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For Immediate Release

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Environment Department to Hold Meeting on Planning Document for Total Maximum Daily Loads for Lower Rio Grande Watershed

WHAT: The New Mexico Environment Department's Surface Water Quality Bureau will hold a meeting on the draft "total maximum daily load" (TMDL) document for the Lower Rio Grande Watershed. The watershed stretches from the Texas Border to Elephant Butte Dam. The meeting will summarize the information and to provide a forum for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments.

WHY: A TMDL is a planning document that establishes specific goals to meet water quality standards in water bodies where pollutant limits are exceeded. It includes current pollution loadings, reduction estimates for pollutants, information on probable sources of pollution and suggestions to restore or protect the health of the watershed. Draft TMDLs in this document include:

- *E. coli*: Rio Grande (Texas Border to Leasburg Dam)
- *E. coli*: Rio Grande (Leasburg Dam to Percha Dam)

WHEN: From 6 to 8 p.m. Tuesday, March 13

WHERE: Las Cruces City Hall, 200 N. Church Street, in the City Council chambers.

WHO: NMED staff will attend the meeting. Formal comments for inclusion in the public record must be submitted in writing, to **Shelly Drinkard, NMED SWQB, Room N2109, P.O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM, 87502; fax number (505) 827-0160; or e-mail: shelly.drinkard@state.nm.us** (if possible, please submit an electronic copy in addition to paper).

OTHER: The 30-day comment period on this document will extend from now until 5 p.m. March 26, 2007. After the comment period ends, copies of the draft final document will be mailed to everyone who submitted timely comments. That information will be available electronically on the bureau's website or by contacting the bureau at the address above. The SWQB will request approval of the draft final TMDLs at the Water Quality Control Commission's (WQCC) regularly scheduled meeting on April 10, 2007. WQCC agendas are available at: <http://www.nmenv.state.nm.us/wqcc/index.html>.

For more information, call Marissa Stone, NMED Communications Director at (505) 827-0314 or Jill Turner, NMED SWQB Outreach Coordinator at (505) 476-1866.

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