



Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly
partnered with the Mid Region Council of Governments

Regional Forum

More than 100 interested Middle Rio Grande residents attended the March 1 Regional Forum. The agenda included presentations about the technical feasibility of the potential actions to be included in the regional water plan. Attendees then participated in small group discussions to rank various alternatives. Each small group considered nine of the 44 alternatives and ranked them into one of the following categories:

- 1—Impossible
- 2—May Be Necessary
- 3—OK
- 4—Good To Do
- 5—Must Do

Following are the alternatives that the groups put into each of these five categories. For many alternatives group members unanimously agreed on a ranking. For others there were competing opinions about how to rank the alternative. In these cases the majority vote determine the ranking.

Must Do

- | | |
|--|---|
| Irrigation Efficiency (A10) | Storm Water Management (A34) |
| Instream Flow (A63) | Active Water Resource Management (A143) |
| Public Involvement (A53) | Conservation Incentives (A22) |
| Maintain Water Resource Database (A73) | Wetlands (A36) |
| Wellhead Protection (A50) | Water Harvesting (A44) Not unanimous. |
| Bosque Management (A1) | Aquifer Storage (A46) Not unanimous. |
| Urban Conservation (A18) | Education (A56) No comments. |
| Reuse Treated Effluent (A27) | Domestic Well Controls (A61) Not unanimous. |
| Conjunctive Management (A144) | Water Quality Protection (A47) |
| Agricultural Metering (A7) | Growth Management (A52) |
| Reservoir Management (A45) | Regional Water Planning Program (A58) |

Good To Do

- | | |
|---|--|
| Watershed Plans (A66) | Reuse Greywater (A24) |
| Domestic Waste Water (A26) | Low Water Crops (A11) |
| Desalination (A39) | Water Banking Authority (A57) Not unanimous. |
| Urban Water Pricing (A21) | Evaporative Loss Accounting (A51) Not unanimous. |
| Surface Modeling (A38) | Importation of Water (A69) Not unanimous. |
| Vegetation Management (A40) Not unanimous. | In-fill Density (A28) Not unanimous. |
| Preserve Deep Water for Drinking (A15) Not unanimous. | |



OK

Acequia Conservation Programs (A60)

Vegetation Removal Products (A2)

Conveyance Systems (A9)

Water Rights Adjudication (A71)

Water/Bank/Authority (A67)

May Be Necessary

No alternatives received this ranking.

Impossible

Weather Modification (A42)

Severance Tax (A59) Not unanimous.

Ambiguous/Non-Graded

Soil and Vegetation Management (A33) No ranking.
Discussion of wise management of river, bosque;
legislation to promote efficient landscaping,
xeriscape requirements; large users as models;
desire for technical analysis be done.

Extreme Within Group Split

Metering Water Supply Wells (A8) Group split on
good/bad. Agreement on beneficial data of use, 3
af/yr very high; but metering costs/regulation
expensive; metering good for leveling playing
field, planning future; incentives use; political
football.

Notable Comments

Key Issues: must acknowledge, address water
shortage, water waste; must include all stakehold-
ers in process, make decisions with an awareness
of impacts on neighbors; public education, critical;
solutions often costly; a living process.

Plenary Session

Following the small group sessions, attendees
returned to a plenary session to report back the
ranking results and to discuss the alternatives.

Attendees raised numerous issues including:

- Regional self-sufficiency
- Need for good data
- Realities of drought & water scarcity data

- Adjudication issues
- Metering and domestic well consumption issues
- Subsidence resulting from aquifer depletion
- Lack of participation by the Pueblos
- Senior users/Priority users
- Coming together to cooperate and be neighborly,
not pitting interests against each other, allowing
for water affordability and availability for all.

Individual Comments on the Alternatives

In addition to the small group rankings, each Forum
attendee could submit individual comments on
each alternative. Twenty attendees responded.
These alternatives received the most comments:

Alternative	Total Comments
Watershed Plans (A66)	16
Reuse Greywater (A24)	16
Bosque Management (A1)	15
Reservoir Management (A45)	15

Many of the comments were clearly supporting or
opposing the various alternatives. Others were
mixed responses or questions about the alternative.
The alternatives that received the most positive
comments included:

Alternative	Positive Comments
Reuse Greywater (A24)	14
Urban Conversation (A18)	11
Growth Management (A52)	11
Metering Water Supply Wells (A8)	10
Education (A56)	10

The alternatives that received the most negative
comments included:

Alternative	Negative Comments
Weather Modification (A42)	10
Import Water (A69)	7
Desalination (A39)	4
Reservoir Management (A45)	4



While participant feedback is crucial to the planning process, the small number of respondents makes it impossible to use these comments in any statistical manner. It is worth noting, however, that many of the negative comments centered on avoiding alternatives perceived to be “technical fixes” to water management. Additionally, the alternative for Reusing Greywater received many, and mostly positive comments. This may be partially because the topic was heavily covered in the media and the State Legislature passed a bill to allow greywater use in its most recent session.

Comparing Forum Alternative Selection to 5th Community Conversation “Votes”

In September 2002 Middle Rio Grande residents attended the 5th round of Community Conversations and had the opportunity to “vote” for their most and least preferred alternatives. Residents could also mail in their votes. Comparing the results from those votes to the ranking results from the Regional Forum uncovered several interesting issues.

The alternatives Aquifer Storage (A46), Domestic Well Controls (A61), Agricultural Metering (A7) and Instream Flow (A63) all received a “Must Do” ranking during the Regional Forum, but were among the least preferred options in the 2002 voting.

Additionally, the alternative Land Use (A30) received a “Good To Do” ranking at the Forum, but was a strongly preferred option in the earlier voting. Water Rights Adjudication (A71) received only an “OK” ranking at the Forum but was strongly supported by residents at 2002 meetings.

Wrapping Up

The Water Assembly volunteers and all of the contributing agencies and organizations are in the final phases of developing the regional water management plan. There are few remaining opportunities for you to ensure that your opinions are integrated into the plan. The 6th series of

Get the Details

This mailer provides a snapshot of the information that was generated at the Regional Forum. For complete reports and more details, go to the Water Assembly web page:

www.WaterAssembly.org



There are numerous possible explanations for the discrepancies between the Forum results and the earlier “voting” results. One possibility is that people have changed their views about some alternatives after having received additional information concerning the feasibility for each alternative. It is also possible that the demographics of those attending the Forum were different than the demographics of those who attended the 5th Community Conversations and/or submitted cards with their alternative preferences.

The diverse and perhaps changing opinions about how best to manage our water for the future makes it even more imperative that everyone attend the 6th series of Community Conversations and the next Regional Forum. At these meetings, Middle Rio Grande residents will make the final decisions about which alternatives are combined into a scenario to form the basis of the regional water management plan.



Community Conversations and the June Regional Forum will determine the framework for the plan.

Mark your calendars and do not miss these crucial meetings that will enable us to balance our water use with a renewable supply.

Future Water Assembly Activities

6th Community Conversations

April 2003

Attendees will have the opportunity to use the model developed by the Water Assembly and Sandia National Laboratories to critique water management scenarios. There will be orientation sessions prior to each meeting for folks who are just joining the planning process.

Regional Forum and Annual Assembly

June 7, 2003

At that time, a preferred scenario will be developed which will be an important input into our Regional Water Plan.

7th Community Conversations

Date to be announced

This series of meetings will present the draft Middle Rio Grande Regional Water Plan.



For more information consult the Water Assembly web site:
www.WaterAssembly.org

◀ Middle Rio Grande Water Assembly

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Thank you for helping to develop our regional water plan through an open, inclusive and participatory process.