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Interstate Stream Commission Hires New Water Planner

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López announced that a new water planner was hired by the agency's Planning and Communication Division.

Gretel Follingstad began work on November 12. She will focus on updating the New Mexico State Water Plan as well as regional water plans for the state's 16 planning regions.

The New Mexico State Water Plan provides a policy framework for the state to manage water issues and helps prioritize funding needs around the state. State law requires the plan to be reviewed and updated periodically. That update process is scheduled for 2009 to address changed conditions such as population growth, climate variability, drought, new and changed water laws and court decisions and other issues that have arisen since 2003 when the plan was first put into place. Follingstad will help coordinate both state and regional water planning efforts.

Follingstad is completing her master's degree in Community and Regional Planning. She has a bachelor's of business administration degree from the University of New Mexico.

She has worked as a private consultant on natural resource management and planning in both Santa Fe and Taos, New Mexico. She has experience in watershed restoration planning, land conservation, grant writing, data analysis, meeting facilitation, and website maintenance. Past employers include Earth Works Institute of Santa Fe and Taos Land Trust.

"Because of her educational training in water planning, her strong communication skills, and her familiarity with New Mexico water issues, she will be an asset to the Interstate Stream Commission's water planning program," said Planning and Communication Division Director Karin Stangl.

Follingstad is fluent in Spanish. She is a native New Mexican, who was born and raised in Santa Fe.

The Interstate Stream Commission is a nine-member board appointed by the Governor. The Commission is charged with 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. The State Engineer serves as Secretary of the Commission.

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