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For Immediate Release

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

Department Offers Free Water Testing

(Santa Fe, N.M.) -- The New Mexico Environment Department's Drinking Water Bureau has advised the following public water systems to issue a boil water advisory for their consumers:

Village of Ruidoso
Smokey Bear Ranger Station / Cedar Creek Campground
Bonito Hollow RV Park
Seeping Springs RV Park
River Ranch RV Park
South Fork Campground
Ruidoso Downs Racing Complex
Apple Blossom/White Angel Mesa RV Park
Deer Crossing RV Park

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

"We will increase the number of staff members assisting communities in the flood affected areas because of the great need in those communities," said New Mexico Environment Department Secretary Ron Curry. "The department will begin free water testing for residents tomorrow. We will keep residents apprised of changes to boil water alerts."

Residents interested in obtaining free water samples from the department should call the Ruidoso Field Office at (575) 258-3272 or stop by the Hondo Valley Public School Gymnasium tomorrow or Friday to sign up.

NMED and the water systems are notifying all customers served by the systems of this advisory. 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.

The Ruidoso Downs Racetrack was put on a “boil water order” today, July 30, 2008, due to bacteriological contamination that exceeded The Maximum Contamination Level (MCL) for E. Coli. NMED has required that the system owner and operator notify all customers served by the system of this finding. Consumers of the water at the Ruidoso Downs Racetrack are advised to boil water for five minutes before drinking, cooking, and dishwashing. People at increased risk (infants, young children, and people with severely compromised immune systems) should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers or use bottled water.

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.

Drinking Water Bureau will continue to assist with trouble-shooting to identify the source of the problem along with the assistance of their contractor, New Mexico Rural Water Association. Actions have been and will further be initiated to identify the possible source(s) of contamination, complete any mechanical repairs if applicable, establish acceptable disinfection, and flush out the water system.

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