largest underground tank farm in the world) safe from any further leaks.
- Supervising the cleanup of remaining contaminated areas of the Navy's Pearl Harbor facilities.

Improving Ocean Health

Assemble federal partners, state agencies, local governments, and non-profits to coordinate science and resources for the benefit of clean and healthy oceans.

- Participated in the multi-agency and international coalition of the Coral Reef Task Force in Palau.
- Identified new qualified professional personnel to manage cooperative efforts to reduce the plastic trash load on the oceans.
- Collaborated with Pacific island government officials and not-for-profit entities on methods and research tuned toward prevention and collection of marine debris and pollution generally.
- Shared new techniques for conservation and recovery of coral reefs and fish populations.
- Planning an Oceans Summit in Region 9 for June 2020 that will convene thought leaders in dialogue on the important topics of marine litter and coral reef protection.

Agriculture

Develop relationships within the largest agricultural production area in the world to ensure healthy food and safely address environmental impacts from a multibillion-dollar industry.

- Participated in more than 12 grower events.
- Hosted Region 9's first summit of state, tribal and territorial leaders with the Department of Agriculture.
✓ Goal achieved by awarding \$14.3 million in Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA).
- Convened farmers and ranchers for a Smart Sectors event in Sacramento where a broad cross-section of agriculture professionals met with our Senior Management Team to exchange information about environmental regulations and agricultural stewardship of the land and water.
- Presented Region 9 EPA work that seeks to maintain both the health of our population and the success of this important industry.
- Follow-up by individual Senior Management Team members on the concerns and questions of the Smart Sector participants.

Work to strengthen our relationship and opportunities with Natural Resource Conservation Service both in California and Hawaii.

- ✓ Completed by way of face-to-face meeting.

Air Quality Improvement

Act on 54 State Implementation Plans (SIP) submittals.

- ✓ Goal exceeded: we took final action on 81 SIP submittals, exceeding our target by 50%.

Reduce the number of old or unapprovable State Implementation Plans in the Region's backlog with a goal of achieving 14 SIP withdrawals, increasing the number of withdrawals from the prior year by 25%.

- ✓ Goal exceeded by achieving 30 SIP withdrawals. That exceeded our target by over 100%.

Reduce particulate pollution in sensitive or challenging areas.

- Approved Portola, California's PM 2.5 attainment plan, an innovative plan that is based on a locally implemented voluntary woodstove change-out program in a small rural area where woodsmoke is the primary pollutant.

Prepare for future smoke events with our Region 9 workforce and our local communities.

- Formed a "Smoke Team" to handle the many challenges related to wildfire smoke response and prevention.
- Developed an internal intranet site with resources for our staff and developed protocols to appropriately alert staff when smoke events reach unhealthy levels.
- Engaged with states, tribes, local cities, and regional and national associations to provide expertise and tools in order to support smoke-event preparedness in communities.
- Deployed EPA's Smoke-Ready Toolbox along with our expertise in AQI (air quality index), sensor deployment, and communication strategies.

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This past year, we focused our energy, talents and resources to accomplish these priorities:

Reduce diesel emissions by more than 1,500 tons of NOx and 76 tons of fine particulate matter.

- Achieved by awarding \$14.3 million in DERA grants to 14 recipients leveraging over \$44 million from public and private partners to clean up 264 medium- and heavy-duty diesel engines.

Agency Outreach to the Regulated Community

Complete over 50 industry compliance workshops with an emphasis on DOD, refineries, engines and pesticide imports in FY2019.

✓ Completed.

Promote Region 9 Senior Management Team having direct and sustained engagement with and outreach to the businesses we regulate.

✓ Completed.

Convene quarterly Smart Sectors meetings – with refineries and agriculture – and continue that practice with a mining Smart Sectors meeting in 2020.

✓ Goal achieved, Smart Sectors thriving in Region 9.

Cooperate with federal partner agencies to achieve great environmental outcomes.

- Attended the 2019 Western Regional Partnership meeting at Camp Pendleton with a group encompassing tribal, state, Bureau of Land Management, and Department of Defense leadership throughout Regions 8, 9 and 10.

Compliance and Enforcement

Focus our efforts on meeting our compliance monitoring commitments according to the specific request of the OECA Assistant Administrator.

✓ Completed.

Accomplish 582 inspections based on well-supported projections.

✓ Goal exceeded by completing over 720 inspections.

Maintain vigorous enforcement while focusing on the Administration's goal of compliance assistance.

✓ Completed with 126 enforcement cases.

Reduce pollution and document the reductions.

✓ Completed, with over 33.8 million pounds of pollution reduced or prevented, over \$110 million in injunctive relief, and over \$4.8 million in penalties.

Address immediate public health needs via clean drinking water.

- Issued two emergency orders to address immediate public health issues at Grindstone Indian Rancheria and Oasis Mobile Home Park (Torres Martinez Tribe).
- Issued 12 orders to water providers for health-based violations serving a combined total of more than 10,000 consumers.

Promote enforcement of clean air objective in the face of unique challenges in Region 9.

- Completed our robust mobile source enforcement program.
- Levied over \$1.37 million in penalties.

- Documented over 5 million pounds of emissions reduced in key non-attainment areas.

Train other regions to combat defeat devices, to make important progress on a national compliance initiative.

✓ Goal achieved with national Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assistance partners by developing the FY2020 Defeat Device National Compliance Initiative.

Interdict those who manufacture and support polluting equipment.

✓ Goal achieved, having stopped five separate companies that manufacture and sell defeat devices.

Act against companies operating diesel vehicle fleets in violation of federally enforceable California regulations.

✓ Goal achieved with seven company fleets brought into compliance.

Reduce industrial sources of air pollution, obtain settlements for mutual benefit when possible, but assess penalties when justified.

✓ Goal exceeded: reduced the risk of accidental releases at anhydrous ammonia refrigeration facilities by taking 12 cases, resulting in over \$590K in Supplemental Environmental Projects (SEP) and over \$440K in penalties.

✓ Won the largest CAA112r case against Chevron with \$10 million in SEPs and over \$2.9 million in penalties.

Deployment of EPA's Lean Management System

Train Management in EPA's Lean Management Systems (ELMS).

- Hosted ELMS Leader Behaviors and Leadership and Change Management training for all managers in first quarter.
- Hosted ELMS Post-Deployment Training for managers in fourth quarter.

Provide basic ELMS training to 18 Champions and 340 employees in Region 9, while deploying 39 teams.

✓ Goal exceeded: Region 9 exceeded the agency 50% deployment requirements (65% Teams Deployed & 67% Individuals Trained). R9 is on track to complete ELMS deployment by September 2020.

Expand Region 9 Bowling Chart to include eight R9-specific operation and sustainment metrics.

✓ Completed.

Conduct monthly senior management monthly business reviews, including Assistant Deputy Administrator Henry Darwin.

✓ Completed.

Coordinate Agency, Deputy Regional Administrator, and Division Director ELMS board Gemba reviews.

✓ Completed.

Begin setting up the Region 9 system standard process for problem-solving.

✓ Completed.