

ARIZONA NONPOINT SOURCE PROGRAM ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2026

*Update on ADEQ's progress toward meeting
water quality protection and restoration goals
related to nonpoint source pollution*

JUNE 2026

Our Mission and Vision

To protect and enhance public health and the environment in Arizona

Through consistent, science-based environmental regulation; and clear, equitable engagement and communication;

With integrity, respect, and the highest standards of effectiveness and efficiency;

Because Arizonans treasure the unique environment of our state and its essential role in sustaining well-being and economic vitality, today and for future generations.

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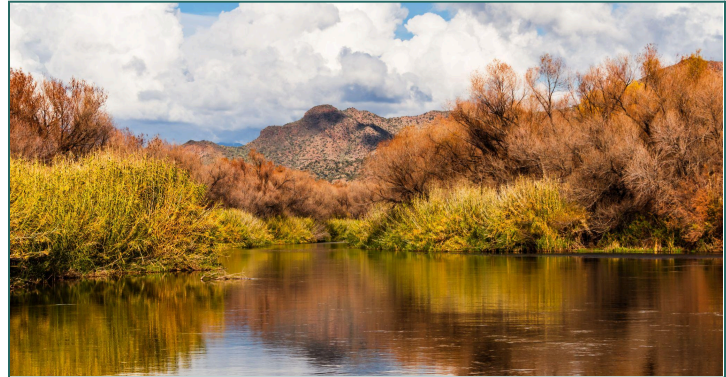
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Acronyms

ADEQ	Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
AZCSA	Arizona Community Science Alliance
CWA	Clean Water Act
EPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
FY	Fiscal Year
NPS	Nonpoint Source
PPG	Performance Partnership Grant
WBID	Waterbody Identification
XRF	X-Ray Fluorescence

Section 1. Executive Summary

This Nonpoint Source (NPS) Annual Report for state fiscal year 2026 (FY26) summarizes the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality's (ADEQ) NPS Program activities that occurred between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026. The state's FY26/27 Performance Partnership Grant (PPG) Work Plan Output Report also documents FY26 NPS-funded activities and is a companion document to this report.



ADEQ's NPS Program is funded primarily by Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) grant monies, awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). CWA Section 319(h)(11) requires states to report annually on the progress made in meeting the schedule of milestones contained in the Nonpoint Source Management Plans (aka the Five Year Plans).

It also requires states to report, to the extent possible, NPS pollutant loading reductions and improvements in water quality resulting from program implementation. For more information about Arizona's NPS Program's goals and structure for the FY26-30 reporting period, refer to the [FY26-30 Five Year Plan](#).

The FY26-30 NPS Five Year Plan has the following goals:



Section 2. NPS Program Funding

The Section 319 NPS Management Program was established by the 1987 amendments to the Clean Water Act. Under Section 319, states, territories, and tribes receive grant funding that supports a variety of activities. Each fiscal year, ADEQ receives approximately \$1.3 million for NPS project implementation. States must allocate grant funds within one year and spend grant funds within five years of disbursement.

A 40 percent non-federal match is required for all projects. This match requirement can be met through cash or in-kind services, such as volunteer work. The federal government provides the remaining 60 percent of the funding through Section 319.

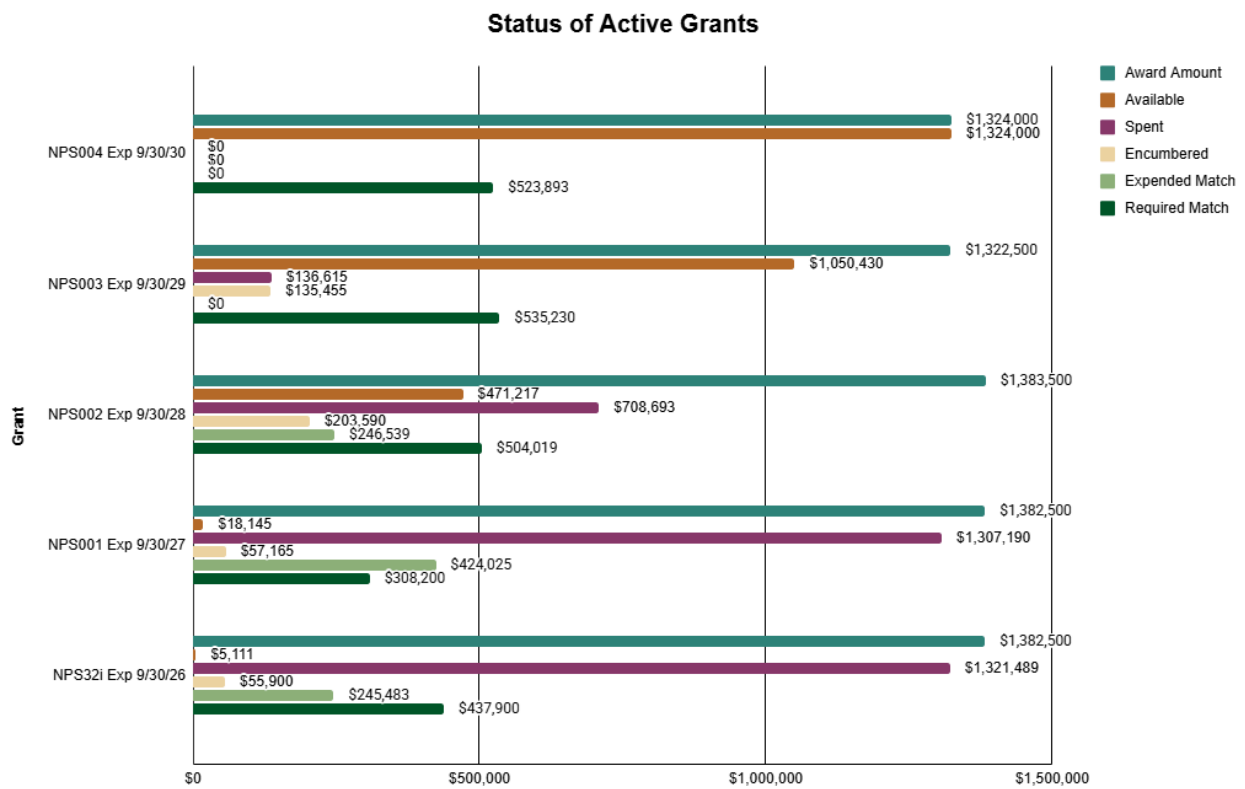


Figure 1. Status of active Clean Water Act Section 319 grants, including match requirements

Additional Funding Sources External Grant Awards	
\$373,000	Arizona Water Protection Fund grant from the Arizona Department of Water Resources Funds a 3-year project along the Babocomari River Watershed to implement upland and riparian measures to improve watershed function, water quality, and habitat health.
\$250,000	U.S. Department of Interior's Abandoned Hardrock Mine Lands Reclamation Grant This grant funds remediation of mine waste, tailings, and various mine workings at the Oro Flame Mine located in the Hassayampa River Watershed.

Section 3. Mission Outcomes

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Conducted 5 archaeological surveys in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act
- 

Investigated 9 abandoned hardrock mines for metals contamination
- 

Received \$320,000 in a state grant to implement Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration in an *E.coli* impaired waterbody
- 

Engaged with 6 new partners to identify NPS projects to reduce *E.coli* contamination
- 

Conducted post-project effectiveness monitoring at 11 project sites

- 10** Access Agreements Signed
- 1** Success Stories Published
- 195** XRF Samples Collected
- 285** Surface Water Samples Collected

7,500 lbs.
Trash removed from Arizona's surface waters by over 400 volunteers

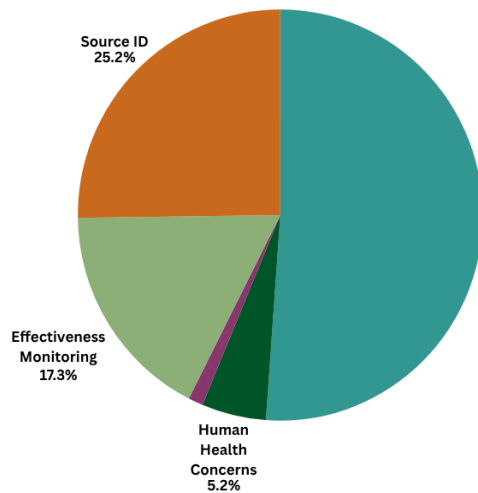


Trash clean up on the Santa Cruz River (January 2026)

AZCSA Surface Water Sampling FY26



Post-Remediation Monitoring at Three R Mine



- **Data Gap - 655 Sampling Events**
 Quarterly samples collected on waterbodies lacking biological or chemical data necessary to make an assessment. Necessary for Clean Water Act Section 305(b)
- **Source Identification - 323 Sampling Events**
 Targeted monitoring to isolate specific pollutants within impaired waterbodies and pinpoint pollutant origins. Necessary for Clean Water Act Sections 303(d) and 319.
- **Effectiveness Monitoring - 222 Sampling Events**
 Effectiveness monitoring before, during, and after restoration and remediation interventions. Establishes specific ecosystem and hydrologic baselines; determines success of implementation procedures in reducing pollutant loads in waterbodies. Necessary for Clean Water Act Sections 303(d) and 319.
- **Human Health Concerns - 66 Sampling Events**
 Self-funded, weekly water quality testing conducted on high-recreation waterbodies like Oak Creek Canyon. Emphasis on microbiological hazards that present an immediate threat to recreators.
- **Obligated - 15 Sampling Events**
 Water quality monitoring activities required by contract, grant agreements, or legal settlement.

Section 4. Project Highlight

Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mine Reduces Lead in Nearby Eugene Gulch, a Tributary of Big Bug Creek

The Eugene Mine is a former gold mine and mill site in the Big Bug Creek watershed in the Bradshaw Mountains of the Prescott National Forest, Yavapai County. The mine site sits on an unnamed tributary to Eugene Gulch (WBID 15070102-1994) which flows into Eugene Gulch (WBID 15070102-768), a tributary to Big Bug Creek (WBID 15070102-034B). Mine features at the site were found to be leaching high amounts of lead and copper during stormflow. ADEQ



Construction of waste rock repository

contracted Tetra Tech to regrade, cover, and consolidate approximately 1,850 cubic caption yards of waste rock. A borrow/repository area was developed for a repository and cover material. The covered piles were revegetated and the access road to the site was repaired and enhanced, benefitting local property owners. Remediation was completed in February of 2022, with effectiveness monitoring completed in November of 2025. During the most recent site evaluation, it was noticed that the repository area had grown in well with vegetation, now showing between 50



Vegetation regrowth on waste rock consolidation pile

to 75 percent plant coverage with a diversity of native species including yarrows, thistles, toadflax, blooming Penstemons, oaks, tiquillas, deervetch, brownfoot, and many grasses and other plant species. Numerous pollinators were observed patrolling the blooms as well. Many of the wattles were being overgrown with plants, having served their purpose. The tackified mulch, where still visible, had formed strong mats where seedlings easily sprouted from. Many sections of the access road were heavily weathered from the previous fall which included many strong storm events. The lead impairment on the unnamed tributary was

resolved by the remediation. Time and nature are once again reclaiming the site.

Section 5. Five Year Plan Updates | FY26

To make this report as useful as possible as an evaluation tool for EPA and a planning tool for ADEQ, each milestone in the FY26 Nonpoint Source Annual Report Table was evaluated based on whether it was on track for the given year and whether it was on track for the overall five-year planning period. This allows staff to identify when additional resources may be needed to keep a milestone on track over a period of several years, and plan accordingly for the following fiscal year. Milestone updates provide status information for the given reporting year. Milestones are identified as “Not Yet Started”, “In Progress”, “Complete”, or “Off Track”.

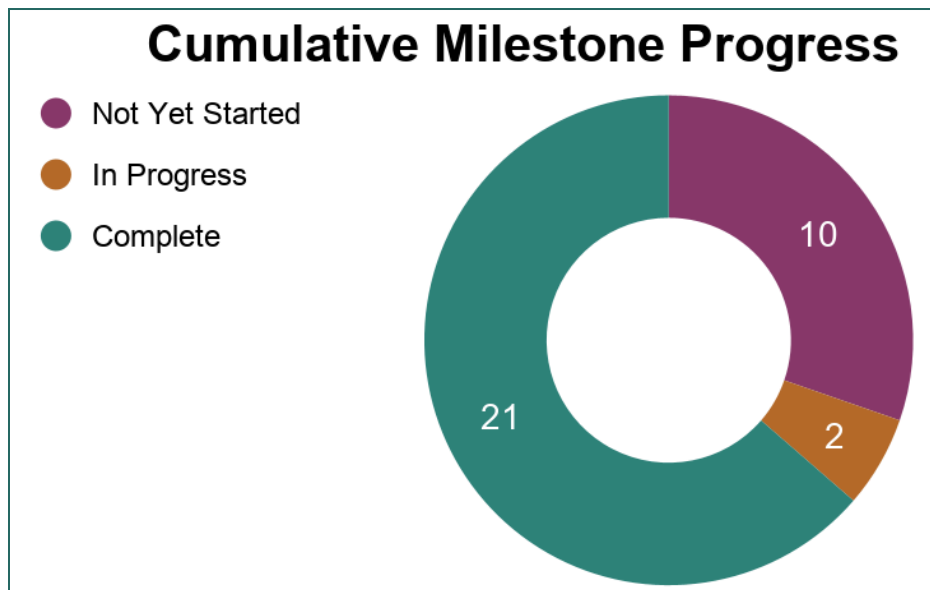


Figure 2. ADEQ's cumulative progress toward meeting NPS Five Year Plan milestones

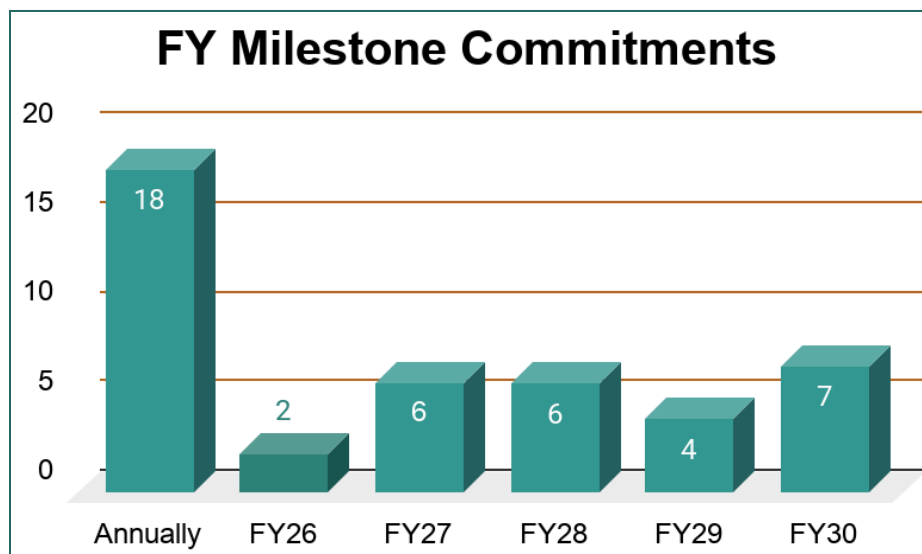


Figure 3. Number of NPS Five Year Plan milestones ADEQ must meet each year

Appendix A. Five Year Plan Annual Report Table

FY2026 Nonpoint Source Annual Report

(July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026)

MILESTONE	DUE DATE	STATUS	% COMPLETE	NOTES
Goal 1. Maintain and grow partnerships to leverage knowledge and resources			88%	

Strategy 1. Build upon existing partnerships

Continue to use inter-agency agreements with federal land managers to implement watershed improvement projects	Annually	Complete	100%	Complete for FY26 - new agreements are with U.S. Forest Service for 7 abandoned hardrock mines polluting waterbodies.
Sub-award NPS funding to non-governmental organizations to implement watershed improvement projects	Annually	Complete	100%	Complete for FY26 - new agreements are with the Watershed Management Group to implement Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration in Cienega Creek (AZ15050302-006B) and riparian cattle fencing along the Babocomari River (AZ15050202-004), a tributary to the San Pedro River (AZ15050202-008). View a map of waterbodies on ADEQ's website here: https://azdeq.gov/emaps
Expend NPS funding for private/for-profit entities to implement watershed improvement projects	Annually	Complete	100%	Complete for FY26 - ADEQ has contracted with Tetra Tech and Atlas to conduct remediation at abandoned hardrock mines polluting waterbodies, specifically the Hassayampa River (AZ15070103-007A), Big Bug Creek (AZ15070102-034A), Lynx Creek (AZ15070102-033A), and Alum Gulch (AZ15050301-561B). View a map of waterbodies on ADEQ's website here: https://azdeq.gov/emaps
Seek opportunities to visit NPS projects on Tribal land and collaborate with tribes to learn about their programs and practices, as available	Annually	Complete	100%	Complete for FY26 - ADEQ met with members of the Navajo Nation at the 2026 National Association of Abandoned Mines Lands Program's Winter Business Meeting to learn more about their uranium mine reclamation program. ADEQ also received comments on a proposed rulemaking from the San Carlos Apache Tribe, which were incorporated into the final draft of the rules pertaining to ADEQ's remediation of abandoned hardrock mines under the Clean Water Act Section 319 Program. ADEQ will continue to seek input and opportunities to collaborate more with Tribes.
Continue to offer support for the National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)	Annually	Complete	100%	Complete for FY26 - ADEQ continues to reach out to NRCS Tucson Office to gauge progress on the Babocomari River, an NWQI Priority Watershed. However, the NRCS has experienced significant turnover and ADEQ has been unable to gain substantial traction with NRCS. ADEQ continues to sub-award NPS funding to watershed groups to conduct low-tech process-based restoration along the Babocomari River.

Strategy 2. Partner with the Arizona Community Science Alliance to increase public awareness of NPS pollution and how the public can help mitigate it

Attend at least one (1) outreach event to educate the public on what NPS pollution is and ways to reduce it	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ participated in Arizona's Envirothon competition as guest presenters on watershed protection and the NPS program. Arizona Envirothon is a statewide natural resource education competition designed to challenge high school students in several key areas, including aquatic ecology, forestry, soils and land use, and wildlife.</p> <p>Additionally, ADEQ participated in the Arizona Hydrological Society's Field Class tour in June, taking future hydrologists to see abandoned hardrock mines that had been remediated via the NPS program.</p>
Identify streams that need effectiveness monitoring after project implementation and enlist community scientist volunteers to conduct sampling	FY27 FY28 FY29 FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	ADEQ has prepared ahead of time to begin conversations with community science volunteers to conduct post-project effectiveness monitoring.
Sub-award a non-governmental organization participating in the Arizona Community Science Alliance to implement a watershed project	FY27	Complete	100%	Completed ahead of schedule in FY26 - The Watershed Management Group has been participating in the AZ Community Science Alliance and is now a subrecipient of NPS funding to implement Low-Tech Process-Based Restoration at the Babocomari River and Cienega Creek. ADEQ will continue to build on this partnership and encourage other subrecipients to get involved with the AZ Community Science Alliance to collect valuable water quality data.

Strategy 3. Expand engagement efforts in communities where projects are actively being implemented

Engage in and/or facilitate community clean-up events to encourage direct action and awareness of NPS pollution	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ partnered with AZ State Parks, National Forest Foundation, Oak Creek Watershed Council, and other partners to host the second annual Oak Creek Collaborative Clean-Up event in November 2025.</p> <p>ADEQ also trained 20 staff members on wet-dry mapping streams while also picking up trash in the Santa Cruz River and the Rio de Flag.</p>
Participate in conferences, community events, seminars, and other opportunities to share knowledge and build relationships that further NPS projects	Annually	Complete	100%	Completed for FY26 - ADEQ attended the following conferences: 1) National Association of Abandoned Mine Lands Program Winter Business Meeting and 2025 Annual Conference; 2) 2026 Santa Cruz River Research Days; 3) 2025 Mining & Metallurgical Society of America's Annual Symposium; 4) 2025 National Nonpoint Source Workshop
Use social media to encourage environmentally responsible behavior and to educate people on NPS pollution	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ continues to share Leave No Trace principles on social media to encourage responsible recreation near waterbodies.</p> <p>ADEQ's Communications team was also awarded the Arizona Forward 2025 Environmental Excellence Award for their engaging and educational content.</p>
Expand ADEQ's current NPS webpage to be more educational and a resource for the public and partners	FY27	In Progress	50%	Started in FY26 - A full website redesign project was launched in 2026 and will be completed in FY27.

Goal 2. Improve water quality through targeted NPS mitigation projects	75%
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Strategy 1. Balance direct-funded projects with sub-awarded projects

Implement targeted NPS mitigation projects	Annually	Complete	100%	Completed for FY26 - new projects this year included: Sheldon Mine, Oro Flame Mine, AZ Victory Copper Mine, Money Metals Mine, Bonnie & Clyde Mine, European Mine, Ventura Mine, Rink Mine, and World's Fair Mine. These are abandoned hardrock mines that are contaminating nearby streams impaired for metals. Additionally, the following new projects for reducing E.coli included: Babocomari River riparian fence and LTBR, beaver dam analogs and LTPBR at Cienega Creek (Mattie Canyon), and a continuous monitoring effort at Oak Creek with USGS. FY27 is gearing up new projects to reduce E.coli at Verde River, San Pedro River, and the Santa Cruz River. All project details are submitted to EPA's Grants Reporting & Tracking System (GRTS).
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Strategy 2. Continue to implement projects that address top impairment parameters using data from ADEQ's Clean Water Act Assessment Dashboard

Implement high-priority projects in <i>E.coli</i> -impacted watersheds	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - After over 5 years of NPS investment, all segments of Oak Creek are attaining the E.coli standard! ADEQ plans to remain aware of efforts in Oak Creek while identifying and prioritizing another nearby E.coli-impacted watershed, the Verde River.</p> <p>In FY26, ADEQ completed an analysis of E.coli impairments across the state in an effort to prioritize new watersheds for NPS project implementation. The analysis accounted for the state's newer E.coli standard, existing watershed plans and TMDLs, engaged partners, and 10-year data trends. This analysis led to the prioritization of: Verde River (AZ15060202-025); Santa Cruz River (AZ15050301-008B); Babocomari River (AZ15050202-004); San Pedro River (AZ15050202-008).</p> <p>View a map of waterbodies on ADEQ's website here: https://azdeq.gov/emaps</p>
Implement high-priority projects in metals-impacted watersheds	Annually	Complete	100%	Completed for FY26 - ADEQ continues to prioritize the remediation of abandoned hardrock mines to address long standing contamination in rivers. ADEQ is currently remediating 3 abandoned mines in the Lynx Creek watershed (AZ15070102-033A); 3 abandoned mines in the Big Bug Creek watershed (AZ15070102-034A); 1 abandoned mine in the Hassayampa River watershed (AZ15070103-007A); 2 abandoned mines in the Alum Gulch watershed (AZ15050301-561C); and 2 abandoned mines in the Cox Gulch watershed (AZ15050301-560). View a map of waterbodies on ADEQ's website here: https://azdeq.gov/emaps
Implement projects in other watersheds identified as high priority by ADEQ, as applicable	Annually	Complete	100%	Completed for FY26 - ADEQ underwent a large prioritization effort this year, starting new efforts in several watersheds mentioned above. ADEQ will continue to balance the implementation of projects in new watersheds with the ongoing needs of past projects in order to observe pollutant load reductions.

Strategy 3. Explore solutions that improve watershed health for all Arizonans, visitors, and wildlife

Conduct an analysis that identifies impaired waterbodies that have not yet received Clean Water Act 319 funding and project implementation	FY28	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
Implement an NPS mitigation project in a watershed that has not previously received Clean Water Act 319 funding	FY28	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
Measure the success of the implemented project, including pollutant load reductions and other benefits	FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A

Strategy 4. Make data-driven decisions regarding the projects the program implements to maximize time, energy, and resources that enable the best outcomes

Measure the effectiveness of watershed projects by collecting surface water and soil samples, as applicable	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ engaged with internal staff and consultants to conduct stream sampling for metals at the following project sites: World's Fair Mine, Humboldt Mine, European Mine, Ventura Mine, AZ Victory Copper Mine, Oro Flame Mine, Rink Mine, Money Metals Mine, Bonnie & Clyde Mine, and Sheldon Mine.</p> <p>ADEQ engaged with subrecipients to conduct stream sampling for E.coli at the following project sites: Cienega Creek, Oak Creek, and Babocomari River.</p> <p>ADEQ coordinates with the AZ Community Science Alliance to provide additional capacity to conduct sampling. ADEQ also engaged with ASU's Center for Bio-mediated and Bio-inspired Geotechnics to collect soil samples from abandoned mines that are used in lab-based bench-scale testing of novel soil stabilization methods from pine resins and bioenzymes. The bioenzymes were applied at Cash Mine in 2025, and more samples were collected from other abandoned mines in FY26 for future applications.</p>
Measure pollutant load reductions resulting from projects and report to EPA and the public via EPA's Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS)	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ submitted data to GRTS by the March 31, 2026 deadline.</p> <p>Additionally, ADEQ submitted 4 NPS Success Stories to GRTS, of which 1 was published by EPA Headquarters ("Miller Creek Delisted for E.coli Due to Construction of Much Needed Public Restroom").</p> <p>EPA's NPS Projects Data Explorer: https://ordspub.epa.gov/ords/grts/ff?p=109:9940:::9940::#map</p>
Use technology and tools to gather and interpret data to make informed decisions on projects	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ continues to use handheld X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analyzers to capture elemental composition of soils at abandoned hardrock mines, which accompanies stream sampling data.</p> <p>ADEQ built continuous monitoring stations with USGS installed at Oak Creek that are being used to develop predictive models of E.coli concentrations.</p> <p>ADEQ also conducts Stream Ecosystem Monitoring (SEM) to compliment stream quality data and measure impacts within ecosystems.</p> <p>ADEQ also installs handmade Remote Environmental Monitors (REMs) that utilize open-source Arduino code and sensors that ping when water is present to aid in sampling ephemeral streams during stormflows.</p>
Develop and submit at least one (1) NPS Success Story to EPA via GRTS	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ submitted 4 NPS Success Stories to GRTS, of which 1 was published by EPA Headquarters ("Miller Creek Delisted for E.coli Due to Construction of Much Needed Public Restroom").</p> <p>EPA's NPS Projects Data Explorer: https://ordspub.epa.gov/ords/grts/ff?p=109:9940:::9940::#map</p>
Identify other ways of measuring project success and share via EPA NPS Success Stories	Annually	Complete	100%	<p>Completed for FY26 - ADEQ's published Success Story for Miller Creek also highlighted the compassionate solution for water quality (a restroom) also resolved long-standing needs of a local population experiencing homelessness.</p>

Goal 3. Protect attaining waters by identifying NPS threats **60%**

Strategy 1. Expand NPS projects in attaining watersheds that are at risk of exceeding protective surface water quality standards

Develop a process for project implementation within an attaining waterbody or Outstanding Arizona Water (OAW) that aims to build resiliency	FY26	Complete	100%	Completed for FY26 - ADEQ is restoring an OAW, Cienega Creek (AZ15050302-006B), with Watershed Management Group, utilizing LTPBR practices. The project is in its second phase, where Post-Assisted Log Structures (PALs) and one-rock check dams are being installed to stabilize headcuts, reduce speed of flows, and overall restore the floodplain.
Establish a predictive model and prioritization structure to identify watersheds that are at risk of exceeding surface water quality standards; prioritize those watersheds that have existing watershed-based plans or total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) that would allow them to be eligible for NPS funding	FY26 FY27	In Progress	80%	In progress for FY27 - As mentioned above, ADEQ prioritized Cienega Creek as an OAW that could potentially exceed for E.coli. ADEQ will continue to work on the predictive model and prioritization structure in FY27.

Strategy 2. Implements projects to protect attaining waterbodies from degradation, including OAWs

Implement protection projects in prioritized attaining, at risk watersheds	FY28 FY29 FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
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Goal 4. Explore alternate funding sources to complement NPS funding 33%

Strategy 1. Identify and apply for external federal and state grants that can support NPS project and provide additional state match funding for NPS grants

Develop a system to track yearly external grant opportunities	FY27	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
Develop a grant writing and application process that can expedite ADEQ's application to external grants	FY28 FY29 FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
Identify and apply for one (1) external grant	FY30	Complete	100%	Completed in FY26 - ADEQ applied for and was awarded the FY26 Arizona Water Protection Fund grant from the Arizona Department of Water Resources. ADEQ applied with Watershed Management Group, and implementation of the project along the Babocomari River (AZ15050202-004) has begun, which will install Post-Assisted Log Structures (PALs) and riparian pole plantings to restore a heavily grazed ephemeral drainage causing E.coli impairments downstream. The 3-year project is expected to cost \$373,000. ADEQ applied for and was awarded the first-ever state FY26 Abandoned Hardrock Mine Reclamation grant from the Department of Interior. ADEQ applied with the Arizona State Mine Inspector's Office for and received the entire award amount - \$250,000 - which will fund a 5-year remediation project at the Oro Flame Mine in Yavapai County, as well as digitize historic paper mine records that will be incorporated into a statewide abandoned mine inventory.

Goal 5. Analyze surface water quality data to determine primary sources of NPS pollution 0%

Strategy 1. Monitor and evaluate surface water quality data to guide source identification and effective project implementation

Conduct a review of existing surface water quality data, TMDLs, watershed management plans, and information from any other applicable sources to better understand known nonpoint sources of pollution and identify where data gaps may exist	FY27	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
As surface water data is collected each year, update the source contributions derived from Milestone 1 above	FY28 FY29 FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A
Use GIS or other mapping technology to visualize surface water quality data in relation to certain attributes (e.g., septic systems, abandoned mines, AZPDES, etc.) to identify facilities or properties that may be contributing nonpoint sources of pollution to nearby surface water bodies	FY30	Not Yet Started	0%	N/A