

May 12, 2001

# **CES SFBWUA**

## **Water Forum**

On May 12, 2001, Citizens for Environmental Safeguards promoted a forum for the Santa Fe Basin Water Users Association. Several water and landuse experts from the Santa Fe Area participated in the forum at the request of Citizens for Environmental Safeguards. In attendance was John Horning - Forest Guardians, Francis West- Retired Hydrologist and Acequia Commissioner, Zane Spiegel - retired Geo-hydrologists and engineer, Judy Stevens - the Santa Fe LandUse and Resource Center, Doug Wolf - the Environmental Law Center, Paul Saavedra - the Office of the State Engineer.

Each of the panelists gave a brief overview of some of the issues important to them in both the state and local water issues. CES goal for the meeting was to formulate a consensus of ideas so that we could promote in the upcoming water forums, community meeting and in formal protests.

### **The Outcomes for Future Water Policy**

On the Rio Grande, there are 17 contractors pulling 70,000 acre feet per year (afy) of new depletion of San Juan Chama water in all. Santa Fe has a chance to be on the cutting edge of environmental policy in the state by dedicating some of its water to environmental use - the Rio Grande. This should be the first priority implemented as part of the County and City water plans.

One baseline fact is that we need all to agree upon -

... Growth is # 1 issue -  
Solutions

... THERE NEEDS TO BE A MORATORIUM ON GROWTH UNTIL AN EIS IS COMPLETED ON THE SJC DIVERSION for both SANTA FE COUNTY AND THE CITY OF SANTA FE. Based upon the outcome of the EIS, a Oversight on Development Procedure and Policy Ordinance would need to be applied to guide future development.

... The moratorium will include all new commercial and domestic starts on building permits, until which time a complete analysis is done on both options of the Ranney Collector Gallery and the Buckman Well Diversion Area. In creating and implementing the Oversight on Development Procedure and Policy ordinance while the EIS is being completed it would bring the agricultural, development, environmental communities and the municipalities to the table for first time for an unique opportunity to do some serious

work for the future generations of New Mexico. (Timeline expected - 2 years)

... The ecosystem can no longer support permanent growth on temporary water, which reflects the current behavior of the EZA, County and City in approving development after development.

... A public welfare policy should be adopted for this region, however, the public welfare will have different measures from various regions all over the state. The final decision should be left up to the voters on the Public welfare statutes.

... Water Conservation only works if the conserved amounts of water are dedicated to the environmental welfare of the Rio Grande. However, self-sustaining environmental uses should be required for new domestic and commercial starts while the value from water savings can then be transferred to dedicated environmental uses. i.e. the native basin of Santa Fe or the Rio Grande.

... All Municipalities take the hit on water use.

... The designation of the Sole Source Aquifer for this area would greatly enhance the protection of the threatened aquifer particularly from upstream contaminants of SJC water

in Rio Grande Many of the environmental groups who supports the designation are waiting for a decision on the petition from EPA. This designation will most undoubtedly help to appropriate funding to the municipalities for water quality assistance such as filtration.

... It was brought to our attention that groundwater mining could fall under the De-watering and mining act. The State Engineer has not acknowledge this law, under this law less ground water would be mined if it was applied. CES supports a more holistic view of looking at water needs to be part of the review process.

... It has been suggested that we consider pushing for abolishment of the stock and domestic well statutes. The jury is still deliberating on this suggestion.