

## 7.0 MONITORING PLAN

Pursuant to Section 106(e)(1) of the Federal Clean Water Act, the SWQB has established appropriate monitoring methods, systems and procedures in order to compile and analyze data on the quality of the surface waters of New Mexico. In accordance with the New Mexico Water Quality Act, the SWQB has developed and implemented a comprehensive water quality monitoring strategy for the surface waters of the State.

The monitoring strategy establishes the methods of identifying and prioritizing water quality data needs, specifies procedures for acquiring and managing water quality data, and describes how these data are used to progress toward three basic monitoring objectives: to develop water quality-based controls, to evaluate the effectiveness of such controls, and to conduct water quality assessments.

The SWQB utilizes a rotating basin system approach to water quality monitoring. In this system, a select number of watersheds are intensively monitored each year with an established return frequency of every five to seven years. The SWQB maintains current quality assurance and quality control plans to cover all monitoring activities. This document called the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is updated and certified annually by US EPA Region 6 (SWQB/NMED 2001b). In addition, the SWQB identifies the data quality objectives required to provide information of sufficient quality to meet the established goals of the program. Current priorities for monitoring in the SWQB are driven by the CWA Section 303(d) list of streams requiring TMDLs. Short-term efforts will be directed toward those waters that are on the EPA TMDL consent decree list (Forest Guardians and Southwest Environmental Center v. Carol Browner, Administrator, US EPA, Civil Action 96-0826 LH/LFG, 1997).

Once assessment monitoring is completed, those reaches showing impacts and requiring a TMDL will be targeted for more intensive monitoring. The methods of data acquisition include fixed-station monitoring, intensive surveys of priority assessment units (including biological assessments), and compliance monitoring of industrial, federal and municipal dischargers, as specified in the SWQB Assessment Protocols (SWQB/NMED 2000).

Long-term monitoring for assessments will be accomplished through the establishment of sampling sites that are representative of the waterbody and which can be revisited every five to seven years. This information will provide time relevant information for use in CWA Section 303(d) listing and 305(b) report assessments and to support the need for developing TMDLs. The approach provides:

- a systematic, detailed review of water quality data which allows for a more efficient use of valuable monitoring resources;
- information at a scale where implementation of corrective activities is feasible;
- an established order of rotation and predictable sampling in each basin which allows for enhanced coordinated efforts with other programs; and
- program efficiency and improvements in the basis for management decisions.

It should be noted that a basin would not be ignored during the years in between intensive sampling. The rotating basin program will be supplemented with other data collection efforts such as the funding of long-term USGS water quality gaging stations for long-term trend data. Data will be analyzed and field studies will be conducted to further characterize acknowledged problems and TMDLs will be developed and implemented accordingly. Both long-term and intensive field studies can contribute to the 305(b) report and 303(d) listing processes.

The following draft schedule covers sampling seasons 1998 through 2004 and will be followed in a consistent manner to support the New Mexico Unified Watershed Assessment (UWA) and the Nonpoint Source Management Program. This sampling regime allows characterization of seasonal variation and thorough sampling in spring, summer, and fall for each of the watersheds. Revisions to the schedule may be occasionally necessary based on staff and monetary resources that fluctuate on an annual basis.

- 1998 Jemez Watershed, Upper Chama Watershed (El Vado to CO border), Cimarron Watershed, Santa Fe River, San Francisco Watershed
- 1999 Lower Chama Watershed (Rio Grande to El Vado), Red River Watershed, Middle Rio Grande, Gila River Watershed (summer and fall), Santa Fe River
- 2000 Gila River Watershed (spring), Dry Cimarron Watershed, Upper Rio Grande 1 (Pilar to CO border)
- 2001 Upper Rio Grande 2 (Cochiti Reservoir to Pilar), Upper Pecos Watershed (Ft. Sumner to headwaters)
- 2002 Canadian River 1, San Juan River Watershed, Mimbres Watershed
- 2003 Lower Pecos Watershed (TX border to Ft. Sumner), Rio Ruidoso Watershed
- 2004 Rio Puerco Watershed, Lower Rio Grande (TX border to Isleta Pueblo boundary)