

For Immediate Release

Aug. 23, 2019

Contact: Maddy Hayden, Communications Director
New Mexico Environment Department
505.231.8800 | maddy.hayden@state.nm.us

The Office of the Picuris Pueblo Governor
575.587.2519 | tribalsecretary@picurispueblo.org
575.587.0110 | environment@picurispueblo.org



Environment Department seeking information about illegal dumping *Raw sewage detected recently in Rio Pueblo*

PICURIS PUEBLO — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) needs the public’s help in reporting and identifying illegal dumping into water bodies.

Last week, Picuris Pueblo found evidence of raw sewage in the Rio Pueblo, including toilet paper and other solids. Within an hour, the Pueblo restricted access to the river as a precautionary measure. After the Pueblo contacted NMED, Surface Water Quality Bureau and Pueblo staff jointly sampled the river at the Pueblo and several miles downstream.



Preliminary results indicate that levels of *E. coli* in the Rio Pueblo are at normal levels and below water quality standards of both the State and the Pueblo. **Currently, the Rio Pueblo is open and safe for recreation.**

The presence of *E. coli* in water is a strong indication of recent sewage or animal waste contamination. Some *E. coli* bacteria can cause disease, including nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, diarrhea and fever.

Although the source of the spill has not been identified, it appears to be the result of an illegal discharge into the Rio Pueblo. Picuris Pueblo is offering a \$500 reward to anyone who identifies the party responsible for the spill.

In New Mexico, discharging any water contaminant without a permit is a 4th degree felony.

NMED depends on involved citizens to assist in holding violators accountable. NMED and Picuris Pueblo encourage anyone who witnesses suspicious activities in the environment to contact NMED’s environmental incident hotline at 1-800-219-6157 (toll free) or file a report at <https://www.env.nm.gov/general/report-an-environmental-issue-or-incident/>.

###

NMED does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in the administration of its programs or activities, as required by applicable laws and regulations. NMED is responsible for coordination of compliance efforts and receipt of inquiries concerning non-discrimination requirements implemented by 40 C.F.R. Parts 5 and 7, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973; the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 13 of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972. If you have any questions about this notice or any of NMED’s non-discrimination programs, policies or procedures, you may contact: Kristine Yurdin, Non-Discrimination Coordinator

New Mexico Environment Department
1190 St. Francis Dr., Suite N4050
P.O. Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87502
(505) 827-2855
nd.coordinator@state.nm.us

If you believe that you have been discriminated against with respect to a NMED program or activity, you may contact the Non-Discrimination Coordinator identified above.

###