

U.S. EPA FACT SHEET

West Pinal County, Arizona Redesignation to Nonattainment for the 1987 24-hour PM₁₀ National Ambient Air Quality Standard

May 22, 2012

Summary

- EPA is redesignating a portion of Pinal County, Arizona to nonattainment for the 1987 24-hour PM₁₀ national ambient air quality standard (NAAQS).

Background

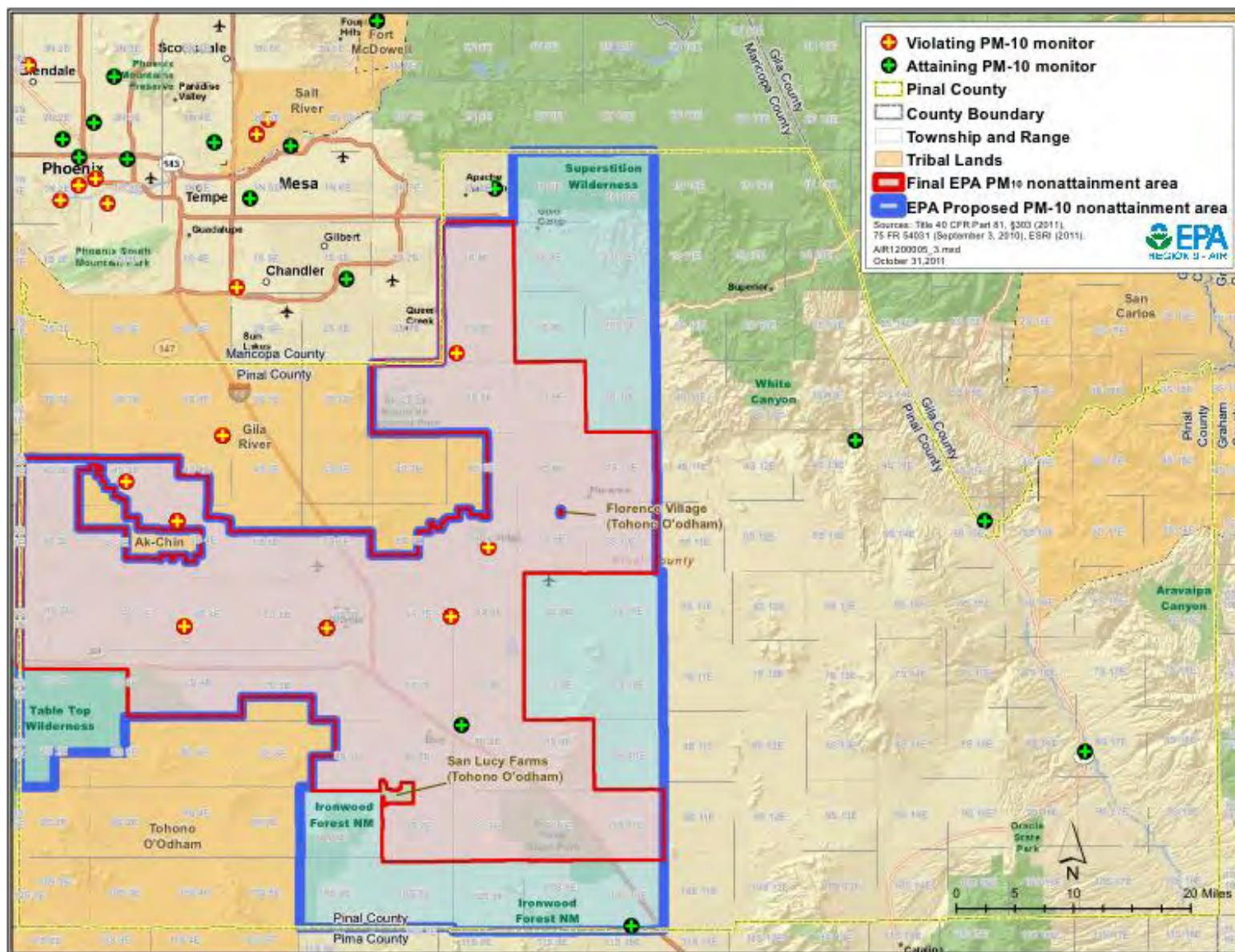
- Airborne particles are a serious threat to human health. Major concerns for human health from exposure to PM₁₀ (particles measuring less than 10 microns in diameter) include: effects on breathing and respiratory systems, damage to lung tissue, cancer, and premature death. The elderly, children, and people with chronic lung disease, influenza, or asthma, are especially sensitive to the effects of particulate matter.
- Ambient levels of PM₁₀ measured at air quality monitoring stations within Pinal County show widespread, frequent, and in some instances, severe, violations of the PM₁₀ standard, dating back to 2002.
- Pinal County's PM₁₀ levels are among the worst in the country. Based on 2009 – 2011 certified air quality data, the Pinal County Housing monitor, located approximately 11 miles east of Casa Grande, predicts over 14 exceedances per year. For reference, more than one exceedance per year is a violation of the standard. Ambient monitors located in the new nonattainment area routinely record concentrations two to three times the level of the standard and several monitors have recorded levels approaching or exceeding the significant harm level of 600 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m³). In 2011, the Maricopa monitor measured 2,318 ug/m³ and the Casa Grande monitor measured 2,040 ug/m³. The 1987 standard for PM₁₀ is 150 ug/m³.
- After reviewing the recommendations we received from the State and certain Tribes and evaluating air quality data, planning, control and other air-quality-related considerations, EPA proposed to redesignate much of the western half of Pinal County to nonattainment for the 1987 24-hour PM₁₀ NAAQS. See 75 FR 60680, October 1, 2010.
- Based on our consideration of the comments we received on our proposal and on further review of the geographic distribution of sources of PM₁₀, EPA, in its final action, is reducing the size of the nonattainment area by about 36 percent, relative to the size of the area we originally proposed.
- EPA has determined that the San Carlos Apache and the main reservation of the Tohono O'odham are not causing or contributing to violations of the PM₁₀ standard in Pinal County, and will not redesignate these areas. We are deferring our decision regarding the lands of the Gila River Indian Community, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and the Florence Village and San Lucy Farms portions of the Tohono O'odham Nation pending completion of consultation with the tribes.

Next Steps

- The effect of this action is to establish a new PM₁₀ nonattainment area within Pinal County. Certain planning requirements will be imposed on the State of Arizona to reduce PM₁₀ concentrations within this area, including the requirement to submit, within 18 months of redesignation, a revision to the Arizona state implementation plan (SIP) that provides for attainment of the PM₁₀ standard as expeditiously as practicable but no later than the end of the sixth calendar year after redesignation.
- EPA's designation of an area to nonattainment does not predetermine the State's control strategy for the area. Arizona will be required to develop a plan to attain the air quality standard for PM₁₀, and the relative contribution of various sources and options for control will be considered in that process. That attainment plan will be subject to public review and comment, both at the state level and again when EPA evaluates and proposes action on the plan as a revision to the Arizona SIP.

For More Information: <http://www.epa.gov/region9/air/az/pinal/index.html>

Comparison of EPA's Proposed Boundaries for the West Pinal PM₁₀ Nonattainment Area with EPA's Final Boundaries for the Area



EPA's Final Boundaries for the West Pinal PM₁₀ Nonattainment Area With Land Use and Emissions Source Information

