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Storrie Lake Diversion Dam Project Opening Celebration in Rio Gallinas Basin

(LAS VEGAS, New Mexico) – A ceremony to mark the completion of construction at the Storrie Lake point of diversion took place on March 31 in Las Vegas, New Mexico. More than 60 people attended the event held at Luna Community College Student Resources board room. A ribbon cutting ceremony followed at the Storrie headgates north of Las Vegas.

Presentations were given by representatives from the various organizations that had worked together collaboratively to find a solution to the problems that had occurred for many years, including Water Resource Allocation Program Director John Romero with the Office of the State Engineer; USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Project Design Engineer Art Ariaz; Mayor of Las Vegas Alfonso E. Ortiz, Jr; Former President of the Rio Gallinas Acequia Association and current member of the New Mexico Acequia Association Joseph Padilla; Storrie Lake Water Users Association President Robert Quintana; Rob Larrañaga of the National Wildlife Refuge, as well as State Senator Pete Campos. Following the program, comments were received from members of the audience.

Officials attending the opening ceremony and ribbon cutting included representatives from the offices of US Senator Jeff Bingaman, and Congressman Ben Ray Lujan, as well as officials from the City of Las Vegas. A note of support and congratulations was also received by US Senator Tom Udall.

This project was needed to solve a stream flow water management problem that was 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.

Construction included a flow control weir located at the Storrie Lake point of diversion. The river gate had deteriorated over the years and was rebuilt to function as originally intended. Construction was performed by New Image Construction of Ribera, New Mexico.

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"Everyone working together has made this Storrie Diversion project a reality," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "We are proud of the open-minded attitudes and cooperation it took to collaborate on this project and the willingness to listen to one another's needs. We are ever striving to implement long-term, sustainable solutions for the complex water issues faced in the Rio Gallinas Basin."

"When we all work together we experience a new level of vibrancy, prosperity, and civility in all that we do," said State Senator Pete Campos during his presentation.

The \$62,000 cost of the project was funded through the 2008 state appropriation to the Office of the State Engineer for Statewide Surface Water Measurement. The project was also funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Las Vegas Field Office.

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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