



Water Wise Community Brief



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Deming Office Develops Computer Tool to Increase Information Access and Improve Customer Service

A new state-of-the-art tool, developed by the District III Office of the State Engineer in Deming, could help eliminate the need for paper files on water rights. It will also improve administrative efficiency and customer access to information.

The computer pilot project, called Virden Valley Enterprise-Geographical Information System (E-GIS), provides a template to allow quick access to information from the agency's WATERS database via a GIS interface.

All historical information on water-right ownership, location of wells, site photos, and access to people who administer the basin one day could be merged into a computer file.

"For the first time, users will be able to view a graphic image from desktop computers and with one click of the mouse be able to access the complete history of any water right," said State Engineer John D'Antonio.

The Virden Valley E-GIS is the brainchild of District III Supervisor



Deming Office employees Tim Farmer and Adrianna Ramirez inspect and record well information to be entered into the E-GIS.



District III WATERS Supervisor John Mora and Water Resource Technician Lloyd Valentine compare Virden Valley water rights files with files from the district offices.

for the Gila/San Francisco Basin Tink Jackson and Assistant Supervisor Tim Farmer. They developed the tool to delineate groundwater uses in the Virden Valley Underground Water Basin in southwestern New Mexico.

The project was initiated in response to the ongoing litigation in the Virden Valley region, a farming community located about 25 miles northwest of Lordsburg along the Arizona border.

The Office of the State Engineer was responsible for the administra-

tion of groundwater in the Virden Valley and did not have records of the numerous wells that were drilled for domestic use prior to the declaration of the basin in 1938.

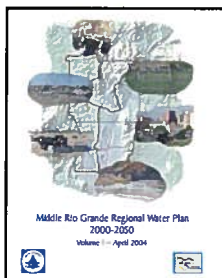
The original project was to find all existing wells and determine the ownership of those wells. The rest evolved from there.

District III staff members assisted by compiling well data in the field and entering that data into the GIS. The GIS data then was compared against

(continued on page 4)

Interstate Stream Commission Accepts Middle Rio Grande Regional Plan

In an effort to plan for 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 pre-



dicted to continue across the State of New Mexico in future years — the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) has accepted the completed Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan.

Governor Bill Richardson's Office directed the ISC to have a comprehensive statewide water plan in place by the end of 2003. In

addition, the ISC 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 ISC staff and must be accepted by the ISC.

"Regional water plans provide an opportunity to involve the public in

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New Native American Water Liaison



Data Corp., Cray Research, Inc., Thinking Machines, and Silicon Graphics, Inc.

"As a former Governor of Santa Ana Pueblo, Armijo understands the water issues facing New Mexico Pueblos including the Rio Grande endangered species issues," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "His experience will be an asset to our agency as this position is instrumental in helping to work collaboratively on water issues involving the State of New Mexico and Indian Pueblos, Tribes, and Nations."

Duties of the Native American Water Liaison include promoting a spirit of cooperation, coordination, communication, and good will between Tribal and state governments as separate sovereignties. The Native American Water Liaison deals with matters related to adjudication of Tribal and Pueblo water rights, negotiations regarding these rights, and assistance to individual Tribes and Pueblos.

"It is my goal to bring together the Tribes of New Mexico and the Office of the State Engineer to work in good faith to resolve issues and differences with regard to water resources, all in accordance with Governor Richardson's goals and initiatives," said Armijo. ♠

Myron Armijo was hired as the new Native American Water Liaison for the Office of the State Engineer on August 5.

Armijo was Lieutenant Governor of Santa Ana Pueblo from January to December 2000. He became Governor of the Pueblo in January of 2003 and held that position until December 2003. During his tenure as Governor, he was the Chairman of the Ten Southern Governors Council.

Armijo was the Chairman of Tamaya Enterprises Inc. from 1997 to 2003. Prior to that, he worked as an electronic technician at the U.S. Nuclear Testing Range in Mercury, Nevada from 1974 to 1977. From 1977 to 1997, he had a career in the computer industry working for companies throughout the State of New Mexico which include Control

San Juan-Chama Permit Approved

The City of Albuquerque's application to divert surface water from the Rio Grande to provide a reliable supply of municipal drinking water for Albuquerque residents was approved by the State Engineer on July 8.

Under the conditional permit, the city may divert and fully consume about 46,000 acre-feet per year of San Juan-Chama Project water. The city may divert up to an equal amount of Rio Grande surface water provided that it returns the full diverted amount to the Rio Grande.

"This permit will not only help decrease the strain on Albuquerque's aquifer, but will provide clean, safe drinking water for city residents," said State Engineer John D'Antonio. "It also will allow the City of Albuquerque to fully use its San Juan-Chama Project water to meet growing water demands while protecting existing water rights."

Six environmental groups have appealed the permit approval fearing water users downstream and the Rio Grande silvery minnow would be harmed.

D'Antonio said conditions placed on the permit will protect downstream users and the minnow. ♠

Water Master Profile: Pojoaque-Nambe-Tesuque Region



photo by Yvette Chavez

Brian Gallegos was hired in June as Water Master for the Pojoaque-Nambe-Tesuque region, where he will administer the distribution of water from stream systems on a daily basis.

From 2002 to 2004, Gallegos was a water resource specialist

for the Office of the State Engineer's Water Rights Division. Prior to that, he was a water resource and environmental specialist for the New Mexico Environment Department's Drinking Water Bureau from 1994 to 2000.

The water master works in cooperation with local ditch organizations, cities, industries, and other entities that divert surface and groundwater to ensure that water is diverted and distributed in accordance with applicable court decrees, permits, licenses, and approved agreements.

"Gallegos' previous experience with our agency and the Environment Department, as well as his good rapport with the people living in the Nambe, Pojoaque, and Tesuque region will be an asset to our objectives of actively managing the surface and groundwater diversions in that region," said State Engineer John D'Antonio.

Gallegos received a bachelor of science degree in environmental science with an emphasis in water resources and a master of business administration from Highlands University in Las Vegas, New Mexico in 1999 and 2002, respectively. ♠

Team Wins Software Application Award

Three Santa Fe Office of the State Engineer employees won a second-place award in the *Software Application Fair Venue* at the 2004 Annual Environmental Systems Research Institute International User Conference in San Diego, California, in July.

The employees are Steve Hayes, Information Technology Systems Bureau, Christina Noftsker, Hydrographic Survey Bureau, and Elizabeth Ayarbe, formerly with the Hydrographic Survey Bureau.

The trio's entry titled, "BLOBing: A Water Right Edit Journal," or (WREJ), is a software application that allows notes and comments on the



Christina Noftsker and Steve Hayes display their award for the "Water Right Edit Journal."

history of a water right to be captured during the adjudication process.

The WREJ manages journal entries stored as Binary Large Objects (BLOBs) in ArcGIS. With this software application, water right specialists can now view and easily

add an unrestricted number of comments to a water right in the Geographical Information System (GIS).

"I am pleased that our staff has been so highly regarded for their efforts to solve the water right information issues that occur during the adjudication process," said State Engineer John D'Antonio.

"Managing water-right information is a difficult task," said Hayes. "This application simplifies the task by managing a limitless number of comments."

"Once people are trained and educated about the software application we expect that it will be widely accepted by Office of the State Engineer employees and users nationwide," said Noftsker. 💧

Employees Volunteer Time at the New Mexico State Fair

Active Water Resource Management (AWRM) was the theme for this year's Office of the State Engineer booth at the New Mexico State Fair.

More than 60 employees from the agency worked at the booth during the month of September.

AWRM refers to a broad range of activities which emphasize permitting transfers, monitoring and metering diversions, and limiting diversion of water to the amount authorized by existing water rights all within the prior appropriation system.

Proactive steps taken by the State Engineer toward AWRM include: designating managers for critical basin areas, developing and implementing schedules for creating water master guidelines, establishing a budget of metering costs, field implementation and enforcement, developing a plan for communication with the public, and hiring and training a water master for each area of critical concern, as well as setting feasible short-term and long-term objectives. 💧



Howard Pakin, of the Litigation and Adjudication Program, provides information about Active Water Resource Management to a guest at the fair booth.

State Engineer's Public Information Team Receives Two Awards

The New Mexico Office of the State Engineer received two public relations awards from the New Mexico Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (NMPRSA).

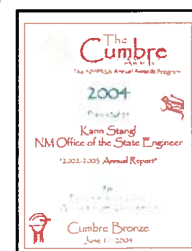
In the category of government-public service, the Office of the State Engineer received a *First-Place Gold 2004 Cumbre Award* for the "Media Campaign for New Mexico's First State Water Plan." This award recognizes outstanding achievement in writing, design, production, and management of materials for a comprehensive public relations

campaign consisting of more than one communication tool, program, or concept. It also included planning and evaluation.

In the category of government-annual reports, the Office of the State Engineer received a *Third-Place Bronze 2004 Cumbre Award* for its 2003 Annual Report. This award recognizes expertise in writing, design, production, and management of materials that meet a single communication need.

The annual competition for the *Cumbre Awards* recognizes public

relations excellence in New Mexico for producing public relations campaigns or public relations tactics. 💧



agency records, Globe Equity Decree No. 59, and historical maps.

"The original groundwater project proved extremely beneficial," said Farmer. "With this success, the scope of the project was enlarged to include surface water data."

Additional data added in the last two years includes Global Positioning Systems (GPS) files for ditches, roads, gauging stations, sluices, and flumes in the Virden Valley. The scope of the Virden Valley Project was expanded in 2003 to include WATERS data and linking the two databases into the E-GIS.

"We hope the Virden Valley E-GIS will provide a workable template for merging files for all areas of the state," said Jackson. "Having key information about an area in one place and not having to dig through the paper files has dramatically improved our administrative efficiency and customer service." 💧

developing water management and conservation strategies within their regions," said ISC Director Estevan López. "The state must work with water users and interested citizens within a region to develop mechanisms for managing limited water resources."

To date, the ISC has accepted nine regional water plans.

The Middle Rio Grande Region includes Valencia, Bernalillo, and Sandoval counties. Also included are the Pueblos of Jemez, Zia, San Felipe, Santa Ana, Sandia, and Isleta and portions of Santa Clara, Cochiti, Santo Domingo, and Laguna. In addition, it covers portions of the Jicarilla Nation and the Tohajilee Chapter of the Navajo Nation. Municipalities included are Albuquerque, Rio Rancho, Jemez Springs, Cuba, San Isidro, Bernalillo, Corrales, Los Ranchos de Albuquerque, Bosque Farms, Los Lunas, and Belen.

Other entities such as the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo

Flood Control Authority, the Southern Sandoval County Flood Control Authority, and the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District also are stakeholders.

Available water in the region is supplied from both ground and surface sources from the Rio Grande and its tributaries. Principal uses of water in the region are agricultural irrigation, municipal, industrial, and domestic uses, riparian evapotranspiration, and evaporative losses from conservation and recreation storage.

The plan addresses drought conditions, Rio Grande Compact constraints, unadjudicated water rights, federal Endangered Species Act issues, and projected population growth.

The plan cost more than \$1.3 million and was funded by the ISC, the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments, local governments, and the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly. 💧

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Make every drop count!

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