

# 11

## Implementation

In order to be useful, a plan needs to be implemented, rather than to lie idle on a shelf. This chapter contains the suggested approach to helping and encouraging effective implementation of the plan's recommendations. The following sections are included:

- Overview and Purpose
- Implementation Team
- Implementation Team Services
- Local Jurisdiction Involvement
- Regional Water Monitoring Program
- Regional Water-Management Database
- Integration with the State Water Plan and Other Water Plans
- Legislative and Congressional Initiatives and Funding Requests
- Public Education and Outreach
- Review and Update of the Plan

### 11.1 Overview and Purpose

Successful implementation of this plan requires identification of three particularly important ingredients which are addressed in this chapter:

- responsible parties
- what actions should be taken
- when the actions or decisions should occur.

A number of factors are needed in order for this plan to be successfully implemented:

- political will and local government capacity
- the necessary tools and financial resources
- coordination and cooperation among the jurisdictions
- an informed citizenry.

To help ensure successful implementation, this chapter presents the recommended approach for implementing the Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan (MRG RWP). Governmental and non-governmental entities in the region must assume a variety of shared as well as independent responsibilities to carry out the recommendations described in Chapter 10. This plan, and the intended implementation activities described throughout this chapter, can be achieved only to the extent that there are adequate resources and coordinated local initiatives to manage water more efficiently. Implementation of the regional water plan will be effected through the combined actions of numerous entities working together to achieve the mission and goals stated in this plan. Region-wide cooperation is essential to conserve the water resources of this region, particularly during times of drought or water shortages. The preferred scenario presented in Chapter 9 leading to the recommendations of Chapter 10 envisions a comprehensive

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management of the region's water resources that must be accomplished in the most effective manner possible.

The implementation strategy presented below includes several categories of action. Section 11.2 identifies the need for and the approach to establishing an effective implementation team to actively encourage the needed activities. Section 11.3 identifies the general services and tools that the implementation team will be responsible to provide. Section 11.4 describes the process intended to actively involve the diverse local jurisdictions of the region in the implementation. Section 11.5 calls for the creation of regional water monitoring processes utilizing local standards that are compatible with state standards. Monitoring is essential for balancing water supply and demand, improving water use efficiencies, and building a regional database for collaborative water management. Section 11.6 provides for the development and maintenance of a regional water-management database to characterize the unique communities and conditions in this region. Much of the regional data can be represented in GIS (geographic information systems) and would interface with the 2003 New Mexico State Water Plan (State Water Plan) database. Section 11.7 focuses on the integration of the regional water plan with the State Water Plan, with water-related plans of other agencies, and with other regional water plans from adjacent areas. Section 11.8 is intended to investigate and benefit from water management initiatives of the New Mexico State Legislature and U. S. Congress. Section 11.9 identifies the intense needs for and approach to developing the needed public education. And Section 11.10 describes the requirements for updating the regional water plan as time elapses and new information is developed.

The inventory of water project needs in this water planning region and its ongoing updates in Section 10.3 provide a basis for funding proposals and financial assistance in development of the water management infrastructure.

### **11.2 Implementation Team**

Numerous parties should be involved to successfully implement this plan. The parties include representatives of the public and private sectors, as well as federal, state and local agencies. Coordination and collaboration among these responsible parties will be a major challenge for successful implementation. Although this plan enumerates specific actions in Chapter 10 that should be undertaken to move the Middle Rio Grande Region (MRG Region) towards the "Preferred Scenario" presented in Chapter 9, the next step should require the responsible parties to take ownership of their share of the plan.

Being the closest government entities to the citizenry and its day-to-day decisions, the individual local governments are the most critical responsible parties in actually making the implementation happen.

Many of the local governments in the region are likely to be seriously short of resources to make this implementation happen. While the local governments do an excellent job on very limited resources, it appears advisable to establish a regional implementation team to support them where appropriate. The role of the implementation team is to serve as a facilitator in helping the diverse local government and other implementers (e.g., state and federal agencies) to make the recommendations of the plan actually come to fruition. The participants in the implementation team are most likely to include the Mid Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), the Water Resources Board, appropriate federal and state agencies, and the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly (Water Assembly). There is insufficient time before issuance of this plan to determine the relative roles of the members of the implementation team, in implementation. Because role determination will require at least several months of discussion, a still-to-be-defined "Implementation Team" is proposed here whose role it is to encourage implementation of the plan.

The MRCOG working together with its Water Resources Board are in a unique position, unlike any other entity in the region, to play an important role in coordinating and monitoring the implementation activities of many of these responsible parties. The MRCOG is a voluntary association of local governments with a long history in assisting and coordinating regional planning efforts. Although it is not an "authoritative" governmental body, it has the ability to help local governments recognize situations where coordinated action on a regional scale may be appropriate, and to bring governmental representatives together to undertake coordinated responses to address problems at a regional scale.

The Water Resources Board is an advisory and policy-recommending body of MRCOG comprised of local governments and special districts and authorities; however, the Water Resources Board itself does not have

regulatory or operational authority in water management programs and therefore cannot implement many of the recommendations in this regional water plan but must rely on the local governments and the political will of their local elected officials to take the next steps.

An effective method for achieving region-wide success is to make use of an organizational structure that brings all of the water management entities to the same table. The purpose of the Water Resources Board is to provide a decision-making process for regional water issues in the water planning area. The Water Resources Board does establish an intergovernmental forum that is structured to coordinate the implementation and progress of a regional water plan. The Water Resources Board can make arrangements for the provision of technical assistance in water planning and management to local governments. During periods of water shortages, the Water Resources Board can facilitate a coordinated approach to managing regional water demand.

Likewise, the Water Assembly has a unique and important role to play in educating and informing the public and other entities in the region about the regional water plan, the implementation process and its progress. The Water Assembly is a non-profit, all-volunteer, grass-roots organization of citizen-stakeholders formed in 1997 for the specific purpose of developing a regional water plan for the MRG Region. The Water Assembly and its Action Committee have enabled interested parties (often with conflicting and competing interests) to articulate their values and visions of a water future for the region through such processes as the Cooperative Modeling Team, the development and evaluation of action alternatives, and the community conversations, which are a form of participatory policy analysis. The Water Assembly has no authority to implement the recommendations contained in this plan.

During the first few months after the regional water plan has been presented to the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC), the emphasis should be placed on building the implementation team. After the MRCOG, the Water Resources Board, federal and state agencies, and the Water Assembly have had an opportunity to reassess their roles in the regional water planning processes undertaken to date, they should negotiate an agreement for the next phase of implementation which clearly delineates the responsibilities each will assume, the resources each will commit, and the processes they will engage in for resolving conflicts between the organizations. The agreement should address the relative roles and responsibilities of each, addressing at least the following listed functional areas (with estimated three year total costs as indicated):

- Phase III – Implementation - encouraging responsible parties to take needed implementation actions (\$300,000 - state funding)
- monitoring and evaluating local water management activities
- developing model programs for water management
- maintaining a regional public forum and dialogue for water issues
- initiating collaboration and coordination among the responsible parties
- providing technical assistance on water planning and management
- maintaining a water stakeholder network
- providing a program for public outreach and education
- establishing and coordinating programs for monitoring the water resource, and
- reviewing and updating the regional water plan (\$450,000 – state funding)

### **11.3 Implementation Team Services**

Those who are involved in actual implementation activities need to be aware of the services that they can expect from the implementation team. This section presents the intentions of the implementation team in this area.

### **11.3.1 Regional Water Plan Distribution**

Following the formal process for acceptance of the MRG RWP, it will be necessary to ensure adequate distribution of the planning document to the implementing agencies of the region. Because of the diverse capabilities of local governments and other water management agencies in the MRG Region, it is anticipated that different interpretations will emerge regarding priorities for implementation. Therefore, immediate efforts will be made to provide copies of the regional water plan with all its documentation to the water management agencies who are actively involved or have jurisdiction in this region. Follow-up efforts will be made, as appropriate, to promote and assist in any changes to local and regional planning processes to accommodate the recommended actions of the regional water plan. Public meetings and workshops would be scheduled accordingly.

#### *Presentations to Local Governments*

Local governments (i.e., municipalities and counties) will be the key players in the implementation of the regional water plan. Other major players include water management agencies such as the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District and the flood control districts (AMAFCA and SSCAFCA). Presentations will need to be made to water management entities throughout the region to identify and discuss the principles and recommendations of the regional water plan and further, to determine individual opportunities and commitments toward achieving water savings and water use efficiencies in accordance with the plan.

#### *Local Water Meetings*

In order to provide ongoing public input regarding the implementation and progress of the water management actions recommended for this plan, meetings will be held as necessary in any or all of the three counties of the water planning region. The purpose of these meetings will be to review the progress of local, state, and federal water management activities throughout each county.

#### *Public Workshops*

Assuming that regional water planning gains acceptance among the various water management entities in the MRG Region, certain water resource issues or problems may arise that require a focused effort to resolve. Facilitated public workshops may be arranged to conduct a process to clarify the regional position and develop a means to achieve consensus. For example, a workshop might be convened to discuss the complexities of local water markets and how that marketing would apply to this region.

### **11.3.2 Oversight of the Implementation Process**

The implementation team should oversee the implementation process of the regional water plan and promote the necessary actions for a more concerted effort to manage water as a limited and shared resource. As a regional entity, the implementation team can provide a mechanism for central reporting and accountability for measuring the individual and combined success of water management programs and projects in the planning area.

### **11.3.3 Evaluation of Local Water Management Planning**

A detailed survey of all water management activities throughout the region should be conducted and periodically updated. In particular, a review of local regulatory ordinances and water-related services should be noted. Also, land use regulations must be considered for their impact on water resources. Most of the water management activities will be conducted as local initiatives and responsibilities, but there can be common and standardized techniques appropriate for this region.

### **11.3.4 Development of Model Programs for Water Management**

Successful implementation of the regional water plan will be enhanced through the use of various types of models developed specifically for this region. For purposes of this plan, the modeling concept refers to one

of two different fields of activities: 1) as a means to set up regional standards for local procedures, regulations, or programs to coordinate water management among multiple entities; or 2) as a simulation of cause and effect actions to manage water, often through the utilization of specialized computer software.

### **11.3.5 Maintain a Regional Forum for Water Issues**

The implementation team should provide for a regional forum for discussion of water related issues and development of strategic recommendations for water management programs and projects for the long-term benefit of the region. The implementation team will provide a central point of contact and negotiation for multiple organizations to deal with the regional complexities of water resource management.

### **11.3.6 Multi-jurisdictional Collaboration**

Implementation of the MRG RWP requires multiple actions by a variety of water management entities, typically operating independently within special districts, service areas, or governmental jurisdictions. The process of regionalization of such organizations is best achieved through interlocal agreements, memoranda of understanding, franchising, or contracting for services. The implementation team should initiate collaboration and enhance coordination among the key water operators in the MRG Region.

### **11.3.7 Technical Assistance on Water Planning and Management**

There is a wide gap in the level of programs, regulations, and staffing capabilities for water management among the local governments in the MRG Region. For instance, while the City of Albuquerque has one of the most comprehensive water management programs in the region, there are many small and rural local governments that are dependent on outside assistance to conduct their own programs approaching the level of complexity in the urban areas. There is also a wide gap in the ability among individual water users (e.g., farmers) to deal with and obtain services and support from governmental agencies. The implementation team intends to remain committed to providing local government technical assistance relating to water resource planning and management, and to provide assistance to individual water users in gaining effective access to existing support programs.

### **11.3.8 Maintain a Water Stakeholder Network**

Water-related issues are driven by many different interests in this region. In order to ensure a fair and equitable system of water management that can benefit numerous and sometimes competing interests, a water stakeholder network needs to be maintained in some manner to allow regional communication and information exchange. Both formal and informal water stakeholder networks need to be enabled as a means of communication and involvement in the water planning and management process. As a minimum, all of the water providers, operators, and water management agencies should be interconnected and involved in the plan implementation.

### **11.3.9 Implementation Tools**

See Section 5.12 of this plan for an inventory of implementation tools and techniques drawn from other areas, which may be appropriate in this region.

## **11.4 Local Jurisdiction Involvement**

Local governments and other responsible parties need to be effectively engaged in the implementation. A strong endorsement and commitment from the local governing bodies within the region to undertake the recommendations discussed in Chapter 10 is needed to make this plan work. This requires extensive support from the implementation team, including presentations to each of the local governments in the region by the implementation team. Following these presentations, and in coordination with the implementation team, the local governing bodies should be provided an opportunity to assess and feed back what specific actions they can reasonably take in response to the recommendations discussed in Chapter 10.

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This section suggests how such a process might work. A local plan of action (LPOA) should be developed for each local government, in a form appropriate for the individual jurisdiction.

The LPOAs have several purposes. Among them are: being a source for coordinated seeking of funds, being a set of guidance for personnel within the jurisdiction to define or take implementation actions, being the source of data for the implementation team to monitor and update the regional plan, and to being a source for dialog between or among jurisdictions concerning equitable approaches to regional issues.

The implementation team will be available for assistance to the local governments, as desired, to develop the strategy and the LPOA (e.g., via workshops, templates, or one-on-one support). The LPOA should delineate the selection of actions the local government will undertake to implement the recommendations contained within this regional water plan, those actions the local government would undertake if additional resources were to be made available, and those recommendations which the jurisdiction sees to be wholly or partially infeasible to implement within the jurisdiction.

The initial LPOAs should be developed as soon as available resources allow, targeting an anticipated six to twenty four month time frame following ISC plan acceptance. Updates to LPOAs should be made as resource and technical needs dictate.

The LPOA should include, to the best practical level of detail, the resources, the timeframes for initiating (and, in some cases, completing) actions, as well as the anticipated measurable outcomes and targets. The LPOAs would focus on the local issues, relative to the regional issues.

Following receipt of these LPOAs or as appropriate, the implementation team, perhaps with representatives of local governments, should reconvene for a workshop to develop a Regional Plan of Action (RPOA). The purpose would be to model the cumulative actions that the local governments have plan to undertake and to determine whether implementation of the recommendations contained in Chapter 10 to meet mission and goals is feasible. Modifications, including a set of benchmarks or measurable targets/outcomes for each recommendation, may need to be made to the regional water plan based on the level of participation anticipated by the local governments in the region.

It is important to note that this should be an iterative process where the regional plan will influence the LPOAs and the LPOAs will influence the and RPOA.

In addition to the local governments in the region and the implementation team, a third critical party responsible for implementation of this plan is the general public. The public's attitudes and understanding about water resources must change if the goals in this plan are to be achieved. After the parties' responsibilities have been spelled out the implementation team should develop a public education campaign with expert assistance.

## **11.5 Regional Water Monitoring Program**

This plan anticipates that the "Preferred Scenario" may be achieved if the local governments and others in this region commit to the actions described in Chapter 10. However, given the number of responsible parties involved, the complexity of the actions requested of the parties, and unforeseen events, it will be critically important to monitor implementation carefully.

Three types of monitoring will be considered or promoted:

1. monitoring the actions and decisions of state, local, tribal, pueblo and federal governments and other entities for consistency with the recommendations contained in Chapter 10 and with the LPOAs;
2. monitoring progress toward balancing our water use with renewable supplies; and
3. monitoring the effect of policies and actions on the different affected constituencies and whether the needs of these constituencies are being reasonably met by the plan.

Perhaps the most critical element of the regional water plan is to establish a regional water-monitoring program to track the progress and effects of water management actions, particularly in terms of water savings. Water monitoring includes metering and other techniques of measurement relative to the supply and demands on the water resources available to the region. The costs and benefits of the numerous local

water management activities should be evaluated for cumulative effects in this region. A water-monitoring program is also an essential component of drought contingency plans and for conducting multi-party water shortage negotiations that may arise in the future. The responsibilities for monitoring water exist at all levels, including local, regional, state, tribal/pueblo, and federal governments (private water providers should be included if possible). Current monitoring programs such as metered water supply operations need to be extended to cover as much of the region as practicable.

### **11.5.1 Establish Regional Water Monitoring Standards**

A primary statistic for water monitoring will be calculations of water consumption for key sectors of the region. Such calculations should be standardized for comparison and contrast among water management entities as well as geographic areas (e.g., urban versus rural), and to be compatible with the water monitoring statistics gathered by the state. Monitoring standards should include water quality parameters.

### **11.5.2 Develop Water Monitoring Systems**

There should be a mechanism established among the water managers in the region to use a common system of monitoring appropriate to this region. Where actual monitoring is not feasible (such as in the rural areas), a simple methodology should be developed to calculate water-related statistics to be included in the regional monitoring information base. The implementation team should identify and recommend a system of monitoring and reporting standards appropriate for this region.

### **11.5.3 Correlate Monitoring with Regional Water Plan**

Where there are measurable objectives stated in the regional water plan, appropriate monitoring mechanisms and systems should be installed to determine progress and success in the water management alternative. In addition, water monitoring in the region should utilize common or compatible standards and techniques for input to the State Water Plan database.

### **11.5.4 Maintain Current and Future Water Use Data**

The purpose of the regional water monitoring systems is to generate a continuous stream of data into a regional (and state) database of water resource information. This type of information is crucial to the water planning and management process, especially when there are periods of drought or other water limitations such as infrastructure breakdowns or water quality issues such as contamination of supply water. Water use data from all sectors (geographic, economic, environmental, etc.) may be used to identify areas where water consumption may need to be modified to contribute to regional water efficiencies and public safety.

### **11.5.5 Annual Reporting**

Annually the implementation team should prepare a written report that describes the progress made to date in implementing the LPOAs submitted by the local governments and the progress made to date in reaching the goals and objectives contained in the regional water plan. Where there are measurable objectives or targets stated in the plan and the LPOAs, appropriate monitoring mechanisms and systems should be developed and the results of such monitoring should be included in the annual report. The report should identify problems and issues that have arisen in the implementation phase, as well as recommendations for future refinement or amendments to the regional water plan.

The report should be provided, at a minimum, to the following:

- Interstate Stream Commission
- New Mexico Legislature
- Office of the State Engineer
- Governor's Office

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- Congressional delegation and appropriate federal water management agencies
- New Mexico Water Trust Board (whose members include the following state agencies or entities: New Mexico Finance Authority, the Environment Department, the Agriculture Department, the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, the Game and Fish Department, and the New Mexico Acequia Association)
- Regional Flood Control Agencies
- New Mexico Conservation Districts
- Each local government within the regional planning boundaries
- Tribal and Pueblo governments
- Adjacent regional water planning districts, and
- Local media

#### **11.5.6 Monitoring Water Resources**

In addition to the monitoring described above, a regional water-monitoring program should be established to track the progress and effects of water management actions and to evaluate progress in reaching the overarching goal of water use based on renewable supply. A water-monitoring program is also an essential component of drought contingency plans and for conducting multi-party water shortage negotiations that may arise in the future. The responsibilities for monitoring water exist at all levels, including local, regional, state, tribal and pueblo, and federal governments. Private water providers should be included if possible.

A primary statistic for water monitoring is calculation of water consumption and savings for key sectors of the region. Such calculations should be standardized for comparison and contrast among water management entities as well as geographic areas, and also be compatible with the water monitoring statistics gathered by the state. Monitoring standards should include water-quality parameters. Current monitoring programs, such as metered water-supply operations, need to be extended to cover as much of the region as practicable. There should be agreement among the water managers in the region to use a common system of monitoring appropriate to the region. Where actual monitoring is not feasible at this time (such as in the rural areas), a simple methodology should be developed to estimate water-related statistics to be included in the regional monitoring information database.

A monitoring program should be established to examine the effect of actions taken under the plan on the farming, economic development, domestic, and environmental (river) sectors and whether the needs of these sectors are being reasonably met.

#### **11.6 Regional Water-Management Database**

A significant amount of information was compiled and analyzed in preparation of this regional water plan. This information should be maintained and updated as needed in order to provide continuity for future evaluation and assessment of implementation strategies. The implementation team should convene a working group comprised of the appropriate information database technicians from the federal, state, regional and local levels to collaborate and ensure data compatibility in this effort. The regional water-management database should be open and available to the public as an important educational tool (to the extent such information is legally open to the public).

The implementation team should coordinate with the Office of the State Engineer (OSE) and adjacent regions to maintain a regional database which meets state-approved standards to allow for ready exchange of information between this region, adjacent regions, and the OSE. The database should not duplicate what local jurisdictions are currently compiling, but provide regional data and information as a basis for historical trend analysis, current conditions profile, and future projections of water supply and demand. The goal should be to compile and maintain such data on a watershed basis. The implementation team should

also take the lead in inventorying regional water resources and regional water infrastructure projects, as well as mapping critical water resource areas and land uses within the region.

## **11.7 Integration with the State Water Plan and Other Water Plans**

The State Water Plan Act of 2003 requires that the regional water plans be integrated with the 2003 New Mexico State Water Plan. The goals and policies contained in the regional water plan should be reviewed and updated periodically to ensure that they further rather than impede the goals and policies contained in the state water plan.

### **11.7.1 Coordination with the Interstate Stream Commission**

Regional water planning has been defined, administered and funded through the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) since 1988. Coordination between the ISC and the implementation team will be critical for successful implementation of both the state water plan and this regional water plan, and depend on regular communication and updates regarding the progress (or challenges) in the regional implementation efforts. The implementation team should provide annual written reports to the ISC which describe the current implementation status of the goals and objectives of this regional water plan.

### **11.7.2 Coordination with State and Federal Agencies**

Many of the recommendations included in Chapter 10 require the state legislature or the OSE to take the initiative, e.g. establishing a domestic well policy. Furthermore, the state administers the use and transfer of water rights, administers interstate compacts and treaties, collaborates with federal agencies concerning river operations and endangered species, and sets policies and priorities through the state water plan. The federal government, through its water management agencies, also plays a major role in water management in this region. Whether or not the MRG Region can achieve its overarching goal to balance water use with renewable supply will depend significantly on the actions or inactions of these state and federal agencies in the coming years.

The implementation team should monitor, using techniques such as computer modeling, actions that might impact the implementation of the regional water plan. Local governments in the region and the public should be informed about proposed state or federal policies or actions affecting the successful implementation of this plan. Early, frequent, and effective communication between the implementation team and state and federal agencies should facilitate coordination among all levels of government. The implementation team should provide annual written reports to the appropriate state and federal water management agencies which describe the current status in effectuating the goals and policies of the regional water plan.

### **11.7.3 Communication with Tribal and Pueblo governments**

The tribal and pueblo governments should be kept informed of the efforts of the implementation team to achieve the goals of this regional water plan and all information and data utilized in the regional water planning process should be made available to these governments to encourage information exchange and joint communication. The implementation team should provide annual written reports and offer oral briefings to the tribal and pueblo governments which describe the current implementation status of the goals and recommendations of this plan.

### **11.7.4 Coordination with other regional water plans**

The implementation team should schedule meetings with other water-planning regions to present the “Preferred Scenario” and the recommendations contained in this plan. Periodically, joint meetings should be scheduled to discuss such issues as the impacts of managing shared basin resources, interbasin transfers of water, and consolidation of water infrastructure projects. The implementation team should provide annual written reports to the adjacent six water-planning regions which describe the current implementation status of the goals and recommendations of this plan.

### **11.7.5 Coordination with Local Governments**

Due to its membership and organizational structure, the Water Resources Board is in a unique position to coordinate the activities of the various local governments within the region throughout the implementation phase. An important responsibility of the Water Resources Board part of the implementation team should be to provide a regular opportunity for member governments to self-evaluate the combined effects of their local water management actions in the context of the goals and objectives of both the regional water plan and the state water plan. The implementation team should conduct a detailed survey of all water management activities throughout the region which is periodically updated. In particular, a review of local regulatory ordinances and water-related services should be noted. Land use regulations should be reviewed for their impact on water resources. The MRCOG and Water Resources Board are also especially suited to initiate multi-jurisdictional collaboration through interlocal agreements, memoranda of understanding, and franchising.

## **11.8 Legislative and Congressional Initiatives and Funding Requests**

The implementation team should establish ongoing communication with the Governor's Office, the State Engineer, the ISC, the State Legislature, and New Mexico's Congressional delegation to ensure that the MRG RWP recommendations and priorities are well understood by those entities and are included in any planning efforts, administrative decisions, legislative initiatives, or funding requests by those offices. The implementation team should identify local, state, federal, and private funding sources that could further plan implementation and develop consensus on a list of priority water projects whose completion would have the greatest impact on attaining the "Preferred Scenario" described in Chapter 9.

### **11.8.1 Lobbying Program**

The implementation team should work with the local governments within the region to coordinate legislative priorities for implementation of the regional water plan. After those priorities are approved by the MRCOG Board of Directors, MRCOG staff should prepare a strategic plan for legislative and congressional action.

### **11.8.2 Identification of Regional Water Projects**

The implementation team should develop consensus on a list of regionally-significant water projects and programs that are essential to implementation of the regional water plan. The list would include project descriptions, cost-benefit assessment (where appropriate), and commitment by responsible entities. The list should be developed with the input of local government officials, water stakeholders, water experts, and the public, and should be updated at least annually and possibly adopted by the MRCOG Board of Directors as part of its annual legislative package. This list appears in Section 10.3 (and its ongoing updates) of this regional water plan.

### **11.8.3 Funding for Water Programs**

The implementation team should research and identify all potential funding sources, public and private, and leverage available resources to attract funding resources for priority projects identified in Section 11.8.2. The implementation team and the local governments within the region should lobby New Mexico's Congressional delegation to make New Mexico's water funding needs a priority, and should advocate on behalf of the priority list established pursuant to Section 11.8.2 to insure that those projects are included in funding decisions.

## **11.9 Public Education and Outreach**

Public involvement was essential in the development of the regional water plan and should continue to be an important component in the implementation phase. The public should be kept informed of the progress and adjustments to the plan during the implementation phase. The regional objectives of ongoing public outreach and education at all levels (elementary through adult) are multi-fold:

- to inform the public about the cumulative progress and challenges involved in the implementation phase
- to learn from the public and to establish a mechanism for public review and comment on program priorities and project development
- to continue the public information campaign regarding water conservation, recycling, and reuse
- to increase the general public knowledge about using water in the most efficient manner and
- to develop public support and advocacy for new initiatives in water management.

The implementation team should provide the forums for sustaining a public dialogue about the water resource issues, including a public education campaign, with expert assistance. As part of this campaign and outreach, the implementation team should actively maintain the implementation team members' websites to encourage an online dialogue in the community about the issues which impact successful implementation of this regional water plan.

### **11.10 Review and Update of the Plan**

In addition to the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of local water management programs, the implementation team should establish a scheduled update of the regional water plan once after compilation of the LPOAs and RPOA and thereafter at least every five years. An essential condition of every plan update should be a determination of the measure of success achieved in the interim. The update should address whether or not the adopted goals and objectives, as well as the specific recommended actions, have been attained. Such measurement should require that local governments provide measurable targets and outcomes in their LPOAs and the RPOA.

In updating the plan, the implementation team should examine the progress toward balancing water use with renewable supplies, water savings from the implementation of recommended actions, the experience of governments and other entities in the region in implementing the recommendations, new scientific information, and other relevant factors. The implementation team should ensure that the general public and the stakeholders identified in the preparation of the MRG RWP are included in each update. The implementation team should specifically involve and solicit the views and experiences by the local governments and other entities intended to implement the recommendations so that additional recommendations can be devised, if necessary, to address barriers to the success of the plan.

## **Chapter 11 References**

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