



For immediate release:

April 3, 2009

For more information, contact:

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

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

New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Launches Public Meetings for the State Water Plan Update

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – The Interstate Stream Commission is hosting 21 public meetings across the state to solicit public input into how New Mexico balances its future water needs with limited supplies. The meetings are to begin in April and will cover each of the state's 16 water planning regions.

State statute requires that the New Mexico State Water Plan be updated every five years according to need. New Mexico's first State Water Plan was completed in 2003. Since then, a variety of factors have emerged that have made updating the plan necessary including: New Mexico's population hitting the 2-million mark, increasing demand for water, continued evidence of drought and climate variability, new court decisions, and the need for increased conservation.

"New Mexico spends a fraction of what surrounding states like Texas, Colorado, and Arizona spend on water planning. Updating this plan is a way for New Mexicans to have a hand in determining their water future," said New Mexico State Engineer John D'Antonio.

"While the 2003 State Water Plan was a good beginning, an update has become necessary," said Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López. "Planning for the future is much less expensive than reacting to crisis situations such as drought, water shortages, infrastructure failures, and other issues."

This is also an opportunity to look at the regional water plans for a particular area and see how those plans can start being integrated with the State Water Plan. Regional water plans address the following concerns: what the available water supply is for a region, what the current and projected future water demands are, and what steps a region plans to undertake to meet future demand with available supply.

"Public outreach efforts will begin the third week in April and will continue through June," said Planning and Communication Director Karin Stangl. "The first public meeting will be held in Las Cruces, New Mexico on April 14."

(MORE)

The schedule for the statewide public meetings for April, May and June is as follows:
All meetings will be held from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

Las Cruces	4/14	Roswell	4/28	Albuquerque	5/7
Deming	4/15	Shiprock	4/28	Las Vegas	5/12
Bernalillo	4/21	Farmington	4/29	Los Lunas	5/12
Socorro	4/22	Carlsbad	4/29	Cimarron	5/13
Moriarty	4/23	Hobbs	4/30	Santa Fe	6/2
Alamogordo	4/27	Portales	5/5	Abiquiu	6/3
Gallup	4/27	Tucumcari	5/6	Taos	6/4

Public forums will provide an opportunity for interested citizens to help shape water policy for the State of New Mexico by participating in discussions of topics such as increased growth and demand, conservation, climate variability, and prioritizing water infrastructure projects for the region.

The regional water planning program began in 1987 in order to protect New Mexico's water resources. The Interstate Stream Commission has worked for many years with all 16 regions of the state to prepare their own regional water plans.

For a full list of public meetings scheduled around the state, please contact the Office of the State Engineer's website at www.ose.state.nm.us on the front page under "Hot Topics" – "State Water Plan Update."

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 investigating, conserving and protecting the waters of the State, in addition to water planning.

#