

TIER-1 APPLICATION TO THE NEW MEXICO INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION
FOR NEW MEXICO UNIT OR WATER UTILIZATION ALTERNATIVE
UNDER THE ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT

APPLICANT INFORMATION (PRINT OR

DATE: 4/30/2011

<p>1. Legal Name: Gila National Forest</p>	<p>2. Organization: United States Forest Service</p>								
<p>3. Address (street, city, county, state, and zip code): 3005 E. Camino del Bosque Silver City, NM 88061</p>	<p>4. Name, email, and phone number of contract person: Rhonda S Helzner rhelzner@fs.fed.us (575) 388-8220</p>								
<p>5. TYPE OF APPLICATION (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Final <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preliminary for review <input type="checkbox"/> Revised</p>	<p>6. TYPE OF APPLICANT (CHECK BOX): <input type="checkbox"/> local governments or municipalities <input type="checkbox"/> soil and water conservation districts, irrigation districts or commissions, acequias, or other political subdivision of the State of New Mexico <input type="checkbox"/> institutions of higher education or a consortium of such institutions <input type="checkbox"/> non-profit organizations or associations <input type="checkbox"/> private individual/s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> federal agency (ies) <input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)</p>								
<p>7. BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Water Delivery System Infrastructure Maintenance</p>									
<p>8. AREAS AFFECTED (describe by county, municipality, township, etc. as applicable): Grant, Catron, Luna, Hidalgo Counties</p>									
<p>9. TOTAL FUNDING REQUESTED (in \$1,000): (See Attachment 9)</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">2012-2021: up to \$800,000</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table>		2012-2021: up to \$800,000							
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<p>10b. TYPED OR PRINTED NAME OF AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE: <i>Patrick McKee for Forest Supervisor</i></p>	<p>11. TITLE: <i>Forest Supervisor</i></p>								
<p>12. PHONE NUMBER: <i>575-388-8261</i></p>									
<p>13. SIGNATURE: <i>Patrick L. McKee</i></p>	<p>DATE: <i>5/2/11</i></p>								

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14. Evaluation criteria. Comprehensive responses to criteria A through D should be supported where possible by the best available science and scientific data, studies, models, and, where applicable, cite state, regional, or other water plans. Where such data and information is not available, applications should include best estimates and describe how such information would be obtained. Applications that do not include the requested information will not satisfy Tier-1 standards and, therefore, will not be eligible for Tier-2 consideration. Use Form 14a if needed.

A. State whether the proposal is for the “New Mexico Unit,” a “water utilization alternative,” or both.

This proposal is for a water utilization alternative. It is a mitigation measure, with the objective of conserving water.

See Attachment 14A.

B. Describe how the proposal will meet a “water supply demand” in the Southwest New Mexico Water Planning Region, comprised of Catron, Grant, Hidalgo and Luna Counties.

Water system improvements and increased efficiency will reduce water losses and improve the water supply. Positive impacts to water supply include water quantity and water quality. These water conservation measures would contribute to increasing the residence time of water left in the basin, which would benefit both watershed resources and wildlife resources. Water would be more available to natural water storage systems (e.g., riparian/wetlands), rather than being siphoned through distribution systems and emerging in other various other areas.

C. Describe how the proposal considers the Gila environment and describe how any negative impacts might be mitigated.

This project would not put any water to use under AWSA. Through the effects of water conservation and increased water system efficiencies, this project would maintain or increase downstream water supplies. This project would provide benefits to downstream water users, the State, and the U.S. public by improving supply, thus reducing water losses.

The NEPA analysis to be conducted before approval of any construction would identify the potential for harm to listed species.

- D. Describe how the proposal considers the historic uses of and future demands for water in the Southwest New Mexico Water Planning Region and the traditions, cultures and customs affecting those uses.

This project will satisfy community needs by infrastructure improvements that will conserve water for downstream use. The project will provide environmental benefits to the Gila – San Francisco basin. The project also helps in meeting current and anticipated future demands for water.

Exhibit A. Interstate Stream Commission Gila Policy Statement, September 2004, and 2004 Arizona Water Settlements Act, Section 212 (i)

INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION GILA POLICY STATEMENT, SEPTEMBER 2004:

The Interstate Stream Commission recognizes the unique and valuable ecology of the Gila Basin. In considering any proposal for water utilization under Section 212 of the Arizona Water Settlements Act, the Commission will apply the best available science to fully assess and mitigate the ecological impacts on Southwest New Mexico, the Gila River, its tributaries and associated riparian corridors, while also considering the historic uses of and future demands for water in the Basin and the traditions, cultures and customs affecting those uses.

2004 ARIZONA WATER SETTLEMENTS ACT, SECTION 212 (i)

(i) NEW MEXICO UNIT FUND- The Secretary shall deposit the amounts made available under paragraph (2)(D)(i) of section 403(f) of the Colorado River Basin Project Act (43 U.S.C. 1543(f)) (as amended by section 107(a)) into the New Mexico Unit Fund, a State of New Mexico Fund established and administered by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission. Withdrawals from the New Mexico Unit Fund shall be for the purpose of paying costs of the New Mexico Unit or other water utilization alternatives to meet water supply demands in the Southwest Water Planning Region of New Mexico, as determined by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission in consultation with the Southwest New Mexico Water Study Group or its successor, including costs associated with planning and environmental compliance activities and environmental mitigation and restoration.

FORM 14A

USE THIS FORM TO COMPLETE ANSWERS TO CRITERIA 1 THROUGH 4. NUMBER EACH ADDITIONAL RESPONSE WITH THE CORRESPONDING CRITERIA NUMBER AND SUB-CRITERIA. USE AS MANY PAGES AS NEEDED.

Attachment 9:

Cost estimates for inventoried needs not being funded by budget allocations exceed \$700,000. Gila National Forest would be project lead. There are several available designs for water conservation on water and delivery systems. Each system would have to be evaluated for the best possible solution and treated accordingly. Gila National Forest has an inventory of these water systems including cost estimates for systems improvements.

The projects are comparable to municipal infrastructure improvement proposals within the provisions of AWSA and would need to be subject to all other legal requirements to which the U.S. Forest Service is accountable.

Like municipal water distribution systems requesting funding, these are systems that serve the public and funding is not available through U.S. Forest Service budgets. They have been inventoried as “Deferred Maintenance” or “Capital Improvement” needs. Any projects funded in other ways would be no longer be a request for AWSA funds. The U.S. Forest Service engages in various partnerships with other agencies and entities; a Forest Service Grants and Agreements Specialist would be consulted to identify what type of cooperative agreement might be needed.

No operation and maintenance costs are requested.

Attachment 14A:

Engineering maintenance and improvement of water delivery systems. Projects would be located on National Forest System (NFS) lands within Grant and Catron Counties in the Southwest Planning Region. More than 25 water systems need maintenance or improvement but the work is deferred due to inadequate annual funding. These public water systems include recreation sites such as campgrounds and picnic areas, and administrative facilities such as fire lookouts and remote work centers. An engineering inventory of maintenance needs or system improvements, along with estimated costs, has identified needs such as component replacements, parts and leak repairs, distribution repairs, and storage replacement.

1. Water losses and water system efficiencies relating to water systems benefiting the public on National Forest System (NFS) lands.
2. Watershed and riparian/wetland health – natural water-related ecosystems losing water unnecessarily due to losses. This can result in changes in plants or animal communities that alter ecosystem health or resilience.
3. Impaired water and water delivery to campgrounds, administrative sites, and other Forest Service facilities where water loss is occurring due to poor infrastructure or inadequate design.

- 4. Benefits to local public, visitors to NFS lands, and the people of the United States, via the opportunities and services provided by facilities receiving this water and who would benefit from improved health of natural water systems and associated environmental services from water conservation in an area where water can be limiting. Recovery of water losses due to leakage, seepage, poor transmission, and other factors are important water conservation measures. Water conservation would be primary benefit by improving antiquated facilities and design. There may be an opportunity to utilize AWSA funds to obtain other cost-share dollars or partners.**

There are concerns that because water systems on NFS lands use relatively small amounts of water, that system improvement benefits will be correspondingly small. A focus is water conservation, and ensuring that public water uses in headwaters areas are efficient and minimizing effects to natural systems and downstream uses where possible.