



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EPA approves KBIC's Water Quality Standards

April 12, 2024 - Baraga, MI, The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is pleased to announce that on April 8, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved KBIC's Water Quality Standards (WQS). KBIC President Doreen Blaker stated, "KBIC has been working diligently on Water Quality Standards since 2020 when we were granted Treatment as a State status by the EPA. We are proud of the work done to get our standards approved and create protection for our great natural resource, Lake Superior."

KBIC Tribal Council Secretary Susan LaFernier also acknowledged the significance of the achievement stating, "Earth Day is April 22, 2024 and what better time to celebrate this accomplishment as we continue our goal to protect the natural gifts of our Earth. Thank you to all for the achievements since 2013 when our Treatment as a State process began." KBIC is the first tribe in Michigan to achieve this regulatory authority for water quality. These standards can now be used for certifications and permitting under Clean Water Act (CWA) §401 for KBIC's L'Anse Reservation.

The KBIC Tribal Water Quality Regulations provide the basis for all water management decisions and activities that affect Waters of the Reservation (WOR) including but not limited to point-source permitting and the physical alteration of water bodies, including wetlands. In addition, they recognize, protect, and provide for the sacred relationship that exists between the Ojibwe people of KBIC, their waters, and all life.

The EPA has long encouraged and assisted American Indian tribes to create and administer locally-relevant environmental programs. The process for establishing WQS is rigorous and all standards are approved in accordance with the Clean Water Act by EPA.

The standards and requirements found (within this enactment) are intended to protect the public health and welfare; to restore, enhance, and conserve the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of our waters; and to protect the natural resources of KBIC for present and future generations.

(more)

For more information about WQS, please visit these websites:

<https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/water-quality-standards-regulations-keweenaw-bay-indian-community>

<https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech>

<https://nrd.kbic-nsn.gov/sites/default/files/Water%20Quality%20Standards%202024.pdf>

About Keweenaw Bay Indian Community

The Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) is a federally recognized Tribe and is signatory to the Treaties with the Chippewa of 1842 and 1854. Established under the Treaty of 1854, the primary land base of the KBIC is the L'Anse Indian Reservation. The L'Anse Indian Reservation consists of approximately 59,000 acres and services members within the boundaries of the reservation in Baraga County, as well as members in Marquette, Ontonagon, and Houghton counties. KBIC currently has over 3,500 enrolled members.

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