

September 26, 2007

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Mark S. Sanchez

Website
<http://www.abcwua.org>

Ms. Johanna Prukop, Secretary
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
1220 St Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Prukop:

I write in support of a proposed initiative to enhance protection of New Mexico's highest quality waters. We believe that clean water is one of our greatest assets and that, collectively, we should be pro-active in securing the quality and quantity of our water supplies by preventing real and potential threats that would degrade our highest quality waters. The Albuquerque Bernalillo County Water Utility Authority (Authority) supports efforts to protect headwater streams and rivers on our roadless national forests by designating them as "Outstanding National Resource Waters."

As you are well aware, in 2008 the Authority will begin to divert imported Colorado river water from the Rio Grande as a means of providing a new source of municipal water supplies to serve New Mexico's largest population. As a result of this new reliance on surface waters we have a heightened concern about the quality of the waters of the Rio Grande and its tributaries as well as the cost of treating polluted waters. We currently face a serious fecal coliform pollution problem in the middle Rio Grande that incrementally increases the Authority's water treatment costs.

According to an analysis recently conducted by Forest Guardians, in New Mexico alone there are more than 1,134 miles of tributary streams that feed into the Rio Grande upstream of the City of Albuquerque. More than 1,000 of these stream miles flow through lands that are unprotected and are therefore potentially subject to increased pollution. However 108 of those stream miles fall within roadless national forests and protection of the quality of those waters would be greatly enhanced by the designation of these waters as "Outstanding National Resource Waters," under provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act.

One of the primary reasons for protecting roadless national forests is that they capture, store, filter, and slowly release clean water. At a time when global warming is casting greater uncertainty on water throughout the West, and especially in the Southwest, we believe that it is prudent and responsible to protect our highest quality, headwater streams in perpetuity.

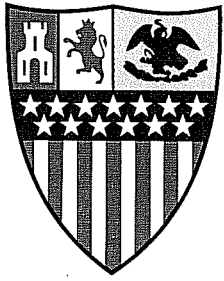
With the saying "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" in mind, we believe that we can and should do more to keep our cleanest waters clean. The Authority supports comprehensive protection of headwater streams by designating them as outstanding waters.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Mark S. Sanchez
Executive Director



City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

200 Lincoln Avenue, P.O. Box 909, Santa Fe, N.M. 87504-0909

David Coss, *Mayor*

Councilors:

Miguel M. Chavez, Mayor Pro Tem, Dist. 3

Patti J. Bushee, Dist. 1

Chris Calvert, Dist. 1

Karen Heldmeyer, Dist. 2

Rebecca Wurzbarger, Dist. 2

Carmichael A. Dominguez, Dist. 3

Matthew E. Ortiz, Dist. 4

Ronald S. Trujillo, Dist. 4

February 27, 2008

Ms. Johanna Prukop, Secretary
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
1220 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Prukop,

I write in support of efforts to protect the quality of the water that is provided by the streams and rivers of New Mexico's roadless national forests by designating them as "Outstanding National Resource Waters." I believe that it is both responsible and prudent to protect our highest quality waters for fish and wildlife, current recreational, agricultural, and municipal uses, and for future generations.

The City of Santa Fe's water supply is currently derived from the upper Santa Fe River, the well field within City limits, and the Buckman well field near the Rio Grande. Our two reservoirs in the upper Santa Fe River watershed, McClure and Nichols Reservoirs, are fed by pristine, mountain streams running through the Pecos Wilderness Area and adjoining Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRA's). This source provides up to half of our municipal water supply.

In addition to the Santa Fe River water, the quality of Rio Grande water is of growing importance to the City of Santa Fe. The City, with its regional partners, the County of Santa Fe and Las Campanas, will be diverting and treating surface water from the Rio Grande within the next four years. Efforts to protect the many tributaries to the Rio Grande that originate in roadless areas will help protect the quality of our drinking water. Protection the streams and rivers in wilderness and IRAs by designating them as "Outstanding Waters" would contribute significantly to the permanent protection of a sizeable portion of the City's future municipal water supply.

We feel that this Outstanding Waters petition has the potential to keep the cleanest waters in New Mexico clean in perpetuity, which will not only serve downstream residential, commercial, recreational, and agricultural uses, but also ensure the integrity of critical habitats for native plants and animals.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

David Coss, Mayor
City of Santa Fe

LAS PLACITAS ASSOCIATION

August 24, 2007

Ron Curry, Secretary
New Mexico Environment Department
1190 St. Francis Drive
Harold Runnels Building
P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, NM 87502-6110

Dear Mr. Curry:

On behalf of the Las Placitas Association (LPA), I am writing in support of Forest Guardians' petition of nominating waters of wilderness areas for Outstanding Natural Resource Waters (ONRW) status. LPA is a 501(c) (3) natural resources conservation non-profit based in Placitas, New Mexico. LPA is dedicated to preserving open space and restoring riparian watersheds in the Placitas area. We are particularly interested in endorsing the Las Huertas Creek, a perennial creek that originates in the Sandia Mountains and flows through the Placitas area, for ONRW nomination as part of this petition.

The Las Huertas Creek was upgraded to a High Quality Cold Water Aquatic Life designation by the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission in 2005. It is a major source of recharge to Placitas Area aquifers and the Upper Santa Fe formation, which comprises the middle Rio Grande aquifer near Albuquerque. The pristine waters of Las Huertas Creek feed a lush riparian environment that is also a major recreational resource for central New Mexicans. The Creek also supplies a centuries-old acequia system in Placitas, and traverses a 560-acre tract managed by the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division (Placitas Open Space). The Creek is located along the eastern boundary of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness area within the Cibola National Forest.

LPA believes that, given recent predictions by climatologists and the ever-increasing pressure on limited high quality fresh water supplies in New Mexico, protection of pristine wilderness water ways is crucial to the long-term quality of life in our State. Petitioning for ONRW status for Las Huertas Creek and similar water bodies is consistent with Governor Richardson's current campaign to protect high quality water supplies for New Mexico.

LPA supports a petition nominating Las Huertas Creek and all of the state's high-elevation waters in U.S. Forest Service Wilderness and Roadless Areas as Outstanding National Resource Waters under provisions contained in the Federal Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,
Las Placitas Association



Reid F. Bandeen, President



PO Box 888, Placitas New Mexico 87043

www.lasplacitas.org

A tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3)

New Mexico Conference of Churches
serving the ecumenical ministries of more than 600,000 New Mexicans



336 N Camino del Pueblo PO Box 606 Bernalillo, New Mexico 87004 505-867-2956 fax 505-867-6379 Email nmcc@nmchurches.org

September 18, 2007

Ms. Johanna Prukop, Secretary
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and natural Resources Department
1220 St Francis Dr
Santa Fe NM 87505

Dear Ms. Prukop,

As we have in the past, the New Mexico Conference of Churches is still a strong proponent of efforts to protect the quality of our headwater streams and rivers by designating all of these waters as "Outstanding Waters." This is an imaginative and promising approach to preventing roads and other development from harming vital watershed values and water quality on public lands.

In the Southwest, water quality and quantity are, of course, essential concerns of public lands management. Given the uncertainty that Climate Change has cast over our region in particular, especially with regards to its effects on our water supplies, the New Mexico Conference of Churches believes that we should be proactive in protecting the quality of our water supplies. The faith community has long supported stewardship of public lands, thereby bestowing an intrinsic value in ecosystems and the moral obligation to maintain the health and beauty of these ecosystems. Clean, unpolluted streams, rivers and watersheds are obviously central to these goals. In fact, the establishment of the national forest system was in significant part due to the need to protect watersheds.

The New Mexico Conference of Churches was supportive of the earlier roadless area rules that were overwhelmingly favored by citizen groups that were in part directed at maintaining watershed values. That these rules have been embroiled in legal battles over the last few years makes it all the more important that states like New Mexico take a leadership role in protecting our highest quality waters. We see this initiative as important part of the "tool box" for protecting public lands from expedient and unwise development. Once waters are degraded it is much more difficult and costly to heal them so let's do our part to keep the cleanest waters anywhere.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Dr. Barbara Dua
Executive Director
New Mexico Conference of Churches

membership

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Episcopal Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church (USA), Roman Catholic Church, United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church



Santa Fe
WATERSHED
ASSOCIATION

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www.santafewatershed.org

August 7, 2007

Ms. Johanna Prukop, Secretary
New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department
1220 St. Francis Drive
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Dear Ms. Prukop,

The Santa Fe Watershed Association strongly supports efforts to nominate and protect all of the state's high-elevation waters in USFS Wilderness and Roadless Areas as "Outstanding National Resource Waters" under provisions of the Federal Clean Water Act. Many other Western states have already utilized this provision to protect their highest quality waters.

The waters under consideration for this designation flow from national forests that capture, store, filter, and slowly release clean water. Governor Richardson has already recognized the values of these roadless areas and called for their protection. These waters are quite possibly the greatest asset of current and future generations of New Mexicans. Our headwater streams on our roadless national forests and wilderness areas provide benefits to all the state's citizens. In our state's plan for the future, water must be the number one concern as it supports all life and is the foundation of economic activity.

The Outstanding Waters petition has the potential to keep the cleanest waters in New Mexico clean in perpetuity, which will serve all New Mexicans in the long run. We have a responsibility to ourselves, to the plants and wildlife, and to the generations of New Mexicans who will come after us. Let's start making amends to Nature, and to future generations, but safeguarding the waters which are still pure. Tackling restoration later will be much more expensive than implementing pro-active conservation measures today. Let's keep our cleanest waters clean.

Sincerely,

Dave Groenfeldt
Executive Director
Santa Fe Watershed Association

Bringing the Santa Fe River back to life -- restoring the heart to our community.