

WATER SUPPLY PROJECT

ALAMOGORDO REGIONAL

What is this Project?

The City of Alamogordo (City) has applied to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for a permit to develop and operate 10 wells on BLM land approximately 10 miles north of Tularosa, New Mexico. A water transmission line would also be constructed within BLM right-of-way from the wells to a proposed water treatment facility. To cover portions of the project cost, the City is currently seeking support from the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) through Title XVI funding. The BLM and Reclamation are joint federal lead agencies.

What is the need for this Project?

The Alamogordo region lacks a sustainable potable water supply. Existing regional water uses are over-dependent on surface water, which is vulnerable to drought.

What is the purpose of this Project?

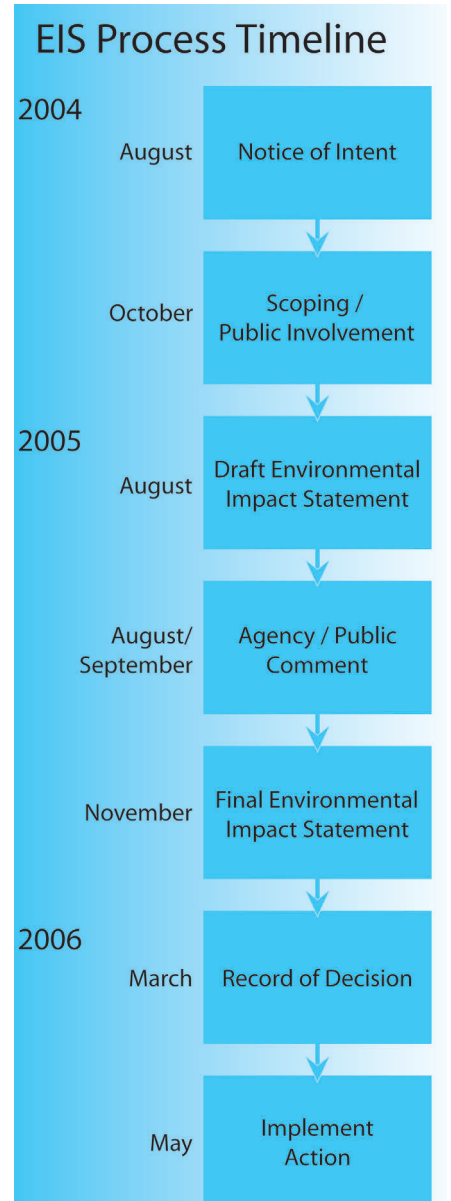
To provide the Alamogordo region with a sustainable potable water supply by bringing water from the Hueco-Tularosa aquifer to needed areas, reducing the dependence on surface water.

What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to evaluate, and disclose to the public, the environmental, cultural, and socioeconomic impacts of any major action they are planning. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared to meet the requirement for evaluating impacts associated with the proposed action. An EIS describes the different ways that the proposal could be implemented and identifies the impacts of these alternatives. The EIS provides the decision-makers with a range of options in addition to information about the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative.

The purpose of the EIS for this Project is to:

- ◆ Evaluate the potential for environmental and socioeconomic impacts as a result of the Project
- ◆ Provide an Agency decision-making tool that will compare and analyze project alternatives
- ◆ Analyse potential impacts and determine appropriate mitigation measures
- ◆ Serve as a public information document
- ◆ Track and document the process used to reach decisions
- ◆ Evaluate the consequences of not developing the Project



What has been done so far?

SCOPING ◆ The Public Scoping process has two parts: providing information to community members about decisions that directly affect them, and soliciting information about the interests and concerns of the community. The purpose of Public Scoping is to identify environmental issues to be considered in the EIS. For the

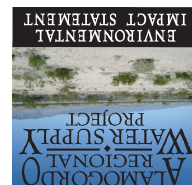
Alamogordo Regional Water Supply Project, scoping lasted from August 26 to October 25, 2004. During that time community open-house meetings were held in Alamogordo on Tuesday, October 5, and in Tularosa on Wednesday, October 6. At these meetings community members identified their concerns about the project, made suggestions for project alternatives, and prioritized project issues.

This document provides an overview of the public input from the open-house meetings. The numerous additional comments and concerns that have been received through our project website, e-mail, and postal mail will be described and addressed in the Draft EIS Appendix.

To find out more about this Project, read comments from the scoping meetings, or see answers to frequently asked questions, visit our website at:

www.swca.com/arwsp/

or write:
SWCA Environmental Consultants
Attention:
Alamogordo Regional Water Supply Project
7001 Prospect Place NE, Suite 100
Albuquerque, NM 87110



What are the concerns of the public?

Over 200 individual comments were recorded during breakout sessions in each community. As themes became clear, 52 topics were transferred to “priority” cards. Some of the same concerns were voiced by both communities. Alamogordo attendees were particularly concerned with current water management and potential effects of the Project on ground water. Attendees at the Tularosa meeting were most concerned with issues of water rights and the Project in general, including the location of facilities. Comments received during the scoping period will be included in a Scoping Summary Report. The scoping document will summarize key public issues identified during scoping. The report provides a vehicle for the EIS authors to filter, integrate, and modify the scope of the Proposed Action and alternatives, if appropriate.

Here’s a sampling of what we heard...

ECONOMIC ISSUES –

“How will this Project affect water rates, cost of living, and ultimately, our property values?”

“Who is accountable if this project devalues my property because of loss of water?”

“Any work related to the Project should stay in the state... hire locally.”

EIS PROCESS ISSUES –

“I want more information on the process, and wonder if public involvement will really make a difference.”

“Stay focused on the EIS purpose: a water supply for the community!”

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS –

“We’re concerned that this Project may lower the water table at higher elevations, desiccate the mountains, and have negative effects on vegetation and wildlife.”

“What will they do with the waste, and what are the environmental impacts in terms of pollution...will wind carry it, and can runoff and flooding affect it?”

GROUND WATER CONCERNS –

“We’re afraid Project wells will dry up current wells—and what effect will the Project have on recharge in the basin?”

“If (it turns out that) Alamogordo needs all the water from the pipeline, we (Tularosa) won’t get a drop!”

GROWTH ISSUES –

“We don’t want growth to dictate water use—we want water availability to dictate growth!”

“This area won’t support a big city; will this Project limit or expand growth opportunities?”

LOCATION OF PROJECT –

“Public lands have been set aside for future use; who made the decision to deplete resources on public lands?”

“The location of the Project has not been fully reviewed for all alternative sites. Why not (put it) south of Alamogordo, because (planned) location of wells will sacrifice the growth of Tularosa.”

PROJECT IN GENERAL –

“Why does Alamogordo offer only one alternative, and why at this location? Is it about water quality or financial concerns, or is Tularosa an easy target?”

“How can this Project be stopped if it creates a problem, and we’d like a mechanism to stop it before it becomes a problem.”

“The Project focuses on symptoms, not actual issues, and is in conflict with the regional water plan.”

“Alamogordo ‘regional water plan’ is an oxymoron... it is not representative of the rest of the communities. There’s no representation from anyone outside the City of Alamogordo, and there is no mention of how the plan will be administered outside of Alamogordo.”

SCIENCE ISSUES –

“I question your science and believe additional science is needed. Make sure more research is done and average all data.”

“What is the timeline of this study?”

The Project should have a 200-year plan: 40 years is a drop in the bucket.”

“I question your data sources for water use...and you are presenting conflicting data.”

WATER MANAGEMENT ISSUES –

“Who is in charge of the cleaned water and will it go out of the area, not just to Alamogordo?”

“Monopoly control of water is bad...how can Tularosa and Alamogordo make decisions for a region? (There are) rural people who this Project impacts.”

“If you pump this water, will we have sinkholes, cave-ins, and subsidence?”

WATER RIGHTS ISSUES –

“Tularosa’s 1865 water rights have priority over Alamogordo’s 1899 rights...we’ll have to pay for water that’s already ours!”

“Why hasn’t Alamogordo developed all of their water rights—or used the ones they already have?”

Where do we go from here?



In the scoping meetings, we had the opportunity to hear your concerns about this project. We thank you for your willingness to give your input and look forward to your participation in the future. You will receive further information regarding our next public meeting once the details are finalized.