



For immediate release:

September 9, 2009

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Construction Project to Begin in Rio Gallinas Basin

(LAS VEGAS, New Mexico) – New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio announced today that a flow control weir located at the Storrie Lake point of diversion will soon be under construction upstream of Las Vegas, NM. The existing river gate has deteriorated over the years and will be rebuilt to function as originally intended.

At the bid opening on September 4 at the New Mexico State Purchasing Division Office, apparent low bidder for the project was New Image Construction from Ribera, NM. The construction phase will take about three weeks and is expected to occur during the late irrigation season. No interference with irrigation is foreseen at this time.

This project is needed to solve a stream flow water management problem that is occurring at the Storrie Lake Project point of diversion on the Gallinas River. The diversion structure serves as the principal device for controlling irrigation water, storm runoff, and heavy spring flows downstream.

Conflict among the various stakeholders is common, especially when stream flows are low as water use is managed using sandbags by the Rio Gallinas Water Master Luis Aguirre.

“Many flow measurement and distribution improvements have been made in the Gallinas system in 2009. This project will improve the reliability of water supply especially during periods of peak consumptive use which occurs during low runoff periods,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio. “The Gallinas River is highly variable. We are working to put the tools in place to measure and manage this precious resource and provide water to all of the stakeholders.”

“Additional work has been done on the measurement program in Las Vegas on the Gallinas River,” said Water Rights Division District 6 Manager Linda I. Gordan. “Eight measuring stations have been installed, including the Gallinas Canal, Storrie Project, and Acequia Madre de Los Romeros, and five more measuring stations will be installed by the end of the year.”

The diversion dam structure construction is being funded through the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Water Resources Allocation Program Measurement Fund, which was appropriated by the New Mexico Legislature in 2004 and 2006, and the New Mexico Natural Resource Conservation Service-Las Vegas Field Office.

(MORE)

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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