



BILL RICHARDSON
Governor
DIANE DENISH
Lieutenant Governor

NEW MEXICO
ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Office of the Secretary

Harold Runnels Building
1190 Saint Francis Drive (87505)
PO Box 5469, Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469
Phone (505) 827-2855 Fax (505) 827-2836
www.nmenv.state.nm.us



RON CURRY
Secretary
SARAH COTTRELL
Deputy Secretary

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Contact: Marissa Stone Bardino, NMED Communications Director
(505) 827-0314 or (505) 231-0475

Environment Department to Use \$101,000 Grant to Improve Water Quality in the State

(Santa Fe) – The New Mexico Environment Department will use funding from a \$101,000 grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to conduct water quality management planning in the Middle Rio Grande and Cimarron River watersheds.

“This award will allow us to continue to continue to implement water quality studies and improve water quality throughout the state to protect our valuable resources,” said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. “The money will also help regional public organizations better manage water quality.”

Forty percent of the money in the grant was available to regional public comprehensive planning organizations to conduct water quality management planning. Regional organizations that obtained funding from the grant submitted proposals to the department through a formal Request for Quotes process that opened Jan. 4, 2010. The department funded two proposals, which totaled \$15,500.

Ciudad Soil and Water Conservation District will develop non-point source pollutant strategies to reduce E. coli on the Albuquerque reach of the Middle Rio Grande

In addition, the funding will allow Elephant Butte Irrigation District and the City of Las Cruces develop water quality planning to manage in-flows to Burn Lake to help achieve designated uses of that water source.

The department will use the remaining funds, which is available to the state each fiscal year as part of the Clean Water Act, to support its Total Maximum Daily Load program. The program works to meet federal water quality requirements conducting chemical and biological field collections and measurements, performing assessments on water quality data toward Integrated Clean Water Act List development, and assistance with water quality standards issues. The TMDL development process includes public notices, public meetings and responses to comments.

For more information, call Marissa Stone Bardino at (505) 827-0314.