

Río Puerco & Río Jemez Subregional Water Plan: 2000-2050

Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan

Volume II – August 2004

Prepared for:
Río Puerco y Río Jemez Steering Committees
on behalf of Río Puerco y Río Jemez Water Users

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Río Jemez and Río Puerco Subregional Water Plan

Preface

This document presents a summary of the subregional water plan for the Río Puerco and Río Jemez subregions of the Middle Rio Grande water planning Region. The Río Puerco and Río Jemez form two of the three watersheds in the Middle Rio Grande regional water planning district. The two subregions are rural and the populace stretched across vast landscape includes Navajo and Pueblo peoples, *acequia parciantes* or ditch users, ranchers, traditional villagers, second home owners, newcomers and a large population that traces its heritage back to early homesteaders. Federal and state agencies manage large portions of the region. Given such a broad spectrum, finding common ground has been a challenge. Likewise, the dearth of technical information to answer the questions regarding supply and demand, together with the level of funds available to locate and assemble it, cause the subregional water plan to be an more of a compilation of information for the time being.

The full draft subregional water plan was published, distributed and commented upon in the months between October and December, 2003. Notable changes from the October version include the addition of the adopted Public Welfare Statement, water planning information from the Navajo Nation, updated information on population trends and projections, an initial water projects list, a section on water quality, and an Epilogue documenting the process undertaken to obtain comment on the draft plan together with the comments themselves.

The process has been aided thanks to the involvement in the water planning Steering Committees of Jemez Pueblo and Zia Pueblo; members from the La Jara, San Ysidro, Jemez, Ponderosa and Los Pinos Acequias, among others; residents in the Villages of Jemez Springs, Cuba and San Ysidro as well as communities of La Jara, Regina, Ponderosa, Cañon, San Luis, and La Cueva; and ranchers from throughout the subregions. The shared knowledge and understanding helped to create a common ground upon which to build. The results -- especially the mission, goals and potential actions-- are based on this input and comments received through a long series of general public meetings throughout the subregion.

Not unlike elsewhere, the area is undergoing changes to customary ways of life while facing stresses on already scarce water resources. As this phase of the subregional water planning comes to a close, it is hoped that the residents in the Río Puerco and Río Jemez will find much in the plan to assist in their efforts to maintain and enhance their watersheds. Improving the information --the water picture-- will be an important step. Continuing the dialogue among the various interests will necessitate ongoing compromise and determination.

The plan is not static. As time goes on, the objectives and potential actions may change to fit the circumstances. Rather than being a mandate, the concept is that a regional water plan is a manual. It can lay out a long-term process towards finding answers and improving solutions, while establishing a vision and context for the entire watershed. Each area, such as La Jara or

Jemez Springs, may choose to have a more locally-based water plan. Together, hopefully, they will ensure that the goals of the subregional water plan are met. The plan will not take away water rights, nor absolutely protect them. The public welfare statement and the goals should guide the State Engineer regarding the community's desires.

A public involvement report, which contributed to this subregional plan, was funded by the Interstate Stream Commission, via the Mid Region Council of Governments and the Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District.

None of this could be accomplished without the time, talent and input of many collaborators. Particular thanks to Steve Lucero and Emmett Cart for their guidance, Judith Isaacs for her editorial assistance, Peggy Ohler for her wisdom and humor, Charlotte Mitchell for graciously handling whatever task is handed to her, and Jennifer Johnson for a superb job of detailing the public involvement and tracking the comments.

Steve Lucero, Chair, Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District
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April 2004

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