

## **AMENDMENT TO HIDALGO COUNTY AWSA OFF-STREAM PROJECT PROPOSAL**

**February 27, 2013**

Hidalgo County submits the following amendment to the AWSA off-stream diversion and storage project proposal that is currently under consideration for implementation by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission. The amendment is to add an additional off-stream storage facility east of the Village of Virden. Diversion and conveyance of AWSA water to the facility would be by use of the existing Sunset Canal. The storage facility would lie below the Sunset Canal so water could simply be let out of the canal by gravity flow into the facility. Storage capacity would be less than 1,000 acre feet of water. When in operation water would be diverted and stored according to the parameters of the Arizona Water Settlements Act (AWSA) and Consumptive Use and Forbearance Agreement (CUFA).

Since the canals in the Virden Valley are restricted to a “call” system pursuant to the Globe Equity Decree, there are times when there is water available in the Gila River, but not enough is allowed to be diverted to satisfy the calls for water. When that happens water could be diverted into the Sunset and New Model canals to meet the calls and AWSA water that was previously stored below their headings could be let out of the new storage facility into the river and thereby make the water users downstream whole.

This amendment to the Hidalgo County proposal would have minimal environmental impact on the river, would be relatively inexpensive in that it would not entail additional diversion or conveyance facilities. Expense would primarily be to build a small dam, provide for conveyance of the water back to the river, and acquire the property for the facility, which is private property. There would be very little maintenance required in addition to that already in effect on the Sunset Canal.

This project amendment has the potential to greatly enhance the agricultural activity of about 2800 acres of farm land in the Virden Valley, a majority of the farm acreage on the Gila River in New Mexico.