



NEW MEXICO ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT

Surface Water Quality Bureau

Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the 2021-2022 Watershed Survey Field Sampling Plans

February 2021

APPROVAL PAGE

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Date

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I. Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Overview

The New Mexico Environment Department (Department), Surface Water Quality Bureau (Bureau) developed this Public Involvement Plan (PIP) for the 2021-2022 Watershed Survey Field Sampling Plans. The Bureau encourages the public to learn about and get involved in decision-making opportunities for watershed surveys. The purpose of this PIP is to provide public participation opportunities and information that may be needed to participate in the Field Sampling Plan (FSP) process. This PIP integrates information about the community and identifies resources needed by the Bureau to successfully incorporate community participation activities into the decision-making process for the FSPs. The PIP identifies the Department staff and resources needed to accomplish these activities.

The Bureau will meet the public participation requirements for the FSPs by following this PIP, which includes all applicable policy, regulatory and statutory public participation requirements.

In developing this PIP, community participation needs were assessed to ensure appropriate promotion of public outreach by identifying whether there is a combination of environmental and demographic factors (i.e., low income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.¹ This assessment identifies community outreach needs and provides for public access opportunities above and beyond statutorily mandated requirements, and underscores the provision of adequate public access to information about the Field Sampling Plans.

As much as possible, public participation and informational activities related to the FSPs will be held within the timelines outlined in the table below. This timeline is tentative and subject to change. Per the federal requirement, a 30-day public review and comment period is allotted.

More detailed information about planned Bureau outreach is available in this PIP.

Activity	Dates
Notice PIP (invite public input)	February 2021
Public Notice	February 2021
Public Review Period	30-day review February – March 2021
Public announcements (radio, brochures, signs, postcards, factsheets, etc.)	As needed
Finalize FSPs and publish on SWQB website	March 2021

This PIP is a “living” document that may be amended after considering public comments and feedback. The Bureau Chief provides final approval of the PIP and amendments.

II. Bureau Contacts

Bureau contacts for questions regarding the 2021-2022 Watershed Survey Field Sampling Plans, the public review and approval process, the Bureau’s website, or this PIP, are listed below:

¹ See IV. Location and Demographics – Demographic Summary below.

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1190 South St. Francis Dr.
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Fax: (505) 827-0160
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Chuck Dentino
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1190 South St. Francis Dr.
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Phone: (505) 946-8868
Fax: (505) 827-0160
Email: Charles.Dentino1@state.nm.us

The NMED SWQB offices are currently closed due to the COVID-19 public health emergency. If you need to contact the Bureau regarding the 2021-2022 Watershed Survey and Field Sampling Plan, please call or email the bureau contacts listed above.

A. Non-English Language Speaker Assistance and Accommodations

Non-English speakers may call the Bureau contacts listed in this PIP and request language assistance services, such as an interpreter, so they can learn more about these FSPs or the watershed survey process.

Based on a four-factor evaluation for limited English proficiency (LEP) accessibility and outreach (NMED Policy and Procedure 07-11), the Bureau determined that additional language assistance (interpretation or translation services) is needed for this activity, at this time. The Bureau has determined that there are adequate resources available within the Department to provide LEP services, if requested or determined necessary. Public participation activities that are provided by the Bureau for the 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans appear sufficient. If additional information or data are acquired that indicate translation or interpretation services are needed, the Bureau will implement expanded outreach activities described in this PIP.

B. Department Websites

New Mexico Environment Department - <https://www.env.nm.gov/>
Surface Water Quality Bureau - <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/>

C. Surface Water Monitoring Website

The Bureau publishes its Water Quality Survey Reports at the website listed below. The website lists all completed watershed surveys in New Mexico as well as the current survey FSP. The list is organized alphabetically by watershed (e.g., river or watershed name).

<https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/water-quality-monitoring/>

III. Regulatory Framework

Monitoring of surface water quality is an important component of the State's water quality management program and is essential to identify and characterize water quality problems, revise water quality standards, and develop and evaluate the results of control actions. Additionally, water quality monitoring data can be used for pollutant allocation computer modeling and as evidence for enforcement actions. The goal of the monitoring program is to provide information to assess the quality of surface waters and direct water quality management activities. The Bureau utilizes a rotating watershed survey design for water quality monitoring. Select watersheds are monitored each year with a return frequency dependent on available staff and financial resources. In even numbered years, the monitoring results are summarized in the State of New Mexico CWA §303d/§305b Integrated Report as required by Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and 40 CFR 130.7.

The public participation requirements of specific water quality programs are specified in 40 CFR Section 25.4 and described in the Water Quality Management Plan and Continuous Planning Process (WQMP/CPP). At a minimum, the public participation process for New Mexico's water quality programs consists of the following:

- Providing the public with the information and assistance necessary for meaningful involvement;
- Providing a central location of reports, studies, plans, and other documents;
- Maintaining a list of affected or interested parties and stakeholders; and
- Notifying stakeholders in a timely fashion prior to consideration of major decisions (generally at least 30 days).

To fulfill this requirement, the Bureau invites the public to comment on the draft FSPs for the 2021-2022 Watershed Surveys. The FSPs describe survey organization, sampling locations, parameters and methodologies. Waterbodies that are monitored during a survey are determined by immediate data needs and age of existing data. Data needs have been determined based on impairments from previous studies, identified data gaps, and consultation with Bureau technical staff as well as other state agencies, federal agencies, tribes, local watershed groups, and interested stakeholders.

IV. Location and Demographics

The 2021-2022 Watershed Survey study areas incorporate three major watershed groups summarized in the table below.

Watershed	USGS 8-Digit Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)
Lower Pecos River/Southern High Plains	13060004, 13060003, 13060007, 13060011, 13070002, 13070001, 13070007, 12080003, 12080004, 12080006, 12080001, 12050002, and 12050005
Jemez River	13020202
Rio Puerco, Rio San Jose, and Little Colorado River	13020204, 13020205, 13020207, 13020206, 15020004, 15020003, 15020006, and 15020001

Demographic Summary

Demographic indicators were obtained from EPA EJSCREEN, an environmental justice screening and mapping tool, available on-line at <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>. EJSCREEN is based on nationally consistent data and an approach that combines environmental and demographic indicators in maps and reports. Users choose the geographic area of interest by selecting a point, line or polygon on the map; users may also choose to select a buffer area (up to 10 miles) around the point, line or polygon to better capture the affected community. EJSCREEN then provides a report that describes demographic and environmental information for that area. The 2014-2018 ACS Report link in EJSCREEN provides a report with US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data in pdf format. The 2014-2018 ACS, through EJSCREEN, provided quantitative information regarding demographic indicators.

Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for the Lower Pecos River/Southern High Plains Watershed Survey

- Area of Interest = Upper Pecos River and Southern High Plains Watersheds (USGS 8-digit HUC codes 13060004, 13060003, 13060007, 13060011, 13070002, 13070001, 13070007, 12080003, 12080004, 12080006, 12080001, 12050002, and 12050005)
- Buffer = 5-mile buffer surrounding the Lower Pecos River/Southern High Plains Watersheds

The project area has an estimated population of 264,398; 51% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 1% identify as American Indian. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 31%, compared to 21.3 % for the United States. The EJSCREEN analysis identified 5,096 of 92,760 households as linguistically isolated, of which 95% speak Spanish and 5% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$22,998, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the state or national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for Jemez River Watershed Survey

- Area of Interest = Jemez River Watershed (USGS 8-digit HUC code 13020202)
- Buffer = 5-mile buffer surrounding the Jemez River Watershed

The project area has an estimated population of 62,310; 43% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 10% identify as American Indian alone. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 27%, compared to 21.3 % for the United States. The EJSCREEN analysis identified 1,078 of 21,841 households as linguistically isolated, of which 78% speak Spanish and 22% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project area is \$25,903, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the state or national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

Summary of Site-Specific EJSCREEN Inputs for Rio Puerco/Rio San Jose/Little Colorado River Watershed Survey

- Area of Interest = Rio Puerco/Rio San Jose/Little Colorado River Watersheds (USGS 8-digit HUC codes 13020204, 13020205, 13020207, 13020206, 15020004, 15020003, 15020006, and 15020001)
- Buffer = 5-mile buffer surrounding the Rio Puerco/Rio San Jose/Little Colorado River Watersheds

The project area has an estimated population of 187,149; 36% identify as Hispanic or Latino (which may be of mixed race) and 34% identify as American Indian alone. The percent of persons that communicate in a language other than English (non-English) at home is 40%, compared to 21.3 % for the United States. The EJSCREEN analysis identified 3,340 of 58,043 households as linguistically isolated, of which 44% speak Spanish and 55% speak various other languages (not identified). The per capita income for the project

area is \$22,538, compared to the national per capita income of \$31,177. These results indicate that for the project area, the percentage of Spanish-speaking communication is considerable (i.e., substantially greater than the state or national percentage) and there are demographic factors (i.e., low income community, minority community, limited English proficiency individuals, Linguistically Isolated Households, etc.) that may impact public participation.

V. Public Participation & Outreach Activities

The public may ask questions about the draft 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans at any time. Interested community members do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact the Bureau. However, the Bureau emphasizes that to be included in the administrative record, comments solicited by public notices must be submitted during the noticed comment periods, and in accordance with the public notice.

Specific outreach activities related to the draft 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans include:

- Developing a public notice announcing the opening of the 30-day public comment period,
- Posting this notice to the SWQB website,
- Emailing this public notice to SWQB's extensive email list through the GovDelivery e-mail delivery service (1,838 email addresses as of December 23, 2020), and
- Sending this public notice to NMED's public relations officer for a press release.

Copies of the draft 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans may be obtained via download from the Bureau's website at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/>, or by contacting Charles Dentino at (505) 946-8868, charles.dentino1@state.nm.us, NMED SWQB, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502. This is the most direct way to learn more about and be involved in the decision-making process for the 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans.

Based on the demographics report discussed in the PIP, basic information about public involvement opportunities will be in both English and Spanish. This information will include how to request materials in Spanish or to speak with Bureau staff through an interpreter. Further details about public participation for this activity are outlined below.

A. Postal Mailing or E-Mailing of Notices to Persons on the Surface Water Quality Bureau's Email List

The Bureau maintains an extensive email list (1,838 email addresses as of December 23, 2020) that includes individuals interested in surface water quality issues and activities. This list is a combination of all previously interested persons who requested the Bureau provide them with information about surface water quality in New Mexico. The Bureau regularly maintains contact information, which is updated or supplemented if additional information is found. Interested persons providing both an address and email may receive physical mail and an email. Additional individuals, organizations, and other interested parties are added to the email list as requested.

B. Email Updates

The Bureau's email list is regularly updated and is available on the Bureau's website at: <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/> by clicking on the "Subscribe to SWQB News" button on the bottom of the home page. The Bureau's website liaison is Heidi Henderson at 505-819-9986 (or email heidi.henderson@state.nm.us).

C. Public Meeting Notices, Public Comment Notices, and Other Notices

Based on the Bureau's evaluation of the community, public notices will be translated into Spanish. In addition, the Bureau may post notices on the Department's Events Calendar at:

<https://www.env.nm.gov/events/>

D. Informational Pamphlets

The Bureau may develop informational pamphlets for the 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans that briefly explain what is happening relative to the watershed surveys, the appropriate Bureau contacts, and next steps in the survey process. To the extent such informational pamphlets are produced, the Bureau may determine whether they will be available in languages other than English and will post online (e.g., Bureau website). They may also be distributed via email to interested organizations and individuals, including those who sign up for email notices through the website.

E. Public Comment Period

The 30-day public comment period for the draft 2021-2022 Field Sampling Plans is planned to start February 12 and end March 15, 2021, at 5:00 p.m.

F. Other Outreach

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health emergency, other means of outreach such as flyers or other hard copy postings will not be used. However, any updates will be posted on the Department's website.

G. Information Repositories

Copies of the draft Field Sampling Plans may be obtained via download from the Bureau's website at <https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/> or by contacting Chuck Dentino at (505) 946-8868, **Charles.Dentino1@state.nm.us**, NMED SWQB, P.O. Box 5469, Santa Fe, New Mexico, 87502.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and health emergency, the Bureau will not provide hardcopies and other information at NMED district offices, post offices, community centers, public libraries, or other repositories. If you would like to request hard copies of important documents and information about how to comment on the draft permit, please contact Chuck Dentino at (505) 946-8868 or email: **Charles.Dentino1@state.nm.us**.

H. Field Sampling Plan Proceedings, Outcomes and Responses to Comments

To address stakeholder and community members submitted comments, the Bureau will prepare the final Field Sampling Plans, as amended, which includes a "Response to Comments" section as Appendix C, following the close of the public comment period. If a person provides comments in a language other than English, the Bureau will respond to those comments in the preferred language. Final Field Sampling Plans will be posted to the SWQB website and an announcement will be sent to the SWQB listserv.

Figure 1: EJScreen Lower Pecos River Watershed Survey Demographic Area

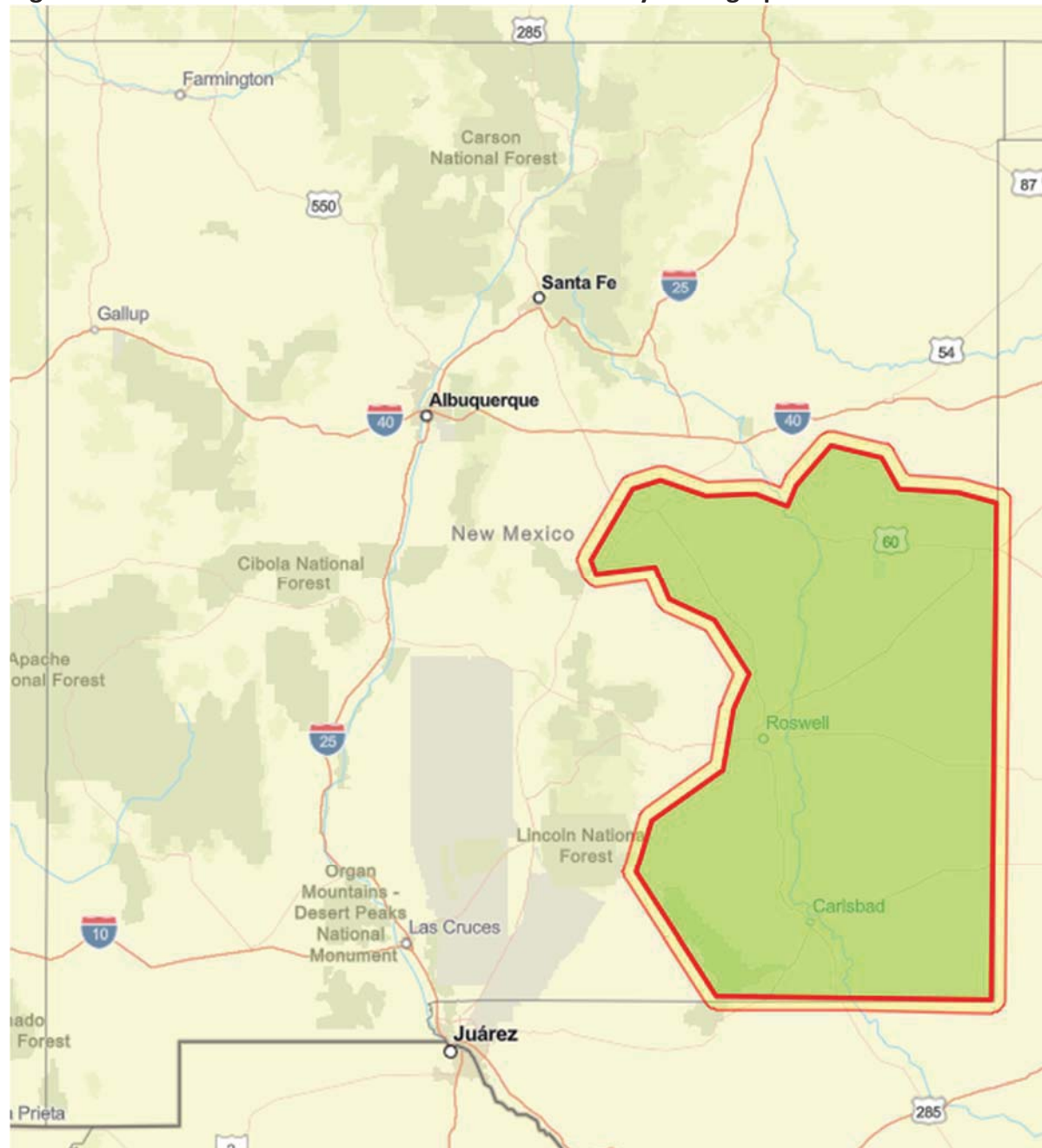


Figure 1: EJScreen Jemez River Watershed Survey Demographic Area

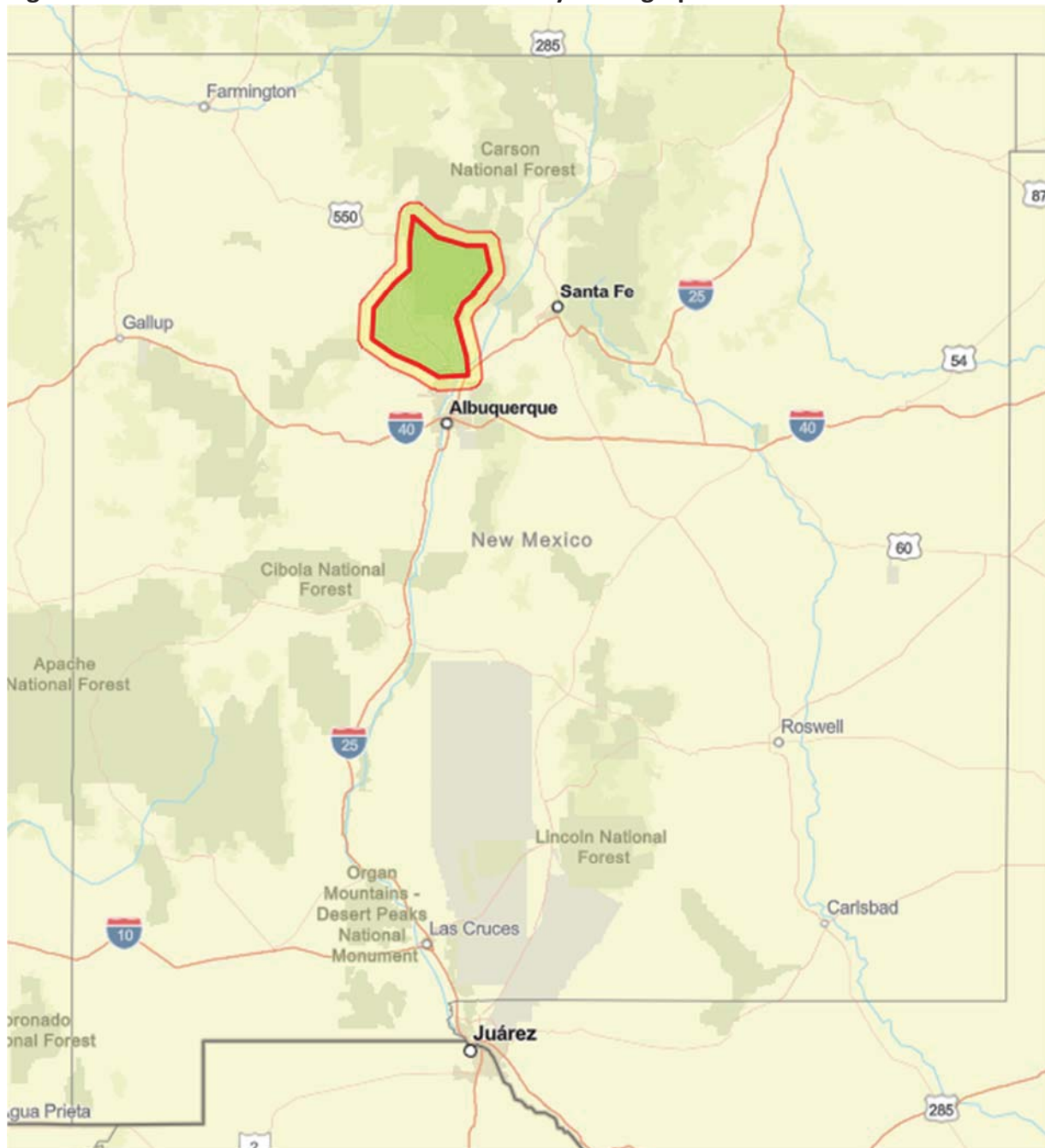


Figure 1: EJScreen Rio Puerco/Rio San Jose/Little Colorado River Watershed Survey Demographic Area

