



**For Immediate Release:**

April 19, 2007

**For more information, contact:**

Karin Stangl, Planning and Communication Director  
Office of the State Engineer  
(505) 699-4923

Leeanne Clark Public Relations Specialist  
Office of the State Engineer  
(505) 765-2057

## **New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Accepts the Northeastern New Mexico Regional Water Plan**

**(SANTA FE, New Mexico)** – In an effort to assure an adequate water supply in relation to projected demands in a specific region of the state – as well as plan for drought conditions that are predicted to continue in future years across the State of New Mexico – the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission recently announced the acceptance of the completed **Northeastern New Mexico Regional Water Plan**.

The **Northeastern New Mexico water planning region** (Region 1) includes Union, Harding, Quay, Curry and Roosevelt Counties.

More than 75 percent of the water currently used for drinking in this region is from groundwater. The remaining 25 percent of the water supply comes from surface water, but it is becoming more important to the region as the groundwater supply shrinks. The **Northeastern New Mexico plan** addresses long-term water supply availability, water quality, water rights, municipal conservation, agriculture conservation, groundwater management, rangeland conservation, infrastructure upgrades, the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water system and Harding county dam construction.

“It is important that completion of regional water plans continue to involve the public in water management, water development, and water conservation strategies around our state,” said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. “New Mexico has been in a drought and conditions may continue for several years to come. We must work together as a state to prepare for that. It is important to balance the needs of all water users in the state. It is equally important that communities, businesses, and interested citizens have input into their regional plans.”

**(MORE)**

**Northeastern New Mexico Regional Water Plan** lists among its strategies for meeting future water demand: municipal conservation to reduce demand for public water supplies; agricultural conservation to reduce demand for agricultural use; groundwater management that focuses on water level and water quality through monitoring and reporting; rangeland conservation and watershed management; the Eastern New Mexico Rural Water System, a proposed pipeline to convey Ute Reservoir water to municipalities in parts of the region; and planning for growth.

The planning committee was comprised of representatives from: counties, municipalities, soil and water conservation districts, the agriculture sector, City of Tucumcari and others--a group of diverse professionals and public participants representing a wide variety of water interests within the five-county region.

Governor Bill Richardson's Office directed the Interstate Stream Commission to have a comprehensive statewide water plan in place by the end of 2003. The Interstate Stream Commission has worked for many years with all regions of the state to prepare their own regional water plans. Once regional water plans are completed, they must be reviewed by the Interstate Stream Commission staff and must be accepted by the Interstate Stream Commission.

Acceptance of the Northeast New Mexico Regional Water Plan marks acceptance of 15 of the 16 regions. Regional water plans were accepted for the Southwest New Mexico Area, Mora-San Miguel Region, Colfax County Region, Jemez y Sangre Area, Lower Pecos Valley, Lea County, Tularosa-Sacramento and Salt Basins, the Estancia Basin, Socorro-Sierra, San Juan Basin, Northwest New Mexico Region, Middle Rio Grande, Lower Rio Grande, and Rio Chama.

Development of the plan was funded by about \$122,000 in grants from the Interstate Stream Commission.

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 nine-member 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.

# # #