



For immediate release:

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State Water Plan Update Meeting in Socorro

(SOCORRO, New Mexico) – About 30 Socorro area residents attended a public meeting at New Mexico Tech on the evening of April 22 to learn about the State Water Plan Update. The meeting was sponsored by the Planning and Communication Division of the Interstate Stream Commission.

Similar meetings are being held in a total of 21 communities around the state to update New Mexico's State Water Plan. The State Water Plan was published in 2003. State statute requires an update of the plan every five years according to need.

Since 2003, 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.

The public forums provided an opportunity for interested citizens to help shape water policy for the state by participating in discussions on topics such as increased growth and demand, conservation, climate variability, and prioritizing water programs and projects for this region based on four questions posed to the audience by the meeting facilitator.

The audience was comprised of farmers and ranchers, environmentalists, hydrologists, and concerned members of the public with an interest in water issues.

The meeting began with a presentation that explained how New Mexico spends a fraction of what surrounding states like Texas, Colorado, and Arizona spend on water planning. The Socorro-Sierra planning region's water use consists of 18 percent groundwater and 82 percent surface water according to the state's *2005 Water Use Report*.

Public outreach efforts will continue through mid June.

(MORE)

If you were unable to attend the meeting, but would still like to voice your opinion, the four questions are posted on the Interstate Stream Commission website at www.ose.state.nm.us on the front page under "hot topics." You can also contact Maureen Haney at 505-764-3864 for more information.

The Office of the State Engineer is charged with administering the state's water resources. The State Engineer has the responsibility to allocate, measure, administer, and oversee the 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.

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.

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