



**For immediate release:**

February 2, 2005

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## **State Engineer Announces Schedule for Supplemental Wells and District-Specific Regulations for Active Water Resource Management of the Lower Pecos Region**

**(ROSWELL, New Mexico)** – New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio announced today his objectives and a schedule for the administration of supplemental wells in the Carlsbad Irrigation District (CID) as well as the creation of Active Water Resource Management (AWRM) district-specific rules and regulations for the Lower Pecos Region.

The schedule and objectives are posted for public inspection on the Office of the State Engineer website at: <http://www.ose.state.nm.us/ActiveWater>

“We are committed to taking proactive steps toward the management of all New Mexico rivers,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio. “Our first priority for the Pecos River district-specific rules and regulations is implementation of the Pecos River Settlement, which was signed in 2003. It can proceed now that a Partial Final Decree on the Carlsbad Irrigation District adjudication has been entered by the District Court. However, I also intend that the district-specific regulations will provide the details of water administration consistent with the settlement or for priority administration if the settlement can’t be implemented.”

The State Engineer’s schedule for development of district-specific regulations for AWRM in the Lower Pecos River Basin in New Mexico concludes in January 2006. Implementation of regulations to prevent over-diversions from supplemental wells within CID is planned at the end of May 2005.

The State Engineer finalized general rules and regulations on December 31, 2004, which provide a consistent statewide framework for water use administration by Office of the State Engineer water masters. The details of how AWRM will apply to water uses in the Lower Pecos River Basin will be spelled out in the Pecos district-specific AWRM regulations.

During the public review of the general regulations, the State Engineer pledged that his office would hold extensive discussions with water users and provide many opportunities for public review and comment as district-specific regulations are developed for each of the highest priority geographic areas, where he is creating water master districts.

**(MORE)**

"It is important to me that we involve area water users and residents in this process," said D'Antonio. "We will conduct several public meetings in Roswell and Carlsbad to understand the public's concerns and to respond to their comments."

"The settlement requires that my office regulate over-diversions from CID supplemental wells. Among those we will meet with are the parties to the CID settlement negotiations and the Lower Pecos Advisory Committee," said D'Antonio.

Implementation of Active Water Resources Management in the Lower Pecos River Basin will address groundwater pumping but will not include oversight of the CID's distribution of surface water for irrigation to its constituents.

"That is CID's responsibility, by law," said D'Antonio, "and I have no intention of duplicating that responsibility."

The State Engineer has already designated priority basin areas around the state, which include in order of priority: the Lower Pecos, the Lower Rio Grande, San Juan River Basin, Nambe-Pojoaque-Tesuque Stream System Basin, Rio Chama, Rio Mimbres, and Rio Gallinas.

A new water master subdistrict was created for the Rio Hondo in early December. In coming months, a declaration of a new water master subdistrict for the Rio Peñasco, Ft. Sumner, and Carlsbad Basin regions is expected. Water masters will be appointed for all subdistricts within the next few months.

For more information on when public meetings will be scheduled for development of the district-specific regulations, contact the District II Office of the State Engineer in Roswell at (505) 622-6521.

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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