



Water Wise

Promoting communication among
New Mexico's community of water users.

Great Outlook for Recreational Opportunities and Reservoir Levels

State officials gathered at Albuquerque's Tingley Beach to report about the substantial winter snowpack levels and spring runoff around the state and the impacts they have on recreational and tourism opportunities.

Attending the news conference on May 29 included State Engineer John D'Antonio; Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department Jon Goldstein; and New Mexico Tourism Department Advertising, Marketing and Promotions Manager Richard Eeds.



State Engineer John D'Antonio, and other officials, addressed the audience at a joint news conference.

D'Antonio reported that reservoir levels statewide are projected to be good for water recreational opportunities in New Mexico for Memorial Day and Independence Day.

New Mexico has experienced an active El Niño pattern this winter and spring, and precipitation so far has been near or slightly above average. As of March 1, snowpack levels around the state were all at or above average in every single one of the state's river basins. At some of the southern and western basins such as the Mimbres, San Francisco-Gila, and the Zuni/Bluewater basin, snowpack was at or near its highest levels ever.

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COMMUNITY BRIEF

Office of the State Engineer Receives Piñon Recognition from Quality New Mexico

The Office of the State Engineer/Interstate Stream Commission was selected to receive a 2009 Piñon Recognition from Quality New Mexico -- the only state agency to receive one last year.



State Engineer John D'Antonio and Pinon Recognition with Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission staff.

Quality New Mexico is a non-profit service organization that promotes, educates, and congratulates performance excellence for agencies, organizations, and businesses in our state.

Agencies receive Piñon Recognition for planting the seed of performance excellence and showing evidence that they are in the beginning stages of systematic approaches.

The agency's core competencies of visionary leadership, interdisciplinary professional expertise, collaboration and communication with stakeholders and water users, as well as use of effective management plans to track progress and deliverables, in addition to their "Plan-Do-Check-Act" process used for performance improvement all contributed to winning the award.

The recognition was presented to State Engineer John D'Antonio, Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López, and the team who worked on the application at a Quality New Mexico luncheon ceremony on April 22, in Albuquerque. ♦

COMMUNITY BRIEF

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Governor Signs Into Law Eastern New Mexico Regional Water Utility Authority

Although the 2010 State Legislative Session lasted 30 days and focused on budget issues, one important bill the agency followed was signed into law in Clovis on March 6.

House Bill 15, sponsored by Representative Anna Crook (R-Clovis), created a water utility district within the boundaries of Curry and Roosevelt counties would benefit Curry County, the cities of Clovis, Portales, and Texico, the towns of Melrose and Elida, and the Village of Grady.

The Authority would be a political subdivision of the State of New Mexico and have the power of eminent domain as well as the ability to establish rates and issue revenue bonds.

A seven-member board would be created to administer the Authority and powers and duties of the board would be

established. Bonds authorized by the board are exempt from all state taxation, and revenue bonds may be issued if approved by a supermajority of five members of the board.

“Currently this area relies on the Ogallala Aquifer, which will not meet the future demand for water because of the region’s diminishing groundwater supply,” said State Engineer John D’Antonio. “Eastern New Mexico communities have come up with a cooperative solution to meet their future needs that would be supplied by the renewable Ute Reservoir supply. This gets them a step closer to building the pipeline project that will transport water from the reservoir.”

The board for the Authority would consist of three members from Clovis, two members from Portales, one member for Curry County, and one member -- on a rotating basis -- from Texico, Melrose, Elida, or Grady. ♦

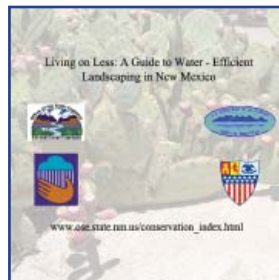
New Conservation Video Released

New Mexico Office of the State Engineer has developed a new training video aimed at reducing outdoor water use in residential and small commercial landscapes.

The video, titled *Living on Less: A Guide to Water-Efficient Landscaping in New Mexico*, was developed through a grant with the US Bureau of Reclamation and a partnership with the City of Santa Fe.

The video covers topics such as: creating a watering schedule, designing efficient irrigation systems, water-efficient plant selection and xeric landscape design, planting techniques and soil preparation, mulching, and other water-saving tips. The target audience is the homeowner and those responsible for small commercial landscapes. To provide access to the large Spanish-speaking population in New Mexico, the video will be translated into Spanish.

The decision to focus on municipal water use comes in part from the U.S. Census Bureau’s projections that population growth for New Mexico will add an additional 800,000 people to the state by 2030. This is an increase of



40 percent over the State’s population in 2000. Outdoor water use is usually the largest part of any municipality’s residential use. In New Mexico’s normally hot, dry summer months, this can increase from 30 percent to 50 to 70 percent of residential usage. The increase is largely contributed to outdoor watering of lawns and landscapes.

Appropriate watering techniques, along with plant selection, soil amendments and other water wise techniques can cut this water use by 50 percent. The *Living on Less* video details these techniques in an easy to understand format.

The video is posted on the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer website at http://www.ose.state.nm.us/wucp_home_owners_dvd.html. ♦

Conservation tip:
Place a layer of mulch around trees and plants. Mulching helps reduce evaporation and keeps the soil moist.



Thank you, in advance, for visiting www.surveymonkey.com/s/9879mc5 to complete a short survey about this newsletter. We’d appreciate your participation.

Construction Project Completed in Rio Gallinas Basin

A ceremony to mark the completion of construction at the Storrie Lake point of diversion took place on March 31 in Las Vegas, New Mexico. More than 60 people attended the event.

Various organizations that had worked together collaboratively to find a solution to the problems that had occurred for many years were represented at the event: Office of the State Engineer, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, City of Las Vegas, Rio Gallinas Acequia Association, and Storrie Lake Water Users Association.

The project was needed to solve a stream flow water management problem that was occurring at the Storrie Lake Project point of diversion on the Gallinas River. The diversion structure serves as the principal device for controlling irrigation water, storm runoff, and heavy spring flows downstream.

Construction included a flow control weir. The river gate had deteriorated over the years and was rebuilt to function as originally intended. Construction was performed by New Image Construction of Ribera, New Mexico.

The \$62,000 cost of the project was funded through the 2008 state appropriation to the Office of the State Engineer for Statewide Surface Water Management. The project was also funded by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service-Las Vegas Field Office. ♦



Commissioner Joseph Padilla of New Mexico Acequia Commission, State Senator Pete Campos, Las Vegas Mayor Alfonso Ortiz, President of Storrie Lake Water Users Association Robert Quintana, Office of the State Engineer Water Resource Allocation Program Director John Romero, and Office of the State Engineer Community Liaison Richard Trujillo are shown standing on the Storrie Diversion headgate as they prepare to cut the ribbon marking completion of the Storrie Diversion Dam Structure for Water Control Project.

Blessing Ceremony Held in Gallup for Water Projects

The Navajo Nation Water Management Branch with 10 chapter houses situated along the NM 550 corridor held a “Blessing Ceremony” in the Navajo Way on April 12. This was to celebrate the Eastern Navajo Regional Water and Cutter Lateral Water Supply Projects -- parts of the Navajo – New Mexico Water Rights Settlement and Navajo – Gallup Pipeline Projects.

Tribal Liaison Myron Armijo was accompanied by William Hume, formerly the Director of Policy and Planning in Governor Richardson’s office. Sam Page, President of the Counselor Chapter, introduced all the invited guests, which included people from state government, US Bureau of Indian Affairs, US Indian Health Service, staff from the NM Congressional offices, US Bureau of Reclamation, and US Department of Agriculture, among others.

After the introductions, the group was transported out to the Counselor Tank Site for the blessing. It was performed by Hataalii (medicine man) Earl Herrera of the Navajo Nation. When the blessing was completed, the Hataalii graciously allowed the dignitaries present to take some corn pollen and to offer a prayer in their own way for the project’s complete success.

An appreciation luncheon was held at the Counselor Chapter House. It was a bitter-sweet moment for President Page as tears welled up in his eyes, that soon the people of eastern Navajo will finally have water closer to their homes. Vice-President Ben Shelly thanked all the many agencies and organizations for the hard work, which included State Engineer John R. D’Antonio and Interstate Stream Commission Director Estevan López and their staff. ♦



Navajo Nation Medicine Man (Hataalii) Earl Herrera (far left) is shown performing a blessing ceremony while Sam Page, Andrew Robertson, former State Senator Leonard Tsosie, Navajo Nation Vice-President Ben Shelly, and Omar Bradley participate.



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Representatives from three local television stations covered the news about snowpack and spring runoff.

The average to well-above-average snowmelt runoff should help replenish storage reservoirs making it another great season to enjoy water-related recreational activities.

Goldstein cautioned everyone that despite the moisture this winter, drought in the Southwest is a long-term phenomenon and that New Mexicans

need to stay vigilant against wildfires.

Goldstein urged visiting the 35 diverse state parks available to explore and enjoy in New Mexico, including cool lakes, mountain forests, canyons, desert beauty, and fascinating historical sites—even dinosaur tracks! New Mexico State Parks offer family-friendly settings, endless recreational opportunities, and hundreds of special events and educational programs each year. Reservoir levels at state parks vary, but will provide superb water recreation this season.

Despite the substantial winter snowpack and spring runoff across parts of New Mexico, the possibility of wildfire is still a very real concern. Fire danger in many areas across the state is high and state residents and visitors should check to see if any fire restrictions exist in the areas they plan to visit.

Eeds told the audience that while optimism is high related to New Mexico's water recreational opportunities, the State consists of 22 million acres of prairies, plains and forests, offering every recreational pursuit imaginable. New Mexicans annually welcome nearly 12 million domestic visitors, who contribute nearly \$6 billion to the state's economy. ♦

For more information about the Office of the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission efforts, visit www.ose.state.nm.us.