SECTION 6
NEED FOR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Public outreach and education is an important component of the overall effort to reduce fecal coliform loadings to the Rio Grande. MRG stakeholders need to play a central role in defining and targeting public education and participation efforts aimed at reducing fecal coliform loadings from known sources.

6.1 Public Education and Participation

The NPDES Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit program (Phases I and II) require development of a Storm Water Management Program (SWMP). One of the MS4 permit conditions develops a public education and participation process. As a result of the 2002 fecal coliform TMDL, USEPA Region 6 and NMED are likely to require MS4 permit holders to develop and document rigorous public education and participation processes that address fecal coliform sources.

The USEPA has a website that specifically addresses pet waste management (see http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/edu_8.cfm). This website describes BMPs and provides links to other websites that address pet waste BMPs. Examples of public outreach material may be viewed at http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwatermonth.cfm#materials. The USEPA also provides a BMP Fact Sheet that address public involvement and participation ideas at http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater/menuofbmps/pub_inv.cfm.

6.2 MRG Stakeholders

Stakeholders within the MRG can be categorized into at least two groups: those that have a financial stake and those with a special interest. USEPA passes the cost of TMDL implementation and enforcement to the stakeholders with NPDES permits. Some of these stakeholders are listed in the NPDES Phase I and Phase II MS4 regulations and are as follows.

- City of Albuquerque
- Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority
- New Mexico Department of Transportation
- University of New Mexico in Albuquerque
- Bernalillo County
- Village of Corrales
- Village of Los Ranchos de Albuquerque
- City of Rio Rancho
- Sandoval County
- Pueblo of Sandia
- Pueblo of Isleta
- Pueblo of Santa Ana

Not all financial stakeholders are listed in the MS4 regulations. Nevertheless, some stakeholders may be required to obtain an NPDES Phase I (co-permittee) or Phase II

MS4 permit because they have water-controlling jurisdiction over an urbanized area. These potential financial stakeholders are as follows:

- Town of Bernalillo
- Pueblo of San Felipe
- Pueblo of Santa Ana
- Kirkland Air Force Base
- Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District
- Southern Sandoval County Arroyo Flood Control Authority

Stakeholders with special interest include:

- USEPA Region 6
- New Mexico Environment Department
- Amigos Bravos
- Citizens for Clean Air and Water
- Corrales Residents for Clean Air and Water
- Other Interested Citizen Groups or Individuals.

6.3 Watershed Partnerships

Coordination among stakeholders is paramount to a significant reduction in reducing fecal coliform contribution to the MRG. Because MRG subwatersheds almost always extend through several jurisdictions of MS4 permit holders, partnerships between stakeholders is necessary. Stakeholder partnerships can be used as a mechanism to distribute the cost of fecal coliform TMDL implementation among multiple parties. Examples include shared cost of area-wide public service announcements or production of public education material.

6.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Both the financial and special interest stakeholders will have roles in implementing management measures and BMPs for fecal coliform. NMED, AMAFCA, Bernalillo County, and the Pueblos have well-defined water quality management roles and responsibilities. A key responsibility of these agencies will be to reach consensus on how data from this study will be utilized to guide decision making on selecting, funding, and implementing management measures and BMPs. Before USEPA Region 6 issues MS4 permits that specifically address the fecal coliform TMDL, stakeholders can organize to prioritize the phased implementation of management measures, identify funding sources, and establish milestones for evaluating reductions in fecal coliform loading. There are several advantages/benefits to organizing before USEPA issues MS4 permits addressing fecal coliform. These include having a larger influence on the requirements stipulated by the permits and the schedule of implementation. A potential benefit can be a lessening of the cost of fecal coliform reduction in the long term.