

To promote the wise stewardship and ensure the availability of water resources for future generations of New Mexicans through support of community-based planning and creation of inclusive forums for education, communication, and development of common ground.

What makes this work so hard?

by John R. Brown, Executive Director, New Mexico Water Dialogue

This issue of *Dialogue* contains four essays by members of the Dialogue Board reflecting on the process and outcomes of a strenuous effort undertaken by state officials and citizens to come up with an initial State Water Plan. These were written before the “draft final” document was completed (it was posted on the OSE Website less than 48 hours ago), so they may not reflect their authors’ current feelings about the product. What they do, however, is demonstrate the strengths and the failings of all of us humans (my mentor calls us “fallible learners”) as we wrestle with the problems of how to establish a just system of rules to govern the stewardship and uses of our indispensable water resources.

This fall I’ve been spending quite a bit of time preparing for and teaching an introductory survey course in political science, including a good bit of political theory. It’s helped me gain a new perspective on our water planning efforts, and why the process of creating a plan is so difficult. (Part of the difficulty is the technical complexity of the multi-dimensional issues a plan must address, but that’s not the underlying problem.) To oversimplify somewhat, the dominant trend in the thinking of the founders of the United States was *liberal individualism*, which focused on the “natural rights” of individuals – “life, liberty and property,” as they were termed – and which viewed the proper

role of the state as securing these rights, and no more. The economic expression of this view – as stated by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* – is that if (in the marketplace) individuals act in their own *self-interest*, the greater good of the commonwealth will be served, as if guided by an invisible hand. It is, in many Americans’ view, this ethic that has made the United States the economic powerhouse that it is.

But there’s another view, also widely shared by many of the same people, and by others, that human liberty can only be realized in the context of community, that we humans are by nature political beings, and that we’re capable of recognizing and pursuing – in some circumstances, anyway – a broader, common interest that is likely to be quite different from our short-term self-interests. Depending on the issue, we may view this collective interest as a concern for justice, fairness, ecological balance, sustainability, biological diversity, or some other human value. Such a view is not Marxian – it does not spring from the material conditions of society – but is often profoundly ethical (some might say spiritual), in that it arises from a sense of our connectedness to each other, and from a sense of our duty to the community as a whole. (In political theory, this line of thought has been called “republican,” – from *res publica*, the idea that we are members of a “body politic” that

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The Dialogue

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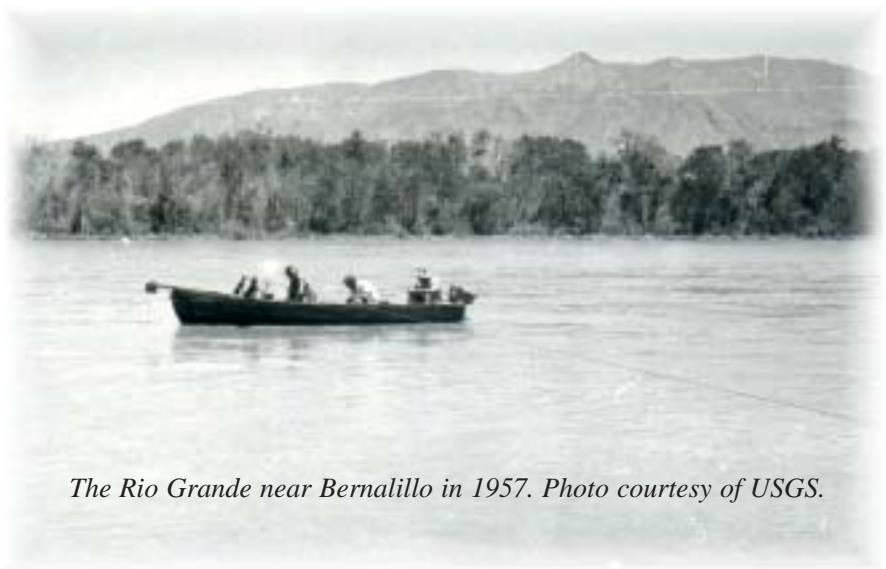
HARD WORK—*Cont'd from page 1*

demands our active citizenship.)

The non-"Anglo" cultures of New Mexico may share this view of human nature more strongly than do the biological or spiritual descendents of the American Puritans. Nonetheless, I believe we all inherit both traditions, and that they are often in conflict. We all want what's in our interest, but we understand that – in the case of scarce and precious water – if we each pursue only our self-interest we're all (humans, vegetation, birds and fish) likely to end up losing far more than any of us gains. Understanding that reality, which (I believe) we all sense at some deep place inside us, is *the* incentive that brings us together to plan, collectively, for our future. Finding and maintaining a balance between these conflicting impulses, and searching for solutions that don't require total self-denial to achieve a common good, is a constant struggle. It requires careful and respectful listening to understand both others' interests and those we share. That's what makes water planning hard,

and why it's likely never to be finished!

That said, the "draft final" 2003 State Water Plan – if it is to be "living document" – is a great start at achieving a balance. It's considerably better at capturing the diverse concerns of New Mexicans and it's far more coherent than the first draft produced in October. It provides a firm foundation on which citizens can build in the coming years. I hope you will read it online or print it out from <http://www.ose.state.nm.us/water-info/NMWaterPlanning/2003StateWaterPlan.pdf>. Not all of the Dialogue's concerns (see our letter to the Interstate Stream Commission in this issue) were addressed in the new draft, but many were. As "the devil is in the details," much remains to be fleshed out by way of crafting arrangements that will ensure fairness and promote efficiency in our uses of water. The theme of the Dialogue's 2004 Annual Statewide Meeting – **New Mexico State Water Planning: Unfinished Business** – reflects that fact. Check out the agenda and plan to attend the meeting!



The Rio Grande near Bernalillo in 1957. Photo courtesy of USGS.

Despite flaws, state water plan meets expectations

by Consuelo Bokum, President of the New Mexico Water Dialogue

As early as 1993, the Dialogue hosted discussions regarding recommendations to the ISC for a state water planning process. Participants at those meetings felt that the state water planning process should be:

- interactive with the regions;
- inclusive of all interests;
- accessible to and understood by the public;
- well funded;
- open to the special role of tribal governments;
- consensus-based where possible;
- coordinated with the state water conservation plan;
- able to harmonize diverse interests;
- attuned to the uniqueness of each community, region; and
- committed to effective public involvement.

Ten years later, we have a draft of a state water plan. In the most general sense, I think we have a lot to be thankful for. When the Interstate Stream Commission (ISC) began the planning process, they could have gone in any number of directions. Especially given the Governor's push for a water plan in one year, the first draft could

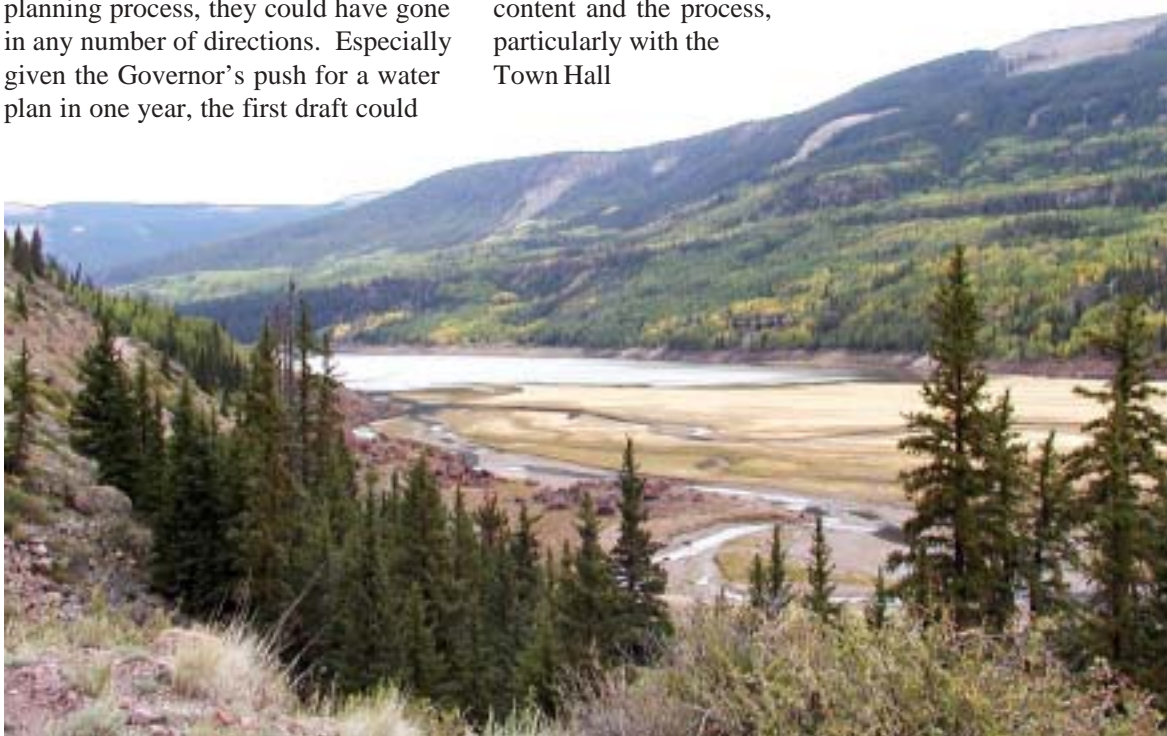
have been written by a few people within the agency and proposed changes for which there was little support.

Instead, the focus was on articulating policies based on a process that sought meaningful public involvement and consensus and was inclusive of many interests. The planning process began in July with public meetings in 29 communities throughout the state and focused on listening to the concerns of each community. The next step was a Town Hall process whose outcome was to develop consensus around a number of issues. Everyone has been given an opportunity to propose changes to a draft of the plan. In addition, the ISC convened an ad hoc group of regional water planners whose recommendations were incorporated into the plan. The ISC and OSE also met with acequias and held a series of meetings with tribal governments.

Given limited time and resources, there was no way the plan would make everyone happy and most people would agree there are flaws in the both the content and the process, particularly with the Town Hall

where attendance was limited and the consensus statements were based on a limited number of questions with further limitations imposed by the way the questions were framed.

Despite the flaws, however, the process and draft state water plan generally conform with the wish list developed in 1993 (one obvious exception being the lack of adequate funding). New Mexico will have accomplished a great deal if the plan adopted by the ISC in December 2003 begins with policy statements that reflect shared values and goals. That is an appropriate foundation upon which the rest of the plan can be built.



The headwaters of the Rio Grande, Colorado.

Photo by Marianne Woodard.

A preliminary look at the “draft final” 2003 State Water Plan

The “first draft” of the plan document was released on October 22, 2003. Comments were due by November 14. The Dialogue Board discussed the draft at its meeting of November 3, and we submitted our comments (see accompanying text on page 5 and 6) on time. The “draft final” was released on December 10, only a few days before this issue of the Dialogue was set to go to press. The new draft, which is scheduled to be approved by the NM Interstate Stream Commission at its meeting on December 17, is a vast improvement over its predecessor, in both its organization and its substance.

There is neither time nor space here to comment in depth on the entire plan document (which is 77 pages long, exclusive of some important Appendices). One element of the plan, the role of markets, is an example of the balancing of multiple values that appear throughout the plan.

In discussing the identified common priority of “ensuring that water is available for the continued and future economic vitality of the State,” the plan notes that New Mexico’s “participation in a global economy characterized by diverse activities that span the entire spectrum of economic activity” from hunting and gathering through subsistence and large-scale agriculture, to recreation, and to the production of products and services including high-technology products used worldwide – all dependent on the availability of sufficient amounts and quality of the water supply. The discussion notes the highly decentralized nature of entities that supply water for all these activities, and stresses the importance of their

continued viability. In the final paragraph of this discussion, the authors state that the state’s economic vitality “is also crucially dependent on its ability to preserve its pristine environment, including its spectacularly scenic wild rivers and wilderness watersheds.” These broad, multifaceted and occasionally conflicting views are evident in the plan’s discussion of specific policies as well.

The policies relating to water markets, a major component of an overall strategy for “active management of the state’s waters” reflect the tensions inherent in this balancing of competing interests. The policy statement is blunt: *The State shall promote water markets that enable the efficient movement of water rights within the State in accordance with the applicable and legal safeguards.* The implementation strategy, however, is tentative: “The State Engineer will develop a strategy for the coordinated enactment of statutes, promulgation of regulations, and development of policies to achieve efficient, localized water markets.” Further on, the discussion of markets notes that they “are in their infancy,” and that “the State must develop well-defined voluntary water rights markets that will allow the identification and dedication of existing water rights to new uses either on a temporary or permanent basis. As water demands ... increase, the demand for marketing of water through these voluntary transfers of existing water rights will grow.”

Then the discussion gets broader in scope. Water markets are not just about water rights; the term encompasses “local, temporary shifts of use within an ... acequia; temporary fallowing agreements for conservation and efficiency purposes;” acequia water banks; water banks “to provide a temporary ‘soft landing’ for junior users facing priority administration;” “expedited transfer policies” and water

banks for providing reliable community water supplies; and finally, “efficiently functioning markets through which permanent transfers to new uses can be accomplished.”

Finally, the discussion of markets notes that they are “subject in their operation to many statutory safeguards and protections,” including the State Engineer’s evaluation of every proposed transfer for issues concerning impairment, conservation and the public welfare, and the plan acknowledges that “while effectively functioning markets are necessary... the State should ensure that effective regulations and policies exist that will protect ... the customs, culture, environment, and economic health and stability of the state’s diverse communities.” There is additional language in another section of the plan (§C.9, regarding water rights transfer policies) that elaborates somewhat on the need for these protections, including processes that provide for “full public notice and opportunity to protest.”

The plan document attempts to strike a similar balance in other areas, including promoting river, riparian and watershed restoration and ESA compliance (§C.8) using “State law-based methods” to prevent federal taking of water; connecting land use decisions with the availability of water supplies (§C.7) through processes involving collaboration with local governments, etc. In every one of these policy areas, the implementation strategies discussed are quite general, and present opportunities for the public to become involved over the coming year in hammering out the details. The plan also commits to “coordinated and concerted efforts to convene water planners and stakeholders to advise the State Engineer and Interstate Stream Commission on issues relating to State Water Plan development and implementation.” This plan makes a good start, but there’s a lot of unfinished business to attend to.

Following is an abridged version of the Dialogue Board's comments on the original draft of the SWP.

Dialogue Board of Directors reviews the Draft SWP

November 13, 2003

To: Director Estevan Lopez,
Planning Director Rhea Graham,
Members of the ISC Planning
Committee

Subject: New Mexico Water Dialogue
Comments on the Draft 2003
State Water Plan

We want to begin with a sentiment that was expressed several times during our Board meeting. Given the time constraint under which the ISC was operating to produce a plan in six months, this draft contains a number of commendable features. Notably, it honors the legislation that authorized and framed the planning process. The process that produced it was not ideal, nor could it have been given the diversity of issues, constituencies and conflicting interests that must be balanced. Yet the 29 public meetings provided useful opportunities for a large number of people with diverse viewpoints to provide comments and insights into the issues that face New Mexicans in choosing their water future, while the Town Hall and other forums that the ISC convened enabled those fortunate enough to participate to engage in more in-depth exploration of some of the key issues that need resolution and to reach consensus on many of those issues.

Several of our Board members are aware of and are contributing separately to specific policy-oriented comments being developed by their respective organizations and constituency groups. The Dialogue Board focused its own review on more overarching concerns related to the scope of the State Water Plan; the nature of the policy statements in it, including apparent gaps, ambiguities and potential conflicts among policies; and finally, the process to be used going forward for approving a

revised draft plan and for continued public involvement in updating and amending it as circumstances warrant. Our Board offers the following thoughts and recommendations for changes to the Draft 2003 State Water Plan.

Scope

The Draft Plan document tracks sections of the legislation that mandated its creation. Yet the Executive Summary contains material that isn't found in expanded form in the main body of the document, so rather than being a summary it's more of an introduction to the plan. Our Board believes that an Executive Summary listing all of the actual policy statements (see below) would be valuable.

The scope of a "comprehensive state water plan" (§1.A of the Act) is listed in eight points under §1.B of the Act, which are not addressed directly in the plan document. The concept of "stewardship" (§1.B.(1)) is noted as a "common theme" in the preface and as the "organizing principle" of the plan under a freestanding section of the document entitled "Vision" (p. 16), where it is discussed briefly, followed by a bulleted list of seventeen actions that apparently constitute stewardship. This list, however, is never tied clearly to the elements of the plan mandated by the Act.

Our Board believes that Section 1.B of the Act provides a basis on which a state-level statement of public welfare can be built. The plan is to be a "strategic management tool" to enable New Mexico to protect its water resources in order to meet the public welfare of the state. Historically, this is the underlying reason for all of the regional and state water planning that has occurred over the past sixteen years.

Rather than "shoe-horning" a few elements of water management priorities under Section C.(1), our Board recommends that broad policy statements pertaining to the public welfare be attached to relevant provisions of §1.B. Defining the public welfare at the state level will be an ongoing process, but

§1.B. provides a broader platform for working collaboratively on a definition.

Policy statements

In general, policy statements should convey intentions (goals sought) and broad strategies for achieving them. The draft plan document as a whole contains a mixture of background and historical information, snippets of technical data, statements of intention, some strategic direction, and in some places specific steps for carrying out strategies. The boldfaced paragraphs labeled "Policies," however, are often not where the policy statements are found. Policy statements are often in the text that precedes the boldfaced type, while what are labeled "Policies" contain implementation steps. A good example of this is in the discussion of §1.E. (pages 63-4), dealing with state coordination with tribes and pueblos. A set of five "Guiding Principles" that "the State agrees with" is listed as background text. These set out intentions and broad strategies. Aren't they then "Policies"? And aren't the boldfaced statements actually activities to carry out such policies? The entire document should be reviewed for consistency as to what constitutes a policy statement.

Active Water Resource Management (pages 22-27)

The Dialogue Board is concerned with the policy implications of a loosely defined "management framework" known as "active water resource management" (AWRM). Though "active management of the state's waters" is noted at §1.C.(2) of the SWP Act, the "framework" is not defined there. The active management of wet water is arguably an important element in securing our state's ability to take charge of its water destiny, but the discussion in the plan document under §1.C.(2), page 24 (as well as the section of the Executive Summary that discusses AWRM) seems based more on alliteration than on logic. The "3 M's" – "measurement, management and markets" – are not equivalent elements of an active management policy.

Some Dialogue Board members feel this section's emphasis on the development of markets – as a means both for moving water to address changing demands and for ensuring that the State can meet its compact requirements – to be an unbalanced approach to AWRM. Active management includes measurement, conservation (see below), adjudication and other strategies. Board members agree that establishing rules to regulate market transactions is properly a function of the State, but find that there is no consensus on a State role in promoting the marketing of water or water rights. Moreover, our Board members find that the draft plan's discussion of water banking (viewed as a market mechanism) fails to distinguish adequately between permanent transfers of water rights and the use of water banks to facilitate the temporary leasing of wet water – two very different sorts of transactions.

Though the Dialogue has no policy position on the question of water marketing, our Board members believe that a much broader discussion of this subject is needed. (The Dialogue intends to take up this question at its Annual Statewide Meeting in January.) Markets are an expression of the autonomous choices of individuals (and of entities that can act as though they were individuals). Some entities – Indian pueblos, tribes and nations, acequias, and perhaps others formed to achieve collective (rather than individual) benefits – may require protection from market forces in order to advance the public welfare. So also may ecosystem values that are not well represented in the marketplace. In addition to willing buyers and sellers, a variety of third parties may be affected in market transactions. Policies that promote markets without considering these issues are liable to fail in such situations. Further deliberation is required to develop policies that adequately specify the role of the state in relation to water markets.

Conservation (pages 38-39)

Our Board agrees with the draft plan's

assertion that though conservation and efficiency measures are critical in meeting New Mexico's current and future water supply needs, unless strategies are thoughtfully developed and implemented, they may result in unintended adverse consequences. However, the conservation strategy proposed in the draft plan (per §1.C.(5) of the Act), while containing potentially useful ideas, requires clearer specification. Conservation has both a technical component and an institutional one. Both are important. If water users (and particularly water right holders) can see no private or collective benefit resulting from costly efforts to save water or use it more efficiently, they have little incentive to invest in conservation. The question of who "owns" saved water must be addressed in a way that provides both private incentives and public benefits. This question, like that of market transfers, also needs a great deal more deliberation in a variety of forums before policy choices are made. (Again, the Dialogue intends to initiate discussions on this topic beginning with our January meeting.)

Process (Section 1.F. of the legislation; pages 65-66 of the draft plan):

With regard to the current draft plan document, the Dialogue Board recommends that the "Objective" on page 66 be restated as a policy, and that the first of the listed "Policies" be seen as a way to implement that policy. Our Board also recommends that the second policy statement be amended to read as follows:

The Interstate Stream Commission shall establish a citizens' advisory committee to provide a continuing mechanism for public input and involvement in the water planning process and the content of the State Water Plan.

In addition the Dialogue Board recommends that:

- *The consensus statements of each of the groups at the Town Hall should be posted on the OSE/ISC Website.*
- *Where consensus emerged during any of the public events leading to the current*

draft, such as the twenty-nine public meetings and the Town Hall, and such inputs were not addressed in the Draft 2003 Plan, there should be an explanation of why the ISC determined that those items were not included or addressed.

- *Public comments on this draft should be similarly published, with explanations if not included in the revised draft.*
- *Based on the comments expected to be received, the drafters should create one additional draft for public review before presenting the Draft 2003 Plan to the ISC for its approval.*
- *The ISC should adopt this plan as an "Interim" plan, or continue to deal with it as a "working draft," pending further analysis and development of policy in areas where policies are vague or missing.*

With regard to the public process going forward, the Dialogue Board believes that the state water planning process needs to be open and transparent, and recommends that the OSE and ISC take the following actions:

- *Develop a system for tracking all comments so that they can be used as input to ongoing plan revisions. This should be added as a third policy statement at page 66.*
- *Define the composition, functions, and authority of the "citizens' steering committee." If well organized and resourced, it can be a useful vehicle for obtaining input for updating the plan. It should be broad-based, and could act in coordination with the ongoing work of the issue-specific ad hoc committees formed this year (the regional water planners' group, the acequia group, and the tribes and pueblos group), in addition to other interest groups that may appropriately discuss certain sections of the plan.*
- *Seek funding in the ISC or OSE budgets for public input and involvement throughout the planning process.*

For the Board of Directors,

John R. Brown, Executive Director

Town Hall finale waters down hard work

by Janet Jarratt

New Mexico's long-awaited state water plan is generating a lot of talk, and a lot of anxiety. People know the Interstate Stream Commission staff had only about six months to produce the document that will serve as the basis of our water future. Certainly there were public meetings—the ISC hosted 29 different forums around the state, and then there was the grand finale: a three-day Town Hall organized by New Mexico First. But does the plan reflect what all those citizens said? Did the state listen to those who will have to live with the results?

The object of the Town Hall was to produce a document for “consideration” by the ISC and the Water Trust Board. The 200 participants, selected by lottery, represented an impressive cross-section of the state. Delegates were divided into panels, each with a broad spectrum of interests, and the groups were asked to create a consensus document around several questions. State Engineer Office staff also participated, providing input to the panel process.

Each panel of about 18 members gathered in a separate room, and the deliberations would prove both arduous and enlightening. The group I was fortunate to participate in had members representing the City of Albuquerque, acequias, irrigation districts, pueblos and tribes, technical entities, open water market proponents, and others. From the beginning, our group felt the questions posed by the ISC were leading, and assumed an outcome rather than being open-ended. We decided to modify the questions to eliminate the

assumed outcome, opening the door for creative solutions. For example, several of the questions referred to the State Engineer managing, implementing, and/or guiding water markets. We felt that the purview of the State Engineer is to *administer* water rights, not to manage rights or operate water markets; therefore we changed that assumption as we deliberated each question.

We spent the entire first two days working toward consensus, amazed to discover the unintended consequences that a “solution” in one particular area could create elsewhere in the state. Considering the passionate diversity of the panel, agreeing on anything seemed quite a feat in itself, and by the time the consensus document was finished, we all believed it contained valuable contributions.

We were shocked, therefore, when the “converged consensus document” was read at the beginning of day three, and not one word of our own work appeared. We had all believed the converged document would reflect where the various panel documents agreed, as well as where they differed, and that the Town Hall as a whole would have the opportunity to consider all the ideas put forth. That was not the case, and dissatisfaction was evident in most (if not all) the panel groups. It was unclear what criteria had been used to select or eliminate (overnight) material contained in the panel documents. The only option for putting an excluded idea back on the table was to offer an amendment, and since there was no time to draft intelligible edits, or to read amendments posed by others, things quickly became chaotic. A fair number

of objections to proposed amendments came from OSE personnel, and many felt it a conflict of interest to have regulatory staff blocking ideas. If an amendment did not receive overwhelming support, it was simply ignored. Innovative ideas disappeared as surely as though they'd never existed, despite having already survived a difficult consensus process. There was no minority opinion possible, although many thought the original rules permitted that option. If an amendment needed reworking to satisfy objections, the interested individuals had to leave the hall to come to an agreement; meanwhile, review and amendment of the remaining sections continued, and those who chose to rework a concept missed hearing amendments made on other sections. It became easier to forget modification and just stick with what seemed safe.

While the panel discussions and resulting consensus documents were extremely valuable, the final report produced by New Mexico First is deeply flawed. The panel documents, which took two days to produce, were jettisoned overnight in the production of an inferior “converged” document, and the final day of cutting and amending left little but pabulum. For many, it seemed that an advisory document ought to put as many ideas on the table as possible. Instead, we were handed a product that failed to reflect the caring, thoughtful, often innovative ideas actually generated at the Town Hall. That's a pity, because it's going to take some very thoughtful innovation to save us from the water wreck we've created with business-as-usual.

Fast-tracked State Water Plan could make things worse

by John J. Carangelo

I believe that the production of the New Mexico State Water Plan is proceeding too fast and in a manner which may not be in the best interest of the welfare of the state of New Mexico.

The plan must take into account what all of the inhabitants of the state deserve and desire the future of New Mexico to be.

The plan also must be scientifically and legally defensible. In the absence of this, the plan will be an assist to neighboring states legal arguments for the transport of water out of New Mexico and cause more harm than good.

We have been in the process of developing Regional plans since 1987 and all are not yet completed. This is due in part to the failure of the Inter State Stream Commission (ISC) and the Office of the State Engineer (SEO) to convey to the legislature a sense of urgency for water planning funding, a distracted legislature involved in more politically expedient issues, divisive posturing of economic powers for the commodification and control of water, and an apathetic populace, secure in that all their daily water needs were being met, but greatly due to the complexity of the undertaking.

Only after a projected lack of water became a threat to industrial and metropolitan development did a sense of urgency emerge. It is difficult to rationalize that a state water plan can be formed in one

year whereas regions have taken several years, and harder still to respect the validity of the plan when all regions are not included, the completed regional plans have not been given the proper review and consideration and pursuant to 72-14-44 NMSA 1978 which says these plans "shall be incorporated into the state water plan."

Unarguably the most critical element in a water plan is the quantification of the available water supply and we should not start to compile one until we know what that is. This is also the key element in any growth plan.

Surface water supply is extremely variable and unreliable, dependent on storage capability and compact regulation and can only be counted on where the uses of this supply can be varied or temporarily discontinued. Ground water must be located and inventoried. Unless we decide to decimate the rural, agricultural and environmental face of our state, growth, in New Mexico, is dependent on this finite supply.

Where is it? Is it potable or not? How

much is there? Can it be extracted? What is the quality? What is the recharge rate if any?

Non-potable water sources must be categorized so as to be able to determine if it can be processed into a potable supply and the feasibility and cost of doing so.

Time and money is needed to get this done, and until it is done, demand projections on an unknown supply and cost are imprudent if not downright ludicrous. If demand projections are to be based on presently known supplies, that exposes the intention to promote development by extirpation of current water users.

Despite the rhetoric and the content of Section 72-14-45 and 46 NMSA 1978, the emphasis on this fast track to a state water plan appears to be on relaxing or repealing rules, laws, regulations in order to facilitate the marketing and transport of water to areas selected for growth, with little regard for the welfare of the move from areas. In particular the use of water for ranching, agricultural pursuits, acequias,

pueblos, cultural and traditional New Mexico life styles, and environmental needs do not appear to be commanding deserved attention.

We should continue to press diligently toward a state water plan, but we should take the time to do it right. The welfare and future of the state of New Mexico is more important than a notch in someone's political belt.



Cautious optimism toward a State Water Plan

by Tracy Seidman Hephner

Midsummer, 2003, the N.M. Interstate Stream Commission asked water planners to help work on the knotty problem of integrating regional water plans and not-yet-drafted state water plan. Each water-planning region was asked to send two representatives to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee of Regional Water Planners. As a member of the steering committee for the Mora and San Miguel Water Planning Region, I was chosen, or rather, elbowed my way into a position on the Ad Hoc Committee.

It was originally envisioned that the group would meet three times, and produce a two or three page document providing, in bullet form, an outline of the necessary steps for integrating the two planning efforts. In the end, our largely volunteer committee met five times in six weeks, in all day meetings, with substantial homework, and delivered a lengthy consensus document. Though not every member was able to make every meeting, at least ten members were present every time. Mary Helen Follingstad served as staff, scribe and leader.

Theoretically, our task should have been relatively simple. We were all very familiar with the regional planning process, and with the problems and conflicts specific to our own regions. Many of us knew each other and had worked together previously, as Dialogue members, on the Template Committee for the ISC, at the Legislature or in the field. The group was bright, motivated, well informed and articulate.

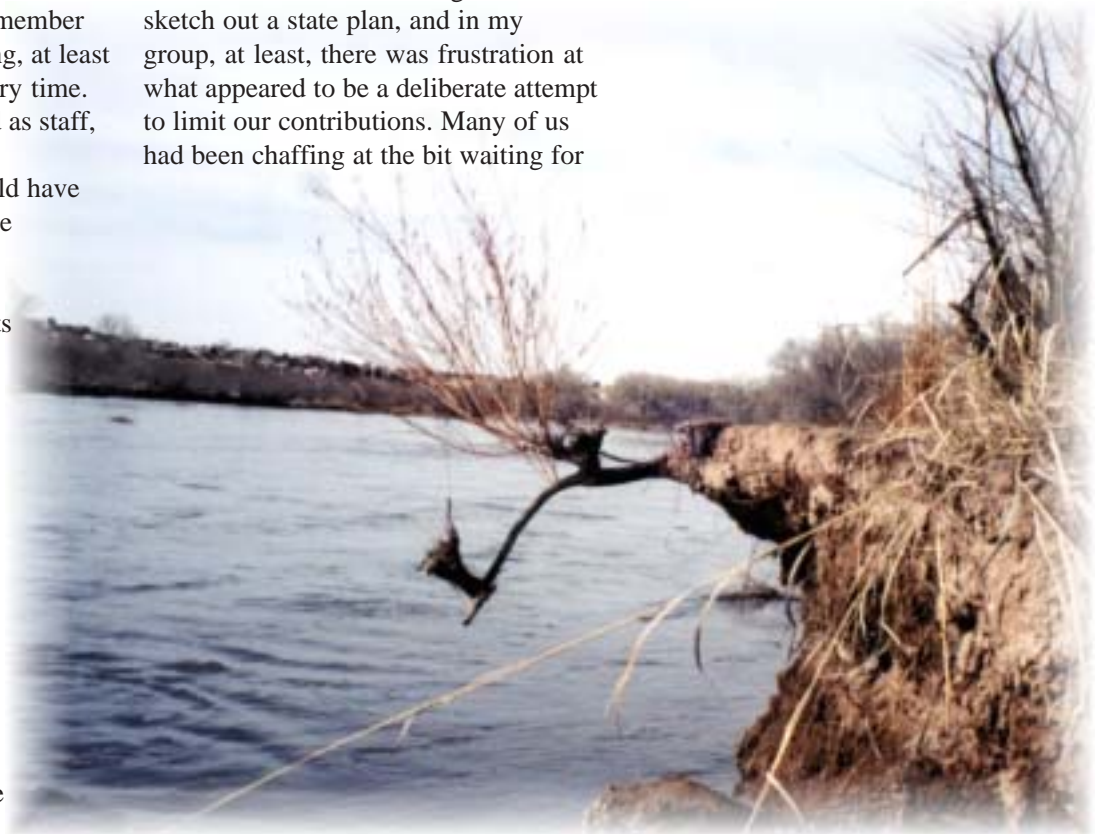
It was still incredibly difficult work— thinking through every problem, understanding regional conflicts, agreeing on language

that delivered the same message to different listeners. Without Mary Helen's steady encouragement, and the patience and energy of key members, we might not have made it to the finish line. We delivered our work to what seemed to be a genuinely appreciative Interstate Stream Commission and received verbal assurance that our document will become part of the final draft of the state water plan.

Those of us who went on to the Town Hall meeting for the state water plan probably had a realistic idea of what such a gathering could reasonably accomplish. The timeframe required a certain amount of structure and focus. The questions presented for Town Hall attendees were focused on directives to the OSE for management of water use. Among some participants, the questions themselves fostered a certain level of discomfort and suspicion. The phrasing seemed to point the way to a chosen conclusion. We'd come together to sketch out a state plan, and in my group, at least, there was frustration at what appeared to be a deliberate attempt to limit our contributions. Many of us had been chaffing at the bit waiting for

New Mexico to finally take a clear, hard look at water realities. By the time it ended, several of us were left wondering whether the Town Hall had really advanced that deliberative process.

Having spent a very long time campaigning for real water planning in New Mexico, I am happy that funding and staff support are finally available. In the current climate of drought and crisis, it's difficult to slow down enough to get everyone aimed in the same direction. In such a heady atmosphere, the Ad Hoc Committee was, for me, a reality check. I realized, once again, how careful, thoughtful and probably annoyingly slow the process must be, if we are to get it right. I am cautiously optimistic. We have a daunting amount of work ahead us. It will take diligence, dedication, trust and goodwill – and at least one more year – to produce a working state water plan.



The Dia Log: Events and Other Possibilities



Join the Quivira Coalition's 3rd Annual Conference January 15-17, 2004, at the Albuquerque Hilton, located at 1901 University Blvd. NE. Register online at <http://www.quiviracoalition.org/>

Children's Water Festivals

2nd Annual Santa Fe Water Festival February 18-19, 2004 at the Sweeney Convention Center. Volunteers needed. For information, contact Susan Gorman, at (505) 259-7190, H2ofest@aol.com or log on to www.pioneerwest.net.



Check out what's going on, or list your own event on the Water Connections website at <http://www.nmwaterconnections.org/>. The *Dialogue's* page at NM Water Connections has a link to the NMSU site where folks can read *Dialogue* and see it in color.

new mexico climate center

Read or download back issues of the Dialogue at <http://weather.nmsu.edu/dialogue/>

How you can support Dialogue in New Mexico

The New Mexico Water Dialogue has just received our final grant from the General Service Foundation. We have also been notified that our other major funder, the McCune Charitable Foundation, will not be able to support us next year at past levels. We are now depending more than ever on individual contributions to support our work, including publishing this newsletter.

We have never charged a subscription fee to individuals for *Dialogue*. If you find our work valuable, we urge you to let us know with your tax-deductible gift, using the form below.

Register for the Statewide Meeting

You may also use this form to register for the Annual Statewide Meeting on January 8, 2004. (For details, see pages 12 and 11).

Yes, I'd like to support the Dialogue with a tax-deductible contribution of \$ _____

Yes, I wish to register for the Annual Statewide Meeting. Here is my \$20 early registration fee. \$ _____

Total amount enclosed (check payable to NM Water Dialogue) \$

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

City, State, ZIP _____

E-mail address: _____

I prefer to receive Dialogue by downloading an online version rather than by mail. (If so, please provide your e-mail address above.)

Send this form with your check to:
New Mexico Water Dialogue
P.O. Box 1387
Corrales, NM 87048

E-mail John Brown at jrb@osogrande.com with your questions and suggestions

Tentative Agenda for Statewide Meeting, January 8, 2004

Morning

- 8:30 – 9:00 Welcome, introductions, plan for the day
- 9:00 – 10:00 **Status of the State Water Plan** – How did we get here and where do things stand now? *Estevan Lopez, Director, NM Interstate Stream Commission*
- 10:00 – 10:15 Break
- 10:15 – 11:05 **“Moving” Water** – This panel explores impacts of market transfers and leases of water, and other tools to reallocate water to new uses, on the future of the state. Can we achieve flexibility *and* protect other valued uses?
 Panelists:
Chris Nunn Garcia, Economist, NM Highlands University
Paula Garcia, New Mexico Acequia Association
Fred Nathan, Think New Mexico
Eileen Grevey Hillson, Agua Vida Resources
Janet Jarratt, Farmer
- 11:05 – 11:25 Discussant response – *John D’Antonio, State Engineer*, and discussion among panelists
- 11:25 – 12:00 Participant questions and comments, and discussion with panelists

Afternoon

- 12:00 – 1:00 Lunch catered by the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- 1:00 – 1:15 Presentation of awards
- 1:15 – 2:10 **“Saving” Water** – This panel will discuss the complexity of conservation efforts (*how* water can be conserved in meaningful quantities) and how to create incentives (private and public benefits) that will motivate individual efforts to save water.
 Panelists:
Gina Dello Russo (convenor), Bosque del Apache NWR
Julie Maitland, NM Department of Agriculture
Steve Harris, Rio Grande Restoration
Sterling Grogan, MRG Conservancy District
Larry Shore, Sandia Urban Watershed Research Institute
Jean Witherspoon, City of Albuquerque
- 2:10 – 2:30 Discussant response – *Rolf Schmidt Peterson, Chief, Rio Grande Bureau, ISC*, and discussion among panelists
- 2:30 – 3:00 Participant questions and comments, and discussion with panelists
- 3:00 – 3:15 Snack break
- 3:15 – 3:35 **The future of state water planning efforts** – *Estevan Lopez*
- 3:35 – 4:00 Discussion and recommendations to OSE/ISC on “taking care of unfinished business”
- 4:00 – 4:30 “Open mike” comments from the floor; nominations for the Dialogue Board; announcements of coming events; thanks to presenters and participants; adjourn.

The New Mexico State Water Plan: Unfinished Business

New Mexico Water Dialogue

Annual Statewide Meeting

Thursday, January 8, 2004

Indian Pueblo Cultural Center – Special Events Building

2401 12th Street NW, Albuquerque

See the TENTATIVE AGENDA on preceding page (p. 11)

The State Water Plan approved by the Interstate Stream Commission in December provides policies that will guide water planning in New Mexico. Two issue areas identified in the plan are key to its success and the state's future: how to handle water transfers and our ability to successfully conserve the limited water supply we have. We have titled these themes “**Moving**” Water and “**Saving**” Water. The major activities of the day are built around them and the future of the state water plan. We envision these panel and participant discussions as only the opening round in ongoing dialogue and deliberation about these key issues that can help to shape the policies of the State Water Plan as it develops.

Send in the registration form on page 10. If you have questions, contact John Brown at the address below, or email John at jrb@osogrande.com

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