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PCB OCCURENCE IN BERNALILLO COUNTY, NM STORMWATER SEDIMENTS

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ABSTRACT: In response to 2009 findings by the NM Environment Department (NMED) that stormwater from urbanized areas in Bernalillo County carries concentrations of PCBs in excess of water quality criteria for the Rio Grande, Bernalillo County worked with the US Geological Survey to conduct a 2010 stormwater sediment screening program to assess historical PCB discharges from four County stormwater systems. The results illustrated that estimated PCB levels in County stormwater are consistent with levels observed by NMED, and indicated that PCB aroclors used for a wide range of applications prior to 1950 remain in the County watershed and are transported by stormwater to the Rio Grande. Further sampling at the County Sanchez Farms Stormwater Facility established that passive sediment removal followed by treatment in a constructed wetlands effectively reduced the concentration of PCBs in stormwater. Using CWA 319(h) grant funds, Bernalillo County has retained a consulting firm to assist with an evaluation of BMPs applicable to its stormwater facilities. The County has also obtained state seed funding to begin installing one or more structural BMPs recommended in the evaluation.

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