

# EPA Environmental News

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## **EPA delegates Clean Water Act authority to southern California tribe**

**SAN FRANCISCO** – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency today announced its approval of the Twenty-Nine Palms Band of Mission Indian's application to administer federal Clean Water Act programs on tribal lands.

The announcement was made today at the 14<sup>th</sup> annual EPA Region 9 tribal conference in San Francisco. The Twenty-Nine Palms Tribe is the 38<sup>th</sup> tribe out of 563 federally recognized tribes nationwide with delegated authority over water quality protection programs to administer water quality standards and a certification program.

"The EPA and tribes attending this conference are pleased to celebrate this achievement with the Twenty-Nine Palms Tribe," said Wayne Nastri, the regional administrator of the EPA's Pacific Southwest region and host of this year's conference. "We will continue to work together to protect and restore precious water resources not only on lands belonging to the Twenty-Nine Palms Tribe, but every tribe in the Pacific Southwest."

The tribe will work with the EPA on a government-to-government basis to develop and adopt water quality standards which, once approved, will form the basis for water quality-based effluent limitations and other requirements for discharges to waters within the tribe's jurisdiction.

The tribe is also authorized to grant or deny certification for federally permitted or licensed activities that may affect waters within the borders of their lands

Under Clean Water Act requirements, the tribe must be federally recognized, have a governing body to carry out substantial governmental duties and powers, have jurisdiction to administer the programs within the boundaries of its reservation, and be reasonably capable of administering the program.

The Twenty-Nine Palms Tribe has a reservation that consists of two properties, in Riverside

County in the city of Coachella and in San Bernardino County between Twenty-Nine Palms and Joshua Tree. There are currently no tribal members residing on the reservations but the tribe wants to ensure that present and future beneficial uses of the water bodies on the reservation are protected from degradation.

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