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Ruidoso and Surrounding Areas Recovering Well from Extreme Weather Events

The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) and New Mexico Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) worked together to provide a swift and comprehensive response to the water emergency in Ruidoso last week. Freezing temperatures followed by thawing resulted in damage to many water systems in Ruidoso and surrounding areas.

Staff from the NMED Drinking Water Bureau and Environmental Health Division began receiving calls from water systems in Lincoln County concerning weather related damage and loss of water on Monday February 7th. By Tuesday, larger water systems including Ruidoso and Cloudcroft experienced major water loss and NMED began assessing water quality by measuring chemical and biological indicators.

Wednesday and Thursday NMED staff from Roswell, Alamogordo, and Las Cruces Offices monitored water quality in community systems and restaurants in Ruidoso, Cloudcroft, and Timberon, the communities with the largest potential threat to public health. The NMED Drinking Water Bureau provided technical and compliance assistance to Ruidoso and other areas. Staff in Ruidoso and Alamogordo Offices worked through the weekend to assess water quality and provide technical assistance to communities in both Lincoln and Otero Counties.

Chlorine residuals and water pressure throughout the Ruidoso water system are now stable. Water samples collected have shown no bacteriological contamination in the water. The precautionary boil water advisory for Ruidoso was lifted by NMED February 15 and the advisory for Sacramento Mountains and surrounding areas was lifted February 17.

Both DWB and EHD continue their protection of public health through outreach and collaboration with communities in Ruidoso and Sacramento Mountains as they repair their water systems.

The event was a collaborative effort between the DWB, EHD, VOR, Lincoln County, Department of Homeland Security and other numerous water system operators to ensure the public health and safety.

Ruidoso Mayor, Gus Raymond Alborn, contacted the New Mexico Environment Department to thank them for their work.

For more information, call Jill Turner, NMED communications; (505) 222-9548

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