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Immediate Release

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State Environment Department Seeks Public Input
on Water Quality Survey of the Canadian River Basin in Northeastern New Mexico

(Santa Fe, NM) -- The New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) is seeking public input on a comprehensive surface water quality study for the Canadian River Watershed in the northeastern corner of the state. The three-season survey of the Canadian River and its tributaries, from the New Mexico-Colorado border to where the river exits New Mexico at the Texas border, 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 water bodies.

Three pre-monitoring meetings for the Canadian River Watershed will be held:

Tucumcari - March 26 - Room 3, Tucumcari Convention Center, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Mora - March 27 - Mora Courthouse, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Raton - March 28 - Arthur C. Johnson Memorial Library, 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Representatives from the NMED will discuss the monitoring plan for the Canadian River Watershed and will provide a forum for interested parties to ask questions and provide comments. The NMED is seeking the opinion of area residents and governmental agencies on the Department's study design and any potential areas of concern that 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.

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The data gathered will also be used to develop a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for those water bodies 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 Seva Joseph in the NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau at (505) 827-0573.

For additional information, contact Seva Joseph, Environmental Scientist, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-0573, or Stephanie Stringer, Outreach Coordinator, NMED Surface Water Quality Bureau, at (505) 827-0418.

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