



For immediate release:

June 22, 2007

For more information, contact:

Karin Stangl, Planning and Communication Director
(505) 699-4923 cell

Maureen Haney, Public Relations Specialist
(505) 764-3864

Interstate Stream Commission Breaks Ground for the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project for the Pecos Settlement

(CARLSBAD, New Mexico) – Another milestone was reached in the implementation of the Pecos River Settlement Agreement today as the Interstate Stream Commission broke ground for the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project near Carlsbad, New Mexico.

"This pipeline is an integral part of implementing the Pecos Settlement. It will help us meet our interstate compact requirements and improve the water supply outlook for the Carlsbad Irrigation District," said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. "The progress made to date indicates that the \$66 million provided in recent years by the New Mexico State Legislature is producing tangible results."

Officials attending the event included: Interstate Stream Commissioners, as well as representatives from US Senator Pete Domenici's Office, US Senator Jeff Bingaman, the Carlsbad Irrigation District (CID), the Pecos Valley Artesian Conservancy District (PVACD), the US Bureau of Reclamation, State Representatives, County Commissioners and others.

The Pecos Settlement and its implementation would not have been possible except for the support of the New Mexico State Legislature and Gov. Bill Richardson. The cooperation of the area legislators, the settlement parties and numerous contractors has been crucial.

The pipeline stretches from the Seven Rivers area near Carlsbad to Brantley Lake on the Pecos River. It is 12 inches to 36 inches wide and has the capacity to deliver 20,000 acre-feet of water per year to the river.

The Seven Rivers Pipeline Project is expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

(MORE)

In 2003, the State of New Mexico, CID, PVACD, and the United States entered into a settlement, that when implemented, will put an end to 50 years of litigation and will result in the adjudication of the Carlsbad Irrigation District's Project water rights. Additionally, the settlement will help the state comply with obligations under the Pecos River Compact as decreed by the United States Supreme Court in 1988.

Augmentation pumping sites are being developed at three locations, including the primary site in the Seven Rivers area. This well field has 10 artesian wells that were drilled and tested during the period of March 2005 to June 2006. These wells and an additional six private wells will be connected by this series of pipelines that can carry approximately 20,000 gallons per minute from the wells to Brantley Reservoir.

The Bureau of Reclamation has contributed \$1 million to the Seven Rivers Pipeline Project through the Water 2025 Program for work related to water efficiency and supply supplementation in compliance with the Settlement Agreement.

"Reclamation is pleased to continue building a successful partnership with the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the Carlsbad Irrigation District, and to see work begin on this important piece of the settlement agreement," said Reclamation Albuquerque Deputy Area Manager John Poland.

The Water 2025 program is aimed at preventing crises and conflict in the West by encouraging voluntary water banks, promoting the use of new technology for water conservation and efficiency and increasing cooperation and collaboration among federal, state, tribal and private organizations. Reclamation is also collaborating with Interstate Stream Commission through a license agreement allowing the project to cross Reclamation land in route to Brantley Reservoir.

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.

#