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New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Accepts the San Juan River Basin Regional Water Plan

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – In an effort to assure an adequate water supply in relation to projected demand in a specific region of the state -- as well as to plan for drought conditions that are predicted to continue in future years across the State of New Mexico -- the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission today announced the acceptance of the completed **San Juan River Basin Regional Water Plan**.

Although Governor Bill Richardson's Office directed the Interstate Stream Commission to have a comprehensive statewide water plan in place by the end of 2003, the Interstate Stream Commission has worked for many years with all regions of the state to prepare their own regional water plans. Once regional water plans are completed, they must be reviewed by the Interstate Stream Commission staff and must be accepted by the Interstate Stream Commission.

"It is important that completion of regional water plans continue to involve the public in water management, water development, and water conservation strategies around our state," said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López "New Mexico has been in a drought for the past four years, and conditions may continue for several years to come. We must work together as a state to prepare for that. It is important to balance the needs of all water users in the state. It is equally important that communities, businesses, and interested citizens have input into their regional plans."

(MORE)

To date, regional water plans were accepted for the Colfax County Region, Jemez y Sangre Area, Lower Pecos Valley, Lea County, Tularosa-Sacramento and Salt Basins, and the Estancia Basin. Other regional plans accepted today by the Interstate Stream Commission are the Socorro-Sierra Regional Water Plan and the Northwest New Mexico Regional Water Plan.

The San Juan River Basin Area is located in the northwest corner of New Mexico and extends into Colorado, Utah, and Arizona. The report evaluates seven of the nine watersheds in the area and takes into account land that is owned privately, by Native Americans, the federal government, and the state. Shallow groundwater development, a drought contingency plan for the Animas Watershed and for all watersheds with agricultural irrigation, crop leasing, and conservation measures were all addressed by the plan.

Key entities involved in the development of the regional plan include the San Juan Water Commission, the Navajo Nation, the Jicarilla Apache Nation, Interstate Stream Commission, several private consultants, and a steering committee of citizens.

The plan was funded by \$389,000 in grants from the Interstate Stream Commission as well as other contributions.

The plan will be posted on the Office of the State Engineer's website located at:
www.ose.state.nm.us

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 water planning.

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