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State Environment Department Lifts *Most* Boil Water Advisories and Order for Water Systems Impacted by Flooding in Lincoln County

Some Systems Remain on Boil Water Advisories

(Santa Fe, N.M.) -- The New Mexico Environment Department's Drinking Water Bureau has advised the Village of Ruidoso, Cedar Creek Water Users Association, Smoky Bear Ranger Station/Cedar Creek Campground, South Fork Campground and Sun Country Food Mart and Conoco to lift a boil water advisory for their consumers.

Those water systems were put on a precautionary "boil water advisory" due to flooding in the area that had the potential to impact water quality.

"Residents served by the majority of water systems in Lincoln County can rest assured that water meets all requirements for safe drinking water," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "We will keep consumers advised when advisories are lifted for the other systems. We will also continue to provide assistance with the wastewater treatment plant and to restaurants through our food program."

NMED staff and the New Mexico Rural Water Association provided technical assistance to the water system to determine if the flooding had adversely impacted the water system. Water samples collected since the flooding have shown no bacterial contamination of the water system. The absence of disease causing bacteria in these water systems has allowed the NMED Drinking Water Bureau to notify the water systems to lift the boil water advisories.

NMED has also advised the Ruidoso Downs Racetrack to lift the "boil water order" for its water system. The Ruidoso Downs Racetrack was put on a "boil water order" on July 30, 2008, due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded The Maximum Contamination Level (MCL) for E. coli.

The presence of E. coli in water indicates that the water may have been in contact with sewage and/or animal wastes, and could contain disease-causing organisms. Most strains of E. coli are harmless and live in the intestines of healthy humans and animals. However, a positive test for E. coli in the drinking water supply may indicate the presence of dangerous strains of E. coli or other disease-causing organisms, which are

sometimes found in sewage or animal wastes. These types of organisms may cause severe gastrointestinal illness and, in rare cases, even death.

Actions to disinfect the water system and identify possible sources of contamination were promptly taken. These actions included shock chlorination and flushing of the entire water system. Water samples collected since the shock chlorination and flushing have shown no bacteriological contamination in the water system.

Systems that remain on a precautionary “boil water advisories” are: Bonito Hollow RV Park, Seeping Springs RV Park, River Ranch RV Park, Deer Crossing RV Park and Apple Blossom/White Angel Mesa RV Park.

Consumers of the water served by these water systems are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing. Flooding has the potential to allow bacterial contaminants to enter a water system. Microbiological contaminants in the water may cause disease. Disease symptoms may include diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches and fatigue. These symptoms, however, are not just associated with disease causing organisms in drinking water.

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