



For immediate release:

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State Engineer Announces a Proposed New Water Subdistrict for the Rio Hondo

(RUIDOSO, New Mexico) – New Mexico State Engineer John D’Antonio announced today that a **public meeting will be held in Ruidoso on Monday, December 6, 2004** to discuss a proposed new water subdistrict to be created for the Rio Hondo region of New Mexico.

In coming months, a declaration of a new water subdistrict for the Rio Peñasco region is expected to follow this action.

The declaration of the special water subdistricts would give the State Engineer the authority to create a position and appoint a water master for the regions, who will be based in Roswell, New Mexico.

Water masters are people who actively administer water on a stream system in New Mexico. They monitor the diversion and use of the waters of a stream system on a daily basis, especially during irrigation season.

“Water masters serve an important function for the Office of the State Engineer because they are our people in the field who can make sure that water is equitably distributed to water users in a particular area,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio.

This action could be a solution to avoid conflict among area water users should the drought continue. It is part of the Active Water Resource Management (AWRM) initiative. AWRM refers to a broad range of activities, which include expediting the application transfer process, monitoring and metering diversions and limiting diversion of water to the amount authorized by existing water rights all within the prior appropriation system.

WHAT: Public Meeting on a Proposed New Subdistrict for the Rio Hondo

WHEN: December 6, 2004

**WHERE: Ruidoso City Council Chambers
313 Cree Meadows Dr.
Ruidoso, NM**

TIME: 7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

(MORE)

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.

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