

Jemez y Sangre Water Planning Council Meeting Notes  
April 12, 2004

Attendees: Bob Vocke, Conci Bokum, Alan Jager, Sigmond Silber, Paul Paryski, Gavin Strathdee, Walt Chapman, Bill LeMay, Don Dayton, Roy Stoesz, Rick Carpenter, Liza Vitale, and Stephen Wust attended the JyS Water Planning Council monthly meeting. Dave Isackson and Lawrence Garcia (US Forest Service) attended the meeting.

The next JyS monthly meeting will be May 10, 2004 in Santa Fe.

Dave Isackson and Lawrence Garcia discussed the Santa Fe Municipal Watershed Project with the Council and the following points were made (go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/sfe/> for additional SF National Forest information):

- It is a collaborative project and an EIS was prepared;
- “Show me” plots were prepared in 2001;
- Most of the watershed work will be done during 2003-2004;
- The goal is to “fire proof” the watershed and improve forest health;
- Ponderosa pine stands had 500-1000 trees/acre (10-50 trees/acre is considered more natural) & consisted largely of small diameter trees and the forests lacked diversity;
- Trees are being thinned by hand and machine (high flotation tires);
- The thinning is being conducted in four phases;
- The City of Santa Fe is doing a paired basin study, which will allow comparison of runoff etc.;
- Machine mulching of trees increases soil moisture, eliminates slash fuel hazards, and eliminates slash burning (including air quality concerns);
- No wood materials are being trucked out due to environmental concerns;
- 800 acres of slash piles were burned in 16 days once burning conditions were satisfactory;
- Larger logs are being used to control erosion;
- Aspen groves are being created;
- Increased surface flows are being observed in treated areas this spring;
- Growth of riparian vegetation is being encouraged;
- Some 1,300 acres have been treated at \$945/acre (does not include US Forest Service time or burning of slash);
- Slash has been burned on 800 acres at \$50/acre;
- 2,000-3,000 acres remain to be treated (treatment area depends on topography);
- All revegetation is natural;
- Trees larger than 16 inches dbh (EIS maximum) are not being cut;
- White fir trees are the first to be cut due to fuel ladder fire concerns; and
- The most desirable trees are ponderosa pines & aspens and other hardwoods are not removed.

Rick Carpenter discussed the following handout materials with the Council (go to <http://www.santafenm.gov/fire/urbaninterface.asp> for additional information):

## **WATERSHED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT PROJECT STATUS UPDATE (Draft)**

### **BACKGROUND FACTS ABOUT THE WATERSHED**

Total size of the Upper Watershed – 17,384 acres

- Santa Fe National Forest – 15,333 acres
- City of Santa Fe – 1,124
- Private (including Nature Conservancy and Audubon) – 927 acres

Watershed Lands within the Pecos Wilderness area – approximately 7,000 acres

Vegetation Management Project Area – 7,270 acres

- Lands within the Project Area which will actually be treated – 4,500 acres (approximately)

### **Definition**

The Santa Fe River Upper Watershed (or the Upper Watershed) is defined as the area, which drains water into the Santa Fe River anywhere above the breached dam of Two-Mile Reservoir. The Upper Watershed is a subset of the entire Santa Fe River Watershed, which includes all the land that drains water into the Santa Fe River above its confluence with the Rio Grande.

### **Vegetation Treatment (Forest Thinning)**

The purpose of this project is to reduce the risk of a major wildfire in the lower 7,270 acres of the Upper Watershed. The USDA Forest Service (USFS) is the lead agency.

Crowded Trees: over 1,000 trees per acre in some locations; less than 300 trees per acre would be optimum.

50%-50% machine treatment – hand cutting

Cost: over \$945 per acre. Rec'd \$1.5 million in federal funding assistance FFY04.

### **STATUS OF THE PROJECT**

Approximately **1500 acres have been thinned to date.**

**Burning of piles on 700 to 900 acres** began last fall as soon as there was snow on the ground in the watershed, and continued through the winter (depending on weather and air quality conditions).

Approximately 1800 acres on the south side and 1500 acres on the north side remain to be treated.

The archaeological field work has been completed and the reports were submitted for concurrence to the State Historic Preservation Office in the near future.

Extensive monitoring of the project is being carried out by scientists from the Rocky Mountain Research Station (US Forest Service), Los Alamos National Laboratory, the College of Santa Fe, and the University of New Mexico.

### **Access**

City Staff and the USFS:

- Are working on an access policy which will be based on fire danger and homeland security threats.
- Do NOT plan to increase unrestricted public access inside the watershed.
- Are still discussing the notion of re-establishing the very limited public tours which were suspended in 2002 due to high fire danger.
- Are looking at the possibility of doing some filming of the vegetation treatments to provide a “virtual” tour (on public access TV or video cassette).
- Hope to have the access policy finalized by June 1, 2004.

Information on the NM Forest and Watershed Health Planning Process can be found @ <http://www.emnrd.state.nm.us/forestry/NMForestHealthPlan/fhpmain.cfm>

Liza Vitale discussed the Santa Fe County Water Conservation Program with the Council and the following points were made (go to <http://www.co.santa-fe.nm.us/water/index.html> for materials):

- The Program has four elements (commercial retrofit, domestic well metering, conservation, and public education/outreach);
- The commercial retrofit is required by January 2005 and includes a certificate of compliance, audits, and fines for non-compliance;
- Conservation includes notices (e.g., hotel brochures, toilet fact sheets, and table tents), outreach (e.g., water fairs and OSE WaterWise Development @ <http://www.seo.state.nm.us/water-info/conservation/waterwise.html>), and the roof-top catchment ordinance; and
- Domestic wells with Santa Fe County use restrictions require annual reporting.

The City of Santa Fe has a water conservation site @ <http://www.santafenm.gov/waterwise/index.asp>

The following was reported on the Cloud Seeding Project:

- The Cloud Seeding Project has three committees Technical Advisory Group (TAG), Funding and Organizing (F&O), and Community Action Group (not operating yet);
- The TAG now has 28 members;
- Based on its March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting, the TAG recommends three projects involving the collection and interpretation of data to demonstrate the feasibility of cloud seeding in New Mexico, and to provide necessary data to help design a scientifically oriented pilot cloud seeding project in the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. These proposals cover storms during the winter seasons:
  - Multi-spectral Satellite Imagery Study over the five major mountain ranges in the state. The study is designed to tell us how many seedable winter storms occurred state-wide during the four-year period from 1999 to 2002.
  - In-situ Field Measurements involves flying 20 hours near the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains and collecting and analyzing cloud microphysical data. The project is planned to confirm the satellite findings and to provide data needed to help design a pilot cloud seeding project.
  - Computer Modeling provides for four, 24-hour simulations of storms over the Jemez and Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The simulations are designed to show transport and dispersion of the seeding materials, which will be critical in designing placement of ground generators in the pilot project.
- A cloud seeding presentation will be made at the May or June Interstate Stream Commission meeting;
- The F&O committee will meet on April 13<sup>th</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup>; and
- The TAG will meet on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### Subcommittee Reports:

- Education – Bob Vocke will be presenting the JyS Water Plan recommendations at he April 20<sup>th</sup> Northern New Mexico Regional Water Meeting. Additionally, the "Technological and Regional Water Stewardship: A Conference Series Aimed at Identifying Priorities in Technologies for Improving Water Management Along the Rio Grande Corridor" will be held in Albuquerque on April 21-22 (<http://research.unm.edu/opst/> - go to "Events").
- State Water Plan @ <http://www.seo.state.nm.us/water-info/NMWaterPlanning/NMWP-index.html> - no report.
- New and Expanded Water Technologies – Sig reported that he would be presenting at the Technology and Regional Water Stewardship conference in Albuquerque. The subcommittee will meet on April 19<sup>th</sup>.
- Measuring Status – no report.
- Governor's Blue Ribbon Water Task Force – will meet on April 28-29 at Elephant Butte Irrigation District.