

**Appendix C**  
**Public Involvement**

## **Appendix C1**

### **Example Meeting Notices**

# **MORA/ SAN MIGUEL/GUADALUPE REGIONAL WATER PLAN**

## **Notification:**

- Public notices - display advertisements (newspapers)
- Public announcements (public radio, public service announcements on private radio)
- Mailed announcements of all public information meetings and the public meetings
- Flyers in community activity areas and local businesses

## **Public Meeting Sites:**

Village of Pecos Administration Building; Highlands University in Las Vegas; United World College; Mora County Office in Mora; City Hall in Santa Rosa; Santa Rosa High School; PNM Building in Las Vegas; West Las Vegas Administration Building.

## **Newspapers:**

Las Vegas Daily Optic  
614 Lincoln Ave  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

Santa Fe New Mexican  
Pecos/Las Vegas Editions  
202 E. Marcy  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Santa Rosa News  
108 5<sup>th</sup> St.  
Santa Rosa, NM 88435

Guadalupe Communicator  
241 So. 4<sup>th</sup> St.  
Santa Rosa, NM 88435

## **Radio Stations:**

KLVF/KFUNPO Box 700  
Radio Heights  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

KENC-FM  
551 Cordova Rd. # 142  
Santa Fe, NM 87501

KEDP/FM  
Highlands University  
Mass Communications Dept.  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

KNMX Radio  
Las Vegas, NM 87701

KSSR Radio  
2818 Will Rogers Dr.  
Santa Rosa, NM

**Are You Interested in Water Planning? You are invited to attend a Public Meeting on January  
16, 2003**

*You are invited to attend a public meeting regarding regional water planning and the formation of a steering committee to guide future efforts in the Tierra y Montes planning region. The meeting will be held in the **Ballroom at Highlands University/Student Center, January 16, 2003 from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m.***

*Regional water planning is sponsored by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC). The purpose of the regional water planning program is to characterize water supply, current and future water demands, and alternatives for meeting future water needs in each of 16 planning regions throughout New Mexico. The Tierra y Montes region encompasses all of Mora and San Miguel Counties except for the eastern plains. The fiscal agent for the region is the Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District.*

*The current effort will build on previous water planning that has been completed for the Tierra y Montes region and will culminate in the preparation of a Regional Water Plan that conforms to the ISC template for regional water plans. Additional information regarding regional water planning will be provided at the meeting.*

*The focus of the meeting will be to form a steering committee to guide regional water planning efforts. Generally, regional water planning steering committees include representatives from major water user groups and water management agencies, such as acequias, county and municipal governments, federal and state agencies, and individual farmers and ranchers. The makeup of the Tierra y Montes Steering Committee will be discussed at the meeting, and meeting attendees will help decide appropriate entities and/or individuals to be represented on the committee.*

*If you are interested in participating in the Steering Committee or the regional water planning effort but are unable to attend the meeting, please contact Rosemary Romero or Joanne Hilton before January 15, 2003 at:  
Rosemary Romero: 1-800-326-9805, 505-982-9805 or rosemary1350@cs.com  
Joanne Hilton: 1-800-933-3105 or jhilton@dbstephens.com*

***We look forward to seeing you soon!***

**MORA  
SAN MIGUEL  
GUADALUPE  
Regional Water Plan**



The steering committee and the Planning Team, DB Stephens & Associates (DBS&A) invite you to attend the upcoming Steering Committee meeting. The meeting will include a presentation of the legal overview portion of the water supply assessment, distribution of summary fact sheets on water supply and demand and legal issues, and discussion of alternative feasibility and implementation, including responsible parties for implementation.

A second meeting will be held in Santa Rosa, NM. Presentations will include an update on the Pecos Adjudication and an overview of New Mexico water rights and legal issues in the Region. DBS&A will also provide

a brief summary of the status of the alternative evaluation.

**Steering Committee Meeting**

Thursday, October 7, 2004

Hebner-Anixter Room Montezuma Castle

Montezuma, NM

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

**Public Meeting**

Wednesday, October 13, 2004

Santa Rosa City Hall

Meeting Room

141 So. 5<sup>th</sup>/Corona

Santa Rosa, NM

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

For more information call Rosemary Romero at (505) 982-9805, [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com) or Joanne Hilton, Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. (505) 822-9400, [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com).



May 1, 2003

Re: Mora-San Miguel Water Plan Meeting, May 27, 2003

Dear Stakeholder:

The next meeting regarding the Mora-San Miguel Water Plan has been scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2003, from 3:00 to 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the PNM building, which is located at 420 Railroad in Las Vegas, New Mexico. PNM has asked that people not park in its customer parking lot. Instead, parking is available on the street.

Notes from the previous Mora-San Miguel Water planning meeting, held in March 2003, are attached. As discussed previously, the purpose of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) regional water planning program is to characterize water supply, current and future water demands, and alternatives for meeting future water needs in each of 16 planning regions throughout New Mexico. The current effort will build on previous water planning that has been completed for the Mora-San Miguel region and will culminate in the preparation of a regional water plan that conforms to the ISC guidelines.

Topics to be covered during the May 27 meeting include:

- Final confirmation of the steering committee composition
- Public involvement plan
- Status of technical evaluation
- Water issues/concerns in the region

If you are interested in participating in the steering committee or the regional water planning effort but are unable to attend the meeting, please contact Rosemary Romero (at 1-800-326-9805 or Rosemary1350@cs.com) or Joanne Hilton (at 1-800-933-3105 or jhilton@dbstephens.com) before the May 27 meeting.

Sincerely,

DANIEL B. STEPHENS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joanne Hilton  
Project Manager

*Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.*

6020 Academy NE, Suite 100

Albuquerque, NM 87109

505-822-9400

FAX 505-822-8877



December 15, 2003

Re: Mora-San Miguel Water Plan Meeting  
January 15, 2004

Dear Stakeholder:

The next meeting of the Mora/San Miguel Regional Water Planning Committee will take place on Thursday, January 15, 2004 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the PNM building, which is located at 420 Railroad in Las Vegas, New Mexico. PNM has asked that people not park in its customer parking lot. Instead, parking is available on the street.

During the past year we:

- Held a public meeting to kick-off the regional water planning effort
- Formulated a steering committee and facilitated steering committee meetings
- Learned more about specific issues such as land grants and county issues
- Heard about the connections between the regional water planning effort and the statewide effort
- Studied the water supply and demand in the planning region

At the January meeting, we will present a summary of the results of the water supply and demand study and, to start the second phase of planning, discuss possible alternatives for meeting the future water needs of the region. Development of alternatives is critical, and your participation during this phase is very important.

In addition, at the previous meeting we briefly talked about bringing Guadalupe County into the Mora/San Miguel Regional Water Plan. We will need to further discuss this and the implications of including them in this planning effort.

Please confirm your participation at this meeting by contacting Rosemary Romero at 982-9805 or, by e-mail, at [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com).

We hope you have a great holiday and look forward to seeing you next month.

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL B. STEPHENS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joanne Hilton  
Project Manager

*Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.*

6020 Academy NE, Suite 100

505-822-9400





March 15, 2004

Re: Mora-San Miguel Water Plan Meeting  
April 14, 2004

Dear Steering Committee Member:

The next meeting of the Mora/San Miguel Regional Water Planning Committee will take place on Wednesday, April 14, 2004 from 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Highlands University, Teacher Education Building, Room 204. Notes from the previous steering committee meeting are attached.

In addition to the regular steering committee meeting, we are planning two public meetings and encourage you to also attend one of those meetings if possible.

- Tuesday, April 13, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Mora County Commission Office
- Wednesday, April 14, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Village of Pecos Administration Building

These meetings will also be publicized in the local newspaper and announced on the radio.

At these meetings and the regular steering committee meeting we will be obtaining public input on alternatives for meeting water supply needs in the region. Alternatives for meeting water supply needs of the region include actions such as water conservation, watershed management, development of new groundwater resources, and other water resource management actions. We will also be soliciting public input regarding identification of priority alternatives for inclusion in the plan.

Please confirm your participation at this meeting by calling Rosemary Romero at 982-9805 or by e-mailing her at [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com).

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL B. STEPHENS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joanne Hilton  
Project Manager

JH/et  
Enclosure

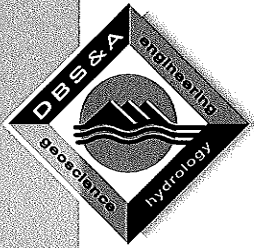
*Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.*

6020 Academy NE, Suite 100

Albuquerque, NM 87109

505-822-9400

FAX 505-822-8877



April 27, 2004

Re: Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Water Plan Meeting  
May 18, 2004

Dear Water Planning Stakeholder:

As most of you are aware, Guadalupe County has recently joined the Mora-San Miguel water planning region. All activities will now cover the entire three-County area. A Guadalupe County public meeting, similar to the meetings recently held in Las Vegas, Mora, and Pecos, will take place on Tuesday, May 18, 2004 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Santa Rosa City Hall Meeting Room, 141 S. 5th at Corona. This meeting will also be publicized in the local newspaper and announced on the radio.

At this meeting we will be providing background information on regional water planning and we will be obtaining public input on alternatives for meeting water supply needs in the region. Alternatives for meeting water supply needs include actions such as water conservation, watershed management, development of new groundwater resources, and other water resource management actions. We will also be soliciting public input regarding identification of priority alternatives for inclusion in the plan.

Please confirm your participation at this meeting by calling Rosemary Romero at 982-9805 or by e-mailing her at [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com).

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL B. STEPHENS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joanne Hilton  
Project Manager

JH/et

*Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.*

4030 W. Braker Lane, Suite 325

512-821-2765



November 18, 2004

*Celebrating  
20 Years*

Re: Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Water Plan Public Meetings  
December 6 and 7, 2004

Dear Stakeholder:

Two public meetings will be held to present information on the Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Regional Water Plan:

- Monday, December 6, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Santa Rosa City Hall Meeting Room, 141 S. 5th at Corona
- Tuesday December 7, 6:00 5to 8:00 p.m.  
New Mexico Highlands University, Student Center Ballroom at  
Ninth and Baca in Las Vegas

At each meeting, an overview of the water plan will be presented, included water supply and demand assessments and alternatives for meeting the future water needs of the region. Public input on the plan, particularly regarding the alternatives for meeting future water needs, will be solicited. All stakeholders, including Steering Committee members, are encouraged to attend and to bring their friends and neighbors to hear about the plan.

Notes from the previous Steering Committee meeting held November 10 are attached. At the November 10 meeting, a draft public welfare statement and a draft implementation schedule were developed; copies of each are attached. Please review these documents and provide any comments to Rosemary Romero (505 982-9805 or [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com)) or Joanne Hilton (800 933-3105 or [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com)) prior to December 15.

Please contact Rosemary Romero (505 982-9805 or [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com)) or Joanne Hilton (800 933-3105 or [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com)) for additional information about these meetings or the regional water planning process.

Sincerely,

DANIEL B. STEPHENS & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Joanne Hilton  
Project Manager

JH/et  
Enclosures

*Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.*

6020 Academy NE, Suite 100

Albuquerque, NM 87109

505-822-9400

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**Appendix C2**  
**Meeting Notes**

## **Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan**

### **Summary of Meeting**

**January 16, 2003**

**Presenter:** Joanne Hilton, Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Facilitator:** Rosemary Romero

**Overview:** Joanne Hilton presented an overview of the water planning process using a PowerPoint presentation.

- The regional water planning effort was initiated in 1987.
- Overall purpose of regional water planning in New Mexico is to protect our water resources.
- There are 16 planning regions in New Mexico
- Results of all planning regions will contribute to the state water plan.

A regional water plan answers the following questions:

- How much water is available?
- How much water will be needed?
- What alternatives can be implemented so that demand can be met?

Public participation in regional water planning:

- Steering committee
- Public involvement plan
- Public meetings
- Focus groups
- Communication with the public
- Documentation of public participation

Mora-San Miguel Planning Region:

- Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District is the fiscal agent for the project.
- The steering committee will oversee the planning process and will review draft documents.

Previous regional water planning efforts:

- Regional water study conducted in 1989 by Frank Martinez focused on water use
- Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan Phase II, prepared by Ruben Romero, Tierra y Montes SWCD, 1994 focused on acequia operation and agricultural water conservation.

- Regional water planning alternatives: effluent reuse, agricultural return flows evaluated by Wendy Easton in 1999.
- The work from previous plans will be incorporated when possible.
- The final outcome of this project will be a regional water plan that follows the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) Regional Water Planning Handbook.

**Planning Region:** The plan will overlap Mora and San Miguel counties. Communities included in the planning are Wagon Mound, Mora, Las Vegas and Pecos.

**Regional Water Planning Process:** A steering committee and the public will create a regional vision and goals. DBS&A will create water supply and demand analyses with input and oversight from the steering committee. The legal team will conduct an overview of legal issues in the region. The steering committee will identify alternatives for meeting future water supply needs. The public input will be incorporated into the alternatives for analysis. A draft regional water plan will be prepared by DBS&A and presented to the committee for their review. A final plan will be presented to the ISC. The two counties, municipalities, agencies and others will implement the plan. In order to create a successful plan it must include: diverse participation, commitment of steering committee members and representation from major water user groups.

**Issues/Concerns at the Process:** Participants noted that representation was critical to the planning effort and pointed out that representation from Mora was needed.

One participant was concerned that the planning budget was very limited and may not have the needed resources to create a good plan. For example, some of the need information included well testing, mapping of impaired water. The ISC representative encouraged the group to think creatively about bringing in additional resources and not to let the need for additional data hold up the planning process. She pointed out that the Estancia Basin was a good example of a region identifying needs and then finding additional partners to help pay for the needed data. Amy Lewis noted that for the Jemez y Sangre water plan, Los Alamos National Laboratories became a partner and brought in a variety of resources, as well as the group seeking out private foundation support and other agency support for specific elements of the planning effort.

Another participant noted that the key to the plan would be implementation and was concerned that in previous efforts the City of Las Vegas had not approved the final plan and hoped that would not happen with this plan. The consultant responded that participation on the steering committee must be inclusive of all parties in order to get buy-in for implementation alternatives. It was suggested that the consultant could bring examples from other plans to help the group when they started to do their work

Another participant hoped that all of the information previously developed would be integrated into the planning process. In particular Frank Martinez' assessment work and the expertise of Hilario Rubio, chair of the previous effort.

**Timeline:** Participants asked how long would the process take. Amy Lewis, the consultant working on the Jemez y Sangre water plan reported that their planning process has taken four years. Joanne Hilton, who has worked on the Colfax plan, indicated that the process there has taken about two years. The ISC representative noted that each planning region has different issues to address ideally the plans should be finished in two years, but often taken longer.

**Clarity about the Planning area:** Participants reviewed the map indicating an outline of the planning area. It was noted that the area must be clearly defined and accepted in order to decide who was to be included and excluded on the steering committee. It was further suggested that representation could also come from each watershed within the planning area.

**Outreach:** Participants suggested that information about the water planning should be included in a variety of newsletters such as the FSA newsletter and the Tierra Y Montes newsletter. In addition, it was noted that people in the NE section of the planning area got their information from the local Raton station and flyers should be posted at all of the post offices.

It was also suggested that in order to get a variety of people interested in the planning efforts, meetings should be held throughout the planning area at different times. Some regions have had good participation by holding meetings on Saturdays or late in the day.

**Coordination with the State-Wide Plan:** Participants asked how this process would fit into the state wide plan. The ISC representative reported that Frances Martinez, District Manager of the Tierra y Montes SWCD reported that they were asked to name a representative to the statewide committee and they had asked Gabriel Mondragon to represent the District.

Categories of interests and possible individuals to represent the interests:

- NRCS – LizBeth Walker
- El Valle
- Acequia Associations
  - Nicasio Romero
  - Glen Post
  - Harold Trujillo
- Water Rights Holders
- Municipalities
  - Las Vegas – Richard Trujillo
  - Pecos – Canuto Melendez
- San Miguel County – Huey Ley (County Commissioner), Alex Tafoya
- Mora County
- Mora Soil & Conservation – Clarence Aragon
- Western Mora County – John Abeyta
- Wagon Mound

- Town Council Representative
- Mayor Quintana
- Owner of Water System – A. Daniels
- Watrous – Fire Department
- Ranching Interests
  - Tracy Hepner
  - Conchas Ranch – Bo Farr
  - Gonzales Ranch – Vicky Gallegos
  - Canyon Blanco
- Academic Institutions
  - Highlands – Dr. Benson
  - World College
- Environmental Organizations
  - Amigos Bravos – Michael Coca
  - Quivera Coalition
  - Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound – Chris Martinez
  - Nature Conservancy – Bill deBuys (Grass Bank)
- Conchas Dam Water Board – Harmon Reynolds
- Federal Agencies
  - US Fish & Wildlife
  - Forest Service
- State Agencies
  - NMDG&F
  - Public Lands
  - NMED
  - State Forestry

Several participants indicated that they would like to be on the steering committee.

**Next Meeting:** Rosemary Romero reported that the next meeting would be late March or early April. Those present suggested that initially a Saturday meeting might work as long as it was late morning. Tuesdays also seemed to be a good day to meet from 4:00 – 6:00 p. m. The group indicated that Wednesdays were not good for most people. Rosemary will also work on getting lists of people from the soil and conservation districts and other means of outreach. Rosemary thanked Lew Granados and his staff for helping to get the space at the University.

**Other announcements:** Rachel Conn, a representative from Amigos Bravos announced an upcoming meeting. Amigos Bravos is holding a water quality workshop on March 22 at the PNM building (by Railroad Track). For further information contact her at 758-3874.

**Contact Information:** Joanne Hilton, 1-800-933-3105, [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com)  
 Rosemary Romero, 1-800-326-9805, [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com)



# Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Plan

## Summary of Meeting

March 18, 2003

**Facilitator:** Rosemary Romero

**Introductions:** Rosemary welcomed the group to the second meeting of the Water Planning Steering Committee. Individuals introduced themselves.

The purpose of the meeting was to further refine the membership of the steering committee and to clarify the boundary to be used in the planning effort. It was noted that there were several important reasons for defining the boundary to be used. The boundary would drive the membership of the group as well as have political ramifications for developing alternatives that could affect municipalities.

**Discussion about planning region boundary:** Mary Helen Follingstad, ISC representative, pointed out examples of how other regions had handled the boundary issue. For example, San Juan County split the San Juan Basin between two planning areas, and Lea County decided to split the planning area between two counties. The group discussed various pros and cons to various boundaries. It was noted that by expanding the planning region to the San Miguel County line, it would include Conchas Dam, which is significant, and would bring in the 4-V Ranch. In addition, it was important to include areas throughout the County in order to address water availability and further planning efforts.

Categories of interests and individuals to represent the interests are:

- NRCS – LizBeth Walker
- El Valle – Chris Nunn Garcia
- Acequia associations
  - Facundo Valdez – NM Acequia Association
  - Nicasio Romero
  - Glen Post
  - Harold Trujillo
  - Lorraine Hurtado
- Municipalities
  - Las Vegas – Richard Trujillo; Morris Madrid, City Manager; Elmer Martinez, Planning
  - Pecos – Canuto Melendez
- San Miguel County – Huey Ley, County Commissioner; Alex Tafoya; Les Montoya, County Manager
- Mora County – Philip Cantu
- Mora-Wagon Mound Soil & Water Conservation District – Walter Wiggins, Eldy Cruz, and Arthur Sandoval

- Mora Mutual Domestic Water Association – Clarence Aragon, Ivan Roper
- Western Mora County Soil and Water – John Abeyta
- Wagon Mound (Tracy will contact)
- Tierra y Montes Board Members – Nappy Quintana, Gabe Estrada, Frances Martinez, Andres Aragon, Rita Gallegos, Carlton Starkey
- Owner of water system – A. Daniels
- Watrous – Fire Department
- Ranching interests
  - Tracy Hepfner, Floyd Causey, Marino Rivera, Martin Honneger
  - Conchas Ranch – Bo Farr
  - Gonzales Ranch – Vicky Gallegos
  - Canyon Blanco
  - Sapello – Ernie Quintana
- Academic institutions
  - Highlands – Dr. Benson
  - United World College – Adriana Botero, V.P.
- Environmental organizations
  - Amigos Bravos – Michael Coca
  - Quivera Coalition
  - Concerned Citizens of Wagon Mound – Chris Martinez
  - Nature Conservancy – Bill deBuys (Grass Bank)
- Conchas Dam Water Board – Harmon Reynolds
- Federal agencies
  - US Fish & Wildlife – Joe Rodriguez, Robert Quintana (Storrie Project)
  - Forest Service – Joe Redden
  - RC&D – Clarence Montoya
- State agencies
  - NMDG&F
  - Public Lands
  - NMED – Nina Wells
  - State Forestry – Louis Casaus
- Fire districts – Reese Elliott, Richard Garcia (Watrous), Virginia Franko
- Land Grant interests – Hilario Rubio (SEO Office)
- Grazing permittees – (needs work)
- Well drillers – Hays Plumbing, Red Top Drilling

**Name of the Committee:** Those present decided that the official name of the planning group would be “Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Planning Steering Committee.”

**Additional Needed Information:** Joanne Hilton asked the Committee to help identify entities that could help get demographic information to her. It was suggested that individuals who could be helpful included:

- Antoinette Gallegos at the Chamber of Commerce
- Amos Atencio from Siete del Norte (economic development/housing)

- Lucy Maez (realtor)

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2003, 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., at the PNM Building. It was further agreed that the Committee would continue to meet on Tuesdays and organize themselves prior to moving the meetings out into the planning region.

**Contact Information:** Joanne Hilton, 1-800-933-3105, [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com)  
Rosemary Romero, 1-800-326-9805, [rosemary1350@cs.com](mailto:rosemary1350@cs.com)

Mora-San Miguel Water Plan  
Committee Meeting  
Las Vegas, NM  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

May 27, 2003

Facilitator: Rosemary Romero  
Consultants: Joanne Hilton, Bruce Poster

**Present:** Julie True, Danielle Diehl, Facundo Valdez, Marino Rivera, Frances Martinez, Josef Pfauwitsch, Philip Don Cantu, Lillian Sanchez, John Spencer, Editha Bartley, Walter Wiggins, Martin Honegger, Clarence Montoya, Alex Tafoya, LizBeth Walker, Joanne Conley, Roger Isbell, Louie Casais, Ken Bentson, SK Ammerson, Ernesto Lujan, Mary Helen Follingstad

**Status of steering committee:** A list of names had been generated at previous meetings to contact for participation on the steering committee, and Rosemary Romero contacted many of the individuals through telephone calls and letters. An updated list of steering committee members was presented to the group. Rosemary noted that although the steering committee will meet regularly to help with the plan, the meetings will be open to the public, and anyone with an interest in the effort could attend the meetings. She noted that the committee has diverse representation from counties, agencies, ranching interests, academic institutions, and others. People have expressed high interest in participating in the two-year process. After reviewing the list participants noted several changes:

Rebecca Montoya is no longer with Senator Bingaman  
The correct title is Pecos/Las Vegas Ranger District  
Carol Reed is no longer available  
Max Weber is no longer available

**Status of boundary change request:** At the previous meeting, participants felt that the boundary for the planning area should be extended to the easternmost boundary of San Miguel County. Mary Helen Follingstad from the ISC asked Frances Martinez to send a letter to the ISC requesting this change. The letter was sent to the ISC in March. Mary Helen reported that she would find out if the ISC request was received and accepted. Meanwhile, the planning will proceed based on the extended boundary.

**Status of water supply and demand:** Joanne Hilton presented various types of data that will be analyzed in the planning process. For example, NOAA information on climate will be included in the supply study. She indicated that there is little published evapotranspiration data available and asked the group to send her any information that they might have. Those present noted additional contacts:

- John Harrington was doing tree research through NMSU at Mora.
- Ken Benson from Highlands has conducted vegetation studies

The reservoir information should be corrected as follows:

- Lujan: These are fishing ponds and not lakes
- Peterson Lake is two lakes (Brandner Lake is separate from Peterson)
- Seven Lakes comes off Mora and Coyote Creeks  
Additional information may be obtained from Jim Hollis, the Canadian Water Master, Robert Tafoya, or Hilario Rubio

**Demographic and economic forecasting:** Bruce Poster from Southwest Planning & Marketing described the economic and demographic analysis that he would do for the plan. This type of analysis requires planning for 40+ years with two possible growth scenarios. The focus areas would include Mora County, San Miguel County, and the City of Las Vegas. Types of industry to be included are mining, industry and agriculture. He also presented preliminary population estimates for 2000 and 2040:

Year	Mora	San Miguel
2000	5,205	29,743
2040	8,469	43,944

Availability of water vs. growth will be part of the planning effort. Growth looks high for Mora County, but is actually likely due to the fact that many people are coming back to the area. There has also been an increase of people buying large ranches, because with a phone line, they are able to do their work from home. For larger subdivisions that have been approved, the County is encouraging shared wells. Some trends noted are the use of wind-generation plants.

Contacts for Bruce:

- Pat Melton (Realtor/Rancher)
- Mike Myer (NMSU)
- Philip Don Cantu (Mora)
- Pat Melendres (San Miguel County extension officer)
- Skip Finley (Mora)
- Mike Melton (Banking)
- Sharon Vandemere (Las Vegas Optic)
- Ron Williams (Wells Fargo Bank)
- Ernesto Gonzales (Mora/San Miguel Coop)
- Pat Patrick (Panderay Village)
- Joel & Elise Scheinberg
- Junior Quintana (Wagon Mound)

**Water issues and concerns in Mora and San Miguel Counties:**

- Groundwater contamination from septic tanks. This may require additional information from NMED.
- Many sites in the planning area are considered “undeclared areas” and do not require permitting for wells.
- The fish hatchery in Mora is taking 940 acre-feet per year; this specific information should be included in the study
- The OSE data indicate that La Cueva Ranch depletions should have actually raised the amount of water used in the area, not the other way around.
- The shoreline at Conchas Dam is about 50% less during the dry years; the smaller surface area should indicate lower evaporation
- The previous Mora-San Miguel plans should have information about the projected growth for the area, floodplains information and cloud seeding data (perhaps contact the RC&D County office, the State Planning Office, or Economic Development Districts).
- Mora County is trying to prevent transfers from acequias.
- Acequias are not metered and it is not clear what the water use is.
- Use of groundwater to fill lined ponds is impacting downstream ranch wells
- Conservation methods
- Water use from domestic wells. Many new developments are scattered and are on 2- to 10-acre lots
- Illegal damming of waterways or springs
- Amount of water used by the Church of Scientology
- Water quality in the Gallinas area
- Agricultural lands changing to development use and other domestic types of uses
- Biomass conversions (issue is the use of large amounts of water)
- Vegetation changes (juniper into grasslands – look at Kerr County, Texas example)
- Wildfires

- Overstock of trees in the forests (will require additional information from the Forest Service and private landowners)
- People moving into critical watershed areas, affecting the people below them.
- Water rights being purchased by large corporations in Mora County.
- Numerous wells drying up
- Pollution caused by roads. The Highway Department should be invited to participate in the planning effort.
- Effect of drought on pinon trees and the invasion of other species such as mesquite
- Recharging aquifers
- Reuse of gray water (need information on how to do right)
- Education
- Protection of acequia systems
- Instream flow to protect natural systems
- Mining issues (Honey Boy Mine and the Terrero Mine in Pecos)

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, September 2 from 3:00 – 5:00 p.m., location to be determined. It was suggested that information should be e-mailed ahead of time to the committee members.

Mora-San Miguel Water Plan  
Committee Meeting  
Las Vegas, NM  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

September 9, 2003

**Facilitator:** Rosemary Romero

**Consultants:** Joanne Hilton, Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Panel Presenters:** Philip Don Cantu, Hilario Rubio, Mary Helen Follingstad, Tracy Hephner

Philip Don Cantu presented information on stock ponds in Mora County, and showed aerial photographs illustrating the number and sizes of ponds. The concern is that these ponds, which have been constructed in recent years for recreational purposes, are affecting senior water rights.

Hilario Rubio also presented information on OSE efforts to address the stock pond concern and land grant issues, and discussed some of the issues that arose in the earlier water planning efforts.

Tracy Hephner and Mary Helen Follingstad presented information about how the region was originally formed and the regional water planning process.

**Facilitated Discussion:** At the statewide water meeting held on September 2, 2003 members of the public wondered why the two counties, Mora and San Miguel, had been joined together for the region. There was concern that issues of growth, urban vs. rural, and diversity of the region would hinder the planning effort.

After Hilario Rubio presented a historical aspect and current status of the local land grants, the group discussed various issues. It was noted that the diminishment of land grants has caused some embarrassment for their loss. Hilario noted that there has been some discussion about return of land grants, but felt that was improbable given the complexity of returning lands that were intended as communal lands and lost by individuals. To this day, the connection between land grants and water still exists. For example, the Las Vegas land grant goes all the way to the Sapello Creek.

A participant expressed concern that mutual domestic water systems want to show growth in order to keep members and income that helps to maintain the systems. This thinking, however, does not encourage conservation and in fact results in more water use than other areas.



The group asked for clarification about the use of the term “ranching,” which is used both for larger organized ranches that are subsidized for livestock and small time ranching.

**Transfer of water rights:** It was noted in the discussion that points of diversion could be found on the Internet, but many of these are for re-drilling that has been necessitated by the drought.

Currently, acequias cannot transfer their water rights unless their bylaws are changed. If for any reason water rights were transferred, it would in effect kill the acequias. As part of the water planning effort, a philosophical issue should be addressed concerning water transfers. Subdivisions by default will get water, but parcientes at the end of a ditch system don’t necessarily get the water they should. This is an equity issue. The public welfare statement must be developed with strong language to protect acequias.

Participants noted that it is important to determine the carrying capacity of the area and link this directly to growth.

One participant noted that Las Vegas has suffered from lack of growth. This can be attributed directly to lack of water and the City choosing to pursue a legal direction in asserting “pueblo water” rights. The doctrine was overturned at the state level and has been mandated to the Supreme Court level.\*

Hilario noted that in order to protect water rights, communities with acequias must look carefully at protecting water rights through a water banking system and then added, “but they must also be compensated.” If this is not developed as an alternative, acequias will be pushed to sell their land or water rights for development.

**Adding to the Planning Area:** Mary Helen Follingstad asked the group to consider adding Guadalupe County to the planning effort. She acknowledged that this was an afterthought, but after review of the planning areas, it seemed that one county would be left out of other planning areas and it seemed logical to add it to the Mora-San Miguel plan. The group tentatively agreed that it seemed like a good idea and thought that Geno Lujan from Guadalupe should be contacted.

**Next Meeting:** Technical information will continue to be developed over the next several months. The group agreed that meeting during December was often difficult and thought early January would be soon enough. Information will be mailed to participants ahead of the meeting, place to be determined.

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\* *Water in New Mexico*, Ira Clark, pages 367-368: The pueblo rights doctrine, peculiar to California and New Mexico, is an aberration applicable to a limited number of communities. In essence it holds that any municipality tracing its origins to a Spanish or Mexican pueblo grant, particularly after 1789, has a prior and paramount right to all waters of non-navigable streams flowing through or by the pueblo to the extent necessary to serve its future growth. The term “pueblo” as used in this sense refers to the agricultural villages associated with Spanish occupation of frontier areas.

Mora/San Miguel Regional Water Plan  
Las Vegas, NM

January 15, 2004

**Summary of Meeting**

**Presentation:** DBS&A presented a summary of the water supply and demand in the Mora-San Miguel Planning region. The presentation included a discussion of growth projections developed by Southwest Planning and Marketing (SWPM), and a preliminary draft of their demographics report was distributed. Joanne Hilton noted that much of the growth in the area is along the I-25 corridor, particularly in the area close to Santa Fe. The SWPM report notes that some growth is projected for both Mora and San Miguel Counties. The DBS&A presentation also included summary surface water statistics for the region, which is largely dependent on surface water, and general groundwater information. Charts showing water use by sector for each County were presented.

The focus of the study will be on supply and demand and alternatives to address the gap between supply and demand. The ISC specifications for regional water planning do not allow for gathering of new data, but require that existing data be used. Sources of existing information include:

- The USGS has data that will be useful.
- One participant noted that the Glorieta Geo/Science group is producing data for Romeroville that might be helpful.
- Well drillers who are drilling new wells should be contacted. These include Red Top and Hayes well drilling.

Joanne said that it would be helpful to have additional information before the next meeting and suggested that people send her information they would like to have considered as part of the supply/demand assessment by the end of March.

**General Discussion:** One participant asked if there was interface between the statewide water plan and the regional water plans. The ISC representative reported that implementation of the statewide water plan will be through the regions. The implementation will include government support through assessments, ordinance development, and other means.

A public involvement plan was distributed to those present for their comments. Participants were encouraged to review the document and contact Rosemary Romero for any additions or corrections.

**Presentation by Hilario Rubio:** Mr. Rubio presented to the group excerpts from the 1991 Mora-San Miguel Regional Water Study and Forty Year Plan. He highlighted several recommendations from the study, including:

1. The City's (Las Vegas) priority should be to provide sufficient water supplies for the health and welfare of its citizens, for commercial and industrial use, and for future growth and demand.
2. If the City is successful in the Pueblo water rights suit and can legally use the Gallinas River water at some future date, the City should recognize the important historical, cultural and economic aspects of the acequia systems to the City of Las Vegas and the area, and allow for coexistence between municipal and agricultural use of Gallinas River water.
3. The City should zone against or discourage the practice of building on meadows and irrigated lands along the Gallinas River to preserve the unique environment of the Las Vegas area and to preserve the Vegas that give the City its name.
4. The City should move away from strict reliance on Gallinas River water and identify other potential water sources for municipal use, including but not limited to the drilling of new wells.

**Guadalupe County Discussion:** The group felt that it was a good idea to include this area in the planning effort for the following reasons:

- Guadalupe County has more in common with this area than it has with the eastern plains area.
- Inclusion of Guadalupe County offers an opportunity to get more information.
- Guadalupe County could take advantage of a plan that held the potential to be completed sooner rather than later.
- The Pecos and Gallina Rivers flow into the area.
- It makes sense to include the area from a watershed management perspective.

**Alternatives Discussion:** Three groups discussed various alternatives to address gaps between supply and demand in the region. The alternatives developed by the groups were:

**Education:**

- Provide educational workshops for people to learn more about the "how to" of water conservation, water harvesting, and other alternatives to save or acquire water.
- Educate people to take personal responsibility.
- Wage a large advertising campaign and put signs up everywhere.
- Educate people on the value of water and the consequences (especially for newcomers) of not conserving.

**Evaporation:**

- Evaluate the specific uses for reservoirs and other water-holding mechanisms. If the water use is recreation, it could be better developed in some place such as Angel Fire. Where it is domestic/mutual use, explore the use of non-toxic oils to reduce evaporation.
- Explore the use of underground storage.

- Explore the use of lining or some other type of physical barrier to lessen infiltration.
- Remove sediment from reservoirs.

### **Implementation:**

- Develop a regional authority to implement changes. The authority could be defined and managed by watersheds. Agriculture should be included in the planning and managing of this authority.
- Get residents in the area to understand the issues and to support the seeking of funding for implementation.
- Appoint a Water Master for the region and adjudicate Mora and San Miguel Counties to address allocation problems and maintenance.
- Look at Cimarron as a model for proactive problem solving.
- Change the use it or lose it law.
- Keep speculation out of water market, while at the same time increasing the value of water.

### **Conservation:**

- Increase water rates to encourage conservation.
- Develop ordinances to support water conservation.
- Support water banking.
- Encourage rain harvesting through various methods, including catchment mechanisms.
- Promote tourism appropriately and work with the various state and local tourism agencies.
- Encourage the use of gray water.
- Evaluate the various water users, including public housing, and create mechanisms to educate people about conserving water.
- Develop a low-flow toilet and shower head distribution for the City of Las Vegas, similar to what Santa Fe has done.
- Offer incentives (such as movie tickets, meals, awards) for people to save water.
- Encourage hotels to use flash heat systems or other plumbing features that will help save water.
- Share wells in order to foster a sense of community, conservation and awareness.
- Mandate that new construction include water conservation and cisterns.
- Use positive and negative reinforcement for conservation.
- Improve irrigation efficiency and maintenance (acequias could look at lining acequias or other methods rather than just letting the water go down an arroyo).
- Teach water conservation through school programs.

### **Enforcement:**

- Create water budgets and fine people if they go over their designated use amount.
- Evaluate various uses of water and create billing mechanisms that are appropriate for the specific use.
- Meter water use (enforcement is an issue).

- To reduce local political pressure, develop State planning laws that Counties implement.
- Enforce existing NMED laws on septic tank placement.

**Growth Limitations:**

- Limit the number of homes and amenities. Tax second homes with full amenities at higher rates.
- Develop and implement rules/ordinances specific to subdivisions that will have an impact on neighbors. Oftentimes, an agency will approve a subdivision without having all of the needed information (i.e., Birds of a Feather subdivision).
- New users/hookups should have second priority or first in time, first in right within City of Las Vegas. This would mean that proposed subdivisions would come second to existing homes or subdivisions.
- Provide for additional protections at the State and local level to make sure that those with existing wells, including private domestic wells, are not harmed by new development.
- Make sure that springs are protected for existing users and that spring water can't be hauled away.

**Water Quality:**

- Extend the depth of existing wells or create new wells to increase domestic well yields. Agencies should take the lead on this.
- Explore using high-TDS water (north of Las Vegas).
- Require proper installation and maintenance of septic tanks.
- Facilitate water quality testing. Encourage the establishment of a testing lab closer than Las Cruces or Albuquerque.

## Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan

### Summary of April/May 2004 Meetings

**Purpose of Meetings:** Regional Water Planning meetings were held in Mora on April 13, Pecos on April 14, and Santa Rosa on May 18, 2004. In addition, the regular Steering Committee meeting was held in Las Vegas on April 14, 2004. The meetings were organized by Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. (DBS&A), Rosemary Romero, and the Steering Committee in order to seek public input on alternatives for meeting water supply needs in the area, as part of the development of a regional water plan.

Each meeting began with introductions, an overview of the regional water planning effort, and a brief discussion regarding the addition of Guadalupe County to the planning region.

At an earlier Steering Committee meeting in Las Vegas, participants began to develop alternatives to address future water demands for the planning area. Those alternatives, as well as alternatives from earlier meetings, were categorized and definitions were presented to meeting attendees.

After discussing the alternatives, participants were asked to prioritize the alternatives to give guidance to the consultant team for further refinement and development of the prioritized alternatives. Records of the general discussion at each meeting are shown below, followed by a table that summarizes the prioritized alternatives from each meeting.

**Mora General Discussion:** Participants noted that important issues for the area included:

- Impoundment of water continues to be an issue for downstream users. In the upper Mora (Cleveland), water hasn't flown in 3 years, even though there is rain.
- Potential contamination to well water from septic tanks is a key concern. Many people do not have the finances to upgrade septic systems.
- There is an interest in development of best practices for agricultural use of water. Delivery systems need to be modernized (only two acequias are lined now). Funding for conservation programs is key.
- Development of water catchments systems is needed.
- The Mora wastewater system is old, but there aren't enough connections to pay for improvements.
- Regionalization of water doesn't make sense for Mora; it would be politically unacceptable.
- Some watershed source protection programs are underway.
- Enforcement of existing laws is important.
- For water rights, an appeal process that doesn't go to the State Engineer is needed (so there can be independent review).

- Adjudication is probably not desirable for the area.

Participants at the meeting suggested that the following alternatives be added to the list.

- Use of snow fences
- A drinking water reservoir for Mora
- Land smoothing (simpler technology than laser leveling)

**Pecos General Discussion:** Several of the participants were new to the planning process and were presented with a comprehensive report on the planning effort to date. After the presentation, participants discussed the issues that were important to the area. Issues noted included:

- Development of a community system is a high priority.
- Both water quality and consistent supply need to be considered.
- Growth in the area and the impact on future supply of water are important issues in Pecos.
- Need to address septic systems; wherever there are domestic wells, there will be septic systems, which can be a major water quality concern.
- There needs to be oversight for domestic systems if tax dollars are received.
- Some wells may be having water quality problems due to mining activities.
- Municipal conservation efforts should also include mutual domestics.

**Steering Committee Meeting:** The meeting was held at Highlands University and included numerous community representatives, including the Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Las Vegas and the City of Santa Rosa.

Participants reviewed the draft alternatives and discussed the various options. After reviewing the alternatives, participants added new alternatives and were then asked to prioritize the alternatives in order to give guidance to the consultant team for further refinement and development.

It was noted that participants were concerned about the lack of involvement from San Miguel County and hoped that representatives would attend more meetings. “Implementation of the plan will be critical, and this is where the counties and municipalities will need to come together,” noted one participant.

The Santa Rosa representative pointed out that Santa Rosa joined the planning effort because of the opportunity presented to be part of a plan that would be finished within a year or so and the cultural similarities between the counties. He further noted that both Guadalupe County and the City of Santa Rosa passed resolutions to indicate their support for the effort and hoped that Mora and San Miguel Counties, as well as the municipalities in the planning region, would also develop resolutions indicating their support for the effort.

Some other issues discussed at the meeting include:

- There is a need for conservation efforts outside of the City. The City of Las Vegas has extensive programs, but similar conservation programs are not in place in outlying areas.
- Water quality for domestic users is an issue. It was suggested that water quality testing for domestic well users could be set up through a water fair or through the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources.
- The Storrie Project water rights should be updated on the water rights summary that was compiled based on the previous water planning effort.
- There are more than 2,000 trees per acre in much of the area, and watershed restoration is a priority.
- Restoration in wilderness areas needs to be considered also because of the fire danger and water yield issues.
- Enforcement of existing laws and policies is more important than developing new laws.
- Dirt tanks can help with erosion control. However, changes to the stock pond law, which now requires a state engineer permit even for stock ponds under 10 acre feet in size, amounts to an attempt to discourage dirt tanks except for stock watering.
- It is important to control development that might affect water quality; we need to protect the quality of the water resource.
- Accurate data are needed before we can decide how to best manage water resources.

New alternatives added at the meeting included:

- Additional use of dirt tanks to store more water
- Development of a process to determine if water projects will impair others
- Citizen participation will be key to implementing the regional water plan
- Additional storage capacity is needed to assist with drought preparedness
- Control development that might affect water quality
- Enforce federal water quality standards
- Data collection, metering, measuring, and monitoring
- Declaration of eastern groundwater basins by the OSE
- Restrictions on domestic wells (amount and number)
- Enforce existing laws and policies

**Santa Rosa Meeting:** As Guadalupe County is the newest county to be added to the planning region, several participants were unfamiliar with the regional planning process. Therefore, the initial discussion clarified that the purpose of regional water planning is to develop water management priorities, to define the local public welfare, and to anticipate and plan for future water needs. It was also affirmed that public discussion of the plan and management alternatives to be developed will be facilitated by further general meetings and steering committee meetings, and may be added onto meetings of other local governmental bodies. The regional water planning meetings are open to the public,



and it is the hope of the steering committee that anyone who wants to participate will attend meetings.

Participants noted that important issues for the area included:

- All water users should be represented fairly in the water planning process.
- Community input into the regional planning document must continue, both before and after the document has been drafted.
- Loopholes in the OSE well and stock tank permitting processes must be closed to ensure that wells and tanks are permitted according to their actual use.
- Drip irrigation is not a feasible water conservation strategy for local groundwater or surface water due to the high level of mineralization.
- Complete draining of Santa Rosa Lake is detrimental to recreational and other uses in the county.

New alternatives added at the meeting included:

- Establish a minimum pool requirement for Santa Rosa Lake
- Utilize lower-water use and/or higher value crops
- Use non-potable water where potable water is unnecessary (i.e., construction)
- Develop recreation ponds for seniors and others
- Protect wetlands

Additionally, Guadalupe County steering committee representatives already chosen by their respective local government bodies were identified, and further nominations were made. Rosemary Romero and the consultant team will follow up on these nominations by telephone and mail contact with assistance from the participants.

**Next Steps:** Based on the input from all of the meetings, the alternatives will be further summarized and discussed at the next Steering Committee meeting. At that time, we hope to reach consensus with the group regarding priority alternatives to be researched and included in the regional water plan. The next steering committee meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 15, 1:30 to 4:30, at the World College in the same rooms used before (main building). Signs will be posted to help participants find their way.

It was further suggested that an agenda item for the committee to consider would be the times, dates, and locations of future meetings.

Meeting in Las Vegas  
April 14, 2004

Present: Mayor Henry Sanchez, Utilities Director Richard Trujillo, City Councilor Gene Romero, City Manager Morris Madrid, Tierra y Montes Representative Frances Martinez.

Consultants Present: Joanne Hilton and Rosemary Romero

Joanne Hilton gave an overview of regional water planning to those present and then opened the discussion. Some water issues discussed at the meeting include:

- Enforcement is a very challenging issue between the City of Las Vegas and San Miguel County. It was noted that the City is doing all they can to track use of water coming in and going out of Las Vegas but there is not the same kind of data for the County. People who don't want to meet the stringent requirements of the City are moving out to the County where they can drill a well and use as much water as they want. There are 811 wells and septic tanks in the Romeroville area.
- A regional water authority may be very useful to bring all of the agencies together to address water issues.
- Changing state water law of "use it or lose it" would also help to conserve water.
- The City does not have a building and permitting department; such a department would help to guide development and growth.
- The readjudication of the Gallinas is not complete, making it difficult for the City to purchase new water rights.
- The City of Las Vegas is the only user metered on the entire Gallinas River. It is important to add metering for other users.
- An important issue for Las Vegas is "quality of life," which guides the City in conserving water for the future. It was difficult for them at the height of the drought season to let parks go. Reuse of water or other conservation measures for recreational purposes is a high priority.
- The City purchased and is distributing (for \$15) rain barrels to the community as part of their conservation program.
- Over the last two years the City has reduced water use by 28%, to 64 gpcd when full restrictions are in use.

To do:

Send the SW Marketing and Planning report to Mayor Sanchez and Richard Trujillo

**Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Regional Water Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting Summary  
June 15, 2004  
World College, Montezuma, NM**

**Facilitator:** Rosemary Romero

Rosemary Romero initiated the meeting with introductions and a review of the agenda. The following correction to the previous meeting notes was presented:

Dirt tanks can help with erosion control. However, changes to the stock pond law, which now requires a state engineer permit even for stock ponds under 10 acre-feet in size, will make it more difficult to use dirt tanks in the future.

Joanne Hilton of DBS&A then presented the following information on the status of alternatives:

- A definition of all alternatives, including the new alternatives added at the April meetings held in Mora, Pecos, Las Vegas, and Santa Rosa
- An outline showing topics that will be included in the alternatives analysis (attached)
- A summary showing all alternatives and the number of dots received at each meeting, sorted by number of dots received
- A summary showing the top ranked alternatives (top ten total from all meetings and the top six at each meeting, attached) and general information about technical, legal, and financial feasibility and the amount of water to be gained or saved from each alternative

The objective of this portion of the meeting was to determine which alternatives would be included in the plan and to prioritize the level of research to be accomplished. The alternatives to be included in the plan will undergo one of three potential levels of analysis:

- A full analysis according to the regional water planning template (see attached outline)
- A limited analysis identifying key issues (see attached outlined)
- Inclusion of the alternative on a recommendations table that identifies key action steps, responsible parties, and a timeline for implementation.

The group was tasked with identifying which alternatives would be the most important to research as part of the plan development. The ISC scope calls for full analysis of 10 alternatives. After discussion with the group, DBS&A agreed to add 2 additional alternatives for a total of 12 for full analysis:

- Watershed management
- Agricultural conservation / delivery system efficiencies (i.e., line ditches, install pipes)
- Water rights protection
  - Create permanent pool of water in Santa Rosa Lake
- Municipal conservation / education (including gray water use)
- Exotic vegetation replacement
- Water quality protection (including septic tanks)
- Require proof of water availability (for new subdivisions; consider other growth controls)
- Water banking (may be combined with water rights protection)
- Data collection, metering, measuring, monitoring and management
- Develop additional storage (consider also aquifer storage and recovery)
- Develop additional groundwater

Three other alternatives were considered to be very important, but to not need the full analysis according to the regional water planning template. These will receive a more limited analysis but will still be key recommendations of the plan

- Complete 40-year water plans
- Water plan implementation
- Citizen participation as part of implementation

The remainder of the alternatives will be included in a recommendations table within the regional water plan.

### **General Comments:**

One participant asked how this process would be implemented. It was noted that the plan will clearly indicate who had agreed to be responsible for the specific activity identified as a solution. Entities that could be responsible for implementation include soil and water districts, municipalities, counties and other partners as appropriate. Implementation is very important, and policy makers should attend the meetings and be involved.

Other general comments included:

- The ISC can reserve groundwater on behalf of the region if the region desires.
- Steering Committee members noted that information/data is important to make good decisions. “We need to get accurate information about groundwater; there isn’t enough data now.”
- Others felt that watershed protection is very important.

- Another participant pointed out that it is important that agriculture should not be mixed up with livestock production.
- Domestic well protection should be considered when evaluating ways of protecting water rights in the region.
- Additional newspaper or newsletter coverage would be helpful.
- Septic tanks should be considered as a subcategory of water quality.
- Domestic water quality testing could be added to data collection.
- Aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) should be considered with the storage alternative.

The meeting then broke up into three subcommittee meetings to discuss specific groups of alternatives. Notes from those meetings follow.

The next Steering Committee meeting is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, September 21, 2004, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m.

### **Subcommittee Meetings**

#### **Water Banking, Additional Storage, Water Rights Protection, Create a Permanent Pool in Santa Rosa Reservoir**

Water banking is a good idea, but there are many political obstacles. People do not want to get involved in water banking unless there is fair compensation for water rights and a mechanism that will work to carry out exchanges. Recent attempts by the City of Las Vegas to purchase water rights under market value have added to an atmosphere of distrust.

Acequias would probably generally be amenable to water banking, but they would need to feel that the setup is fair and that they would be compensated. A neutral facilitator to negotiate the setup and contractual arrangements for a water bank would be required.

Potential condemnation of water rights is another issue that fosters distrust and may affect the ability to develop trust and establish a workable water bank.

Many people are arguing about water now that there isn't enough. A better process for resolving disputes is needed.

Storage on Tecolote Creek is an issue. There are a lot of dirt tanks on the Tecolote headwaters. There are still times when there is no flow even after rains.

## **Agricultural Conservation, Municipal Conservation, Control Growth, Require Proof of Water Availability, Data Collection, Groundwater Development**

### *Agricultural Conservation*

Ranchers use less water than farmers and automatically have to adjust to the water supply. Unless they have an aquifer like the Ogallala, they are limited to the water flow. Consequently, ranchers are always in a conservation mode. The region needs to know what is available from groundwater and needs to focus on irrigation.

The Storrie Project is an important project for this region. The NRCS technical folks study each irrigation system individually and help farmers get funding. Currently, the project is focused on the Gallinas River below Las Vegas. Pipelines and infrastructure, including meters, are being installed. The new Water Master will also play an important role in regulating diversions. Funding for the projects is from the Farm Service Administration (FSA), NMED Water Quality Bureau, and other grants.

The cost to line the entire Storrie Project would be \$58 million. Senator Domenici said that the only way he would fund the project is if the parties agreed to drop the litigation. The City of Las Vegas recently voted (unanimously) to continue their litigation against the acequias. A Water Compact Committee Findings Report (2003) discusses the losses and potential savings for improvements to the Storrie Project. The report shows that the 50% of the water from the Storrie Project is lost during conveyance and that the City of Las Vegas loses another 38% in its distribution.

### *Control Growth*

What growth? There used to be 200 people 40 miles east of Las Vegas; now only a few people remain. Growth is occurring west of Las Vegas, near Pecos and Santa Fe. Santa Rosa is also growing.

### *Require Proof of Water Availability*

Data collection is needed for proof of availability. Milagro is starting a new subdivision. The 1972 Subdivision Act is supposed to require proof of water availability, but it is not being enforced. PNM explored for groundwater in a 10-mile radius and found none, so they gave the water system to the City of Las Vegas.

### *Data Collection*

Data collection is important for many reasons. The region needs to know what groundwater is available, because it is more stable than surface water. The gas exploration wells drilled 6 miles north of Las Vegas should be looked at as a source of groundwater data.

### *Groundwater Development*

The region needs to know what is available for drought reserve, and data collection needs to proceed. As the group was breaking up at this point, a clear discussion did not take place.

## **Watershed Protection, Water Quality Protection, and Exotic Vegetation Removal**

### *Watershed Protection*

The area has received several grants to work on watershed issues. These have included NMED Section 319 grants for Gallinas and Sapello, Wildland Urban Interface grants from the Energy, and Natural Resources Department, and CFRP (Collaborative Forest Restoration Program) and other grants for streambank restoration, erosion control, and seeding of critical areas.

Many of the grants have an education component and this will continue. To date there have been about 10 presentations per year. These presentations could complement the implementation part of the water plan which, as people have noted in previous meetings, must include an educational component.

Thinning of the forest has served several purposes: reducing forest fires, creating a healthy area, and using small-diameter timber, which has created some economic development.

### *Water Quality*

Acequias are challenged to address water quality issues, but this is very difficult because of time. Individuals involved in acequia issues are often working two jobs or no longer living in the area. This becomes more difficult each year when people get frustrated and sell their land. Ideally it would be good to conduct a study to show how many water rights have been transferred.

### *Exotic Vegetation Removal*

Money from the Water Trust Board has been available to Tierra y Montes to address this issue. The legislature has allocated \$5 million for the Canadian River area in San Miguel and Mora Counties. Removal of exotic species has increased flow.

Methods of eradicating exotic species include use of goats, spraying, excavating, and grubbing.

**Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe  
Regional Water Plan**

**Summary of Meeting  
October 7, 2004**

**Facilitated by: Rosemary Romero**

**Presentation by Susan Kery:**

Susan Kery gave an overview of the legal issues faced by the region in the development of the regional water plan. Topics included legal implications of additional storage in the region, the Endangered Species Act, and the status of Las Vegas water rights quantification and stream system adjudications.

Participants were interested in knowing more about the implications of the Hope Decree on the regional water planning effort and whether the state would acknowledge the 1933 decree. Ms. Kery reported that Hope Decree is not binding for the State because they were not a party to the decree. However, the State does consider the Hope decree as evidence (in conjunction with other information) in ongoing adjudications on the Pecos River. It was noted that there would be a more in-depth presentation at the Santa Rosa meeting on October 13.

Another participant asked what the definition of “beneficial use” was from the state perspective and wondered if there was any chance that this could change. Kery reported that an example of beneficial use is irrigation and the needs for agriculture.

Another issue that could affect the area is the Endangered Species Act. Currently, the Pecos bluntnose shiner is on the list. Though the breeding ground for the fish is on the lower Pecos, activities upriver that are part of management of the system must be taken into account. For example, if reservoir management changes in any way, this is considered an “action” that will require consultation among agencies and will include mitigation efforts to protect the fish.

Ms. Hilton then presented a handout on water demand for discussion purposes. In general the group agreed to the methods of projecting demand that were presented in the handout. The representative from the Santa Rosa area reported that dairy farm representatives had contacted Guadalupe County about the possibility of siting a dairy farm in the area. He noted that this would increase the use of alfalfa and was a land use issue. Other ranching representatives pointed out that rainfall affects growth or increase in agriculture and, given the drought impacts, doubted that there would be a significant increase in agriculture. Others noted that although groundwater withdrawal indicates increased use for domestic use, without metering, it is difficult to determine the full amount. Another participant noted that an important aspect of the regional water plan (RWP) is to include a recommendation for metering.



Another participant noted that acequias have the ability to influence the planning effort but need help in changing their bylaws as needed. It was suggested that the RWP could find a way to offer technical support for acequias specifically for updating their bylaws.

**Discussion about Alternatives:** Participants reviewed several of the alternatives with respect to implications for political, cultural, economic or environmental issues.

*Groundwater Development:* Mora County representatives noted that Mora County is very dependent on groundwater and future supply should be protected. It was noted that often counties don't take into account the effect of development on current users when they are approving subdivisions. One participant noted that it would be great if water planning happened first and took priority before land use planning and encouraged a more "socialist" perspective about water planning. People have come to the area because of the openness and views and then find out that there are problems with a consistent water supply. San Miguel County can ask for proof of enough water before permitting.

*Additional Storage:* This has economic and environmental impacts. Dredging the reservoir in order to create more storage is costly, but it may be better from an environmental perspective to go deeper rather than broader.

*Aquifer Storage:* This has been considered in other areas, but is difficult for this area because of the geological fractures. Another political consideration is one of water rights. This has been a challenge for water banking. There was concern expressed that water banking could help get water to land that did not have water.

**Next Meeting:** The group decided that the next steering committee meeting should be longer in order to finish reviewing the alternatives and to allow for a detailed discussion about implementation. The next meeting will be on Wednesday, November 10 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There was also discussion regarding another public meeting, but a date for that has not yet been set.

**Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan  
Santa Rosa, New Mexico  
October 13, 2004**

**Summary of Meeting**

**Facilitated by:** Rosemary Romero

**Presenters:** William Cassel, Office of the State Engineer  
Susan Kery, Sheehan, Sheehan and Stelzner  
Joanne Hilton, Project Manager for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Purpose of the meeting:** Representatives from Santa Rosa requested the additional meeting in order to better understand issues specific to the Hope Decree and water rights. William Cassel, the OSE managing attorney for the Pecos Adjudication, and Susan Kery, attorney with Sheehan, Sheehan & Stelzner, gave presentations about the two issues concerning the area.

**Hope Decree Discussion**

Mr. Cassel reported that adjudications are mandated by the State of New Mexico. The purpose of adjudications is to confer legal rights to water holders.

Mr. Cassel gave an overview of the Hope Decree. He noted that the Decree was not considered binding for the State of New Mexico because the State had not been a party to the negotiations and the settlement. The decree was a means for the federal government and water holders to reach agreement on water rights. The State is now in the process of adjudicating Pecos River water rights in a manner that will be binding to the State. In the current adjudication, the OSE is using the Hope Decree as evidence.

Participants again questioned why the Hope Decree was not affirmed, and Mr. Cassel responded that the State had not been a party to the original decree. Mr. Cassel noted that the schedule for adjudications is dependent on the availability of staff and resources at the OSE to address more than one priority area. Judge Byrd had ordered that the OSE undertake the Gallinas Adjudication in 2002, and this became a priority for the state.

One participant noted that at one time the Gallinas River flowed into the Pecos River and there was quite a bit more water and asked, "What happened to the water?" Mr. Cassel reported that there was more water in the past, but due to drought, depletions by other users, and storage, less water was now available. Water users have included the City of Las Vegas, acequias, and Storrie Lake storage.

## **Water Rights Discussion**

Ms. Kery gave an overview of New Mexico laws governing water rights. She reported that a water right is determined by beneficial use and that each right has a priority date corresponding to the original use. The right may be “evidenced” through a declaration or a homestead right. Because most water in the area is allocated, a water right can now generally be obtained only by purchasing a prior right. If a property is sold but the deed is silent on the associated water right, then the land will still include the water right unless the deed specifically notes that it does not include the water right.

In order to sell a water right, an individual must apply to the OSE for an ownership change, and the deed must be filed with the county and, for inheritance purposes, the change of ownership noted and filed. An application for a water right change must be published in the newspaper, and others can protest it if they feel they will be impacted by the change. If a water right transfer is protested, then a hearing will be held to determine if there is impairment.

One participant asked if the discussion applied to leased water rights versus owned. Ms. Kery reported that the steps are the same. Another participant suggested that water banking might be a way to protect water rights; others in the room pointed out that several obstacles must still be overcome before this concept is widely accepted.

Another participant asked what would happen if a parcel of land had not been irrigated for 50 years. Did this constitute abandonment of water rights? Ms. Kery noted that if there was a reason for the land not being irrigated, such as loss of access or control of the conveyance mechanism, these would be taken into consideration and water rights would probably not be deemed abandoned, due to cause.

## **Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan**

### **Steering Committee Meeting**

**November 10, 2004**

**Las Vegas, NM**

**Facilitated by:** Rosemary Romero

**Welcome and introductions:** Rosemary Romero welcomed members of the steering committee, members of the public, and elected officials. At the previous steering committee meeting, members had decided that there was so much information to cover that a longer meeting would be in order. The meeting was then scheduled from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in order to have enough time for review of the alternatives and other issues.

**Presentation on alternatives:** Joanne Hilton gave an overview of the alternatives that were not covered at the previous meeting. She then asked participants to break into three groups to discuss the remaining alternatives and discuss the feasibility of each alternative relative to social/cultural and political challenges. The reports from each group are attached.

**Public Welfare Overview:** A small group met and developed a draft public welfare statement, which is attached.

**Implementation Overview:** A small group met to discuss how the group would be able to carry out the implementation of the regional water plan. The group decided that keeping the region together through a regional water planning council would serve the needs of the area. Ideally, the council would include diverse representation from citizens, designated representatives appointed by the governing bodies, soil and water conservation districts, and others. Funding for projects could be more successful if the region applied as a whole, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities such as Clean Water Act Section 319 grants, Water Trust Board grants, Collaborative Forest Restoration Program (CFRP), and others.

The group agreed to the following:

- The group will continue as the Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Water Council
- Interim leadership of the council will be Frank Splendoria, Gabe Estrada, Gino Lujan, and David Salazar.
- Volunteers willing to help the leadership team include Walter Wiggins, Martin Honnegger, Lillian Sanchez, Frances Martinez, and Editha Bartley
- The group felt strongly that decisions made by the council should be reached by consensus. It was noted that if this group is to be effective, the group must vet the recommendations made to decision makers.
- Ideally, Memorandums of Understandings (MOUs) will be developed for all three counties among each other and will include the incorporated municipalities of Pecos, Las Vegas, Vaughn, Santa Rosa, and Wagon Mound.

- In addition, Resolutions should be drafted by all of the entities to be presented to their respective councils or commissions for acceptance of the water plan and commitment for implementation.
- The Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District offered to continue administration for the Council and offered meeting space.

**Implementation Schedule:** A small group met to develop a draft implementation schedule. The schedule identifies responsible parties and the relative time frame to begin implementation of each alternative. The alternatives included in the table were based on the original list of alternatives developed last spring and summer and therefore include not only the alternatives receiving more detailed analysis in the plan, but other alternatives that were originally identified by the group as well. A copy of the draft implementation schedule is attached.

**Next Steps:** Joanne Hilton reported that the next steps for finalizing the Plan would include two public meetings in December to present the results of the planning process to date for comment. A draft of the Plan could then be issued in February 2005. Public meetings will be held as follows:

- December 6, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
Santa Rosa City Hall
- December 7, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.  
New Mexico Highlands University Student Center Ballroom, Las Vegas

## Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan

### Steering Committee Meeting

November 10, 2004

### Group Discussions of Alternatives

#### *Group 1:*

**Watershed Management:** The group hoped that the \$5 million allocated to higher education for development of a watershed institute would occur. This would be helpful to the area if Highlands University received this type of support.

- This alternative has much political support, and very successful projects supported by various grants have been conducted in the region.
- More education about the implications of *not* doing something is needed.
- The Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District, the New Mexico State Forestry Division, and Highlands University have created a good partnership for getting grants and addressing watershed problems.
- Education is critical. There has been misunderstanding about how thinning a forest actually helps to create more water and reduce fire hazards. One strategy to educate people may be to have the council create articles to show the benefits and connections to thinning and water flow. Good information on this subject is available from Delores Maese of the U.S. Forest Service and from Highlands University.

#### **Development of Additional Groundwater:**

- Comprehensive mapping of areas that hold the potential for development of additional groundwater resources should include all of the counties. Well drillers may be a source of information and should be contacted.
- The effort should identify and include sources in the Mora area, acequias, and critical areas.
- Evaporation must be addressed.
- Smaller ranches or landowners will worry that the development of additional groundwater may harm them by hampering or limiting their ability to access water. This may be seen as an issue of impairment.
- Variances should be reviewed carefully and not used if it is determined that they will be detrimental to groundwater sources. Housing concerns drive families to use family transfers or lot splits, and these in turn create further impairments due to additional septic tanks or separate wells.
- Cross-contamination is occurring throughout the area. There are currently no regulations that state where one can place a well and thus nothing prevents someone from putting a well over

a septic tank (Cleveland site example). Individual wells are most at risk if something is not changed.

- Vaulted systems are also problematic: NMED permits these, but after they leave, the systems are not monitored. This is an issue of compliance and monitoring.
- Water availability should be determined first before land development is approved.

### **Exotic Vegetation Removal**

- The group agreed that this alternative seems to have no drawback from a political perspective. There may be limitations due to funding, but these can be addressed through partnerships.
- Comparison data are needed in order to show others what has been done. Ranchers could use their work to show neighbors the various techniques for removal of exotic vegetation, but support would need to be given to them on the monitoring aspects. Goats have been used effectively, and the success of using them would have to be shared in order to educate the public about this effective means of reducing exotic vegetation.
- People will need to be educated about why removal of exotic species is important for the overall health of an area.
- Land trusts may be a means of helping to correct problems on dormant lands. This would be similar to a water bank, where land that has weeds and other exotic vegetation is helped to become productive through a trust (grass bank example).
- More data are needed to address the problem. Give people clear examples of the benefits of looking at their land from a holistic perspective and the impacts they have on their neighbors when they don't take care of their land.

### **Water Quality Protection**

- San Miguel County is taking the lead in requiring tertiary systems. The drawback to these, if they become part of the permitting process, is that they are expensive.
- Well owners in rural areas have difficulty getting their water tested. Many have to drive long distances to NMED facilities. The state could create mobile units to send out to rural areas, similar to a bookmobile system. People could then more readily get the information they need.
- Education is needed to show people what is in their water. Monitoring and enforcement are linked, and less enforcement would be needed if people understood this connection.
- The slivering of land for family members has created multiple problems. People don't link their systems, resulting in numerous wells and septic systems on smaller parcels of land, thus creating potential for more environmental degradation. Solving this problem will require long-term education as well as advocacy for not allowing variances that add to the problem.

## ***Group 2***

### **Agricultural Conservation:**

- Acequia organizations would have to be convinced that conservation would benefit them.
- It is not known what impacts conservation measures would have on the Wildlife Refuge (Dr. Jennifer Lindline studied recharge from canal leakage on the Wildlife Refuge).
- Canal leakage recharges the aquifer; therefore, lining canals may have a negative impact on groundwater users.
- Canal lining and other conservation measures are expensive, and it is not clear what incentive there is for a farmer to spend the money to implement such measures.
- In some situations, the canal leakage may go back to the river anyway, so no water is actually saved through the conservation efforts.
- Agriculture use of water should be more efficient, because it is already a poor use of water as compared to municipal use.
- Funds from the ISC are available for acequias to improve their systems whereby they only have to pay 8 percent of the costs, while the State pays 17 percent and the federal government the remainder. Low interest loans are available for the acequias to pay the 8 percent of their share. Some acequia organizations do not want to have “Big Brother” involved in their projects; however, the huge backlog in applications for these funds suggests that the program is popular.

### **Municipal Conservation**

- This alternative is a great idea and has lots of support, but may be costly (e.g., retrofits of existing buildings with low-flow fixtures).
- Incentives for conservation, such as rebates and rate structures that encourage low water use, are needed.
- There is some concern that the lower revenue from the low water usage will cause rates to increase, while at the same time the lessened use will allow the Cities to hook up more customers. In that case, what is the incentive for existing residents?
- Education is needed.
- Future municipal demand could be reduced by giving tax breaks to landowners for not developing parcels within the city water system.



## **Require Proof of Water Availability**

- There is support for this alternative because existing residents need to be protected from new uses of water.
- San Miguel County has required proof of water availability for approval of new subdivisions since 1999. Since that time, two subdivisions have been approved; however the process of demonstrating proof of water availability took 4 years. Two other proposals were denied. Conversely, 400 permits for homes not in subdivisions have been approved since 2001, because the OSE automatically approves the individual domestic wells. This loophole is a big problem with implementing this alternative. Legislation is needed to impose criteria to reduce the 3-acre-foot-per-year allocation for domestic wells, require metering, or develop critical management areas to reduce the negative impacts of this loophole.
- Monitoring is needed after a subdivision is approved to ensure that they actually develop the water supply system that was the basis for approval.
- The cost of review of water availability studies needs to be considered when developing ordinances and fees for subdivision review.

## **Data Collection**

While data collection is needed in order for the region to understand what it is using and how much is available, who will pay for it? The City of Las Vegas is the only entity that meters its use of the Gallina River. Otherwise, metering occurs only if a lawsuit is in process (i.e., Tecolote). The region's legislators have requested funds for data collection and other basic studies of the aquifers in the region, but these requests have been denied. Education is needed so that people can understand the importance of the data. How can we protect what we don't understand?

## ***Group 3***

### **Water Rights Protection**

- Most acequias have old bylaws. Many are probably not aware of the recent state law changes that allow them to adopt bylaws to have the authority to prevent transfers of water rights out of the acequia.
- Education and technical assistance for updating acequia bylaws are needed. County extension agents would be helpful in doing this
- If the largest user on a small ditch were to sell their rights, it would put too much burden for ditch maintenance on the others. Some acequias have adopted bylaws that require those who purchase water rights to continue the maintenance of the ditch.

- Within community or municipal water systems, the rights of existing users should be considered before adding new water users; that is, if the addition of new water users will result in severe restrictions being imposed, that wouldn't be fair to the existing users.
- Las Vegas has had a moratorium on new expansions to protect existing users.
- Subdivisions are being evaluated to determine if they have water rights; impact fees are needed to cover the cost of the review.
- Counties and municipalities need to make sure that wet water, not just water rights, is available for new subdivisions.

### **Water Banking**

- Lack of storage is an issue for running an effective water bank: if temporary transfers are to be effective, the water needs to be stored somewhere so that others can use it later.
- Water rights have been over-appropriated. For a water bank to be effective, it needs to be based on wet water, not transfers of paper water rights that don't have actual water to go with them.
- Storrie Lake sediment needs to be assessed; removing sediment could potentially create more storage that could be used for a water bank.
- Working on shortage sharing agreements would be a good way to start a dialogue that might eventually lead to a water bank.
- A facilitated process is needed to establish trust between water bank participants and to define the terms that all parties would be comfortable working under. It would be best if attorneys were left out of this process.
- It isn't politically feasible in many cases for the City of Las Vegas to purchase water rights.

### **Development of Additional Storage**

- Underground storage should be considered because of high evaporation rates; aquifer mapping is needed. Funding was in place before but was vetoed by Governor Johnson; trying again should be considered.
- Public Service Company drilled many wells in the 1950s. This information could be helpful in designing an aquifer storage and recovery project.
- Sediment removal should be considered to increase storage capacity.
- The idea of diverting water from the Canadian Basin and bringing it to the Las Vegas area has been talked about, but not really studied in any detail. This is a possibility because, while the Pecos River Compact makes additional storage of Pecos waters very difficult, additional storage of Canadian Basin water would be easier to implement.

**Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan  
Public Meeting  
Santa Rosa, NM  
December 6, 2004**

**Summary of Meeting**

**Facilitated by:** Rosemary Romero

**Presenter:** Joanne Hilton, Project Manager for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Purpose of the meeting:** To inform the various stakeholders throughout the planning area about the work of the steering committee, to review of the alternatives developed, and to discuss implementation of the alternatives. In addition, the consultant team reviewed the schedule for finalizing the plan.

**Overview of Regional Water Planning:** Joanne Hilton provided a summary of regional water planning tasks completed to date, including an overview of water supply and demand information and legal issues.

**Alternative overview:** After review of the priority alternatives, which had been previously selected by the steering committee, and further refined through a public process, the participants were asked to think about the feasibility of implementing the alternatives, keeping in mind the possible constraints from a political, social, cultural or environmental perspective.

Priority Alternatives:

- Infrastructure/Water Supply Development
- Water Resource Management
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality
- Groundwater Development
- Develop Additional Storage
- Watershed Management
- Exotic Vegetation Replacement
- Water Banking
- Protecting Water Rights
- Permanent Storage Pool in Santa Rosa Reservoir
- Data Collection, Metering, and Monitoring
- Proof of Water Availability
- Municipal Water Conservation
- Agricultural Conservation

Alternatives for Limited Analysis:

- Complete 40-year water plans
- Water plan implementation
- Citizen participation as part of implementation

**General Discussion:** Participants felt that many of the alternatives would require lobbying, especially when money was requested for specific projects. It was also noted that agricultural conservation was important for the Santa Rosa area; however, a “one-size-fits-all” conservation plan would not work for the three counties.

After reviewing the protecting water rights alternatives, participants felt that the plan should recommend options specifically for how to protect water rights and limitations on selling of water rights that impacted the surrounding area.

One participant noted that the information presented was invaluable and hoped that another “study session” could be organized to more fully review the alternatives.

Participants questioned why the evaporation from reservoirs was so high in specific areas. Joanne Hilton noted that evaporation on reservoirs is a common occurrence, and is accounted for in the county where the reservoir is physically located. One participant pointed out that there is continual research being conducted on evaporation issues. He further noted that a professor from NMSU has issued a report on diminishing evaporation as well as agricultural techniques to conserve water use.

The group discussed various challenges attributed to the use of conservation easements. It was noted that NRCS or others might be more appropriate to hold easements rather than private organizations such as the Nature Conservancy. The group felt that further understanding about conservation easements could be organized through an educational forum in the future.

**Mora/San Miguel/Guadalupe Regional Water Plan  
Public Meeting  
Las Vegas, NM  
December 7, 2004**

**Summary of Meeting**

**Facilitated by:** Rosemary Romero

**Presenter:** Joanne Hilton, Project Manager for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Purpose of the meeting:** To inform the various stakeholders throughout the planning area about the work of the steering committee, to review the alternatives developed, and to discuss implementation of the alternatives. In addition, the consultant team reviewed the schedule for finalizing the plan.

**Overview of Regional Water Planning:** Joanne Hilton provided a summary of regional water planning tasks completed to date, including an overview of water supply and demand information and legal issues.

**Alternative overview:** After review of the priority alternatives, which had been previously selected by the steering committee and further refined through a public process, the participants were asked to think about the feasibility of implementing the alternatives, keeping in mind the possible constraints from a political, social, cultural or environmental perspective.

The priority alternatives include:

- Infrastructure/Water Supply Development
- Water Resource Management
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality
- Groundwater Development
- Develop Additional Storage
- Watershed Management
- Exotic Vegetation Replacement
- Water Banking
- Protecting Water Rights
- Permanent Storage Pool in Santa Rosa Reservoir
- Data Collection, Metering, and Monitoring
- Proof of Water Availability
- Municipal Water Conservation
- Agricultural Conservation

Alternatives for limited analysis include:

- Complete 40-year water plans
- Water plan implementation
- Citizen participation as part of implementation

**General Discussion:** Participants questioned why the evaporation from reservoirs was so high in specific counties. Joanne Hilton noted that evaporation on reservoirs is a common occurrence, and is accounted for in the county where the reservoir is physically located, even if the water stored there is used primarily downstream of the region.

A question regarding appropriation of groundwater was asked. Ms. Hilton responded that all groundwater in the region has been declared (requires an OSE permit) except for the central part of the region, generally east of Las Vegas. The undeclared area allows people to drill wells without having to get a permit from the OSE.

One participant asked about the Hope Decree and Pueblo water rights. Ms. Hilton explained that steering committee members in the Santa Rosa area requested additional information about the Hope Decree and impacts on their water rights. William Cassell from the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) gave a presentation in Santa Rosa about the Hope Decree, and Susan Kery, a water attorney, gave an overview about water rights in the area. Joanne reported that when the Hope Decree was signed in 1933, it was an agreement by the federal government and water rights holders along the Pecos River and its tributaries. Because the state was not a party to the negotiations, they are not bound by the decree and are conducting alternate adjudications along the Pecos. Information regarding water rights from the Hope Decree is being used as evidence in the adjudication for the area, along with other pertinent information.

Regarding the Pueblo Water rights, the City of Las Vegas claimed water rights similar to those established for Pueblos. A Supreme Court ruling recently limited the Pueblo right for the City Las Vegas.

One participant questioned if the OSE recognized cloud seeding or snowmaking as a beneficial use. It was noted that the Jemez y Sangre (JyS) Regional Water Plan as well as a plan by the previous Mora-San Miguel Water Plan Committee had developed a similar alternative on cloud seeding; however, the cloud seeding alternative did not make it to the top of the priority list for the current plan. The JyS Council held a forum on cloud seeding in order to better inform the Council about the implications of such an alternative.

Another alternative suggested by the steering committee was the use of snow fences to capture snow and utilization of the resulting water for domestic use. This alternative did not make it to the top of the priority list either, but will become part of the regional water plan recommendations. It was further noted that this alternative was more specific to the Mora area.

**Discussion about Implementation of the Plan:** At the previous steering committee meeting, an interim Council was formed with designated leadership to work with decision makers on the implementation of the regional water plan. It was noted that the Water Trust Board could offer opportunities for funding of implementation. One of the water trust board criteria for funding is identification of the project in an ISC approved regional water plan. Paula Garcia, a member of the New Mexico Acequia Association and member of the Water Trust Board, complimented the planners on the efforts thus far and reported that she would like to be more involved with the Council.

One member of the steering committee reported that the Council had a good chance to implement the regional water plan. The Council has support from at least three San Miguel County Commissioners, and David Salazar, the incoming Commissioner, has offered to be part of the Council leadership.

One participant noted that it might be helpful to invite the Water Master for the area to be on the Council or at least to come learn more about the regional water planning effort. In addition, a planning and zoning person from the City of Las Vegas should also be on the Council.

**Coordination with Other Plans:** One participant pointed out that there are currently several plans developed by agencies that should be coordinated with the regional water plan. For example, he noted that the Forest Service has management plans that could directly link with one of the alternatives in the plan.

**Additional Information:** It was reported that the consultants only used existing data and did not collect any field data, in accordance with ISC procedures for regional water planning. One participant felt that it would be important to know the number of irrigable acres in order to implement the plan. The alternative calling for additional information might offer an opportunity to develop a proposal to the Water Trust Board in order to get this information.

As part of the regional water planning effort, Southwest Planning & Marketing conducted growth analysis for the three counties. Mora showed some growth as well as San Miguel. In particular, areas closer to Santa Fe County seem to be experiencing quite a bit of growth, while Santa Rosa will have limited growth.

**Conservation Efforts:** Several participants in the audience represented economic development for Las Vegas and hoped that the City would utilize gray water for such things as parks or other recreation in order to draw businesses to the area.

Participants thought that higher value crops could be utilized in the area to maximize use of water. This led to a brief discussion about challenges faced by urban vs. rural use of water. Cities need to have water to grow, and oftentimes citizens move out into unincorporated areas in order to save money, but exacerbate the problems of more septic tanks and depletion of groundwater.

**Link Between Land Use and the RWP:** Several participants pointed out that there is a direct link between land use concerns and the regional water planning effort. The plan could serve as a mechanism to help cities and counties develop regulations that could prevent further contamination of groundwater. In addition, the county could link land use regulations to cleanup of arroyos.

**Public Welfare Statement:** Though a presentation was not made about the Public Welfare Statement, it was reported that at the previous steering committee meeting, a small group met and developed a statement. That statement was then mailed to the entire stakeholder list for comment. One participant emphatically stated that water is the key to the future and the regional water plan should articulate the values of the areas such as need for clean water and healthy watersheds.

It was recommended that a small subcommittee be formed to review the draft Public Welfare Statement and meet before the regional water plan is completed.

**Additional Data Alternative:** One participant cautioned the group about the alternative that required additional data. She pointed out that metering, for example, could be used against people and that people on wells were often good stewards of resources and should not be mandated to meter their wells.

**Timeline for the Planning Effort:** Joanne reported that the input from the recent meetings would be added to the plan and a draft plan would be ready in the spring. The draft will be available for a 45 to 60 day review period, and a final plan would then be completed by July 2005.



**Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Regional Water Plan  
Steering Committee Meeting  
Las Vegas, New Mexico  
April 12, 2005**

**Summary of Meeting**

**Facilitated by:** Rosemary Romero

**Presenter:** Joanne Hilton, Project Manager for Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.

**Purpose of the meeting:** Joanne Hilton presented an overview of the *Draft Mora-San Miguel-Guadalupe Regional Water Plan* (RWP) and asked those present to review the full document online or at the designated areas throughout the planning area. She also noted that CDs could be requested, as some members of the steering committee had difficulty downloading some of the larger files.

The deadline for submitting written comments is May 31. These should be sent to Joanne Hilton at:

- E-mail: [jhilton@dbstephens.com](mailto:jhilton@dbstephens.com)
- Mail: Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc.  
6020 Academy NE, Suite 100  
Albuquerque, NM 87109
- Fax: 505 822-8877

If participants need clarification on any aspect of the plan, they can call Joanne directly at 505 822-9400. Comments received by May 31 will be addressed by the end of June if possible.

**Other meetings scheduled to present the plan:** Joanne noted that several presentations would be made over the next several weeks to present an overview of the plan to municipalities and to seek their support of the RWP through resolutions. She encouraged steering committee members to attend these presentations in order to show their support for implementation of the plan (Note: Some of the meeting dates have changed. The schedule below is the most current; please check with the government body or Joanne or Rosemary for updated schedule changes.)

April 11 Pecos Village Council  
April 12 Steering Committee in Las Vegas  
April 19 Mora County Commission, 10:00 a.m.  
May 9 Wagon Mound Town Council, 6:00 p.m.  
May 10 San Miguel County Commission, 1:30 p.m.  
May 18 City of Las Vegas Council, 6:00 p.m.  
May 23 Guadalupe County Commission, Santa Rosa City Council, Vaughn Town Council (combined meeting), 4:00 p.m.

**Alternatives overview:** Joanne Hilton presented an overview of the priority alternatives that were analyzed in the RWP:

- Municipal water conservation
- Agricultural water conservation
- Watershed management
- Exotic vegetation replacement
- Water quality protection (including septic tanks)
- Groundwater development
- Develop additional storage (including aquifer storage and recovery)
- Create permanent pool in Santa Rosa Lake
- Water rights protection
- Water banking
- Require proof of water availability
- Complete 40-year water plans
- Data collection, metering, monitoring, and management

**Implementation of the Plan:** The steering committee and members of the public discussed various ideas about implementation of the plan. The signed resolutions will be an important aspect for final approval of the plan by the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC), and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs), or Joint Powers Agreements (JPAs) between the various municipalities will help with the implementation and future funding of projects.

At the November 2004 steering committee meeting, it was decided to implement the plan through a Regional Water Planning Council, and at the November meeting of the Steering Committee, an Interim Council was organized. Membership of the Council includes:

Frank Splendoria  
Gabe Estrada  
Gino Lujan  
David Salazar  
Walter Wiggins  
Martin Honneger  
Frances Martinez  
Editha Bartley  
Joe Herrera  
Murl Baker

The Tierra y Montes Soil and Water Conservation District has agreed to be the fiscal agent for the Council and will coordinate administration efforts. A first step for the Council may be prioritization of specific implementation projects, some of which would be driven by grant opportunities.

The Council was encouraged to make presentations to the various city councils and county commissions as a first step in order to link the RWP to local priorities as well as to start with small projects and build success. Steering Committee members encouraged the consultants to reference the Council at the upcoming presentations in order to further build support for the work of the Council.

One member of the public suggested that perhaps individual County subgroups could be developed to represent the different issues of each county. Though she expressed praise for the planning effort, she felt that this was a push towards regionalization that might not suit the needs of the individual counties.

A member of the Steering Committee pointed out that the City of Las Vegas has had representation at the Steering Committee meetings and noted that the City could use the Council to work through larger issues that overlap between the City and County. Because of its diverse representation, the Council could play an active role between counties.

It was further suggested that the Council could play an active role as a convener for information exchange and in creating forums for education and dialogue about water issues.

Council members asked if they could get example documents that would help organize the council for its work. For example, MOUs and JPAs used by other regions could be useful. Also, watershed groups/associations have developed various types of materials for constituting councils. Rosemary Romero offered to send the web site for watershed information to Frank Splendoria.

**Future Funding:** The group discussed various means of funding projects, including soliciting grants/loans from the Water Trust Board (WTB). Paula Garcia is on the WTB and was asked to give an overview of the types of funding available. She reported that the WTB was created by the legislature with representation from the various state agencies and communities throughout New Mexico. The WTB meets once a month and has money for water, watershed and conveyance projects; however, the amount of money available is small compared to the demand. Meeting participants were encouraged to visit the New Mexico State Board of Finance web site or the ISC web site for more information. Paula also noted that the WTB encourages regional approaches to water problems.

**Public Welfare Statement:** Paula Garcia, who is also a representative of the New Mexico Acequia Association, noted that although she had not fully read the plan, she felt that the Public Welfare Statement could be further improved. A small subgroup was formed to review the statement and recommend changes. Volunteers for this small group included Paula Garcia, Kelly Fahee, Frank Splendoria, Angela Herrera, Editha Bartley, and Alex Tafoya, who offered to be the coordinator for this small group. He can be reached at 425-7805. Joanne Hilton noted that comments must be received by May 31.

**Next Steps:** The executive summary of the RWP will be presented to the various elected commissions and councils, along with a request to pass resolutions in support of the RWP.

Comments on the RWP will be received until May 31, 2005. After the comment period is closed and comments incorporated, the draft will then be finalized and will go before the ISC for approval. The ISC meetings are held throughout the state and it is not clear yet where the summer meetings will be held. Indications are that the RWP will be final in July, and it will then be posted on the ISC website.

The Interim Leadership Council for implementation of the water plan will begin to meet and organize themselves. As noted above, the group asked for documents that could help them through this process. In addition, representatives from the three counties as well as the Council will meet with the various elected officials to talk about implementation. The Council will organize these meetings.