



Water Wise Community Brief

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Officials Tour New Sanctuary for the Silvery Minnow in Albuquerque

The Rio Grande silvery minnow will live and thrive in a new \$1.7 million state-of-the-art facility designed for breeding and rearing the fish in captivity. The Albuquerque facility, called a "refugium," was toured by federal, state, and city officials on June 27.

Silvery minnow populations have been in decline in recent years. This facility will help protect the Rio Grande silvery minnow from extinction by providing a place for the fish to spawn and grow in an environment that closely resembles its natural habitat. When the fish are mature enough to survive on their own, they will be reintroduced into the wild.

Officials touring the facility included: Governor Bill Richardson, Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, New Mexico State Engineer John D'Antonio, Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan Lopez,



Silvery minnow refugium pond in Albuquerque.



State Engineer John D'Antonio addresses crowd.

photos by Yvette Chavez



A crowd of 250 guests attended the dedication.



Holding tanks for spawned silvery minnow.

Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Fish and Wildlife Service, and others. John Keys, officials from the U.S.

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State Water Plan Meetings Are Launched

In an effort to gather public input into how New Mexico should balance future water needs with limited supplies, the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission launched a series of public meetings July 9 in Clayton, New Mexico.

Governor Bill Richardson's Office has directed the Interstate Stream Commission to have a comprehensive state water plan in place by the end of 2003.

"I'm committed to developing a comprehensive state water plan in



Facilitators listen in Las Cruces to questions about shortage sharing during a drought.

order to end the fighting among ourselves and plan for the future,"

said Governor Bill Richardson. "New Mexico has been in a drought for the past four years, and conditions may continue for several years to come. We must – as a state – work together to prepare for that. This is an opportunity for interested citizens to take an active role in discussions of water issues affecting our state and to help be a part of the problem solving process."

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New Conservation Brochures

With the drought expected to continue in New Mexico through 2003 and beyond, now is a good time for homeowners and businesses to conserve water.

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer offers three new brochures, which provide valuable conservation information.

A Waterwise Guide to Rainwater Harvesting provides the basics of collecting rainwater for landscape irrigation. It describes how to design and build a rainwater harvesting system and different system types to consider.

A Waterwise Guide to Evaporative Coolers contains a descriptive diagram of an evaporative cooler for easy maintenance evaluation, along with a seasonal checklist. Evaporative coolers can be large water users (more than 3,000 gallons of water a cooling season in a typical Santa Fe home and over 12,000 gallons in Las Cruces). The brochure provides suggestions on how to buy and maintain water-efficient coolers.

A Waterwise Guide to Clothes Washers focuses on the highest water-using appliance inside the home after the toilet – the clothes washer. A traditional clothes washer uses about 40 gallons of water per load. New, water-efficient models use only about 20 gallons – and can cut energy use in half. The brochure provides tips on buying a new clothes washer and operating traditional and new models efficiently. 💧



Free copies are available by calling the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer at 1-800-928-3766, or from our web site at: www.seo.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation.

Agreement Prevents a Priority Call on Water for the San Juan River

Priority administration on the San Juan River this year was averted because major water users on the river in New Mexico have developed and endorsed recommendations and principles for the operation of Navajo Dam and the administration of diversions from the river during the remainder of 2003. The New Mexico State Engineer and the Bureau of Reclamation have accepted the recommendations and principles.

The recommendations were developed in light of the extreme low water supply conditions that occurred last year, the continuance of the drought through the past winter, low storage conditions in Navajo Reservoir, and competing needs for water.

"I support the efforts of water users to work towards cooperative solutions to local or regional problems," said New Mexico State Engineer John D'Antonio. "These solutions are preferable to state or court-imposed actions."

The water users making the recommendations include the Bloomfield Irrigation District, the Hammond Conservancy District, the Farmers Mutual Ditch, the Jewett Valley Ditch, the Public Service Company of New Mexico, the Arizona Public Service Company, BHP Billiton, the Jicarilla Apache Nation and the Navajo Nation. The Navajo Nation approved the recommendations and principles on behalf of the Navajo Indian Irrigation Project and the Fruitland and Hogback irrigation projects. The City of Farmington also endorsed the recommendations.

Under the recommendations and principles, the water users will share shortages in the water supply available to meet the water use needs from the San

Juan River. The Bureau of Reclamation will estimate the amount and percentage shortage that must be incurred by the water users in order to prevent the water surface at Navajo Lake from falling below the active storage capacity in the reservoir. The anticipated shortage will be continually updated through the irrigation season to reflect actual run-off and revised streamflow forecasts.

The Navajo Indian Irrigation Project, the City of Farmington, and water users at the San Juan Generating Station and the Four Corners Power Plant, and associated mines, will reduce the amount of their diversions by the percentage shortage determined by Reclamation. The Citizens, Hammond, Farmers Mutual, Jewett Valley, Fruitland and Hogback ditches will shorten their irrigation season to save the same percentage of irrigation use. Some of the ditches have already saved some depletion by delaying the start of their season, and the end of the irrigation season will be determined based on the actual water supply that materializes the remainder of the season. It is anticipated that the release from Navajo Dam will not go below 450 cfs this summer.

Reclamation has estimated a shortage of about 3 percent this year based on current water supply conditions and the June 1 snowmelt run-off forecasts for the San Juan Basin issued by the National Weather Service. The shortages are estimated using the minimum probable run-off forecasts to be conservative should the drought continue. The amount of shortage will dissipate as the season progresses if actual run-off conditions permit.

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State Engineer Meets with Las Vegas Water Users

New Mexico State Engineer John D'Antonio, Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan Lopez, and other Office of the State Engineer staff members made a visit to Las Vegas, New Mexico on May 2, to meet with three groups of water users.



State Engineer John D'Antonio meets with landowners near acequias in Las Vegas to listen to concerns about water rights.



City of Las Vegas officials meet with staff from the Office of the State Engineer to discuss water supplies during the drought.

First, the staff toured water facilities maintained by the City of Las Vegas, including the diversion point in Gallinas Canyon as well as Peterson and Bradner Reservoirs.

Then, they met with a group of various acequia representatives, who are the priority water users in the area, to hear their concerns about meeting their water needs

if drought conditions continue through the summer. Representatives voiced concerns about water levels at the Montezuma diversion point.

Then, staff toured Storrie Lake to meet with members of the Storrie Project Water Users Association, who expressed concerns about

dropping lake levels with the continued drought.

D'Antonio discussed shortage sharing among all water users, continued adjudication of water rights, and possible funding options to renovate the head gates at the Montezuma diversion point so better measurements could be taken. 💧

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such as water banking, drought contingency measures, strategies for water conservation, watershed restoration, and other issues.

The nine-member Interstate Stream Commission is responsible for conserving, protecting, and planning for water resources and stream systems in New Mexico.

Here is the meeting schedule:

Clayton	7/9
Raton	7/10
T or C	7/14
Espanola	7/16
Tularosa	7/17
Jemez Pueblo	7/21
Las Cruces	7/23
Anthony	7/24
Socorro	7/28
Gallup	7/30

Taos	7/31
Santa Rosa	8/4
Clovis	8/6
Tucumcari	8/7
Deming	8/12
Reserve	8/13
Silver City	8/14
Chama	8/18
Farmington	8/20
Shiprock	8/21
Albuquerque	8/25
Hobbs	8/27
Acoma	8/28
Las Vegas	9/2
Santa Fe	9/3
Moriarty	9/4
Isleta Pueblo	9/8
Roswell	9/10
Carlsbad	9/11

For more information, call (505) 764-3868. 💧

"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 in this process," said New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan Lopez. "We are on a very aggressive timeline to gather input for the comprehensive state water plan."

Meetings will start in July and will continue through September, culminating in a New Mexico First Town Hall meeting September 23-24. The public forums provide an opportunity for interested citizens to help shape water policy for the State of New Mexico by including discussions of topics

The water users, who are party to the recommendations, encourage the other water users in the San Juan Basin to implement water conservation measures as may be appropriate. Of the total flow in the San Juan River downstream from Farmington, only roughly half is

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supplied by the San Juan River and regulated by Navajo Dam. The Animas River contributes most of the remainder. The State Engineer will assist in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations and principles. The State Engineer also will see to the continued installation

of flow gaging equipment on ditches in the San Juan Basin. With Interstate Stream Commission funding, the State Engineer has installed gaging equipment on many ditches in the basin with their cooperation. 💧

Phase One of the project was funded jointly by the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and the City of Albuquerque at a cost of \$1.1 million, which included design and construction of the building and catchment ponds, as well as the operation and maintenance costs for one year.

Phase Two of the project will be funded by federal grants from Bureau of Reclamation at a cost of \$640,000, which will add 12 holding tanks, lab space, and netting for predator control. The City of Albuquerque Biological Park provided the land to host the facility as well as staff to manage and operate it. In addition, the City of Albuquerque obtained a \$300,000 Challenge Grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, by using the funds provided by the Interstate Stream Commission as matching funds.

"Because of the lack of leadership, it is unfortunate that the debate has pitted fish against humans," said New Mexico Governor

Bill Richardson. "The hope of this venture is to breed the silvery minnow off the endangered species list outside of the Rio Grande environment ending the potential of a federal takeover of New Mexico's water."

"The New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission developed the conceptual idea for this facility in 1998. We entered into an agreement with the City of Albuquerque to build and operate this facility. Thanks to federal funding for the facility supported by Senator Pete Domenici, it is now a reality," said Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan Lopez. "New Mexicans are aware of the intense pressure we're under to find the right balance on the Rio Grande. This minnow refuge is one example of a cooperative endeavor that can help relieve some of that pressure and ensure that we can meet the water needs of our communities, farmers, and the minnow." 💧

Drought Declared

Governor Bill Richardson declared a state of emergency because of drought conditions across the state on May 30. He signed an executive order creating the New Mexico State Drought Task Force to recommend ways for the state to mitigate drought conditions and impacts in the state.

The Drought Task Force will be composed of the following members or their designees: John D'Antonio, State Engineer; Ron Curry, State Environment Secretary; David Harris, New Mexico Finance Authority; Estevan Lopez, Interstate Stream Commission; Joanna Prukop, Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Secretary; James Jimenez, Department of Finance Secretary; Miley Gonzalez, Department of Agriculture Secretary; Tim Manning, Office of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety; Bernie Teba, Office of Indian Affairs Secretary; Bill Hume, Planning and Policy Director for the Governor; Rick Homans, Economic Development Secretary; and Fred Peralta, Tourism Secretary. 💧

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Make every drop count!

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