

PRESENTATION OF THE

LOWER RIO GRANDE  
REGIONAL WATER PLAN

TO THE  
INTERSTATE STREAM COMMISSION

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO  
MARCH 23, 2017

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

- Importance of water to our area
  - ...a scarce resource essential to native plants and animals and the quality of human life
- Description of the Region (Doña Ana County)
  - Diverse economy (focus on agriculture & international trade)
  - Expanding communities of various sizes
  - Native environment especially the Rio Grande

## **INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT (cont'd)**

- Purpose of a regional water plan
  - ...to help all interested parties find a fair and equitable basis for balancing demands with available supplies
- Steering Committee assessment of LRG-RWP
  - ...the plan does not meet that objective
- Primary Issues
  - Estimates of water availability
  - How to balance “supply” and “demand”

## **KEY WATER ISSUES IMPACTING THE REGION**

1. The Rio Grande Stream system is fully appropriated
2. Widespread concern that combined groundwater and surface sources are less than the total appropriation for the region
3. Projections of future water availability are highly uncertain
  - Unresolved legal claims on use
  - Extreme variations in precipitation (regional & watershed)

## **KEY WATER ISSUES (cont'd)**

4. In spite of uncertainty, stakeholders are making water management decisions
  - Established law
  - Prior settlements
  - Best available info on water supply
5. Increased concentrations of salt in groundwater could impact high-demand areas
6. Expected population growth
  - Up to 350,000 by 2060

## **KEY WATER ISSUES (cont'd)**

7. Failure to appropriate adequate water has compromised the health of the Rio Grande ecosystem

## **STRATEGIES TO MEET FUTURE WATER DEMAND**

- Increase & protect water supply
- Reduce and manage demand
- Promote our regional values

## **STRATEGIES TO MEET FUTURE WATER DEMAND**

### **Increase & protect water supply**

- Water Pollution control
- Desalination
- Storm water capture
- Reducing evaporation



## **STRATEGIES TO MEET FUTURE WATER DEMAND**

### **Reduce and manage demand**

- Completing adjudication of water rights
- Improving system efficiency
- Water Use

## **STRATEGIES TO MEET FUTURE WATER DEMAND**

### **Promote our regional values**

- Preserving agriculture
- Rio Grande system restoration
- Sustain rural communities
- Enhance economic development
- Watershed management
- River based recreation

## **Key Collaborate Projects**

### **Promote Regional Values**

- Comprehensive water budget for the Lower Rio Grande (NM) basin
- Adjudication of water rights
- Address water in Comprehensive Plans
- Restore rangeland & upland areas
- Rio Grande habitat restoration

## **KEY COLLABORATE PROJECTS**

### **Increase & Protect Water Supply**

- Reduce non-point source pollution
- Capture & appropriate use of storm water
- Expand water reuse
- Explore alternative water sources
  - Desalination
  - Reclaimed or reused water

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

### **The Regional Planning Process**

- The Steering Committee
- Public involvement
  - Stakeholders
  - Interested members of the public
- Working Groups
- EBID & Bureau of Reclamation declined to participate

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

### **Recommendations re future meetings**

- Central location
- M-F during the day; weekends as needed
- Continue work of subcommittees
- Continue outreach

## **FINAL COMMENTS**

### **Issues for consideration in development of the State Water Plan**

- Complete adjudication of water rights
- Develop & maintain comprehensive water budgets for each of the state's six interstate water basins
- Conduct planning on the basis of interstate water basins

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Steering Committee Recommendation**

- Cannot recommend approval of the plan as a whole
- Ask that Sections 2 & 8 be endorsed, perhaps as amendments to the 2003 plan

### **ISC Action**

- Voted unanimously to “accept” (not adopt or approve) the LRG-RWP in its entirety