



For immediate release:

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Public Meetings to be Held on Draft Environmental Impact Statement on the Upper Rio Grande

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – A draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) on the impacts of proposed changes in water operations of federal facilities in the Upper Rio Grande Basin was released for public review on February 17, 2006.

The DEIS is aimed at formulating a plan for future water operations at ten water facilities in the Upper Rio Grande Basin. It was prepared by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Bureau of Reclamation, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Eight public meetings will be held to gather public input on the DEIS. All meetings will be held from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the dates and locations that follow:

- **Feb. 21, 2006:** International Boundary and Water Commission, 4171 N. Mesa, El Paso, TX.
- **Feb. 22, 2006:** Mesilla Valley Inn, 901 Avenida de Mesilla, Las Cruces, NM.
- **Feb. 23, 2006:** Ranchers Steak House, 606 North California St., Socorro, NM
- **Feb. 28, 2006:** Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, 2401 12th St NW, Albuquerque, NM.
- **March 1, 2006:** Radisson Hotel, 750 N. St. Francis, Santa Fe, NM.
- **March 2, 2006:** Espanola Public Library-Richard Lucero Center, 313 N. Paseo de Oate, Espanola, NM.
- **March 8, 2006:** Corps of Engineers Abiquiu Reservoir Office, Highway 95, Abiquiu, New Mexico
- **March 9, 2006:** U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development, 101 S. Craft Drive, Alamosa, CO.

The proposed changes in operations must be within the existing authorities of the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Army Corps of Engineers. The DEIS presents alternatives that include changing waiver dates at Heron Reservoir, changing channel capacity below Abiquiu and Cochiti Reservoirs, allowing storage of Rio Grande water in authorized San Juan-Chama space in Abiquiu Reservoir and allowing varying degrees of diversion to the Low Flow Conveyance Channel. The DEIS summarizes the environmental, economic and social effects of these alternatives.

(MORE)

The document is available for review at the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, 555 Broadway NE, Suite 100, Albuquerque, New Mexico or at <http://www.spa.usace.army.mil/urgwops/>. Comments will be accepted until March 21, 2006.

The nine-member New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission is responsible for compact compliance, investigating, conserving, protecting, and developing the water resources and stream systems of New Mexico as well as carrying out plans and programs for beneficial uses in the state. The Commission also has water planning responsibility for the state.

Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits.

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