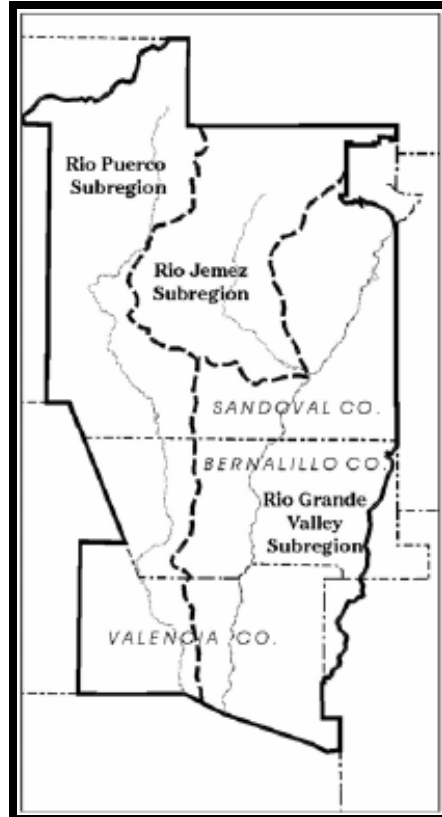


RIO PUERCO Y RIO JEMEZ

Regional Water Plan

Public Involvement Program - Phase I



January 2003

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RIO PUERCO Y RIO JEMEZ

Regional Water Plan

Public Involvement Program - Phase I

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Please Note: The Appendices noted throughout are located in the offices of the Cuba Soil & Water Conservation District and the Mid-Region Council of Governments.

Introduction

Regional water planning in the Río Jemez and Río Puerco sub-regions has been underway since January 6, 2000. Phase I's activities, which ended at the end of December 2002, have included meetings and workshops to identify issues, concerns, values, problems, and goals and objectives related to developing a regional water plan. The following report documents the public involvement program and process in Phase I, then summarizes the interim results. These results reflect the input by citizens who gave of their time and energy to ensure that the plan represents the values and visions of the Río Jemez and Río Puerco watersheds. It is the sincere desire that this report will stimulate more public involvement as Phase II begins.

Acknowledgements

This report is a product of the work and support of Mike Wirtz, Cuba Soil & Water Conservation District, the Mid-Region Council of Governments, and the Interstate Stream Commission. Thanks also to the Steering Committees of the Rio Puerco and the Rio Jemez watersheds, and to the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly, for adding their thoughts and guidance to the process.

Chapter 1 - History of the Planning Process

As part of its mandate to protect New Mexico's water, the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) is to prepare a state water plan. Prior to doing so, the ISC designated sixteen water planning regions throughout the state, and then asked them to prepare regional water plans in accord with the *Regional Water Planning Handbook* and §72-14-44 NMSA. The legislature recognized and directed that water planning is most effectively done at the local level. Regional water planning allows all stakeholders to help determine the direction of water use within the region. Broad public participation is necessary in the development of regional water plans to enhance their acceptance locally and to increase their potential contribution to state decision making in regard to "public welfare" and "conservation" determinations. This effort is overseen by the ISC and funded through the Commission and local entities.

The Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly, a non-profit, all-volunteer, grass-roots organization, was formed in late 1997 to develop a regional water plan through an open, inclusive, and participatory process. The region, as designated by the ISC, included the Middle Rio Grande, the Rio Puerco, and the Rio Jemez watersheds. In 1998, the Water Assembly and the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments (MRGCOG), now the Mid-Region Council of Governments (MRCOG), agreed to work together in this planning process.

In the spring of 1999, the ISC and the MRCOG entered into a Scope of Work to fund Phase I of the Region Water Plan. The Rio Puerco and the Rio Jemez watersheds were included in the tasks to be accomplished:

Subtask 2.1 - Urban and Rural Sector Participation; Linkage between watersheds. - Subregional committees will represent the rural interests of the Jemez watershed, the Rio Puerco watershed, and the rural sectors of the Middle Rio Grande watershed to provide input to the regional water plan. These subregional committees will serve to involve rural sectors in all phases and activities of the water planning process.

Several small communities are located near the headwaters of the Rio Puerco and Rio Jemez and are included within the larger Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region. Mr. Emmett Cart of the Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District (CS&WDC) felt that it was important for these stakeholders to be able to voice their concerns and opinions and to participate with residents from the urban centers such as Albuquerque, Bernalillo, and Rio Rancho. The CS&WCD agreed to be the fiscal agent for the process and arranged with MRCOG to undertake Phase I of the program for the smaller subregions. That, in turn, formed the basis of the agreement between the CS&WCD and Mike Wirtz, the project coordinator.

Beginning in January 2000, a series of meetings were held, and the Río Jemez and Río Puerco Joint Watershed Steering Committee, as well as a set of Bylaws, were created. These meetings have been a part of the public involvement process described in more detail below. Appended to this report are the outcomes of the structural portion of the meetings, the Steering Committee Agreement, the Bylaws, lists of meeting attendees, and minutes from those meetings. Furthermore, there have been a number of articles in the local newspaper about regional water planning (Appendix 1 and 2).

Chapter 2 - The Public Involvement Process

The *Regional Water Planning Handbook*, available through the ISC, provides guidance as to what should be included in the regional water planning process, particularly with regard to public involvement. As is noted in the *Handbook*, “a critical element of the regional water plan is public participation in the planning process. Planners must demonstrate that reasonable and diligent efforts have been made to reach the public so as to invite, value, and reflect public comment.”

The Rio Puerco y Rio Jemez Joint Watershed Steering Committee has worked carefully to fulfill this mandate. For the past three to four years, residents from the small communities of Jemez Springs, Ponderosa, La Cueva, Cuba, La Jara and Regina and the Pueblos of Jemez and Zia, New Mexico, have attended meetings and seminars to learn about water planning. Throughout the process, the intent has been to involve local residents as stakeholders in all phases of the water planning efforts.

A. First series of meetings - January 6, 2000, through July 28, 2001

From January 6, 2000, through July 28, 2001, community residents and the project coordinator held a total of eleven separate meetings, six in Cañon and five in Cuba, New Mexico. In addition, members of these communities and the project coordinator attended two Water Assembly meetings in Albuquerque, and the Goals and Objectives Forum at the Albuquerque Convention Center on November 4, 2000. A list of the participants and the minutes from those sub-regional meetings is included in Appendix 1. At the March 31, 2001, Water Assembly meeting in Albuquerque, the project coordinator presented an interim report on behalf of the sub-regions to all attendees. During this time, community members worked on developing a Steering Committee for the sub-regions, writing by-laws, identifying issues and concerns, and listing interim goals and objectives. Set out below are the meeting dates, locations, number of attendees, and key issues and concerns that were expressed during this first series of meetings.

1. February 26, 2000 in Cañon, NM. Twelve residents attended the meeting and discussed their concerns and water-related needs. Managing the watersheds for water production was a strong concern. They also listed ideas about the impending sub-region water plan. A flyer announcing the meeting had been circulated throughout the community.
2. March 29, 2000 in Cañon, NM. Ten participants including guest speaker Richard Spencer who had worked on the Estancia Basin water plan attended. The group discussion centered on how to use less water, how to conserve more, and how to keep the water within the watersheds. An agenda had been prepared.
3. April 21, 2000 in Cañon, NM. Eleven community members discussed the template set out in the ISC's *Regional Water Planning Handbook*, and how the sub-regions would become involved in the overall planning process.

4. June 6, 2000 in Albuquerque, NM. Two members from the Jemez Springs area and the Project Coordinator attended the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly meeting.
5. July 18, 2000 in Cuba, NM. Eighteen community members from the Rio Puerco watershed area met and discussed their water related concerns and values. One of the main issues as stated by a participant was that “land without water rights is valueless; water rights must come with the land.” The participants also stressed that planning should begin at the top of the watershed and address erosion control issues.
6. August 22, 2000 in Cuba, NM. Nine stakeholders attended the meeting and viewed excerpts of the video, “Cadillac Desert”. They also discussed how to get the word out so more community members could become involved.
7. September 19, 2000 in Cuba, NM. Nine residents attended and voiced concerns about how small communities could lose their water if they didn’t participate in planning efforts. They also were concerned about getting their individual water rights records and certificates in order.
8. December 2, 2000 in Cuba, NM. Thirty-two stakeholders were present and discussed water rights and how to protect them. They also reiterated the need to protect and manage the watersheds. An agenda had been prepared and circulated throughout the community prior to the meeting. One of the community organizers of the meeting stated that “we’re here to make water resource management plans and it’s up to you to help us”.
9. January 6, 2001 in Cuba, NM. Ten members discussed the formation of a Steering Committee that would represent both the Rio Puerco and the Rio Jemez watersheds. Discussions centered on whom should be on the committee.
10. March 17, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Twenty-three stakeholders attended this meeting. Flyers had been circulated and an agenda prepared. There was a recap of the watershed water planning efforts, a Steering Committee status report, and a review of the Cooperative Agreement and Bylaws.
11. March 31, 2001 in Albuquerque, NM. The program coordinator presented a report to the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly about the Rio Puerco y Rio Jemez sub-region planning activities and the formation of a Steering Committee. The belief stated by a meeting participant “Speaking from the heart is real power” has been an underlying value from the stakeholders in those two sub-regions.
12. April 7, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Ten members discussed the structure of the Steering Committee. One comment that was voiced was “we need to be self protective of our water demands so MRGCOG won’t take our water”.
13. July 28, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Nineteen stakeholders were present when the Steering Committee Agreement was finalized and the Bylaws ratified. In addition, an update of the sub-regions’ water planning efforts was presented.

B. Second series of meetings - July 28, 2001 through December 17, 2002

Since July 28, 2001, when the Steering Committee was established, there have been eleven meetings involving the Steering Committee. Appendix 2 includes the participant lists, notes, and comments from these meetings. In addition, at the April 2002 Annual Water Assembly

meeting in Albuquerque, two basin members presented an interim report on behalf of the sub-regions. A list of the eleven Steering Committee meetings since July 28, 2001 follows:

1. August 10, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Eleven participants attended this meeting including a representative from MRGCOG. Discussions centered on whom would be co-chairs of the Steering Committee.
2. September 21, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Thirteen members attended and it was decided that Marion Woolf from the Rio Puerco watershed and Emmett Cart from the Rio Jemez watershed would be co-chairs for at least the next six months. It was also recommended that the Steering Committee look at the goals and objectives developed by the Water Assembly and Water Resources Board.
3. October 19, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Fifteen members of the Steering Committee were present and discussed the format of the two planned public meetings scheduled for early 2002.
4. November 16, 2001 in Cañon, NM. Nine members were present for a discussion about assignments for the public meetings. Also an update on the public notification process involving the Rural Electric Association was presented. Flyers announcing the meetings were to be enclosed in the next electric bill.
5. January 12, 2002 in Cañon, NM. Ten members were present including two from the Regional Water Assembly. Final plans were made for the public meetings and an agenda was prepared. The meetings would inform the public of past planning efforts, identify the members of the Steering Committee, provide for a formal statement of the problem regarding water supply and demand, allow participants to describe what they value concerning available water, and formulate a process for working together to overcome obstacles during the planning process.
6. February 16, 2002 in Cañon, NM. Ten members were present including two from the Water Assembly and one from MRGCOG. Final preparations were made for the Cuba public meeting by reviewing the results from the Jemez public meeting.
7. March 16, 2002 in Cañon, NM. Thirteen people were present and discussed the funding situation and the process for receiving money from MRGCOG. Members also discussed developing a Memorandum of Understanding between MRGCOG and the CS&WCD to cover planning expenses for the sub-regions.
8. May 9, 2002 in Cañon, NM. Sixteen members were present including two members from the Water Assembly. Further discussions were held concerning the funding situation and ways to overcome the problem. A recap of the joint list of goals and objectives from both public meetings was also presented.
9. October 30, 2002 in Cuba, NM. Fourteen members were present. The Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between MRGCOG and the CS&WCD was discussed. A few changes are necessary for it to be acceptable. Discussions also covered the interim report that the sub-regions will make to MRGCOG by the end of the calendar year.
10. November 20, 2002 in Cuba, NM. Five community members were present and discussed a list of draft alternatives that will be discussed at future meetings. Managing and restoring our watersheds was the major concern.

11. December 17, 2002 in San Ysidro, NM. Seven members were present including two members from the Water Assembly. The main item discussed was the format and content of the Steering Committee's interim report to MRGCOG.

C. Progress Report

In addition to reporting at the Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly's Annual Assembly, the project coordinator presented a Progress Report to the MRCOG's Water Resources Board in May 2002. The Progress Report included a summation of the public participation process up to that point, and reviewed the main categories of issues and concerns elicited through the process, identified a draft list of goals and objectives, and explained the funding situation for the sub-regions (Appendix 4). The main categories of issues and concerns included:

1. manage the watersheds where we live,
2. provide more education to all residents within the Middle Rio Grande Water Planning Region on the conservation and wise use of water
3. provide a forum for the local citizens to express their issues and concerns that will be incorporated into the final regional plan.

D. Workshops

Two Workshops were held in 2002. These were designed to allow participants to describe what they value concerning available water, and to formulate a process for working together to overcome obstacles during the planning process. Flyers were included in the electric cooperative's bills, to ensure that everyone received notice. Results are discussed in the following chapter as well as can be found in Appendix 3.

1. January 19, 2002 in Cañon, NM. The first of two Workshops was held. Participants were asked to list their concerns and values on flip charts under six different categories. Sub-committees were formed and each group reported back to the entire group with their concerns and recommended actions to be taken to reach the desired goals.
2. February 23, 2002 in Cuba, NM. The second public Workshop for the sub-region watersheds was held on Saturday afternoon. Formal presentations were made and a recap of issues and concerns from the Jemez public meeting were discussed. Participants were asked to list their visions and values and begin listing alternative management strategies.

Chapter 3 - Interim Results

A. Mission Statement

On July 28, 2001 in Cañon, New Mexico, the community members agreed on the revised wording of the Cooperative Agreement that formed the Río Puerco y Río Jemez Steering Committee. They also agreed on the Bylaws and signed these two documents (Appendix 6). At that time, the Steering Committee developed a Mission Statement, which is:

The Río Puerco y Río Jemez Steering Committee promotes the enhancement of watershed restoration efforts that will benefit communities and it's residents by increasing water production and improving water quality.

B. 2002 Workshops

Workshops were held January 19, 2002 in Cañon and February 23, 2002 in Cuba. Based upon the meetings held in 2000 and 2001, the steering committee created six separate categories of previously identified water related issues:

1. Agriculture/ranching
2. Acequia/cultural
3. Development/growth
4. Watershed management
5. Community involvement
6. Other

These were first explained at the Workshops. Then participants were asked to expand on the list. Finally, they formed small sub-committees and discussed a desired state for their communities within the next 40 years. Appendix 3 recaps the citizens' concerns and suggestions from both of the Workshops.

C. Interim Goals and Objectives

The Steering Committee developed a list of goals and objectives for each of the two sub-regions, based upon earlier input. These lists were then consolidated to include comments and concerns from both groups. The list will be reviewed and amended where necessary, and submitted for acceptance in the next Phase II Workshops in 2003. The accepted goals and objectives will be submitted to the Water Assembly for consideration and inclusion in the overall Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. Listed below are the interim goals and objectives:

1. Manage the watersheds for increased water production and improved water quality
2. Insure that traditional values and use of water is preserved
3. Educate all citizens about the need to use water wisely
4. Provide for reaching public participation in the water planning process

5. Promote the conservation of water and incorporate these concepts in the local schools' curriculum

D. Preliminary Water Management Alternatives.

During the summer and fall of 2002, members of the Steering Committee and the project coordinator developed a draft list of water management alternatives. The list reflected the concerns and comments expressed by stakeholders throughout the entire planning process and as presented at the October 3, 2002 meeting in Cuba, NM. The list will be reviewed and amended where necessary and submitted for acceptance at the first Phase II Workshop in 2003. The accepted alternatives will be submitted to the Water Assembly for consideration and inclusion in the overall Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan. The list (also Appendix 5), in no order of priority, follows:

1. **Manage and Restore our Watersheds.**
 - reduce wildfire hazard
 - minimize negative vegetation effects on water quality using Best Management Practices (BMPs)
 - improve stream channel health
 - create local employment and economic benefits
2. **Reduce Water Demand**
 - every customer (user) has his or her own water budget
 - incentive pricing can generate significant water savings
 - allow for greater water availability for other users
3. **Increase Water Storage Capacity in Rural Areas**
 - additional storage protects from drought
 - adds flexibility in water management
 - a regional approach would be beneficial
4. **Reduce Water Loss in Aceqnias**
 - lining and repairing existing acequias can reduce or eliminate contaminant into groundwater supply
 - some of the water savings would otherwise have recharged groundwater
5. **Protect Water Rights**
 - rural communities and their way of life cannot be sacrificed to provide water for growing municipalities
 - “acequia and Tribal issues for water use and management should be recognized at all times
6. **Use Surface and Groundwater in Combination**
 - common sense alternative
 - use surface water in wet years, groundwater in dry years

7. **Manage Growth and Land Use Together**
 - helps maintain a sustainable community
 - it is important to base reasons for growth management or constraints to water availability
 - a regional approach is important
 - growth management is important to acequias
8. **Manage Drought**
 - drought is a recurring cycle
 - planning ahead is important in avoiding crisis management
 - proactive planning approach is beneficial to all parties
9. **Capture Flood Flows**
 - reduce and protect against flood flows, manage the hydrograph
 - reduce flood damage
 - depends on availability of storage and diversion points
10. **Reuse Wastewater (Gray)**
 - reuse for irrigation
 - inject as artificial recharge
 - reduces demand and eliminates discharge to stream
 - two to three times more expensive for small communities than larger urban areas
11. **Remove Trace Elements From Water to Increase Supply**
 - arsenic is the most prevalent and presents the most important concern
 - if enacted, more water will be available because water with high concentrations of arsenic and other constituents is not being used
12. **Install Domestic Supply Wells**
 - this involves managing a well field that may consist of one or more well sites
 - groundwater generally needs less treatment than surface water
 - groundwater will be more reliable during drought periods
 - domestic wells may be only alternative in isolated areas

Chapter 4. Where Do We Go From Here?

Phase II of the Scope of Work between the Middle Rio Grande Council of Governments and the Cuba Soil and Water Conservation District will include two workshops per watershed to focus on (1) reaching public consensus on goals and objectives, and prioritizing alternative actions, and (2) investigating the feasibility of the alternatives and hopefully creating scenarios for the alternatives in order to attain the goals of the subregion and provide for project ideas suitable/appropriate for funding from the Water Trust Fund. In addition, the Steering Committee will meet monthly to ensure that the regional water plan includes the visions and values of the Rio Puerco and Rio Jemez sub-regions.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Steering Committee - January 6, 2000, through July 28, 2001

Water Planning meeting - February 14, 2000
notes

Water Planning meeting - February 26, 2000
minutes; sign-up sheet; agenda

Water Planning meeting - March 29, 2000
minutes; sign-up sheet; agenda

MRG Water Planning meeting at MRCOG - April 21, 2000
sign-up sheet

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; May 19, 2000; Water Planning Article

Water Assembly Action Committee - June 21, 2000
Agenda

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; June 16, 2000; review of June 7, 2000 meeting

Water Planning meeting - July 18, 2000
sign-up sheet; minutes; Letter to Mr. Cheney

Water Assembly Action Committee - July 19, 2000
Minutes

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Regional Water Planning
Cuba News; July 21, 2000; Water Planning Article;
review of July 18, 2000 meeting and announcing August 22, 2000 meeting

Water Planning meeting - August 22, 2000
notes; sign-up sheet

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; September 15, 2000; Article and Announcement for September 19, 2000 meeting

Water Planning meeting - September 19, 2000
notes; sign-up sheet

Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan Goals and Objectives Forum - November 4
Agenda; Notes

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Meeting Announcement for December 2, 2000 meeting
Cuba News; November 17, 2000

Water Planning meeting - December 2, 2000
notes; sign-up sheet

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; December 15, 2000; Review of December 2, 2000 meeting

Steering Committee - January 6, 2001
notes; sign-up sheet

Regional Water Planning
Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; January 19, 2001; Review of process

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; February 16, 2001; article announcing upcoming meeting

Steering Committee - March 17, 2001
agenda; notes; sign-up sheet

Water Assembly - March 31, 2001
Presentation; Agenda

Steering Committee - April 7, 2001
notes; sign-up sheet

Steering Committee - June 9, 2001
Notes

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; June 15, 2001; article describing June 9, 2001 meeting

Steering Committee Meeting - July 28, 2001
agenda; sign-up sheet

Appendix 2- Steering Committee - July 28, 2001 through December 17, 2002

Water Planning meeting - August 10, 2001
sign-up sheet; notes

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; August 17, 2001; review of August 10, 2001 meeting and announcement of September 21 meeting

Water Planning meeting - September 21, 2001
minutes; sign-up sheet

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; October 19, 2001; review of September 21, 2001 meeting and announcement of October 19 meeting

Water Planning meeting - October 19, 2001
minutes; sign-up sheet

Water Planning meeting - November 16, 2001
minutes; sign-up sheet

Rio Puerco Y Rio Jemez Watershed Committee
Announcement for January 29, 2002 Workshop
Cuba News; December 21, 2001

Water Planning meeting - January 12, 2002
minutes

Water Planning meeting - January 12, 2002
sign-up sheet

State Mandated Water Planning
Announcement for January 19, 2002 Workshop
Cuba News; January 18, 2002

Water Planning Workshop - January 19, 2002
agenda

Water Planning Workshop - January 19, 2002
Community Involvement Notes
Agriculture / Ranching Notes
Acequia / Culture Notes
Watershed Management Notes
Other Notes

Water Planning reminder notice - for February 16, 2002

Water Planning meeting - February 16, 2002
minutes; sign-up sheet

Water Planning Workshop - February 23, 2002
Other Notes, Acequia / Culture Notes, Community Involvement Notes, Watershed Management Notes,
Agriculture / Ranching Notes, Development / Growth Notes

Water Planning Workshop - February 23, 2002
agenda

Water Planning reminder notice - for March 15, 2002

Water Planning meeting - March 16, 2002
minutes; sign-up sheet

Water Planning meeting - May 9, 2002
minutes

Agua Por Vida o Agua Perdida
Cuba News; June 21, 2002; Water Planning Article

Water Planning meeting - October 30, 2002
minutes; sign-up sheet; handouts: "Planning Goals" "Alternatives"

Water Planning meeting - November 20, 2002
minutes; sign-up sheet

Water Planning meeting - December 17, 2002
minutes; sign-up sheet

Appendix 3 - Workshop Notes

Water Planning Workshop - January 19, 2002
Development / Growth Notes
Community Involvement Notes
Agriculture / Ranching Notes
Acequia / Culture Notes
Watershed Management Notes
Other Notes

Appendix 4 - Progress Report

Progress Report presented to MRCOG's Water Resources Board on May 16, 2001.

Appendix 5 - Preliminary Alternatives

Preliminary Alternatives, October 30, 2002

Appendix 6 - Bylaws and Cooperative Agreement

Rio Puerco and Rio Jemez Watershed Planning Steering Committee Bylaws, July 28, 2001

Cooperative Agreement for the Rio Puerco and Rio Jemez Watershed Planning Steering Committee, July 28, 2001