



SALT RIVER PROJECT CASE STUDY

Salt River Project Streamlines Security Operations with Tufin's SecureTrack

THE BUSINESS

The Salt River Project (SRP) consists of two entities: the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District, a political subdivision of the state of Arizona; and the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association, a private corporation. The District provides electricity to nearly 930,000 retail customers in the Phoenix area and the Association delivers nearly 1 million acre-feet of water annually to a service area in central Arizona.

SRP's mission is to deliver ever improving contributions to the people it serves through the provision of low cost, reliable water, power, and community programs to ensure the vitality of the Salt River Valley. SRP relies heavily on its network to successfully deliver its services and maintaining highly available, redundant, secure access to core systems is fundamental to its success.



THE ENVIRONMENT

Salt River Project is the largest provider of power and water in the metro Phoenix area and the second largest in Arizona. In order to implement streamlined process and technology controls, while maintaining secure access to business critical applications over an expanding network infrastructure, SRP needed a standardized framework for managing firewall policy changes.

THE CHALLENGE

SRP had three objectives for implementing a firewall management solution:

- **Streamline business processes:** As part of an overall effort to implement more efficient, streamlined IT processes, SRP wanted to establish a standardized framework for firewall policy management. Initially the organizational structure of SRP Network Management did not utilize structured operational teams, and as a result, firewall changes were made on an ad-hoc basis and were not routed through a particular person or subgroup. Additionally, people would approach the same policy objective in different manners, with no visibility into how or why firewall changes were made. As a result, when a rule was set it didn't always work because a previous rule would contradict it.
- **Streamline internal audits:** During the course of the year it was extremely difficult to get everyone on board to properly document policy changes. Often, changes were made to solve immediate problems that resulted in bloated rule bases with no context as to why a change was made or assessment of existing rules that might impact the effectiveness of a given change. As a result, SRP's audits were long, tedious affairs.
- **Coordinating changes:** With several people managing firewall changes and no centralized communications regarding why changes were made, performance and access issues stemming from shadowed or contradictory rules were causing unnecessary inefficiencies. Because there was no audit trail documenting changes, tracking down the exact nature of the problem was a time consuming, tedious process that took up too much of senior staffers' time.

“As a utilities provider, we are too reliant on our network to take chances that might result in any sort of service disruption. We don’t buy or try new things unless we are SURE that it works. We recognized right away that SecureTrack could make our daily security operations work much easier. Within a few hours of deploying the product, we were receiving useful rule usage reports that gave us the visibility we needed to immediately streamline operations. Working with a smaller, crisper rule base rule is less taxing on both the team and the firewalls themselves.”

Tim Weid,
Salt River Project

THE BENEFITS

- Dramatic efficiency gains
- Automated and standardized change management
- Enforcement of IT Governance and corporate best practices
- Reduced time and cost of firewall audits
- Optimized infrastructure performance
- Improved network security



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THE SOLUTION

Tufin’s SecureTrack was the only solution SRP evaluated that was able to meet its requirements. Within a few hours of deploying SecureTrack, SRP began to receive useful change reports that gave them much needed visibility into the state and nature of existing firewall policies. It also provided them with reports on the effectiveness of existing rules and helped identify questionable, obsolete, or conflicting policies.

With SecureTrack, when implementing a firewall change, the entire IT security team was sent an email alert detailing who made the change, and the exact nature and impact of the change. These real time change alerts combined with granular reporting and SecureTrack’s correlation engine provided SRP with the visibility and process controls essential for streamlining operations.

SecureTrack’s robust, on-demand reporting enabled SRP to run audits at any interval and immediately identify potential audit issues, flagging them as low, medium, or high priority. This real-time visibility enabled SRP to add any missing critical rules, clean up obsolete or “shadowed” rules (partially overlapped rules based on where they reside in the rule base), and more effectively run Security Audit reports. Furthermore, it allowed SRP to implement corporate best practices, resulting in much shorter and easier audits as well as a higher degree of network security.

Finally, SecureTrack enabled SRP to implement proper change processes that enforced best practices and eliminated short cuts or quick fixes by flagging poorly crafted or illogical policies, eliminating rule base bloat and optimizing firewall operations. Its correlation engine provided the reporting and auditing capabilities required to critically and collaboratively evaluate policy decisions if there were questions or issues regarding a specific change request.

“SecureTrack has been a smart investment for us. I would estimate that we have reduced the time we spend on firewall maintenance, reporting clean up and auditing by 50 to 60 percent. Its greater value is in the actual simplicity of using the product, and the ease at which it tracks changes – by use, by rule, and by policy. Thanks to Tufin, we now have a very good self-assessment of where we are with firewall rule changes, plus the day to day tracking of who is doing what, and from where. Now that we know where we stand at any given moment, the audit process is much faster and easier.”

Jim Heyen,
Salt River Project