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**State Environment Department Seeks Public Input
on Water Quality Survey of the San Juan River Basin**

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is seeking public input on a comprehensive surface water quality study for the San Juan River Watershed in the northwestern corner of the state. The three-season survey of the San Juan River and its tributaries, in the area between Navajo Reservoir to the Navajo Nation Boundary at the Hogback ridge formation will begin this spring. The results will be used to determine the status of water quality within the Watershed, track water quality improvements and identify impaired waterbodies.

A pre-monitoring meeting for the upper San Juan River Watershed will be held on Thursday, February 28, 7:00-9:00 p.m., at the Farmington Civic Center, conference rooms C and D in conjunction with the San Juan River Watershed Group's meeting. Representatives from the NMED will discuss the monitoring plan for the San Juan River Watershed and will provide a forum for interested parties to ask questions and/or provide comments. The NMED is seeking the opinion of area residents, and tribal and governmental agencies on the Department's study design and any potential areas of concern which may not be included in the study. The NMED also invites the public to observe staff on sampling trips and offers a field demonstration of sampling procedures in the summer.

The data gathered will also be used to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for those waterbodies determined to be impaired by one or more pollutants. A TMDL is a water quality planning document with specific water quality goals and a means for recommending controls needed to meet water quality standards in a particular water or watershed. The TMDL will identify potential sources of pollution and will be the basis for the NMED making recommendations on how to reduce pollutant loads for each segment of river or stream identified as impaired. The process for developing a TMDL will also be described and discussed at the meeting.

This study and subsequent planning are part of recurring watershed analysis performed by the NMED. Every watershed throughout New Mexico is monitored every 5-7 years.

Additional information can be found in the NMED's website at:

www.nmenv.state.nm.us/swqb/swqb.html. Questions and comments can be directed to Neal Schaeffer in the NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau at (505) 827-2912.

For additional information, contact Neal Schaeffer, Environmental Scientist, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-2912, or Stephanie Stringer, Outreach Coordinator, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-0418.

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