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## **State Engineer Announces a New Water Master for San Miguel County**

**(SANTA FE, New Mexico)** – New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio announced today that a water master has been hired for the Rio Gallinas in San Miguel County.

**Max Chavez**, will assume his position as water master in Las Vegas, New Mexico on April 12.

In August 2003, the State Engineer declared San Miguel County a special water district in response to requests by water right users in the area to actively manage and administer the diversions and use of water from the Rio Gallinas on a day-to-day basis. The declaration also gave the State Engineer the authority to create a position and appoint a water master for the district.

Water masters actively administer water on a stream system in New Mexico. They monitor the diversion and use of the waters of a stream system on a daily basis, especially during irrigation season.

Chavez is currently employed by the Office of the State Engineer as an engineer in the Litigation and Adjudication Program. Before that, he was a project manager in the agency’s Adjudication Bureau in Las Cruces, New Mexico from 1996 to 2001 and a unit supervisor for the agency’s Hydrographic Survey Bureau in Santa Fe from 1990 to 1996. From 1979 to 1985, Chavez held the position of a water master for the Costilla Creek from New Mexico to Colorado. Prior to joining the agency, Chavez worked for the United States Geological Survey as a hydrologic technician from 1968 to 1979.

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He received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1971.

“Water masters serve an important function for the Office of the State Engineer because they are our people in the field who can make sure that water is equitably distributed to water users in a particular area,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio.

In coming months, the Office of the State Engineer will be working with water users to develop a water master manual that will fit the Rio Gallinas.

The State Engineer views the declaration of the special water district as a means to a solution to avoiding conflict over water during this lengthy period of drought.

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has power over the supervision, measurement, appropriation, and distribution of all surface and groundwater in New Mexico, including streams and rivers that cross state boundaries. The State Engineer is also Secretary of the Interstate Stream Commission and oversees its staff.

The Interstate Stream Commission is charged with separate duties including protecting New Mexico’s right to water under eight interstate stream compacts, ensuring the state complies with each of those compacts, as well as water planning.

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