

POSITION DESCRIPTION
EPA FOUR CORNERS AIR QUALITY LIAISON
(INTERGOVERNMENTAL PERSONNEL ACT ASSIGNMENT)
February 18, 2010

The Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) should establish a senior level job position that would report to EPA Headquarters, and be responsible for coordinating a single EPA position on Four Corners air and related water quality issues. This employee should be recruited and hired as an Intergovernmental Personnel Act (IPA) position in a Four Corners community with some basic staff support. The individual assigned should have senior level management experience and a good grasp of air quality management. The individual needs to be able to deal with cross-media movement of pollutants, e.g., between air and water. (Mercury concentration in rain and snow collected at Mesa Verde National Park has been shown to be the second highest concentration in the U.S., and atmospheric mercury deposition is responsible for mercury fish consumption advisories at McPhee, Narraguinnep, and Vallecito reservoirs (CO), as well as at Navajo Lake (NM)). Outstanding ability to operate in, listen, communicate, and build consensus in a complex jurisdictional setting particularly with tribal officials and industry is critical to the success of the assignment.

I. INTRODUCTION

This position is organizationally assigned within the EPA National Directorate, but is field-based in a Four Corners community. Working very closely with the Regional Administrators of three EPA Regions, and their management teams, the incumbent serves as the principal EPA representative for all air quality and many related water quality issues with respect to the Four Corners area of the southwestern U.S. This position is needed as the Four Corners area is experiencing disproportionate adverse air quality impacts from the clustering of industrial sources, including coal-fired and natural gas facilities that are endangering public health.

II. MAJOR DUTIES

Assists the Regional Administrators in fulfilling their goals and objectives in the Four Corners, while also serving as the EPA's principal liaison officer to State and Tribal interests in the Four Corners. Responsible for providing inter-regional and intra-regional coordination of EPA policy development and implementation in the Four Corners.

Responsible for working with other agencies, tribes, states, Four Corners communities, and industry groups to not only keep them informed, but to coordinate their concerns and needs with appropriate EPA officials.

Provides coordination focus in the Four Corners for EPA air and water interests with the federal land managers.

Provides EPA coordination and focus with the four State air and water regulatory agencies of the Four Corners region, including the Navajo Nation EPA and Water Resources Department, the Southern Ute Tribe, the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the Jicarilla Apache Nation.

Serves the three Regional Administrators and EPA Headquarters as the local EPA liaison for implementation and management of the 1991 Memorandum of Agreement between the Navajo Nation and EPA Regions 6, 8 and 9 (on environmental standards and regulation).

Serves to proactively identify and analyze federal and state legislation, regulation and policy, tribal law and other pertinent initiatives that involve Four Corners air and related water quality issues and opportunities. Ensures that key decision makers are informed of these issues and opportunities.

Assumes a leadership role through traditional paths and innovative methods, to gain open and complete consideration for the protection of Four Corners air resources.

III. KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED BY THE POSITION

Knowledge of how to apply the principles and practices of environmental management, public administration, and public policy analysis to complex multi-jurisdictional air and water issues on a large regional scale.

Thorough familiarity with federal and state clean air and clean water legislation and regulation, and federal land and related water management law and regulation the Four Corners, including familiarity with NEPA.

Substantial knowledge of Native American presence and culture, traditional ecological knowledge and values, tribal government and tribal law in the Four Corners area.

Thorough familiarity with the Four Corners recreational opportunity spectrum including national, state, and tribal parks, wilderness study areas and designated wilderness.

Broad, extensive knowledge of air and water resources on a landscape and multi-state scale, and ability to evaluate and resolve unusual and complex problems.

Broad understanding of energy industry activities, including traditional oil, gas, and coal-bed methane development, coal mining, coal-fired electricity generation and renewable resources energy alternatives.

IV. GUIDELINES

Guidelines include all laws, regulations, court decisions and policies related to air and water quality in the Four Corners, including federal, state, and tribal. Incumbent will exercise judgment in interpreting broad and frequently ambiguous legislation and policy positions.

V. COMPLEXITY

Work involves the interpretation and analysis of laws, court decisions, permit terms and conditions, regulations and policies which are evolving, highly complex, often ambiguous, and often controversial. Incumbent is aware of the various technical, legal, management, and economic implications of his/her interpretation and actively consults and coordinates within the EPA, among states and tribes, and other organizations which his/her work may impact.

VI. SCOPE AND EFFECT

The primary purpose of this position is to assist the Regional Administrators in fulfilling their air and water goals, objectives, and oversight in the Four Corners area. In doing so the incumbent provides advice, opinion and interpretations to the Administrator and Assistant Administrators in EPA Headquarters, EPA Regional Administrators, Air and Water Directors, State and Tribal officials, and others. The work performed establishes legal, regulatory, and policy markers for air and water quality management and protection in the Four Corners.

VII. PERSONAL CONTACTS

Contacts are with EPA senior executives, other federal, State, Tribal, Congressional and industry officials, local elected officials and representatives of the public. These contacts are often with individuals at equivalent or higher levels of responsibility. The purpose of the contacts is not only to provide information, but also to investigate, justify, defend, explain, facilitate, negotiate and resolve matters relating to air and water permitting, resource protection, monitoring, and agency and industry roles, responsibility, and funding for the Four Corners area. These issues will often be controversial and significant to local, state, tribal, industry, and sometimes national interests. These contacts will often involve communicating with those holding diverse and conflicting views which will require compromise, innovation, and flexibility by the incumbent.

VIII. SUPERVISORY CONTROLS

Works under the supervision of the EPA Administrator (or her designate). Incumbent is given exceptional latitude in development of work priorities, scheduling, and coordination. Assignments are framed at the Senior Executive level, and work is carried out with no day to day supervision. Work is reviewed primarily in relation to broad policy requirements, conformance with EPA policy, improvement in intergovernmental relationships, and is based upon input from cooperating federal, tribal, and state executives.

IX. PHYSICAL LOCATION

The incumbent is located in a Four Corners community where necessary resources and services are available to meet the needs of the position.