



For immediate release:

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For more information, contact:

Karin Stangl, Public Information Officer
Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission
(505) 827-6139 or (505) 699-4923

Michael Benson, Public Information Officer
Navajo Nation (928) 729-4004

Public Comments Available for Review on a Proposed Water Rights Settlement Agreement by New Mexico and the Navajo Nation for the San Juan River Basin

(SANTA FE, New Mexico) – Public comments received by the Interstate Stream Commission and the Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources on a proposed settlement agreement between the Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico **are available for review** at various locations in the San Juan River Valley.

The proposed agreement, made public on December 5, 2003, could potentially resolve the claims of the Navajo Nation for the use of waters of the San Juan River Basin in northwestern New Mexico. The proposed settlement agreement is intended to adjudicate the Navajo Nation's water rights and provide associated water development projects for the benefit of the Navajo Nation in exchange for a release of claims to water that could potentially displace existing non-Navajo water users in the basin.

Public comments will be available for review at the following locations:

- **Aztec District Court**
103 South Oliver Dr.
Aztec, New Mexico, 87410
- **Aztec Public Library**
201 West Chaco St.
Aztec, New Mexico, 87410
- **Bloomfield Public Library**
333 South First St.
Bloomfield, New Mexico, 87413
- **Farmington Public Library**
2101 Farmington Ave.
Farmington, New Mexico, 87401

(MORE)

Public comments are also available for review at Navajo Nation Chapter Houses located along the San Juan River Valley in New Mexico.

Also, the proposed settlement agreement and supporting documents on which comments were received can still be downloaded from the Office of the State Engineer's website at: www.ose.state.nm.us

The Navajo Nation and the State of New Mexico are reviewing and considering the public comments received. Continuing negotiations could result in execution of a settlement agreement by officials of the Navajo Nation and the State Of New Mexico by March 1, 2004. If a settlement is reached, federal legislation would be introduced to Congress to approve the settlement.

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 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.

The Navajo Nation Department of Water Resources is charged with administering and managing the Nation's water resources.

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