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Immediate Release

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## **Environment Department Taking Public Comment on Water Quality in Upper Rio Grande Watershed, Public Meeting Scheduled for Taos**

(Santa Fe, NM) — The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED), Surface Water Quality Bureau (SWQB) is inviting the public to comment on water quality in the Upper Rio Grande watershed. This area is defined as the main stem of the Rio Grande from Pilar, New Mexico to the New Mexico-Colorado border and associated tributaries.

NMED has developed draft “total maximum daily load” (TMDL) documents for these waters. A TMDL is a planning document that establishes specific goals for water quality conditions. It includes current pollution readings, reduction estimates for pollutants currently exceeding state surface water quality standards, and information on probable sources of pollution that need to be addressed to restore and protect the health of the waterbody.

Draft TMDLs out for public comment include: Comanche Creek, Costilla Creek, Rio de Los Pinos, Rio Grande, Rio Hondo, Rio San Antonio, Rio Fernando de Taos, Rio Grande Del Rancho, and Rio Pueblo de Taos.

The 30-day comment period begins August 10 and will end September 9 at 5:00 p.m. MDT. Formal comments for inclusion in the public record must be submitted to the SWQB in writing. These comments should be sent to Lynette Guevara, NMED SWQB, Room N2163, P.O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, NM, 87502. Faxes may be sent to (505) 827-0160, or e-mail:

<[lynette\\_guevara@nmenv.state.nm.us](mailto:lynette_guevara@nmenv.state.nm.us)> (if possible, please submit an electronic copy with faxes and letters).

A public meeting will be held to summarize the information and to provide a forum for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments. The meeting will be held in **Taos on Tuesday, August 24th, at the Juan I. Gonzales Agricultural Center located at 202 Chamisa Road**. The meeting will run from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. Formal written comments for inclusion in the public record may be submitted at this meeting as well.

Once comments are received and reviewed, the SWQB will approach the NM Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) at their regular monthly meeting, tentatively set for October 12, 2004, to request final approval of the final draft Upper Rio Grande Part 1 TMDL. Following the close of the public

comment period, copies of the final revised draft document as amended will be available to the public upon request and on the SWQB website 10 days prior to the WQCC meeting referenced above. For more information, or to request a copy of the TMDL, contact [Lynette Guevara](#), in the NMED SWQB, at the address provided above, or by calling (505) 827-2904.

If you are an individual with a disability and you require assistance or an auxiliary aid (e.g. translator or sign-language interpreter) to participate in any aspect of this process, please contact [Judy Bentley](#) as soon as possible, at: the New Mexico Environment Department, P.O. Box 26110, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502, (505) 827-9872 (TDD or TDY users please access her number via the New Mexico Relay Network. Albuquerque TDD users: (505) 275-7333; outside of Albuquerque: 1-800-659-1779.)

For further information contact [Jon Goldstein](#), Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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