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JOHN R. D'ANTONIO, Jr.
SECRETARY

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For Immediate Release

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REVISION TO October 16 Release:

**Cochiti Middle School Students Participate in National Water Monitoring Day
with State Environment and Game & Fish Departments**

(Santa Fe, NM) – State Environment and Game & Fish departments staff will join 7th and 8th graders from Cochiti Middle School to assess water quality in the Lower Santa Fe River on October 18, the first annual National Water Monitoring Day.

National Water Monitoring Day is a nationwide event marking the 30th anniversary of the initial passage of the Clean Water Act. To commemorate this anniversary, Governor Gary Johnson has proclaimed October as “Clean Water Month.” The national effort is coordinated by America’s Clean Water Foundation, in cooperation with several other environmental groups and governmental agencies across the country.

The main purpose of the event is to take a snapshot view of streams, lakes and coastal waters throughout the United States by inviting citizen monitors, established volunteer monitoring organizations and federal, state, tribal and local monitoring program staff to evaluate water quality conditions within their local watersheds. Data collected will help identify changes in water quality over the past 30 years.

Mr. Castagna’s science class is one of numerous local water monitoring groups participating in New Mexico Watershed Watch, a program sponsored by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish. This program, coordinated by Richard Schrader of River Source (a contractor to the Department of Game &

Fish), works with volunteer groups to periodically collect data to evaluate water quality conditions. There are currently 20 teachers at 17 schools participating in the Watershed Watch program, a number of which plan to conduct local monitoring for the October 18th event.

The day's efforts will be relatively easy and fun. Volunteers will be gathering and submitting data from four water quality tests: dissolved oxygen, pH, turbidity/clarity and temperature. More experienced monitors, such as Cochiti School, which has been monitoring the site for the past eight years, may also complete more technical analyses such as macroinvertebrate (aquatic bugs) sampling, nitrogen and phosphorus content, and speed of the water flow.

The Cochiti class and other monitors will enter gathered information into a national databank available to the public on The Year of Clean Water website, www.yearofcleanwater.org. Detailed maps will allow users to pinpoint a monitored watershed and access information collected for that specific area.

The Environment Department and the Department of Game and Fish are committed to protecting our state's aquatic habitats and associated wildlife, and welcome citizen participation in this and other work.

"I hope that this event will increase the public's awareness of their role in protecting and preserving the quality of the nation's waters," said Environment Secretary John R. D'Antonio, Jr. "We invite all citizens to work with us throughout the year to protect their watersheds."

For more information, contact Stephanie Stringer of the Environment Department's Surface Water Quality Bureau at (505) 827-0418) or Rich Schrader of River Source at (505) 992-0726, or visit the Year of Clean Water website www.yearofcleanwater.org. You may also check out www.riversource.com, www.acwf.org, and www.tmdls.net for related information.

For more information, contact Stephanie Stringer, Outreach Coordinator, NMED at (505) 827-0418, or Cathy Tyson-Foster, Communications Director, NMED at (505) 827-0314.

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